

**AN ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPALS' SUPERVISORY PRACTICES ON QUALITY
ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Principals play important roles towards quality assurance in secondary schools. That is, the principals ensure that deadlines are met and students register impressive grades in national examinations, that is, KCSE. However, in Thika West Sub-county, this has not been the case with most secondary schools registering dismal performance characterized with failures to meet deadlines. Thus, the purpose of this study was to assess the principal's supervisory practices on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-county, Kiambu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study included; assessing principals' supervision of teachers, management of resources, implementation of policies and supervision of non-teaching staff in relation to quality assurance. The study was guided by The Systems Theory. The study applied mixed methods approach, that is, quantitative and qualitative methods and thus applies concurrent triangulation research design. The target population comprises of 50 principals, 93 HoDs and 9 QASOs all totaling to 152 which a sample of 49 respondents were selected using The Central Limit Theorem. Stratified sampling was applied to create five different strata based on the number of zones in Thika West Sub-county. From each stratum, three principals and six teachers were selected using purposive sampling. The researcher then applied simple random sampling to select three QASOs. Questionnaires were used to collect data from principals and HoDs whereas interview schedules were used to collect data from QASOs. Piloting of the instruments was conducted to help establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. Reliability was established using test retest method and reliability coefficient, $r = 0.65$ was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Formula thus indicating higher internal consistency. Credibility was established through data triangulation by multiple analysts and experts whereas dependability was established through repeated trial. Data analysis began by identifying common themes. Frequency counts of the responses were also taken. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically based on research objectives whereas the quantitative data was analyzed using One-Sample t-Test Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21). The study has established that principals' supervisory practices enhance quality assurance in secondary schools. However, in Thika West Sub-county this has not been the case. Students register dismal grades in KCSE, time taken to meet deadlines long and poor time management. The study thus recommends that principals should attend training courses on human resource management in order to enable them acquire pre-requisite skills to supervise teachers and non-teaching staff. This may go a long way in developing mutual understanding on how to meet deadlines and register impressive performance in KCSE. Principals should understand that prudent management of resources is critical to the quality assurance in most secondary schools. Thus, the school principals should ensure that resources are properly managed to realize the school's stated objectives. Principals should note that quality assurance is guaranteed through implementation of policies such as curriculum, fee guidelines and teacher recruitment. Thus, the principals should ensure stricter adherence to implementation of such policies. Principals should ensure that non-teaching staff attend to their jobs, well appraised and motivated in order to guarantee quality assurance in schools.