

The Extent to Which Monitoring of Instructional Practices Influences Students' Academic Performance in Mtama District Public Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the extent to which monitoring of instructional practices influences students' academic performance in Mtama District public secondary schools. The theory which guided this study is Mwoshe's Adaptive Competence Development Theory (MACDT). The study was guided by a mixed research approach with a convergent research design. The total sample size for all respondents was 171 respondents (149 teachers, 14 heads of schools and 8 District School Quality Assurers [DSQAs]). Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select the participants of the study from fourteen (14) selected public secondary schools in Mtama District. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, while quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics through statistical package for social science (SPSS) software, 29.0 version. The findings of the study revealed the extent to which monitoring of instructional practice influences students' academic performance in Mtama District's public secondary schools. The study found that monitoring instructional practice improves teaching effectiveness; consistent instructional supervision improves students' academic performance; feedback from the head of school motivates teachers to work harder and achieve better results; and teaching time is effectively utilised. Moreover, monitoring instructional practice helps improve syllabus coverage in schools and promotes accountability among teachers. The study concluded that, monitoring of instructional practices plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance in public secondary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that School leaders and education authorities should strengthen leadership monitoring of instruction by conducting regular classroom observations, reviewing lesson plans and providing constructive feedback to teachers.

Keywords: Instructional practice, Monitoring, Academic performance, Practice, Performance

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Academic performance is a key indicator of the quality and effectiveness of education systems and persistent low performance in public secondary schools has become a major concern for policymakers, educators, and communities alike (Urio, 2023). In many contexts, the problem of poor student performances is often linked to weak instructional delivery and ineffective monitoring of teaching practices, creating a gap between planned curriculum goals and actual classroom implementation. Monitoring of instructional practices refers to the systematic observation, evaluation and feedback provided to teachers regarding their instructional methods, classroom engagement, preparation of professional documents and delivery of lessons to ensure alignment with curricular objectives and standards (Otieno et al., 2020; Urio, 2023). This process is intended not only to hold teachers accountable but also to enhance their professional practice through targeted support, constructive feedback and professional development opportunities.

Instructional practices involve the strategies, methods and techniques teachers use to facilitate student learning, including lesson planning, interactive teaching, student assessment and classroom management. The quality of these practices has a strong relationship with students' academic performance because effective instruction responds to diverse learners' needs, engages students actively in the learning process, and provides timely feedback, which supports deeper understanding and skill development (Ho & Gan, 2023). Evidence from

international large-scale assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), indicates that regions with higher levels of adaptive instruction, teacher support and stimulation of learning often achieve stronger student performance outcomes compared to regions where instructional practices are less adaptive or student-centered (Ho & Gan, 2023).

In Canada, educational quality indicators such as the National Survey of Student Engagement include measures of instructional practices and student engagement, which policymakers use to inform improvements in teaching and learning, although direct causal evidence on monitoring systems and performance remains limited (National Survey of Student Engagement, n.d.; OECD, 2020). In Singapore, high performance in international assessments is attributed in part to instructional approaches that integrate adaptive instruction and strong teacher support within monitoring frameworks, enabling educators to address learning difficulties and tailor instruction effectively (Ho & Gan, 2023). In Nigeria, existing studies indicate that structured instructional supervision activities such as classroom visitation, feedback and review of teaching practices are associated with improvements in teaching quality and indirectly, student performance (Sanga, Nyoni, & Sanga, 2025). In Kenya, empirical research has demonstrated that principals' instructional oversight particularly regular classroom observations and guidance on teaching strategies is positively linked to learner outcomes, although the strength of these effects varies by context and implementation quality (Kirwok, Otiso, & Morogo, 2025). In Tanzania, studies suggest that supervision of instructional programmes and leadership practices that prioritize instructional monitoring are important for identifying teaching gaps and improving student outcomes; however, inconsistent implementation and resource challenges often weaken this influence on academic performance (Urio, 2023; Michael & Mhando, 2024).

Despite these understandings, there remains a significant gap in context-specific evidence on how structured, systematic monitoring of instructional practices influences students' academic performance in Mtama District's public secondary schools. Most existing studies in Tanzania have focused on broader leadership practices, primary schools, or general instructional supervision without isolating the effects of monitoring instructional practices on students' examination outcomes in this specific district. This study therefore fills that gap by exploring the extent to which monitoring of instructional practices affects academic performance among secondary school students in Mtama District.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Mwoshe's Adaptive Competence Development Theory (MACDT), developed by Mwoshe (2024). The theory explains how continuous supervision, feedback and reflective practice enhance teachers' professional competence and subsequently improve students' academic outcomes. MACDT views teaching effectiveness as a dynamic process in which educators progressively adapt their instructional practices in response to monitoring information, learners' needs and the school environment.

The theory posits that competence development is not static but adaptive. It argues that teachers improve their instructional quality when they receive structured monitoring, constructive feedback and professional support that allow them to modify their teaching approaches. According to MACDT, monitoring mechanisms such as classroom observation, lesson plan reviews, mentoring and performance appraisal create opportunities for identifying instructional gaps and initiating targeted improvements. These adjustments enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, assessment strategies and responsiveness to learners' diversity, which ultimately contribute to better students' academic performance.

MACDT is grounded in several key assumptions. It assumes that instructional practices directly influence students' learning outcomes and that teacher competence develops progressively through experience, feedback and reflection. The theory further assumes that monitoring is developmental rather than punitive, serving as a supportive tool for professional growth. It also assumes that when schools establish systematic and consistent monitoring structures, teachers are more likely to adopt effective instructional strategies and maintain accountability. Additionally, the theory holds that students' academic performance improves when teaching practices are continuously refined to match learners' needs and contextual demands.

The relevance of MACDT to the present study lies in its clear explanation of the relationship between monitoring of instructional practices and students' academic performance. Since the study sought to examine the extent to which monitoring influences learners' achievement in Mtama District public secondary schools, the theory provides a conceptual lens for understanding how supervision, feedback and professional guidance enhance teachers' adaptive competence and, consequently, students' results. It helps justify the focus on monitoring processes such as classroom observation, review of teaching materials and supervisory feedback as key variables that shape instructional quality. Therefore, MACDT offers an appropriate foundation for interpreting how effective monitoring systems contribute to improved academic performance in secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Approach and Design

In examining the extent to which monitoring of instructional practices influences students' academic performance, a mixed research approach was used. Qualitative approach was applied first, where the researcher collected and analysed data to gain in-depth insights and meaningful understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data provided detailed views of the respondents, such as the perspectives and experiences of district school quality assurance officers and heads of schools, during the investigation of monitoring of instructional practices on students' academic performance. Subsequently, the quantitative approach was used to collect numerical data, which were interpreted qualitatively to provide a comprehensive perspective. The quantitative method examined the extent to which monitoring of instructional practices enhanced students' academic performance by analysing measurable indicators. This combination ensured that both the processes of monitoring of instructional practice and their tangible effects are thoroughly examined.

The study utilized convergent research design. Using a convergent research design allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research problem by integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The convergent design was particularly suited for this study because it provided a more holistic view of the issue at hand. Since the qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time, it saved time and resources. This was especially important in the context of this educational research, where time constraints limited the duration of the study.

Participants

In the study, the target population was 238 teachers, 14 heads of schools from the 14 selected public secondary schools as well as 8 District School Quality Assurers (DSQAs) in Mtama District. Therefore, the total population was 260 respondents. The sample size for teachers was 149 respondents who were obtained through Taro

Yamane formula which is:
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$
 where; n = sample size, N = total population size (238) and e = desired level of precision (typically 0.05 for 95% confidence level). $n = 238 / (1 + 238 \times 0.05^2)$. $n = 149.22$. The total sample size for all respondents was 171 respondents (149 teachers, 14 heads of schools and 8 DSQAs). The representative for teachers represents approximately 62.6% of the total teacher population. Due to the obtained sample size, the researcher hoped that it was enough to provide the required information concerning the study. Each group played a vibrant role in school leadership and academic performance. Heads of schools were important for understanding the on-the-ground implementation of leadership initiatives and monitoring school administration to foster student progress. Academic teachers contributed understandings into instructional coordination and academic progress monitoring while, classroom teachers provided valuable daily experiences from the front lines of teaching. Furthermore, DSQA provided expert evaluations of leadership's impact on teaching and learning.

In selecting the sample from the target population, the study employed multiple sampling techniques to ensure comprehensive representation across stakeholders in Mtama District's secondary education system: Simple random sampling was employed to select teachers who provided qualitative data for the study. This technique ensured that every respondent had an equal chance of being included in the sample, reducing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings. This approach was particularly useful in obtaining unbiased data and ensuring representativeness. Also, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the key

informants for the qualitative part based on their strategic roles in school leadership. This comprised district school quality assurance officers and heads of schools.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires were used as the primary tool for collecting quantitative data from teachers. According to Creswell (2014), questionnaires are effective for gathering data from a large number of participants, making it possible to obtain a broad and representative sample of teachers' perspectives. The study utilized closed-ended responses presented in a Likert scale structure to allow for the collection of structured data that could be analyzed statistically (Bryman, 2016).

Also, interviews were conducted with heads of schools and DSQAs to gather qualitative data. Interviews were particularly valuable for exploring complex phenomena, as they allowed for in-depth conversations and the flexibility to probe further into participants' responses. The interview lasted for thirty (30) to forty-five (45) minutes. The researcher used both voice recording and note-taking during the interviews to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data.

Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

The data that obtained through interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. The analysis process begun with the researcher becoming familiar with the data by transcribing interviews and repeatedly reading the transcripts to gain a deep understanding. The quantitative data which were obtained from questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 29.0. The data were presented in tables indicated through frequencies and percentages.

Also, adherence to ethical considerations was paramount throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, an introductory letter was obtained from the office of the Director of Postgraduate Studies at the Open University of Tanzania. This letter served as formal recognition, allowing the researcher to approach regional and municipal authorities with credibility. It facilitated access to the selected schools, ensuring that the study was conducted within a framework of institutional support. During the data collection process, ethical issues were carefully addressed to protect the rights and well-being of the participants. Informed consent was sought from all respondents, ensuring that they fully understood the purpose of the study, their role in it, and their right to withdraw at any time. This transparency was crucial in fostering trust and promoting a respectful research environment. Furthermore, confidentiality was rigorously maintained; participants were assured that their identities and responses would be kept anonymous, which is essential for encouraging open and honest communication.

Ethical considerations continued during the data analysis phase, where the researcher was committed to relying solely on the findings derived from the collected data rather than imposing personal biases or interpretations. Through focusing on the evidence gathered from questionnaires and interviews, the analysis aimed to faithfully represent the perspectives and experiences of the participants. This commitment to ethical integrity ensured that the study's conclusions were grounded in the reality of the participants' experiences, contributing to the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study found out the extent to which monitoring of instructional practice influences students' academic performance in Mtama District's public secondary schools. The study found that monitoring instructional practice improves teaching effectiveness; consistent instructional supervision improves students' academic performance; feedback from the head of school motivates teachers to work harder and achieve better results; and teaching time is effectively utilised. Moreover, monitoring instructional practice helps improve syllabus coverage in schools and promotes accountability among teachers. Teachers' responses on the extent to which monitoring of instructional practice influences students' academic performance were analyzed and presented in tabular form (See Table 1).

Table 1: Teachers’ Responses on the extent to which monitoring of Instructional Practice Influences Students’ Academic Performance (N=149)

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1. Leadership monitoring of instruction improves teaching effectiveness	43(28.7%)	15(10.1%)	91(60.9%)
2. Consistent instructional supervision improves students’ academic performance	50(33.8%)	17(11.8%)	81(54.1%)
3. Feedback from the head of school motivates teachers to work harder and achieve better results	40(27%)	28(18.6%)	81(54.1%)
4. Teaching time is effectively utilized	38(25.3%)	17(11.8%)	91(60.9%)
5. Monitoring of instruction has led to better syllabus coverage in my school	28(18.6%)	28(18.6%)	93(62.6%)
6. The school’s monitoring system promotes accountability among teachers	48(32.1%)	10(6.7%)	91(60.9%)

Source: Field data (2025)

Leadership Monitoring of Instruction Improves Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching effectiveness refers to the ability of teachers to facilitate meaningful learning by using appropriate instructional strategies, managing classrooms well, engaging students actively and achieving desired learning outcomes. It is reflected in improved students’ understanding, skills and academic performance. Effective teaching therefore depends not only on subject knowledge but also on how well teachers plan, deliver and assess instruction (OECD, 2020).

Leadership monitoring of instruction improves teaching effectiveness by ensuring that teaching practices meet expected standards and continuously improve. Through classroom observations, review of lesson plans, supervision and constructive feedback, school leaders identify instructional gaps and support teachers with guidance, mentoring and professional development. This process promotes accountability, reflective practice and the adoption of learner-centered strategies that enhance students’ achievement. Schools with consistent instructional monitoring often demonstrate stronger teaching quality and better academic outcomes (Hallinger & Walker, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

Based on the results, as presented in Table 3, indicated that a majority of respondents acknowledged the positive influence of monitoring of instructional practice on students’ academic performance in Mtama District. A large proportion, 60.9%, agreed that leadership monitoring of instruction improves teaching effectiveness. 28.7% disagreed, while 10.1% remained neutral. These findings suggest that most teachers perceive instructional monitoring as having a significant positive impact on teaching quality, which, in turn, is likely to enhance students’ academic performance.

The results indicate that when school leaders actively monitor instructional practices, teachers become more accountable, reflective, and systematic in their lesson planning and delivery. Leadership monitoring often includes classroom observations, lesson plan reviews, feedback sessions, and discussions of student performance. Teachers who experience these practices are more likely to adjust their instructional strategies, adopt innovative teaching methods, and address student learning gaps effectively. On the other hand, the number of teachers who disagreed may have encountered monitoring practices that were irregular, punitive, or lacked constructive feedback, thereby limiting their positive impact on teaching and learning. Neutral responses could reflect uncertainty about the effectiveness of monitoring practices in improving academic outcomes, possibly

due to inconsistent implementation across schools in the district. Interviews with heads of schools and DSQAOs provided additional insights into how instructional monitoring contributes to teaching effectiveness.

One head of school explained: *“When we regularly monitor teachers’ lessons, we can identify strengths and areas for improvement.” Teachers who receive guidance during supervision tend to prepare better lessons and deliver them more effectively, which is reflected in students’ performance.*” This extract illustrates the perceived link between leadership monitoring and improved instructional quality. The head emphasised that supervision enables the identification of teaching gaps and the provision of support, which enables teachers to improve their lesson delivery and, consequently, student outcomes.

Another head of school highlighted: *“Monitoring is not about fault-finding; it helps ensure that teachers teach according to the syllabus and use appropriate methods. Schools where this is done consistently tend to achieve better results because teachers are more organised and focused.”* This statement underscores the idea that effective monitoring promotes accountability and alignment with curriculum objectives. It also indicates that when teachers understand that monitoring is intended to support their professional growth rather than penalise them, they are more likely to respond positively and improve their instructional practices. DSQAOs corroborated these findings.

One officer remarked: *“Schools where heads actively monitor instructional practices consistently show improvements in student performance. Monitoring ensures that teaching is structured and that teachers follow recommended strategies, which positively impacts students’ learning.”* This passage confirms that leadership monitoring is not merely procedural but has tangible outcomes on teaching quality and student achievement. The officer emphasised that structured supervision and consistent oversight are key drivers of improved academic performance. However, some DSQAOs pointed out challenges in achieving the desired impact.

One officer explained: *“In some schools, monitoring is irregular or focuses only on formal compliance. In such cases, the influence on teaching and learning is limited because teachers do not receive sufficient guidance to improve their practice.”* This observation aligns with the teachers’ disagreement responses and highlights that the effectiveness of instructional monitoring depends on its consistency, focus, and follow-up. Supervision without meaningful engagement or feedback may fail to improve teaching quality, thereby limiting its impact on students’ performance.

The findings are consistent with Hallinger and Murphy (2023), who note that principals’ active involvement in classroom supervision, lesson planning, and teacher feedback positively influences teaching quality, which in turn translates into better student achievement. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that instructional leadership practices, including monitoring and support, are strongly associated with improved teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. The results also concur with Bush (2020), who highlights that effective school leadership includes regular observation of teaching and learning activities, the provision of feedback, and supportive interventions to enhance instructional quality. Conversely, studies such as Okendu (2012) caution that monitoring alone is insufficient; it must be implemented in ways that support teacher development rather than simply enforcing compliance. This supports the mixed perceptions observed among teachers in Mtama District, where a portion disagreed or remained neutral about the impact of monitoring on academic performance.

Consistent Instructional Supervision Improves Students’ Academic Performance

Students’ academic performance refers to the extent to which learners achieve the intended educational goals and learning outcomes, commonly measured through examinations, tests, continuous assessments, and classroom tasks. It reflects students’ mastery of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through the teaching and learning process. High academic performance indicates effective instruction, adequate learning support and a conducive school environment, whereas poor performance often signals weaknesses in instructional delivery or school management practices (OECD, 2020).

Consistent instructional supervision improves students’ academic performance by ensuring that teaching practices are regularly guided, monitored and strengthened. Through activities such as classroom observation,

checking lesson preparation, reviewing assessments and providing timely feedback, school leaders help teachers improve lesson delivery, address learning difficulties and adopt effective teaching strategies. This continuous support enhances instructional quality, increases learner engagement and promotes better understanding of subject content, which ultimately leads to improved academic outcomes. Schools that maintain systematic and supportive supervision structures tend to record higher student achievement compared to those with irregular or weak monitoring systems (Hallinger & Walker, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

The results in Table 3 showed that 54.1% of teachers agreed that consistent supervision improves students' academic performance, while 33.8% disagreed, and 11.8% remained neutral. These findings indicate that a slight majority of teachers perceive regular and systematic supervision as a factor that enhances student learning outcomes. However, substantial disagreement suggests that a significant proportion of teachers do not perceive consistent supervision as effective in influencing academic performance, possibly because of irregular or ineffective supervision practices.

The results showed the role of regular and systematic instructional supervision in shaping teaching practices and, ultimately, student achievement. Consistent supervision ensures that teachers adhere to curriculum standards, implement effective teaching strategies, and maintain high levels of classroom engagement. Conversely, inconsistent supervision may fail to hold teachers accountable or provide timely feedback, limiting its impact on learning outcomes. Neutral responses indicate uncertainty among some teachers regarding the frequency or effectiveness of supervision in their schools. Interviews with heads of schools and DSQAOs further illustrated how consistent supervision influences student performance.

One head of school explained: *“When we regularly supervise lessons, we notice patterns in teaching strengths and weaknesses. This allows us to guide teachers and ensure that students are learning effectively. Schools that maintain regular supervision tend to have better results.”* This statement emphasises the value of consistency in instructional monitoring. The head highlighted that repeated observation and feedback help teachers identify areas for improvement, refine their teaching practices, and systematically support student learning. Regular supervision creates an ongoing cycle of reflection, adjustment and improvement that directly affects academic outcomes.

Another head of school noted: *“Consistency in supervision motivates teachers to be prepared for every lesson. They know that their work is being observed, not to penalise them, but to support improvement. This consistency helps raise the standard of teaching and improves student performance.”* This statement emphasises the motivational effect of regular supervision. Teachers are more likely to plan lessons diligently, engage students effectively, and adopt recommended pedagogical strategies when supervision is consistent and supportive. This aligns with the principle that accountability, coupled with guidance, promotes professional growth and better learning outcomes.

DSQAOs reinforced this finding. One officer stated: *“Regular and systematic instructional supervision is strongly linked to student achievement. Schools that maintain a routine supervision schedule ensure that teachers implement effective teaching strategies and improve learning outcomes over time.”* This evidence reflects the observed correlation between consistent leadership oversight and enhanced student performance. DSQAOs emphasised that when supervision is routine and focused, it ensures quality teaching and reduces variability in instructional practices across classrooms.

The findings are consistent with prior research emphasising the importance of regular instructional supervision for improving teaching quality and student outcomes. Hallinger and Murphy (2023) note that systematic classroom observation, feedback, and follow-up are critical components of effective instructional leadership, directly contributing to higher academic achievement. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2020) assert that consistent supervision, combined with support and feedback, strengthens teaching practices and enhances student performance. These findings also align with Bush (2020), who emphasises that instructional leadership is most effective when it is continuous and consistent rather than episodic. Regular supervision ensures that teaching standards are maintained and that instructional practices are aligned with curriculum objectives, resulting in improved student outcomes.

Motivating Teachers to Work Harder and Achieve Better Results

Teacher motivation is the internal and external factors that stimulate teachers' commitment, enthusiasm and effort toward performing their professional responsibilities effectively. It encompasses aspects such as job satisfaction, recognition, supportive leadership, professional growth opportunities and a positive working environment. When teachers are motivated, they demonstrate greater dedication, creativity and persistence in lesson preparation, instructional delivery and student support, which contributes to improved teaching quality and learner outcomes (UNESCO, 2023).

The findings in Table 3 revealed that 54.1% of teachers agreed with the statement, indicating that slightly over half of the respondents perceive feedback from school leaders as a motivating factor in enhancing their teaching performance. However, 33.8% disagreed, while 12.1% were neutral. These findings suggest that while feedback can positively influence teacher motivation and effectiveness, a substantial proportion of teachers do not perceive it as sufficiently motivating, potentially due to the nature, frequency, or quality of the feedback provided.

The results imply that feedback plays a key role in shaping teachers' professional attitudes and commitment. When teachers receive constructive, timely, and specific feedback, they are more likely to engage in reflective practice, adopt recommended teaching strategies, and strive for better student outcomes. Conversely, generic, infrequent, or perceived as critical feedback without guidance may fail to inspire improved performance. Neutral responses suggest that some teachers are uncertain about the motivational impact of feedback, perhaps because feedback is communicated inconsistently across schools. Interviews with heads of schools and DSQAOs revealed that feedback from the head of school motivates teachers to work harder and achieve better results. Strengthening feedback mechanisms to ensure they are constructive, actionable, and frequent could enhance teacher motivation, improve instructional practices, and positively impact student performance in Mtama District.

One head of school stated: *"I always give teachers feedback after classroom observations, focusing on what went well and what can be improved. I have noticed that when teachers receive this kind of feedback, they become more motivated to carefully prepare lessons and work towards improving students' results."* The head of school emphasised that motivational feedback encourages teachers to reflect on their practices and take proactive steps to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. When feedback is delivered constructively, it fosters motivation, professional engagement, and accountability, thereby improving teaching practices and student performance. DSQAOs also corroborated these findings.

One officer remarked: *"Teachers who receive consistent, specific feedback from school heads tend to be more committed and perform better. Feedback motivates teachers because it shows that leaders are actively involved in supporting their professional development. However, in some schools, feedback is irregular or vague, with comments like 'improve your teaching. Such feedback does not motivate teachers because it lacks direction or encouragement. Motivation comes from specific and actionable guidance."* This observation aligns with the teachers' perceptions and underscores that leadership feedback is not merely evaluative but also a motivational mechanism. When demonstrating that school leaders care about teaching quality, feedback encourages teachers to put more effort into lesson planning and instructional delivery. However, the statement demonstrates that unclear, infrequent, or overly critical feedback fails to inspire teachers to improve, undermining its intended effect on instructional quality and student outcomes.

Hattie and Timperley (2017) emphasise that effective feedback significantly enhances performance when it is specific, timely, and focuses on improvement rather than punishment. Similarly, Blase and Blase (2020) argue that feedback from school leaders fosters teacher reflection, professional growth, and commitment to high-quality teaching. Furthermore, these results are consistent with Bush (2020), who highlights that instructional leadership that combines monitoring with constructive feedback promotes teacher motivation and accountability. When teachers perceive that feedback is meaningful and supportive, they are more likely to adopt recommended teaching strategies and improve student outcomes.

Effective Utilisation of Teaching Time

Effective utilization of teaching time is the purposeful and efficient use of allocated instructional periods to maximize students' learning opportunities. It involves timely lesson preparation, punctual class attendance, smooth lesson transitions, minimal disruptions and focused engagement in academic activities. When teaching time is well managed, more content is covered, learning tasks are completed and students have adequate opportunities for practice, clarification and feedback, which collectively enhance academic achievement (OECD, 2020).

Ensuring effective utilization of teaching time improves students' academic performance because it increases the amount of meaningful learning that takes place in the classroom. Through consistent instructional supervision, lesson planning checks and monitoring of teachers' attendance and time management, school leaders help reduce time wastage caused by lateness, absenteeism, or poor organization. This structured oversight encourages teachers to remain focused, organized, and accountable, leading to greater instructional efficiency and improved learning outcomes. Schools that manage instructional time effectively often demonstrate higher levels of student engagement and better academic results (UNESCO, 2023; Hallinger & Walker, 2021).

The statement that teaching time is effectively utilised was recognised by 60.9% of respondents. However, 25.3% disagreed, while 11.8% were neutral. These findings suggest that a majority of teachers perceive that instructional supervision helps ensure that lessons are conducted efficiently and within the allocated time. However, a notable proportion of teachers disagreed, indicating that in some schools, teaching time may not be managed optimally, potentially limiting students' learning opportunities. Effective utilisation of teaching time is critical for enhancing instructional quality and improving academic performance. When school leaders monitor and guide the use of lesson time, teachers are more likely to structure their lessons, deliver content systematically, and engage students productively. Conversely, poor time management can lead to incomplete lesson coverage, rushed activities, and missed learning opportunities, ultimately affecting student outcomes. Neutral responses may indicate uncertainty or inconsistent experiences with managing teaching time across different schools.

Also, the findings from interviews with school heads and DSQAOs indicate that teachers widely recognise effective use of teaching time as a positive outcome of instructional monitoring. While most participants acknowledge the benefits, a significant minority noted challenges in time management, highlighting the need for consistent supervision and guidance. Strengthening oversight of teaching time can enhance lesson delivery, improve student engagement, and contribute to higher academic achievement in Mtama District.

One head of school explained: *"We observe lessons not only to assess teaching quality but also to ensure that teachers use the allocated time wisely. Teachers who manage their time well can cover the syllabus effectively and ensure students understand the lessons."* This quotation highlights that effective time management is an integral part of instructional supervision. The head emphasised that monitoring lesson duration and pacing helps teachers plan more efficiently and deliver content comprehensively, which directly influences students' academic performance.

Another head of school remarked: *"Time is precious in teaching. Through supervision, we encourage teachers to start lessons on time, maintain focus during the session, and complete all planned activities. This ensures students benefit fully from each lesson."* This statement illustrates that leadership monitoring of teaching time promotes discipline, structure, and accountability. Teachers are motivated to adhere to schedules, prioritise learning activities, and reduce downtime, thereby enhancing instructional effectiveness and learning outcomes. DSQAOs also emphasised the role of monitoring teaching time.

One officer noted: *"Schools where leaders ensure effective use of teaching time tend to have better academic results. Teachers maximise learning opportunities, and students have more exposure to the curriculum, which contributes to improved performance."* This quotation aligns with the teachers' perceptions that structured and well-monitored teaching time enhances student learning. DSQAOs highlighted the direct link between classroom time management and academic achievement, underscoring the importance of leadership oversight in this area.

However, challenges were also reported, as another officer stated: *“In some schools, teachers are late or spend time on non-instructional activities. Without consistent monitoring, valuable lesson time is wasted, and students’ learning suffers.”* This observation explains why the number of teachers who disagreed with the statement. Ineffective use of teaching time can result from a lack of supervision, poor classroom management, or external interruptions. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2015) argue that instructional time is one of the strongest predictors of student achievement. Effective leadership ensures that teachers maximise lesson time, maintain focus on learning objectives, and implement instructional strategies efficiently. Similarly, Hallinger and Murphy (2023) assert that monitoring classroom practices, including lesson pacing and time management, is a core function of instructional leadership that contributes to improved student outcomes.

Better Syllabus Coverage in Schools

Better syllabus coverage is a systematic and complete implementation of the prescribed curriculum content within the allocated academic time. It involves teaching all planned topics, competencies and learning activities according to the scheme of work and academic calendar to ensure that students are adequately prepared for assessments and progression to higher levels of education. Effective syllabus coverage ensures that learners receive comprehensive subject knowledge and skills without omissions, which directly supports improved academic performance (OECD, 2020).

Promoting better syllabus coverage in schools enhances students’ academic performance because it guarantees that essential content is taught and reinforced before examinations. Through consistent instructional supervision such as reviewing schemes of work, checking lesson plans, monitoring teaching progress and providing feedback school leaders help teachers stay on schedule and address delays early. This structured monitoring reduces content gaps, improves lesson organization, and encourages accountability, leading to more thorough teaching and better learner outcomes. Schools that closely track syllabus implementation tend to demonstrate higher completion rates of curriculum objectives and stronger examination results (UNESCO, 2023; Hallinger & Walker, 2021).

The majority, 62.6% agreed that monitoring of instruction has led to better syllabus coverage in schools, while 18.6% disagreed, and another 18.6% were neutral. These findings indicate that the majority of teachers perceive that instructional monitoring positively influences the extent to which the syllabus is delivered, ensuring that planned curriculum content is systematically covered. However, the notable disagreement and neutral responses suggest that some teachers experience gaps in syllabus coverage, possibly due to inconsistent supervision, teacher workload, or resource limitations. Effective syllabus coverage is essential for ensuring that students receive a comprehensive education aligned with national curriculum objectives. Leadership monitoring contributes to improved syllabus coverage by ensuring that teachers plan lessons in line with the curriculum, maintain consistent pacing, and prioritise essential content. Supervision also helps identify areas where teachers may fall behind, enabling corrective measures to ensure full coverage within the academic year. Neutral responses may reflect uncertainty or variability in how supervision is implemented across different schools.

Insights from heads of schools and DAQAOs corroborated the survey findings. One head of school stated: *“Through regular monitoring, we ensure that teachers follow the syllabus and cover all required topics. This helps prevent gaps in students’ learning and ensures that examinations align with what has been taught.”* This quotation emphasises that monitoring helps align teaching practices with curriculum expectations, promotes structured lesson delivery, and reduces the risk of incomplete syllabus coverage. The head highlighted that instructional oversight is not only about quality but also about maintaining comprehensive curriculum delivery.

Another head of school remarked: *“Monitoring allows us to track which topics have been taught and which still need attention. Teachers are reminded to stick to the syllabus, which ensures that students are well-prepared for exams and have a thorough understanding of the subject matter.”* This statement illustrates that leadership monitoring supports systematic instructional planning and execution. When ensuring teachers adhere to the syllabus, school leaders can optimise learning outcomes and reduce disparities in student preparedness. These findings are consistent with existing research emphasising the role of instructional monitoring in ensuring comprehensive curriculum coverage. Hallinger and Murphy (2023) argue that effective instructional leadership involves supervising curriculum implementation and ensuring that teaching aligns with planned objectives,

which enhances both teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2020) suggest that systematic monitoring helps ensure teachers stay on track with the syllabus, thereby improving instructional consistency and student performance.

Promoting Accountability Among Teachers

Promoting accountability among teachers refers to ensuring that educators take responsibility for their professional duties, instructional practices and students' learning outcomes. Teacher accountability involves fulfilling assigned tasks such as lesson preparation, regular attendance, timely assessment, accurate record keeping, and adherence to curriculum standards. When teachers are accountable, they demonstrate commitment, professionalism and ethical conduct, which contribute to consistent and effective teaching and improved student achievement (OECD, 2020).

Table 3 indicates that 60.9% acknowledged that the school's monitoring system promotes accountability among teachers. However, 32.1% disagreed, and 6.7% were neutral, indicating that a considerable proportion of teachers either do not experience the monitoring system as promoting accountability or are unsure of its effectiveness. Accountability in teaching involves teachers taking responsibility for lesson preparation, timely delivery of content, adherence to curriculum standards, and achievement of learning objectives. When school leaders systematically monitor instructional practices, teachers are encouraged to uphold professional standards, maintain regular teaching schedules, and ensure that students receive quality instruction. The neutral responses may indicate variability in how supervision and accountability measures are implemented across schools.

Insights from heads of schools reinforced these findings. One head of school stated: *"Our monitoring system ensures that teachers are accountable for lesson planning, classroom management, and syllabus coverage. Teachers know that their performance is being observed and that they are responsible for student outcomes."* This quotation highlights that instructional monitoring establishes clear expectations and reinforces professional responsibility. When linking supervision with accountability, school leaders encourage teachers to maintain high standards in their teaching practices.

Another head of school elaborated: *"Teachers are motivated to follow schedules, prepare lessons carefully, and report progress because they know that monitoring is ongoing. This culture of accountability ensures that instructional objectives are met and students benefit from quality teaching."* This statement emphasises that accountability is reinforced not only through observation but also by fostering a professional culture where teachers understand the expectations and consequences of their instructional practices. Consistent monitoring helps teachers internalise responsibility for delivering effective lessons and achieving student learning outcomes.

The findings are consistent with prior research emphasising the importance of accountability in instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (2023) argue that monitoring and supervision are central to establishing teacher accountability, which in turn improves instructional quality and student achievement. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2020) highlight that effective school leadership fosters professional responsibility among teachers through structured supervision, feedback, and performance expectations. These findings also concur with Bush (2020), who asserts that instructional leadership should balance support and oversight, promoting accountability without creating a punitive environment. Teachers who understand that monitoring is designed to enhance professional standards and student learning are more likely to engage in reflective practices and maintain high instructional quality.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that monitoring of instructional practices plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The results show that effective teaching is closely linked to leadership supervision, consistent instructional monitoring, teacher motivation, efficient use of teaching time, thorough syllabus coverage, and accountability among teachers. Leadership monitoring improves teaching effectiveness by providing guidance, feedback, and professional support, enabling teachers to adopt learner-centered strategies and refine their instructional approaches. Consistent instructional supervision ensures that

teaching practices are systematically strengthened, gaps are addressed, and learning time is maximized, which directly contributes to better academic outcomes.

Motivating teachers has been shown to enhance their commitment, enthusiasm, and effort, leading to more effective lesson delivery and increased student engagement. Similarly, effective utilization of teaching time ensures that instructional periods are used purposefully, reducing time wastage and enhancing learning opportunities. Better syllabus coverage guarantees that all prescribed curriculum content is taught and reinforced, preparing students adequately for assessments. Promoting accountability among teachers ensures that they fulfill their professional responsibilities consistently, maintaining high instructional standards that positively influence learner achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several actionable recommendations are proposed to enhance students' academic performance through improved monitoring of instructional practices. School leaders and education authorities should strengthen leadership monitoring of instruction by conducting regular classroom observations, reviewing lesson plans, and providing constructive feedback to teachers. This will ensure that teaching practices remain effective, learner-centered, and aligned with curriculum objectives. Also, schools should implement consistent instructional supervision to identify gaps in lesson delivery, support professional growth, and promote continuous improvement in teaching practices. Supervisors should adopt a developmental approach that encourages reflective teaching and addresses challenges faced by teachers in the classroom.

Additionally, efforts should be made to motivate teachers by recognizing their achievements, providing professional development opportunities, offering incentives, and creating supportive working environments. Motivated teachers are more likely to be committed, innovative, and productive in delivering lessons that improve student learning outcomes. To maximize instructional impact, schools should ensure effective utilization of teaching time by enforcing punctuality, reducing disruptions, and monitoring adherence to scheduled lessons. Similarly, better syllabus coverage should be prioritized by reviewing schemes of work, tracking lesson progress, and ensuring that all topics are adequately taught within the academic year. Finally, promoting accountability among teachers is essential. School management should establish clear performance expectations, conduct regular performance evaluations, and provide feedback to encourage responsibility, professionalism, and commitment to students' academic success.

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