

Influence of Job Characteristics as a Motivation Strategy on the Academic Achievement of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Kisii Central Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to determine teacher motivation strategies on student academic achievement in secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub-County, Kenya. The study majored on the effects of job characteristics as a motivation strategy on the academic achievement of teachers in secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub-County of Kisii County. The study was guided by Herzberg's (1966) Two Factor Theory which divides motivation and job satisfaction into two groups of factors known as the motivation factors and hygiene factors. This theory is suitable for this study because it addresses both intrinsic and extrinsic ways of improving teacher motivation. The research methodology for this study was quantitative method combined with descriptive survey design. The study targeted all the forty-five principals of the secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub-County, BOM heads and teachers in secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub-County. The entire population was sampled using simple random sampling technique; where 16 schools out of the 48 secondary schools in the sub-county were sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select data from BOM heads of the respective schools. The research instruments used were questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaires were used on teachers and interviews on principals of various secondary schools. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequencies were used. The study established that job characteristics as a motivation strategy on the academic achievement of teachers, the study showed that principals need to create opportunities for growth, ensure there is job security and set goals and objectives. The study recommended that principals needs to communicate the school policy to the teachers to ensure clarification and presence of a common understanding by teachers. Inferential statistics showed that protecting teachers from job insecurity inconveniences and guidance and counseling has a positive effect in improving teacher motivation.

Key words: motivation, strategy, achievement, academic

Background to the Study

Motivation is the power that triggers the action that follows (Schunk &Zimmerman, 2012). The term motivation derives from the Latin word movers, "to move". It is virtually impossible to determine a persons' motivation until that person behaves or literally moves (Mifflin, 1995).

Many countries around the world have been boosting teacher motivation in order to improve performance and productivity within their professions. A good example is France where teachers are well motivated and this reflects in their good academic achievement. Basically, good performance is realized if there is good co-ordination, effective communication and generally improved and sustained teacher motivation (Kukla-acevedo, 2009).



Paul (2004) argues that there are a variety of ways used to improve teacher motivation in south Asia and Africa although each specific country has its own different way or strategy of motivation. Although this happens, he further argues that there are many cases of teachers teaching in secondary schools in low income countries who are not well motivated due to a combination of job satisfaction and low motivation. However, on few occasions when school administrators and teachers have been asked directly concerning motivation, motivation has been reported to be quite high.

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), sizeable proportions of teachers have low levels of job satisfaction and are poorly motivated. Many tens of millions of children are, therefore being not taught properly and are not receiving even a minimally acceptable education. The unavoidable conclusion is that most schooling systems are faced with what amounts to a teacher motivation crisis, which has far reaching implications for the Education Millennium Development goals (MDGS) for basic education and development as a whole. Motivation levels appear to be chronically low in Gambia and Zambia. Stakeholder respondents in these countries identified the same negative and positive factors but invariably reached different conclusions about the overall impact on teacher motivation. However, sizable proportions of teacher respondents indicated that teachers in their schools are increasingly de-motivated (GCE, 2005). The report by the global campaign for education also concludes that "it is evident that in the five years since the EFA goals were restated at Dakar, improving teacher motivation has still not been sufficiently prioritized as a major concern of national or international policy makers. As a result, teacher motivation and morale remain in a chronic state of decline." The main reasons for this decline are identified as large classes, erosion in the quality of teacher training, the employment of Para-teachers, other cost cutting measures such as multiple shifts, and poor pay (GCE, 2005).

In the East African region teacher motivation has been on a downward trend which has in turn led to low academic achievement in secondary schools. Due to the low motivation teachers have opted to further their studies with the hope of securing other jobs that are perceived to be better than teaching. In reference to Tanzania, numerous official documents over the last decade have increasingly drawn attention to the fragility of teacher motivation in the country. For example, the report on the education sector towards 2000 notes that "since 1962, the different schemes of service for teachers have not reflected due recognition of the heavy demands of society upon teachers nor the crucial contribution of the latter in molding the future citizens of society. This attitude has greatly discouraged academically able young men and women in enrolling in teacher training courses. Many dedicated teachers have gone to more caring employers. In similar vein, the 2007 World Bank report on recruiting and retaining teachers in sub-Saharan Africa concluded that "in the absence of incentives to perform better, many teachers are currently providing much less and lower quality education than they are capable of. The de-motivation of teachers is a major contributory factor to the abysmally poor learning and teaching achievements (World Bank, 2007).

Teachers should understand their students well by looking at their individual needs, their background, their development stages and how well to solve their problems in the best way



possible. These compounded with many other factors will motivate students and as a result good performance is realized (Keiser & Schulte, 2009).

Keiser and Schulte (2009) argue that a positive school climate increase academic performance enhances social and emotional skills and retains teachers. They continue arguing that in a system with low staff motivation, teacher turnover is high thus impacting student performance which is normally manifested in the K.C.S.E results. Teacher motivation in Kenya has been low and this is characterized by the perennial teachers' strikes that are witnessed in the country. Teachers in Kenya have constantly championed for better incentives, better pay and harmonization of salaries with their colleagues in the civil service. Teacher motivation in Kisii Central Sub- County has been low and hence the question what drives teachers to do their job well?

Statement of the Problem

Teacher motivation has not been adequately and properly handled, consequently, there is a wide range of views about teacher motivation in Africa, most of which are country specific. Paul (2004) argues that there appear to be mounting concerns that unacceptably high proportions of teachers working in school systems in many countries have a combination of low motivation and low job satisfaction, poor incentives, and inadequate controls and other behavior sanctions. Low teacher motivation is reflected in deteriorating standards of professional conduct and poor professional performance in Kisii Central Sub-County. This has to some extent affected academic achievement which is reflected in the academic performance of learners in Kisii Central Sub-County.

Literature Review

Job characteristics in the journal of organizational behavior by Pierce, Jussila and Cunnings (2009) define job characteristics as 'psychological ownership within the job design context.' Job characteristics describe how happy and satisfied an individual is with his or her job. It means the variety of tasks involved, the interest and the challenge the job generates and the clarity of the job description. There are a variety of factors such as: security of employment, opportunities for growth and setting goals that influence a person's level of job satisfaction which in turn translates to achievement.

Gosnell (2000) sees career satisfaction as the degree to which people are happy with their careers. Essien (2002) viewed it as an emotional response to a job situation and often determined by how outcome meets or exceeds expectation. Secondary school teachers are currently facing many challenges in education and in the society, which may well affect their levels of job satisfaction (Adenike 2011). This raises concern regarding the attitudes of educators towards their work and their levels of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction she stated. Kesterner as cited in Adenike (2011) posited that almost half of new staff leaves the field during the first five years of their employment. This should be of great concern to all employers because unhappy and dissatisfied employees may mean poor performance and high staff turnover. Fajan (2002) identified lack of recognition for work done well through merit or announcement in meetings, lack of material resources which make it difficult for employees to carry out duties and lack of staff development activities.



Employees need to have security of their jobs at all times. In an ILO report (2011), Dasgupta referring to an earlier ILO report from 1995, uses the following definition of employment security for wage and salaried workers as follows, "protection against unfair or unjustified dismissals." Dasgupta notes that this definition only applies to workers who are employed by "some legal entity." Dasgupta states that job security is specific for a certain job and not for a certain employer of job security. Job insecurity is one de-motivating factors in an organization and hence a firm cannot have success and develop to the desired pace and desired level until and unless job security is provided to its employees.

Job security is one of the top goals that motivate employees. School heads in Kisii Central Sub-Countyneed to communicate and clarify organization policy and discuss job security to their teachers. Teachers can help to soften the blow of getting laid off by providing counseling and assistance to laid off teachers so they can secure a new position elsewhere. By having such assistance available, the negative emotional aspect of job security is reduced. If teachers feel that the educational institution cares about their employment, they are more likely to be committed to the institution and therefore be motivated to work harder hence improve their performance (World Bank 2007).

This kind of growth is the need that is fulfilled by string personal involvement that fully utilizes one's abilities, skills and creativity. The growth to attain the highest status is the desire of any professional including teachers. Here, the responsibility of the head teacher in a school is to support the teachers to attain higher status. They should act both as stimulants to the professional growth of their teachers as well as successful executives who are similar to the role models for these teachers. Head teachers in Kisii Central Sub-County should provide all the elements of growth to the teacher such as environment, support and facilities. Moreover, all problems and issues must be solved by negotiation according to the situation, being fair with the professionals (Bubin, 2009).

Quality of leadership is a very important piece to the academic achievement of teachers in secondary schools. Gilrane, Robert &Russel (2008) states that the most important part of her job as a principal is to model, assist, motivate, empower and encourage everyone to reach their fullest potential. By working as an agent for change and using collaboration, she is able to assist teachers and create a positive school climate. Poor relationships with peers and supervisors can lead to dissatisfaction. Authoritarian principals can also lead to teacher dissatisfaction and hostility among the staff. Teacher satisfaction affected positively by achievement, recognition and autonomy. This study therefore seeks to find out possible ways of nurturing and sustaining high motivation among teachers in order to have excellent academic achievement. Principals are members of the school community who have the ability to make lasting impacts to improve staff motivation. Despite limited resources a principal can find ways to increase the staff motivation and consequently other aspects of the school. Principals should support teachers, provide opportunities for teachers to build relationship and provide teachers with autonomy.



School leaders or principals should formally assess school climate. Keiser and Schulte (2009) found that without an accurate measure, assumption can lead to an imprecise picture of school climate. Fourth-grade and fifth-grade students and their teachers were given a survey in one urban school. Students' and teachers' perception of the school climate did not match and there were statistically significant discrepancies in the urban school Keiser and Schulte (2009). While making efforts to increase staff motivation a principal needs to be aware of the teachers' perception and not just base information what he or she believes should be making a difference and an impact.

Gilrane, Robert and Russel (2008) evaluated professional development activities to report the success of a grant to teach all students to read. Teachers and principals were observed and interviewed in one school when introducing new programs and initiatives. Teachers felt it was important for principals to participate in the performance development and work alongside the teachers to implement the change. Principals also reported being more aware of the problems. In the classrooms, having more respect for the teachers and feeling like they were more a part of what was going on Gilrane, Robert, and Russel (2008). Principals may have ability to increase staff motivation by being involved in professional development and working alongside the teachers.

A strong school principal has the ability to help the school work through the fear of doing something differently and to assist them in working cooperatively to meet the new accountability standard. When standard-based reforms are accepted by the principal, teachers appear to be more willing to take the new challenges (Gilrane, Robert & Russel 2008). A principal who is able to help teachers make sense for new policies and help them meet the new requirements will help improve staff motivation.

In the survey completed by middle school students, parents and teachers who explored how the school organization plays role in producing a sense of community, involving parents in their children's education and leadership characteristic of the principal as reported by teachers, Belenardo (2001) established a strong correlation between the principal's leadership style and school community. However, political and symbolic style of leadership also had significant correlations. Principal that have ability to assign responsibilities, identify necessary organization structures, set goals and manage the School resources may have the greatest impact on creating a positive school community.

Humorin work place may impact employee satisfaction and motivation. Vecchio, Justin, and Pearce (2009) determined that the use of humor by leaders can have positive or negative effects. The effectiveness of humor is dependent upon the other leadership qualities of the leader. Gender of the leader and the subordinates also affects the effectiveness of humor in the work place. Training of leaders to understand the right use of humor in the work place may be a tool to open communication in the work place. The use of humor may open communication between leaders and followers and this can potentially increase performance hence academic achievement. Principals in school do not have access to extra money and need to rely on other means to increase staff motivation. Principals can use social and personal means to motivate teachers.



Teachers taking graduate classes and membership in professional organizations can also lead to greater satisfaction Kelly (2004). principals in Kisii Central Sub-Countymay also need to provide training to teachers to help teachers feel more confident in their ability to be meaningful contributors to the school.

Research Methodology

The target population in this study consisted of school principals, deputy principals, Board of Management heads and teachers in the schools to be sampled. Kisii Central Sub-County has a total of 48 secondary schools. The study targeted all the 48 principals, 48 BOM heads and 1200 teachers in the schools in Kisii Central Sub-County. The researcher used simple random sampling technique so that each school in the district has an equal chance of being picked for inclusion in the sample. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 16 secondary schools from the 48 in the sub-county. Thereafter, purposive sampling technique was used to select 16 head teachers and six teachers of the sampled schools. Furthermore, purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of Board of Management heads of the respective schools. The data for this study was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis.

Findings

The study had a sample size of 297 respondents. All were given the questionnaire and which they filled and the researcher picked after one week. At the end of the week only 251 respondents had filled in the questionnaire giving a response rate of 85%. The researcher made efforts to call other respondents to fill the questionnaires but was not successful. Due to the constraint of time, the researcher continued with the analysis since according to Best and Khan, (2006) a response rate of 50% is considered adequate, 60% good and above 70% very good. Therefore, in view of this, the response rate was considered very good and exceeded the threshold postulated by Best and Khan.

The findings obtained are presented in the section in table 1.

Table 1:I believe that our secondary school aims at making its teachers satisfied with their jobs.

Secondary School aims at making its teachers satisfied with their jobs					
					Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	111	44.2	44.2	44.2
	Disagree	88	35.1	35.1	79.3
	Undecided	39	15.5	15.5	94.8
	Agree	13	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	251	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher, (2020)



From the findings above, 79.3% of the respondents disagreed (44.2% strongly disagree, 35.1% agree) that their respective secondary school aimed at making its teachers satisfied with their jobs. 15.5% of the respondents were undecided on whether their secondary school aimed at making its teachers satisfied with their jobs. Only 5.2% of the respondents agreed that their school aimed at making teachers satisfied with their jobs. From the findings above, most of the teachers in Kisii sub-county feel that their respective school does not play a role in ensuring their satisfaction. This dissatisfaction may lead to bad attitude towards the job and possibly leaving teaching as result of frustration. It is important to ensure that teachers are satisfied by recognizing teachers for a job well done and creating staff development activities that make them feel appreciated as being part of the school community.

The respondents were further asked to respond on the statement that: "My employer cares about my job and ensures there is job security to protect me from unfair and unjustified outcomes". Responses on this are shown in table 2.

Table 2: My employer cares about my job and ensures there is job security to protect me from unfair and unjustified outcomes

The research sought data on the above statement. The findings are shown in the table below.

My em	My employer cares about my job				
					Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	52	20.7	20.7	20.7
	Disagree	124	49.4	49.4	70.1
	Undecided	39	15.5	15.5	85.7
	Agree	36	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	251	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher, 2020

From the table above, 70.1% of the respondents disagreed (20.7% strongly disagreed, 49.4% disagreed) that their employer cares about their job and ensures there is job security to protect them from unfair outcomes. 14.3% of the respondents agreed that their employer cares about their job and ensures there is job security to protect them from unfair outcomes. 15.5% of the respondents were undecided on whether their employer cares about their job and ensures there is job security to protect them from unfair outcomes. Majority of the respondents disagreed that their employer cares about their job and ensures there is job security to protect them from unfair outcomes. According to World Bank (2007), if teachers feel that the education institution cares about their employment, they are more likely to be committed to the institution and therefore be motivated to work harder hence improve their performance. From the findings above, the teachers in Kisii central sub-county feel that their respective education institutions do not care about their jobs. Teachers in Kisii central sub-county need



to be assured of their job security so that the schools within the sub-county can be achieve the success and develop to their desired place.

Respondents were also responded to the statement "Our principal has put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth" as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Our principal has put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth

Principal has put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth

					Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	101	40.2	40.2	40.2
	Disagree	101	40.2	40.2	80.5
	Undecided	49	19.5	19.5	100.0
	Total	251	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher, 2020

From the findings above, 80.5% of the respondents disagreed (40.5% strongly disagreed 40.5% disagreed) that their respective principals have put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth. 19.5% of the respondents were undecided on whether their respective principals have put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth. None of the respondents agreed that their respective principals have put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth. Majority of the respondents disagreed that that their respective principals have put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth. According to Bubin (2009), the growth to attain the highest status is the desire of any professional including teachers; the responsibility of the headteacher in a school is to support the teachers to attain higher success. The findings obtained showed that principals are not instrumental in providing opportunities for growth. It's important for principals to lead by example by being guides in showing their subordinates how to incline the career growth ladder. This will motivate teachers to strive higher in the self-development hence benefitting their students and eventually increasing academic performance.

Furthermore, respondents commended on the statement that: "Our education institution has set clear, measurable and time specific goals and objectives alongside an action plan for achieving them." Their responses are shown in table 4.



Table 4: Our education institution has set clear, measurable and time specific goals and objectives alongside an action plan for achieving them

Our School has set clear goals and objectives with their action plans

					Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Disagree	24	9.6	9.6	9.6
	Undecided	36	14.3	14.3	23.9
	Agree	152	60.6	60.6	84.5
	Strongly Agree	39	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	251	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher, 2020

From the findings above, 76.1% of the respondents agreed (15.5% strongly agreed, 60.6% agreed) that their schools set clear goals and objectives alongside action plans for achieving them. 14.3% of the respondents were undecided on whether their schools set clear goals and objectives alongside action plans for achieving them. 9.6% of the respondents disagreed that their schools set clear goals and objectives alongside action plans for achieving them. Majority of the respondents agreed that their schools set clear goals and objectives alongside action plans for achieving them. (Devra, 2011) asserted that giving clear goals, setting priorities and communicating these to the teachers or employees help them to work properly and increase productivity and performance. From the findings above, schools in Kisii subcounty have implemented the goal setting and action planning strategy. This is expected to increase motivation among the teachers since they aware of their expectations and how to achieve the desired success.

Also, respondents responded to the statement that "There is guidance and counseling for teachers to address issues revolving around job security" as shown in table 5.

Table 5: There is guidance and counseling for teachers to address issues revolving around job security

R01 Gu	R01 Guidance and Counseling to deal with issues of job security						
					Cumulative		
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent		
Valid	Strongly Disagree	100	39.8	39.8	39.8		
	Disagree	151	60.2	60.2	100.0		
	Total	251	100.0	100.0			

Source: The researcher, 2020

From the findings above, all the respondents disagreed (39.8% strongly disagreed, 60.2% agreed) that there is guidance and counseling for teachers to address issues revolving around job security. Guidance and counseling can be used as both a preventive and curative measure to counter job insecurity. At times teachers can be laid off due to a number of issues. For



teachers who have been laid off guidance and counseling aim at helping them accept their current situation and seek new opportunities elsewhere. Principals should involve teachers in the organization policy and discuss it with their teachers to avoid unnecessary issues that may arise that would have otherwise been negotiated and resolved.

Inferential statistics

The research conducted further quantitative analysis on the data obtained. In this section, correlation and linear regression techniques were used. The findings obtained are detailed in the section below.

*Table 6: Correlation*The findings obtained are presented in the table below.

Correlations						
				R01		R01
		R01		Headteach	R01 Our	Guidance
		Schools		er has put	School has	and
		aims at			set clear	
		making its	•	structures	_	_
		teachers	employer		objectives	
		satisfied	cares		with their	
			about my		action	job
DO1 C-11:	D	jobs	job	growth .173**	plans .297**	security
R01 Schools aims at making its	Correlation	1	368**	.173	.297	068
teachers satisfied			.000	.006	.000	.284
with their jobs	N	251	251	251	251	251
R01 My employer	- 1	368**	1	153*	529**	.204**
cares about my job		306	1	133	329	.204
cares about my job	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.016	.000	.001
	N	251	251	251	251	251
R01 Headteacher		.173**	153*	1	.097	073
has put in place		.173	.133	1	.071	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.016		.124	.247
provide	N	251	251	251	251	251
opportunities for	1	201	201	201	201	201
growth						
R01 Our School	Pearson	.297**	529**	.097	1	.172**
has set clear goals						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.124		.006
with their action	N	251	251	251	251	251
plans	D	0.00	20.4**	072	170**	1
R01 Guidance and		068	.204**	073	.172**	1
Counseling to deal with issues of	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.284	.001	.247	.006	
job security	N	251	251	251	251	251
			_	<i>43</i> 1	<i>43</i> 1	231
**. Correlation is si	-					

^{*.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: The researcher, 2020



The following correlations had a significance at the 0.01 level meaning there is at least a 99% chance of increasing teacher motivation if the two variables were implemented concurrently. They are arranged in descending order based on their highest determinants of increasing teacher motivation:

- ✓ Employers caring about the jobs of teachers by ensuring there is job security to protect them from unfair and unjustified outcomes and schools setting clear, measurable and time specific goals and objectives alongside an action plan of achieving them. The coefficient was -.529**.
- ✓ Employers caring about the jobs of teachers by ensuring there is job security to protect them from unfair and unjustified outcomes and schools aiming to ensure that their teachers are satisfied with their jobs. The coefficient was -.368**.
- ✓ Putting in place guidance & counseling to deal with job security issues and Employers caring about the jobs of teachers by ensuring there is job security to protect them from unfair and unjustified outcomes. The coefficient was .204**.
- ✓ Headteachers putting in place structures to provide opportunities for growth and schools aiming to ensure their teachers are satisfied with their jobs. The coefficient was -.173**.
- ✓ Putting in place guidance & counseling to deal with job security issues and schools setting clear, measurable and time specific goals and objectives alongside an action plan of achieving them. The coefficient was .172**.

The following correlation had a significance at the 0.05 level meaning there is at least a 95% chance of increasing teacher motivation if the two variables were implemented concurrently:

✓ Principals creating structures to provide opportunities for growth and Employers caring about the jobs of teachers by ensuring there is job security to protect them from unfair and unjustified outcomes. The coefficient was -.153*.



Table 7: Linear Regression (Coefficient determination)

The findings obtained are shown in the table below.

dized ients t 12.781 5.906	Sig000 .000
t 12.781 5.906	.000
12.781 5.906	.000
5.906	
2.350	.020
.580	.562
-2.131	.034
-2.456	.015

Source: The researcher, 2020

From the findings above, apart from headteachers put in place structures to provide opportunities for growth, all other variables were significant predictors of improved teacher motivation and increased academic achievement. They had a significance level less than 0.05 meaning there a 95% confidence level that these variables were significant predictors of increasing teachers' motivation thus improving academic achievement and performance. The constant variable was also a significant predictor too.

Conclusion

On the effect of job characteristics as a motivation strategy on the academic achievement of teachers, the study showed that principals need to create opportunities for growth, ensure there is job security and set goals and objectives. Principals need to communicate the school policy to the teachers to ensure clarification and presence of a common understanding by teachers. Inferential statistics showed that protecting teachers from job insecurity inconveniences and guidance and counseling has a positive effect in improving teacher motivation.



On the influence of quality leadership as a motivation strategy on the academic achievement of teachers, the study noted there is no collaboration between the principal and the teachers in an effort to increase academic performance thus reducing teachers' motivation. Principals are not aware of the teachers' thoughts and concerns about how a conducive school climate should be. There are so many assumptions being made. Though the leadership style of the school may have a positive influence in the school community, principals are not involved in the implementation of new school programs and activities.

Recommendations for further practice

- 1. Government should ensure that opportunities for growth are available for all teachers.
- 2. Goals and objectives setting should be done as a collective effort by the principals and teachers to ensure that both parties are aware of the roles, they need to play
- 3. The government should ensure that it assures its employees' job security and their satisfaction in terms of employment.
- 4. Principals should act as role models to the teachers and ensure that they is a conducive working environment.
- 5. There should be healthy communication between teachers and their supervisors in order to increase individual support.

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