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Original Article

Secondary School Quality Assurance Strategies Used in Improving Students' Academic Achievements in Moshi Municipality

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*Quality Assurance,
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School Improvement,
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This study aimed to assess secondary school quality assurance strategies used in improving students' academic achievements in Moshi municipality. The study used Scientific Management theory, which was developed by Fredrick Taylor (1911). The study mainly focused on four research questions, which sought information on quality assurance strategies used in improving students' academic performance in secondary schools. The study used a stratified and simple random sampling technique to get the respondents to participate in the study. The target population comprised secondary school students, secondary school teachers, heads of schools and secondary school quality assurance. In order to get data from the respondents, the researcher used questionnaires for secondary school students, questionnaires for secondary school teachers' interview guides for secondary school quality assurers and interview guides for Heads of schools. Quantitative data was analysed in the form of frequencies and percentages and presented in tables with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Qualitative data was analysed through building themes, narration and direct quotations from respondents. Research findings revealed that school quality assurance was an important service in all schools. Based on the findings, there were several strategies used by secondary school quality assurers in Moshi Municipality, such as observation, provision of feedback, arranging a school visit, advisory role as well and professional training. Also, the role played by school quality assurance in ensuring the academic achievement of students in secondary schools around Moshi Municipality was through the proper following of their quality assurance strategies. Again, the findings revealed that secondary school quality assurances had poor working conditions since they were suffering from a lack of enough capital to run quality assurance activities in schools and trained quality assurance personnel were few compared to the demand. These situations hinder them from performing their duty effectively and efficiently. Another challenge reported by quality assurers was poor cooperation among heads of schools who tend to see quality assurers as their enemies, and in such cases, quality assurers seem to lack accountability, which is a powerful force for students'

academic improvement. The study also suggested that the budget for school quality assurance be increased to cover the cost of visiting more schools timely, and including workshops or training for teachers to improve their performance. The number of school quality assurances should also increase so as to avoid much burden on quality assurers, which will make them perform their work effectively and efficiently.

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INTRODUCTION

Many countries throughout the world have developed some means of monitoring the quality and standards of their education systems. In most cases, the monitoring process involves supervision by quality assurance of educational institutions such as schools, and other aspects of the education systems, with the aim of improving standards and quality of education, and it should be an integral part of a school improvement program. In many countries where the quality assurance system of supervision of schools is conducted, the responsibility for quality assurance lies with the quality assurance board. (Mwabogela, 2017)

School quality assurance practices, especially in Third World countries, such as Tanzania, are associated with numerous problems, which, as a result, education standards and quality seem to decline as we go on. Schools have to make their own quality assurance standards, like monitoring the teaching in classrooms, collecting lesson plans before the timetable starts and inspecting the

students' exercise books weekly, a practice which is partially done (Mwabogela, 2017)

School quality assurance is commonly considered an essential instrument for quality education that will help the nation to improve the standard and quality of education so that its graduates can compete in the ever-changing world economy. It is a form of evaluation, which involves the measurement, testing and evaluation of educational activities in school systems for the purpose of improving the standards and quality of education programs offered (Ololube, 2014). Due to the demand to monitor and supervise the quality of education delivered to the citizens and raise the general standards in education, quality assurance has been embraced as a method that helps to improve quality and shape teachers' professionalism since they are key implementers of education in the classrooms. (Van hoof & Van Petegem, 2007; Wilcox, 2000; Lingard & Varjo, 2009). Governments need to be answerable for the appropriateness of the educational aims. Therefore, they seek to promote quality assurance (Davis & White, 2001). This practice is aimed at making

teachers more committed towards the task of educating. In recent years, there has been a rapid growth of enrolment in secondary schools versus the infrastructure and teaching learning resources, and therefore, schools are overwhelmed. Therefore, there is a strong need to embrace education monitoring agents because the bigger the number of students, the higher the care that is needed. School quality assurance is a fundamental agent in the whole process of educational change, reform and development. It is responsible for monitoring, promoting, and supervising the provision of education to the students, as well as teachers' performance in the school setting. It has been revealed by different researchers, such as Van Nuland & Khandelwal (2006), who noted that quality assurance has a great impact both inside and outside the school, and when it is credible, ethical and has at its heart the care and well-being of children.

Like in many countries, education in Tanzania is considered a key to life as well as a gateway for social and economic development. The quality assurance is carried out by the School Quality Assurance Department, and the key purpose of school quality assurance is to inform the government about the standards and quality of education provided to the children so that corrective measures may be taken where things seem to go wrong. In Tanzania, the purpose of quality assurance is to ensure that the school complies with the provisions of the Education Act and to ascertain whether that school is being properly and efficiently managed, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2017).

According to The Education Act No. 25 of 1978, School quality assurance is conducted for the following six major reasons; to have an overview of the quality of education, based on agreed all-round performance indicators of the performance of an educational institution and to report to the educational institutions to enable them to plan improvement strategies. To supervise the

implementation of the school curriculum. To help diagnose the problems and shortcomings in the implementation of the curriculum. To identify some of the discipline problems encountered in schools. To monitor and improve teaching and learning in schools. To provide guidance to schools on how they can improve.

For that matter, it is apparent that the school quality assurance department is responsible for maintaining high standards of school performance and teachers' conduct. Furthermore, they are responsible for assessing the quality and performance of the educational institutions, services, programs, as well as the schools' projects. One strategy for monitoring teaching and learning in schools and for enhancing quality and raising standards, which has received a great deal of attention over the years in the world, is supervision by inspection (UNESCO, 2000).

UNESCO (2002) refers to quality Education as an improvement of all aspects of learning and ensuring excellence so that recognisable and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all learners, especially literacy, numeracy and essential life skills such as appreciating and being able to accommodate others, that are necessary for responsible living. In addition, UNESCO working paper (2000) also defines quality education as learning which strengthens the capacity of all children to act progressively on their own through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes. Education, among other things, is recognised for its positive contribution to economic, social and physical outcomes. These, therefore, include cognitive development, which is a primary objective of education and the education's ability to promote creative and emotional development, peace, citizenship, security, higher wages, and better health and pass cultural values down to future generations.

There is a need for research to see whether the Tanzanian school quality assurance is doing what is intended, because secondary school performance has been deteriorating every year. Since 1978, the

government instituted a policy in section 4 (3.9) of the Education Act No. 25 of 1978 with the objective of enhancing equitable access to quality education (MoEC, 1978). However, the official statistics revealed that academic performance in primary and secondary schools is still a problem. In fact, a large number of students fail to pass the examinations. This has been the case for many years, but the problem has become more critical and debated over recent years.

A poor-performing student in secondary school in such vital subjects reveals a loss for the individuals as well as for the society. It affects the possibility for students to move on to higher education. It also hinders the ability of the Government to reach strategic development goals such as the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of 2015 to 2025, not just for the education sector, but for the society and the country at large (NAOT, 2008). Many issues have an influence on the quality and the progress of schools and students' performance. The students' social and economic background, as well as their parents' education and engagement, are examples of factors influencing the students' performance. However, school quality assurance seems to be the most critical factor that can enhance positive academic achievement in schools (MoEC, 2005).

The government is able to influence the curriculum, competence of teachers, training materials and pedagogical practices. School quality assurance is at the same time one important tool for the government with the mission to notice and ensure the quality and good performance in the schools, as was emphasised in the Education and Training Policy 1995 (MoEC, 2005). Also, the quality assurance team has recently reformed from the school quality assurance department to Quality Assurers, where the responsibilities are almost the same. However, earlier studies show that there are indications that the school quality assurance is not as efficient and effective as it is intended. Measures have also been taken to improve the situation. This indicates that the school quality assurance is not efficient and

effective in addressing its mission to enhance good quality in education, for instance, it reaches a time when some schools are not visited by quality assurers for a very long time. Thus, the study conducted research on the contribution of secondary school quality assurance towards improving the academic performance of students in Moshi Municipality.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the government of Tanzania's effort to institute a quality assurance department for schools so as to supervise and guide the teaching and learning process, still, secondary school academic performance seems to be average which in some schools in Moshi Municipal remains not as good as per the municipal expectations of removing division four and zero. There's a concern that the education process in schools is not monitored the way it ought to be, as justified by the studies done by Ololube (2014), Wanga (2014), Bowen (2011), Isolo (2010) and Kamuyu (2016). From the reviewed studies, the aspects of secondary school quality assurance strategies used by school quality assurance have not been adequately addressed. Thus, this study examined the secondary school quality assurance strategies used by schools to ascertain whether they contribute towards students' academic achievement in Moshi Municipal.

The Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions;

What strategies do secondary school quality assurers use in improving students' academic performance in secondary schools in Moshi Municipal?

What are the roles of quality assurers in improving students' academic performance in secondary schools in Moshi Municipal?

What challenges do the school quality assurers face when dealing with the inspection of secondary schools in Moshi Municipal?

How do secondary school quality assurance strategies influence students' academic achievement in Moshi Municipal?

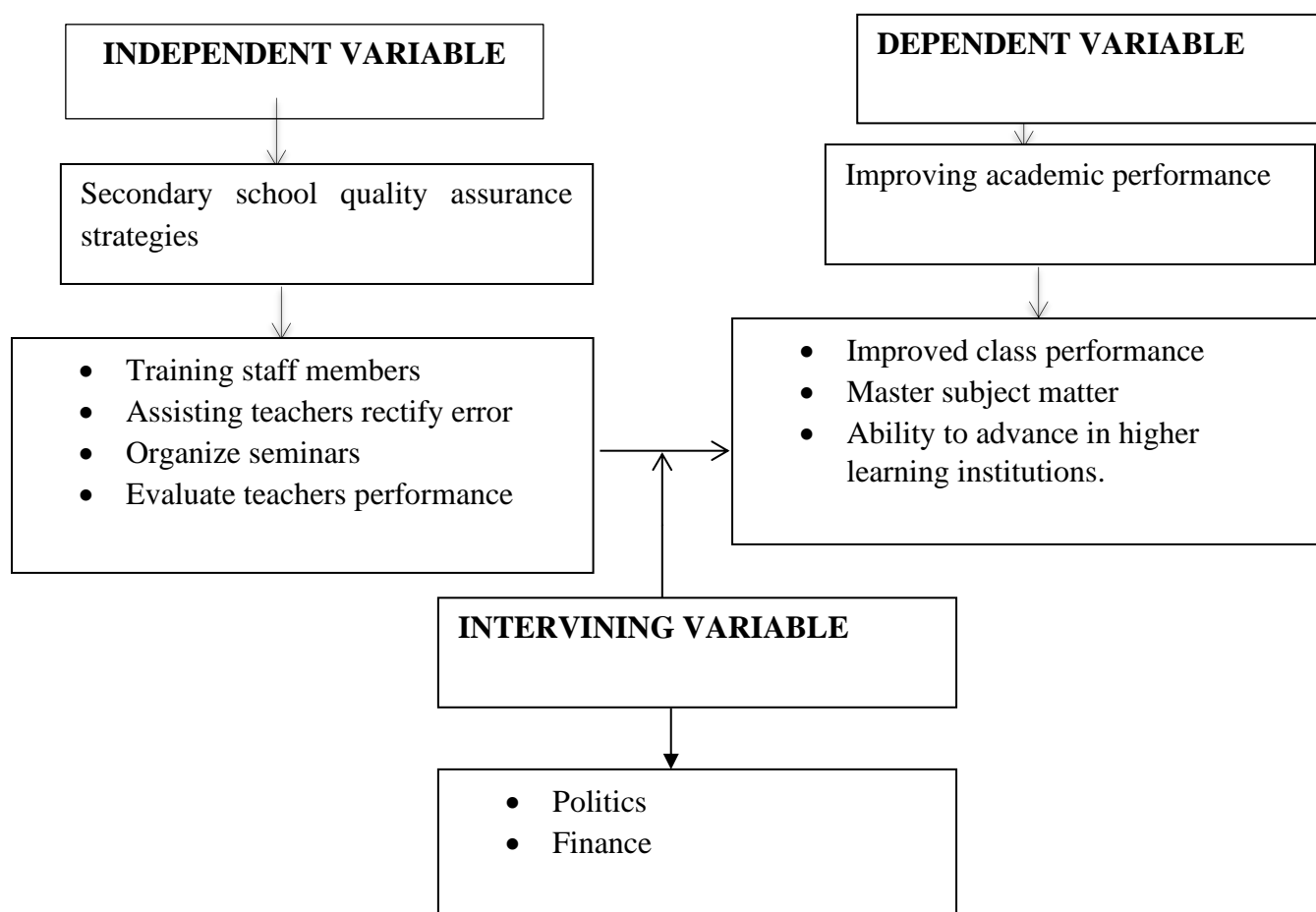
Theoretical Framework

This study used the Scientific Management theory, which was developed by Fredrick Taylor (1911), an

American Engineer, in his book “The Principles of Scientific Management”. It is the theory of management that analyses and synthesises workflow processes to improve labour productivity.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structure which the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied (Osanloo & Grant, 2016).



REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

The study reviewed two theories, which are human relation theory and critical theory.

Review of Empirical Literature

Strategies Secondary School Quality Assurers Use in Improving Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools.

Some studies have been conducted in relation to school quality assurance, For example, in Scotland,

as explained by McGlynn and Stalker (2017), Her Majesty's quality assurance was charged with the following major inspectorate responsibilities: To undertake a program of quality assurance of individual schools and colleges and of key aspects of education, to monitor arrangements for quality assurance in education through the quality assurance's Audit Unit, to provide sincere and objective advice through the quality assures Chief quality assures of Schools to the Secretary of State; and to ensure that educational initiatives are implemented effectively.

Despite the fact that the study concentrated on the relationship between quality insurance and improvement of results, the study did not use a design which could support getting relevant information. For example, it only used qualitative data, but the present study used both qualitative and quantitative designs to find out the strategies to be used by school quality assurance to improve students' academic performance.

Again, McGlynn and Stalker (2018) conducted a study on the process of school quality assurance in Scotland, citing the following three reasons for conducting school quality assurance. These are to: report on the effectiveness of education in schools and other educational institutions and to recommend action for improvement; evaluate the arrangements for assuring quality in schools; and provide frank and objective advice to the higher education authorities and to ensure that educational initiatives are implemented effectively.

The study focused only on the process without providing feedback on the strategies to be employed in improving students' academic performance in secondary schools, while this study covers the missing part.

Furthermore, Wilcox and Gray (2014) conducted a study that explored the reactions of primary teachers, head teachers, and quality assurers to school quality assurance in Britain. The study reported that both quality assurance and the school

teaching staff agreed that quality assurance had been valuable in reviewing the position of the school and indicating its way forward. However, the study was based on primary school teachers and quality assurance and not secondary school teachers. Also, the study focused on the reaction of primary teachers and quality assurance rather than strategies to be employed. For such a case, this study addressed the strategies to be employed by school quality assurers in secondary schools in Moshi Municipality.

Joakimu (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between quality assurance and quality education in Mozambique. The study used 40 respondents, including secondary school teachers and parents. The study found that secondary school quality assurance has a great role to play in order to improve students' academic performance, and that quality of teaching can be achieved when people dedicate time.

Although the study came out with a good result, the study did not concentrate on asking the heads of schools, who are also part of the teaching and learning process. Hence, the current study worked to find out the relationship between secondary school inspectors and the improvement of students' academic performance.

Roles of Secondary School Quality Assurers in Improving Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

Halsen (2017) conducted a study on the attractiveness of humanising morals and quality of education presentation, and how it should be a vital part of a school improvement program. The rationale for this improvement is threefold. The universal recognition of the right of every child in every classroom, in every school to receive a high-quality education appropriate to their needs and aptitudes; the effectiveness of the education system is a key influence on the economic well-being of every nation; and the recognition of the need to equip students with the kind of education that will

enable them to contribute to increasingly complex and fast-changing society.

Despite the fact that the secondary school inspectors have roles to play, the study did not show how applicable such roles were to improve academic performance, especially in secondary schools. The current study worked to show the role of secondary school inspectors and academic achievement.

Another study done in the UK focused its attention on studying the science of the job and how quality assurance could favour the environment of work (Hoyle & Wallace, 2015). The study revealed that the reason for the expansion of leadership and management in Her Majesty's Inspection (HMI) was the survey reports, which acted as a result of secondary school quality assurance done properly and that quality assurance evaluation was meant to improve performance. Although the study worked on quality assurance roles, the study did not manage to draw the best recommendations with regard to the findings set. The current study worked to cover that gap by showing the roles and strategies, as well as recommendations to different education stakeholders.

More recently, the emphasis has been placed on the studies as indicated below, where quality assurance and reports were made on the role of school leadership and management (Hoyle & Wallace, 2015; Ehren & Visscher, 2018). School quality assurance is a key to any school's academic development as far as students' academic achievement is concerned. The studies emphasised the value of secondary school teachers to allow the role of school inspectors to make use of quality insuring of schools for the purpose of improving academic performance. The critic of this is that it only managed to show the roles of school quality assurers but did not address the gap well, especially showing the ways school quality assurers are supposed to apply such roles in order to assist students in improving performance. The current study addressed the roles and showed how such

roles, when properly used, can improve academic performance.

Challenges Secondary School Quality Assurers Encounter During School Quality Assurance in Improving Students' Academic Achievement.

Various scholars such as Wanga (2014), Bowen (2011), Isolo (2010), Kamuyu (2016), Nakitare (2018) and Ndegwa (2001) have highlighted the constraints encountered towards school quality assurance in various countries. Such challenges include those associated with the following major areas: professionalism, attitudes and commitment, feedback and follow-up, collaboration, pre-service and in-service training, quality assures autonomy, means of transport, planning inspection, quality insurance-university Partnerships, education system, cost of inspection, quality assures recruitment, selection, and deployment, adequacy of quality assurance resourcing, quality assurance reports, post-quality assurance evaluation, quality assures titles. Despite the fact that secondary school quality assurers was observed to have challenges, the reviewed study did not show the best ways to overcome the challenges. The current study worked on addressing the challenges and showing ways to overcome those challenges.

Kalinga (2016) conducted a study on obstacles that school quality assurance faces in implementing quality in secondary schools in the Kigoma region. The study used a mixed research approach, but the way the data was analysed did not show how mixed the data were. The current study covered the gap by using a mixed research approach, and both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed accordingly to produce good results.

Summary of the Reviewed Studies and Research Gap

The researcher reviewed different empirical studies related to secondary school quality assurance strategies used in improving students' academic achievements. The reviewed studies mainly talked of the role of secondary school quality assurance

and the challenges facing secondary schools' quality assurance when they operate without having trained people to conduct quality assurance. A lot has been covered, although less is covered on what strategies secondary school quality assurance should use to improve students' academic performance. Therefore, the current study worked to find out secondary school quality assurance strategies used in improving students' academic achievement in Moshi Municipality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel design under the Mixed Method Approach.

Target Population

In this study, the target population involved was 25 secondary schools found in Moshi Municipality, 10

secondary school quality assurers, 66 secondary school teachers and 1000 secondary school students found in Moshi Municipality.

Sample Size

Kothari (2004) discusses the concept of sample size in research and suggests that when deciding on a sample percentage (the proportion of the population to include in the sample), the size should be determined logically based on the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. For large populations, selecting 10% to 30% of the population as a sample is often considered adequate. Therefore, the researcher used 10% of the targeted population to get the sample size.

Sampling Procedures

Probability and non-probability sampling procedures were employed.

Table Showing Sampling Matrix. Where f = frequency

Target population	Population	Desired Sample f	%	Sampling technique
Students	1000	300	30	Stratified random sampling
Teachers	66	20	30	Stratified random sampling
Heads of schools	25	12	-	No sampling technique (direct involvement)
Schools quality assurers	10	02		Stratified random sampling
Total	1101	334		

Data Collection Instruments

This study used questionnaires for students and teachers and interview guides for heads of schools and quality assurance.

Validity of the Instruments.

Validity of instruments refers to the quality of data-gathering instruments or procedures, which measure what is supposed to be measured (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the above-mentioned instruments of data collection were subjected to

content analysis. The administration of instruments was done by the researcher in person so as to be able to make elaborations and clarifications whenever needed in case of ambiguities or misinterpretation. Moreover, several drafts of instruments were vetted by colleagues who helped to rectify inconsistencies and ambiguities. A trial out of the instruments was done in one secondary school in Moshi Municipal so as to test the validity of the instruments. On top of that, instruments were finally examined carefully researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

Since the study design used a Convergent parallel methods design, the researcher gathered both qualitative and quantitative data and analysed the dataset separately.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science version 21. All descriptive information was offered in the form of frequencies, means, and percentages and presented in tables.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Information from qualitative instruments was summarised and analysed in each theme, and then relevant information was extracted, interpreted and discussed.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter presents data and research findings based on themes arising from the research questions

of the study. The Analysed data are presented in the form of tables and figures.

Strategies Secondary School Quality Assurers Use in Improving Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Moshi Municipality.

Students were provided with questionnaires on a Likert scale to indicate the level of agreement, disagreement or Undecided on the strategies secondary school quality assures use in improving academic achievement in secondary schools in Moshi Municipality. This research question was also asked of teachers through questionnaires and heads of secondary schools through interview guides. The findings from students are indicated in the table below;

Students' Responses on Strategies Used by Secondary School Quality Assurers in Improving Academic Achievement (n=300)

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Checking the availability of teaching and learning resources	-	-	-	-	10	3.3	50	16.7	240	80.0
Checking whether learning and teaching is taking place	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	26.7	220	73.3
Giving guidelines to be used in teaching and learning	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	16.7	250	83.3
Looking at the teaching and learning environment	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	13.3	260	86.7
Look at extracurricular activities.	-	-	-	-	10	3.3	50	16.7	240	80
Advising students on how to improve their performance	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	13.3	260	86.7
Encourage teachers to motivate the best-performing students.	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	10	270	90
Giving chance to students to identify challenges affecting their academic achievement	-	-	-	-	20	6.6	40	13.3	240	80

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Advising students on moral issues	-	-	10	3.3	-	-	70	23.3	220	73.3
Work on students' suggestions and challenges.	-	-	-	-	-	-	110	36.7	190	63.

The findings in the table, as shown, indicate that 96.7% of students agreed that checking the availability of teaching and learning resources is among the strategies secondary school quality assurers use in improving the academic achievement of students in secondary schools of Moshi Municipal.

Also, 100% of secondary school students agreed that checking whether learning and teaching are taking place is among the strategies school quality assures use to improve students' academic performance. On the other side, 100% of secondary school students agreed that giving guidelines to be used in teaching and learning is the strategy used by school quality assurers in secondary schools to improve academic achievement.

Again 100% of secondary school students in Moshi Municipality agreed that looking at the teaching and learning environment is one of the strategies school quality assurers can use to ensure academic achievement of the students. This implies that an environment where teaching and learning take place is important in ensuring students' academic achievement in Moshi Municipality.

Also, 96.7% agreed that looking at extracurricular activities is among the strategies that school quality assurers use to ensure academic achievement in secondary schools. This implies that secondary school quality assurers had a tendency to inspect extracurricular activities on whether they are done in the proposed time or not, so as to ensure academic achievement around secondary schools in Moshi Municipality.

Also, 100% of the secondary school students agreed that advising students on how to improve their performance is another strategy used by secondary school quality assurers in Moshi Municipality to ensure the academic achievement of the students. This implies that students' academic performance can be improved through a quality assurance strategy of advising students on how they can improve their academic achievement.

Again, another 100% of students agreed that encouraging teachers to motivate best-performing students is among the strategies used by school quality assurance to ensure the academic achievement of secondary school students. This implies that during quality assurance, teachers are encouraged and advised to motivate students who perform well in their examinations so as to ensure academic achievement for students around schools in Moshi Municipality.

Furthermore, 93% of secondary school students agreed that giving chance to students to identify challenges affecting their academic achievement is among the strategies to enhance academic achievement in secondary schools in Moshi Municipality. This implies that quality assurers in secondary schools normally give chance to students during their quality assurance to identify challenges facing their academic struggle, which then, quality assurers can advise on what to do so as to ensure students' academic achievement in secondary schools of Moshi Municipality.

Students who agreed that advising students on moral issues is one of the strategies used by secondary school quality assurers in improving

academic achievement were 96.6%. Again, 100% of secondary school students agree that working on students' suggestions and challenges is among the strategies used by secondary school quality assurers in ensuring academic achievement in Moshi Municipality. This implies that quality assurers usually strives to solve the challenges of the students after their quality assurance in schools for the academic improvement of the students.

Generally, the findings from students revealed that strategies used by secondary school quality assurers such as checking whether teaching and learning are

taking place, giving guidelines to be used in teaching and learning, observing on teaching and learning environment, checking on extracurricular activities advising students on moral issues and working on student's suggestions when properly considered by quality assurers during quality assurance can improve the academic achievement of the secondary school students in Moshi Municipality.

The same question was asked to teachers through a questionnaire, and the responses were as follows;

Teachers' Responses on Strategies Used by School Quality Assurers in Improving Academic Achievement in Secondary School in Moshi Municipality. (n=20)

Responses	No. of respondents F	%
Providing professional support	14	80
Classroom observation	18	90
Advising after inspection	18	90
Providing inspection feedback	17	80
Arranging date and time for an inspection visit	13	65

From the table, responses from teachers on strategies used by secondary school quality assurers, the following strategies were mentioned by teachers including; providing professional support as indicated by 80% of the respondents mentioned it as a strategy used by school quality assurers in secondary schools in Moshi Municipal to improve academic achievement of the students, while 90% of teachers mentioned classroom observation as a strategy. Again, advising after quality checking was another strategy mentioned by 18 teachers, which is 90%. Providing feedback was also mentioned by 17 teachers, which is 80% of teachers who responded to the item, as well as 13 teachers which is 65%, mentioned arranging dates and times for school checking as the strategy used by secondary school quality assurers in improving academic achievement in secondary schools found in Moshi Municipality.

From the interview guide used to secondary school quality assurers on strategies used in improving academic achievement in Moshi Municipality, the first secondary school quality assurer responded that:

"As we want to conduct quality assurance, we normally focus on the first strategy, which is arranging a visit, where the timetable is given to heads of schools, then on the day for the visit, we normally go to school, observing classroom teaching, school environment, as well as students activities. From there, we normally ask for time to talk to teachers and for advice on what they should improve or talk about any weakness observed during quality control."

Another school quality assurer also responded to the strategies that they use to improve the academic achievement of the secondary school, in which he responded that:

“As quality control, we have our guidelines and also strategies to ensure the performance of any school we are supervising. Actually, one of our strategies is to provide feedback after the quality assurance process, where the head of school and teachers are given results. Since the quality assurer will be passing through classrooms to observe teaching and learning activities, he or she will get to know what is going on. Also, teachers are advised after inspection, depending on what has been observed and where necessary. When it happens, teachers have no idea about a certain issue, an inspector has to arrange a day and give them training, for example, when there is anything new with the curriculum. Also, where necessary, warning letters can be provided to teachers as the quality assurers realise that every time the same teacher is found with either indiscipline cases or not fulfilling his or her duties well.”

Generally, the findings revealed that secondary school quality assurers had their strategies to follow during quality assurance in school, such as

arranging a visit, classroom observation, observing teaching and learning environment, extracurricular activities, professional training for teachers, advising roles and feedback. When all these strategies are followed by school quality assurers, the academic achievement of students in Moshi Municipality will be highly improved.

Roles of Secondary School Quality Assurers in Improving Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Moshi Municipal

This item is intended to find out the roles of secondary school quality assurers in improving students' academic achievement in secondary schools of Moshi Municipality. Through a questionnaire with Likert scale items, teachers were asked to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement on the roles of school quality assurers in improving the academic achievement of the students. Also, heads of schools were asked the same question through the interview guide. The responses from teachers on the Roles of secondary school quality assurers in improving the academic achievement of secondary school students in Moshi Municipality were as follows;

Summary of Teachers' Responses on Roles of Secondary School Quality Assurers in Improving Academic Achievement (n=20) where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, U =Undecided, A = Agree and SA = Strongly Agree.

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Providing professional support to teachers	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	70	6	30
Classroom observation	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	40	8	60
Check on teaching and learning materials.	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	25	15	75
Providing feedback after a visit	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	20	16	80
Advising on proper methods of teaching and learning		-	-	-	-	-	9	45	11	55

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Providing either motivational letters or warning letters to teachers	-	-	-	-	1	5	6	30	13	65
Check on the teaching and learning environment.	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	50	10	50
Encourage the government on teachers' motivation.	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	55	9	45
Advise on teachers' discipline.	-	-	-	-	1	5	7	35	13	65
Check on extra-curricular activities.	-	-	-	-	1	5	11	55	8	40

Source: Field Data 2024

From the findings, 100% of teachers agreed that providing professional support to teachers is one of the roles of secondary schools' quality assurers in improving the academic achievements of students in Moshi municipality. Again 100% of teachers agreed on classroom observation as among the roles of secondary school quality assurers in ensuring the academic achievement of secondary school students in Moshi Municipality.

Also, 100% of secondary school teachers agreed on checking on teaching and learning materials, providing feedback after a visit, and advising on proper methods of teaching and learning, as the roles of secondary school quality assurers in improving academic achievement. Also, 95% of secondary school teachers agreed on providing either motivational letters or warning letters to teachers as another role of secondary school quality assurers in ensuring the academic achievement of the students around Moshi Municipality. This implied that teachers were aware of the quality assurance role towards the academic achievement of the students. These roles are played by quality assurers during their quality assurance in secondary school.

Again 100% of secondary school teachers agreed on a check on the teaching and learning environment, encouraging the government on teachers' motivation and advising on teachers' discipline as the roles of secondary school quality assurers in improving the academic achievement of secondary school students around Moshi Municipal. Also, 95% of secondary school teachers agreed on the check on extra-curricular activities as among the roles of secondary school quality assurers.

Generally, the findings revealed that secondary school quality assurers have to follow their roles such as providing professional support, classroom observation, checking on teaching and learning materials, providing feedback after a visit, providing motivational letters or warning letters to teachers, checking on teaching and learning environment, encourage government on teacher's motivation, advice on teachers discipline as well as check on extracurricular activities. This implies that when all these roles are followed by school quality assurers, there is where improvement in performance will be seen in Moshi Municipality. This was supported by the study done by Joakimu 2014 where by the study found that secondary

school quality assures have a great role to play in order to improve students' academic performance, and that quality of teaching can be achieved when people dedicate time.

From the interview guide asked to heads of secondary schools on the roles of secondary school quality assurers in improving the academic performance of secondary school students, and the responses were as follows:

The first respondent replied,

“Quality assurers have many roles as they are part of their daily responsibilities. When these are followed, the improvement in academic achievement can be seen. Quality assurers are the advisers of teachers and heads of schools, so they have the role to advise when they see that things are not going well. Also, the quality assurer plays a role in ensuring that the curriculum is followed as it is intended in secondary schools. They also have a role to pass around schools and see how teaching and learning activities and the environment together influence learning. Here is where the quality assurer fulfils his or her roles, and in such a case, students' academic achievement can be improved.”

This implies that quality assurers have great roles to play in ensuring the academic achievement of the students through their strategies in quality assurance, which act as guidelines towards their quality assessment.

The second respondent who replied to the interview guide postulated that,

“Actually, secondary school quality assurers have different roles such as an advising role, a managing role and a supervising role. In the advising role, the quality assurer has to advise on how teaching and learning should take place as he or she observes teaching and learning in secondary school during quality assessment. Also in the managing role, the quality assurer is

the one who manages schools in his or her area of quality assurance in the sense that he or she has to pass in schools and see how activities are going on and he or she can fire or hire a teacher after his or her report of quality assurance. In the supervising role, a quality assurer is the one to supervise education activities in secondary schools, giving guidelines to heads of schools and teachers as well as providing training where necessary.”

Therefore, the findings from the interview guide revealed that secondary school quality assurers play a great role in ensuring the improvement of the academic achievement of the students. Through quality assurance strategies, quality assurers play their roles effectively. For example, in the observation role, school quality assurers have to check on how teaching and learning are taking place and the environment which supports teaching and learning, then from there, he or she can advise on the proper ways to be used so as to improve teaching and learning for academic improvement of the students.

Challenges that School Quality Assurers Face When Dealing with Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools in Moshi Municipality

This question is intended to find out the challenges faced by quality assurance in secondary schools of Moshi Municipality. This was asked of secondary school quality assurers through an interview guide. Quality assurers are the one who conducts quality assurance assessments in secondary schools, so they are aware of the challenges and, in such cases, they can provide supportive information to this study. The mentioned challenges were; lack of enough capital allocation in inspection, not enough trained quality assurers, poor cooperation among heads of schools and quality assurers, as well as poor communication of quality assurance results to education stakeholders.

Lack of Enough Capital Allocation in Inspection

This was one of the challenges mentioned by the school quality assurer, whereby one quality assurer postulated that,

“There is not enough money to run quality assessments in all schools, and for such cases, we just conduct quality assurance assessments once a year or twice. Sometimes, where necessary, quality assurers have to use his or her own costs to pass around the school for the visit in schools”.

Not Enough Trained Quality Assurers

This was a challenge mentioned by all quality assurers, in which they said that the lack of enough trained quality assurers in Moshi Municipality has been a challenge to them because they find themselves overloaded. This was also reported by one secondary school quality assurer who said that,

“Scarcity of quality assurers makes us have a lot to do. It is hard to conduct regular school quality assessments since there are many schools compared to the quality assurers. Therefore, we just plan on quality assurance assessments when possible, and we cannot do it as many times as is supposed. But when it happens that there is a problem in a certain school, we normally put priority on that school for quality checking example, where the school didn't perform well or other educational challenges”.

Poor Cooperation among Heads of Schools and Quality Assurers

This challenge was mentioned by two quality assurers who identified poor cooperation among heads of schools and quality assurers as a main challenge facing quality assurance activities. Heads of schools were reported to be against quality assurance in their schools, mainly private schools, where they see quality assurers as enemies and they don't want to be assessed.

Sometimes they tend even to hide some necessary information when asked by their quality controllers.

Poor Communication of Quality Assurance Results to Education Stakeholders.

This also mentioned the challenge that quality assurers face during quality assurance in secondary schools around Moshi Municipality. One of the secondary school quality assurers reported that,

“There is no room where school quality assurance results can be communicated effectively and efficiently to the various stakeholders, such as parents who are the customers of the education services. This makes them not have evidence based on their claims about their students' performance soon after quality assurance. Besides, not all teachers who are implementing the curriculum set are informed with respect to their findings and possible recommendations to be put in for their self-improvement soon after quality assurance”.

Generally, the mentioned challenges are the ones which hinder the quality assurance process not to being conducted effectively and efficiently in schools around Moshi Municipality. Despite that, quality assurance is still conducted in schools, but not to the extent it is needed, as the quality assurers are still few, having not enough capital, as well as poor cooperation among heads of schools and poor communication of quality assurance results.

How Do Secondary School Quality Assurance Strategies Influence Students' Academic Achievement in Moshi Municipality

This research question was asked to secondary school quality assurers through an interview guide. The intention was to know how strategies used by quality assurers during quality assurance influence students' academic achievement. The responses from secondary school quality assurers were as follows;

The first respondent replied,

“Strategy like classroom observation helps to influence students’ academic achievement since the quality assurer observes how teaching and learning take place, as well as providing feedback which helps to improve teaching and learning for the academic achievement of the students. Again, another strategy, such as professional support through training, helps much to influence students’ academic achievement as teachers get to be equipped with different skills which make them to do better in their teaching profession”.

The second respondent also reports that:

“Strategies like quality assurance assessment on the school environment, classroom observation, advisory role and providing feedback plays a great role in influencing the academic achievement of students. Through checking on whether the environment of the school supports learning, the quality assurers can also advise on how to make the environment supportive of teaching and learning. Also, in classroom observation, a quality assurer checks on how teaching and learning are taking place, and whether curriculum objectives are met, and after there, he or she can provide feedback and recommendations for improvement. On another side, advising and feedback provision helps teachers to identify areas of weakness for improvement and the quality assurer also can advise the government on issues like the provision of supportive materials for teaching and learning to take place well and through these the academic achievement of the students can be improved in secondary schools around Moshi Municipality”.

Generally, the findings revealed that each strategy used by the secondary school quality assurer has its role in influencing students’ academic achievement, as the intention of quality assurance is to ensure that curriculum objectives are met for the academic

achievement of students in secondary schools, particularly in secondary schools around Moshi Municipality.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to examine secondary school quality assurance strategies used in improving students’ academic achievement. The study revealed that school quality assurance was an important service in all schools. The impact of the school quality assurance process depends on the strategies used by quality assurers as an important aspect to drive school improvement. Based on the findings, the quality assurers have a great role to play in ensuring students’ academic achievement, as they have strategies which guide them in organising quality assurance so as to have a positive impact on the work of teachers and students’ academic achievement. Therefore, the study concluded that school quality assurance strategies, if properly used, play a great and potential role in improving teaching and learning, as a result, students’ academic achievement will be improved.

Recommendation

Since the findings of the study indicated that there are a number of problems caused by scarcity of resources being financial and material resources, it is suggested that the budget for school quality assurance be increased to cover the cost of quality assessment of more schools timely and including also workshops or training for teachers to improve their performance.

The number of school quality assurers should also increase so as to avoid much burden on quality assurers, which will make them perform their work effectively and efficiently.

Quality assurers should adopt a collaborative approach, providing constructive feedback and working together with teachers to solve instructional challenges. A supportive relationship encourages professional growth and reduces resistance from teachers.

Therefore, since the study concentrated on secondary school quality assurance strategies used in improving academic achievement in the secondary schools of Moshi Municipality, the result of quality assurance depends on how it is done and the way recommendations were made in practice.

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