

Original Research Article

Determining Primary School Teachers Awareness of the Roles of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers

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Abstract: The Kenyan government has always aimed at providing quality education and training for all its citizens. This is predominantly dependent on education supervisors and teachers who share the burden in curriculum implementation. Therefore, this study sought to: Establish primary school teachers awareness of the roles of quality assurance and standards officers. This study was conducted in Teso North district, Western province. The study was based on needs assessment theory which postulates that a need should always be linked to the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes an individual must possess to be competent and therefore accomplish the desired results. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A total of 180 respondents participated. Thirty (30) head teachers from the selected schools were selected, while the 150 teachers were selected by simple random sampling. Data were collected by use of a self-administered questionnaire for teachers and a structured interview schedule for head teachers. Data were analyzed and presented by use of frequency tables and t-test statistics. It was established that teachers are fairly aware of the supervisory roles of QASOs' and most teachers generally agree that supervision enhances their professional development. Generally teachers' are aware of the roles of QASOs'. When teachers are aware of the supervisory roles of QASOs' they are more likely to co-operate in making the process more successful. The study recommends the introduction of a mandatory course in Quality Assurance and Standards in teacher training institutions.

Keywords: Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, Awareness, Teachers, Supervisors.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of the government of Kenya since independence in 1963 has been to provide quality education and training for all its citizens. This is because education is critical in the promotion of social, economic, and political development. However, the ultimate attainment of the designated goals in any education system largely depends on the goodwill, and concerted efforts of all educational stakeholders. Prominent among these are educational supervisors and teachers who share the greatest burden in the curriculum implementation process.

Many countries around the world have developed some means of monitoring the quality and standards of their education system. Mostly, it involves supervision and inspection of educational institutions

and other aspects of the education system. Supervision is mainly concerned with improvement of standards and quality of education and should be an integral part of a school improvement program. School supervision is necessary as it ensures that high educational standards are maintained and there is continuing development in the education system.

Generally, supervision according to Okumbe (1999) subsumes the supervisory activities that take place outside the classroom and instructional supervision. Supervisory activities that take place outside the classroom include, among others: writing and revision of the curricula; preparation of units and materials for instruction; development of processes and instrument for reporting to parents; evaluation of educational programmes. Instructional supervision is that supervision aimed at improving a teachers' classroom performance.

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In Kenya, responsibility for the education system is vested in the Ministry of Education. The Kenyan philosophy of education embraces “inculcation of high quality instruction” (Republic of Kenya, 1999). According to the government of the Republic of Kenya, this quality has been equated with high standards, namely, a set of criteria against which an institution or system is judged. Among the determinants of the quality of education are the availability of qualified and motivated teachers, a conducive environment for teaching and learning, facilities and resources available for effective curriculum delivery and the tools for evaluation.

Gosh (2005) as stated by Too (2009) says that staff development is fast assuming an ever increasing importance in all organizations including schools. He argues that the past four decades have witnessed unparalleled technological advancements and if teachers are to remain focused, they must engage in training programmes to upgrade and familiarize themselves with the new processes in technology. Also, in the contemporary society the profile of those who require education is not homogenous, thus flexible modes of provision of education need to be administered. Teachers ought to keep up with the current developments in teaching, learning and instruction for educational goals to be attained.

Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) is a recent term coined to refer to the education officer responsible for supervision of curriculum implementation in schools (Ajuoga, Indoshi and Agak 2010). This is a new term commonly used in place of the traditional term of, “inspector”. The new term QASO is intended to remove the stigma associated with the inspector and to portray the officers as people concerned with improving quality and standards of education by working as partners with the teachers. In this way, supervision can also be seen as a social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task (Jepchumba, 2010). Therefore, QASO are expected to enhance education effectiveness and efficiency by working in collaboration with teachers and schools.

The improvement of the teaching learning process to a large extent depends on teacher’s perception and attitudes towards supervision. If teachers perceive supervision as a process of promoting professional growth and student learning then the whole process and activity of supervision may yield the desired outcome.

Research Objective

To determine primary school teachers awareness of the roles of quality assurance and standards officers

Research Question

To what extent are primary school teachers aware of the roles of quality assurance and standards officers?

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted needs assessment theory. Kaufman. R and English F (1979) defined a need as a gap between a desired outcome or performance and the current outcome or output. David R, Tindall. S, Badger. K & Webster M (2009) state needs assessment as a process that attempts to estimate deficiencies. It is seen as an activity that gages gaps and insufficiencies.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study was conducted in primary schools in Teso North district, Western province, Kenya. The district borders Mt. Elgon district in the North, Teso South District in the South, Bungoma district in the West and The Republic of Uganda in the East. The district has two administrative divisions which are Amagoro and Angurai divisions. According to 1999 census the two divisions had total population of 103,036. It is mainly an agricultural district with 65 per cent of the population involved in agricultural activities. The food crops grown include maize, beans, millet while the cash crops grown are tobacco, cotton and Pepper.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is preferred because it seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behavior or values (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

It also enables data collection for purposes of describing a large population hence cutting down on costs by use of representative sample.

Study Population

For the purposes of this research, the population consists of all teachers in primary schools in Teso North district. The district has three educational zones, Angurai, Kolanya and Amagoro. Angurai zone has 29 public primary schools, Kolanya zone 28 public primary schools and Amagoro zone 30 public primary schools. In total there are 640 primary school teachers’ in the district.

Sampling Design and Sample Size

The researcher used zones to classify schools using stratified sampling technique to ensure that teachers from schools in different zones are represented in the sample. Schools were stratified according to the educational zones.

Simple random sampling was then used to select 10 schools from each zone. Five teachers from the respective schools were then selected by simple random sampling so as to have a sample size of 150 respondents. Census was used in selecting all head teachers of the selected schools. Thirty head teachers were sampled for the study.

Research Instruments

The collection of data was done through questionnaire for teachers and interview schedules for head teachers.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Descriptive methods were employed and

the data was presented in form of frequency tables that will facilitate description and explanation of the findings. Inferential statistics were used to generalize the results. T-test was used to relate:

The extent to which teachers are aware of the roles of QASOs’ with the general dispositions primary school teachers have towards QASOs’

Data Presentation, Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

The researcher wanted to investigate the extent to which teachers are aware of the supervisory roles of QASOs’. Their responses on the provision of the stated services were scored and the results presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Awareness of teachers on roles of QASOs’

Responses Variable	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	(i) Development of quality services	23	15.3	16	10.7	17	11.3	57	38.0	37
(ii) Career guidance to schools	23	15.3	24	16.0	25	16.7	56	37.3	22	14.7
(iii) Subject allocation and timetable management	16	10.7	21	14.0	19	12.7	56	37.3	38	25.3
(iv) Advising on financial matters	16	10.7	16	10.7	24	16.0	60	40.0	34	22.7
v) Coordination of creative and extra-curricular activities	26	17.3	21	14.0	23	15.3	56	37.3	24	16.0
(vi) Overseeing handing over in schools	20	13.3	18	12.0	26	17.3	58	38.8	28	18.7
(vii) Co-ordination of supervision and assessment	12	8.0	12	8.0	21	14.0	72	48.0	33	22.0
N = 150 Overall mean = 2.6										

The results of descriptive statistics presented in table 1, indicate that, generally most teachers agree and are aware that QASOs’ do provide the stated services. From the table, 62.7% of the teachers’ agreed that QASOs’ play an important role in the provision of quality services in our schools, they do assist in good timetable management, ensuring efficient and fair subject allocation and advising on financial matters. 57.4% agreed QASOs’ do assist in overseeing the handing over in schools, 53.3% supported that they assist in co-ordination of creative and extra- curricular activities and career guidance to schools (52.0%) and the co-ordination of supervision and assessment (70%). From the interview data majority of head teachers (76 %) felt that the teachers are sufficiently aware of the roles of QASOs’.

The inspectors and supervisors are now described as quality assurance and standards officers Farrant, 1994 cited by Ajuoga, Indoshi & Agak, (2010) posits that the new term QASOs’ was intended to portray the officers’ as people concerned with improving quality and standards in education by working as partners with teachers. Teachers’ awareness of the supervisory roles of QASOs’ is necessary if they are to embrace positively efforts put by QASOs’ in the supervision process. Bishop, 1985 argues that educational change and reforms can only succeed when teachers are sufficiently impressed by the validity of the

new approach and thoroughly grounded in the techniques necessary for its implementation.

In his study, Etindi (2000) cited in Wanzare (2002) did a study on the factors that impede and affect effective inspection and supervision of primary schools in Khwisero Division of Butere Mumias District. He found out that one of the factors that impede effective supervision and inspection is the teachers’ knowledge and awareness of the roles of supervisors and inspectors. He found out that the teachers’ knowledge of the roles of QASOs’ was fairly average. In his study, this average knowledge was seen as an impediment in the teachers’ understanding of the roles of QASOs’.

Good supervision should seek ways that enhance learning and teaching techniques in every possible way; create physical, social, psychological atmosphere and environment that support learning, combine, coordinate all educational efforts and provide there permanence. Teacher qualities and competencies change and grow through experience and adapt to the circumstances in which they find themselves at varying stages of their career. Supervisory practices should clearly be stated and communicated to the teachers for supervision efficiency to be realized. From the current study’s findings, we may deduce that generally teachers’ are aware of the roles of QASOs’.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that generally teachers' are aware of the roles of QASOs'. When teachers are aware of the supervisory roles of QASOs' they are more likely to co-operate in making the process more successful.

Supervisory practices that lack clear goals will allow different understandings and interpretations. Each supervisory practice should be purposeful and its goals should be clearly stated and communicated to the teachers. For instance, if a teacher does not understand the goal of the classroom visitation he is more likely to consider it as a summative evaluation visit, or even an inspection visit. Supervisors should make their goals clear, not only for themselves, but also for teacher's awareness and supervision efficiency.

As Mujivane, (2007) poses, Quality assurance and standards officers should make decisions which enable the educational process within the school to be improved for effective achievement of pre-determined objectives.

Supervision is identified as the process of guiding and leading people in their studies to implement the organization's aims (Daresh & Playko 1995). But the aim of supervision of teaching is to develop teaching and success of school to provide success of students, teacher development and educational equality by cooperating with educationists (Glickman *et al.*, 2004).

Teacher qualities and competencies change and grow through experience and adapt to the circumstances in which they find themselves at varying stages of their career. QASOs' should therefore act as scrutinizers whose function is to verify and provide corrective measures in curriculum processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

University schools of education are called upon to introduce a mandatory course in Quality Assurance and Standards. The same course can also be introduced in teacher training colleges. This will help teachers learn what is required in quality assurance and standards long before the teachers join the teaching profession and understand more the process of supervision.

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