



Contribution of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' in Enhancing Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Kwanza Sub-County

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the contribution of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' (QASOs) in Enhancing Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in Kwanza Sub-County. The study was founded on Role theory developed by Mullin (2004). The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised of 319 teachers, 35 principals and 2 QASOs. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 95 teachers, 11 principals and purposive sampling technique was used to select 2 QASOs. Interview schedules were used to collect data from QASOs. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Data collected was analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistics. Results indicated that QASOs typically enhance staff growth and development, educational and learning materials. QASOs also play an important role in the development of educational programs in the Kwanza Sub- County. Further, they provide advice and feedback on how to run the curriculum, and indicating that the curriculum has been implemented. It was determined that QASOs play a significant role in ensuring proper curriculum implementation in schools. The report suggests that QASOs should be bolstered by providing them with more resources. QASOs should monitor schools more frequently and develop a follow-up system to guarantee that their suggestions, among other recommendations are executed.

Keywords: Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, KCSE, Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Quality education depends on teachers, school structure, and management's ability to improve teaching and learning (Harris, 2013; Sharabi, 2013). The 1990 UNESCO Conference led to the establishment of quality assurance and control in education as an emergent policy viewpoint (Blight et al., 2002; Ayeni, 2011; Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000; Uvalic Trumbic, 2006). Article 11 of the United Nations' World Declaration on Higher Education (UNESCO, 2007) defines school quality as a multidimensional concept that encompasses all of its activities, including teaching and academic initiatives, research and scholarship, workforce, students, buildings, faculties, facilities, services, the society, and the academic environment.

In a school setting, quality management encompasses the assessment and evaluation of learning objectives, the evaluation of teachers' performance, and the measuring of students' achievement via tests and exams. The end-of-year performance of students is indicative of the standard of education and

performance in the school system. The supervision methods form the management strategy for quality control. According to Obiweluzor *et al.*, (2013), the purpose of oversight and inspection is to ensure the attainment of academic objectives. The research study conducted in the United Kingdom by Cullingford, Daniels, and Brown (1998) reported an improvement in overall performance in the year that the inspection visit took place.

In Kenya, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards is the section of the Ministry of Education responsible for school oversight. The Education Act, Cap. 211 of the laws of Kenya authorises the directorate to visit and inspect schools. Section 18 of the Education Act states that "school inspectors appointed by the Ministry of Education shall have the authority to enter and inspect any school, or any place where it is reasonably suspected that a school is being conducted, at any time, with or without notice, and report on their findings" (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Furthermore, they can ask that the principal of the school place at their discretion all facilities, financial records, notebooks, examination scripts, and any other school-owned materials that may be demanded for inspection (Republic of Kenya, 2000).

Officers of Quality Assurance and Standards play a crucial role in fostering staff development in education (Wasanga, 2004). Wanjiru (2014) evaluated the function of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in promoting education in private secondary schools in Limuru District, Kiambu County and reported that the primary responsibilities of QASOs during curriculum supervision included visiting teachers in the classroom to observe their teaching methods, checking lesson preparation, examining records and work plans, and ensuring that teachers have adequate teaching and learning materials. According to Kimball (1997), a fundamental purpose of Quality Assurance is to conduct out curriculum design activities and produce suggestions for desired research demonstration and dissemination activities. Wafula (2010) explored teachers' views on the role of quality assurance and standards in promoting and sustaining education quality in Nairobi. The study found that principals believed QASOs were significant in assisting with the improvement of real teaching. Teachers viewed QASOs as extremely helpful in the preparation and maintenance of teaching records. Despite the importance of QAOs in education system, they continue to confront obstacles that prevent them from completing their duties efficiently.

The challenges encountered by QAOs in promoting the quality of education have an impact on the delivery of quality education in secondary schools. Ondicho (2004) studied inspection challenges in Thika Municipality, Thika Sub County. Observed that inspectors face inadequate money, lack of transit and communication, bad attitudes from teachers, inadequate professional training, and delayed implementation of their recommendations. In addition to ensuring that the school environment is suitable to teaching and learning, the QAOs plays a vital role in ensuring that educational standards are maintained by ensuring that schools are adequately equipped in terms of both physical and human resources. However, the ongoing reduction in the quality of education, particularly at the secondary level, has placed its role in proper perspective.

Performance on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) is of utmost importance to all Kenyan education stakeholders. This milestone influences a KCSE graduate's future profession. From 2012 to 2015, the mean

KCSE scores in Kwanza Sub-County K.C.S.E. have remained below the national average of 6.0. (C plain) as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 3: Kwanza Sub-County K.C.S.E for the year 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Mean score	5.353	5.356	5.595	5.857

Source: County Director of Education (2016)

The situation reveals that the most of form four graduates in the sub-county enroll in intermediate level institutions for diploma programmes, while a select minority who earn a grade B or higher attend university for degree programmes. The current condition of affairs, in which a greater number of form four graduates achieve an average performance on the KCSE national examinations, makes this study essential. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the contribution of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers" (QASOs) in Enhancing Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in Kwanza Sub-County.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is predicated on Mullin's Role theory (2004). According to Mullins, a role is the expected pattern of conduct associated with members occupying a specific area of the organization's structure. It also describes how an individual perceives his own circumstances. The concept of role clarifies the structure and defines the complicated relationship pattern inside a group. Combined with elements such as role conflict, role overload, and role conduct, these will clearly depict the co-existences and relationships necessary to achieve the intended outcomes (Ayuba, 2018). This theory takes into account the fact that supervisors in an organisation want each employee to exhibit a certain pattern of conduct, termed "role demand." Role theory focuses on one of the most essential aspects of social life, namely roles or typical behavioural patterns. It explains roles by assuming that individuals occupy social positions and have expectations for their own and others' conduct (Eagly *et al.*, 2000). The role theory has offered a valuable framework for comprehending perceived and actual group distinctions. Just as perceivers fail to account for the influence of roles on the behaviour of individuals, they also fail to account for the influence of roles on the behaviour of group members. The theory posits that the division of labor in society takes the form of the interaction among heterogeneous specialized positions that we call roles (Brookes *et al.*, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. The study population consisted of 319 teachers, 35 principals and 2 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The study sample consisted of 95 teachers, 11 public high school principals, 2 quality assurance staff. The schools were divided into boys 'and girls' schools and mixed schools and selected randomly. The study involved 5 mixed schools and 4 schools for boys and 4 girls. 30% of the total number of secondary schools in Kwanza Sub-County were sampled. Teachers were selected using simple random sampling while principals and Quality Assurance and Standards Officers were selected using purposive sampling. Using questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group

discussions, and a document analysis guide, data was collected. The instruments' validity was confirmed by educational administration researchers. Using the Spearman-Brown proficiency formula on the data from the pilot study, the questionnaires' reliability was determined to be 0.80. This implied that the surveys were quite reliable (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Before collecting data in the field, the researcher obtained an introduction letter from the school of Education at Mount Kenya University and a permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. The permit was then delivered to the director of education for Trans-Nzoia County. Using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts and percentages, quantitative data was evaluated. Utilizing inferential statistics, namely regression analysis, the influence was determined.

RESULTS

Demographic Description of Respondents

The demographic data collected from participants includes their gender, age, highest level of education, and service experience.

Gender of the Respondents

The gender of participants was enquired and figure 1 summarises their responses.

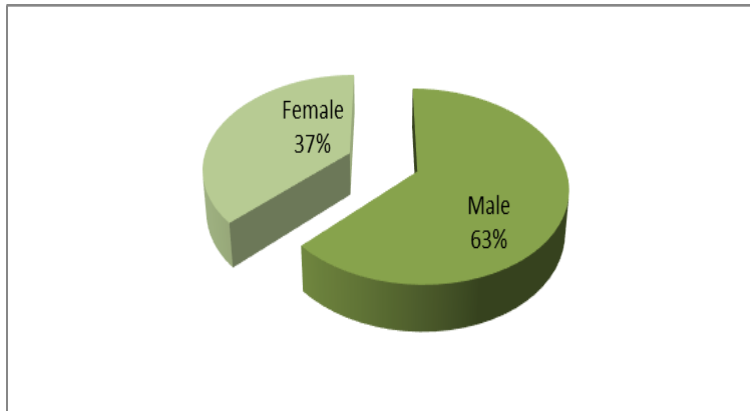


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Figure 1 shows that 64(63%) of the respondents were male while 38(37%) of the respondents were female. From the findings, majority, that is, 64 (63%) of respondents were male. This shows that there were more male teachers than female in the schools. This is because males are seen as more credible and easier to work as administrators as compared to females (Leah, 2014).

Age of Respondents

Further, the respondents were asked to indicate their age bracket. The results of their responses were presented in figure 2 below.

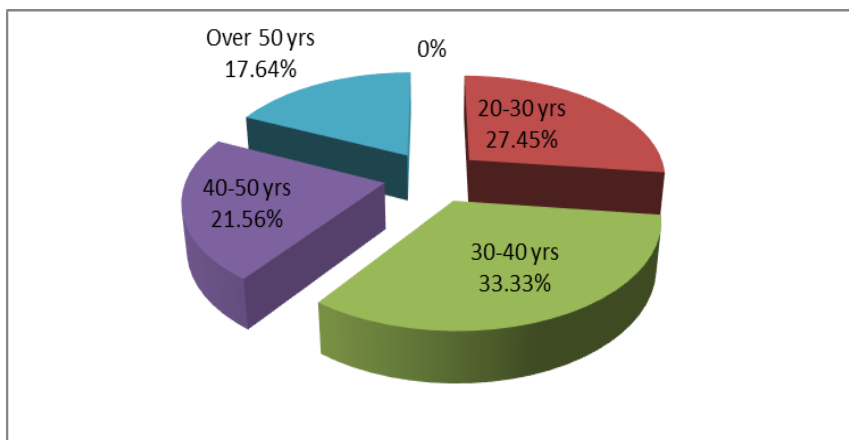


Figure 2: Age of Respondents

Figure 2 shows that 33(33.3%) of the respondents were aged 30-40 years, 28(27.45) % respondents were aged 20-30 years, 22(21.56%) respondents were aged 40-50 years and 18(17.64%) of the respondents were aged over 50 years. This implies that most teachers and principals are within the productive age of teaching force. The age factor was considered to be of importance since a professionally mature person strives to do what is correct especially when they face challenges in their line of duty (Ruga, 2017).

Level of Education of the Respondents

The highest educational qualifications were enquired and figure 3 summarises their responses.

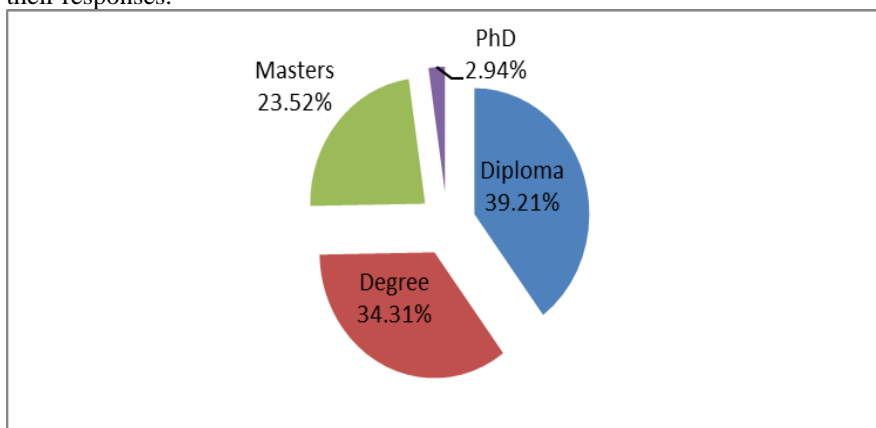


Figure 3: Highest Education Level of the Respondents

Figure 3 shows that 40(39.1%) of the respondents had diploma, 35(34.31%) of the respondents had degree, 24(23.52%) of respondents had masters' level of education, and 3(2.94%) of respondents had PhD. This implies that schools employed competent teachers with high level of education in order to ensure quality service delivery and to promote efficiency, accountability and transparency. This further implies that the researcher was able to collect data from all levels of education represented in the study. These results further imply that the teachers had the required academic qualification to serve in public schools (Agesa, 2015).

Length of Service

The respondents were further required to indicate their experience in service. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Length of Service

Years	Frequency	Per cent
Below 5 years	18	17.6
6-10 years	39	38.2
11-15 years	32	31.37
Above 16 years	13	12.74
Total	102	100

Source: Researcher Data (2020)

The study findings on work experience of the respondents showed that 11(15.1%) had work experience of below 1-5 years, 9 (12.1%) had 6-10 years of experience; 29(41.7 %) had 11-15 years of experience while 22(30.9 %) had over 16 years of work experience. This implies that majority of the respondents had served for over 10 years.

This shows that data was obtained across all levels of experience in terms of years of work. This was deemed to mean that the study was able to collect varied opinions from the respondents and the responses collected were a true representation of the happenings without influences resulting from being in the institutions for too long or being relatively new in the schools.

Contribution of QASOs on KCSE Performance

The study sought to establish the contribution of QASOs on K.C.S.E Performance. The study findings were as tabulated in table 3.

Table 3 shows that 57 (62.6%) respondents felt that QASO needed to develop a suitable inspection structure. In addition, 55 (60.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that QASOs typically enhance staff growth and development in the schools they come to. Also, a large proportion of respondents, 43 (47.2%), agreed that QASOs contribute to the development and use of resources in schools. The results also showed that 37 (40.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that QASOs contribute to the wellbeing of staff in the schools they visit.

Vernava and Koutsoulis (2006) state that teacher supervision may contribute to improving academic performance in public high schools. From the responses provided, it was noted that teachers appreciate the fact that their knowledge of teaching has improved. Their confidence and academic skills also increased. Therefore, school reviews have improved standards and quality of education (Vanzare, 2006).

Table 3: Teachers' response on the contribution of QASOs on K.C.S.E Performance

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std Dev
Supervisory structure	F	7	10	17	30	57	91	5.30	-1.047
	%	7.6	10.9	18.6	32.9	62.6	100	106.1	
Staff development	F	7	15	14	28	55	91	5.12	-1.074
	%	7.6	16.4	15.3	30.7	60.4	100	102.4	
Development and use of resources	F	0	10	17	43	21	91	3.82	-0.342
	%	0	10.9	18.6	47.2	23.0	100	76.4	
Teacher utilization	F	9	14	17	51	29	91	4.80	-0.346
	%	9.8	15.3	18.6	56.0	31.8	100	96	
Staffing and staff welfare	F	0	5	15	34	37	91	4.13	-0.591
	%	0	5.4	16.4	37.3	40.6	100	82.6	
School infrastructure	F	8	8	15	29	41	91	4.28	-0.577
	%	8.7	8.7	16.4	31.8	45.0	100	85.6	
Teachers' presence	F	0	0	7	34	50	91	4.47	-0.404
	%	0	0	7.6	37.3	54.9	100	89.4	
Subject organization	F	6	6	17	29	33	91	3.84	-0.010
	%	6.5	6.5	18.6	31.8	36.2	100	76.8	
Teacher lesson preparation	F	7	15	34	26	9	91	3.16	-0.346
	%	7.6	16.4	37.3	28.5	9.8	100	63.8	
In- service training of teachers	F	0	0	14	37	40	91	4.28	-0.591
	%	0	0	15.3	40.6	43.9	100	85.6	

Source: Researcher data (2020)

The findings of the study concur with those of Mwinyipembe and Orodho, (2014) who stated that QASOs seek to assist teachers in enhancing student learning and disseminating improved learning results. This creates a good working atmosphere that encourages teachers to perform better, hence improving academic success.

According to Ruga (2017), teachers value their work and consider the important roles of QASOs as important. When teachers have counseling and facilities without coercion or reprimand, it is likely that they will improve teaching standards and thus educational improvement of students. Oya (2007) views QASOs as a leadership role in curriculum innovation at the national and local levels. He states that QASOs serve as a source of information, development and advice to the Ministry of Education in the formulation of national education policies and objectives.

The results of this study indicated that teachers who are professionally developed and well paid are experienced with job satisfaction and are likely to be more productive at work than those trapped in the classroom. Thus, professionally trained teachers can easily solve a student's problems as they are motivated.

Principal aspects that are helpful to principals are classroom observation, teaching methodology and advice on staff development. Teachers select school resource assessment, follow-up lessons and field counseling. QASOs also help identify areas and levels of performance, and provide constructive advice and key recommendations to improve performance.

As a result of the study, three respondents (28.1%) agreed that QASO would improve K.C.S.E 's work in providing educational and learning materials. Overall, 4 respondents (39.6%) agreed that the QASO should have the school administration in the Kwanza area work towards infrastructure development. In terms of team development, five respondents (41.7%) said QASO is contributing to employee development and growth. As a result, it was found that 5 respondents (43.2%) agreed that QASO plays an important role in the development of educational programs in the Kwanza province. In addition, most of the respondents found that teachers asked for training in the Torah through training (7 people (62.6%).

As a result, it was found that 5 respondents (47.5%) agreed that QASOs influence teachers to improve KCSE's performance. It also showed that most respondents agreed that QASO is involved in learning and teaching. The study also highlighted the importance of monitoring school structure and its development. Teachers and managers appreciate excellent teaching skills. They also grew up with confidence and educational skills. As a result, school revitalization improved the quality of education (Vanzare, 2006).

Ageza (2015) said that the role of QASOs is very important in planning regular school visits, taking responsibility for the textbooks, providing advice and feedback on how to run the curriculum, and indicating that the curriculum has been implemented. They also monitor the development of a curriculum and work plan.

Table 4: Principals' response on the contribution of QASOs on KCSE Performance

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	StdDev
Ensuring proper supply of teaching and learning materials	F	1	1	2	5	3	11	4.00	-1.187
	%	5	8.6	15.8	42.4	28.1	100	80.0	
School infrastructure	F	1	1	2	4	3	11	3.55	-0.969
	%	5	10.8	14.4	39.6	30.2	100	71.0	
Administration of the school	F	0	0	2	7	2	11	3.55	-0.764
	%	0	2.2	13.7	61.9	22.3	100	71.0	
Staff development	F	1	1	2	3	5	11	3.16	-0.606
	%	5	7.9	17.3	28.1	41.7	100	63.2	
Educational development programmes	F	0	0	2	5	4	11	3.11	-1.446
	%	0	2.2	15.1	43.2	39.6	100	62.2	
Subject organizations	F	1	1	1	5	4	11	4.13	-0.860
	%	5	5	11.5	41.7	36.7	100	82.6	
In- service training of teachers	F	0	0	0	4	7	11	4.12	-0.936
	%	0	0	3.6	33.8	62.6	100	82.4	
Teacher motivation	F	1	1	1	4	5	11	3.98	-1.130
	%	5	5	8.6	33.8	47.5	100	79.6	
Student performance	F	1	2	3	4	2	11	4.12	-0.764
	%	7.2	14.4	28.1	36.7	13.7	100	82.4	
Student discipline	F	0	0	1	4	6	11	4.28	-0.606
	%	0	0	8.6	34.5	56.8	100	85.6	

Source; Researcher data (2020)

According to the questionnaire, QASOs found that auditing affects school performance. They say that satisfaction lies in fulfilling their wishes. In response, administrative performance and the skills of principals and teachers are improving. The officials said it also plays an important role in class preparation, participation of teachers and students, and administration. According to Omoga (2009), Kenyan authorities have taken steps to improve teacher performance in order to increase the quality of education. For them; focus on learning, focus on extraordinary activities, transfer teachers to school, depressed absences, help parents understand the importance of quality education, use textbooks effectively, and prepare professional teachers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results indicated that QASOs typically enhance staff growth and development, educational and learning materials. QASOs also play an important role in the development of educational programs in the Kwanza Sub- County. Further, they provide advice and feedback on how to run the curriculum, and indicating that the curriculum has been implemented. It was determined that QASOs play a significant role in ensuring proper curriculum implementation in schools. The report suggests that QASOs should be bolstered by providing them with more resources. QASOs should monitor schools more frequently and develop a follow-up system to guarantee that their suggestions, among other recommendations are executed.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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