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Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Adequacy of External Supervision in Secondary Schools in Chamwino District, Tanzania

Dr. Joseph Manase

Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations and Continuing Studies,
College of Education, University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Habibu D. A.

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies,
College of Education, University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Abstract:

Quality of education is a complex phenomenon that needs a multi-dimensional approach in achieving, and one of the major factors for it to be realized is the institutionalization and reinforcement of external school inspection. This study was focused on searching for adequacy of external school inspection in secondary schools in Chamwino district in Dodoma. The key objectives were to: explore stakeholder's perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision; assess the extent of school inspection and determine the link between school supervision and improvement in teachers' pedagogical practice. The study was guided by the 1995 Education and Training Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania. Overall, the findings show that most stakeholders have negative perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision; secondary schools are less supervised by external inspectors and are faced by a number of challenges; and external school inspection has influence on teachers' pedagogical practice. Recommendations and conclusion were made.

1. Introduction

External school supervision known as school inspection is very important service used by various education systems around the world to hold schools to account to the public, to guarantee that school comply with educational standard and to support schools in the improvement quality education (Patrick, 2009; Machumu, 2012). It is a mechanism used to assess the performance of schools against a benchmark (Grauwe, 2001; Barber, 2004; Kenan, 2011).

In this regard, inspection is used to measure the outcomes and process that drives the outcomes, consequently this helps the school to identify areas in need of improvement (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). It is also trusted that, inspection helps teachers to plan for instruction as instructional planning is considered as the first step in the improvement of instruction (Blok, Slegers, & Karsten, 2008).

Moreover, it has been written at length that, for effective classroom instruction, a teacher should be well prepared for both, short term plans (lesson plan) which show the planning for one day and longer periods of time from which the lesson plans are derived (Dash, 2008; Hussain, 2012). A lesson plan should be prepared for each stream of every class. Scheme of work should be prepared at least for the quarter of the year, but for good preparation that has no disturbances it's better for the teacher to prepare for the term or a year (Wanzare, 2002; Machumu, 2012).

It is also emphasized that, to ensure effective implementation of educational objectives, school supervision should be done, to check the effective preparation and use of lesson plan for classroom instruction, and other issues in a school so as to ensure high performance (McCrone, Coghlan, Wade, & Rudd, 2009). School supervision includes internal and external supervision (Archibong, 2011; Obiweluozor *et al.*, 2013). While Internal supervision involves heads of school and sometimes academic masters/mistresses and heads of departments on behalf of the school head (Wolf, & Janssens 2008; Matthew, 2012), external supervision involves school inspectors from zonal department or Ministry of education (Chapman, 2001; Whitby, 2010). Inspection is therefore seen as one of the supervisory practice whereby supervision is the whole; inspection is part of it (Dash, 2008; Penzer, 2011). Inspection helps teachers to plan for instruction as instructional planning is considered as the first step in the improvement of instruction. The main responsibilities of a school inspector are to supervise schools for developing and improving teacher's pedagogical and administrative skills in order to maintain set standards for quality education (Chediell *et al.*, 2000; Dash, 2008) as cited in Godliver (2014).

In England, and many other European countries, school inspection system have been introduced in the last 10-20years as an integral part of the broader school reform initiatives with the purpose of increasing accountability in schools. For example, the school inspection body in England was established in 1992 as part of new era of parental choice and accountability (Chapman, 2002; OFSTED, 2009; Burgess & Allen, 2012). In some African countries like Uganda, The Government of Uganda established the

Directorate of Educational Standard within in the Ministry of Education and Sport to carry out inspection and to document and share the best practices within the education system among other functions.

In Tanzania, school supervision is perceived by stakeholders as a vital means to ensure efficiency and quality delivery of education to ensure that the right instructions are delivered to the right people at the right time. Some educational stakeholders such as teachers and students perceive differently the implementation of policy theory and its practice (URT, 2003). The country's education and training policy (ETP, 1995) stresses the need for quality assurance body (Inspectorate department) to supervise the provision of education. The policy calls for deliberate efforts to strengthen this body so as to supervise teaching-learning process in schools. It clearly states that, "The inspectorate shall be strengthened and adequately resourced to monitor and supervise provision of education" (ETP, 1995 P 100).

The policy again highlights the general function of school inspectors as to ensure adherence of set policy, laws and regulations and standards of education in the school system of Tanzania through school inspection (MoEVT, 2010). Again, in its ESDP (2004-2009) and in SEDP I and II (2004-2009 and 2010-2015) respectively, it stressed on the quality of education by empowering the supervision in its educational system. However, there is a perception by different educational stakeholders that limited resources (financial and human) have meant that school supervision has remained poor, and the number of inspectors have not kept pace with the number of schools and teachers, as a result it limits school inspectors' capability to regularly visit the schools and perform their supervisory roles accordingly (Grauwe, 2001; Naidoo, 2003) as cited in (Matete, 2009; Olube & Major, 2014).

Besides, it is claimed that, due to lack of financial resources, school inspectors have limited means of transport, and lacks field allowances to facilitate their frequent visits in schools. Even though they receive some amount of finance for fuel from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, it is too little to cover school inspection activities (Matete, 2009; Matthew, 2012). In most cases, they depend upon the contribution done by the students, whereby all schools are supposed to contribute towards school inspection from school fee collection Chediell *et al.*, (2000). Hence, school inspection is confined to school's close to inspectorate offices while in distant school's inspection is said to be done under irregular basis and only once for 2 or 3 years Chediell *et al.*, (2000).

Regarding these challenges facing the inspectorate unit in Tanzania, it becomes very difficult for them to make regular visits in schools including follow up inspection to see if the advice provided is followed. Because of these challenges, there are concerns that, school inspection does not achieve its goal of supporting teachers in improving their pedagogical practice hence calling for empirical evidence in this case.

Moreover, enormous number of studies exist on the ground, addressing issues of school inspection, such as (Dash, 2008; Machimu, 2012; Matete, 2009; Wanzare, 2002; Grauwe, 2001; Naidoo, 2003; Chediell *et al.*, 2000; Lyimo, 2015). However, little is known on the stakeholders' perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision, specifically in Chamwino district in Tanzania. Again, the influence of school supervision on improving teachers' pedagogical practices seems to be in undefined direction. For this reason, the need for this study was established.

1.1. Study Objectives

The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of external school supervision and its contribution in improving secondary education practice. Specific Objectives of this study were to: Explore stakeholder's perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision; assess the extent of school inspection; determine the relationship between school supervision and improvement in teachers' pedagogical practice. The central questions geared towards findings for the solutions were: What are the stakeholders' perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision? To what extent is school inspection conducted in the study area? And what is the relationship between school supervision and improvement in teachers' pedagogical practice in Chamwino district?

2. Methods

This section indicates methods and techniques employed in this study. Cross-sectional design was employed due to its advantage of gathering the data at one point in time. The study used mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative) which were found to be important. The sample included 50 teachers, 5 heads of school and 2 school inspectors from Chamwino district. Therefore, the total sample size was 57 respondents. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. The study employed Semi structured interview and questionnaires in data collection.

In understanding stakeholders' attitude, Likert scale was used to measure teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of external inspection. Triangulation of data collection methods, theories and data sources was considered to establish the validity and reliability of findings. Content analysis was used in which relevant information were extracted by summarizing and listing the major issues contained in it. Influence of school inspection on teachers' pedagogical practice was qualitatively established through interview responses. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 20) was used to generate frequencies, percentages and means. Ethical issues were considered during the entire study process.

3. Results

This section presents the findings relevant for this study. Findings are presented in tables as well as descriptively. Results related to Stakeholders Perceptions on the Effectiveness of External School Supervision are presented in appendix I. It summarizes frequencies, percentages as well as mean for the items generated in the Likert scale. The results indicate that, out of sixteen (16) statements, only two (2) were reported under the agree status while fourteen (14) statements were reported under the "not sure status". The average mean was found to be 3 which mean that, respondents were not sure of the effectiveness of external school inspection. These results

can be generalized into the negative perception, because, if they could have experienced any positive impact of external school inspection on them, it would have been easy for them to notice significant changes.

In regard to the rate of recurrence of inspection conducted by external inspectors, it was found that 31(62%) of the respondents reported to have been sometimes inspected while only 3(6 %) of respondents said schools are inspected very often (see appendix II). It was also found that 45(90%) of the respondents indicate the items mostly inspected are those of the pedagogical aspect while only 5(10%) reported the non-pedagogical items to be inspected. Through content analysis it was found that out of 60 items which are supposed to be inspected from pedagogical and administrative categories, only fifteen (15) items are inspected for pedagogy and only three (3) items are of administrative category.

Interview conducted with one of the school inspectors revealed most schools to be less inspected as she points out that:

“We cannot inspect all schools as required because we have so many schools in our location in central zone, our number is so limited and we lack facilities such as transport and financial resources. This limits regular inspection and it implicates to inefficiency of quality assurance department” (School Inspector A, January 2017).

As part of the findings, school inspectors suggested a combination of efforts in school supervision as to involve various stakeholders such as district educational officers, head teachers, and ward educational officers to work together so as to ensure efficient external school supervision.

During interview with head of school “D” she reported that she perceives the effectiveness of school inspection more negatively since when external school inspectors visit schools they normally appear to be less friendly with the stakeholders and some of them do not follow the rules as stated in the inspection guideline: *“ School inspection is not effective due to the fact that, external inspectors are not friendly with teachers, they do not follow rules during their inspection and they also focus less on academic issues” (HoSD, January, 2017).*

When discussing on the current ad hock inspection style with the head of school E he reported:

“I think the current style of ad hock school inspection is not proper since it disturbs school timetable. At one event there was school graduation, inspectors intruded in a school; teachers had to run here and there and even in the school kitchen. Surprisingly, they started helping the cook for fear of school inspectors” (HoS E, January, 2017).

Moreover, interview with one of the school inspectors (Inspector B) he also reported:

“We conduct inspection rarely due to financial constraints, limited number of human resources, lack of transport as well as lack sufficient knowledge and skills to some of us and fear of challenges from some of the school heads. Some school heads have a master degree while some school inspectors have a diploma or a bachelor degree. Pedagogically, there is a problem of significant improvement due to low teachers’ work morale” . (School inspector B, January, 2017).

Regarding the recommendations on ways to improve the process of school inspection, both head teachers from schools A, B, C, D and E had the recommendations that: *“schools have to be sufficiently financially empowered so as to afford various items relevant for running academic issues, school supervisors have to be equipped with inspection skills so that they can complement on school inspection”.*

In regard to the relationship between External School Supervision and Improvement in Teachers Pedagogical Practices, results were summarized in appendix II and it indicate that, out of eight (8) statements, two (2) of them were reported under the agree status while six (6) items were reported under the not sure category. None of the statements were reported under disagree and strongly disagree. The overall mean for the responses was approximately 3 which mean that most of the respondents in Chamwino district are not sure whether external school inspection improves their pedagogical practices. However, to prove the actual direction of their perception the mean score index was re-categorised. Results indicate that majority of the respondents 22(44%) agrees on the fact that external inspection improves teachers pedagogical practice. The figure below summarizes the results:

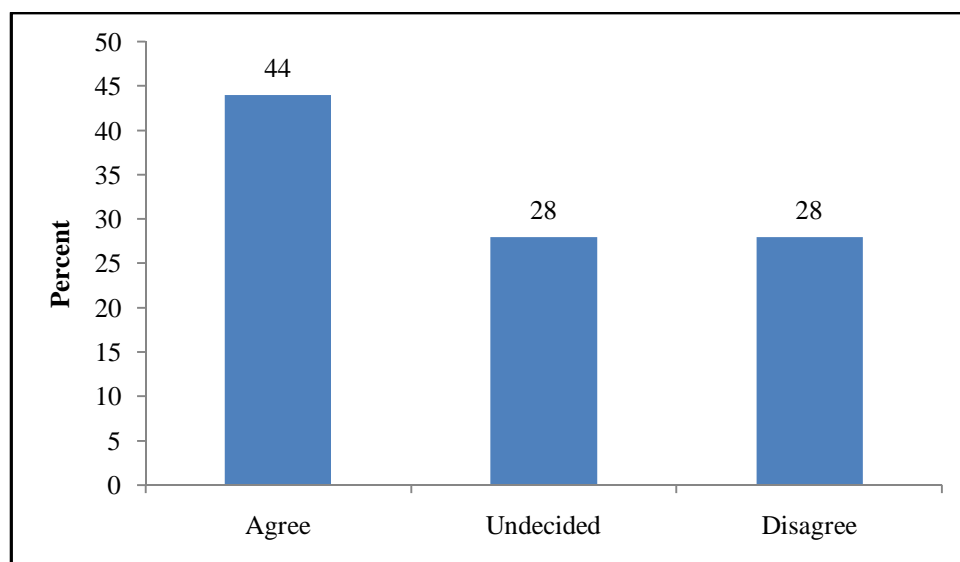


Figure 1: School inspection vs Teachers pedagogical practice

In line with the above findings, interview with one of the school heads from school E reported that: “*external school inspection is helpful though sometimes it does not bring a desirable pedagogical change in our schools and especially in my school.*” (HoS C, January 2017).

In addition, another interviewee from school A reported that:

“*I do not see the significant influence of school inspection against pedagogical practices, these inspectors do not turn up regularly and therefore is like they come to show us that they exist. Sometimes it takes up to three years without being inspected. This is a clear indication that it does not effectively improve pedagogical practices.*” (HoS C, January 2017).

Generally, external school inspection has not been adequately conducted and educational stakeholders perceive it inefficient in its operations. Moreover, though external school inspections influence teachers’ pedagogical practice, it has not been true for teachers in Chamwino district.

4. Discussion of Findings

The general implication of all the study results is that external school inspection exists but it needs some improvement for it to be effective and efficient. The current mode of school inspection does not effectively improve teacher’s pedagogical practice in the sense that different stakeholders are doubtful about its role of improving the quality of secondary education, especially in the area of teaching methods and classroom interaction. There are some contradictions on the way stakeholders view the effectiveness of school inspection, some see it as being caused by poor resources but others think it is due to the people’s attitudes as supported by URT (2014) which present that some educational stakeholders perceive differently the implementation of policy theory and its practice. The results as well do not align with the Education and Training Policy (1995) which stress that “...the inspectorate shall be strengthened and adequately resourced to monitor and supervise the provision of education.”

Generally, some stakeholder’s have negatively perceived the effectiveness of external school supervision. Likewise, studies by (Grauwe, 2001; Naidoo, 2003) as cited in Matete (2009) reflect similar perception by arguing that limited resources have resulted into poor school supervision and the number of inspectors have remained small to cater for the growing number of schools and teachers. This has overwhelmed school inspectors’ capability to regularly visit the schools and perform their supervisory roles accordingly.

In regard to the extent of school inspection, it was clear that external school inspection is not frequently conducted and this practice affects teachers’ performance. The findings are against the study by Machumu (2012) who presents that all education institutions are required to be inspected at least once in every two years. It is also contrary to the Education Sector Development Committee (2008) which affirms that external supervisors are supposed to visit schools regularly in order to complement on the internal school supervision. In the researcher’s views, if the frequency of external supervision could be made regularly it would have strengthened teachers’ pedagogical skills. This is in line with the country’s education and training policy (ETP, 1995) that stresses the need for quality assurance body to supervise the provision of education.

It has been highlighted clearly that there is a strong relationship between school supervision and improvement in teachers’ pedagogical practice. If supervision would be regularly conducted, as Machumu (2012) argues, the likelihood of improving teacher’s efficiency would result. He connects that School inspection is important for accountability of teachers, and has the purpose of guaranteeing and ensuring standards in education.

School inspectors are reported to inspect only few items against the requirement of the set standards. Most of the items checked are those related to pedagogical practice and leave aside relevant administrative items. Against this are studies by (Chediell *et al.*, 2000; Dash, 2008) as cited in Godliver (2014) that the main responsibilities of a school inspector are to supervise schools for developing and improving teacher’s skills in order to maintain set standards for quality education. In the researcher’s views failure of the external inspectors to follow rules and regulations in their course of school inspection is in one way or another associated with inadequate skills and educational statuses that do not suffice the quality of inspection expected by educational stakeholders.

In regard to the differences in level of education, there are cases where the inspected schools were reported to be led by heads of school that holds a bachelor degree and even a master’s degree while the school inspector is a diploma holder or holder of a bachelor degree. In such a condition, it is possible for inspectors to develop an inferiority complex during inspection sessions. Some of the inspected individuals own critical skills of school inspection acquired from different literacy settings including the formal and non-formal ones. Similarly, Dash (2008) confirms that inadequate skills from school inspectors have resulted into poor performance of inspectorate departments in the education sector in most of developing countries.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the overall objective of the present study, which was to assess the effectiveness of external school supervision on improving secondary school teachers teaching practice. Overall, the research results show that an external school inspection has an influence on teachers’ pedagogical practice. Besides, the findings show that, most stakeholders have negative perceptions on the effectiveness of external school supervision; secondary schools are less supervised by external inspectors and are faced by a number of challenges. In light of these findings, the following recommendations were made to enhance the adequacy of school inspection on teachers improved pedagogical practice.

Firstly, the budget for quality assurance body should be rechecked and if possible increased in order to make this organ execute its duties effectively. Presently, the practitioners fail to discharge their roles due to very limited financial resources.

Secondly, a number of school inspectors should be increased in order to reduce the work load of few inspectors visiting the school. There were times that, a ratio of the distributed inspectors does not tally with the school to be visited, this has been harming the effectiveness of the entire inspection exercise.

Thirdly, there is a need to provide a very timely feedback to the school. The current experience is that, the reports are sent to the school very late and hence the delayed decision. This contradicts with inspection regulation that requires that, all inspection reports should be sent to the key stakeholders two weeks after the inspection process.

Fourthly, the government of Tanzania through its Ministry of Education Science and Technology should invest more in building a strong inspection (quality assurance body) with competent human capital that is capable enough to discharge their duties effectively, for example, a minimum level of education should be a Master degree for secondary schools.

Lastly, in the face of contemporary financial and human resources constraints, it is suggested that, more capacity building programs should be put in place for head teachers and Ward Educational Officers to perform self evaluation or inspection.

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Appendix I

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE CATEGORIES										MEAN
		SA 1		A 2		UD 3		D 4		SD 5		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1	Inspection is conducted often in our school	13	26	15	30	5	10	14	28	3	6	2.14
2	I always found prepared whenever my school is visited by external inspectors	15	30	23	46	3	6	8	16	1	2	3.00
3	I just prepare my lesson when i expect school supervisors	12	24	12	24	6	12	4	8	16	32	2.98
4	I get time to discuss with school inspector after every inspection session	10	20	14	28	5	10	9	18	12	24	3.14
5	School inspection bring new skills to my competence	6	12	21	42	10	20	4	8	8	16	2.98
6	School inspectors seem to be more professional	4	8	17	34	12	24	10	20	7	14	2.52
7	Advice i get from inspectors is more helpful	11	22	20	40	7	14	6	12	6	12	2.68
8	Inspection has impact on my classroom teaching	10	20	16	32	10	20	8	16	6	12	3.10
9	School inspectors improves working morale	6	12	16	32	8	16	7	14	13	26	3.28
10	I insist that school inspection is a wastage of time	2	4	13	26	8	16	16	32	9	18	3.06
11	School inspectors spend less time on inspection activity	3	6	16	32	12	24	13	26	6	12	3.46
12	School inspectors introduce issues not related to inspection rules	4	8	10	20	9	18	13	26	14	28	3.28
13	School inspectors give information prior to their visit	6	12	12	24	10	20	6	12	16	32	2.96
14	School inspectors are more time conscious	6	12	16	32	10	20	10	20	8	16	3.14
15	Less work is often done without school inspection	6	12	17	34	6	12	6	12	15	30	3.16
16	I believe that external school inspection is less effective	8	16	10	20	11	22	8	16	13	26	2.12
	total mean											49.58
	average mean											3

KEY: KEY:SA 1-1.4, A 1.5-2.4, UD 2.5-3.4, D 3.5-4.4, SD 4.5-5

Appendix II

Category	Frequency(N)	Percent%
Not at all	8	16
Sometimes	31	62
Often	8	16
Very often	3	6
TOTAL	50	100

Appendix III

Relationship between External School Supervision and Improvement in Teachers Pedagogical Practices

s/n	Item	Response Categories										MEAN
		SA 1		A 2		UD 3		D 4		SD 5		
1	School supervision improves my lesson plan, scheme of work and lesson notes preparation skills	15	30	17	34	6	12	7	14	5	10	2.4
2	School inspection improves my teaching techniques	10	20	22	44	4	8	10	20	4	8	2.5
3	School inspection enhances my classroom management skills	6	12	23	46	8	16	7	14	6	12	2.6
4	School inspection encourages me to be familiar with changes in curriculum	12	24	20	40	6	12	7	14	5	10	2.4
5	School inspection increase availability of teaching-learning resources.	6	12	13	26	6	12	16	32	9	18	3.2
6	School inspection improve teaching-learning climate.	8	16	14	28	7	14	13	26	8	16	2.9
7	External inspection improves teachers' pedagogical processes	8	16	17	34	7	14	8	16	10	20	2.9
8	I believe that External inspection has great influence in teachers' attitude towards teaching and learning processes	11	22	16	32	7	14	6	12	10	20	2.7
	TOTAL MEAN											21.6
	Overall MEAN											2.7