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Re-engineering Quality Assurance Functions to Support Implementation of CBC in Secondary Schools Lessons for Tanzania: A Literature Review

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Abstract:
The significance of quality assurance (QA) function in supporting CBC implementation should not be underestimated. Major functions of QAs are to supervise the implementation of the curriculum, organize in-service courses for curriculum implementers, and conduct research on the best practices on QA of the delivery of education. Regardless of the aforementioned QAs functions, a review of literature indicates that QA officers in many African countries do not visit secondary schools as it is required, instead they prefer visiting primary schools to execute their QA activities. This casts doubt on their capacity to carry out their responsibilities in the setting of CBC in secondary schools. Therefore, the purpose of this desktop paper was to find out how QA functions should be re-engineered to match with CBC principles to enable QA officers to supervise implementation of CBC in secondary schools. The specific objectives of this study were to identify the challenges that hinder the execution of QAs functions, recommend strategies for QA officers to enhance their performance and find out lessons which Tanzania can learn from other countries in order to improve QA operations in secondary schools. To find answers to these questions, the study reviewed literature and found that the QA departments were understaffed. Tanzania's QA department, for example, has 1185 officers, with 218 officers assigned to Secondary and Teachers' Colleges. Furthermore, review of literature revealed that lack of in-service training among QAs officers has hampered their ability to carry out QA activities in compliance with CBC principles. Based on the findings, the study recommends that there should be adequate staffing of QA department and capacity building for QAs Staff to enable them to execute their roles effectively in the context of CBC.

Keywords: Quality assurance, implementation of CBC, CBC compliance, challenges facing quality assurance, lessons for quality assurance

1. Introduction

The desire to promote and sustain quality, in our case the quality of secondary education in Tanzania, lies at the heart of quality assurance. Khedkar and Rushpanadham (2018) define quality assurance as the process of ensuring effective resource input, control, refining the process and raising the standards of output in order to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability. According to Raouf (2003), quality assurance in education is the process of ensuring continuous improvement in all aspects of educational institution of learning to satisfy the needs and expectations of the institution's customer (society). In the aspects of school life, quality assurance is defined as an internal and external process of promoting, supporting and imparting agreed quality standards for all aspects for school life to ensure that acceptable standards are attained and that there is a continuous improvement (URT, 2017). Quality of education is a three-dimensional concept comprising quality of human and material resources available for teaching (inputs), instructional/teaching practices (process), and results (outcomes). In this light, quality assurance is a comprehensive process which integrates both internal and external approaches to ensure best practices in resource inputs, utilization and curriculum management by education stakeholders in order to maintain and improve their quality, equity, and efficiency.

2. The Importance of School Quality Assurance

In any country, including Tanzania, school quality assurance plays a critical role in the educational system, notably in raising educational standards. Major roles of QAs are to supervise the implementation of the curriculum, organize in-service courses for curriculum implementers, and conduct research on the best practices on QA of the delivery of

education (URT, 2011). Various scholars and academic institutions have argued for the importance of quality assurance, as seen below:

2.1. Supervisory Instrument towards Curriculum Implementation

One of the most significant aspects of a school quality assurance visit, according to URT (2017), is gathering evidence on the implementation of the curriculum. In doing so, classroom observation has been identified as a key activity in evaluating effectiveness of curriculum implementation. School Quality Assurance Officers are expected to spend more than 80% of their visit observing teaching and learning, providing feedback, and gathering evidence on the impact of leadership and management, the curriculum, and the school environment on teaching and learning quality (URT, 2017). On curriculum implementation, the inspector is required to:

- Observe teachers and student work
- Assess whether learning is participatory and matched to learner's abilities and their overall well-being
- Judge and provide feedback on the quality
- Make recommendations for changes to be made
- Identify salient issues and needs for re-training for teachers (URT, 2010, pg.13).

2.2. Complement to Education Research and Knowledge

Quality assurance mechanisms provide information on current performance and assist in identifying areas of success as well as areas for system and school improvement. Education research methodologies enable a much more in-depth understanding of 'what works best for learning', for whom, and under what conditions. Reflection on effective school development is aided by both quality assurance and education research (European Commission, 2018). Quality assurance data can be used to ensure that schools are meeting standards to distribute resources effectively and equitably, identify schools that are 'at risk' and in need of additional support, and highlight and share 'best practices' more widely, all with the goal of stimulating and supporting school improvement. In this case, both quantitative and qualitative data are crucial. Quantitative data can be combined to make system-level decisions, such as distributing resources equitably among regions and schools. Disaggregated quantitative data at the school level can be utilized to highlight areas where further investigation of student needs is necessary. Qualitative data also adds context to the picture and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the progress of the school.

2.3. Enhances Teachers' Accountability and Improvement

Accountability is very important for ensuring the quality of both processes and outcomes. Internal quality assurance systems at the school level, for example, that foster teacher-to-teacher trust, a shared focus on enhancing instruction and learning, and teacher experience, are all indicators of good internal control and accountability. Internal control and accountability indicators are linked to levels of student achievement. Teachers in highly successful secondary schools have higher levels of trust, indicating that internal control and accountability are in place (European Commission, 2018).

2.4. Fostering Constructive Dialogue

School Quality Assurance officers, according to Haule (2012), talk with employees, administration, and even students. During that dialogue, they agree to work on improving academic performance. According to Haule (2012), school quality assurance is necessary to inspire staff to develop a teamwork attitude so that the schools' fundamental functions can be readily accomplished.

3. History of Quality Assurance in Tanzania

Globally quality assurance is a relatively new concept in education. Before the use of the "quality assurance", the term "inspection" dominated checks and balances of the education systems both globally and Tanzania included. But what is important to note is that procedures and practices of inspection have been changing with time. Whatever may be the nomenclature of inspection in any country of the world, the history of inspection can be classified into two main categories. These are old or traditional systems of inspection and the modern inspection which may be referred as the quality assurance.

In Tanzania, the history of school inspection can be classified into two main categories which are the school inspection era and school quality assurance era. The school inspection era is divided into four periods namely- (i)school inspection from 1903 to 1925, (ii) school inspection from 1925 to 1945, (iii) school inspection from 1946 to 1961, and (iv) School inspection from 1961 to 2016 (Mbwana & Onyango, 2021; Haule, 2012 cited in JMT, 2006). On the other hand, the period of school quality assurance began in 2017 and continues to this day (URT, 2017).

3.1. The Period from 1903 to 1925

This is the period when Tanzania (Tanganyika) was under the German colonial rule. In 1903 colonial government of the then Tanganyika introduced school inspection practices. Inspectorate Division of education under German colonial rule in Tanganyika executed its functions as directed by educational colonial policies of checking the quality of instruction in schools. People were forced to obey the colonial master's culture and work carefully and with discipline under the schooling requirements at the time.

3.2. The Period from 1925 to 1945

Britain captured the German holdings including schools in the then German East Africa region after WW I. In regard to school inspections, British colonial government in Tanganyika Territory formed three kinds of school inspectors. These were education secretaries, supervisors of volunteer institutions, and school inspectors. Education secretaries and supervisors of volunteer institutions were responsible in inspecting schools which were under volunteering institutions or organizations. School inspectors were known as Government school inspectors and were in charge of inspecting Colonial Government schools.

3.3. The Period from 1946 to 1961

During this period, British colonial government developed and issued a ten – year plan for educational growth (1946 to 1956). The position of chief inspector of schools for the first time, along with other school inspectors, was acknowledged and recognized in this education development plan. When the ten-year development plan was coming to an end, a new five-year education development plan (1957 to 1961) was devised by the British colonial government. This five-year development plan permitted the appointment of deputy education secretaries to inspect schools under volunteering institutions or organizations.

3.4. The Period from 1961 to 2016

After independence, the government of Tanzania took several steps and enacted several laws in order to improve the quality of education. The Education Act No. 25 of 1978, for instance, included the establishment of the school inspectorate department (URT, 2011). According to this Act, the purpose of the school inspection was to monitor the delivery of education and the adherence to the stipulated curriculum and the standards sets in order to safeguard good quality of education. The purpose was, therefore, to oversee the efficient and effective delivery of education and to supervise the schools. In addition, it was also aimed to provide feedback to education agencies, managers and administrators.

3.5. The Period of School Quality Assurance (From 2017 to Date)

The inspection philosophy, that emerged when the school inspectorate was established in 1978, did not result in the projected improvement in learners outcomes (URT, 2017). It lacked standards and rules, and it was mostly limited to diagnosis with little helpful quality assurance support. Thus, in 2017, the ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) decided to shift from traditional or old system of inspection to School Quality Assurance. Learning outcomes, prioritization for school development-planning, building capacity through school self-evaluation and sharing practice within and across schools, and support for the participation of the community are at the heart of School Quality Assurance practice in this new approach (URT, 2017).

Generally, a shift from school inspection approach to school quality assurance approach resulted into a significant shift in the theory and practice of educational inspection, which is now more democratic, dynamic, enlightened, constructive, and creative. In this sort of inspection, the quality assurance officer serves as a friend, philosopher, and guide to the teachers, assisting them in becoming better and more effective. He/she encourages and helps them in making good plans for their tasks judiciously and fearlessly. Co-operative planning is the core in type of inspection. Quality assurance officer and the teacher collaborate in identifying shared problems, developing appropriate criteria for evaluating educational activities, experiences, and even drafting educational reports.

4. A Shift from School Inspection to Quality Assurance Approach

Many changes have occurred in educational systems necessitating revisions to the practices and functions of school inspection of the traditional system of inspection. For example, a shift from Knowledge-Based Curriculum (KBC) to Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), behaviorism learning theory to Constructivism learning theory compelled changes in the school inspection practices. The global spread of neoliberalism, which emphasizes on the decentralization of power to give autonomy to school to take decisions for ensuring better learning outcomes, compelled the shift from old to new approach of school inspections (Simeonova, *et. al.*, 2020). Furthermore, new educational technology and the ever-expanding field of knowledge to support schools in achieving greater standards of excellence as learning-centres and meeting the different needs of individual learners have resulted a shift from traditional system of inspection to quality assurance approach (URT, 2010). In Europe, the economic crisis of 2008 resulted into a need for quality assurance systems leading to academic excellence through school improvement (Simeonova, *et. al.*, 2020).

According to Ali, *et al*, (2021), traditional system of inspection is the kind of inspection which relies upon a bureaucratic, hierarchical system that perpetuates traditional roles, cultural norms, and power dynamics that do not support inclusivity and cultural responsiveness. These characteristics suggest that traditional system of inspection is an old management system whose fundamental premise originates from an autocratic management system.

Due to the nature of traditional system of inspection, a relationship between the inspectors and the teachers was strained. There are numerous causes for this, but only a few will be discussed here. First, during inspections, inspectors focused more on themselves as authority figures, which irritated teachers. To cope, teachers put physical and social distance between themselves and the inspectors to the extent that some teachers refuse to come to school during inspections (Blumberg, 1988). Teachers also devise tactics (such as whistling) for informing one another when an inspection is taking place, as though a detective has arrived. Second, since such an inspection is external to the school, some teachers tend to regard it with mistrust. They assume that inspectors are unfamiliar with their students and hence

are unable to provide much assistance. In conclusion, traditional inspection is viewed as a tense, undemocratic meeting in which both the inspector and the teacher spend majority of their time dealing with rather than focusing on practical concerns that are crucial to the learning of the students.

Following this, many countries decided to shift from traditional system of inspection into quality assurance approach concentrating more to the advisory role in helping teachers and school managers on good practice.

4.1. The Contrast between the Old and New Systems in Tanzania Is Summarized in Table 1 Below

Traditional System of Inspection	New System (School Quality Assurance)
No guiding framework to work from (only inspectors working from school inspectors handbook)	An overarching framework which has been created through a consultative process
School performance checklist focusing on compliance - tick the box system	Evaluation Standards and Guidelines focusing on helping each school to improve
Inspection only involved school inspectors	SQA system involves all key education stakeholders at every level (school, community, ward, district, regional and national)
Inspections infrequent with some remoter schools never getting inspected	Emphasis on continuous QA, with no schools left out
Reports were disseminated to a few key actors	Reports will be issued to all key education stakeholders in a timely way, including sharing information with parents and community
Quality Assurance was a top down process	Bottom up approach, focusing on 'in-school' and 'close-to-school' QA

Table 1: The Contrast between the Old and New Systems in Tanzania Is Summarized
Source: URT, 2018

5. Strategies Used to Enhance School Quality Assurance Functions in the Context of CBC

The inception of CBC changed the way inspection was perceived. Initially, the purpose of school inspection is not merely that of "inspection for compliance". Rather, inspection is conceptualized as a catalyst for continuous school improvement through a process of externally-regulated school self-governance. The approach to school quality assurance is not just about ensuring a minimal set of standards; it also relies on the belief that there is always room for improvement, regardless of the level of quality achieved (Brown, *et al*, 2016). The following are strategies used to enhance quality assurance.

5.1. Changing the Structure of Management and Administration of School Inspection

According to URT (2014), one of the traditional inspection system's flaws was the structure of inspection management and administration. The previous school inspection system reinforced the assumption that quality assurance was solely the duty of the inspectorate. This placed inspectors far away from the schools, school committees and boards, as well as Heads of schools and parents who were not held accountable enough on supervision and control of the quality of education. Tanzania adapted a new school management and administration structure in 2017 which replaced the old one (URT, 2017). School inspectors are supposed to work closely with school committee and boards, Head of Schools and the parents to make it a holistic system of inspection. The involvement of these key stakeholders is critical since they are more familiar with the local context than those in central government. As a result, they can provide in-depth knowledge, insightful observations, and critical criticism on how to improve schools (Brown, *et al.*, 2020). However, in internal quality assurance, the voice of key stakeholders such as parents is perceived with many limitations. Lack of time, institutional atmosphere, and teacher attitude, and fear of criticism, especially fear over potential decrease in the professional status and general wellbeing of teachers are all common barriers to increasing parental participation in internal quality assurance (Brown, *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, they may be discouraged due to perceptions that their children may be put into a vulnerable position if they take a critical stance on school policies or if they feel that they lack the resources to make their voices heard (Brown, *et al.*, 2020).

5.2. Increased Emphasis on School-Self Evaluation (SSE)

Traditionally, quality assurance was perceived as being the responsibility of the government, but schools are now required to implement their own school-based policies (Brown, *et al*, 2020). In order to improve the quality of education, there is now an expectation, or requirement, in many systems that schools monitor and improve what they deliver themselves.

In this new approach of school inspection, more emphasis is placed on school self-evaluation (SSE) as a required aspect of the inspection and schools' continuous review and improvement process (Simeonova, *et al*, 2020). Schools are bound by regulation to carry out SSE and prepare plans for school improvement. This is a way of giving schools the power to assess their performance against national standards or inspectorate-defined criteria, and to set goals for improvement. In this regard, inspectorates in some countries, such as Australia, Scotland and Ireland, have developed support materials as well as guidelines for schools to carry out self-evaluation (Simeonova, *et al*, 2020). Therefore, in these countries the

task of school capacity building to carry out SSE and school improvement planning to meet the legislative requirements has been added to the advisory role of a school inspector.

5.3. Increased Use of Statistical Conjectures on Student Performance

Every country, with a system of school inspection, tends to develop a set of school SSE instruments that schools are required to gather information such as students' academic performance, their participation in co-curricular activities, and the quality of teaching and learning (Brown, *et al*, 2016). In the case of Tanzania, for example, schools are required to use School Self-Evaluation Form (SSEF) to record a range of evidence, information, data, knowledge and understanding about the school which are important to evaluate the impact of actions, procedures and processes. As a consequence, they produce reports which hold schools accountable for a broad range of goals related to student achievement, teaching, organizational and leadership.

6. The Functions of QAOs as Defined in Legislation

According to the Web Page for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (http://moe.go.tz/sw/menu-item/idara-na-vitengo/idara/uthibiti-ubora-wa-shule#), the Quality Assurance Officers for secondary schools are mandated to perform specific activities as they are listed here below:

- Monitor the conduct of external quality assurance activities by Regional and District Levels Quality Assurance Offices in order to ensure compliance to policies, legislation, standards and guidelines related to the delivery of secondary education as well as special, adult and non-formal education at secondary levels;
- Prepare, analyze and upload data to the ESMIS and Open Government Partnership portal related to the Section in accordance with the agreed work flow and protocol;
- Monitor the carrying out of periodic school physical condition survey and recommend remedial measures so as to continuously improve the quality of the secondary education as well as special, adult and non-formal education at secondary levels school facilities as circumstances may require;
- Advise on matters arising from the quality assurance experience pertaining to secondary education as well as special, adult and non-formal education at secondary levels;
- Conduct research on best practices on quality assurance of the delivery of secondary education as well as special, adult and non-formal education at secondary levels and advise accordingly; and
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and implementation of internal quality assurance plans and services for secondary education as well as special, adult and non-formal education at secondary levels Technology (http://moe.go.tz/sw/menu-item/idara-na-vitengo/idara/uthibiti-ubora-wa-shule#).

Looking closely to the above functions, it is noted that the department of Quality assurance is hampered by inadequate legal provision which limits their developmental and improvement functions. It simply has an advising and supervisory role. Assuring quality is based not just on compliance and accountability, but it is also seen as having a developmental and improvement function since it equips schools with the ability to examine daily activity performance and drive change as they perform internal quality assurance. Quality development is achieved through the provision of staff development opportunities or short seminars, and the development of teaching and learning materials (Mmbando & Hongoke, 2010). Therefore, components of capacity building should be included in the quality assurance functions of the directorate.

Furthermore, there appears to be a missing link and functional role between the directorate and other educational institutions which are important in ensuring provision of quality education. There is no function specifying the involvement of inspectorate with Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), National Examination Council of Tanzania, book publishers and others on matters of quality of education. Clear and formal interaction between educational institutions, that have a direct or indirect role in the provision of quality education, should be acknowledged as a vital aspect of the quality assurance functions. For instance, when TIE organize in-service program for teachers to implement CBC, the quality directorate can ask to chip in and benefit from that opportunity and expertise that will ease their functions if it is clearly stated as one of their functions. But since it is not indicated in the stipulated functions as shown above, then it is difficult for them to ask and participate in that program. These shortcomings warranting for the re-engineering of quality assurance function particularly in the CBC context.

7. Challenges Experienced by QAOS in Supervising CBC

The performance of this department has been confronted with different challenges, thus failing to undertake its responsibilities efficiently. The following are the challenges:

7.1. Incompetence among QAOs

Among the challenges leading to irregular supervision of the CBC, there is incompetence among QAOs. Komba and Shukia (2017) point out that some of QAOs are weak and do not possess the requisite professional qualities to inspect others. Their understanding on CBC teaching approaches and methodologies is not clear, thus further training is needed (Komba & Shukia, 2017). Although there is clear policy of identifying suitable candidates to be recruited as QAOs based on education levels, teaching experience and track record, there is evidence from the field that despite the clear policy, unsuitable personnel find their way into the Inspectorate (Mmbando & Hongoke, 2010).

When the underperforming teacher becomes 'QAO' then the inspectorate loses out authority. As a result, if such a person goes to the field for inspection, he/she will only carry out superficial kind of inspections which do little

to boost the quality of services in schools. Another indication is their focus of inspection. It has been reported that QAOs have the tendency to focus on school buildings and administrative systems rather than on teaching and learning, with minimal attention to the identification and improvement of education standards. For instance, follow up and special inspections of secondary school during 2006-2007 did not address the issue of pedagogies and poor results in mathematics and Science subjects, rather it concentrated on administrative and infrastructures (URT, 2011, pg 16). This would be counteracted by organizing in-service training to QOAs which has not been done sufficiently.

7.2. Lack of In-Service Training

Most of the QOAs in Tanzania require in-service training in order to improve their working ability (Lyanga and Chen, 2020). The in-service training is quite important, especially when it comes to implementing CBC. In developed countries such as China, the ministry of education holds many seminars and workshops for school inspectors and teachers at all levels, from primary to secondary, in order to improve both the quality of inspection and the teaching skills of teachers (Ibid). In Tanzania, the in-service training program on CBC is only a few weeks long, resulting in superficial topics coverage and very little field practice. This limits QAOs' ability to carry out QA activities in compliance with CBC principles. Omorigho (2016) points out that the whole concept of training and retraining of QAOs is to make them self-reliant, productive, functional, competent and efficient in supervision.

7.3. Inspectorate Autonomy

According to Mmbando and Hongoke (2010), the Inspectorate, as a whole, lacks the authority to enforce the recommendations made to teachers during inspection. Even worse, once the school fails to act on the QAOs' recommendations, the inspectorate is powerless to hold them accountable. All in all, what QAOs do is to inspect schools, point out mistakes, make recommendations, and pass them to the School Committees or boards, district education Officers, and Regional Education Offices for further actions. Lyanga and Chen (2020) point out that QOAs, sometimes, pile new recommendations on top of a pile of numerous unworked-on recommendations making them and teachers believe that they are wasting their time. This discourages QOAs to engage into deep inspection of curricular activities, thus ending up doing "business as usual".

7.4. Insufficient Staffing

QA officers, in many African countries, do not visit secondary schools as it is required; instead they prefer visiting primary schools to execute their QA activities. This casts doubt on their capacity to carry out their responsibilities in the setting of CBC in secondary schools. Tanzania's QA department, for example, has 1185 officers, with 218 officers assigned to Secondary and Teachers' Colleges (URT, 2011). This affects execution of their functions. For instance, during 2015, the school quality assurance department carried out inspections in 2285 out of 4759 secondary school (URT, 2018, BEST, 2016). This is 48% of the inspected secondary schools. This also affects the amount of observation of classroom teaching by QOAs.

8. How Other Countries Improved Operations of QA in Secondary Schools?

8.1. Belgium

The issue of competencies and capacity for QAOs has been at the centre of the recruitment, selection and deployment policy in Belgium. For example, in order to employ new inspectorate member, an applicant should have right qualities from among serving teachers. He/she should have been serving at least eight (8) years as a teacher. The applicant of the post of QAO should take two tests (in written and oral form) to assess their thinking skills, assertiveness, communication skills, team spirit, flexibility, and organizational skills. Those selected for the post should attend a professional development for one full year to enable them acquire additional knowledge about inspection without which they cannot be allowed to undertake their responsibilities as a QAO (OECD, 2011).

8.2. Poland

Poland has a system of "pedagogical supervision" which focuses on core curriculum implementation, parents as school partners, students' activity, and social skills development (European Commission of education, 2018). The school heads are required to carry out a process of internal pedagogical supervision and evaluation which may be supported by teacher training development. The rationale behind this is to direct the school's attention to its own identified needs.

8.3. German

The German Steiner-Waldorf Schools have developed a teacher-led model rather than a top-down approach for internal quality assurance for their schools. The key principles are: improving the quality of teaching by individual feedback, advice to teachers, working in teams on pedagogical issues and stimulating individual professional development. The process is integrated into school life-it must be part of the core processes and not incur "additional time" to avoid creating burden (European Commission of education, 2018).

9. Lessons That Tanzania Can Learn from Other Countries in Order to Improve QA Operations in Secondary Schools

Based on the above examples, Tanzania can learn the following from the above countries:

- Introducing a mandatory full one year professional training on Quality assurance matters for new QOAs.
- The Government of Tanzania through the ministry of Education should coordinate the currently employed QOAs' study visits to other countries on exchange programs to enable them acquire additional knowledge and experience about quality assurance.
- Strengthening internal quality assurance by combining both pedagogical supervision and teacher-led model for effective implementation of the CBC.
- Collective reflection between key stakeholders in education should be enhanced. This includes partnership between Teachers Resource centers, National Examination Council of Tanzania, Tanzania Institute of education. Clear and formal interaction between educational institutions, that have a direct or indirect role in the provision of quality education, should be acknowledged as a vital aspect of the quality assurance functions.
- The functions of the directorate should be restated by including not only advisory role but also developmental and improvement function such as carrying in-service training programmes.
- The government should ensure that the directorate is well-staffed and allocated with necessary resources for effective execution of the functions.

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