

**CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES ON  
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS IN KAKONKO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that they have read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled, “**Contribution of School Quality Assurance Practices on Students’ Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kakonko District Council**”. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Master of Education in Quality Management (MED-QM) of the Open University of Tanzania

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I **Kashirira Elias Kashirira** declare that, the work presented in this Dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Education in Quality Management (MED-QM) of the Open University of Tanzania



.....  
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**Date**

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. ELIAS; my daughters, Magdalena, Rehema, Cassandra, and Abgael; my beautiful wife, Agnes; and my entire family. Your innate kindness and essential assistance kept me motivated as I studied. May God bless you.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kankoko District Council. Three objectives guided the study; first was to identify school quality assurance practices implemented in public Secondary schools in Kakonko District Council, second was to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of how quality assurance practices affect academic performance in Kakonko district council in public secondary schools in Kakonko and third to identify the challenges faced in implementing quality assurance practices in public primary schools in Kakonko district council. The study was guided by Total Quality Management theory. The study used a qualitative research approach and a single case study design. The study was conducted at Kankoko district council, where the sample size was 26 participants. The sample size included secondary school teachers, headmasters, and school quality assurers. The data collection method included a focused group discussion and a semi-structured interview. Data were analysed thematically. Findings indicated that QA practices included school visits, provision of feedback, stakeholder engagement, professional support, and follow-up. Stakeholders perceived QA practices as indirectly improving academic performance through enhanced teaching quality, greater accountability, student-centered improvements, and professional development opportunities. However, these benefits are constrained by irregular QA visits, limited feedback, and inadequate monitoring. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should ensure enough financial and logistical resources for quality assurance officers to visit schools regularly and thoroughly. Structured follow-up procedures must be established to implement school inspection recommendations effectively.

**Key words:** School quality assurance practices, student academic Performance, Public secondary Schools, Head of school and Quality assurance officer (SQAQO)

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### **ABBREVIATION**

CSEE	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
DED	District Executive Director
DEO	District Education Officer
DSQAO	District School Quality Assurance Officer
GPA	Grade Point Average
Kakonko DC	Kakonko District Council
NECTA	National Examination Council of Tanzania
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISSA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TQM	Total Quality Management
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This research examines the impact of quality assurance practices in educational institutions on students' academic performance in public secondary schools within Kakonko Council. This section outlines the study's background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, scope, limitations, and operational definitions of key terms.

#### **1.2 Background to the problem**

Academic achievement in public secondary schools is a key indicator of students' ability to meet educational standards. It predicts future success in employment, higher education, and overall life outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Students who perform well academically typically demonstrate enhanced cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. These competencies promote personal growth and resilience and contribute to societal development by nurturing a skilled and informed citizenry. Academic achievement also boosts students' motivation, self-confidence, and preparedness for the demands of adult life. Moreover, evidence links strong academic performance to improved long-term economic prospects, reduced poverty rates, and increased social mobility (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Despite its importance, secondary school academic performance remains a global concern. A significant number of students worldwide fail to meet expected educational standards (OECD, 2020). International assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which evaluates students'

reading, mathematics, and science abilities, have revealed declining performance in several countries. For instance, in Spain, PISA results from 2022 showed a noticeable decline in all three disciplines compared to 2015, and performance was generally lower than in 2012 and 2015 (PISA, 2022). These findings point to a persistent global issue in maintaining educational standards. In addition to that, this trend is alarming because secondary education is a critical bridge between foundational learning and higher education or vocational training.

International large-scale assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered by the OECD, offer valuable insights into global education performance. PISA assesses 15-year-old students in key domains: reading, mathematics, and science, to evaluate what they know and their ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. These assessments are widely used as benchmarks for assessing the quality and equity of education systems across countries.

The most recent PISA results from 2022 highlight a concerning global pattern. In Spain, for instance, student performance declined in all three core subjects, reading, mathematics, and science, compared to 2015 results. Even more troubling, these scores were lower than those recorded in 2012, indicating a consistent downward trend over time (PISA, 2022). This deterioration may reflect broader challenges such as outdated curricula, insufficient teacher training, overburdened classrooms, or the effects of disruptions caused by events like the COVID-19 pandemic, which heavily impacted instructional time and learning continuity.

Furthermore, this is not an isolated case. Many other countries participating in PISA have also reported stagnating or declining scores. These findings underscore the difficulty that even high-income or moderately resourced nations face in sustaining educational quality and adapting to evolving learner needs in the 21st century. The global nature of this problem signals an urgent need for education systems to re-evaluate their instructional methods, invest in teacher professional development, and ensure equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all students.

The situation is often more acute in lower- and middle-income countries due to limited educational resources, large class sizes, and social inequalities. For instance, in Bangladesh, Shahjahan (2021) reported that approximately 88.4% of secondary school students achieved a GPA of less than 2.5, which indicates a widespread lack of mastery in core subjects. The high rate of underachievement points to deep-rooted challenges such as poverty, poor infrastructure, untrained teachers, and limited parental involvement. Similarly, in Oman, Manizhen (2016) identified that family background, ineffective teaching strategies, and weak community support were among the key contributors to low academic outcomes. These cases reveal that a combination of student-level, institutional, and societal factors is at play in shaping academic performance globally.

Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly affected by persistent academic underperformance in secondary education. Countries across the region face various structural and policy-related challenges that hinder student achievement. In South Africa, for example, data from the 2022 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations



revealed that fewer than 40% of candidates met the minimum criteria for university admission. This low pass rate suggests ongoing issues with curriculum delivery, learning support systems, and socioeconomic disparities that affect learners' access to quality education.

Similarly, the 2022 General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (GSECE) results in Ethiopia showed that only 47.6% of students achieved passing grades, with rural areas performing significantly worse than urban counterparts (MoE Ethiopia, 2023). This disparity highlights the uneven distribution of educational resources and qualified teachers between regions. In Ghana, secondary schools are burdened by overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of trained teachers, and insufficient instructional materials, all of which reduce the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and limit students' academic potential.

Tanzania is no exception to these challenges. According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT, 2014), national efforts have focused on expanding access to secondary education by building more schools at the ward level and implementing policies that reduce education-related costs for families. While these initiatives align with the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, which aims to eradicate illiteracy and promote inclusive education, academic performance at the secondary level remains unsatisfactory. The MoEVT set a performance target that 70% of students should score within Divisions I to III in national examinations, yet this benchmark has not been met in most regions. UNICEF reports from 2016 and 2017 further confirm that while Tanzania has made progress in increasing enrolment,

the quality of learning remains inconsistent, and students' academic outcomes are still far from optimal.

Fasasi and Oyeniran (2014) attribute some of these shortcomings to ineffective school leadership and poor resource management. When school administrators fail to adequately plan, allocate, and supervise the use of resources, the quality of education delivery is negatively impacted. This suggests systemic reforms must address access, management, and instructional quality.

Within Tanzania, the Kakonko District Council (DC) exemplifies the challenges in public secondary schools. Despite government efforts to improve education infrastructure and reduce barriers to access, academic performance in this district remains worryingly low. According to the District Education Office (DEO, 2024), many students in Kakonko fail to meet national educational standards due to several interrelated factors, including the shortage of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and socio-economic hardship among students and their families.

The persistent low performance in national examinations has raised serious concerns among educators, parents, and policymakers. One of the key indicators of this problem is the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) results over the past three years. The table below illustrates performance trends in Kakonko DC between 2021 and 2023.

**Table 1.1: CSEE Results for Public Secondary Schools in Kakonko DC from 2021 to 2023**

YEAR	Students who sat for exams	DIV I	Percent	DIV II	Percent	DIV III	Percent	DIV IV & 0	Percent
2021	1217	48	3.94%	194	15.9%	202	16.5%	773	63.51%
2022	1376	52	3.77%	133	9.66%	211	15.33%	965	70.13%
2023	1305	60	4.59%	173	13.25%	256	19.61%	810	62.06%

**Source** (NECTA, 2021, 2022, & 2023).

As shown in the table, most students in Kakonko each year are placed in Division IV or receive a failing score (Division 0), significantly reducing their eligibility for A-Level education or technical training. In 2022, over 70% of students fell into this lowest performance category. Even though there was a slight improvement in 2023, with a small increase in students attaining Divisions I to III, the overall results still indicate a high academic failure rate. This trend reflects deep-rooted challenges within the district's education system and suggests that poor performance will continue without strategic intervention.

Efforts by the Tanzanian government to improve education have included expanding schools to the ward level and policies aimed at reducing educational costs. These initiatives are aligned with Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, which aims to eliminate illiteracy and promote equitable access to education (UNICEF, 2016 & 2017). However, as Fasasi and Oyeniran (2014) point out, school administrators' ineffective organization and poor resource management hinder progress toward quality education.

Despite those efforts, the academic performance in public secondary schools in the Kakonko District of Tanzania remains particularly problematic. According to the District Education Office (DEO, 2024), many students fail to meet academic

expectations due to a lack of educational resources, ineffective teaching strategies, and socioeconomic challenges that affect learning environments. These challenges hamper efforts to improve education quality and highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and robust quality assurance mechanisms.

The causes of poor academic performance in secondary schools are varied and often interconnected. Key student-related factors include lack of study habits, poor time management, absenteeism, and low motivation to succeed (Manizhen, 2016; Eldridge, 2012). In addition, low self-esteem and test anxiety (Kendal, 2018) further hinder students' academic potential. Pedagogical issues such as limited hands-on learning opportunities and inadequate teaching methods (Mohammad, 2015) also play a critical role. On the systemic side, poverty, financial constraints, lack of parental support, and high student absenteeism (Mallika, 2022) further exacerbate the problem. These multifaceted challenges necessitate coordinated and sustained interventions.

One promising avenue for addressing these issues is the implementation of strong quality assurance practices in schools. Quality assurance in education refers to systematic monitoring, curriculum review, teacher assessment, and evaluation of teaching and learning practices (MacBeath, 2006). These practices help ensure compliance with educational standards and allow schools to identify and rectify issues in a timely and efficient manner. Moreover, quality assurance enhances teacher accountability, supports professional development, and helps optimize the use of educational resources, contributing to better learning outcomes.

Research supports the value of quality assurance mechanisms. For example, Makiya et al. (2022) conducted studies on public primary schools in Tanzania's Arusha Region, emphasizing increased government investment in quality assurance. Their recommendations included better funding, sufficient recruitment of qualified quality assurance officers, and strong follow-up mechanisms to implement recommended changes. Another study highlighted the importance of school visits, prompt feedback, and active teacher involvement in ensuring quality (Makiya et al., 2022). These practices improve monitoring and foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

School leadership and management are fundamental pillars in determining the effectiveness of educational institutions. Anshebo (2020) stresses the importance of delegating authority effectively in public primary schools, observing that inclusive and participatory leadership styles enhance teacher commitment and promote institutional efficiency. In the case of secondary schools, particularly in Kakonko District Council, the role of leadership and quality assurance in influencing students' academic achievement remains less evident and inadequately examined. Unlike primary schools, secondary institutions grapple with more complex administrative, instructional, and managerial demands. Yet, there is limited understanding of how school quality assurance practices specifically affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in this context. This knowledge gap provides a strong justification for undertaking the present study.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Secondary education is expected to provide learners with the essential knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal development, further studies, and future careers (Liem, 2019). However, in Tanzania, academic performance in public secondary schools continues to raise concern. According to the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA, 2023), nearly 35% of Form Four candidates in Kigoma Region, including Kakonko District, scored below Division IV, indicating persistent underachievement. If left unaddressed, this situation will weaken the effectiveness of school quality assurance practices in enhancing students' performance in Tanzanian public secondary schools. Consequently, limiting students' opportunities for higher education diminishes their competitiveness in the job market, reinforcing cycles of poverty and unemployment within Kakonko district and the wider region.

The Government of Tanzania has made notable efforts to improve secondary education by supplying textbooks, recruiting qualified teachers, offering professional development, and expanding infrastructure such as classrooms and science laboratories in districts like Kakonko (URT, 2021). Alongside these efforts, broader reforms, including the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative and the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP), were introduced to strengthen accountability and raise learning standards (World Bank, 2022; MoEST, 2023). Nevertheless, despite these measures, student performance in public secondary schools across Kakonko District remains poor, suggesting that the anticipated outcomes of these interventions have not been fully achieved (NECTA, 2023).

Various studies have investigated the role of school quality assurance (SQA) in improving learning outcomes. For instance, Philibert (2022) in Ilala, Phillymon (2020) in Misenyi, and Andronesia (2017) in Mbulu analyzed the relationship between quality assurance measures and students' academic performance. Although their findings offer valuable insights, little is known about how SQA practices influence academic achievement in Kakonko District, creating a contextual gap that requires further study. Therefore, the current study sought to explore the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

##### **1.4.1 General objective of the study**

The main aim of this study was to explore the contribution of school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kankoko District Council.

##### **1.4.2 Specific objectives of the study**

The following objectives guided this study.

- i. To identify school quality assurance practices implemented in public Secondary schools in Kakonko District Council.
- ii. To examine the stakeholders' perceptions of how quality assurance practices affect academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko DC.
- iii. To identify the challenges faced in implementing quality assurance practices in public primary schools in Kakonko DC.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study;

- i. What quality assurance practices for schools are implemented in public secondary schools in Kankonko DC?
- ii. How do stakeholders perceive the impact of quality assurance practices in schools on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kankonko DC?
- iii. What challenges are faced in implementing quality assurance in public secondary schools in Kankonko District?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study's findings have the potential to significantly enhance students' academic performance in public secondary schools. This study aims to identify the impact of school quality assurance, thereby highlighting effective strategies for enhancing teaching and learning processes and improving educational outcomes. The results will provide critical insights into how quality assurance measures, including monitoring and evaluation, promote accountability, professional development, and a supportive educational environment.

The findings of this study aim to elucidate the effective implementation and enhancement of existing education policies to address students' needs. This study's findings aim to assist policymakers in developing or improving policies that align with quality assurance practices, thereby ensuring compliance and enhancing the overall efficiency of the education system. The findings of this study are anticipated to expand our knowledge about the role of quality assurance in educational



improvement. Parents will develop confidence in the system as evidence demonstrates that consistent monitoring and evaluation improve learning outcomes. The study emphasizes professional development opportunities and constructive feedback that educators can employ to improve their practices. Policymakers should utilize the findings of this study to identify gaps and allocate resources more effectively, thereby ensuring equitable educational opportunities.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study was carried out in public secondary schools within Kakonko District Council to explore the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance. The study involved secondary school teachers, headmasters, and quality assurance officers, who are directly responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating quality assurance measures in schools.

### **1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study included the reluctance of some participants to engage fully, particularly in completing questionnaires. Time constraints, limited interest, or personal preferences could have influenced this hesitancy. To mitigate this, the researcher assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity and informed them that the collected data would be used exclusively for academic purposes. Additionally, flexible timelines and alternative methods for questionnaire completion were provided to accommodate participants' schedules. On the other hand, the study was limited to public secondary schools within Kakonko District

Council and involved secondary school teachers, headmasters, and school quality assurance officers

### **1.9 Delimitations of the study**

Kakonko DC was the exclusive focus of the study. The location is in Kigoma region. The selection of Kakonko council is due to its numerous Secondary schools. The expectation is to gather sufficient data to achieve the desired objective. This study examines the impact of quality assurance practices in schools on students' academic performance, acknowledging that various factors, including national education policy, working conditions, and broader political, economic, social, and cultural influences, also shape academic outcomes. Given the extensive size of the target study population, including the entire population in the research is impractical. Consequently, a representative sample of the intended population will be utilized.

### **1.10 Operations definitions of key terms**

**School Quality Assurance:** This refers to systematic processes for monitoring, evaluating, and improving teaching and learning practices to ensure educational standards are met, foster accountability, and promote continuous improvement within schools.

This study defines **students' academic performance** as the quantifiable results of educational achievements, encompassing grades, test scores, and overall mastery of curriculum objectives, which indicate their knowledge, skills, and competencies across different subjects.

**Public secondary schools** are defined in this study as government-funded educational establishments that offer secondary-level instruction to students from various socioeconomic backgrounds. They usually adhere to a national curriculum and are run by state or local education authorities.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This study established the critical foundation for the contribution of quality assurance in schools to students' academic performance in public secondary schools. This part consisted of the following sections: theoretical literature review, empirical analysis of relevant studies, conceptual framework, research gap, and chapter summary.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

##### **2.2.1 Theories Which Relate to the Study**

##### **Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT)**

This study was guided by the Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT), pioneered by W. Edwards Deming in the 1950s. While the theory was initially intended to enhance industrial processes, it has since been adapted to the education sector, where it serves as a framework for examining how institutional practices shape performance outcomes. The core principles of the theory emphasize continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and systematic process management as essential elements of success. Within the school environment, TQMT underscores the shared responsibility of heads of schools, teachers, students, and quality assurance officers in maintaining and advancing academic standards. It advocates for leadership commitment, transparent communication, evidence-based decision-making, and ongoing evaluation principles that underpin quality assurance practices such as classroom supervision, teacher appraisal, curriculum review, and structured feedback.

The theory further posits that student performance emerges from a well-coordinated system rather than individual efforts alone. It therefore stresses the importance of strengthening leadership, teaching methodologies, and the management of resources. Moreover, it highlights that even in contexts with limited resources, schools can achieve improved outcomes through effective planning, accountability, and fostering a culture of continuous development. These propositions align closely with the focus of this study, which examines the role of school quality assurance practices in enhancing students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council.

### **Strengths of the Theory**

A key strength of the Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT) lies in its emphasis on continuous improvement and collective responsibility, which directly aligns with the focus of this study on school quality assurance practices and their impact on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council. By promoting shared accountability, the theory encourages a school culture that prioritizes academic excellence, systematic internal evaluation, and optimal utilization of available resources. It facilitates the establishment of structured mechanisms to monitor progress toward institutional goals, allowing for early identification of weaknesses and timely corrective actions. Moreover, TQMT fosters collaboration among school leaders, teachers, and students, enhancing institutional cohesion, consistency, and overall quality. Its participatory approach also strengthens staff morale and motivation, improves teaching effectiveness, and ultimately

contributes to better student academic outcomes, demonstrating a direct link between quality assurance practices and educational performance.

### **Weaknesses of the Theory**

Although the Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT) offers valuable insights, it presents certain limitations when applied to public secondary schools. Developed primarily for industrial contexts, some of its concepts—especially those related to standardization and quantitative performance assessment—may not fully address education's complex nature, where measurable results and intangible factors such as emotional well-being, creativity, and social development shape student outcomes. Implementing TQMT effectively in schools also demands substantial investment in training, time, and resources, challenges that are particularly pronounced in under-resourced public institutions. Moreover, resistance to change, insufficient professional development, and limited institutional capacity can hinder the complete application of the theory, potentially restricting the impact of quality assurance practices on improving students' academic performance.

### **Relevance of the Theory to the Study**

Despite its limitations, the Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT) remains highly applicable to this study on the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council. The theory provides a robust framework for understanding how systematic monitoring, performance evaluation, and active collaboration among stakeholders' school heads, teachers, students, and quality assurance officers can

enhance academic outcomes. Its focus on process evaluation, regular feedback, and alignment of school goals directly supports the study's objective of assessing the impact of quality assurance practices on student performance. In the context of Kakonko District, where schools often face challenges such as limited resources, weak instructional supervision, and gaps in leadership, TQMT offers practical guidance for establishing sustainable mechanisms to improve teaching and learning. Additionally, the theory emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making, which can guide schools in identifying areas of instructional weakness, prioritizing interventions, and allocating resources more effectively.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

### **2.3.1 School quality assurance implemented in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council.**

Kahlenberg and Potter (2020) conducted a study in the United States that examined mechanisms through which schools ensure compliance with established quality standards. Their investigation, which employed multiple research methods, highlighted the role of accountability in sustaining educational quality and improving institutional performance. We collected the information through a questionnaire and a conversation. With the help of SPSS software, content analysis was used to look at the data from interviews, and descriptive analysis was used to look at the data from surveys.

According to the results, laws like “No Child Left Behind” and “Every Pupil Succeeds Act” force schools to use strict tests to measure their performance. The study by Kahlenberg and Potter on accountability in education focused on the role of

policy frameworks and standardized tests. Still, it didn't detail how quality assurance methods affect students' performance in school. The information gap is caused by things like performance specific to each student that have not been directly analyzed. So, the proposed study filled this gap by looking at how methods for ensuring school quality affect students' grades. This process gave us a more in-depth, student-centered look at how accountability works.

Abrokwah and Essuman (2021) examined the effectiveness of quality assurance in Ghana's public secondary schools. The research utilized a qualitative methodology. The researchers collected data through interviews and focus group discussions. We employed content analysis to scrutinize the data. The study indicated that quality assurance mechanisms, including school inspections and the formulation of school improvement plans, were instituted to uphold standards; however, their efficacy was undermined by inconsistent implementation and insufficient resources. Students indicated a lack of adequate training in implementing quality assurance practices. Abrokwah and Essuman conducted a study evaluating the effectiveness of school quality assurance in secondary schools through a qualitative approach emphasizing administrative practices and school inspections. The study did not directly examine the effects of these quality assurance practices on student performance. This study examines the impact of quality assurance in schools on students' academic performance. The results will enhance understanding of the relationship between school quality assurance and students' academic performance in secondary schools. A study by Mbilinyi and Kileo (2019) in Tanzania examined school quality assurance and its effects on primary education. The research utilized a mixed-



methods approach. Data were collected via questionnaire and interview. The data collected from interviews underwent content analysis, whereas the data from questionnaires were analyzed descriptively using SPSS software. The findings indicated that the Ministry of Education, Vocational and Training implemented several quality assurance practices, such as regular inspections, teacher evaluations, and curriculum assessments, to regulate the quality of education delivered. Mbilinyi and Kileo's study on school quality assurance and its impact on quality education did not directly examine students' academic performance as a primary outcome of quality assurance mechanisms. This study examined the effect of quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in primary schools. This study aims to enhance understanding by concentrating on outcomes specific to students within the quality assurance framework.

### **2.3.2 Stakeholders' Perceptions of How Quality Assurance Practices Affect Academic Performance in Kakonko District Council**

Kufi (2023) examined the quality of school-based practices in enhancing secondary school students' academic achievement in Ethiopia. The study employed a mixed-methods design, utilizing questionnaires and interviews for data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques with the aid of SPSS software, while qualitative data underwent content analysis. The findings demonstrated that regular assessment of students' academic progress facilitated the early identification of learning gaps, enabling timely pedagogical interventions that improved educational outcomes.

Despite these valuable insights, Kufi's study concentrated predominantly on school-based practices without sufficiently interrogating the broader framework of school quality assurance mechanisms and their direct influence on academic performance. Consequently, the current study seeks to address this conceptual gap by specifically exploring the contribution of formal school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance within public secondary schools in Kakonko DC.

Similarly, Kagochi (2022) investigated the influence of internal school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kenya. Like Kufi, Kagochi employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics supported by SPSS, while qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The study revealed that practices such as classroom observations, routine monitoring, and evaluations significantly positively impacted students' academic performance.

However, while Kagochi's study expertly demonstrated the influence of internal quality assurance practices, it predominantly relied on a mixed-methods approach with a greater emphasis on quantitative measures. The proposed study, by contrast, intends to adopt a purely qualitative research design to allow for a deeper, more nuanced exploration of how school quality assurance practices are perceived and operationalized in enhancing students' academic performance in Kakonko DC. The proposed study aims to address the methodological gap left by Kagochi's investigation by offering rich, detailed, and context-sensitive insights.

Joseph and Mrema (2024) conducted an empirical study examining the impact of school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in Tanzania. Their research employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews, with quantitative data analyzed using descriptive statistics (via SPSS) and qualitative data subjected to content analysis. Their findings indicated a significant positive relationship between implementing school quality assurance practices and improving students' academic achievement. Nonetheless, Joseph and Mrema's study was geographically confined to Mafia District in the Coast Region of Tanzania. Given the diverse socio-economic, cultural, and educational landscapes across Tanzania's regions, it is plausible that the dynamics influencing the effectiveness of quality assurance practices may vary considerably. Thus, the proposed study aims to fill this contextual gap by examining how the school.

Quality assurance practices contribute to academic performance within the distinct socio-cultural and educational context of Kakonko DC in Kigoma Region, which differs noticeably from that of the Coast Region.

In synthesizing these prior studies, it becomes apparent that while considerable progress has been made in exploring the nexus between quality assurance practices and academic performance, there remain essential conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps. Existing studies have either narrowly focused on school-based practices without attaching them firmly within the broader quality assurance framework (Kufi, 2023), relied predominantly on quantitative methods without sufficiently capturing stakeholders' lived experiences and perceptions (Kagochi,

2022), or been conducted in different geographical and socio-economic contexts (Joseph and Mrema, 2024). Accordingly, the present study seeks to advance the field by focusing specifically on stakeholders' perceptions of the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance, employing a qualitative approach to capture deeper contextual realities within public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council.

### **2.3.3 Challenges faced in implementing school quality assurance practices in public secondary schools**

Peter (2017) examines higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing its status, challenges, opportunities, and effective practices in the USA. The research utilized a mixed-methods methodology. The data were gathered via questionnaire and interview. We studied the numeric data through descriptive statistics using SPSS software and examined the qualitative data through content analysis.

The findings showed that a lack of training in modern quality assurance skills, low motivation among SQAOs, teachers' unwillingness to follow SQAOs' advice, and a limited time to carry out quality assurance tasks made it hard for SQAOs to do their jobs. The similarity and difference between Peter's study and the proposed study are that Peter's study emphasized the challenges in implementing SQAP. In contrast, using a qualitative methodology, the proposed study investigates how quality assurance in schools affects students' academic performance. The idea aims to address the gap by offering comprehensive insights into the direct impact of quality assurance techniques on academic achievement in secondary schools.

Watsulu and Simatwa (2011) investigated the challenges and opportunities pertaining to quality assurance and standards within the context of Kenya. The investigator utilized a descriptive survey design and adopted a mixed-method approach. The methods employed for data collection included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The quantitative data underwent analysis through descriptive statistics facilitated by Microsoft Excel, whereas the qualitative data were examined thematically. The investigation uncovered several obstacles confronting school quality assurance: insufficient collaboration from certain educators, instances of missing financial documentation, and the infrequent execution of school assessments, which fell short of the necessary frequency. The investigation conducted by Watsulu and Simatwa primarily examined the challenges and opportunities associated with quality assurance standards in Kenya, without establishing a direct correlation between these practices and students' academic performance. Consequently, the proposed study aims to address this gap in knowledge by specifically analyzing the impact of quality assurance practices on academic performance, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of their effectiveness in enhancing students' educational outcomes in Kakonko District Council.

Mritha and Onyango (2022) examined the challenges encountered by quality assurance officers in schools aimed at improving academic performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected via questionnaire and interview. Descriptive statistics were

employed to analyze quantitative data, whereas qualitative data were examined through content analysis.

The findings indicate that SQAOs encounter challenges, including insufficient motivation, inadequate quality assurance skills, and a restricted timeframe for conducting quality assurance activities. The research undertaken by Mritha and Onyango examined the obstacles encountered by quality assurance officers in educational institutions to improve academic performance, emphasizing barriers while not explicitly correlating practices with quantifiable student outcomes. The proposed study will explore the direct impact of quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The proposed study contributes to this gap by moving from just finding problems to assessing how well certain practices work, which will offer helpful advice for improving academic performance through quality assurance practices.

## **2.4 Research Gap**

After reviewing numerous studies conducted worldwide by various researchers, the list of notable scholars encompasses Kagochi (2023), Joseph and Mrema (2024), Mritha and Onyango (2023), Watsulu and Simatwa (2011), Mbilinyi and Kileo (2019), Mganga and Lekule (2022), Katete (2023), Makiya et al. (2022), Wasanga (2014), Medard and Mwila (2022), and Peter (2017). Nonetheless, while the scholars mentioned above have provided valuable insights into the study's problem, they have overlooked the impact of quality assurance in schools on students' academic performance in secondary education. The proposed study seeks to address the identified gaps by investigating how school quality assurance affects students'

academic performance in public secondary schools within the Kakonko District Council.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlined the methodological elements regarding the impact of practices to ensure school quality on students' academic performance in the Kakonko District Council public secondary schools. The components encompass the research paradigm, approach, design, study area, target population, sampling procedures, and sample size. The document outlines the research instruments, assesses the study's trustworthiness, details the data analysis plan, and addresses ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

This study's interpretivism paradigm guided the rational selection of research methodology components. The interpretivism paradigm was selected because it focuses on understanding the meaning and experiences of individuals within the social setting. This paradigm allows researchers to explore how teachers, students, and administrators perceive and interpret quality assurance practices, recognizing that each participant's subjective experiences influence academic performance. Interpretivism enables a profound understanding of the complex, context-specific nature of quality assurance in schools. This paradigm allows a researcher to gain further depth by seeking experiences, interpretations, and perceptions about the contribution of quality assurance in schools to students' academic performance in public secondary schools to uncover reality.



### **3.3 Research Approach**

This study adopts a qualitative approach. Collecting, presenting, and analyzing data from various respondents and sources in this study employed a qualitative approach. The researcher has chosen a qualitative approach due to the nature of the proposed study, which seeks to explore the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to capture the feelings, views, interpretations, and narration of the study topic and to make the qualitative data collection possible; semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were conducted with the key respondents (Creswell, 2018). Since qualitative research strives for a deep understanding of the participants in a natural setting, the current researcher went to the participants and the sites to collect data on the contribution of school quality assurance practices to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in a natural setting.

### **3.4 Research Design**

This study employed a single case study design to examine how school quality assurance practices influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District. This design was selected for its strength in providing a thorough, context-sensitive understanding of educational issues within their real-life setting. Focusing on schools chosen within one district allowed for an in-depth and concentrated analysis. The approach facilitated the collection of rich qualitative data from key stakeholders, including teachers, headmasters, and quality assurance officers, capturing their perspectives, experiences, and practices concerning school quality assurance and its effects on student outcomes. It offered an interpretive lens

to explore the intricate relationships between school leadership, instructional quality, and student performance that quantitative methods alone might not fully reveal.

### **3.5 Area of the Study**

This study was conducted in the Kakonko District Council in the Kigoma region. The unsatisfactory performance of CSEE students from 2021 to 2023 led to the selection of Kakonko DC. For example, in CSEE 2021, 63.51% of students achieved division four and zero; in CSEE 2022, 70.13% of students attained division four and zero; and in CSEE 2023, 62.06% of students scored division four and zero (NECTA, 2021, 2022, & 2023).

The statistics reveal that the students' performance in the CSEE has been suboptimal. Furthermore, Kakonko Council was chosen due to the limited understanding of how school quality assurance practices influence students' academic performance; thus, this study addresses the existing knowledge gap. Based on the provided information, this study investigates the impact of quality assurance practices in schools on the academic performance of public secondary schools.

### **3.6 Population of the Study**

Population refers to the entire group of interest from which a sample is drawn (Mark, 2015). This study involved 222 participants from public secondary schools in Kakonko District, comprising 18 school heads, 200 teachers, and 4 School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs). These groups were purposefully selected for their pivotal roles in implementing and monitoring school quality assurance practices. School heads provided insights on leadership and decision-making, teachers

contributed perspectives on instructional delivery and student learning, and SQAOs offered external oversight aligned with national education standards, including this diverse population ensured a comprehensive understanding of quality assurance practices from multiple angles, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

### 3.7 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This study's target population consisted of 219 individuals, from which a representative sample was selected. According to the guidelines established by Mugenda and Mugenda (1987), a sample size of 10% to 30% is considered adequately representative when the target population is under 10,000. The study utilized a sample size of 26 participants, representing approximately 20.7% of the total population. The sample size was deemed sufficient to ensure both the feasibility of data collection and the depth of the information gathered. Table 3.1 illustrates the distribution of sampled participants among different respondent categories:

**Table 3.1: Sample Size Distribution**

S/N	Category of Respondents	Respondents	Percentage %
1	Heads of Schools	5	27.7
2	Teachers	20	10
	School Quality assurance offer (SQAQO)	1	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20.9</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Construct (2025)

### **3.8 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling techniques are strategies used to systematically select a subset of individuals from a larger population for participation in a study (Kothari, 2004). This study employed purposive and convenience sampling methods to select participants, consistent with acquiring rich, relevant, and context-specific information.

#### **3.8.1 Purposive Sampling Technique**

Sampling techniques are strategies used to systematically select a subset of individuals from a larger population for participation in a study (Kothari, 2004). This study employed purposive and convenience sampling methods to select participants, consistent with acquiring rich, relevant, and context-specific information.

#### **3.8.2 Convenient Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which units are chosen for the sample based on their accessibility to the researcher (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The choice of units may result from geographical proximity, temporal availability, or willingness to engage in the research. Convenience sampling, often inadvertent sampling, is a form of non-random sampling. In this study, twenty (20) teachers were chosen using a convenience selection method. This study employed a convenience sample strategy to identify individuals who were readily available, accessible, and willing to participate, conserving time and resources. The study engaged teachers due to their accessibility and representation of the directly affected population, facilitating more efficient and practical data collection.

### **3.8.3 Data collection methods and Instruments**

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were the primary methods used in this study. Various methods were used to triangulate data sources, improving the validity, breadth, and depth of the information gathered.

#### **3.8.1.1 Interviews**

The semi-structured interview schedule utilized interview guides to collect in-depth information from the study respondents regarding their views and perceptions on how school quality impacts students' academic performance in public secondary schools. We administered semi-structured interviews to the heads of secondary schools and the District School Quality Education Officer (DSQAO). The semi-structured interview is flexible enough to allow the researcher to seek clarification from the study participants to enrich the study. The conversations from the study participants were carried out through note-taking techniques. The digital audio recorder recorded them to keep the information's reliability and validity and not miss any important information from the research participants when the researcher transcribes the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Kothari, 2019).

#### **3.8.1.2 Focus group discussion method**

Teachers in secondary schools were surveyed through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). FGDs, as described by Patton (2002), encourage lively interactions among participants with comparable backgrounds, encouraging the exchange of ideas and the creation of deep, group insights. When it came to gathering varied viewpoints on

the execution and perceived effectiveness of school development plans and infrastructure upgrades, this approach was constructive.

We held a structured discussion lasting roughly an hour in each of the five focus groups comprising four teachers. For the convenience and privacy of the participants, the discussions were held in private rooms within the individual schools. To promote informed participation, the researcher trained participants on the study's goals before it started. By manually noting participant contributions and recording audio, we ensured all relevant data was captured for further research.

### **3.9 Data analysis Procedure**

This research employed thematic data analysis to examine qualitative data. The researcher analyzed the data to identify recurring themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions. This process consists of five steps, as Braum and Clarke (2006) proposed, beginning with the researcher conducting a comprehensive review of the information and categorizing the study themes. Secondly, the researcher organized the data into subtopics of the study based on these themes. The researcher systematically reviewed the common patterns within each category to extract relevant information and eliminate redundancies. The researcher quantitatively validated the themes by analyzing their frequencies of occurrence.

The researcher analyzed the themes expressed by respondents to derive meaning, utilizing recordings and quotations in some instances to document their experiences and emotions. This study used thematic data analysis to explore the impact of School Quality assurance practices on student academic performance in public secondary

schools in Kakonko DC. Consequently, the researcher conducted a systematic data analysis, correlating the frequencies of themes with specific content areas to ensure accuracy and enrich the overall significance of the study.

### **3.10 Trustworthiness of Data**

The criteria set within a selected research paradigm generally assess researchers according to their beliefs and values. How can a reader ascertain the validity and reliability of findings derived from qualitative methods? This paper highlights the necessity of employing appropriate language for a selected paradigm. This study has chosen the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivists and constructivists use language to judge the quality of qualitative research, emphasizing trustworthiness, which includes four parts: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability, unlike the validity, reliability, objectivity, and replication found in the positivist paradigm.

#### **3.10.1 Credibility**

In this study, the researcher utilized triangulation, which involves using multiple investigators, diverse data sources, and various methods to gather different perspectives rather than relying on a single viewpoint, to enhance the credibility of the findings. We employed triangulation to address any deficiencies identified in an individual strategy. The researcher used this strategy consistently across the study stages to determine if various sources of information would uncover a shared pattern. The researcher concluded that those sources had a discernible level of validity. A further approach to establishing credibility involved implementing member checks.

Having developed her own interpretation, the researcher submitted a proposal at OUT seminars and solicited critiques from experts, including faculty members from the Faculty of Education. Following the fieldwork, a report was presented at panels organized by OUT, from which the information was extracted for analysis to evaluate its plausibility, soundness, and accuracy. The external assessment of quality further validated the report's credibility.

### **3.10.2 Dependability**

This study established coherence between the research objectives and questions, ensuring their alignment within the report, which was subsequently presented and defended. The alignment of information among the objectives and methods enabled the researcher to validate the consistency of the study's findings. The researcher implemented an audit trail documenting research decisions, modifications, and data analysis procedures. The researcher employed this strategy to solicit peer reviews of the research document at multiple stages of the investigation. This strategy enabled the researcher to obtain constructive feedback to enhance the study. The two supervisors reviewed the study and provided recommendations for enhancements to improve its utility and credibility. Researchers employing qualitative methods should strengthen the dependability of their findings through the triangulation of methods and techniques to capture diverse perspectives, rather than pursuing a singular truth. Additionally, coherence throughout the report is essential to align with the study's objectives (Patton, 2002:267-269).



### **3.10.3 Transferability**

To guarantee transferability in this study, the researcher utilized a diverse sample strategy to select individuals from designated groups. The sample represented a heterogeneous cohort of participants, comprising educators, school administrators, and school board members. Patton (2002) advocated for the intentional selection of these samples to guarantee a diverse array of individuals capable of providing varied perspectives and experiences.

### **3.10.4 Conformability**

This study replaced the objectivity criterion, which seeks objective opinions by quantifying results to ensure internal validity, with the conformability criterion. The conformability criterion emphasizes the researcher's subjectivity when interpreting people's views during interviews in a natural setting. This approach focused on understanding participants' points of view rather than just measuring outcomes.

## **3.11 Ethical consideration issues**

This study commenced with the researcher obtaining a research clearance letter from the Office of Postgraduate Studies at The Open University of Tanzania (OUT), which served as the foundation for requesting permission to conduct research from the Kakonko District Executive Director (DED). The researcher adhered to the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to anonymity. The researcher maintained confidentiality by safeguarding sensitive information and preventing unauthorized access. The researcher refrained from using names, employed numerical identifiers, and abstained from taking photographs without

obtaining consent from the respondents. To prevent plagiarism, the researcher cited and acknowledged all sources of information utilized for data acquisition.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter delineates, evaluates, and deliberates on the study's findings investigating the impact of quality assurance in schools on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kankonko District Council, Kigoma Region. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, and the presentation of results is structured according to the following study questions:

- i. What quality assurance practices for schools are implemented in public secondary schools in Kankonko DC?
- ii. How do stakeholders perceive the impact of quality assurance practices in schools on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kankonko DC?
- iii. What challenges are faced in implementing quality assurance in public secondary schools in Kankonko District?

#### **4.1 School Quality Assurance Practices Implementation in Public Secondary Schools**

##### **4.1.1 School Visits**

According to the results of five school heads' interviews, school visits are crucial to the quality assurance framework because they provide methodical supervision of instructional strategies, resource use, and standards compliance. School officials view these visits as vital for promoting accountability and coordinating the delivery

of instruction with curriculum objectives. According to the answers, some schools receive visits from School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) annually, while others receive visits quarterly. The irregular frequency of visits is mainly caused by logistical issues such as scarce financial resources, isolated areas, and inadequate road infrastructure, especially during the rainy season.

School heads stated that during their visits, SQAOs primarily evaluate important papers, such as lesson plans, textbook inventories, and attendance registers. They also observe classes to evaluate instructional methodologies, teaching methods, classroom management techniques, and general learning settings. Through these observations, SQAOs offer constructive criticism to boost student engagement and class performance.

School visits are essential for identifying absenteeism patterns and ensuring consistent student participation in classroom activities, which are closely associated with academic performance. For example, a head of school, referred to as A1 from Secondary School C1, explained:

*We receive visits every three months, which keeps us focused on our goals. The quality assurance officers watch classes during these visits to assess instructional strategies and verify teachers' attendance. They frequently conduct focus groups with teachers and students to get input on the learning environment. They gave us a report at the conclusion of their visit that identified our strengths and made recommendations for enhancements. (Interview A1, March 28, 2025, Secondary School C1)*

Another participant, A3 from Secondary School C3, reported:

*"We get visitors about once a year, but occasionally they're late because of problems with transportation." Quality assurance officers observe and evaluate the lessons teachers teach during these trips. They also review our paperwork, like lesson plans and*

*records of how well students did in school, and talk with teachers and students. (Interview A3, Secondary School C3, March 28, 2025)*

In contrast, A4 from Secondary School C4 highlighted the infrequency of visits, attributing it to infrastructural barriers:

*We get visits every two years, but occasionally they bypass us due to transportation concerns. When they arrive, they usually spend their time in the office checking papers such as attendance records and lesson plans. They rarely interact with the pupils or watch live classroom sessions. (Interview A4, secondary school C4, March 28, 2025)*

These accounts underscore the significance of quality assurance visits in enhancing the quality of training. To guarantee that education is delivered in an efficient and curriculum-aligned manner, school directors stressed that SQAOs routinely assess teaching strategies and classroom management. Document reviews can provide a foundation for determining teachers' readiness and pinpointing areas that need focused assistance.

School visits are a tool for quality enhancement and ongoing improvement throughout the educational system, reflecting Total Quality Management (TQM) tenets. The actions conducted by SQAOs are consistent with TQM's theoretical stance, which supports data-driven, methodical approaches to fostering excellence.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier research that underscores the pivotal role of quality assurance in improving educational standards. Onocha (2002) emphasized that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) must conduct regular school visits to assess academic performance, management practices, and the overall learning environment. Similarly, the United Republic of Tanzania (URT, 2006) highlighted the authority entrusted to SQAOs to guide school administrations on

curriculum implementation and pedagogical approaches, ensuring alignment with national educational goals. Sumi (2016) further reaffirmed that frequent school audits are essential for maintaining compliance with quality assurance standards, providing schools with accountability and professional guidance.

Beyond compliance, research has shown that quality assurance mechanisms positively influence the broader educational experience. Ryan (2015) demonstrated that active engagement with quality assurance processes enhances students' academic and social self-concepts, cultivating confidence and motivation. Similarly, Osaki (2000) found that consistent QA activities strengthen attitudes toward learning and translate into measurable academic improvements. Complementing these perspectives, Onuma and Okpalanze (2017) observed that quality assurance initiatives contribute to effective textbook selection, infrastructure assessment, and systematic monitoring of academic progress factors indispensable for fostering conducive learning environments.

Recent studies further reinforce these insights in different contexts. For example, Kufi (2023), examining Ethiopian schools, revealed that regular assessments enable early identification of academic weaknesses, allowing for timely interventions and remedial support. Correspondingly, Kagochi (2022), in his study of Kenyan schools, confirmed that internal quality assurance practices—such as classroom inspections and performance monitoring play a significant role in enhancing academic outcomes. These studies affirm that quality assurance mechanisms are not merely evaluative tools but transformative instruments that sustain high standards, improve teaching

practices, and ultimately elevate students' academic performance when properly implemented.

Heads of schools voiced strong concerns about the irregularity and limited scope of quality assurance visits, noting that such shortcomings undermine the very purpose of these inspections. In many cases, officers fail to observe live classroom teaching or engage meaningfully with students, reducing the depth and reliability of their evaluations. Without these critical interactions, assessments overlook the actual dynamics of teaching and learning, providing only a partial picture of school performance.

These concerns align with the study by De Grauwe (2001) and Mulkeen and Chen (2008), who reported that schools located in remote areas are often disadvantaged due to logistical and resource constraints. Such neglect weakens the consistent application of quality standards, leaving rural schools particularly vulnerable to systemic inequities. Consequently, while quality assurance is intended to enhance learning, its uneven implementation risks widening the gap between well-resourced urban schools and their marginalized rural counterparts. This hinders the realization of equitable education and compromises broader national efforts to ensure quality and inclusiveness within the education system.

#### **4.1.2 Provision of Feedback and Recommendations**

Interview findings indicated that quality assurance officers generally deliver verbal feedback during structured debriefing sessions after school assessments. The sessions aim to identify strengths and areas for improvement, providing practical guidance to

enhance teaching and administrative practices. School leaders indicated that these feedback sessions promote reflective dialogue and facilitate clarification of assessment results.

For example, participant A3 from Secondary School C3 stated:

*“When they go to schools, quality assurance officers watch teachers teach and rate how well lessons are taught” To get feedback, they also talk with teachers and sometimes with students. They talked to us about what they think at the end of the visit, but I wish there had been more written information on improving. (Interview A3, 12th Grade C3, March 29, 2025)*

Similarly, A2 from Secondary School C2 noted:

*Officers ensure high standards and conduct classroom observations and focus groups with educators and their pupils. They provide our classrooms that are comfortable and safe for students to learn. The interview occurred on March 28, 2025, at Secondary School C2.*

The interviews reveal that feedback is predominantly provided verbally, focusing on identifying weaknesses and proposing actionable steps for enhancement. Concerns were expressed about the sufficiency of the input, especially the absence of comprehensive written recommendations to inform long-term strategic planning.

The findings of this study are consistent with Mhagama (2022), who observed that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) employ strategies such as monitoring, evaluation, and feedback provision to strengthen school planning and ultimately enhance academic performance. Similarly, a study by Khadija et al. (2024) in Zanzibar affirmed that constructive feedback is indispensable for improving teaching practices. However, the same study cautioned that some external SQAOs provide written reports that are overly general and lack the detail necessary for meaningful



follow-up. Such shortcomings limit the usefulness of the feedback and diminish teachers' confidence in the quality assurance process.

This concern was echoed in the present study, where inaccurate evaluations and minimal teacher engagement were noted. These weaknesses raise legitimate questions about certain quality assurance activities' reliability and overall impact. As De Grauwe (2001) emphasized, the value of assessment lies not merely in the act of evaluation but in providing clear, evidence-based recommendations that can be translated into practical improvements. Without comprehensive and actionable feedback, quality assurance risks becoming a procedural exercise rather than a transformative tool for educational enhancement. In this sense, the absence of meaningful guidance may undermine the objectives of quality assurance, supporting teachers, improving instructional practices, and fostering better learning outcomes.

#### **4.1.3 Stakeholder Engagement**

The data collected from interviews and focus group discussions indicated that stakeholder engagement is crucial in ensuring school quality. School leaders said that school quality assurance officers (SQAOs) regularly strive to include essential stakeholders, such as parents, school boards, and local education authorities, in assessing and enhancing educational quality. School committee meetings, parent-teacher association (PTA) forums, and collaborative planning sessions primarily facilitate this participation.

For instance, participant A2 from Secondary School C2 noted:

*“Following every visit, the officers frequently suggest that we address areas of weakness by including parents and school committee members. Sometimes they participate in our meetings to*

*discuss declining infrastructure, textbook shortages, or student absence. On March 29, 2025, Interview A2, Secondary School C2*

This collaboration fostered a shared sense of responsibility and collective decision-making, particularly in addressing non-academic factors that indirectly influence performance. SQAOs promote discussions among stakeholders to facilitate the creation of comprehensive strategies suited to the specific context of the school. Some respondents expressed concerns regarding the uneven level of engagement across schools, which often correlates with local stakeholders' enthusiasm and school leadership's proactivity.

This finding is supported by De Grauwe (2001), who underscored the critical role of community involvement in quality assurance. He noted that active participation of stakeholders enhances transparency, strengthens accountability, and mobilizes resources necessary for sustaining educational quality. Similarly, Osaki (2000) and Sifuna (2014) emphasized that community support is fundamental in driving educational reforms and sustaining school improvement initiatives, as it fosters a sense of shared responsibility between schools and their stakeholders. The present study, however, revealed that stakeholder involvement in quality assurance remains uneven and inconsistently applied. While schools generally recognize the value of community participation, its integration into quality assurance practices is often ad hoc and informal. This lack of systematic engagement undermines the potential benefits that could be realized through broader collaboration.

#### 4.1.4 Professional Support

Interview responses highlighted the crucial professional assistance SQAOs offer before and after school visits. School heads agreed that instructional coaching, mentoring, example lessons, and the supply of reference resources to improve teaching methods are common forms of this help. The improvement of teacher competency and the alignment of instruction with curriculum standards were considered outcomes of these professional development programs.

Participant A5 from Secondary School C5 commented:

*“One of the most valuable parts of the QA visits is when officers provide guidance on teaching strategies or even demonstrate how to deliver complex topics. It helps build our capacity, especially for new teachers who may not be confident in their delivery.”*  
(Interview A5, Secondary School C5, 29 March 2025)

Total Quality Management (TQM) says the best way to improve things over time is to build people's skills. Giving professional help fits with this idea. The interviews showed that changes in the quality of teaching and student outcomes were more noticeable in schools where SQAOs actively mentor teachers and offer hands-on help. However, several respondents noted that this type of help varies. For example, some SQAOs emphasize reviewing documentation more than improving instruction.

Supporting literature reinforces these findings. Mhagama (2022) emphasizes that professional support is a cornerstone of adequate quality assurance, as it equips educators with the skills and confidence needed to address classroom challenges. Similarly, Sumi (2016) and Khadija et al. (2024) demonstrated that well-targeted professional development interventions strengthen curriculum implementation and promote student-centered pedagogies, creating more engaging and effective learning

environments. Conversely, quality assurance practices' credibility and overall impact are significantly undermined when School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) provide only superficial support or fail to follow through after evaluations. The results of this study suggest that embedding structured professional development into quality assurance visits could transform these inspections from essentially evaluative exercises into dynamic platforms for teacher growth and instructional improvement. Such an approach would ensure that teachers receive feedback and benefit from practical guidance and sustained support tailored to their instructional needs.

#### **4.1.5 Follow-up**

The lack of follow-up beyond the initial QA visits was a recurring theme in all interviews. Although SQAOs frequently provide verbal feedback and recommendations, school heads noted insufficient systematic follow-up measures to track implementation and evaluate progress. This gap was mentioned as a significant obstacle to sustaining the momentum of development initiatives.

As A1 from Secondary School C1 explained:

*“The officers give feedback and tell us what to improve, but they don’t always come back to see if we’ve implemented their advice. Sometimes, it feels like we are left alone without support.”*  
(Interview A1, Secondary School C1, 28 March 2025)

Participants emphasized that the absence of regular follow-up visits and progress assessments diminishes accountability and weakens the continuity of school improvement processes. In some cases, school leaders are left uncertain about whether their efforts align with the expectations of the QA officers.

This finding is consistent with the argument of De Grauwe (2001), who emphasized that adequate supervision must include systematic follow-up. Such follow-up reinforces feedback, sustains stakeholder motivation, and enables data-driven adjustments to school practices. Without it, even well-intentioned evaluations risk losing their transformative potential, as recommendations may remain unimplemented. Similarly, Sifuna and Sawamura (2010) highlighted that continuous engagement by quality assurance personnel is essential for institutionalizing reforms and preventing them from becoming fragmented or episodic interventions.

The implication is clear: quality assurance should not be reduced to one-off inspections that end with a report. Instead, it should be a cyclical process anchored in feedback, reinforced through follow-up, and refined by ongoing collaboration between SQAOs and schools. By embedding sustained engagement into the system, quality assurance can evolve into a catalyst for lasting improvement, ensuring that schools meet prescribed standards and continuously grow in their capacity to deliver high-quality education.

From a Total Quality Management (TQM) perspective, follow-up is vital to the quality cycle, ensuring that recommended improvements are implemented, monitored, and refined over time. The absence of follow-up interrupts this cycle and reduces the impact of initial quality assurance interventions.

The study found that quality assurance visits without a structured follow-up strategy risk becoming isolated events rather than catalysts for sustained change. Integrating follow-up procedures, such as progress reviews, mid-term assessments, and

continuous dialogue between schools and SQAOs, could significantly enhance the impact of QA practices on academic performance.

## **4.2 Stakeholders' Perceptions of How Quality Assurance Practices Affect Academic Performance**

This section presents, analyzes, and discusses the findings related to stakeholders' perceptions of how quality assurance practices influence academic performance in public secondary schools within Kakonko District Council. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders, including heads of schools, teachers, and quality assurance officers. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and insights from the responses.

Four major themes emerged from the data: teaching quality enhancement, accountability and compliance, student-centered improvement, and professional development and support.

### **4.2.1 Enhancement of Teaching Quality**

Stakeholders consistently noted that quality assurance practices, particularly classroom observations and performance evaluations, significantly improve teaching strategies and lesson delivery. Participants emphasized that when teachers receive regular feedback, it motivates them to improve and adopt more effective methods.

One head of school A4 stated:

*“After every classroom observation, our teachers reflect on the feedback and make real changes. You can see it in how they plan their lessons now, there’s more focus and structure.” (Interview A4, Secondary School C4, 29 March 2025)*

Similarly, a teacher of School C4 noted:

*“The feedback from quality assurance officers helps us see where we are going wrong. It helps us teach better, and that reflects in our students’ performance.” (FGD A4, Secondary School C4, G4, 29 March 2025)*

These views suggest that QA practices indirectly improve academic performance by refining the instructional process.

#### **4.2.2 Accountability and Compliance**

Many stakeholders viewed quality assurance as a mechanism for fostering accountability. Heads of schools mentioned that QA visits compel teachers to be punctual, prepare lessons, and maintain up-to-date teaching records.

A quality assurance officer remarked:

*“When schools know we are coming, they ensure everything is in place: lesson plans, student assessments, teaching materials. That pressure helps maintain standards.” (Interview SQAO, 6 April 2025)*

This perceived accountability contributes to a more disciplined and consistent teaching environment, which stakeholders believe positively impacts learners’ academic outcomes.

#### **4.2.3 Student-Centered Improvement**

Several respondents mentioned that QA practices indirectly focus on students’ learning conditions and outcomes. For example, school visits often assess student attendance, engagement, and access to learning materials.

A teacher A1 from school C1 shared:

*“Quality assurance has helped our school to focus more on learners, not just teaching. Now we ensure every student has a*

*textbook, and slow learners are supported.” (Interview A1, Secondary School C1, 29 March 2025)*

This shift towards learner-focused practices, driven by QA recommendations, is seen as a contributing factor to improved academic performance.

#### **4.2.4 Professional Development and Support**

Another strong theme was the value of professional development facilitated by QA officers. Participants expressed that school visits often involve mentorship, training recommendations, and ongoing support.

One head of school A3 explained:

*“After the QA visit, they suggested a workshop for our teachers on classroom management. It really helped, especially for the new teachers.” (Interview A3, Secondary School C3, 29 March 2025)*

Teachers rebounded the sentiment, indicating that professional development helps them stay updated with modern pedagogical approaches, which enhances student achievement.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings reveal a strong perception among stakeholders that quality assurance practices positively influence academic performance, although indirectly. While QA officers do not teach students directly, their practices shape the learning environment through enhanced teaching, improved accountability, and structured follow-up.

These findings resonate with existing literature that conceptualizes quality assurance as a mechanism for monitoring and a vital instrument for professional and institutional development (Sallis, 2012). Evidence from related studies demonstrates that sustained quality assurance practices significantly enhance teacher effectiveness,



boost student motivation, and improve overall school performance (Ndunguru, 2020; Musoke, 2017). This dual role of quality assurance as both evaluative and developmental highlights its transformative potential in shaping educational quality. When implemented consistently, QA processes do more than enforce compliance; they foster a culture of continuous improvement that benefits teachers, learners, and the broader school community.

However, the findings also highlight challenges, such as inconsistent visit schedules and limited follow-up due to logistical constraints. Despite this, stakeholders remain optimistic about the potential of QA practices when implemented consistently and supported with adequate resources.

### **4.3 Challenge Faced: Implementation of School Quality Assurance Practices.**

The research question investigated the challenge of implementing school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council. Data for this research question were generated through focus group discussions and interviews with the head of schools, the quality assurance officer, and teachers. The findings revealed several challenges hindering School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices. These challenges are categorized based on systemic, logistical, and human resource constraints.

#### **4.3.1 Limited follow-up mechanisms**

The interview with the head of school and teachers revealed that recommendations from school quality assurance visits are often not implemented due to a lack of follow-up support or monitoring mechanisms. Furthermore, focus Group discussions

revealed that some teachers reported that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) conducted follow-up visits. **At the same time**, most respondents stated that no follow-up visits occurred after initial inspections.

This disparity highlights the inconsistent implementation of post-inspection monitoring in quality assurance processes. For example, teachers in group three expressed concerns about the delay in receiving written reports after inspections, which hinders their ability to effectively address identified issues and improve the teaching and learning process. This delay reduces the impact of quality assurance efforts, as timely feedback and follow-up are crucial for making necessary adjustments to enhance educational outcomes. The summary of group three is as follows;

*Verbal feedback from quality assurance officers can be challenging to remember accurately, as it is easy to forget important details over time. Moreover, the feedback we receive is often delayed, and by the time we get the written reports, it is already too late to address the issues raised effectively (Focus group discussion G3, from secondary school C3:28 March 2025)*

Furthermore, the interview with the school quality assurance officers highlighted that the limited number of follow-up visits to schools hindered the ability to conduct close supervision and ensure that recommendations were effectively addressed. This limitation was primarily due to the lack of adequate facilities, which made it challenging for supervisors to visit and monitor the implementation of recommended actions frequently. As a result, it became difficult to maintain consistent oversight, track progress, and provide necessary support or guidance to ensure that

improvements were being made as intended. For example, the school quality assurance office narrates the following;

*Follow-up visits to some schools are infrequent, not because school quality assurance officers lack diligence, but because there are not enough officers to conduct visits regularly. Additionally, the shortage of facilities and inadequate resources make it challenging to carry out their duties effectively (Interview, quality assurance officer: 31 March 2025)*

The interview data highlights several challenges in implementing quality assurance recommendations in schools. One of the key issues identified is the lack of consistent follow-up support and monitoring mechanisms after initial school inspections. While some teachers reported that school quality assurance officers (SQAOs) conducted follow-up visits, the majority indicated no such visits occurred, pointing to inconsistency in the monitoring process. This inconsistency in follow-up visits can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, school quality assurance officers face logistical challenges, including limited officers and insufficient facilities, primarily due to budget constraints. These limitations hinder their ability to conduct frequent and thorough follow-up visits, essential for ensuring that recommendations are effectively implemented.

Moreover, the delayed provision of written reports after inspections exacerbates the problem. Teachers expressed frustration that it is often too late to make timely improvements when they receive feedback. This delay reduces the overall impact of quality assurance efforts, as immediate guidance is crucial for addressing issues and enhancing teaching and learning practices. These findings align with a study by De

Grauwe (2001), who found that although the School Quality Assurance Department (SQAD) planned school follow-up visits, the number of visits was insufficient.

This shortfall was primarily due to financial and transport constraints, which made it challenging for quality assurance officers to travel to schools regularly. As a result, the planned follow-up activities were not fully implemented, and it was impossible to effectively monitor and support the implementation of recommendations made during initial inspections. De Grauwe's study further highlighted that limited budget allocations hindered the department's ability to cover travel expenses, accommodation, and other logistical needs associated with school visits. Additionally, inadequate transport infrastructure, such as poor road conditions and a lack of reliable vehicles, further complicated the efforts of quality assurance officers to reach remote and rural schools.

Furthermore, a study by Makiya et al. (2022) revealed that the field data showed that most respondents expressed skepticism regarding the occurrence of follow-up school visits. Specifically, 80% of classroom teachers, 71.1% of pupils, and 66.7% of district school quality assurance officers (DSQAOs) disagreed with the statement that follow-up visits took place after initial inspections. This lack of follow-up can hurt learning outcomes within schools. Regular follow-up visits are essential for monitoring the implementation of recommendations and ensuring continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices. As Ahmad et al. (2013) stated, infrequent follow-up visits create a sense of alienation among teachers. Teachers may feel neglected and unsupported when follow-up visits after school inspections are rare or inconsistent.

### 4.3.2 Communication gaps

The interview conducted with the head of the school and FGD by teachers revealed significant communication gaps between quality assurance officers, stakeholders, teachers, and students. These gaps manifest in various ways and negatively impact the effectiveness of quality assurance practices and the overall school improvement process. Furthermore, it was identified that there was a lack of clear and timely communication from quality assurance officers to the teachers and other stakeholders regarding the findings and recommendations from inspections.

Teachers reported that they often receive feedback long after the inspections, making it challenging to address identified issues promptly. For example, a teacher from Group 2 explained that there was minimal communication between the quality assurance officer and students. Instead of engaging directly with students to understand their learning experiences or challenges, quality assurance officers primarily focused on checking teachers' lesson plans. The summary of teachers in group two is as follows.

*Quality assurance officers rarely take the time to communicate directly with students to understand their learning experiences or challenges. Instead, they primarily focus on checking teachers' lesson plans and ensuring adherence to the syllabus. While lesson plan reviews are important, neglecting student perspectives means missing valuable insights into the learning process. Sometimes students face challenges that significantly hinder their performance, such as difficulty understanding specific topics, lack of learning resources, or ineffective teaching methods (Focus group discussion G2, from secondary school C2:28 March 2025)*

The analysis of the quotes indicates that the communication gap extends to students and the wider school community, who frequently remain uninformed regarding the results of quality assurance visits. The absence of transparency undermines the

collaborative efforts essential for improving educational practices and fostering a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, stakeholders, including parents and community members, often lack sufficient information regarding the quality assurance findings and the measures implemented to address these issues.

The lack of effective communication limits stakeholders' ability to participate meaningfully in initiatives designed to improve the school environment. When stakeholders are excluded from timely and transparent information sharing, their potential contributions remain underutilized, whether in decision-making, resource support, or monitoring. This finding is consistent with Kambuga and Dadi (2015), who observed that disseminating school inspection outcomes to key educational stakeholders is often neither effective nor efficient. Such communication gaps weaken accountability and diminish the collaborative spirit required for sustaining school improvement. Strengthening communication channels, therefore, is essential for fostering inclusivity, ensuring that inspection results are translated into actionable strategies, and enhancing shared ownership of educational quality.

The school's advancement does not sufficiently communicate with parents, who are the primary recipients of educational services. Consequently, they lack the essential data to formulate evidence-based assertions about their children's performance. As a result, the leadership practices within the school have not evolved, resulting in minimal or no enhancement in students' academic performance.

### 4.3.3 Lack of professional training

According to the findings of the interview that was carried out with quality assurance officials working in schools, a significant number of them have not received sufficient professional training. So, they may lack the knowledge and skills to conduct thorough, adequate inspections. This lack of experience might result in superficial evaluations that do not properly address the underlying factors contributing to poor performance. Because of this deficiency, evaluations may fail to uncover the fundamental problems influencing students' performance and the overall quality of education. Officers may provide either generic or irrelevant feedback and will not address the actual difficulties that schools and teachers experience. Such behavior is in contrast to offering insightful recommendations based on facts. As an illustration, the quality assurance officer for schools acknowledges that there is a lack of training, which negatively impacts their ability to supervise schools in the following manner:

*“Yes, there is a significant challenge in conducting adequate classroom supervision, primarily due to limited training on how to carry out comprehensive and meaningful evaluations. Without adequate professional development, quality assurance officers may struggle to effectively identify key areas that impact teaching and learning. (Interview, quality assurance 31 March 2025)”*

The insights gathered from the discussions with school quality assurance officers highlight a notable deficiency in professional training, which negatively affects the efficacy of school quality assurance practices. The insufficient provision of professional development results in numerous quality assurance officers lacking the critical skills and knowledge necessary for performing thorough inspections. To improve the effectiveness of school quality assurance, it is crucial to offer continuous

professional development opportunities for quality assurance officers. Training programs should emphasize enhancing the ability to perform significant evaluations, accurately analyze educational data, and convey recommendations clearly and supportively.

The results align with the European study, which demonstrated that training cultivates a culture of lifelong learning among quality assurance officials, prompting them to adjust to changing educational policies and standards. This guarantees their sustained efficacy in their positions throughout time. Moreover, consistent training guarantees that quality assurance officials remain informed about optimal educational management and inspection procedures.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter provides a summary, conclusion, and suggestions based on a study examining the impact of quality assurance in schools on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council, Kigoma Region, Tanzania. The chapter comprises four principal sections: an overview of the investigation, a summary of significant findings, conclusions from the results, and recommendations grounded upon empirical evidence.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The study's objective was to explore the relationship between practices aimed at ensuring school quality and their impact on students' academic performance in public secondary schools located in Kakonko District. Edwards Deming's articulated principles of Total Quality Management Theory informed the framework. TQMT highlights essential principles, including ongoing enhancement, engagement of stakeholders, methodical assessment, and decisions grounded in data to advance the quality of education. We modified the theory, which originates in industry, to investigate its significance and usefulness in educational contexts.

A study of pertinent literature identified a knowledge gap in current research. While school quality assurance procedures have been examined worldwide and regionally, few studies have directly connected these practices to student academic outcomes. Research from the USA, Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania identified numerous administrative, logistical, and motivational obstacles confronting quality assurance

systems. Nevertheless, they did not conduct a direct evaluation of the influence of these practices on academic achievement, hence the importance of the current study.

The investigation utilized a qualitative case study methodology framed within an interpretivist perspective, effectively designed to capture the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders. Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with school leaders and quality assurance personnel, alongside focus group discussions with educators. The study obtained a targeted sample of 26 participants from selected schools in Kakonko District. Thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the qualitative data. Trustworthiness was established by employing triangulation, engaging in peer debriefing, and maintaining a rigorous commitment to ethical principles encompassing confidentiality and informed consent.

## **5.2 Summary of Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of School quality assurance practices in enhancing academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District. The findings highlight significant insights regarding the implementation of quality assurance, the perceptions of stakeholders, and the challenges encountered in sustaining these practices.

The implementation of quality assurance in Kakonko District is predominantly carried out through school visits conducted by quality assurance officers. These visits focus on assessing instructional methodologies, examining the adequacy of school infrastructure, and reviewing essential academic records, such as lesson plans and attendance registers. At the end of these visits, verbal feedback is generally provided

to teachers and school leaders. However, the frequency of such visits is irregular due to logistical and financial constraints, especially in remote areas. This irregularity undermines the consistency and effectiveness of the quality assurance framework, thereby limiting its overall impact on teaching and learning.

Stakeholders, including teachers, school Heads, and quality assurance officers, widely acknowledged that quality assurance plays a vital role in improving teaching standards and student outcomes. They considered inspections, feedback mechanisms, and professional development workshops crucial in improving instructional delivery and ensuring alignment with the national curriculum. Despite these positive perceptions, concerns were raised about the infrequency of inspections, the limited involvement of key actors, particularly students, and the lack of consistent follow-up mechanisms. Such shortcomings were perceived to dilute the potential benefits of quality assurance.

The study also identified several systemic challenges affecting the successful implementation of quality assurance. These included limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, shortages of trained personnel, and weak monitoring of the application of inspection recommendations. In some cases, quality assurance officers prioritized examining teacher documentation at the expense of more holistic aspects of the learning environment. Furthermore, meaningful engagement with learners during inspections was minimal, thereby neglecting valuable perspectives that could contribute to improving classroom practices. These challenges collectively reduced the capacity of schools to translate inspection recommendations into tangible improvements in academic outcomes.

From these findings, it can be concluded that quality assurance remains essential in strengthening teaching effectiveness and ensuring accountability in public secondary schools. Activities such as classroom observations, lesson plan evaluations, and teacher development programs enhanced pedagogical practices and contributed, albeit indirectly, to improved student performance. Stakeholders also recognized the role of quality assurance in encouraging reflective teaching and promoting curriculum fidelity. Nonetheless, irregular visits, limited stakeholder involvement, and persistent resource constraints hindered the system's effectiveness. These limitations weakened the monitoring of schools and obstructed the implementation of recommended interventions, thereby constraining the intended improvements in academic achievement.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are advanced. First, in collaboration with local education authorities, the Ministry of Education should strengthen resource allocation to ensure that quality assurance officers have adequate financial and logistical support for regular and comprehensive school visits. Investment in transportation facilities is particularly crucial to facilitate access to remote areas.

Second, robust follow-up mechanisms must be established to ensure that inspection recommendations are systematically implemented. This should involve the provision of written feedback and planned follow-up visits to monitor progress and address challenges encountered by schools.

Third, greater emphasis should be placed on stakeholder engagement. The evaluation process should involve teachers, school leaders, students, and parents, whose perspectives can offer critical insights into the quality of teaching and learning.

Finally, capacity-building initiatives should be prioritized. Teachers and quality assurance officers should be provided with continuous professional development opportunities through workshops, mentorship programs, and training modules tailored to the unique challenges of their educational contexts.

**In terms of further research,** it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in other districts and regions to generate comparative evidence on the effectiveness of quality assurance across Tanzania. Such studies could reveal regional disparities and everyday challenges, offering insights for formulating national strategies. Moreover, future research should focus on the preparation and capacity of quality assurance officers. Exploring their training, recruitment processes, and professional experiences would provide a clearer understanding of how their competencies shape the effectiveness of school inspections. Insights from such studies could guide the development of more robust training frameworks to strengthen the efficiency and impact of quality assurance practices nationwide.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Head of Secondary Schools

Dear Participants,

I am **KASHIRIRA ELIAS KASHIRIRA**, a student pursuing a Master's of Education in Quality Management at The Open University of Tanzania. I am conducting research titled “**Contribution of school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko district council,**” To fulfill the requirements for the mentioned award. I kindly request you to cooperate with me in this study by answering the following questions. The information you are going to provide is for academic purposes only, and it will remain confidential.

1. How often does your school receive visits from quality assurance officers, and what activities are conducted during these visits?
2. How would you describe the relationship between the recommendations provided by quality assurance officers and your school's academic performance?
3. How would you describe the relationship between the recommendations provided by quality assurance officers and your school's academic performance?
4. In your opinion, how effectively do school quality assurance officers use the follow-up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of their recommendations?
5. What changes have you observed in your school's academic performance due to quality assurance activities?

6. What strategies would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of school quality assurance practices in enhancing academic performance?
7. How could quality assurance practices better support teachers in improving students' academic outcomes?

**Thank you for being so cooperative**

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide for DSQAO**

Dear Participants,

I am **KASHIRIRA ELIAS KASHIRIRA**, a student pursuing a Master's of Education in Quality Management at The Open University of Tanzania. I am conducting research titled **“Contribution of school quality assurance practices on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko district council,”** To fulfill the requirements for the mentioned award. I kindly request you to cooperate with me in this study by answering the following questions. The information you are going to provide is for academic purposes only, and it will remain confidential.

1. Can you describe the key activities you perform during your visits to secondary schools in Kakonko District?
2. What are the main focus areas during your quality assurance assessments, and why are these areas prioritized?
3. What methods do you use to evaluate the academic performance of schools under your jurisdiction?
4. How do you follow up to ensure that schools are implementing your recommendations?
5. What measures do you think can enhance the effectiveness of your role in improving students’ academic performance?
6. How do you think school leadership and teachers could better collaborate with quality assurance officers to achieve improved academic outcomes?

**Thank you for being so cooperative**

### **Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussions Guides for Teachers**

Dear Participants,

I am **KASHIRIRA ELIAS KASHIRIRA**, a student pursuing a Master's of Education in Quality Management at The Open University of Tanzania. I am conducting research titled “**Contribution of school quality assurance practices on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko district council**” To fulfill the requirements for the mentioned award. I kindly request you to cooperate with me in this study by answering the following questions. The information you are going to provide is for academic purposes only, and it will remain confidential.

1. How do you perceive the role of school quality assurance officers in supporting teaching and learning processes?
2. What feedback or recommendations have you received from school quality assurance officers during their visits?
3. In your experience, how effective are school quality assurance officers in providing recommendations for improving students' academic performance?
4. What challenges do you face in implementing the recommendations given by school quality assurance officers?
5. What improvements would you suggest to make school quality assurance activities more relevant and impactful for teachers?
6. How can school quality assurance officers better collaborate with teachers to address challenges in teaching and learning?

**Thank you for being so cooperative**

## Appendix 4: Clearance Letter



**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**



**Ref. No OUT/ PG202102461**

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

District Quality Assurance Officer,  
 Kakonko District,  
 P.O Box 98,  
**KAKONKO-KIGOMA.**

Dear Officer,

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR A STUDENT KASHIRIRA ELIAS PG202102461**

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Kashirira Elias**, reg no (**PG202102461**), pursuing **Masters of Education in Quality Management (MEDQM)**. We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled "**Contribution of School Quality Assurance Practices on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary School in Kakonko District**". He will collect his data at your office from 26<sup>th</sup> March to 09<sup>th</sup> April, 2025.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**



Prof. Gwahula Raphael Kimamala

**For: VICE CHANCELLOR**



## Appendix 5: Permission Letter



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA  
OFISI YA RAIS  
TAWALA ZA MIKOA NA SERIKALI ZA MITAA  
HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA YA KAKONKO



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Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Mtendaji,  
S.L.P. 03,  
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Tafadhali husika na somo tajwa hapo juu.

2. Rejea barua yako ya tarehe 20<sup>th</sup> Machi, 2025 yenye Kumb. namba **OUT/PG202102461** kuhusu mada tajwa hapo juu.
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4. Asante kwa ushirikiano.

  
Ndaki S. Mhuli  
Mkurugenzi Mtendaji (W)  
Kakonko

**MKURUGENZI MTENDAJI (W)**  
**HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA**  
**KAKONKO**

Nakala: Katibu Tawala wa Wilaya,  
Ofisi ya Mkuu wa Wilaya,  
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- Kwa taarifa

Afisa Elimu Sekondari (W)

- Kwa taarifa

Kashirira Elias

- Kwa ajili ya utekelezaji wa utafiti na kuzingatia maadili ya utafiti katika kipindi chote cha utafiti huo.

**MANUSCRIPT**

## **Challenges Facing the Implementation of School Quality Assurance Practices in Public Secondary School in Kakonko District Council**

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### **Abstract**

This study employed a qualitative approach under the interpretivist paradigm to explore the challenges facing the implementation of school quality assurance (SQA) in public secondary schools. A single case study design was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue within a real-life context in Kakonko District. Participants, including District education officer, school heads, and teachers, were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience with SQA practices. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which allowed for open and detailed responses. The data were analyzed using thematic

analysis, where responses were organized into meaningful categories and themes aligned with the research questions. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Ethical standards were maintained by obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation. This methodological framework provided a solid foundation for generating rich, reliable insights into the barriers affecting effective SQA implementation in the selected schools. The study revealed that limited follow-up mechanisms, communication gaps and lack of professional training are the main challenges hindering the implementation of school quality assurance practices. Concluded that systemic and operational issues, such as a lack of finance, poorly maintained infrastructure, and a shortage of capacity among quality assurance officers, make it difficult to execute quality assurance.

***Key Words:*** *Challenges, school quality assurance practices and public secondary schools*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Despite strong education systems, developed countries continue to face persistent challenges in implementing effective school quality assurance (SQA) in public Secondary schools. In England, empirical studies have shown that Ofsted school ratings explain only a small proportion of student achievement, raising concerns about the reliability and impact of inspection outcomes (Jerrim & Sims, 2021). Similarly, in Scotland, excessive teacher workload often exceeding contractual hours by over 11 hours weekly undermines the sustainability of school-level quality monitoring and teacher wellbeing (Forde et al., 2023). In Wales, the rapid rollout of

curriculum reforms has led to inconsistent implementation due to varied staff capacity, weak assessment literacy, and limited collaboration among school clusters (Welsh Government, 2024). These findings reveal that even in well-resourced contexts, SQA is hindered by human resource limitations, policy design issues, and inspection models with limited predictive validity.

School quality assurance (SQA) systems across many African countries face persistent challenges that hinder their effectiveness in improving educational outcomes. In Nigeria, Oloruntegbe and Odutuyi (2022) found that school inspectors are frequently under-resourced, with irregular inspection schedules and political interference undermining their authority. Additionally, In Uganda, only 35% of schools were inspected in 2024 due to logistical and funding shortfalls, with rural schools most affected (Mugula et al, 2020).

Implementing effective school quality assurance (SQA) in Tanzania's public Secondary schools faces significant challenges. A study by Makiya et al (2023) in Arusha Region identified that inadequate training, poor understanding, and inflexible SQA criteria hindered learning achievements. Similarly, Tarimo and Mrema (2025) in Moshi Municipality found that while SQA practices positively impacted academic performance, issues like limited instructional resources, time constraints, and teachers' reluctance to implement recommendations undermined effectiveness. Additionally, Mapunda (2023) in Iringa District highlighted that SQA activities improved teachers' classroom assessment and management skills but were limited by infrequent inspections and inadequate support. These studies underscore the need for comprehensive reforms, including enhanced training, resource allocation, and

consistent monitoring, to strengthen SQA systems and improve educational outcomes in Tanzania. There was a problem with the implementation of school quality assurance (SQA) practices in Kankoko district, affecting the regularity and effectiveness of monitoring public Secondary schools. This situation prompted the need for this study to explore the underlying factors influencing SQA implementation and to identify ways to improve educational quality in the area

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review explores existing studies related to the implementation of school quality assurance (SQA) in public secondary schools. It examines theoretical foundations, global and regional perspectives, and specific challenges identified in previous research.

### **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

This study will be informed by Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT), established by Edwards Deming in the 1950s, to lay the essential groundwork for understanding the role of quality assurance in schools and its impact on students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

#### **2.2.1 Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT)**

Total Quality Management Theory (TQMT) is a management paradigm that prioritizes continuous improvement, customer happiness, and the involvement of organizational members in process enhancement. This approach comprises essential

elements, including quality circles, customer orientation, prompt benchmarking, and continuous improvement (Birzea et al., 2006).

### **2.2.2 Strength of Total Quality Management Theory**

Total Quality Management Theory enhances practices for ensuring quality in schools through a systematic approach to continuous improvement and the engagement of stakeholders. TQM promotes a collaborative environment in which teachers, students, and administrators collectively strive for academic excellence. Deming (1986) asserts that principles of Total Quality Management, such as leadership commitment, effective communication, and data-driven decision-making, substantially improve organizational performance. TQM fosters accountability, innovation, and quality service delivery in the education sector, resulting in enhanced academic outcomes. Sahney et al (2010) demonstrate that TQM in educational institutions enhances resource utilization and the learning process, thereby aligning efforts to attain measurable outcomes. TQM enhances school quality assurance through consistent evaluation, standardization, and a dedication to professionalism, ultimately leading to improved academic performance for students.

### **2.2.3 Weakness of Total Quality Management Theory**

Despite its strengths, Total Quality Management (TQM) presents several weaknesses when applied to the education sector, particularly in the context of public secondary schools. One key limitation is its heavy reliance on continuous improvement and stakeholder commitment, which can be difficult to achieve in under-resourced school environments. In this study, poor infrastructure, limited funding, and lack of trained

personnel hinder the consistent implementation of quality assurance practices conditions that challenge TQM's core principles. Moreover, TQM emphasizes measurable outcomes and standardization, which may overlook the complex, human-centered nature of teaching and learning (Sallis, 2014). In such contexts, rigid application of TQM may not fully address contextual factors such as cultural, social, and institutional barriers influencing school performance.

#### **2.3.4 Applicability of Total Quality Management Theory**

Total Quality Management (TQM) is applicable to this study as it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving the implementation of school quality assurance (SQA) in public secondary schools. TQM emphasizes continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement, and a focus on customer (learner) satisfaction all of which align with the goals of effective SQA (Sallis, 2014). In this study, TQM principles help assess how school leaders, teachers, and quality assurance officers work collaboratively to ensure consistent standards in teaching and learning. Additionally, TQM's emphasis on data-driven decision-making supports the need for regular monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, TQM serves as a relevant theoretical lens for identifying gaps and proposing sustainable improvements in school quality assurance practices.

#### **2.4 Empirical Literature Review**

Peter (2017) examines the quality assurance of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing its status, challenges, opportunities, and effective practices in the USA. The research utilized a mixed-methods methodology. The data were gathered



via questionnaire and interview. We studied the numeric data through descriptive statistics using SPSS software, and we examined the qualitative data through content analysis. The findings showed that a lack of training in modern quality assurance skills, low motivation among SQAOs, teachers' unwillingness to follow SQAOs' advice, and a limited time to carry out quality assurance tasks made it hard for SQAOs to do their jobs. The similarity and difference between Peter's study and the proposed study are that Peter's study emphasized the challenges in implementing SQAP, whereas the proposed study seeks to investigate how quality assurance in schools affects students' academic performance through a qualitative methodology. The idea aims to address the gap by offering comprehensive insights on the direct impact of quality assurance techniques on academic achievement in secondary schools.

Watsulu and Simatwa (2011) undertook an investigation into the challenges and opportunities pertaining to quality assurance and standards within the context of Kenya. The investigator utilized a descriptive survey design and adopted a mixed-method approach for the research. The methods employed for data collection included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The quantitative data underwent analysis through descriptive statistics facilitated by Microsoft Excel, whereas the qualitative data were examined thematically. The investigation uncovered several obstacles confronting the assurance of school quality: insufficient collaboration from certain educators, instances of missing financial documentation, and the infrequent execution of school assessments, which fell short of the necessary frequency. The investigation conducted by Watsulu and

Simatwa primarily examined the challenges and opportunities associated with quality assurance standards in Kenya, without establishing a direct correlation between these practices and students' academic performance. Consequently, the proposed study aims to address this gap in knowledge by specifically analyzing the impact of quality assurance practices on academic performance, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of their effectiveness in enhancing students' academic outcomes in Kakonko District Council.

Mritha and Onyango (2022) examined the challenges encountered by quality assurance officers in schools aimed at improving academic performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected via questionnaire and interview. Descriptive statistics were employed for the analysis of quantitative data, whereas qualitative data were examined through content analysis. The findings indicate that SQAOs encounter challenges, including insufficient motivation, inadequate quality assurance skills, and a restricted timeframe for conducting quality assurance activities. The research conducted by Mritha and Onyango examined the obstacles encountered by quality assurance officers in educational institutions aimed at improving academic performance, emphasizing barriers while not explicitly correlating practices with quantifiable student outcomes. The proposed study will investigate the direct impact of quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The proposed study contributes to this gap by moving from just finding problems to assessing how well certain practices work, which will offer useful advice for improving academic performance through quality assurance practices.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes understanding participants' perspectives within their social context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative research approach was employed to explore stakeholders' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of school quality assurance (SQA) in public secondary schools. The study adopted a Single case study design, allowing for an in-depth and contextual analysis of the SQA process (Yin, 2018). Participants including secondary District education officer, heads of schools, District quality assurance officer and teachers were selected using purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques targeting individuals with relevant knowledge and involvement in SQA activities (Palinkas et al, 2015). Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to allow for open, detailed responses and interaction among participants (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The data analysis was guided by content analysis, where recurring themes and patterns were systematically identified and categorized in relation to the research questions. This method enabled the researcher to interpret meaning from the textual data by organizing responses into meaningful themes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility through triangulation and member checking, dependability by keeping a detailed audit trail, transferability through thick contextual descriptions, and confirmability by using participant quotes and minimizing researcher bias. Ethical considerations were observed throughout. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality and anonymity

were assured, and data were used strictly for academic purposes. All sources were properly cited to maintain academic integrity and uphold research ethics.

## **4.0 Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on the challenges facing the implementation of school quality assurance in public secondary schools. The results are organized thematically based on the research objectives, with participants' views analyzed and interpreted to provide insights into the existing practices and underlying issues.

### **4.2 Challenge Faced Implementation of School Quality Assurances Practices.**

The research question investigated the challenge faced the implementation of school quality assurance practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakonko District Council. Data for this research question were generated through focus group discussion and interview with head of schools, quality assurance officer and teachers. The findings revealed that there are several challenges that hinder the effective implementation of School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices. These challenges are categorized based on systemic, logistical, and human resource constraints.

#### **4.2.1 Limited follow-up mechanisms**

The interview conducted with head of school and teachers revealed that, recommendations from school quality assurance visits are often not implemented due to a lack of follow-up support or monitoring mechanisms. Furthermore, findings

from focused Group Discussion revealed that some teachers reported that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) conducted follow-up visits, while most respondents stated that no follow-up visits occurred after initial inspections. This disparity highlights inconsistent implementation of post-inspection monitoring in quality assurance processes. For example, teachers in group three expressed concerns about the delay in receiving written reports after inspections, which hinders their ability to effectively address identified issues and improve the teaching and learning process. This delay reduces the impact of quality assurance efforts, as timely feedback and follow up is crucial for making necessary adjustments to enhance educational outcomes. The summary of group three are as follows;

Verbal feedback from quality assurance officers can be challenging to remember accurately, as it is easy to forget important details over time. Moreover, the feedback we receive is often delayed, and by the time we get the written reports, it is already too late to address the issues raised effectively (Focus group discussion G3, from secondary school C3:28 march 2025)

Furthermore, the interview with the school quality assurance officers highlighted that the ability to conduct close supervision and ensure that recommendations were effectively addressed was hindered by the limited number of follow-up visits to schools. This limitation was primarily due to the lack of adequate facilities, which made it challenging for supervisors to frequently visit and monitor the implementation of recommended actions. As a result, it became difficult to maintain consistent oversight, track progress, and provide necessary support or guidance to ensure that improvements were being made as intended. For example, school quality assurance office narrates the following;

Follow-up visits to some schools are infrequent, not because school quality assurance officers lack diligence, but because there are simply not enough officers to conduct visits regularly. Additionally, the shortage of facilities and inadequate resources make it challenging to carry out their duties effectively (Interview, quality assurance officer:31 march 2025)

The interview data highlights several challenges in the implementation of quality assurance recommendations in schools. One of the key issues identified is the lack of consistent follow-up support and monitoring mechanisms after initial school inspections. While some teachers reported that school quality assurance officers (SQAOs) conducted follow-up visits, the majority indicated that no such visits occurred, pointing to inconsistency in the monitoring process. This inconsistency in follow-up visits can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, school quality assurance officer face logistical challenges, including a limited number of officers and insufficient facilities, largely due to budget constraints. These limitations hinder their ability to conduct frequent and thorough follow-up visits, which are essential for ensuring that recommendations are effectively implemented.

Moreover, the delayed provision of written reports after inspections exacerbates the problem. Teachers expressed frustration that by the time they receive feedback, it is often too late to make timely improvements. This delay reduces the overall impact of quality assurance efforts, as immediate guidance is crucial for addressing issues and enhancing teaching and learning practices. These findings are in line with study done by De Grauwe (2001) who found that although the School Quality Assurance Department (SQAD) had planned to conduct follow-up visits to schools, the actual number of visits carried out was insufficient. This shortfall was primarily due to

financial and transport constraints, which made it challenging for quality assurance officers to travel to schools regularly. As a result, the planned follow-up activities were not fully implemented, effectively monitor and support the implementation of recommendations made during initial inspections. De Grauwe's study further highlighted that limited budget allocations hindered the department's ability to cover travel expenses, accommodation, and other logistical needs associated with school visits. Additionally, inadequate transport infrastructure—such as poor road conditions and a lack of reliable vehicles further complicated the efforts of quality assurance officers to reach remote and rural schools.

Furthermore, study done by Makiya et al (2022) the field data revealed that the majority of respondents expressed skepticism regarding the occurrence of follow-up school visits. Specifically, 80% of classroom teachers, 71.1% of pupils, and 66.7% of district school quality assurance officers (DSQAOs) disagreed with the statement that follow-up visits took place after initial inspections. This lack of follow-up can have a negative impact on learning outcomes within schools. Regular follow-up visits are essential for monitoring the implementation of recommendations and ensuring continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices. As supported by Ahmad et al. (2013) stated that infrequent follow-up visits create a sense of alienation among teachers. When follow-up visits after school inspections are rare or inconsistent, teachers may feel neglected and unsupported.

#### **4.2.2 Communication gaps**

The interview conducted with the head of the school and FGD by teachers revealed significant communication gaps between quality assurance officers, stakeholders, teachers, and students. These gaps manifest in various ways and negatively impact the effectiveness of quality assurance practices and the overall school improvement process. Furthermore, it was identified that there was the lack of clear and timely communication from quality assurance officers to the teachers and other stakeholders regarding the findings and recommendations from inspections. Teachers reported that they often receive feedback long after the inspections have taken place, making it challenging to address identified issues promptly. For example, teacher from Group 2 explained that there was minimal communication between the quality assurance officer and students. Instead of engaging directly with students to understand their learning experiences or challenges, the primary focus of quality assurance officers was on checking teachers' lesson plans. The summary of teachers in group two are as follows.

Quality assurance officers rarely take the time to communicate directly with students to understand their learning experiences or challenges. Instead, they primarily focus on checking teachers' lesson plans and ensuring adherence to the syllabus. While lesson plan reviews are important, neglecting student perspectives means missing out on valuable insights into the actual learning process. Sometimes students face challenges that significantly hinder their performance, such as difficulty understanding certain topics, lack of learning resources, or ineffective teaching methods (Focus group discussion G2, from secondary school C2:28 march 2025)

The analysis of the quotes indicates that the communication gap extends to students and the wider school community, who frequently remain uninformed regarding the results of quality assurance visits. The absence of transparency undermines the



collaborative efforts essential for improving educational practices and fostering a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, stakeholders, including parents and community members, often lack sufficient information regarding the quality assurance findings and the measures implemented to address these issues. The absence of communication hinders their ability to engage in or contribute to initiatives aimed at enhancing the school environment. The results align with the research conducted by Kambuga and Dadi (2015), which observed that the communication of school inspection outcomes to essential educational stakeholders is neither effective nor efficient. The school's advancement does not sufficiently communicate with parents, who are the main recipients of educational services. Consequently, they do not possess the essential data required to formulate evidence-based assertions about their children's performance. As a result, the leadership practices within the school have not evolved, resulting in minimal or no enhancement in students' academic performance.

#### **4.2.3 Lack of professional training**

According to the findings of the interview that was carried out with quality assurance officials working in schools, a significant number of them have not received sufficient professional training. So, they may lack the knowledge and skills to conduct thorough, effective inspections. This lack of experience might result in evaluations that are superficial and do not properly address the underlying factors that contribute to poor performance. Because of this deficiency, evaluations may fail to uncover the fundamental problems that are influencing the performance of students and the overall quality of education. It is possible that officers will provide

feedback that is either generic or irrelevant and will not address the actual difficulties that are experienced by schools and teachers. Such behavior is in contrast to offering recommendations that are insightful and based on facts. As an illustration, the quality assurance officer for schools acknowledges that there is a lack of training, which negatively impacts their ability to effectively supervise schools in the following manner:

“Yes, there is a significant challenge in conducting effective classroom supervision, primarily due to limited training on how to carry out comprehensive and meaningful evaluations. Without adequate professional development, quality assurance officers may struggle to identify key areas that impact teaching and learning effectively. (Interview, quality assurance 31 March 2025)

The insights gathered from the discussions with school quality assurance officers highlight a notable deficiency in professional training, which negatively affects the efficacy of school quality assurance practices. The insufficient provision of professional development results in numerous quality assurance officers lacking the critical skills and knowledge necessary for performing thorough and comprehensive inspections. To improve the effectiveness of school quality assurance, it is crucial to offer continuous professional development opportunities for quality assurance officers. Training programs ought to emphasize enhancing the ability to perform significant evaluations, accurately analyze educational data, and convey recommendations in a clear and supportive manner.

The results align with the European study, which demonstrated that training cultivates a culture of lifelong learning among quality assurance officials, prompting them to adjust to changing educational policies and standards. This guarantees their sustained efficacy in their positions throughout time. Moreover, consistent training

guarantees that quality assurance officials remain informed about optimal methods in educational management and inspection procedures.

## **5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study concluded that systemic and operational issues, such as a lack of finance, poorly maintained infrastructure, and a shortage of capacity among quality assurance officers, make it difficult to execute quality assurance. These limitations impede regular school monitoring and the implementation of suggested interventions, which ultimately impacts the intended gains in academic achievement.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

To address systemic and operational challenges affecting quality assurance in education, it is recommended that the government and education stakeholders increase budgetary allocation for quality assurance functions. Investment should prioritize improving infrastructure, including transportation and digital tools, to support regular school monitoring. Additionally, targeted recruitment and continuous professional development of quality assurance officers are essential to build capacity and effectiveness. Strengthening collaboration between schools, district education offices, and quality assurance units can enhance the implementation of monitoring outcomes. Clear guidelines, adequate resources, and accountability mechanisms must be integrated into the system to ensure timely follow-up of recommendations. These interventions will help improve the quality of teaching and learning, thereby contributing to better academic performance and educational equity.

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