



The Paradigm Shift from School Inspection to School Quality Assurance: Perceptions of the In-service Trained Teachers on the Achievements Made

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the quality of education is a Tanzania strategy towards preparation of innovative, creative, competent and competitive workforce required for economic transformation from low agricultural productivity to middle income and semi-industrial country by 2025. Therefore, the paradigm shifts from school inspection to school quality assurance in basic, secondary and teacher education in 2017 was an imperative intervention towards the national development vision. This study therefore, sought to evaluate the perceptions of the in-service trained teachers on the achievement of the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in Tanzania education as empirical feedback for the government commitments and investments. Through convergent parallel mixed-methods design, data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires from 76 in-service teachers trained in School Quality Assurance, followed by interviews conducted with in-service teachers trained in Education Leadership, Management and Administration both at Diploma level, between 2019 and 2021 years. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents' categories basing on their professional training in relation to education practices. The descriptive statistics and content analysis techniques were

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used to analyze, present, and discuss quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The study found that, the in-service trained teachers perceive the paradigm shift's significant achievement is institutionalizing a collaborative, transparent, holistic and friendly mechanism compared to its predecessor school inspection. However, such achievement has not impacted positively on the quality of education provided as expected due to inadequacy of resources to meet quality standards as recommended by school quality assurance officers, limited quality assurance competencies among teachers, little attention given to teachers' welfare services and lack of legal power to school quality assurance directorate to enforce their recommendation in schools. Therefore, the study recommended improving resources to meet school quality standards, developing quality assurance competencies among teachers before they graduate, exceptional attention to teachers' welfare services, and constitutionalizing the school quality assurance directorate into an autonomous entity reporting directly to the parliament. Further study can be conducted on evaluating models for developing quality assurance competencies among pre-service teachers in colleges.

Keywords: Paradigm shift; school inspection; school quality assurance; school quality assurance framework; school quality assurance directorate.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is a determinant factor for social and economic development at the individual, national and global levels [1]. Since Independence, the Tanzania government therefore, has been designing and implementing different strategies and mechanisms to ensure that the quality of education provided is improved and maintained to foster workforce training towards national development vision [2,3]. Consistently, the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance system in the monitoring of basic, primary and teacher education in Tanzania is a typical strategy and mechanism to improve the quality of education provided towards innovative, creative and competitive workforce training for social and economic development [4].

The genesis of the school inspection system can be traced back to the Napoleon Regime in France during the 18th Century, which was intended to monitor the provision of education in terms of standards [5]. It was then adopted in the United Kingdom when her majesty inspector of school was appointed in December 1839 to ensure that the money given to the school as grants were well spent to support public education in England [6]. Therefore, the system was established to ensure that education provision as a public service complies with the prescribed rules, regulations, and programmes (Brown, McNamara, Hara & O'Brien, 2016). School inspection system was then adopted in different countries across the world, even in the high performing education systems like Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Scotland and

Netherlands, for the same purpose as those of England (Whitby, 2010) and the United States of America [7].

In Africa, school inspection began during the colonial era. In Ghana, for example, it was established in 1853, after the appointment of the first inspector of schools for British West Africa Colony to ensure that the African teachers in colonial schools comply with the prescribed curriculum, rules, regulations, programmes and procedures for safeguarding the colonial interests [8].

Similarly, after Independence, the independent African governments adopted the school inspection system to adhere to the prescribed rules, regulations, and standards [9]. In independent Tanzania, for example, school inspection was formalized in 1979 when the inspectorate department was established under the Ministry of education, following the education Act number 25 of 1978 [10]. The main objectives of school inspection in Tanzania include monitoring enrollment, access, completion and equity in education; observing the work being done by students, teachers and schools, to make judgements on quality; promoting school development and improvement; collecting data, analyzing, interpreting them, giving reflection and reporting; providing feedback to the Ministry, Heads of schools, owners and other stakeholders, identifying specific needs for schools, teachers and students; monitor students' and teachers' discipline and conducting action research [11: 71]. The system involved inspectors visiting schools without prior information for evaluation purposes to ascertain

whether they comply with the education act and regulations or not and administer punishments to the culprits [12].

The school inspection system had four types of inspections which included: Full assessment that intended to evaluate the whole operation of the school from curriculum implementation, administrative function as well as school environment; follow up inspection to examine the extent to which school management has implemented the given recommendations from the previous inspection; partial inspection to evaluate specific aspects of the school operations as well as a special inspection to find the solution for a particular problem in a specific school [13].

However, the school inspection system has been criticized globally for its limitation to address quality challenges threatening the achievement of 21st-century learning needs [14]. At the local level, school inspection has been graded as ineffective to improve the quality of education, which is the driving force towards the Tanzania development vision '*transforming a country from low-agricultural productivity into a middle income and a semi-industrialized nation by 2025*' as well as the Sustainable Development Goal, Agenda 2030 which intends to improve the provision of *inclusive equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all* [15,2, 5]. Such global and local needs for quality education as declared in the education and training policy of 2014 in section 3.2 that: '*education and training should adhere to quality assurance and standards acceptable that would make Tanzanians to be competent and competitive at national and international levels*', necessitated the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in Tanzania in 2017, where the latter is expected to be collaborative, effective, evidence-based, communicative and transparent to ensure that the prescribed standards are achieved and maintained than the former [16] (MoEST, 2017).

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN TANZANIA EDUCATION

The quality assurance systems in Tanzania education can be categorized into three types. The first is the School Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD), a ministerial department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The SQAD is responsible for ensuring the quality of education at primary,

secondary and teacher education levels. The directorate is the former school inspection department [17]. The second is the National for Technical Education (NACTE), the semi-autonomous Agency responsible for ensuring technical education quality [18]. The third is the Commissions for Universities (TCU), which coordinates university and higher learning institutions [19]. Each level of education provided in Tanzania has its quality assurance mechanism, although the Ministry of Education Science and Technology has the overall responsibility for educational quality improvement.

3. CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

The Tanzania government, in 2017, transformed the education monitoring system from school inspection to school quality assurance as an intervention to improve the quality of education as a determinant factor towards man power training for national development [4]. Therefore, the school inspectorate department and their officials and school inspectors assumed school quality assurance functions and responsibilities [17]. The paradigm shift intended to transform the practice and behavior of school inspection into school quality assurance towards achieving the desired quality goal in education [20]. Since 2017 when the school quality assurance system was born from school inspection in Tanzania, there was a dire lack of empirical feedback from teachers who are educational practitioners at grassroot level on the achievement made so far. Without such feedback, the national and international efforts and endeavors towards improving quality assurance systems in Tanzania education, would remain in a dilemma. Therefore, this paper has come into being to bridge such a knowledge gap.

4. FACTORS FOR THE PARADIGM SHIFT FROM SCHOOL INSPECTION TO SCHOOL QUALITY ASSURANCE

There are empirical evidence and policy statements as forces behind the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance. Beginning with the failure of school inspection as the external evaluation system hence a need for a blended education monitoring system. For example, the paper on approaches to school inspection in Northern Ireland Assembly pinpointed the need to blend school self-evaluation and external evaluation instead of

relying on the external evaluation only. This new approach blending school self-evaluation and external evaluation is a paradigm shift from school inspection, which relied only on external evaluation to school quality assurance, a blended system [21].

Secondly, the weaknesses of the school inspection system. The study on barriers to practical school inspection in Pakistan highlighted the following inadequacies: autocratic tendencies among school inspectors, bureaucracy in the system, faultfinding attitudes among inspectors and lack of follow-up after the school visits for inspection [22]. The noted weakness implies a need to transform the system to remove bureaucracy and solve the lack of follow-ups.

Consistently, in Australia, the study conducted by Altricter and Kemethofer in 2014 established that, the inspected schools improved their academic performance compared to the uninspected ones. In the same line, the report of the Controller and Audit General about school inspection in Tanzania highlighted the incapability and incapacity of the school inspectorate department to inspect many schools, citing the example that, in the 2008/2009 financial year, the schools inspected were 346 out of 3,798 which is about 9% of the schools which were supposed to be inspected in that year [15]. This implies that if the inspected schools improve their academic performance, only 346 schools could improve while the uninspected schools continued deteriorating. Due to this situation, there was a need for a paradigm shift from the school inspection system.

Similarly, a study conducted in six countries: Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa on challenges facing school inspection identified: corruption, irregular practices, and lack of competencies among inspectors, as well as financial constraints [12]. Those challenges imply the system's weakness, thus needing change for improvement. In Nigeria, school inspection was ineffective due to unprofessional tendencies of inspectors who serve as masters of all subjects, punishment-oriented inspection, relying on upon setting down rules than reality and poor remuneration among inspectors [23].

In the same line, the paper presented by Hongoke and Mmbando in the 2010 Joint

Education Sector Review, under the subject 'Management, Inspection and Supervision for Effective Delivery of Quality Education' condemned school inspection system for creating an antagonistic relationship between inspectors and the inspected, lack of commitment among inspectors and inspected, poor feedback systems, lack of follow-up mechanism, inadequate facilities, lack of transparency as well as lack of autonomy to the inspectorate department itself. The Controller and Audit General observed the same weaknesses in 2008, Kambuga and Dadi in 2015 as well as Mollel in 2015 hence a need for intervention strategies including structural and administrative change of the system as emphasised in the education and training policy [16].

Finally, the need for improving the quality of education to meet the learning needs of the 21st Century, which are critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, have instigated the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance to ensure that education management and administration, the curriculum, methodology, assessment and teaching and learning resources address these learning needs. These skills are essential for workforce training towards Tanzania development vision 2025 and sustainable development goal, 2030 as stated in the education sector development plan 2016/2017-2020/2021 [20].

5. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The paper was guided by the paradigm shift theory founded by Thomas Kuhn (1962). The theory asserts that, a paradigm shift is a fundamental change in world view, concepts and practices when the former paradigm does not achieve the expected goals [24]. The major assumptions of the paradigm shift theory include: Changes are inevitable as the world is not static, the consequences of the paradigm shift can be good or bad depending on how the new paradigm is put into use, paradigm shift often comes from the young because older people usually are conservatives of ideas and practices, the existing paradigm cannot be abandoned until its replacement is found and a new paradigm needs adequate time for its goals to be achieved [25]. The paradigm shift results from the existing weaknesses, which did not meet peoples' expectations [26]. The theory is suitable for this paper because it answers the study's critical

questions concerning what, how, why, when, and who is the paradigm shift. Therefore, data collection, analysis, presentation, and discussions are based on the paradigm shift theory.

6. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design which merged with the qualitative and quantitative research approaches and methods. The design enabled the triangulation of the results collected concurrently and analyzed separately using qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques [27]. Questionnaires with open-ended and closed questions were distributed randomly to 94 out of 172 in-service teachers trained in School Quality Assurance between 2019 and 2021 in order to express their perceptions concerning the achievement of the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in Tanzania education. 76 out of 94 respondents returned the complete filled questionnaires, while 6 filled with some questions skipped, and 2 did not fill anything at all. The return rate, therefore, was 80.1%. To triangulate the questionnaire and interview findings conducted to five in-service teachers trained in Education Leadership, Management and Administration between 2019 and 2021. Purposeful sampling was used to obtain both categories of respondents basing on their professional training and practical experiences in education. The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were subjected to verbatim and content analysis techniques. Data presentation involved table, figure, frequency, verbatim and descriptions.

7. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A total of 76 in-service teachers trained in School Quality Assurance filled questionnaires about the achievement of the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in education. Their responses are presented in Table 1.

As indicated in Table 1 and Fig. 1, in-service teachers trained in School Quality Assurance are knowledgeable that the shift from school inspection to school quality assurance has made a remarkable transformation in education monitoring mechanisms in terms of stakeholders' involvement, improved feedbacks, change of attitude from school inspectors to school quality assurance practitioners and transparency in the whole process of quality assurance. Triangulating these findings to in-service teachers trained in education leadership, management and administration, an interview question was posed to them about the achievement of the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in Tanzania education. Their responses were as follows:

The teacher from school A replied that:

'These school quality assurance officers are friendly; they advise and share their views for improving the teaching and learning and school management and administration, unlike the former school inspectors. Nevertheless, teachers' welfare services are not part of the quality assurance framework; the concentration is on learners' achievement is disregarding their abilities.'

Table 1. Perceptions of in-service trained teachers in school quality assurance on the achievements of the paradigm shift from school inspection

Perceptions of in-service trained teachers in school quality assurance on the achievements of the paradigm shift from school inspection.	Frequency N 76.
Improved the use of quality assurance feedbacks for school improvement (M1)	63
Improved the learners' academic achievements (M2)	7
Improved teachers' awareness of their roles and responsibilities in quality assurance processes (M3)	18
Change of attitude from school inspectors to school quality assurance practitioners (M4)	66
Improved community involvement in quality assurance practices (M5)	72
Improved teachers' welfare services provision (M6)	12
Improved enforcement of the quality assurance recommendation (M7)	15
Improved transparency in quality assurance processes (M8)	69
Improved school resources for quality achievement (M9)	29

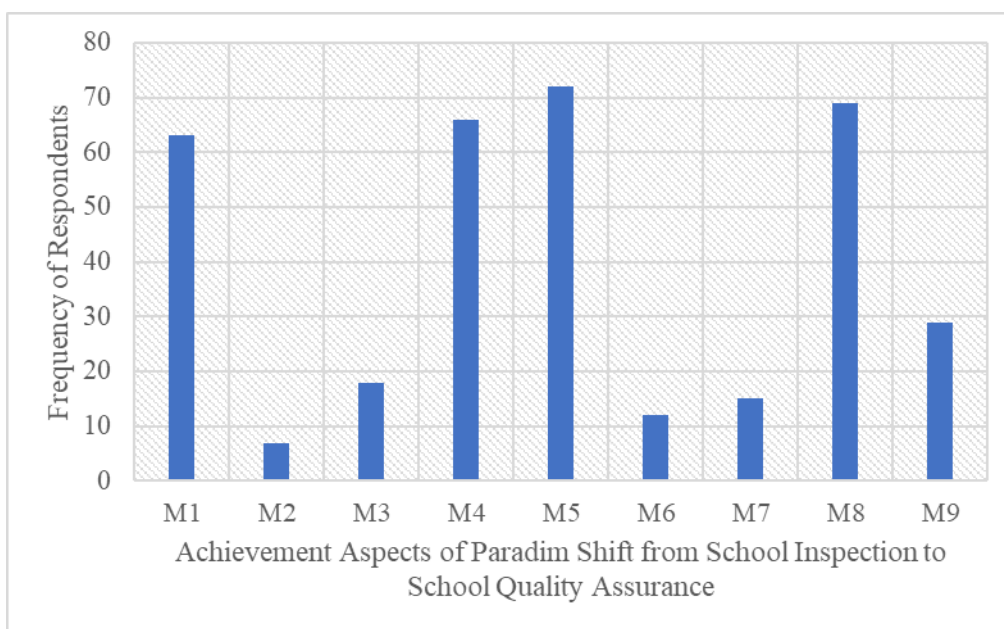


Fig. 1. Perceptions of in-service trained teachers in school quality assurance on the achievements of the paradigm shift from school inspection

The teacher from school B answered that:

‘The school inspectors created fear as they invaded schools unnoticed, their relationship with teachers was cats and rats, but currently, things are good. However, the good recommendations they gave require adequate resources hard for school management to mobilize and themselves, they are incapable of enforcing them to the ministries dealing with education.’

The teacher from school C, argued:

‘Although the quality education in terms of academic results have not been achieved due to increased enrollment compared to the available teachers, classrooms and books, there is an achievement in stakeholders’ involvement in quality assurance practices as well as transparency in the whole processes and constructive feedback to schools. The wrong side of the paradigm shift is that apart from headteachers, other teachers are not even aware of their roles and responsibilities in the new paradigm’.

The teacher from school D, responded that:

‘At least these quality assurance officers are aware that some situations in our schools like shortage of teachers, classrooms, books, and desks are not the fault of the school

Management but the government which own these schools. In the former systems, we were penalized for the mistakes, not ours, for example, poor performance in standard seven examinations lead to the demotion of most of head teachers from their posts’

The teacher from school E, said:

‘A paradigm shift needs time to achieve its intended goal; there are observable gradual improvement year after year since 2017 up to date. At first, we have got the new system that is a great achievement then we expect for the achievement of the new system in the near-future especially the improvement of school resources, students and teachers’ welfare and academic performance in the poor performing subjects’

8. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The views of the in-service trained teachers in School Quality Assurance are in line with the observations given by the in-service trained teachers in Education Leadership, Management and Administration that the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance have improved the character and practice of personnel dealing with education monitoring. This result is in line with the study conducted by Doherty in the United Kingdom [28], who

established that quality assurance should replace school inspectors in 'white coats' with quality assurance personnel 'problem solvers' This has been achieved in Tanzania as manifested in the change of attitude from school inspectors to school quality assurance personnel as well as improved transparency and feedback systems. However, the observable achievement has impacted little in the academic performance, a tangible indicator of the quality goal of education, which was a cry even during the school inspection system as established by the controller and audit general in 2008 and 2016 [15,2].

Moreover, the results further imply that, minor academic achievement in education is the results of paying little attention to the teachers who are the steering wheel of quality education. The emphasis on learners' achievement in the new paradigm should go hand in hand with teachers' achievement due to their mutual relationship, as Almadani, Rud and Rodrigues [14] proposed in Bangladesh. Similarly, the study results on minor achievement on learners' achievement are in line with the study conducted by Abdullahi [29] in Nigeria, who found that, the education quality achievement has not been achieved through quality assurance processes due to the poor quality of the enrolled students in schools as well as limited teachers' competencies in both, teaching and quality improvement of the education service they provide. In summary, the findings discussed above imply that, only the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance is not a panacea for quality improvement in education, unless there are other supportive policy, managerial and structural interventions to enable the new paradigm achieve its desired goals [30-34].

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that the significant achievement of the paradigm shift from school inspection to school quality assurance in Tanzania education-monitoring system is the institutionalization of a collaborative, transparent, holistic and friendly mechanism compared to its predecessor school inspection. However, such achievement has not impacted the quality of education provided as expected due to various factors such as inadequate resources to meet quality standards as recommended by school quality assurance officers. Besides, teachers are confused about their roles and responsibilities in

the new paradigm. Furthermore, teachers' welfare services receive little attention. In addition, there is a lack of institutionalized powers on school quality assurance directorate of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology to mandate various recommendations to the operators of schools, including the Ministry that is responsible for dealing with education, currently known as the Ministry of Presidents' Office - Rural Administration and Local Government.

Based on the paradigm shift theory that guided this study, three years is not enough for a new paradigm to fully achieve its goals and objectives; however, this study at the early stage of the paradigm was necessary to track the progress. Therefore, to achieve the desired outcomes in education resulting from a paradigm shift, the current study recommends the following. Firstly, providing relevant resources and facilities to meet the quality provision of education in schools. Secondly, developing foundational quality assurance competencies to teachers while still in Teacher Colleges. Thirdly, reviewing policy in order to strengthen community involvement in education practically. Fourthly, giving special attention to teachers' welfare services such as timely and fair promotion, teachers' houses, upgraded salary scale, payable leaves and a good working environment. Fifthly, constitutionalizing the school quality assurance directorate as an autonomous entity reporting directly to the parliament. Further study can be conducted on developing quality assurance models for competence development among pre-service teachers in Teacher Colleges.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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