

Strategies Used by School Quality Assurance Officers on Quality Teaching in Public Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the strategies used by school quality assurance officers on quality teaching in public secondary schools. Qualitative research approach with a case study research design was employed in this study. The target population of the study was teachers and heads of schools from the selected four public secondary schools as well as district schools' external quality assurance officers. The sample size was 45 participants (36 teachers, 4 heads of schools and 5 school quality assurance officers). Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), documentary review and analyzed through content analysis approach. The study findings revealed various strategies used by school quality assurance officers on quality teaching. Those strategies included; conducting regular classroom observations to monitor teaching quality, providing feedback to teachers after classroom observation, organizing in-school seminars for teachers on effective teaching methods, encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers and providing teachers with updated curriculum guidance during their visits. This study concluded that, the quality of teaching in public secondary schools is closely linked to the effectiveness of support systems provided by education management structures. School quality assurance officers serve as a vital connection between educational policies and classroom implementation, promoting reflective practices and learner-centered approaches. However, the effectiveness of these strategies faces an insufficient staffing and resources, limited professional development training and resistant to feedback and implementation. Addressing this systemic reform, capacity-building, and stronger stakeholder support are recommended.

Keywords: Quality teaching, School quality assurance officers, strategies, public secondary schools

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Quality teaching has increasingly become a central theme in the discourse of education where learners' changeover into higher levels of knowledge acquisition and skill development (Muya & Ngirwa, 2024). Globally, quality teaching is recognized as a fundamental determinant of students learning outcomes and overall academic performance (Sakani & Otieno, 2024). It is not only associated with the mastery of content but also with the ability of teachers to apply effective pedagogical approaches, manage classrooms and create supportive learning environments. In this regard, the quality of teaching remains important in shaping learners cognitive, social and emotional development and it serves as an essential benchmark for measuring the success of an education system.

In pursuit of quality teaching, many education systems place emphases on the role of school quality assurance officers (SQAOs) whose mandate is to oversee, monitor and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in schools. These officers employ different strategies, including school inspections, teacher professional development programs, mentoring and coaching, monitoring instructional plans and ensuring adherence to curriculum standards (Peter & Mkulu, 2022). Through these strategies, school quality assurance

officers contribute to improving instructional delivery, supporting teachers to adopt best practices and ensuring accountability in the teaching process (Mwoshe & Wachawaseme, 2021). Their contribution is therefore critical in aligning classroom practices with national education goals and international standards.

The strategies employed by school quality assurance officers have been studied across different contexts with varied outcomes. In Finland, school quality assurance practices emphasize a supportive rather than punitive approach, where inspectors focus on mentoring and collaboration with teachers (Kassim, 2024). The strategies adopted encourage innovation, autonomy and continuous improvement in pedagogy, leading to consistently high student performance in international assessments. In Nigeria, school quality assurance officers often emphasize strict inspection and compliance with educational standards (Ahmed, Huret & Dessen, 2023). While this ensures accountability, studies reveal that challenges such as inadequate resources and limited professional development hinder the effectiveness of their strategies in sustaining quality teaching. Cecilia and Onyango (2022) in Kenya asserted that, the shift from traditional inspection to a quality assurance framework has enabled officers to adopt more participatory strategies such as teacher mentorship, capacity-building workshops, and collaborative feedback. These efforts have positively influenced teacher motivation and instructional practices, although issues of workload and inadequate follow-up remain significant challenges.

According to Agapiti and Kitula (2022) Tanzanian government has restructured the inspectorate system into school quality assurance with the aim of making it more developmental and supportive to teachers. Strategies include school visits, provision of professional guidance, capacity building and monitoring the implementation of curriculum reforms have been utilized (Kaparata, 2022). While these strategies have had a positive influence in some schools by improving teacher preparedness and instructional delivery, there are concerns regarding limited resources, irregular visits and insufficient follow-up mechanisms which compromise their effectiveness.

Despite these efforts, there remains a notable gap in understanding how school quality assurance officers specifically strategize to enhance quality teaching in different contexts within Tanzania. Existing studies (i.e Mwoshe & Wachawaseme, 2021; John, 2022; Kaparata, 2022) have concentrated on broad issues of school inspections or general quality assurance without focusing adequately on the practical strategies used and their direct influence on quality teaching. In Mbeya City Council, where education remains a key driver of socio-economic development, little is known about how school quality assurance officers operationalize their mandate and the extent to which their strategies contribute to improving quality teaching in public secondary schools. This gap calls for an in-depth exploration of the strategies employed by school quality assurance officers and their influence on quality teaching in Mbeya City Council. Such a study is expected to provide empirical evidence that can guide policy and practice in strengthening the role of school quality assurance in Tanzania's education system.

Theoretical Framework Underpinning the study

This study was guided by Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, developed in 1960 (Omolawal, 2021). This theory is foundational in the field of management and motivation and provide contrasting views about human behaviour in the workplace (Siadari et al., 2024). Theory X assumes that employees inherently dislike work, avoid responsibility and must be closely supervised and controlled through strict rules and punishments to perform effectively (Omolawal, 2021). while, Theory Y assumes that employees are self-motivated, enjoy their work, seek responsibility, and can be trusted to work independently when provided with the right conditions and support.

This theory thought to be relevant, since the study concerned with strategies used by school quality assurance officers to enhance quality teaching, it lies in understanding the attitudes and perceptions of School Quality Assurance Officers towards teachers, and how these perceptions influence their supervisory practices. Theory X portrays that in nature human being are lazy especially when working in groups. In order to meet organizational needs, they need strictly supervision. Appropriateness of theory X to the study was that it enabled to incorporate the findings of the study on the belief of strictness on teachers' job performance fueled by school quality assurance officers for quality teaching. Also, if SQAOs adopt a Theory X approach, they may rely on strict inspection and control, which could create a culture of fear and resistance among teachers

for betterment of teaching. Conversely, a Theory Y approach encourages support, collaboration, and professional development, which are likely to foster quality teaching and continuous improvement. When applying this theoretical lens, the study sought to explore the strategies used by school quality assurance officers to enhance quality teaching in public secondary schools, exemplifying Mbeya City Council.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Approach and Design

In exploring the strategies used by school quality assurance officers on ensuring quality teaching in public secondary schools, a qualitative research approach particularly fit because it helped to gain in-depth understanding of complex phenomena. This approach enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed insights into quality assurance officers and teachers' experiences, perceptions and the contextual factors influencing quality teaching. Qualitative data, such as interviews and focus group discussions, revealed nuances that quantitative methods overlooked, providing a more comprehensive view of the strategies used by quality assurance officers on ensuring quality teaching in public secondary schools.

The case study research design was also employed; this design was employed in this study because it allowed getting in-depth and context-specific exploration of the strategies used by School Quality Assurance Officers in ensuring quality teaching in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. This approach is appropriate as it enables the researcher to investigate complex interactions, gather rich qualitative data from multiple sources, and generate practical insights relevant to the local educational setting.

Participants

In the study, the target population included teachers working within the selected public secondary schools in Mbeya city council, heads of schools and school quality assurance officers. A total sample size of 33 participants was included, consisting of 24 teachers, 4 heads of schools and 5 school quality assurance officers. This sample size was chosen to ensure a diverse range of perspectives while maintaining manageability for in-depth qualitative analysis. The inclusion of both teachers, heads of schools and school quality assurance officers, as it allowed for a comprehensive understanding the strategies used by school quality assurance officers on quality teaching in public secondary schools. To select the sample, a purposive sampling technique was employed. This method was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to intentionally ensure that the sample consists of participants who have direct experience and expertise relevant to the study's focus, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of the findings.

Data Collection Methods

The methods for data collection included interviews with heads of school and school quality assurance officers, focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and documentary review. An interview with heads of school and school quality assurance officers was beneficial as it ensured uniformity and comparability of responses, thereby enhancing the reliability of the data collected. FGDs with teachers complemented the head of schools and quality assurance officers' interviews by providing a platform for teachers to express their thoughts and feelings about the strategies used by school quality assurance officers on quality teaching in public secondary schools. This method encouraged interaction among participants, allowing them to share and reflect on their collective experiences. Through capturing diverse viewpoints, the focus groups enriched the data, revealing trends and common themes in student experiences.

In addition, documents such as school inspection reports, teachers' lesson observation reports, records of in-service training or professional development sessions, teachers' performance appraisal forms and national education policy documents related to quality assurance were reviewed. These documents provided rich source of contextual and historical information that was not easily accessible through interviews and FGD. It allowed the researcher to identify patterns, verify findings and triangulate data from other sources, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the research.

The integration of these methods enhanced the credibility and depth of the findings. Interviews brought forward expert opinions, FGDs offered grassroots perspectives, and document reviews ensured the verification and contextualization of data. Together, these methods supported a holistic analysis and enabled a more nuanced discussion of the findings, grounded in multiple layers of evidence.

Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

In order for the raw data to make sense, data were analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis was preferred due to its flexibility that allowed the researcher to focus on the data in numerous different ways. The process started by selecting the content that was analyzed based on research questions, defining the units and categories of analysis, developing a set of rules for coding, coding the text according to rules, analyzing the results and drawing conclusions. Moreover, in order to ensure rigor or confidence and to avoid bias with the findings as the basic for qualitative research, multiple criteria such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability was ensured.

Also, adherence to ethical considerations was paramount throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, an introductory letter was obtained from the office of the Director of Postgraduate Studies at Ruaha Catholic University. This letter served as formal recognition, allowing the researcher to approach regional and municipal authorities with credibility. It facilitated access to the selected schools, ensuring that the study was conducted within a framework of institutional support. During the data collection process, ethical issues were carefully addressed to protect the rights and well-being of the participants. Informed consent was sought from all respondents, ensuring that they fully understood the purpose of the study, their role in it, and their right to withdraw at any time. This transparency was crucial in fostering trust and promoting a respectful research environment. Furthermore, confidentiality was rigorously maintained; participants were assured that their identities and responses would be kept anonymous, which is essential for encouraging open and honest communication.

Ethical considerations continued during the data analysis phase, where the researcher was committed to relying solely on the findings derived from the collected data rather than imposing personal biases or interpretations. Through focusing on the evidence gathered from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews, the analysis aimed to faithfully represent the perspectives and experiences of the participants. This commitment to ethical integrity ensured that the study's conclusions were grounded in the reality of the participants' experiences, contributing to the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes. Overall, these ethical practices not only safeguarded the participants but also enhanced the overall quality and legitimacy of the study, ensuring that it was conducted with respect and responsibility towards all stakeholders involved.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored the strategies used by SQAOs on quality teaching in Mbeya City public secondary schools. The findings indicated that there were various strategies used by SQAOs on quality teaching. Those strategies included; Conducting regular classroom observations to monitor teaching quality, providing feedback to teachers after classroom observation, organizing in-school seminars for teachers on effective teaching methods, encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers and providing teachers with updated curriculum guidance during their visits. Also, they included; collaborating with HoS to plan for instructional improvement as well as mentoring teachers on classroom management practices. Those strategies were identified by almost more than half of the participants visited. However, the utilization of those strategies was associated with certain conditions as explained in the following paragraphs.

Conducting regular classroom observations

Conducting regular classroom observation was one of the key strategies used to enhance quality teaching in schools. It involves school quality assurance officers, head teachers, or other educational supervisors visiting classrooms to observe how lessons are planned, delivered and managed (Mwoshe & Wachawaseme, 2021). Through this process, teachers' instructional methods, classroom management skills, use of teaching resources and interaction with students are closely monitored. Regular observation provides an opportunity to identify

strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices and to offer constructive feedback that helps teachers improve their performance (Kanika, 2022).

Regular classroom observations conducted by school quality assurance officers was found to be a practical and impactful strategy for promoting quality teaching in public secondary schools. These observations fostered accountability, encouraged teachers to adopt effective teaching practices and created a platform for constructive feedback that supported teachers' professional growth while enhancing pupils' learning experiences in classrooms. Interviews with SQAOs and HoS, along with focus group discussions with teachers, revealed that conducting regular classroom observations is a key strategy used by SQAOs to monitor and promote effective teaching. Through these observations, SQAOs assess lesson delivery, the use of teaching methods, classroom management and the extent to which teachers engage learners in the learning process. One school quality assurance officer explained:

We make it a point to visit classrooms frequently because it is the only way to see the real teaching situation and understand the methods teachers are using to teach students. When observing directly, we can identify where the strengths are and where teachers need support to improve. Our observations are not just to find faults but to help teachers see areas for growth so that learning in the classroom can truly benefit the students. (Interview with SQA0 3 held on 5th June, 2025).

Heads of schools emphasized that the presence of quality assurance officers during lessons encourages teachers to prepare thoroughly and use varied instructional strategies that promote learning. One head of school shared;

When teachers are aware that quality assurance officers will be in class, they put more effort into their lesson plans, ensure they have teaching aids ready, and try to use methods that involve the learners actively in the lesson. Therefore, these visits remind teachers that teaching is not just about covering the syllabus but about delivering lessons effectively and ensuring pupils understand. (Interview with HoS from SA held on 15th June, 2025).

During focus group discussions, Teachers shared mixed feelings about these observations but acknowledged their role in improving teaching practices. One teacher stated, *"At first, it can be stressful when someone is observing you, but it helps us know what we are doing right and what we need to improve"*. Another teacher added; *"Sometimes, after the observation, the officers give us feedback that opens our eyes to new ways of handling lessons and managing classrooms that we had not considered before"*.

These observations also enabled school quality assurance officers to identify challenges that teachers encounter, such as difficulties in implementing learner-centered approaches or managing large classes. This helps SQAOs to provide targeted feedback and practical advice to teachers based on real classroom contexts. One SQA0 explained;

After observing lessons, we sit with teachers to discuss what went well and areas that need improvement. We guide them on how to structure lessons, engage learners, and manage their time and resources better to improve the quality of their teaching (Interview with SQA0 4 held on 5th June, 2025).

Regular classroom observations conducted by SQAOs are a practical and impactful strategy in promoting quality teaching in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. These observations fostered accountability, encouraged teachers to adopt effective teaching practices and provided constructive feedback that supported professional growth while enhancing pupils' learning experiences. These findings align with Enock, Sanaullah and Quddus (2022) who noted that continuous classroom observations serve as an effective mechanism for monitoring teaching quality and ensuring adherence to learner-centered instructional methods. The direct involvement of SQAOs in lesson observation, as revealed in this study, reflects the argument by Kissa and Wandela, (2022) who found that school-based supervision encourages teachers to maintain high standards of lesson preparation and delivery when they know that quality assurance officers are monitoring their teaching.

Providing feedback to teachers after classroom observation

Feedback to teachers after classroom observation is a crucial strategy for improving teaching quality (Mcheka, Anangisye & Mislay, 2022). It provides teachers with constructive insights on their strengths and areas for improvement based on observed lessons. Effective feedback is timely, specific and supportive, helping teachers reflect on their practices and adopt better instructional methods (Mcheka et al., 2022). When delivered collaboratively, it motivates teachers, builds confidence, and fosters continuous professional growth, ultimately leading to improved student learning outcomes.

Providing feedback to teachers is a practical and supportive strategy used by school quality assurance officers to promote quality teaching. This strategy fosters continuous improvement, encourages teachers to reflect on their practices and supports them in adopting methods that enhance pupil learning in public secondary schools. Interviews with SQAOs and HoSs, along with FGD with teachers, revealed that providing feedback to teachers is a strategy used to support quality teaching. SQAOs emphasized that giving feedback helps teachers understand their strengths and identify areas for improvement in their teaching practices. One SQAQO noted;

Feedback is very important because it guides teachers on what they are doing well and where they need to make changes to improve the learning experience for their pupils. We ensure that feedback is clear and practical so that teachers can apply it in their daily teaching. (Interview with SQAQO 1 held on 5th June, 2025).

HoSs highlighted that feedback provided by quality assurance officers helps teachers to grow professionally and build confidence in their teaching. One HoS said; *“Teachers appreciate receiving feedback as it helps them reflect and improve, which enhances their effectiveness in delivering lessons”*. Another head explained; *“Feedback sessions also encourage teachers to adopt new strategies that can improve pupil participation and understanding”*. Teachers who participated in FGDs acknowledged that the feedback they receive is valuable for their professional development. One teacher explained;

The feedback we get helps us see how we can improve our teaching and motivates us to try new methods in our classrooms. It also helps us know that we are supported in our work, and that encourages us to keep improving. (FGD with Teacher 1 from SB held on 5th June, 2025).

Providing feedback to teachers after classroom observation is a practical and supportive strategy used by SQAOs to promote quality teaching in public secondary schools. This strategy fosters continuous improvement, encourages teachers to reflect on their instructional practices and supports the adoption of methods that enhance pupil learning. Also, the findings of the study revealed that feedback sessions encourage teachers to try new strategies to improve pupil participation and understanding. The findings are consistent with Mritha and Onyango (2022), who observed that constructive feedback serves as a catalyst for teachers to experiment with diverse teaching methods that engage learners actively.

Therefore, providing feedback to teachers after classroom observation has proven to be an effective strategy for enhancing quality teaching in public secondary schools. It not only enables teachers to reflect critically on their practices but also builds their confidence and professional competence, leading to improved lesson delivery and enhanced pupil learning experiences. These findings reaffirm the critical role of school quality assurance officers in providing structured, supportive and actionable feedback to foster a culture of continuous professional growth and instructional excellence within the education system.

Organizing in-school seminars for teachers

Organizing in-school seminars for teachers is an important strategy for promoting continuous professional development and improving teaching quality. These seminars provide a platform where teachers come together to share experiences, discuss challenges and learn new pedagogical approaches (Munna & Kalam, 2021). They often focus on areas such as curriculum implementation, classroom management, use of teaching resources and innovative instructional strategies. When being conducted within the school, seminars are more accessible and context-specific, addressing the actual needs of teachers and students in that environment. They also encourage collaboration and peer learning, fostering a culture of teamwork among teachers. In-school seminars help

update teachers with current educational policies and practices, equip them with practical skills, and boost their confidence in delivering lessons effectively. Ultimately, this strategy enhances teachers' professional competence, which directly contributes to better learning outcomes for students (Kassim, 2024).

These seminars strengthen teachers' instructional practices, encourage professional collaboration and provide teachers with practical strategies to enhance lesson delivery and pupil engagement in public secondary schools. Interviews with SQAOs and HoSs, alongside FGDs with teachers, revealed that organizing in-school seminars for teachers on effective teaching methods is a key strategy employed to support quality teaching.

SQAOs highlighted that these in-school seminars aim to build teachers' capacity in using diverse, effective teaching approaches. One SQAQO said;

We organize seminars to equip teachers with practical skills on using participatory teaching methods and learner-centred strategies that engage pupils more actively. Seminars allow us to discuss current teaching challenges and help teachers develop approaches that improve lesson delivery. (Interview with SQAQO 1 held on 5th June, 2025).

HoSs noted that these seminars are beneficial for encouraging professional collaboration among teachers while exposing them to innovative instructional practices. One HoS explained;

Seminars organized by quality assurance officers help teachers share experiences and learn how to handle teaching topics using different methods that can improve pupils' understanding. They create a learning environment for teachers themselves, where they gain confidence and feel supported in improving their teaching. (Interview with HoS from SA held on 15th June, 2025).

Teachers who participated in FGDs expressed appreciation for these in-school seminars, noting their practical impact on teaching. One teacher had this to say; *"Seminars give us new ideas on how to teach topics using examples that make lessons easier for pupils to understand. Also, they motivate us as we learn from each other and from the facilitators on better ways to manage lessons and use teaching aids effectively"*

Generally, the study revealed that organizing in-school seminars is an effective strategy used by SQAOs to improve quality teaching in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. These seminars strengthen teachers' instructional practices, encourage professional collaboration and provide practical strategies that enhance lesson delivery and pupil engagement. The findings align with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Muya & Ngirwa, 2024) guidelines, which advocate for school-based professional development as a sustainable approach to improving teaching quality and promoting active learning in Tanzania's education system.

The study demonstrates that in-school seminars organized by school quality assurance officers are instrumental in enhancing quality teaching in public secondary schools. Through providing teachers with practical instructional strategies, promoting collaboration and building confidence in using learner-centered approaches, these seminars contribute to teachers' professional growth and improve lesson delivery and students' engagement. This emphasizes the critical role of school quality assurance officers in facilitating continuous, context-relevant professional development for teachers, ensuring that teaching practices align with contemporary educational goals and effectively support students' learning.

Encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers

Encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers is a strategy that strengthens collaborative professional development and promotes reflective teaching (Sakani & Otieno, 2024). Through peer learning, teachers observe each other's lessons, share experiences and exchange effective teaching techniques. This creates a supportive environment where teachers learn from one another's strengths and address common challenges collectively. Lesson study, on the other hand, involves teacher's jointly planning, teaching, observing, and reflecting on a particular lesson with the aim of improving instructional practices. It fosters deep professional dialogue, critical reflection and innovation in teaching methods (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

Both peer learning and lesson study enhance teachers' confidence, encourage teamwork, and build a culture of continuous improvement within schools. Ultimately, these practices improve lesson delivery, stimulate learner engagement, and contribute to higher student achievement.

The findings of the study revealed that encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers is a strategy used by school quality assurance officers to enhance quality teaching. This approach helps teachers improve lesson delivery, fosters teamwork and builds a supportive learning community among teachers in public secondary schools. Interviews with SQAOs and HoSs, alongside FGDs with teachers, revealed that encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers is a strategy employed to support quality teaching.

SQAOs explained that they encourage teachers to learn from one another by observing each other's lessons and discussing effective teaching practices. One SQAQO said;

We advise teachers to observe how their colleagues teach, then sit together to reflect on what went well and what can be improved. Through lesson study, teachers plan lessons together, teach while others observe and later discuss the strengths and areas of improvement, which helps them build each other professionally. (Interview with SQAQO 5 held on 5th June, 2025).

HoSs emphasized that this strategy promotes a culture of teamwork and continuous improvement among teachers. One HoS said;

We have seen that when teachers work together to plan and review lessons, they gain new teaching ideas and become more confident in delivering lessons. Peer learning allows teachers to support each other, and it becomes easier for them to address challenges in the classroom because they discuss and find solutions together. (Interview with HoS from SD held on 15th June, 2025).

Teachers in FGDs appreciated the peer learning and lesson study practices encouraged by school quality assurance officers. One teacher had this to say; *"Learning from a fellow teacher helps me see different ways of explaining concepts to students, and I improve how I teach"*. Another teacher noted; *"Lesson study helps us work as a team, and we feel free to ask questions and get help on areas we find difficult"*

Encouraging peer learning and lesson study among teachers is a strategy employed by SQAQOs to enhance quality teaching in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. This approach raises collaboration, improves lesson delivery and builds a supportive learning community among teachers. Also, peer learning and lesson study enable teachers to contextualize instructional practices to meet their students' learning needs. This finding aligns with Kissa and Wandela, (2022) who found that collaborative learning among teachers is crucial for the effective implementation of learner-centered teaching approaches in Tanzanian schools. The findings also align with UNESCO (2017) and MoEST (2018) guidelines, which emphasize the importance of nurturing collaborative professional learning communities among teachers to enhance instructional quality and pupil engagement in the learning process.

Providing teachers with updated curriculum guidance

According to Mcheka et al., (2022) providing teachers with updated curriculum guidance is a key strategy for ensuring effective implementation of education policies and improving the quality of teaching. It involves equipping teachers with the latest information, materials, and directives related to curriculum changes, subject content, teaching methodologies, and assessment procedures. This guidance helps teachers align their lesson plans and instructional approaches with national education standards and contemporary learning needs (Sakani & Otieno, 2024). When teachers receive clear and updated curriculum guidance, they are better positioned to deliver lessons that are relevant, accurate, and responsive to learners' contexts. It also reduces confusion that may arise from curriculum reforms and ensures consistency in teaching across schools. Moreover, updated guidance supports teachers in adopting modern pedagogical strategies, integrating cross-cutting issues, and meeting diverse learners' needs. Ultimately, this enhances the effectiveness of classroom instruction and contributes to improved student learning outcomes.

The findings of the study indicated that providing updated curriculum guidance during visits is a strategy used by school quality assurance officers to enhance quality teaching. This support enables teachers to align their teaching with current curriculum demands, improves planning and lesson delivery and builds teachers' confidence in handling curriculum requirements in public secondary schools. Interviews with SQAOs and HoSs, alongside FGDs with teachers, revealed that providing teachers with updated curriculum guidance during visits is a key strategy employed to support quality teaching.

SQAOs explained that during their visits, they ensure teachers understand current curriculum requirements and expectations. One SQAQO said;

When we visit schools, we guide teachers on how to align their schemes of work and lesson plans with the latest curriculum changes. We bring updated circulars and clarifications on curriculum interpretation to help teachers stay on track with what is required in each subject. (Interview with SQAQO 2 held on 5th June, 2025).

HoSs emphasized the importance of this support in helping teachers implement the curriculum effectively. One HoS said;

Our teachers sometimes get confused with new changes, but the officers help them understand what they need to teach and how to assess students. We rely on these visits to ensure teachers have accurate information, which helps them plan and teach confidently (Interview with HoS from SC held on 15th June, 2025).

Teachers in FGDs also expressed appreciation for receiving updated curriculum guidance from school quality assurance officers. One teacher explained;

Sometimes we are not sure about the changes in the curriculum, but when the officers come, they explain and guide us, which makes our work easier. Getting direct clarification helps us avoid mistakes in teaching and assessment (FGD with Teacher 7 from SD held on 5th June, 2025).

Providing updated curriculum guidance during school visits is a strategy used by SQAOs to enhance quality teaching in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. This strategy enables teachers to align their instructional practices with current curriculum demands, improves lesson planning and delivery and builds teachers' confidence in handling curriculum requirements. Also, the provision of updated curriculum guidance during school visits contributes to the effective implementation of competence-based curricula, as emphasized by Chilongani (2021) in promoting quality education through continuous professional and curriculum support. Similarly, the MoEST (2018), underscores the role of quality assurance officers in providing curriculum guidance to ensure consistent teaching quality across schools in Tanzania.

Mentoring teachers on classroom management practices

Mentoring teachers on classroom management practices is a vital strategy for enhancing quality teaching and creating a conducive learning environment. It involves experienced educators or school quality assurance officers guiding teachers on effective ways to organize classrooms, establish routines, handle disruptive behaviour, and maintain positive teacher-student relationships (Mwoshe & Wachawaseme, 2021). Through mentoring, teachers gain practical skills in fostering discipline, promoting learner engagement, and maximizing instructional time.

This support not only builds teachers' confidence but also helps them develop strategies tailored to diverse learners and classroom contexts. Effective classroom management reduces learning interruptions, encourages active participation, and improves overall student achievement. When mentoring teachers in this area, schools strengthen teachers' professional competence while ensuring that classrooms remain orderly and productive spaces for learning.

The study found that mentoring teachers on classroom management practices is a strategy employed by SQAOs to improve teaching quality. This mentorship helps teachers develop confidence in handling diverse classroom challenges, enhances pupil engagement and fosters a positive and organized learning environment in public secondary schools. Interviews with SQAOs and HoS as well as FGDs with teachers, revealed that mentoring teachers on classroom management practices is a strategy actively used to support teaching quality.

SQAOs explained that during their visits, they engage teachers in discussions on managing classes effectively, maintaining discipline and creating a conducive learning environment. One SQAO said;

We take time to guide teachers on how to handle large classes and different pupil behaviours while ensuring learning continues smoothly. Sometimes, we demonstrate strategies that help teachers manage time during lessons while keeping pupils engaged. (Interview with SQAO 2 held on 5th June, 2025).

HoSs confirmed the importance of this mentorship, noting that it equips teachers with practical skills for maintaining control in their classrooms. One HoS remarked;

Teachers often face challenges with discipline, but the mentoring they receive from officers helps them gain new strategies to manage pupils without conflict. Through this mentorship, teachers learn how to set clear expectations, use positive reinforcement, and handle disruptions constructively. (Interview with HoS from SB held on 15th June, 2025).

Teachers in FGDs expressed that this mentorship has been valuable in helping them manage their classrooms effectively. One teacher noted; *“The officers show us practical ways of handling pupils who are disruptive without losing control of the lesson. We learn how to organize group activities and keep pupils on task, which has reduced noise and increased participation”* Mentoring teachers on classroom management practices is a strategy employed by SQAOs to improve teaching quality in public secondary schools within Mbeya City Council. This mentorship helps teachers develop confidence in handling diverse classroom challenges, enhances pupil engagement, and fosters a positive and organized learning environment. Also, practical demonstrations by SQAOs on managing large classes and diverse pupil behaviors align with learner-centered and inclusive teaching approaches, as advocated by Agapiti and Kitula (2022) who underscores the role of mentoring in improving classroom practices and enhancing pupil learning experiences. The findings also align with MoEST guidelines, which emphasize that school quality assurance officers are responsible for providing practical support to teachers in managing classrooms effectively, ensuring that teaching and learning take place in a safe, orderly and engaging environment (John, 2022).

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study it concluded that, the quality of teaching in public secondary schools depends not only on individual teacher effort but also on the systems of professional support that surround them. Effective teaching flourishes when teachers are empowered through guidance, collaboration, and mentorship that respects their autonomy while encouraging accountability. From a broader perspective, this suggests that sustainable improvements in education are rooted in environments where supervision is developmental rather than purely evaluative.

Teachers thrive when they are engaged as reflective practitioners who can experiment with strategies, learn from peers, and align instruction with curriculum expectations. Such an approach fosters professional confidence, innovation, and a sense of responsibility, ultimately benefiting pupils' learning experiences. The study highlights a central principle: the role of school quality assurance is most effective when it is facilitative providing actionable support, fostering collaboration, and nurturing continuous growth rather than simply monitoring compliance. This reflects a professional belief that quality teaching is a product of both systemic support and teacher agency, where constructive supervision and mentorship create conditions for excellence in classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should strengthen the capacity of school quality assurance officers through training, resource allocation, and logistical support to enable them to implement practical and contextually relevant strategies effectively. School leaders should cultivate a professional culture in which classroom observations, feedback sessions, mentorship, and in-school seminars are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than punitive exercises. Teachers should actively engage with the guidance provided, applying reflective practice, collaborative learning, and learner-centered strategies to enhance instructional quality and

pupil engagement. School quality assurance officers should ensure their interventions are consistent, practical, and tailored to the challenges teachers face in real classroom contexts. Finally, collaboration between teachers, school leadership, and quality assurance officers should be institutionalized as a continuous process to sustain professional growth and enhance the overall quality of teaching and learning in public secondary schools.

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