

# Cultivating Leadership Agility for Quality Assurance: A Conceptual Framework for Faith-Based Schools in Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Abstraction of theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the integration of faith with quality assurance standards in a dynamic, evolving, revolving and competitive educational environment has become inevitable for faith-based schools in their endeavors of promoting total quality management and improvement in education. Leadership agility plays a crucial role in shaping and directing the processes of implementations of quality management systems and accomplishments of quality assurance initiatives undertaken by faithbased schools in Kenya. Their mission and vision statements are the driving forces for their endeavors to attain full compliances with the national and international quality education standards. This paper is a conceptual review that explores the complex relationship between leadership agility and quality assurance standards in faith-based schools, aiming to discover the nuanced interaction between leadership competencies and quality enrichment determinations. A detailed thorough reviews of literature and conceptual analysis led to the emergence of a strong framework that demonstrated how different levels of leadership agility interacted with quality assurance standards to influence total quality management and improvement in education. Of great interest in the levels of leadership agility are; context-setting agility, stakeholder agility, creative agility and self-leadership agility. The real-world applications of the framework on leadership agility underline the significance of realigning leadership enhancement plans, institutional cultural and traditional promotions, spiritual emphasis plans, strategic visionary thinking and decision-making with higher levels of quality assurance standards compliances. In addition, this paper provides the basis for further research work by delimiting the concepts and abstracts that need in-depth investigations comparative and correlational analysis in cross-cultural settings, explorative research, customer care and stakeholder satisfactions, and adaptability to modern technological changes. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical frameworks and it does not only enhance the discourse between leadership agility and quality assurance but it also provides a robust blueprint guide for educational practitioners, administrators, managers, experts and researchers who determined to uplift the quality of education in schools. This paper is an exploration of how a leader's agility is instrumental in transforming the quality of education in a school setting

**Keywords:** leadership Agility, Leadership Competence, Quality Assurance Standards, Total Quality Education, Faith-based Institutions

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, educational institutions are operating in a competitive environment. According to Andrade et al., (2020) different countries and regions of the world have devised unique accreditation standards to mitigate the challenges of the high demands for learning and compliance to quality assurance (QA) standards.

Educational institutions around the world have not been able to integrate their information and communication systems with the plans they have for QA standards. Countries in most parts of the world have established national and regional QA standards agencies/bodies and educational institutions accrediting associations to ensure that the required standards of education and training are fulfilled nationally and internationally. The world is quickly shifting towards educational programs that foster optimal development of competencies and skills to meet their set QA standards. In the European Countries the standards and guidelines for QA in their education systems are clearly stipulated in their manual for the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher

Education (ESG-QA). This manual contains clear set guidelines and standards for external and internal quality and QA agency (ESG, 2015). The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE 2018) is responsible for coordinating and registering major QA standards agencies in Europe through the European Association of Quality Assurance (EAQA), the European

Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation

(CYQAA, 2015) all of which are to ensure quality, continuous upgrading and improvement of HE in Europe. Javed and Alenezi (2023) noted that public, private and church institutional leaders are continuously initiating educational reforms and consistently empowering school managers and administrators with competencies, skill and strategies that enables them to be fully compliant with the desired QA standards. Consequently, institutions are increasingly becoming more strategic and determined to winning more students for enrollment, establishing a more competent workforce and acquiring a wider market share for their institutions. Javed and Alenezi (2023) pointed out that public, private and church educational sectors have come up with a myriad of measures to monitor and evaluate the QA standards through well-established agents of standardization. The continental and regional bodies include the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SEACMEQ) and the Eastern Africa Community (EAC) Education Reforms working with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) was established to ensure that the provision of educational services are aligned with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025). This agency is expected to guarantee that there are quality, inclusivity, and equitability in education (UNESCO 2019) which are integral educational leadership factors for sustainable developmental goals, establishment of robust innovations in science and technology, and enhancement of creative and entrepreneurial skills in organizations (Javidpour 2024). Fourteen member countries in Southern and Eastern Africa which included Kenya were facilitated by SACMEQ (2017) to build capacity for educational assets/facilities, quality basic education, quality educational services and handbooks, equitable resource allocations, quality learners' outcome, and health awareness. Quality education and human resource developments are crucial for the economic empowments of African nations, and more pertinently, in gearing the systems of education towards quality and equality in socio-economic, religious and educational atmosphere (Larasati & Rindaningsih, 2024; Baker, 2014)

Kenyan Government began the process of reviewing its education system and reforming its educational curriculum from the year 2010 in order to provide quality education through Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) which was a diversion from Outcome-Based Curriculum (OBC) that had been in place for some time (Education Reforms in Kenya, (GOK, 2023)). In this process of reform leadership agility played a significant role in ensuring that there was total compliance to quality assurance standards at all stages of the reforms. The diversion was informed by the Kenyan need for a paradigm shift in education system from OBC which was deemed to be of inferior quality because it was more of examination-oriented and mainly drilling student on rote memory, knowledge, understanding, and cognitive domain of learning outcomes only, to a more superior CBC which is more concerned with developing competencies and skills in learners. OBC was long and largely considered to be the main cause of poor quality products, incompetent and poorly trained school leavers, industrial workers, and non-compliance to QA standards (GOK, 2023). In the Constitution of Kenya (GOK 2010) it was stipulated that the greatest need for Kenya is a quality education system that does not produce school leavers that are job seekers, less creative with no innovative skills, and are low in terms of productivity and their impacts on the development of the society, but to produce competent and skilled school leavers (Constitution of Kenya, GOK 2010).

Quality of education of both public and faith-based educational institutions in Kenya is guided by the Kenya Education Act 2013, the Kenyan Vision 2030, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) Act 2012, the Session Paper No. 14 of 2012, and the KICD Act 2013. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) is mandated by the Kenyan government to set quality standards for all educational institutions and patronize or enforce institutional compliances to those QA standards. As an authority in education MOEST has developed working mechanisms with established QA agents which include the Directorate of Quality Assurance Standards (DQAS), the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) and the National Education Quality Assurance and Standards Framework (NEQASF). The QA standards bodies and

Accrediting agencies for faith-based educational institutions include the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) based in USA.

All these quality agents and accrediting bodies strive to meet international quality standards like those of Human Resource Management (HRM) standards, International Labor Laws (ILO) standards, Total Quality Management (TQM) standards, and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

Reforms in quality assurance, quality educational system, and quality examinations in Kenya began way back in the 1960s with the Ominde Commission Report of 1964 which was mainly concerned with eradicating colonial education system of education (Ominde, 1964), Gachathi Commission Report of 1976 (GOK 1976) which advocated for the quality of education to be centered more on transformative vocational policies, cultural aspirations, socio-economic skills and national values. The MacKay Commission Report of 1981 (GOK 1981) and Kamunge Commission Report of 1988 (GOK 1988) advocated and emphasized mainly on education quality that were more practical, relevant, accessible and affordable. Koech Commission Report of 1999 (GOK 1999) came up with Total Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET) that introduced practical subjects in secondary schools to develop the practical skills of students and further made reformations in the quality of Kenyan examination system (Inyega et al., 2021; Muricho 2023). A case study about revisiting educational reforms in Kenyan CBC was conducted by Akala (2020) and found out that with all the reforms the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) and the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) were better placed and equipped to ensure quality processes of implementing the reforms. CBC was established to enhance the quality of education in Kenya and to produce graduates that are useful in the society, financially self-reliant, selfemployed through job-creations and innovation, technically competent and skilled in the community

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the growing awareness of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the establishment of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET) are instrumental tools for Kenyan institutional leaders to effectively invoke institutional QA standards in their agile leadership dispensations. The National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) is a robust educational database and a digitized educational tool established in Kenya to improve the quality of service provision in the education sector. NEMIS provides dynamic portals and a dashboards for ICT-enabled assessment framework for Institutional-Based Quality Assurance (IBQA) which has greatly paved way for AI in education

## METHODOLOGY

The research methodology engaged in this for the exploration of the relationships between leadership agility and quality assurance among faith-based schools in Kenya is outlined in this section. In-depth reviews of literature and deep analyses of conceptual and theoretical frameworks were the mixed approaches utilized in this study. These approaches paved way for in-depth searches of available knowledge and findings of leadership agility and quality assurance in school settings that were analyzed and synthesized into a robust conceptual framework. The in-depth reviews of literature in this study began with intensive and extensive search and analyses of related literature in articles and other literature sources like reports, books, and published scholarly literature. These reviews of literature were conducted to find out fundamental information and concepts, conceptual trends and frameworks, and related literature that was crucial in establishing concrete theoretical and conceptual frameworks related to leadership agility and quality assurance in faith-based school settings (Petermann and Zacher 2020; Garira 2020; Base and Abad 2025). A wide range of literature resources that included theoretical and empirical studies done by other scholars, and a thorough examination of policy documents in education were involved in the processes of this study to develop a conceptual framework (Buckley 2020; Susanto et al. Ahmadi 2024; Chansatitporn and Pobkeeree 2020). The aim was to identify and isolate the established theories and existing models of leadership agility that are often applied in faith-based schools and frequently used to establish the best practices and mechanisms of quality assurances (Kwasek et al. 2024; Coruzzi 2020; Chansatitporn and Pobkeeree 2020).

The findings of the literature reviews in this study were analyzed, synchronized and integrated to develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks that comprehensively defined the intricate relationships between compliances in quality assurance and competencies of leadership agility in relation to faith-based schools (Suhermin, Rahayu and Shabrie 2024; Nyaga and Mwaniki 2025; Hoff and Smith 2020). The conceptual framework established in this study is founded on well recognized and identifiable concepts, themes, subthemes and theories extracted from the reviewed literature (Koomson, 2024), and was heavily based on the identification of common patterns and interrelationships that informed the interconnectivity of concepts and theories related to leadership and quality assurance (Nguyen et al. 2024). The end result of these conceptual reviews was to create an integrated conceptual framework through a process that involved categorization and organization of themes and subthemes of concepts found in literature reviews (Zhang 2022). The categorization of the findings in the literature reviews found in this study was instrumental in constructing a robust conceptual framework that critically demonstrated how the various dimensions of leadership agility (such as faith-based school context-setting agility, stakeholder agility, creativity agility and self-leadership agility) were significantly influential to the process and outcome of quality assurance (Base and Abad, 2025).

This conceptual study totally depended on literature reviews and analyses of other scholars' findings on conceptual and theoretical reviews, and therefore, ethical considerations and issues of human participations do not arise and are non-consequential in this literature explorations. Nevertheless, ethical issues of intellectual property rights and ethical guidelines on the in-text citations and referencing was seriously taken into consideration and strictly followed in this study (Mataveli, Calvo, and Gil 2022). The practicality and applicability of the conceptual framework constructed from this study on conceptual reviews may vary from one faith-based school to another because it was purely constructed from concepts and theories from literature, belief systems of faith-based schools and theoretical leadership concepts (Koomson, 2024). This methodology of study used in this study heavily relied on literature reviews and theoretical analyses of concepts to establish a conceptual framework of interrelationships and interconnectedness of quality assurance and leadership agility in schools that are faith-related. The aim of the methodology was to aid in developing a conceptual framework that ultimately contributes significantly to the understanding of how to integrate leadership and quality in academic institutions of cross-cultural settings. The insights gained from this study can inform the appropriate leadership choices and practices in schools and transform the quality of education in Kenya

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The basis of the conceptual framework in this study is the in-depth review of literature on detail information related to leadership agility and quality assurance in the context of faith-based school setting. The understanding of the concepts, theories, belief systems, values, standards, norms and how they interact in a religious and secular space to inform the functioning of a faith-based school is the firm foundation of this conceptual framework. The various facets of leadership agility which range from the context-setting, the stakeholder, creativity and self-leadership (Tripathi and Sankaran 2021; Buffone 2021; Mulyana, Nurhayati and Putri 2023) and how they vigorously interact with quality assurance standards (Baydar 2023; Ozdemir 2023) forms a solid conceptual framework that inform the day-to-day operations and functioning of a faithbased school.

The literature reviews on the multifaceted characteristics of leadership agility provided a deeper understanding of how leadership competencies are effective in transforming the quality of education in faithbased schools (Syamsira, Saputrab and Mulia 2025; Nisha and Jayarajan 2024). On the other hand, literature reviews on the multiple quality assurance standards revealed that the belief systems, values, norms, governance standards, mission and vision statements, quality of spiritual plans, and quality of education and learner services, interact vigorously with the various facets of leadership agility to produce better quality education and services both locally and globally (Base and Abad 2025; Lewa, Mburu and Murigi 2022). The literature reviewed revealed that the various religious institutions (churches) have put in place quality standards for their faith-based schools that are in line the State guidelines and requirements for the education sector (Hakim et al. 2024; Kithinji, Murucha and Kinoti 2022; Taylor 2022). The quality standards set by religious institutions often augment and support the quality standards set by the state for all public and faith-based schools (Mulyadi et al. 2022; Odhiambo, Kahuthia and Wandiga 2025).

In a nutshell, the interplay, interconnectedness, and interrelationship between the government quality assurance standards and those of religious institutions provide strong conceptual and theoretical frameworks that inform the functioning and performances of Church and State educational institutions (Koomson 2024). The conceptual review of literature in this paper clearly revealed how concepts, theories, knowledge, contextsetting, norms, cultures, belief systems, leadership styles and competencies, and rules and regulations interacted vividly in a conceptual framework. Further, it gives clarity and meaning to the quality and standards of functionalities and operations of a faith-based school (Petermann and Zacher 2020; Kwasek et al. 2024). The resultant conceptual framework from conceptual reviews is highly moderated by the religious values and belief systems of the school setting, the school leadership, the teachers, the stakeholders, and the school communities.

The conclusion of the matter is that the conceptual framework developed in this study provided a very clear understanding of how the multifaceted dimensions of leadership agility interacted with the multiple quality assurance standards in a faith-based school context to achieve higher levels of total quality management and improvements of education and schools

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework and theoretical analyses developed in this study heavily depended on the review of literature. The findings in the literature review of this study are analyzed, categorized into themes and subthemes, and synchronized and integrated into concepts and theories. This study delved into an in-depth review of literature related to leadership agility and quality assurance taking into consideration the faith-based schools in Kenya. Majority of the schools in Kenya are church sponsored under the most prominent religious organizations like the Catholics, the Muslims, Councils of Churches, the Protestants, and the Adventists. These schools are studied together under one umbrella called Faith-Based Schools (FBS). The literature review obtained from these FBS is instrumental for total quality management and improvement of education in Kenya

### Faith-Based Schools and Quality Assurance

The government is not the only entity that is interested in promoting quality education through effective leadership. Religious organizations, such as, the West Kenya Union Conference (WKUC) of Seventh-day Adventist church, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) have established mechanisms to ensure that their faith-based schools are providing quality education through agile leadership. The Catholic Church, for a long time in Kenya and globally, is known for providing quality education, establishing wellstructured schools, and partnering with the government to beef up effective school leadership, school governance and school management (Kithinji, Murucha and Kinoti 2022; Omundi 2024; Adhiambo 2019). SUPKEM on the other hand is well known for establishing and running vibrant Islamic schools and providing robust Islamic religious education with learning agility and agile leadership (Hakim et al. 2024; Abdalla, Chown and Memon 2020). However, there are a few faith-based independent and not-for-profit institutions' accrediting associations and QA standards monitoring bodies around the world. The General Conference (GC) of SDA Church has a robust philosophy of SDA education with clear statements of its mission, vision, values, aim, goals and objectives (GCWP 2015), which form the basis for QA standards and quality education. According to the philosophy of SDA education, the aim of education is to provide Bible-based all-round education that prepares the learner to be equipped with useful skills and competencies, embrace the dignity of labor and be filled with the joy of service (Taylor, 2022). The GC also established the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) for the purposes of evaluating and accrediting SDA institutions that meet QA standards. This body is mandated to carry out the assessment, evaluation and accreditation of the schools, colleges and universities (AAA Handbook, 2019), and makes recommendations for TQI and TQE to the Education Departments of the Church at the GC and by extension of the same services to all the SDA institutions in the worldwide unions and divisions. The SDA Church at East and Central Africa Division (ECD) is growing very fast and has the largest population of church members specifically the youths in the whole world church. The total population of the youth enrolled in schools in 2021 was 2,064,761 out of a total church membership of 4,666,780 that represents 44.2% (Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics, 2001, n.d.)

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is a faith-based QA body that is mainly concerned with accreditation of Christian church schools in USA and the whole world (ACSI Manual, 2023). This Christian accrediting body uses an accreditation manual for institutional self-evaluation and uses this as a tool for inspiring schools to prosper and grow when they attain the set QA standards. Equipping these youths with the necessary leadership competencies and agility, through competency-based curriculum and the provision of quality educational programs and facilities, is inevitable for effective service delivery to the faithbased institutions in the countries of Africa and the world (Teacher Certification Manual, 2023).

## Faith-Based and Government Schools

The Directorate of Quality Assurance Standards (DQAS) was established by the government of Kenya with the aim of ensuring that all educational institutions are complying with QA standards in the basic, higher and technical systems of education (UNESCO, 2004). DQAS mandates include working harmoniously with the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) on the tasks of ensuring quality education in the new educational reforms through enactment of proper educational policy and planning (MOEST, 2015). The government took upon itself to fully fund the cost of education in the Public Sustained Schools (PSS) and provide partial funding for church sponsored schools (Simiyu, 2025; Nason, 2023). The church schools are in three categories. The schools that are purely owned, funded and managed by the church organization are referred to as Church Maintained Schools (CMS). The category of schools that are privately owned by church members are referred to as Church Related Schools (CRS). The schools that are owned, managed and operated jointly by the government and church organizations cooperatively or in partnerships are referred to as Church Sponsored School (CSS) and are the majority in Kenya. The government in this arrangement of CSS provides capitation for tuition for every child in the school, supply text books, hire teachers and partially provide development funds. The church on the other hand provides leadership, spiritual nurturing, development funds, and human resource management oversight (Taylor, 2020). The MOEST through TSC employs principals and teachers for PSS and CSS schools, provide books and funding for development projects though Constituency Development Funds (CDF) and annual government appropriation of educational funds as specified in the Education Act Chapter 211 of Kenyan Laws 2010. The CMS are not funded by the government at all and mainly depend on school fees and some little appropriation of educational funds from the church. They also generate income from projects like Income Generating Units (IGUs) and savings from students' work programs at school as prescribed in their respective church manuals

Traditionally, public institutions of learning are fully owned, funded and run by the government. These are purely public sustained schools (PSS) and tertiary institutions like colleges, TIVETs and Universities. The government gets its funding through taxation and appropriates portions of that fund to public educational institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022) compared the public and private schools to find out how their quality of services differ. It was observed that the government provided full funding for public schools, the classrooms are big in size and student population in those classrooms spacious with large number of students that are sometimes unmanageable. Salary payment for teachers is much more in public schools than those of the private schools though the attrition rates of teachers are higher in public than in private schools. Principals' influences on curriculum activities are higher in private than public schools. Class sizes are small and manageable in private than public schools. Crime rates of students in public schools are higher than that of the private schools.

Faith-based schools, unlike the public and private schools, have different funding modes, working environments and levels of compliances to QA standards. Faith-based educational institutions that are well organized provided very conducive environments for learners and workers. The workers will always feel fulfilled and satisfied with a sense of belonging. Educational leaders under thriving public schools have more controls over funding, financial management and autonomy than their private schools counterparts (Dieude and Proitz, 2024). The teachers' sense of inclusion, community and belonging, and the invigorating academic activities is higher in faith-based and private schools than in public schools. Level of compliance with QA standards is higher in faith-based schools than in both private and public schools. The increasing need for standardization and effective quality assurance compliances are proving to be great challenges to the leadership autonomy and quality standards in private, public and faith-based schools

## Faith-Based Holistic Quality Education

Balanced education is achieved through a reform process that is transformative, integrative and disruptive. Quality education in general is one whose products are viewed as products of well-balanced QA standards and leadership abilities. Educational quality is greatly enhanced when institutional instructional leaders are able to implement and comply with QA standards successfully and completely as enforced by the State and Church QA agencies (Nason, 2023; Nupap, 2016). These spectrum of standards and leadership factors begin from schooling and co-curriculum activities that nurture, mentor, and mold the learners to become responsible citizens. The African Union (AU) established a system in 2010 for providing quality education and harmonizing educational statistics (KICD 2013). In 2014, the East African Community (EAC) in collaboration with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) adopted the AU strategy with a special emphasis on the harmonization strategy for QA standards (EAC Secretariat, 2014). The main concern of EAC is establishments of quality criteria for curriculums designs and implementations, availability of resources for teachers and learners, and attainment of required standards of resources needed for the implementations of harmonized curricula.

QA standards in educational institutions involve continuous assessment and evaluation of programs in education and establishing mechanisms for better and efficient performances (Putri, 2020). The processes of attaining QA standards in institutions of learning depend on technical support and adequate information from education stakeholders, readiness of school administrators to embrace change, establishment of systems that work well, financial supports and accountabilities, and a robust criteria and mechanism for making informed decisions. True education aims at imparting not only academic knowledge but balancing that knowledge with the holistic development of a whole person physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually (White, 1894). The work of education is to inculcate into the learners the values and virtues of honesty, integrity, sincerity and faithfulness (White, 1903). Further, the work of education is to ensure that there is character formation of youth, to produce spiritually strong young people who will not succumb to the whims of corruption and usury, who will stand firm for truth at all times, and who will be true to their duty and service to God and mankind. Directorates of quality assurances and educational supervisory authorities are mandated by the government to develop comprehensive manual for education directors in order to enhance the directors' supervisory roles and ensure that there is Total Quality Education (TQE) and Total Quality Improvement (TQI) in the educational institutions operated by churches around the world, (Larasati and Rindaningsih, 2024)

Faith-based leadership agility and management competencies in educational institutions determine the levels of achievements and compliances to QA standards. Leaders need to initiate educational reforms to compete favorably in the competitive education market (Mbithe et al., 2021). Denominational church leaders are mandated to provide competent, strategic leadership and vision to accomplish the mission of the church. For implementing such an endeavor, the leaders must be spiritually and morally upright (SDA Working Policy, GCWP 2015b). Emphasis is on quality and not quantity. The beliefs and religious values of a servant leader, alongside those of transactional and transformative leaders, are vested on their ethical and moral values like love, purity, kindness, generosity, humility, honesty, dignity, and integrity. Institutional leaders take the greatest responsibility for providing best educational materials and services to their esteemed learners as stipulated in the Adventist Educators' Manual 2023 for certification of educators in SDA institutions.

## Quality Assurance Supervision

Supervising QA standards in schools requires leadership agility. School supervisors are external agents of quality in schools, and are in better positions to help some schools with lower standards to benchmark with those other schools with better standards. School inspectors also have better opportunities to give schools with low visionary thoughts better and bigger pictures of how to enhance quality based on their encounter and experience from better quality schools they have ever inspected before (Schrage and Rasche, 2022). Both the school supervisor and inspectors are well equipped with the tools and methods that can help institutions to attain the desired QA standards and possess abilities to sensitize schools that are slow in development by inspiring and motivating them to engage in self-drive initiative for growth and improvement. Importantly, inspectors must demonstrate that they use the same criteria and standards to ensure that all criteria and schools are fair to assess schools and teachers (reliability of inspectors). Baharun et al. (2021) say that quality of education can be achieved by using varied approaches, instruments and methods. Appropriate instruments used for assessing and accrediting schools

are designed to set the best standards in line with the vision statements that give the aspiration to be the best in the region or the whole world. Inspectors and supervisors use standardized instrument to cut across all the schools being evaluated and accredited.

Internal and external QA assessments are meant to countercheck each other, but external QA is more crucial for checking and giving direction to internal QA (Nyamwesa, Magambo and Onyango, 2020). External checks of quality is carried out by various forces which include QA agents, the public, politics, creditors and competitors. Diversities in higher education pedagogy, institutional infrastructure, subjects and course, learner and teacher expectations require a lot of balancing in terms of ensuring accountabilities and quality improvements. European Commission Director (2020) observed that quality is high on the political education agenda, and quality improvement is an important issue facing many educational institutions. Heystek and Shula (2024) say that the political concerns for quality in education come with concerted pressure and desire for greater responsibility in improving quality and standards. Quality of education often become a political agenda and part of political manifestos for various presidential candidates. At some point the very quality being advocated by the political class end up being manipulated and compromised. Various stakeholders in education are quick to point out if there is a decline in performances in any unit of the educational sector

Locally and equally around the world, attainments of QA standards face big and small challenges depending on the various government policies on education. Kayyali (2023) observed that in some schools the quality has been severely compromised, the school systems are flawed, teachers and students are not performing to the expectation of their institutions, there are poor work ethics among teachers, lack of parental support for learners from the parents, poor control by the educational authorities (school administration and management), and poor support for teachers. Eliamini and Otieno (2024) say that QASOs are facing great challenges which include shortage of time and funding for carrying out QA activities, inadequate or no tools for QA assessments, and lack of transport means and facilitations. However, the government in Kenya has declared that it is serious about managing education reforms and quality, and has initiated programs for change in the education system to improve quality and access in educational services.

OECD (2012) states that the existence of QA and QC in organizations is important in building economic, social, technological, financial and good living standards. In this context, with reference to secondary school policy, some important areas that educational institutions (authorities) should give more attention in order to deal with student failure while studying at school have been identified. These include: eliminating grade repetition, avoiding early tracking and delaying the choice of upper secondary school students, and regulating the choices of students by schools to prevent them from segregating and discriminating other students. Governments have robust funding models for all levels of education to help identify needy students and facilitate the funding of their education. European Commission (2020) stated that QA monitoring in schools involves regularly reviewing academic programs and processes using proper tools and actors. Both self-evaluation and supervisory assessment of school are important in improving QA standards.

Qualitative education approach is a process used in education to develop character in a well-researched field of study (Mantula, et al. 2024). This has been extensively reviewed by both the religious and secular scholars. Learners are exposed to a sensitization to be responsible for their environment, develop good judgment, and be trained in survival skills needed for daily survival and delivery of quality services. In doing so, quality education helps students achieve suitable social balance, develop an attitude of self-awareness and positive life values, and appreciate the freedom of choice, freedom of speech, and respect the rule of law and order as a responsible citizen. The spiritual and Christian worldview, quality Christian education transforms learner to be God-fearing morally upright and good citizens of the nation and heaven. Christian education help learner continue learning even after graduation, to try and restore the lost image of God in themselves in terms of mental intellect and physical skills formation as well as building a Christ-like character (Guirguis, 2021). According to the philosophy of Christian education, the Christian church believes that God has endowed every individual with unique skills and values that are meant to be utilized for the mission of God as stipulated in the

Bible and church policy. SDA education philosophy according to the faith of believers is meant to prepare mankind for better service to God here on earth and to prepare for higher services in heaven. Christian education instrumental in molding humanity to be Christ like in character. Pruitt (2023) says that for education to build a

character akin to that of Christ, quality Christian education, the core Christian values of mental health and physical fitness must be integrated with the dignity of labor. Educational leaders with different leadership styles, competencies, skills and strategies are highly needed for the success of educational institutions (Ombao and De Jesus, 2025). Effective leadership is exemplified in the full implementation and compliance with QA standards of their institution (Lepeley, 2020). According to Noreen (2025) institutional leadership styles and leader's competencies greatly determine how private and public institutions respond to changes in the standards of accreditation. Enhanced monitoring, evaluation, inspection and supervision of schools have momentous transformation of educational programs and services (Tan, 2025).

## Leadership Agility

Leadership agility are the abilities of a leader to move quickly, act easily, adjust appropriately, respond promptly, change efficiently, and swiftly make precise decisions when challenges or obstacles are encountered in leadership (Tordrup and Engholm, 2022). Further, agility is explained as the leader's synergistic combinations of being robust, resilient, responsive, flexible, innovative, and adaptive. Agility is the leader's mental capacity and capabilities for rapidly and efficiently adapting, embracing and practicing change in an organization while taking precautions to ensure that such changes in the organizational environment is costeffective and progressive. Agile leaders are described by their flexibilities in changing, effectiveness in responses, speed and precision in action, and swiftness in making informed decisions.

The concept of leadership agility was initially developed by software engineering developers and manufacturers in 1970s (Rimita, Hoon, and Levasseur, 2020). The manufacturing companies at that time were facing uncertainties in the local and global markets and therefore manufacturers and organizations were desperate for leaders who would make them thrive and succeed in such dynamic changing market environment. Hence, the concept of leadership agility originated from the business idea of identifying and engaging agile leaders who were ready to steer manufacturing organizations to thrive and succeed in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) business environment by providing robust business agility. Basically, the idea was to develop leadership competencies to provide leadership and management agility. Thus, a leader with agility competency was found to be a positive asset in managing turbulent environments by demonstrating two characteristics of agility, that is, flexibility and adaptability. Lewa et al. (2022) describe emerging global organizational environments as being characterized by unpredictability, competitiveness, and complexities in business managements. It is a business environment with enormous demands ranging from consumer expectations, product innovations, and technological changes. Improving service provisions that require more than one competitive niche in the market require leaders with certainty to deal with uncertainty. VUCA environments require advanced leadership capabilities that are both focused and flexible. It requires leadership agility that enable leaders to readily adapt to changes that have significant positive impacts on organizations.

## Agility and Flexibility

Majnoor and Vinayagam (2023) state that executives in organizations are looking for leaders with agilities because those leaders are intentional, proactive, responsive, innovative, and flexible. Additionally, leadership agility implies that a leader has the ability to predict in advance what is likely to change in the working or business environment and consequently develop action plans to mitigate possible consequences or take advantage of the opportunities that come along with the change. Thus, agility provides a leader with the capacity for maintaining and sustaining consistent bearings and directions for organizations that are wallowing through VUCA working or business environments. Asbari et al. (2021) say that agility competency is an emerging management style of employee performances exhibited in four interconnected leadership areas such as self-leadership, stake-holder leadership, leading in a context or cross-cultural setting, and problem-solving creativity leadership. Leader's competency of strategic mindset, mental agility, problem-solving ability, and participatory decision-making are critical leadership qualities sought for in complex organizational and business environments

## Agility and Adaptability

Claus (2021) defines adaptability and change competencies as those abilities of an individual or an organization to change, adapt and adjust to changing conditions or environments. Adaptability is a learning experience by

organizational leaders who have to develop resilience in continuously and consistently keeping on adopting to new changes in dynamic changing environments. It is the ability and willingness of a leader to change in order to suit different changing conditions. It is simply being flexible, adaptable, agile, and versatile when things or situations change. Leadership adaptability is becoming a basic necessity for effective leadership in the prevailing VUCA educational environments and has become a vital source of competitive advantages for leaders and organizations (Sott and Bender, 2025). The rate of change in organizations are rapid and unpredictable and this has necessitated the need for organizational leadership to consider new and adaptive measures to mitigate the challenges associated with change, enhancing change management skills, adapting collaborative flexible approaches through effective learning continuously. Institutions of learning are going through complicated, challenging and uncertain educational settings (Inusa et al. 2024; Niemeyer-Rens, Sullivan and Self, 2022) and are grappling with rapid demographic population changes, rapid technological evolution, successive reformations in organizational policies, and the speedily shifting societal values. The rapidly shifting circumstances in today's environment is compelling organizational leaderships to consider changing their styles of leadership and encouraging leaders to learn new leadership competencies. Business and organizational environmental changes in the past that have been unprecedented have necessitated more adaptive leadership models and approaches (Ma, et al. 2024). Adaptability in an organization entails the leaders' possession of soft skills like interpersonal skills, communication skills, creative and strategic thinking skills, and problem-solving skills.

### **Agility and Change Management**

Musaigwa (2023) say that institutional leaders who are well balanced and adaptive are perceptive in enhancing the interpersonal working relationships and inspirations among the teaching and non-teaching staff, improving effective people management at work place. They have the capacity for inculcating positive spirit of synergy in the emotional, spiritual, vocational, physical, and intellectual dimensions of the workers. Makambe and Moeng (2020) say that organizations and leaderships in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are facing critical challenges caused by explosive technological and environmental changes. Organizations need to keep on changing and adjusting accordingly to strategically adapt to new changes in technology and environments. Adaptability is associated with changes and disturbances. In the spate of turbulences in the changing environments there is a dire need for 21<sup>st</sup> Century leaders with adaptability competencies to provide effective adaptive leadership.

According to Çitaku and Ramadani (2020) the paradigm changes and adaptations are experienced at all levels of leadership in organization especially by individuals and the management. The top leadership of an organization depends on the levels and seniorities of management to effect innovative and emergent changes in the organization. Organizational leadership and management are therefore continuously striving to cope up with changes by adapting new technology and advancing in knowledge development. Moradi and Beigi (2020) have emphasized that an understanding of what adaptation entails in a leader is paramount for initiating and managing changes in an organization. Organizations whose leadership are not able to adapt eventually become stagnant and regressive. Organizations that embrace adaptive leadership tend to experience tremendous developmental strides and continuous growth.

Leading change, driving change and change management pose great challenges in organizational leadership especially in today's uncertain working environments. Organizational changes are forces that destabilize an organization in a given situation or condition and cause it to alter its position or operations to another level (Fatima and Fatima, 2022) and these changes can be undesirably negative or desirably positive. A change may be initiated by leadership or can be forced by circumstances. In all these changes, leaders need to be prepared and equipped with competencies to manage change occurrences. Majority of leaders are aware that change is often resisted hence they prepare well and equip themselves with competencies to handle resistance to organizational changes.

### **Agility and Innovation**

Leadership innovation is critically instrumental in the overall improvement of organizational performance, creativity, flexibility, efficiency, inspiration and motivation of workers, visioning and strategy, adaptive capacity to new ideas, and the rate of response to new techniques (Odhiambo, Kahuthia and Wandiga, 2025).

Organizational innovativeness creates a working environment where innovative leaders can motivate and inspire employees to be more creative and adaptive to new techniques and methods of operation.

Innovators are willing to embrace change and develop positive attitudes towards efficiency at workplace and in a rapidly changing work environment. Innovative leadership leads to effective communication, efficient teambuilding, leadership accountability and transparency, active identification of the organizational needs, and receptive attitudes toward adapting new trends in the market (Indriyani, Utami and Afrianty, 2024). Leaders who are innovative are adept in encouraging their teams, employees and organizational stakeholders to make informed decisions and choices that improve the performance, foster resilience and organizational agility. Consequently, educational institutions led by agile leaders with innovative inclination are competent in their adaptation to new changes, keen in identifying and taking advantages of new opportunities for growth and development, and quick in embracing change.

In education, innovative leadership is a concept that is referring to transformative leadership agility that is responsible for total quality improvement and performance in education. It is referring to the enhancement of educational leadership agility, elevating creativity and strategic thinking levels of learners, and ensuring that there is total compliance to quality standards (Kwasek, et al. 2024). Innovative leadership in educational institution involves changes in curriculums and programs of study to new and better ones, changing the techniques and methods of teaching and learning to modern and more efficient ones emerging in education systems, and adapting new instructional technology and institutional leadership competencies (Ozdemir, 2023). In this era of digitalization and globalization, leadership agility involves innovative educational leaders who possess the capacity to embrace, adapt and manage information and communication technology, artificial intelligence and digital instructional technology while integrating it with instruction, leadership and learning (Karafakioglu and Findikli, 2024). Institutional leadership agility and innovations are categorized into cultural and climatic dimensions, individuals' innovative capabilities, institutional leadership structures, leaders' strategies and techniques of leadership, robust teambuilding and cooperative activities, and strategic communication skills (Baydar, 2023). The role of leadership agility and innovation in educational institutions is to create organizational climate that is favorable for effective institutional leadership and management of quality education.

Modern educational institutions are responsible for imparting knowledge and training to learners and professionals in various disciplines of work life using different techniques. The society is shaped by the quality of educational programs offered by educational institutions and the technology used by instructional leaders to disseminate educational information, knowledge and skills (Bux, Zhu and Devi, 2025). Changing the society and preparing individuals for change is the noble responsibility of agile and innovative leaders in educational systems. Individuals need to be prepared psychologically and properly sensitized to be more flexible, receptive and willing to change for better. Creativity and innovation can only be attained when the organization employs leaders who are competent and agile. Agility is the leader's abilities for predicting better opportunities, quickly responding to the rapidly and successive changes in the organizational environment, and efficiently managing the changes. Institutional alertness, leadership preparedness, and individuals' vigilance and sensitivity to evolving business and educational environment are important aspects of leadership agility and innovations (Attar and Abdul-Kareem, 2020). This further constitutes the basis for organizational survival and competitiveness in a volatile ever changing educational requirements, and forms the foundations for employees and customers satisfactions by providing space for flexibility in creativity and innovations

### **Implication for Practice and Future Research**

The implication of the findings in this conceptual review study revolves around its major contributions towards improving operations of leadership and systems in a school setting. The study identifies the weak areas of school leadership and points out areas that contribute significantly to the development and growth of the teaching and non-teaching staff, not only in terms of intellectual achievement but also in emotional intelligence and relational advancement. The refined conceptual framework is a fundamental source of empowerment to leadership agility leading to professional growth in terms of competencies, emotional and social intelligence, accountability and compliance to quality standards. Collaborative relationships, strategic thinking, visioning, and adaptability to change are further enhanced by the findings of the conceptual reviews and the subsequent understanding of the

conceptual framework. The conceptual study pointed out the areas of weakness and strengths in faith-based schools and the pointers formed a formidable rationale for further research studies.

Further, the findings suggest how to improve and operationalize non-performing units in the system. Optimizing the quality of output and maximizing the efficiency of educational services is the most fascinating contribution of the conceptual review to faith-based schools. Leadership development and advancements in competency levels are the most significant implications of this conceptual reviews. To sum up the implications of this study, the findings of this study are fundamentally significant in transforming the quality of education and improving leadership competencies through effective communication and conducting seminars and workshops

## **CONCLUSION**

The interaction between leadership agility and quality assurance in the rapidly changing and evolving spheres of educational systems, globally, is becoming increasingly supreme in determining the quality of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The study in this conceptual paper delved into an in-depth investigation of the interrelationships of the various facets of leadership agility attributes and the effectiveness of quality assurance compliances. The aim was to unearth the major contributions of such relationships to the quality of education in faith-based schools. Breakthroughs in the establishment and effective application of quality standards in education, coupled with successful engagement of competent leaders, form a formidable base for speedy transformation of quality education in faith-based schools.

A well-established conceptual framework is refined through in-depth reviews of literature, critical analyses of concepts and theories, and appropriate research methodology. Such a conceptual framework underlining the relationships of leadership and quality, has emerged to be the most consequential in impacting on the quality of education. A strongly founded and established conceptual framework serves as a dependable guide and blueprint providing visionary leadership directions, future quality research pointers, synergetic quality improvements, transformational improvements and management of schools. The leader's competence levels of leadership agility, capacity to transform and inspire innovative and motivational excellences, is crucial for quality assurance of education and performances of schools. Agile leaders focus on effective processes and collaborative relational leadership that promote quality assurance.

Practically, the conceptual framework model is a significant tool for educational transformation. Agile leaders create conducive school environments that foster quality education by aligning cultural values of the school settings with leadership competencies. Conceptual frameworks guide and empower agile leaders in their decision-making and strategic thinking that are crucial to their adaption to identified relevant change needs in their schools. The study provides a visionary direction for additional improvement through further research work. Identified gaps in this research paper informs the need for further research work through surveys, interviews and case studies. Further studies can be undertaken to validate the conceptual framework developed in this study. Correlational studies on cross-cultural relationships can be conducted to illustrate the mediating long term effects of cultural reformation and technological advancement on the leadership agility and quality assurance

The study approach and methodology used in this conceptual study not only enhances the understanding of the collaborative relationship between leadership agility and quality assurance, but also illumine the potential and synergetic applicability of the conceptual framework in faith-based schools. It provides a firm foundation for enhancing institutional technological advancements towards academic excellence in schools. It provides the basis for sound and informed decision-making by policy-makers, school administrators and management, and academic scholar and researchers. It strengthens good governance in faith-based schools and improves accountability, emotional intelligence, and transition to digital space and globalization. It fosters the abilities of agile leaders to navigate through the volatile, uncertain, complex and (VUCA) environments with vision, understanding, clarity and agility.

The study nurtures the abilities and effectiveness of agile leaders in establishing good interpersonal relationships through a robust conceptual framework of collaboration, teambuilding, corporate social responsibility, sound

decision-making, and good governance practices of accountability and transparency. Ultimately, the study contributes significantly to the total quality management and improvement in quality education

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