

# Quality Assurance in Emerging Primary Private Teacher Training Colleges in Bungoma County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to assess the quality assurance mechanisms available in emerging private primary teacher training colleges. The research was carried out in eight private teacher training colleges in Bungoma County in Kenya. The sample comprised of eight college principals, 43 tutors and 416 second year teacher trainees. Data was collected through questionnaires, interview and document analysis. The research findings were presented the results in form of frequency tables, graphs and pie-charts. The research established that the rapid emergence of private primary teacher training colleges had a negative impact on quality of teacher preparation as there was ineffective quality assurance and standards mechanisms in place. This continues to have negative effect on the quality of graduates produced. It was concluded that proliferations of teacher preparation in such conditions are a manifestation of the ineffectiveness or near to total collapse of the system of monitoring and regulation of teacher training institutions. The study therefore recommended that, monitoring and evaluation audits should be conducted regularly to ensure that these colleges conform to the set standards all the time. There is further need to constantly review and improve the quality of teacher training to be in tandem with the global trends. This will ultimately enhance adequate preparation of teachers' and minimize the quality inconsistencies in the emerging private primary teacher training colleges.*

**Keywords:** Quality, Monitoring, Evaluation, Teacher preparation

## 1. Introduction

The concept of 'quality of education' has been difficult to define. Debate on quality of education has focused on learning achievement, relevance of the curriculum to labor markets and/or the social, cultural and political environment in which the learner finds him/herself, as well as conditions of learning including teachers and facilities (Lee, 2006; Hanushek and Wobmann, 2007). Quality education is one that enables all learners to realise the capabilities they require to become economically productive, to develop sustainable livelihoods, to contribute to peaceful and democratic societies, and to enhance wellbeing (DFID, 2000).

The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 did not only emphasize the need to achieve education for all, but did also notice the need to improve the quality of education. The Forum made the following recommendation: "Improve all aspects of the quality of education to achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes for all-especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (UNESCO, 2000). Based on the recommendations in the Dakar Framework for Action and the Convention of the Right of the Child, as well as a number of other international conventions and recommendations, it can be concluded that everyone has the right not only to receive education, but also to receive education of a high quality.

The Sessional Paper No.6 of 1988 put the significant emphasis on quality education. The Ministry of Education through the directorate of quality assurance and standards has developed through extensive consultation which various stakeholders facilitated by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, two sets of guidelines aimed at ensuring the provision of quality and relevant education. This include; Guide one 'Competency in literacy numeracy for pre-school

and primary schools', Guide two 'Basic standard and performance indicators for education and training institutes other than universities'. These two guides are complementary. They are meant to be used with stakeholders especially teachers, proprietors and managers of the institution, parents and educational administrators to enhance attainment of quality education (Nkinyangi, 2006).

According to the world declaration on Education for All (EFA), a quality education for all is the one that satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of the learners and their overall experience of living. The Global campaign for Education, (A worldwide alliance of NGOS and Trade Unions); observe that quality education for all (EFA) is one that fosters the ability of children to acquire knowledge and critical learning skills (UNESCO, 2000). A quality education system must manage to provide all learners with a comprehensive education and with an appropriate preparation for working life, life in society and private life. In line with this, Eshiwani (1993) indicated that quality of the education must be defined in terms of post school outcome, thus will be charged according to how well the school graduates perform in their jobs and the social quality of the life they lead. According to Grisay and Mahlck (1991), the notion of quality of education should go beyond student results and look at the determinants of such results including provision of teachers, buildings, equipment, and curriculum among others. From this argument, the quality of education comprises three interrelated aspects: quality of human and material resources available for teaching (inputs), quality of teaching practice (process) and the quality of results (outputs and outcomes). The first two are inputs into the schooling process. Quality of education can be conceptualized as the quality of the students entering the school system, quality of inputs and instructional processes and the quality of outcomes (Zhang, Postlethwaite and Grisay, 2008; Bayer, Ferreira and McMillan, 2002). Students and school inputs

interact within a social, economic and political environment over which the school system has limited control.

Many studies have used learner achievement as an indicator of educational quality (Michaelowa, 2001; Chinapah, 2003). However, achievement results can be interpreted meaningfully only in the context of the system that produced them. To comprehensively understand and evaluate the quality of education, it is important to examine all the aspects of school quality and the ways in which environmental factors both inside and outside the school community may affect quality indicators. However, this may not always be possible in a study like this one, in addition to data limitations that sometimes limit the analysis.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Quality Assurance in Educational Institutions

Quality assurance is the systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedure adopted to ensure that the learning environment and the curriculum program of an educational institution meet the specified standards to achieve the set goals and produce outputs that will satisfy the expectations of the institution's customers (society). Quality assurance oriented schools are characterized by core values and elements which were identified by UNICEF (2000) as: quality learners, learning environments, curriculum content, teaching and learning processes, and learning outcomes.

The history of quality assurance in educational institutions can be traced back to the year 1654, when the United States government appointed teachers of sound faith and morals to carry out school supervision. The team of teachers was concerned with matters such as appraising the general achievement of learners in subject matters and observing general management of schools (Okumbe, 1998). This paved way for the supervision of schools in the years thereafter. However, much focus was paid to the external quality assurance with little or no emphasis on internal assurance (Mobegi, 2007).

According to Neil and Kitson (1996) the British government established an inspectorate body to inquire into provision of books, checks on methods of instruction, preparation of plans and specifications of the buildings in 1939. In addition to the Education act 1992; all schools in Britain were to be inspected on regular basis using standard framework and teams of independent inspectors. The main focus of inspection was the quality of teaching and learning as well as the extent to which schools were fulfilling statutory requirements. Furthermore, Edukugho (2007) indicated that lack of inspection of schools Nigeria for several decades was one of the major drawbacks in education sector leading to academic and infrastructural decay. Similarly, Auma (1994) indicated that evaluation is concerned with assessing the impact of quality of performance and relies on a range of indicators or guides to support the human judgment that in the last analysis be geared towards attaining certain objectives. This process is a pivotal one in the planning cycle because it links past performance with the setting of the objectives for the future.

Lewis (1962) noted that before independence in Kenya, the colonial government started with little commitment to African education until 1910, when the Director of Education was appointed. The director was charged with the duties of organizing, supervising and inspecting all protectorate schools. More so in 1911, the Education Department was established and became responsible for all matters related to education. The white paper of 1925 indicated that a thorough system of supervision was indispensable in order to attain the vitality and efficiency of the educational system. It also advised on the importance of each mission to make arrangements for effective supervision of its own systems of schools. In the same year, Phelps-stoke commission was committed on the quality of education provided in African schools. The colonial government responded by recognizing the importance of supervision in schools as a means of enhancing the quality. In addition, the Beecher report (Republic of Kenya, 1949) emphasized that there was need to separate supervision and inspection of schools. The report maintained that supervision was the responsibility of the school managers or voluntary agencies and inspection was the sole responsibility of the government.

In 1976, Gachathi commission on Education objectives and policies focused on issues of quality and relevance of curriculum and subsequently the Kamunge Report of 1988 highlighted the importance of maintaining standards of educational programmes through enhancement of inspection and supervisory services (Republic of Kenya, 1976, 1988). All these commissions came up with national policies on quality education, particularly on governance and the management of the learning institutions. Therefore whatever is done in these institutions should be consistent with national policies on quality education.

### 2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Internal quality assurance mechanisms can also be referred to as supervision. The term supervision has been given different definitions by scholars, managers, administrators and medical practitioners among others in different organizations relating to their field of study, needs, plans, purposes and past experiences.

Good (1997) defined supervision as all efforts of designated school official toward providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. It involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction, method of teaching and evaluation of instruction. Within the educational system in particular, right from primary to tertiary level, some groups of teachers may view the concept of supervision as threat, insecurity of job, criticism forceful act of increasing work output through negative motivation while on the other hand, another group may view it as a means or necessary tool for their personal development of sound mind, means of increasing their knowledge and integration of self.

According to Okumbe (1998), supervision is more recent concept which developed as a result of a need to work with people in a more humane understanding. Daresh and playko (1992) carried out a research on how supervision impacted

on curriculum implementation in schools in Boston. Results obtained revealed that supervision done in areas of checking on lesson plans, schemes of work, register and other administrative documents had positive impact in academic performance of learners.

In a school setting the overall supervisor is the principal (also referred to as head teacher). Chitiavi (2002) noted that even though supervision accounted for only less than 1% in institutional performance, he agreed with Samoei (2009), Musungu (2007) and Achoka (1990) that every head teacher's dream as a supervisor is to get his school ranked among the best in national examinations. An effective supervisor should be a little more informed of modern methods of administration and those of teaching. It is the supervisor who is responsible for quality (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). According to Shiundu and Omulando (1992) positive factors affecting quality of teachers has a role in improving quality of teaching and curriculum implementation by controlling unwanted absenteeism, negligence in lesson preparation and laxity in marking of books and feedback. Hence if principals played their role as required of them there would be no quality debates.

### 2.3 External Quality Assurance Mechanisms

External quality assurance mechanisms were earlier on referred to as inspection of schools. Giwa and Illo (2000) expressed the problems militating against schools inspection, as shortage of manpower and quality of the personnel available for the work. According to them, in most Africa countries the roles of inspectors tend to be ineffective due to severe resources constraints. In the findings, they realized the number of inspectors and monitoring officers who are newly employed with no practical experience on the job are being posted to the inspectorate unit of the Ministry of Education. They stated that to inspect and supervise schools effectively requires regular school visits of well experienced officers with adequate provision of resources to forestall ineffectiveness in performing their duties.

Fagbamiye (2004) recommended that government should enhance its responsibilities to monitoring of what transpires in the learning institutions to ensure quality. According to Zwede (1984), quality assurance is a mechanism by which organizations employ in order to achieve their intended objectives. Zwede views it as a positive exercise which helps educationists deal with challenges in the education system when he states that the activities of most of our schools include many occasions on which the public appears to develop dissatisfaction with the school performance. To meet this challenge positively, inspection is carried out to evaluate and report to the education officials to ensure that the education services for which they are responsible are happening in an intended or desired way.

Kihumba (2001) says that monitoring of learning institutions assesses the competence of the institutions heads, learners' access to textbooks and maintenance of books, individual teacher performance and financial management. It therefore calls for involvement of experienced professionals with some independence from the institution being inspected. According to Okumbe (1998), inspection is an old concept in management whose basic percept is that of autocratic

management which is aimed at catching workers red-handed. This is a fault finding attitude in management which some people associate with the image of a man whose main concern is that of assessing and fault finding. The term therefore conjures an image of a personage who has authoritarian control, prescription and enforcement. All in all, whatever the perception, inspection is done for the purpose of making maximum contribution to the objectives of the organization.

According to Zwede (1984), an ideal external quality assurance involves examining and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in school, it is judgmental in nature, monitors education trends and standards in institutions and checks availability and sustainability of the required physical facilities, human resources and instructional materials. It therefore serves as a mean of providing useful professional consultation between teachers and inspection officials thus improving the quality of teachers who in turn play an important role in performance of the school.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Target Population

Borg and Gall (1996) define the target population as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people events and objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of study. The target population in this study was 43 out of 85 tutors (50% of the tutors in each of the 8 colleges) and 8 principals out of 11 principals from colleges with second year-teacher trainees.

### 3.2 Instruments for Data Collection

Information was gathered from the teacher-trainees and tutors through the questionnaires, while interview schedule was used to collect information from the college principals. Documents analysis was used to collect information from all categories of participants. Asembo (2003) underscores the importance of using several appropriate instruments for the collection of the relevant information. A variety of research instruments help in getting a holistic view of the research situation. Thus the instruments helped to clarify issues by making it clearer and eliminating any discrepancy in their responses. They strengthened the data collected by verification of responses and complementing each other. The items in questionnaire comprised of close-ended and open-ended. The open-ended questions were used to probe for in-depth responses from the respondents particularly during interview.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Internal Supervisory Approaches Employed in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges

Principals were asked to give information on the curriculum supervisory approaches that were regularly employed in their colleges. The responses were as summarized in table 4.1.



**Table 4.1:** Principals' responses on internal supervision

Approaches	No	Yes
Check record of work	25.0%	75.0%
Schemes of work	37.5%	62.5%
Departmental supervision	75.0%	25.0%
Check on students work	37.5%	62.5%
Frequent testing	25.0%	75.0%
Teacher appraisal	37.5%	62.5%
Attendance registers	12.5%	87.5%
Class visits	62.5%	37.5%

Source: Researcher's Analysis from Data

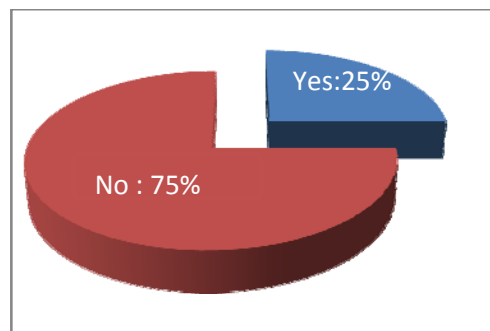
Findings in table 4.1 show that 75% of college principals preferred the use of written records (records of work covered, schemes of work and class attendance register) in the supervision of the curriculum; however, data also indicated that less emphasis was given to departmental supervision (25%) and class visits (37.5%).

The use of written records as illustrated in the table 4.1 above was the most preferred methods of supervising curriculum implementation. This means that principals found it easy to check on teacher's records due to their accessibility and availability. However, they did not employ the teacher appraisal toolkit frequently. This could be due to lack of experience on how to use it successfully or because teachers felt intimidated and victimized by principals. On the other hand, this could indicate lack of concern or commitment on the part of principals. Lack of departmental supervision could be due to lack of competent heads of departments. From the findings, most of the old serving tutors were not professional teachers therefore they could not carry out the duties of H.O.Ds effectively. This could also be the result of lack experience on how to utilize and encourage teacher appraisal. Results also indicated that there was also lack of class visits and observation on the part of principals. This could be due to either principals being committed to administrative functions or ignoring it as well as regarding it as a less important aspect of their supervisory role. However, absence of class visits meant that teachers could decide to attend to their lessons or not. These therefore left principals in employing the easiest alternative methods, that is, the checking of records. This suggests that the strategies of curriculum supervision employed by principals were inefficient and inadequate consequently compromising quality. This agrees with the views given by Nyamu (1986) and Mobegi (2007) who observed that the principals over relied on teacher professional records leaving out other critical aspects that are crucial in evaluating the curriculum implementation by the teachers.

Olembo (1992) suggested that provision of quality education requires that the principal be involved in translation of education policies and objectives into viable programmes within the school; while Shiundu and Omulando (1992) emphasized that on a daily basis the principal has the responsibility to ensure that teachers implement the set curriculum and the learning activities takes place. Therefore, in order to support teaching and learning processes, Dohary (1993) observed that the principal should ensure quality curricular supervision.

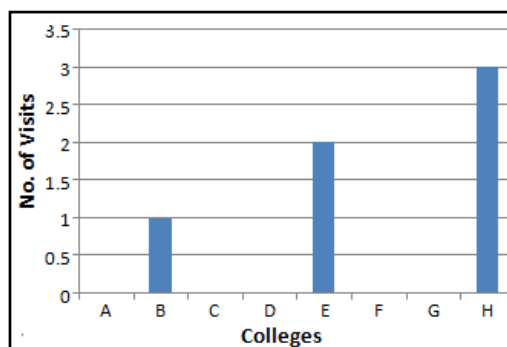
#### 4.2 Frequency of College visits by Quality Assurance Officers

Principals were asked to indicate if their schools had been visited by quality assurance officers in the 2008-2010. Their responses were summarized in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1:** Frequency of quality assurance officers visits

Source: Researcher's Analysis from Data

Findings in figure 4.1 revealed that 75% of the Principals interviewed reported that their colleges had not been visited by quality assurance officers in the period of 2008-2010; they further reported that there were no clear reasons as to why their colleges had not been visited by the officers concerned. The figure 4.2 below represents the evidence collected from document analysis on the frequency of visits made by quality assurance officers' in these colleges.

**Figure 4.2:** Records of Quality Assurance visits from College Visitors books and Log books (2008-2010)

Source: Researchers Analysis from Data

Figure 4.2 indicates that out of eight colleges only three had been visited by quality assurance officers in the 2008-2010 Period. Lack of regular visits by quality assurance officers as indicated in figure 4.1 and figure 4.2 clearly revealed that principals did not receive the advisory services especially on supervisory methods of curriculum implementation hence a challenge on teacher preparation. The findings were in agreement with those of KIPPRA (2007), which indicated that many private schools were not inspected as required and was likely to affect the quality of teaching and education. Edukugho (2007) also indicated that lack of the inspection of schools was one of the drawbacks in the education sector leading to academic decay. Kamunge report of 1988 also highlighted the importance of maintaining standards of education programmes through enhancement of inspection and supervisory services (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Fagbamiye (2004) reiterated that the government should

redirect its responsibilities to monitoring on what transpires in the learning institutions to ensure quality.

## 5. Conclusions

The study found out that quality assurance mechanisms were inadequate as quality assurance officers rarely visited these institutions. In addition, the Principals limited themselves on professional documents other than departmental supervision, teacher appraisal, class visits and observation which are crucial in fostering quality adherence culture. Supervision and inspection mechanisms which are critical in the reviewing and determining the quality of education programmes were insufficient in the emerging private primary teacher training colleges, posing a challenge on teacher preparation. Principals being the immediate quality assurance officer did not make lesson observations and teacher appraisals. Quality assurance officers from MOE rarely visit these colleges, which is an indication that advisory services especially on supervisory methods of curriculum implementation are inadequate. Although the situation might improve, lack of proper supervision and inspection prevents these institutions from contributing to the production of up-to date and specialized knowledge for their trainees. Emerging private primary teacher training institutions are most likely commercially driven hence service quality and standards are considered secondary.

## 6. Recommendations

Teacher quality has long been and will continue to be an important issue to parents, educators and policymakers and to that extent therefore, there will be need for a legislation framework to be enacted to act as a watch dog over the teacher preparation programmes across the nation. In the light of the findings and conclusions of this research, the following recommendations were made; the Ministry of Education should enhance and enforce regular inspection of private primary teacher training colleges to ensure conformity to standard guidelines and the Principals in emerging private T.T.Cs should take up their roles as quality assurance officers in their colleges and ensure that there is adequate supervision.

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