

Exploring internal school quality assurance teams' readiness to supervise instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools

¹Abich Omollo, ²Rose Matete & ³Paul Loisulie

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the readiness of the Internal School Quality Assurance Teams (ISQATs) to supervise instruction in Tanzanian public secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative approach, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary reviews. A purposeful sampling technique was used to select 18 participants from the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania. The findings indicate that many Internal School Quality Assurance Officers (ISQAOs) had limited professional profiles despite having adequate teaching qualifications. Their supervisory practices included regular checking of academic records, reminding teachers of their responsibilities, and recommendations on academic matters. It was also found that ISQATs faced challenges such as heavy workloads, poor cooperation from teachers, a lack of supervision guidelines, and different perspectives regarding lesson planning. This study concludes that ISQATs were not fully ready to supervise instructions as professionals, implying that the existing ISQAOs need to receive professional training and that a supervision policy that requires possession of instructional supervision skills as a pre-requisite for teachers' promotion to an instructional supervision role be implemented.

Keywords: *instructional supervision, school quality assurance, readiness, internal supervision teams*

Article History:

Received: July 2, 2024

Accepted: August 10, 2024

Revised: August 6, 2024

Published online: September 4, 2024

Suggested Citation:

Omollo, A., Matete, R. & Loisulie, P. (2024). Exploring internal school quality assurance teams' readiness to supervise instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies*, 5(3), 198-220. <https://doi.org/10.53378/ijemds.353097>

About the authors:

¹Corresponding author. PhD Candidate, The University of Dodoma. Email: abich.omollo@udom.ac.tz

²Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Dodoma. Email: rose.matete@udom.ac.tz

³Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Dodoma. Email: loisulie.paul@udom.ac.tz



1. Introduction

Instructional supervision is directly related to the improvement of teaching and learning (Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). Through instructional supervision, teachers are supported to ensure that they are adhering to the principles of good teaching, and those who perform well are given positive reinforcement to ensure that they continue to do so. However, if a teacher fails to apply effective teaching principles, the supervisor must provide remedial support by explaining and modeling appropriate teaching practices, setting improvement benchmarks, and monitoring and supporting the teacher's efforts to improve (Glickman, et al., 2013; OECD, 2013).

Instructional supervisors are expected to adhere to the principles of effective supervision, including fault-free problem solving, collaborative processes, and a dedication to the advancement of teachers' professional development, among others (Glickman et al., 2013; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). This has necessitated the establishment of professional instructional supervisors from outside the school. Unfortunately, most external supervisors behaved inconsistently with the original purpose and principles of effective instructional supervision (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Zepeda, 2017). For example, some visited the schools without prior notice, a style associated with guerilla tactics of attacking unsuspecting enemies and fleeing away immediately. This style of supervision instilled fear and tension among teachers (Ngwenya, 2020). Some approached teachers as enemy with a "cold war" strategy in which neither side has any faith in the other (Ebele & Olofu, 2017; Matete, 2021; Zepeda, 2017).

In Tanzania, the state of instructional supervision has been more serious. Studies demonstrate that external supervisors did not have access to reliable modes of transport or sufficient funding to enable them to visit schools. Their workload was heavy due to the overabundance of schools and the shortage of supervisors (De Grauwe, 2001; Matete, 2021). Others provided hurried and superficial supervision to a few teachers in an effort to cover as many schools as possible (Matete, 2021). It was also more challenging for them to follow through on the recommendations they made in inspection reports due to insufficient coordination and collaboration with other authorities. As a result, poor teaching practices remained unsolved as supervision did not yield the anticipated improvement in the quality of instruction (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2021; Ministry of Education, Science, and

Technology [MoEST], 2017a). Given reports of a significant decline in the quality of instruction, the overall conclusion is that the impact of the instructional supervision service provided to Tanzanian schools is insufficient to improve teaching and learning (De Grauwe, 2001; MoEST, 2017b; 2017a; Mosha, 2012; Tonini, 2012).

In view of this situation, the Government of Tanzania was to follow either of the two popular solutions for improving instructional supervision. First, to replace external supervision and visits with total decentralization of supervision at the school level, like in Finland. Second, to strengthen the internal instructional supervision capacity in order to counterbalance the weaknesses of external supervision visits (De Grauwe, 2001; UNESCO, 2011). Fortunately, the Tanzanian Government chose option number two in January 2018, replacing the school inspection system with the school quality assurance system (SQAS), which resulted in the establishment of both external school quality assurance (ESQA) and ISQATs to support instructional improvements at the school level (MoEST, 2017a, 2017b; URT, 2018).

Despite the necessity of introducing ISQATs at the school level, it is still unclear whether they are prepared to make any difference in teachers' instruction. Nevertheless, there have been limited studies investigating ISQATs' readiness to support instructional improvement, as recent research has primarily focused on external instructional supervisors. For example, Mcheka et al. (2022) examined the role of ESQA, Agapiti and Kitula (2022), and Secilia and Mwila (2022) investigated the impact of external supervisors on teachers' efficacy, and Medard and Mwila (2022) focused on the guidelines for school quality assurance (SQA). The extent to which ISQATs are ready to bring about change in secondary schools in Tanzania is not well studied and documented. Thus, this study explored the readiness of the ISQATs to conduct instructional supervision in secondary schools in Tanzania. The key research question was: Are the ISQATs ready to supervise instructional activities in secondary schools? The study did not focus on the supervision of school financial resources and teaching and learning materials, although these play a great role in effective classroom instructional practices.

2. Literature review

2.1. Rationale for the Internal School Quality Assurance Teams

In many countries, middle management teams, such as ISQATs, dedicated to pedagogical improvement are emerging as the ideal form of school management (Ngwenya, 2020; OECD, 2008). This paper presents five rationales for ISQATs. First, ISQATs provide

sustainable improvement of instruction because they are close to the point of instructional delivery. This makes it even more for them to monitor what occurs in schools and to provide consistent support to teachers (De Grauwe, 2001; Ngwenya, 2020; Zepeda, 2017). Second, ISQATs serves as a link between internal school improvement processes and externally initiated reform. They help their teachers match their pedagogical approaches to the established external performance standards (OECD, 2008). Instructional improvement cannot be achieved solely by the external or internal supervision teams; rather, a combination of both is likely to produce better results than either strategy alone (Hargreaves, 1995; UNESCO, 2011). Third, ISQATs promote a culture of self-assessments and self-correction in schools. Thus, ISQATs help schools to solve their problems, rather than relying on external actors (UNESCO, 2011). Through ISQATs, teachers are given more professional autonomy to engage in self-quality assurance practices that allow them to utilize each other's expertise for improvement (De Grauwe, 2001). Fourth, delegating leadership roles to ISQATs helps to prepare teachers for higher-level positions requiring a high degree of leadership expertise as they get the opportunity to diffuse leadership-decision making skills (OECD, 2008; Zepeda, 2013). Fifth, ISQATs help reduce the span of control of the head of the school. This implies that the head of the school has less work to do at the school level, which makes the headship role more manageable (OECD, 2008; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019).

2.2. Pre-Requisites for Effective Instructional Supervision

The goal of instructional supervision is to facilitate teachers' instructional improvement. To achieve this goal, supervisors need to have supervision skills, have a manageable workload, use professional guide, practice intensive supervision, and use appropriate supervision approach (Southworth, 2002; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). Supervisors need technical skills because instructional supervision activities involve technical tasks like assessing the application of student-centered pedagogies in lesson preparation and facilitation (Glickman et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2011). Supervisors must also have interpersonal skills, like communication skills, to interact and collaborate with a diverse range of teachers on a daily basis while addressing their instructional challenges at the school. In contrast, a lack of it leads to constant conflict with teachers, the emergence of negative attitudes among teachers toward instructional supervision, and unimproved instruction (Glickman et al., 2013; Southworth, 2002; Zepeda, 2017). It is important for instructional supervisors to undergo professional training for them to develop new competencies, including technical and interpersonal skills.

Newly appointed supervisors can benefit from induction programs that prepare them to begin instructional supervision practices while existing supervisors can receive continuous in-service training to help them adjust to changing conditions in their roles (UNESCO, 2011). The implication is that teaching alone cannot produce effective instructional supervisors (OECD, 2008).

It is also important that instructional supervisors have a manageable workload, so that they have more time to engage in instructional improvement activities (Panigrahi, 2012). Too much involvement by supervisors in activities unrelated to instructional improvement in schools decreases not only their commitment and ability to supervise instruction (UNESCO, 2011; De Grauwe, 2001). It is critical that if teachers are required to perform supervisory duties, their excessive workloads, which prevent them from focusing on instructional improvements, be reduced. Without this, supervision is frequently reduced to meaningless checklists, resulting in missed opportunities for meaningful instructional supervision (UNESCO, 2011; Zepeda, 2006). Supervisors also need professional guidelines and manuals to objectify and depersonalize supervision. Using an observation protocol, for example, enables the supervisor to concentrate observation on the tangible evidence found during the teaching and learning process in the classroom rather than the observer's normative position or personal attributes of the teacher (Elmore, 2008). According to the OECD (2005), standardized supervision with detailed performance indicators facilitates a shared understanding between the supervisor and the teacher regarding the qualities of effective teaching. Santiago et al. (2013) added that supervision guidelines not only support supervisors in assessing teachers' work but also guide teachers in evaluating themselves.

Supervisors should also practice intensive supervision, which entails devoting enough time to engaging teachers in in-depth discussions about effective teaching and using multiple data sources and strategies to improve both general and specific aspects of teachers' professional practice as a whole (Owan et al., 2023; Santiago et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2011; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). Supervisors must avoid traditional supervision that focuses on ensuring compliance with rules and regulations that require them to check off extensive checklists of easily measurable items such as the number of lessons taught and write related reports (UNESCO, 2011; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). Moreover, supervisors have traditionally used a directive supervision approach, in which the supervisor bears a high degree of responsibility while the teacher bears little responsibility. However, evidence from effective

schools indicates that directive supervision is being replaced by collaborative supervision (Glickman et al., 2013). The rationale is that directive supervision is more about controlling teachers than helping them develop professionally (UNESCO, 2011; Glickman et al., 2013). Teachers view directive supervision negatively and with bitterness, as they equate it with the process of finding faults in their teaching. As a result, they are resentful of the process of supervision (Hoque et al., 2020). On the other hand, collaborative supervision has been embraced because it allows the teacher and the supervisor to work together to improve instruction (Glickman, 2002). The approach also treats supervision as an adult learning process where the supervisor consults with teachers as peers on issues related to pedagogical improvements (Glickman et al., 2013; Weinberger & Libman, 2018; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019).

3. Methodology

It was important for this study to apply a qualitative research approach and an exploratory case study design to explore readiness of ISQATs to supervise instruction in their schools. The qualitative research approach collects participants' views, behaviors, and experiences in responding to the research questions of the hows and whys rather than how much or how many (Tenny et al., 2022). In addition, exploratory case study design employs multiple data collection methods to collect rich data for better understanding the phenomenon under investigation in its natural setting (Crowe et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). It was also critical to reduce common flaws in the findings associated with the use of qualitative approaches and case study designs, such as subjectivity and limited generalization, among others. Thus, this study used a triangulation strategy that employed multiple data sources and collection methods. The study also used thick descriptions so that document passages and words uttered directly by study participants when expressing their views were quoted to support the findings. Allen (2017) and Given (2008) assert that thick descriptions facilitate the transferability of the findings by allowing the reader to assess the relevance of the findings in their context.

This study was carried out in the Kilimanjaro region. The Kilimanjaro region is situated in northern Tanzania. Kilimanjaro is one of Tanzania's top-performing regions in secondary education (NECTA, 2019). Moreover, the Kilimanjaro region has established ISQATs in its

public schools in response to school quality assurance system reforms (URT, 2018). These factors put the Kilimanjaro region in a better position to provide more insight into the ISQATs' readiness to conduct instructional supervision in public secondary schools.

The study employed the criterion-purposeful sampling technique. As stated by Palinkas et al. (2015), this technique is appropriate for identifying and selecting "participants who meet a predetermined criterion of importance". As a result, the sample size of eighteen (18) participants was obtained through saturation. In particular, this study identified and selected ISQAOs (06), heads of schools (06), and teachers (06) from six public secondary schools in Kilimanjaro. It was important to involve ISQAOs, who were the first to form ISQATs in 2018 and had experience with supervision of instruction. It was also important to involve heads of schools as well, as appointed teachers serve as ISQAOs, supervise ISQATs directly, and serve as the chief internal school quality assurance. Teachers were also involved because ISQAOs are expected to help teachers improve instruction.

Data for this study were gathered through document reviews and interviews. In particular, the study employed in-depth interviews because it enables participants to share their experiences related to the readiness of ISQATs to supervise instruction. It also enables the researcher in probing additional information from participants' accounts that is helpful for the analysis (Given, 2008). The school performance evaluation reports (SPERs) and teachers' lesson plans were reviewed. The SPERs are general school performance reports that are prepared by Zonal School Quality Assurance Officers (ZSQAOs) from outside the school, and they include information on ISQATs' job performance. Lesson plans also offered information on ISQAO supervision practices, such as how they attempt to improve teachers' lesson preparations through their comments in the lesson plans.

This study employed thematic analysis techniques, which entail the identification and analysis of meaningful patterns within the qualitative dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In particular, the analysis involved: (i) interview data were transcribed from audio to texts and texts were translated from Swahili to English; (ii) texts were read several times to become familiar with the data pertinent to the research question, and the relevant items were noted; (iii) codes were generated by assigning symbols to text messages that contained recurring ideas to set them apart from other texts; (iv) the previously generated codes were examined and codes with similar meaning were grouped to form broader patterns of meaning known as categories

or sub-themes; (v) the sub-themes were deeply examined, leading to the combination of related themes, and as a result, final themes were developed; and (vi) the research report was written.

All research ethics were complied with, from the conception of the research problem to the report writing (Given, 2008). For example, the institutional research review committee (IRRC) of the university granted ethical clearance for the proposed research. In the field, participants were informed about the goal of the study, the duration of the interviews, the methods and instruments used to collect the data, and how the report would be disseminated. It was also important that participants were to consent to take part in this study voluntarily. Pseudonyms were also used in place of participants' and institutions' real names during reporting to protect their identity. Issues related to plagiarism were highly avoided by ensuring that all materials used in the study were acknowledged.

4. Findings and Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to find out how prepared the ISQATs were to supervise instruction in Tanzania's public secondary schools. Three key themes emerged from the collected data. They include the profiles of ISQAOs, the instructional supervisory practices of ISQATs, and the challenges faced by ISQATs in supervising instruction.

4.1. Profiles of Internal School Quality Assurance Officers

Table 1

Profiles of ISQAOs

Category	Description	Frequency
Sex	Male	04
	Female	02
Teaching experiences	7-10 years	02
	11-15 years	02
	26-32 years	02
Education qualification	Bachelor	04
	Masters	02
Professional training	Prior to the appointment to be ISQAO	01
	After appointment to be ISQAO	-

Note: N=6

The study included six ISQAOs from six public secondary schools. The sex profiles of the six ISQAOs indicates that four were males and two were females. Moreover, the teaching

experience profile shows that each of the six ISQAOs has worked as a secondary school teacher for at least seven years. Furthermore, the education qualification profile indicates that two ISQAOs had master's degrees and four had bachelor's degrees in education (see table 1). This demonstrates that each of the six ISQAOs had the educational background required to teach secondary students effectively. This suggests that ISQAOs were appointed based on their teaching profiles, which include their educational backgrounds and teaching experience.

According to the data on the professional training profile, only one of ISQAOs had gone through professional training before being appointed as an Internal School Quality Assurance Officer (ISQAO). However, the vast majority of the ISQAOs did not possess the professional skills necessary to supervise instruction at secondary schools. The data also shows that none of the six ISQAOs attended any professional training after being appointed. This suggests that there was only one teacher who met the minimum professional requirements for the instructional supervision role. The following is what ISQAO from school "D" said during the interview about professional training:

“We were simply given a letter informing us that a new unit whose focus would be on quality assurance had been launched and that we would be the quality assurers. Thus, we found ourselves working but like someone who was groping into darkness who is not sure of the next step. So, in similar manner, we have been working but not sure of what we are doing. Sometimes I have been asking myself, what is our scope and limitations of our responsibilities? There are times when you do something and you are told that this was not supposed to be done by you. Then when you abandon that task, you are told this is your task as the quality assurer. If seminars were conducted to orient us on our duties it would be better instead of being just given responsibilities as it is now the case.”

Regarding the same issue, another ISQAO from school "A" commented during the interview:

“No one has received training of quality assurance since we began this work. When we first started, I remember I told the head of the school that these teachers are just inspecting, but they have no idea what they are doing. So, I volunteered and created the inspection guide based on the knowledge I gained from my Master's Degree studies in education supervision.”

Data from documentary reviews also indicate that ISQAOs had never received

professional training. Consider the following passage from SPER for school "D":

“Internal school quality assurance team is in place; however, it needs training on what and how to perform its roles. Members are not familiar with responsibilities handed to them... equip the team with knowledge on what to do as ISQAT so as to assist administration to get feedback on the teaching and learning for appropriate recommendation for action.”

The presented narratives indicated that the majority of ISQAOs assumed the role of supervising instruction for quality assurance without a proper professional profile. They never participated in induction or continuous in-service professional development after being appointed. The findings imply that ISQATs were not ready to supervise instructions because ISQAOs had limited professional profiles although they had adequate teaching profiles. These findings are in line with those of Dea (2016) in Ethiopia, who found that instructional supervisors lacked professional training and skills, and thus they tended to focus too much attention on teachers’ weaknesses, and they imposed punishments rather than helping the teachers improve instructions. However, UNESCO (2011) and Zepeda (2017) recommend that internal instructional supervisors need professional training for them to succeed in promoting the use of effective teaching and learning techniques while also providing a range of professional development opportunities for their teachers.

4.2. The Instructional Supervisory Practices of ISQATs

Data indicated that ISQATs implemented a number of supervision procedures to improve instruction in their schools. These supervisory practices include checking academic records, reminding teachers of their responsibilities, and provision of recommendations on academic matters.

Checking academic records. Data show that ISQATs supervised teachers’ instructions by checking the academic records such as teachers’ lesson plans, students’ exercise books, log books, and class journals. According to the findings, ISQAOs collected these academic documents every Friday for assessment to determine whether teachers planned and taught lessons in accordance with the number of periods assigned to them. The findings from lesson plans reviewed indicated that ISQAOs just commented ‘seen’ or “checked”, followed by their signatures. ISQAO from School “A” explained during the interview how they supervise instruction by checking a number of academic records:

“The documents are collected every week and must be reviewed; all the lesson plans, schemes, and log books must be collected every Friday and must be checked and signed to know those who completed their duties and those who are not. We also look through them to see how many periods have been lost in a week. If there is a discrepancy, we discuss with the teacher how he or she will compensate for the missed periods.”

During the interviews, ISQAO from school “E” explained the rationale behind the weekly checking of academic records:

“We check to verify if the lesson plan is compatible with the notes taken by students and the class journals. As you may know, there are some teachers who can write lesson plans without attending the classroom, and some teachers can even teach without a lesson plan. So, we must expose such people. We also check student’s notebooks to see if the teacher has given notes to the children, whether the teacher has given them notes and exercises, and whether they are marked.”

The findings indicated that ISQATs carried out their duties by checking academic records, including students’ exercise books, class journals, and teachers’ lesson plans. These findings are consistent with those reported by Fathil et al. (2021) in Malaysia and by The World Bank (2021) in Tanzania, who both found that academic records, such as lesson plans and class journals, were regularly examined to ensure that teachers planned and taught their lessons consistently. Different scholars also agree that regular checking of academic records is important for understanding the quality of teachers’ instruction and students’ learning, as well as to determine whether the curriculum is being followed (Malunda et al., 2016; Mauliate et al., 2019). The findings suggested that the goal of checking academic records was to ensure that the number of activities completed by teachers matched the number required. However, the literature does not support the practice of simply matching the number of planned lessons to the lessons taught. For instance, UNESCO (2011) argued that supervisors need to move from a traditional approach to supervision that focuses on ensuring compliance and instead focus on more intensive supervision with the aim of improving instructional quality by allocating adequate time to engage teachers in in-depth discussions about how they are teaching. Owan et al. (2023) and Zepeda and Ponticell (2019) suggested that instructional supervisors need to focus on the supervision which supports the holistic improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. To these scholars, engaging in checking of extensive

checklists of easily measurable items such as the number of lessons that are planned is meaningless and waste of time.

Reminding teachers of their responsibilities. The findings indicated that ISQATs were constantly reminding teachers of their primary responsibilities of planning and facilitating classroom instructions. It was also found that ISQATs insisted on teachers to prepare and teach all of their lessons, assess learning, and practice all aspects of good instructions. During the interview, one of the ISQAOs from school “C” explained that they were closely monitoring teachers’ performance and notice any flaws, which they used as an example in the staff meeting to remind them to perform their duties properly. Here she explained:

“We make sure the teachers have a lesson plan and a scheme of work, and if they do not, we take note of it. During staff meetings, which take place every day at tea time, we ask the head master for an opportunity to present the areas of weaknesses identified. We also use that opportunity to remind the teachers that it is their responsibility to the plan lessons, give students notes and exercises.”

Another ISQAO from school “B” commented during the interview on how continuous reminders have helped teachers become more accountable. He said:

“Teachers are aware of their responsibilities, but we simply encourage them to do so. Overall, the quality assurance department strongly encourages teachers to attend all sessions. Sometimes the lessons are lost because the teacher do not attend classrooms. So, by insisting on the same thing from the academic office and the quality assurance department, we are able to reduce the number of lost sessions.”

As can be observed from the findings, ISQATs clearly used various opportunities to remind teachers not to neglect their core responsibilities of planning and facilitating instructions in the classroom. This suggests that oral reminders along with written reports are crucial in helping teachers identify their areas of weakness and the need to strengthen them.

Provision of recommendations on academic matters. The findings indicated that the assessment reports from ISQATs highlighted issues that needed improvement and recommended how to address them. The reports were useful in understanding the academic situation in the school for both internal stakeholders (e.g., teachers, heads of academic departments, and heads of schools) and external supervisors (e.g., ward education coordinators, district council education officers, and zonal quality assurance officers). Regarding the use of

ISQATs' assessment report, ISQAO from school "A" stated during the interview:

"Our main work is to go through every aspect of academics. When external inspectors arrive, they do not start the inspection process directly, but they will start with us so that we can give feedback on what we have done, what shortcomings we have identified, and the solutions we have recommended. We have made it too easy for them to carry out inspections after they have read our reports. External quality assurers and all people who want to carry out inspection must go through us first because what they come to inspect, is what we have already done internally and written a report about it."

Another ISQAO from school "C" stated during the interview that how recommendations assisted in resolving the issue of inadequate physics instruction in Form IV, she explained:

Form IV students expressed dissatisfaction over their lack of understanding of their Physics teacher. Head master informed me about the situation and I advised the teacher to change his teaching approach by engaging students, giving them notes, and also providing them with exercises. I have been making a follow-up on the issue ever since, and those students have told me that they are now understanding him better than they did before. I can say that the feedback has been encouraging and beneficial.

ISQAO from school "B" also clarified during the interview the extent to which their recommendations are helpful. He commented:

"We advise the head of the school, or rather, the school in general, when we see that there are academic challenges that can be solved. We also talk with individual teachers about their challenges and help them understand how they can solve them."

As can be seen, the findings indicated that ISQATs' instructional supervisory practices involved giving recommendations on academic situation in the school to education stakeholders, both internal and external and suggesting necessary actions to improve instructions. This implies that one of the key responsibilities of the ISQATs is to provide an advisory role about the academic situation and how to improve instructions in the school. These findings are consistent with the earlier studies that have demonstrated the importance of internal supervisors in linking internally initiated improvement processes with externally

driven reforms to maximize synergy among diverse education stakeholders (UNESCO, 2011; OECD, 2008).

4.3. Challenges Faced by ISQATs in Supervising Instructions

The findings revealed four key challenges that were impeding ISQATs' ability to effectively supervise teachers' instructions: heavy workloads, poor cooperation from teachers, lack of supervision guidelines, and different perspectives on lesson planning.

Heavy workloads. The finding indicated that teachers who were appointed as ISQAOs were not released from their previous responsibilities. As a result, they became so overwhelmed with their teaching responsibilities that they were unable to find time for classroom observations. During the interview, one of the ISQAOs from school "C" made the following complaints:

“Personally, I have more periods to teach than I can handle. How can I then leave my periods that I have not prepared yet, I have not taught and go to observe another teacher teaching? As you can even see me here now, I have locked myself in here marking, how can then have time to go and inspect my fellow teacher? Therefore, with regard to observing teachers in classrooms I need to be honest and admit that we have not as internal quality assurers done that. Perhaps, we can do it if the number of the periods per week we have now can be minimized.”

Another ISQAO from school "E" also stated on the same during the interview that they have not carried out the regular classroom observation and he said:

“We are required to inspect teachers in the classroom at least four times a year. But as I previously stated, we may only visit the classrooms once a year because there are few quality controllers and we must still teach in classrooms as regular teachers.”

On the same issue, heads of schools also agreed that ISQAOs were overburdened with teaching responsibilities. One of the heads of schools from school "E" claimed during interview:

“The challenge is that these quality assurers are sometimes supposed to go to the classroom. But they often find themselves having many periods, especially science teachers. Thus, they miss that time to visit the classroom to see how and what teachers are doing in reality.”

The findings from teachers also confirmed that they had never seen ISQAOs visiting them in the classroom. One of the teachers at School "D" stated that he was aware that the ISQAOs only assess documents, but not classroom observations. He said:

“It might be possible that they visited my colleague without my knowledge, but in my class, I have not seen them. They often say that they will visit us, but I have never seen them. All I know is that these quality assurers check the lesson plans we submitted to the department head every Friday.”

The findings from SPER also supported what was found through interviews on the ISQATs' ability to conduct effective classroom observations. The excerpt from the SPER from school "F" reads:

“The Internal School Quality Assurance Team (ISQAT) is not well prearranged to make regular class visits to observe teaching and learning process. As a result, teaching is not effective in some classes.”

From the findings, it is indicated that heavy workloads prevented the ISQATs from supervision of instructions in the classroom settings. This suggests that heavy workload hampered the ISQATs' readiness in supervising instructions. The finding supports the previous studies' arguments that excessive workload interferes with supervisors' ability to carry out classroom observations (Panigrahi, 2012). Unless their excessive workload is reduced, supervisors are more likely to become less committed to the improvement of instructions in their schools, which results in a loss of opportunities to provide meaningful instructional supervision (De Grauwe, 2001; UNESCO, 2011; Zepeda, 2006).

Poor cooperation from teachers. The findings indicated that teachers did not cooperate well with ISQAOs during supervision time. Some teachers did not submit the academic records required for assessment on time. Others did not show up for classroom observations. One of the ISQAOs from school “A” explained:

“There is a teacher here who would always be absent from duty whenever it was time for classroom observations. He would always keep himself away by saying that he was sick. I remember one day I wanted to supervise a certain teacher. I entered the classroom with him to check his teaching, and I sat at the back of the classroom. What I noticed is that he completely failed to teach. No words actually came out of him.”

The findings also revealed that many teachers were not considering ISQAOs as instructional supervisors but rather as a mere fellow teacher. During the interview, the ISQAO from school "E" commented:

“The big challenge that we experience from teachers is that they can tell you that my friend, you know the way I teach, is there anything new that you want to know about me? If she or he tells you like that, then everything just ends there. It is true that you may not visited the teacher in the classroom and seen the way he or she teaches. But by telling you that way, it suggests that the teacher does not want you to see how he or she teaches in the classroom.”

Based on the findings, it can be said that ISQATs were not receiving adequate cooperation from teachers. Some of the teachers did not submit their academic records for assessment, while others did not show up for classroom observations. These findings are consistent with Nir’s (2003) study in Israel who found that some teachers were confident that they had superior knowledge than their supervisors and, thus, they did not want to be instructed. The findings also confirm the argument by Hoque et al. (2020) that unless teachers perceive supervision as a process of improvement, they become resentful toward it. As observed by Glickman et al. (2013) and Zepeda and Ponticell (2019), the ideal supervision practice involves collaboration where supervisors work together with teachers as peers on issues related to instructional improvement. Zepeda (2017) and Southworth (2002) also recommend that supervisors need to possess sufficient technical competencies about teaching and learning, as well as human skills, to work harmoniously with different teachers daily to support teachers’ professional growth.

Lack of supervision guidelines. The findings indicated that the ISQATs did not have the supervision guidelines. As a result, some ISQAOs did not conduct classroom observations because they did not know how to go about it. During the interview, ISQAO from school "D" said the following:

“One of the challenges that I did not mention before is that when we were appointed, we did not receive any guidelines on what would be our key responsibilities and what would guide us in carrying them out. Thus, we are trying to set up some of our own systems that will be uniform internally. We do not know what others are doing out there.”

The ISQAO of school "B" commented on the same issue that they did not receive the

guidelines:

“A guidebook was not provided to us, but rather I received a letter informing me that I had been appointed as an internal quality assurer; however, the letter did not specify how I should ensure quality. However, the headmaster handed me a file containing school assessment reports from the zonal school quality assurance officers and told me to read them so that we could follow their lead.”

The findings clearly show that ISQATs were not provided with a supervision guide. This suggests that each ISQAO acted according to his or her own discretion rather than supervising the instructions based on professional standards.

Different perspectives on lesson planning. The study found that ISQAOs were hesitant to assess the quality of the content of the lesson plans due to a misunderstanding of what constitutes a good lesson plan, and contradictory directions from district education officers and ZSQAOs. One of the ISQAOs from school "E" narrated how lesson plans raise heated arguments between teachers and supervisors. She said:

“If you begin telling them how to plan lessons in a particular way, they usually tend to argue and you find yourselves arguing... You know, not everyone takes the advice from other person to change what he/she believes to be correct and adopt another person’s point of view. I came into contact with such a teacher. He was really very argumentative. Finally, I realized that despite his being argumentative he was incorrect although he stood firm to what he believed to be correct.”

It was found that each teacher training institution has a different approach in preparing lessons. As a result, teachers had varying perspectives on how lessons need to be planned. Consequently, the ISQAOs were not delving deeper to examine the quality of the lesson plans prepared to avoid endless arguments. One of the head of schools from school “A” commented during the interview:

“The University of Dodoma will teach their students on how to carry out evaluation; Mwenge University will do the same to their students. Thus, you find that there are a lot of inconsistencies on this issue. If you want to delve into such subject matter, you will find that it is so controversial. But what is obvious is that every teacher writes the lesson plan according to what he or she knows. On the whole, this issue remains highly controversial.”

Other ISQAOs reported similar experiences with teachers when attempting to provide the feedback on the lesson plan contents. For example, one of the ISQAOs from school "B" reported:

“The challenge we have in the lesson plan is, first of all, how to write some components. Each of them went to their own school and even to seminars. There are times when teachers attend different seminars...Someone can just say that: I have been writing like this since I was in college because that is how I was taught. Where did you get the skill to tell me this?”

The findings from documentary reviews also provided similar answers. For instance, passage from SPER for school "E" reads: "*The inconsistency in preparation of lesson plans makes some teachers fail to write a clear statement of specific objectives, a proper statement for assessment and students' evaluation*". This suggests that the preparation of lesson plans has been controversial in schools and that ISQATs are not prepared to help teachers with it. Thus, there is a need to harmonize lesson preparation.

A lack of supervision guidelines and the existence of divergent perspectives regarding lesson planning as it was found in this study hindered the ISQATs' readiness to supervise effectively. These findings concur with those of Ali (2017), who found that less experienced Tanzanian teachers were at a crossroads because the lesson plan format taught during their teacher training colleges differed from those implemented in schools. König et al. (2020) report significant differences and inconsistencies among various lesson planning manuals, theories, and formats used in Germany. This is contrary to the findings by Santiago et al. (2013) in Chile who found that instructional supervisors were provided with standardized lesson planning manuals and guidelines that helped to eliminate variations and contradictions in lesson planning. According to OECD (2005), the standardized lesson planning manual helps both the supervisor and the teacher to have a common understanding of how to prepare and deliver effective lessons.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the readiness of the ISQATs to supervise instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania. The findings indicated that ISQATs were not fully ready to supervise instructions because ISQAOs had limited professional profiles although they had adequate

teaching profiles. The findings further indicated that the heavy workload, poor cooperation from teachers, a lack of supervision guidelines, and different perspectives on lesson planning hindered ISQATs' readiness to supervise instructions.

For ISQATs to be fully ready to supervise instructional practices effectively, they need in-service professional training and standardized supervision manuals and guidelines so that they can monitor the quality standards and instructional practices professionally in schools. There is also a need for implementation of the internal supervision policy that requires possession of instructional supervision skills as a pre-requisite qualification for teachers' promotion to an instructional supervisory role. Moreover, future research should employ quantitative methods, have a larger sample size, and cover a broader geographic area.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was funded by University of Dodoma.

ORCID

Abich Omollo – <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4507-1753>

Rose Matete – <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1452-3641>

Paul Loisulie – <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4444-2364>

References

- Agapiti, F., & Kitula, P. (2022). Contribution of school quality assurance supervisory role on teacher's efficacy in public secondary schools in Monduli district, Tanzania. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 6(4), 28-35.
- Allen, M. (Ed.). (2017). *The SAGE encyclopedia of communication research methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Ali, H. (2017). The roles of school heads in supporting novice teachers at the public secondary schools in Zanzibar, Tanzania. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(8), 793-811. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.886531>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(100), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- Dea, M. (2016). The nexus between instructional supervision, supervisors' and teachers': The practical paradox and its effect on quality education a case of Woliat zone administration elementary and secondary schools (1-8). *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(7), 108–118.
- De Grauwe, A. (2001). *School supervision in four African countries*. Volume 1: Challenges and reforms. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000124823>
- Ebele, U., & Olofu, P. (2017). Enhancing the standard of teaching and learning in the 21st century via qualitative school-based supervision in secondary schools in Abuja municipal area council. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 9(6), 79–83. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2016.0490>
- Elmore, R. (2008). Leadership as the practice of improvement. In Pont, B., D. Nusche and D. Hopkins (eds.), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*. Paris: OECD.
- Fathil, F., Ziden, A., & Osman, S. (2021). Lesson planning practices and lesson planning system design preferences among novice ESL teachers. *Journal of Educational Research and Indigenous Studies*, 3 (1), 170-184.
- Given, L. (Ed.). (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Glickman, C., Gordon, S., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2013). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership (3rd ed.)*. Pearson.
- Hargreaves, D. (1995). Inspection and School Improvement. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 25 (1), 117- 125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764950250112>
- Hoque, K., & Kenayathulla, H., & Subramaniam, M., & Islam, R. (2020). Relationships between supervision and teachers' performance and attitude in secondary schools in Malaysia. *SAGE Open*, 10(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440209255>
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press.
- König, J., Bremerich-Vos, A., Buchholtz, C., Fladung, I & Glutsch, N. (2020). Pre-service teachers' generic and subject-specific lesson-planning skills: On learning adaptive teaching during initial teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*,

- 43(2), 131-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1679115>
- Maisyaroh, M., Wiyono, B., Hardika, H., Valdez, A., Mangorsi, S., & Canapi, S. (2021). The implementation of instructional supervision in Indonesia and the Philippines, and its effect on the variation of teacher learning models and materials. *Cogent Education*, 8(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.1962232>
- Malunda, P., Onen, D., Musaaazi, J. & Oonyu, J. (2016). Instructional supervision and the pedagogical practices of secondary school teachers in Uganda. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(30), 177–188. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1118918.pdf>
- Matete, R. (2021). Evidence based impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in primary school education in Tanzania. *Huria Journal*, 28(1), 105-126. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/huria/article/view/225994>
- Mauliate, H., Rahmat, A., & Wachidah, S. (2019). Evaluation the lesson plan of English language learning in junior high school, Seraphine Bakti Utama West Jakarta. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 7(7), 1078-1086. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4108/eai.29-8-2019.2289153>
- Mcheke, Anangisye & Mislai, (2022). Discursive construction of external school quality assurance policy actors' power in selected secondary schools in Tanzania. *Huria Journal*, 29(2), 1-25. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/huria/article/view/261845>
- Medard, G., & Mwila, P. (2022). School quality assurance guidelines: its implementation and challenges in public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 6(10), 124-133. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journal/v6y2022i10p124-133.html>
- MoEST. (2017a). *School quality assurance handbook*. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- MoEST, (2017b). *Basic, secondary & teacher education quality assurance framework*. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- Mosha, H. (2012). The state of quality of education in Tanzania: A reflection. *Papers in Education and Development*, 31, 61–76. <https://journals.udsm.ac.tz/index.php/ped/article/view/1464/0>
- National Examinations Council of Tanzania [NECTA]. (2019). *Regional rankings in CSEE*. https://necta.go.tz/files/Mpangilio_wa_MkoaCSEE2018.pdf
- Ngwenya, V. (2020). School-based supervision enhances the professional development of

- teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 40(3), 1-10.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n3a1744>
- Nir, A. (2003). The impact of school-based management on supervision instructors' professional considerations. *The International Journal of Educational Management* 17(2), 49-58. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540310460243>
- Palinkas, L., Horwitz, S., Green, C., Wisdom, J., Duan, N., & Hoagwood. K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Panigrahi, M. (2012). Implementation of instructional supervision in secondary school: Approaches, prospects and problems. *Science, Technology and Arts Research Journal*, 1(3), 59-67. <https://doi.org/10.4314/star.v1i3.98799>
- Santiago, P., Benavides, F., Danielson, C., Goe, L., & Nusche, D. (2013). *OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education: Teacher evaluation in Chile*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264172616-en>
- Secilia, F., & Mwila, P. (2022). School quality assurance recommendations and teacher efficacy in public secondary schools in Ilemela Municipality, Tanzania. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 30(2), 62-74.
<https://journalajess.com/index.php/AJESS/article/view/586/1171>
- Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence. *School Leadership and Management*, 22(1), 73-91.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430220143042>
- Tenny, T., Brannan, G., & Brannan, J. (2022). *Qualitative Study*. StatPearls Publishing.
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/#_ncbi_dlg_citbx_NBK470395
- Tonini, D. (2012). Increasing the flow of students, washing out quality: World Bank policy effects in Tanzanian secondary schools. In C. S. Collins & A. W. Wiseman (Eds.), *Education strategy in the developing world: Revising the World Bank's education policy* (pp. 423–450). Emerald Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679\(2012\)0000016022](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679(2012)0000016022)
- OECD. (2013). *Teachers for the 21st century: Using evaluation to improve teaching*. OECD Publishing.
<https://www.oecd.org/site/eduistp13/TS2013%20Background%20Report.pdf>

- OECD (2008). *Improving school leadership*, volume 1: Policy and practice. OECD.
<https://www.oecd.org/education/school/Improving-school-leadership.pdf>
- OECD (2005). *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. OECD.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264018044-en>
- Owan, V., Johnson, A., Osim, R., Anagbogu, G., Otu, B., Undie, S., Ogabor, J., Apie, M., & Ekere, S. (2023). School-based supervisory practices and teachers' job effectiveness using bootstrapping in covariance-based structural equation modelling. *Cogent Education*, 10, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2168406>
- Sallis, E (2002). *Total quality management in education (3rd ed.)*. Kogan Page Ltd.
- UNESCO. (2011). *Reforming school supervision for quality improvement*. UNESCO-IIEP.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/ced02f98-0ba6-41bc-bd89-b672206f0ef0>
- URT. (2021). *Annual general report on the performance audit for the period ending 31st March 2021*. National Audit Office.
- URT. (2018). *Education sector development plan (2016/17-2020/21): Tanzania mainland*. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- Weinberger, Y., & Libman, Z. [Eds.]. (2018). *Contemporary pedagogies in teacher education and development*. Intech Open.
- The World Bank. (2021). *Tanzania education sector institutional and governance assessment*. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/35973>
- Zepeda, S., & Ponticell, A. (Eds.) (2019). *The Wiley handbook of educational supervision*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Zepeda, S. (2017). *Instructional supervision: applying tools and concepts (4th ed.)*. Routledge.
- Zepeda, S. (2013). *Instructional leadership for school improvement*. Routledge.
- Zepeda, S., & Mayers, R. (2013). *Supervision across the content areas*. Routledge.
- Zepeda, S. (2006). High stakes supervision: We must do more. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9(1), 61–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120500448154>