

# Effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' School Supervisory Roles in Enhancing Students' Academic Performance in National Examinations in Nakuru District, Kenya

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## Abstract

The gist of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' (QASOs) supervisory roles and their impact on students' academic performance in national examinations in Nakuru district, Kenya. The study had four fold objectives: i) to determine the level of training of QASOs on standards assessment before employment; ii) assess the factors affecting the quality of school standards assessment; iii) examine teachers perceptions towards the usefulness of QASOs and iv) find out the effectiveness of QASOs assessment reports and their impact on students performance in national examinations. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. A random sampling technique was used to sample nine (21.2%) secondary schools from a population of 46 schools and 82 teachers (10.1%) out of a population of 818 and all the 5 QASOs yielding a total sample size of 142 subjects. The study used three types of research instruments, namely; Quality Assurance and Standards officers interview schedule (QASOIS), Headteacher questionnaire (HTQ), and secondary school teachers' questionnaire (SSTQ) to collect data. Mixed methods involving qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data. The major finding was that while all the QASOs have the required academic and professional qualifications with long periods of experience in undertaking supervisory roles in curriculum implementation, they are faced with numerous and intertwined challenges hampering effective execution of their duties. The critical challenges included inadequate logistical and financial facilitation as well as laxity by certain schools to implement the QASOs supervisory reports on strategies geared towards the enhancement of students' performance in national examinations, especially at Kenya Certificate of Education (KCSE). It is recommended that QASOs should be provided with adequately facilitated with requisite finances and resources as well as in-depth training on utilization of assessment techniques so as to intensify informed advisory roles geared towards enhancement of teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools not only in the study district of Nakuru, but in other areas with similar constraints. [325 words]

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QUASOs), students' academic performance, Academic qualification, professional qualification, institutional performance, advisory roles, learning outcomes'.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background Information

The debate on supervision of school principals and teachers for effective implementation of curriculum to yield high has received top priority not only in most sub-Saharan African countries but also in Kenya (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2014). Quality of education measures using academic and no-academic indicators in secondary education in Kenya is neither achievable nor sustainable without the continuous assessment of these indicators on how they influence the delivery of quality education by school systems in the country. Demand for educational quality is also increasing, as the Government of Kenya views the satisfactory performance of her basic education systems not only instrumentally but also strategically in relation to economic development and international competitiveness (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

The supervisory role of schools is deeply entrenched in the Laws of Kenya Chapter 211 known as Education Act gave the inspectorate a legal backing (Republic of Kenya, 2012a, 2012b). Section 18 of the Education Act states that "school inspectors appointed by Ministry of Education be charged with authority to enter and inspect any school, or any place at which it is reasonably suspected that a school is being conducted, any time, with or without notice and to report" ( Republic of Kenya, 2013). This mandate is further enhanced in the Basic Education Act 2013 which also transformed the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) into Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council (ESQAC). The responsibility of the inspectorate is elaborated in MOEST Handbook (2000) and in the Legal Notice Number 11 of 2014 on the regulations on Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council. The handbook gives a guide to the inspectors and other stakeholders in education on their role (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). Since the establishment of the Directorate of QASO, there has been no systematic examination of the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the

usefulness of the QASOs school supervisory roles. This lacuna in knowledge spurred the undertaking of this study.

### Literature Review

Since the establishment of the inspectorate division in the Ministry of education, over 30 years ago, the inspectors have been operating through circulars and guidelines. However, a direction has been given through KESSP report Republic of Kenya (2005), which realized that, for effective curriculum delivery, a Quality Assurance and Standards officer is expected to provide advisory services to school on how best to improve on pedagogical and androgogical skills ( Republic of Kenya,2005). This eventually is supposed to enhance a schools performance. The same advice also goes to stakeholders at school, district and headquarters level. Specifically, the executive summary is given to the head teachers and other stakeholders for immediate action, including a full report distributed to principals/head teachers, chairman Board of Governors (BOG), District Education Officers (DEOs), Director Secondary (MoE), Director Quality Assurance and Standards and Teachers Service Commission. All these officers are responsible for making a follow up of the crucial areas either mentioned or implicated such as staffing, finances, curriculum issues and performance among others.

According to MOEST (2000), the QASO is charged with specific roles such as conducting standard assessment in schools, which encompasses all areas of management and specifically oversees examination (both internal and external) syllabus coverage, curriculum development and implementation, financial accounting and auditing as well as overall instructional leadership.

The Jomtien Conference on education (1990) focused on access to quality education for all. This position was reaffirmed in the Dakar Forum in 2000 when over 150 countries committed themselves to the achievement of six (6) goals now popularly known as Education For All (EFA) Goals. One of the six goals is specifically focused on quality of education (MOE News letter, 2005). This goal aimed at improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. This necessitated various countries to come up with mechanisms to fulfill the aspect of quality. Finland through its Bergen report (2005) had a similar idea but decentralized the practice. The Finnish system of evaluation and quality assurance has remained decentralized based on voluntary participation by the institutions and focused on quality enhancement rather than control-fitness for purpose.

Kenya has also made strides in quality improvement as stated in Sessional paper No.1 of 2005, which explains that the provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy. This has been elaborated further in the Vision 2030 with three strong pillars namely; political, social and economic (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

Since independence, the government has addressed several challenges through commissions, working parties and task forces in order to change the quality of education in the country as per Sessional paper No.1 of (2005). This led to the reforms, which resulted, into the re-structuring of the Ministry curving out a directorate of quality assurance and standards encompassing quality audit, quality assurance and quality development. The National Education Sector Support Programme 2014-2018 (NESSP) envisages a devolved and effective quality assurance which will be under the proposed Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Before independence in 1963, most schools in Kenya were under the colonial government and missionaries. Emphasis was on provision of technical skills to indigenous Kenyans. As changes emerged with the demand for industrial education with mushrooming of schools, the government was forced to come up with supervisory Systems for all schools. According to Maranga (1987) the colonial inspector was expected to impact the methods of teaching in all schools and criticize the suitability of the curriculum, to examine schools in conjunction with the staff and to adopt the examination to the curriculum. Just like inspectorate, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) has a vision and mission statement to guide the QASOs in their operations. According to MOEST (2000) its vision is, "to provide quality assurance to all education stakeholders in all education institutions, while the mission is to establish, maintain and improve education standards" Republic of Kenya, 2000).

The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards is headed by the Director assisted by a Senior Deputy Director. Cascaded below are: Deputy Directors, Senior Assistant Directors, Assistant Directors, Senior Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, and Quality Assurance and Standard Officers who are both stationed within the ministry headquarter and, replicated in the field, that is, Provincial and District. The QASOs at the Directorate headquarters are mainly in-charge of specific subjects or areas while the seniors are either in charge of a subsection, program or project. It is also envisaged that the head teachers are also QASOs 'number one' assisted by Heads of departments as for secondary and class teachers in primary schools. They are QASOs 'number one' because according to the norms, Quality Assurance officers would visit schools at most once after three years unless it is a special measure or follow up being made.

Immediately after independence in 1964, Professor Ominde chaired the first education commission called the Kenya Education Commission. This commission harmonized the education in the country as previously it was offered on segregation lines. This commission underscored the importance of supervision in schools. In 1970, the inspectorate division of the then ministry of education science and technology was given legal backing by the Education Act Chapter 211, where school Quality Assurance and standards officers were appointed by the minister and charged with authority to enter and inspect any school which is reasonably suspected that learning is going on there. This mandate was equally emphasized in the Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

The colonial supervision of schools lacked qualified staff and sufficient number of QASOS to the available schools. For inspection and supervision to be effective, inspectors should make regular visits and adequate follow-up services in order to move out of the colonial inadequacies. Sifuna (1974) asserts that the work of inspectors concerns assessment and quality of standards of education being provided in schools. According to Maranga (1977), the role of inspectors in the past was perceived as those of policing teachers. Inspectors were seen as faultfinders who were mainly interested in reporting teachers to ministry of education without giving them any advice to enable them improve the teaching and learning techniques. Their visits to schools were impromptu and irregular. Such practice had adverse effects on teachers who felt mistrusted with their jobs and spied on. Current inspection trends calls for openness on the part of inspectors. Internal and external supervision of teachers has its role in improving the quality of teaching. The unwarranted absenteeism, negligence in lesson preparation and marking of books could be a thing of the past. What remains according to Sifuna (1974) is to have a little more informed supervisors on modern methods of supervision.

The directorate of Quality Assurance and standards division in the Ministry of Education dealt largely with the maintenance and implementation of standards of education in Kenyan schools and colleges. It decided what should be taught and also because it is in touch with every aspect of educational development, it has sometimes been referred to as the 'nerve centre' of the MOE. Through the supervisory of the curriculum, the inspectorate in essence, determines the trend of education in the country at any given time. Maranga (1987) sees Quality Assurance and Standards officers of schools as playing a leading role both nationally and locally in curriculum innovation. Inspectors act as source of information and development and advice to the Ministry of education to the formulation of national education policies and objectives in the country. Kimball (1997) asserts that a basic function of Quality Assurance is in carrying on curriculum planning activities and being responsible for developing proposals for desired research demonstration and dissemination of activities. Mbiti (1999) says Quality Assurance Directorate should be at the center to control the quality of education at all levels throughout the country through Inspection, Guidance and Advice in all schools in the country.

Quality Assurance and Standards Officers are charged with advising the government on trends obtained in learning institutions particularly in areas of access, quality gender, enrolment, wastage, curriculum evaluation and in-service training of teachers among others, (T.P.C, 2006). The reviewing of the teaching and learning material in collaboration with the Kenya national Examination council as well as advising on standards in education based on all round standard performance indicators in both curricular and co-curricular activities is a central involvement for quality assurance and standards officers. It requires that any quality assurance and standards officer should have competent skill background regarding inspection for him to stair teachers to teach effectively (Mbithi, 1974). The ministry of Education has placed great responsibility on Quality Assurance Officers, which includes carrying out panel inspection with a view to diagnose the academic performance of the institutions. Subjects based panel inspection are also organized to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the curriculum. Also Quality Assurance and Standards Officers are charged with a responsibility of "modifying" the introduction of any new subject in the school curriculum.

Sifuna (1980) contends that the work of inspectors concern assessment of standards and quality of education being provided in schools. He emphasizes that internal and external supervision of teachers has its role in improving the quality of teachings. Things like unwarranted absenteeism, negligence in lesson preparation and marking of books must be curbed. In addition, the supervision team should be a little more informed of modern methods and tone down their administrative roles to that of helper. A number abandoned their helping role. Some tend to wear on color of a police officer that teachers often resent their presence. Maranga (1977) notes that these differences develop largely because inspection had to adopt traditional inspectional legacies which Kenya inherited at independence. There is therefore a need to eradicate such attitudes through training where both sides appreciate each other as team players in curriculum implementation.

Maleche (2004) agrees that there are numerous teachers who in their long service have never attended these courses. One wonders how effective they are in their job. Occasionally, they are visited by that much-loathed official called the school inspector whose major role is to give guidance to practicing teachers. Unfortunately he visits schools when there is a crisis and his advice is least likely to be sympathetic to the plight of the teacher. Indeed on those occasions, he enjoys demonstrating his authority rather than acting as a counselor. He ends up

being viewed as an unwelcome visitor whose professional services they would rather do without. And this merely serves to isolate the teachers from a potentially valuable source of professional help. In time, teachers who are so isolated become incompetent, apathetic and routine in their role.

Maranga (1987) observes that the inspector subjects the teachers to position of passive recipients expected to receive orders and instructions without questioning them. This behavior naturally stifles the creative spirit of those teachers dedicated to self-improvement in their teaching and learning process.

The directorate of quality assurance and standards is mandated to work in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, Quality assurance and standards Assessment functions through the following areas (Oyaya, 2007).

- Advising the government on the current trends obtained in learning institutions in areas of access, quality, leadership, staffing, governance, health care, career guidance, curriculum evaluation, pre-service training of teachers, teacher proficiency and institutional plans and performance.
- Reviewing the teaching and learning materials in collaboration with Kenya institute of education and publishers (both formative and summative)
- Liaising with Kenya institute of education in quality development service with the design of in-service training programs whenever the curriculum is revised
- Advising stakeholders on education matters pertaining to curriculum delivery, assessment and provision of resources.

With the changes in the education system, there are concerns about the Standards of curriculum and assessment made to award qualification in the system. What has been gained and lost in the country has come to think about knowledge, its transmission by educators and acquisition by learners? How valid and workable are the instruments used to enable individuals to assemble their own qualifications and their own building block of knowledge. Quality of knowledge is about enhancement of cognitive skills through the schooling experience. In other words, good schooling should be about the development of highest levels of cognitive skills. In 2005 EFA Global monitoring report demonstrated a strong link between the developments of cognitive skills as measured by cognitive tests scores and educational quality (UNESCO, 2004). In the UNESCO report, little doubt is cast over the use of cognitive skills as a key measure for measuring quality in education, rather than the functionality of schooling.

According to Oyaya (2007) Monitoring and advising on standards in education and training is based on all round standard performance indicators in both curricular and co-curricular activities. The core values of directorate of quality assurance and standards are derived from the ministry of education charter, which underscores the following as important segments for quality assurance officers.

- Impartial judgment where by an officer is required to demonstrate secure judgment which are reliable, valid, comprehensive, prognostic and corporate.
- Respect for value added progress by examining entry behavior and assessing the value added and progress made on individual learner and institutions
- Integrity through upholding transparency and accountability through objective assurance and standard assessment and reporting
- Professionalism through subject mastery and skill upgrading of teachers through in-servicing and conducting teacher proficiency courses
- Quality assurance by establishing, developing and monitoring educational and training standards through quality audit and control and giving feedback to stakeholders.
- Good rapport by using collegial approach and respect of individual differences, available resources and regional disparities

The mission of the department of Quality Assurance and standards is to establish, maintain and improve educational standards in the country (Wasanga, 2004). This department is mandated to co-ordinate, follow-up and advice on curriculum delivery in schools.

Wasanga (2004) maintains that Quality assurance officers should have good academic qualification, specialized skills and well established staff development programs. He contends that the department of Quality Assurance is hampered due to inadequacies in skills. This is mainly caused by lack of a specific policy on recruitment and deployment of Quality assurance and standards officers. Such a policy should take into account an officer academic background and experience and in the education sector.

The criterion used for the selection of inspectors' previously was based on the identification of successful head teachers who excelled in their administration as well as in their subject area. Currently, the recruitment of QASOS is a prerogative of the public service commission. Those who go through the interviews are appointed and deployed as QASOS of various calibres. This is devoid of their passed records. Maranga (1987) sees quality Assurance and standards officers as playing a leading role both nationally and locally in curriculum innovation. He goes on to say that QASO act as a source of information and development and advice to the ministry of

education on formulation of national education policies and objectives (Oyaya 2007).

Kimall (1967) and Macharia (2008) concur that, to enhance quality inspection and supervision, both the quality assurance and standards officer and the head teacher are expected to have a very good grasp of all curricular subjects, how best these should be delivered to the students and the optimum use of resources that can achieve effective teaching and learning. They document that the method of appointing quality assurance officers in education was weak, Training of quality assurance and standards officers in relevant knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes is necessary for the adequate performance of their duties. Macharia (2008) contends that quality assurance and standards officers should possess a repository of pedagogical skills, which could enable him, organize upgrading workshops for trainees and have capability and exposure to new approaches in Education. The whole aim is to improve performance and organization standards. According to UNESCO Global monitoring report (2004) attempts should be made in order to improve on the quality of education by traditionally embodying accountability measures where an outside body intervenes in the school or classroom area. Examples of these external interventions include school inspection (UNESCO, 2005a, 2005b).

### **Statement of the problem**

Despite changing the titles, from school inspectors to quality assurance and standards officers, some QASOs still play the role of inspectors by harassing teachers and serious engagements in fault finding. This brings negative reputation, walloping their credibility, leading to poor performance in service delivery and draining the existing standards. Teachers have expressed major concerns and other stakeholders on the poor image pasted against a very hardworking and diligent DQAs. Some Schools have complained of lack of quality assessment aimed at standard improvement. The bottom line is that, there is likely to be some QASOs who are conservative and maintain status quo due to lack of understanding of what their job demands.

At the same time, in spite of the fact that the government's effort in strengthening quality Assurance directorate by providing vehicles and motorbikes, there is an increasing concern regarding declining efficiency and effectiveness of quality assurance officers by various stakeholders. Parents because of the numerous school strikes have expressed major concerns, mismanagement of schools and poor performance in national examinations. (Koech, 2008; Republic of Kenya, 2012a).

Nakuru district over the last three years has performed poorly in its Kenya certificate of examination having obtained a mean of 5.17 in 2008 results out of a maximum of 12 points to be scored (DEO Nakuru, 2009). This performance is certainly not the best for the district bearing in mind that the District is geographically placed in agriculturally potential area with ample supply of other basic learning facilities and with high presence of QASO (Nakuru District development plan, 2007). Literature review gives a summary of the District performance in KCSE examinations for the last six years and reflects that the performance has not improved over the same period. Therefore, this study was spurred by the rising public concern regarding the apparent declining efficiency of QASO and sought to determine some of the problems that could be responsible for the poor state of education performance in Nakuru District.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the study**

Based on the problem under reference, the study was to determine the role of quality assurance and standards officers in school supervision and school performance in national examinations in Nakuru district. The study had four fold objectives, namely:

1. To determine the level of training of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers on Standards assessment before employment.
2. To assess the factors affecting the Quality of school Standards assessment.
3. To find out teachers perceptions towards Quality Assurance and Standards officers (QASOs)
4. To find out the effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers assessment reports and performance of schools in national examinations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is premised on Role theory developed by Mullin (2004). According to Mullins, a role is the expected pattern of behavior associated with members occupying a particular portion within the structure of the organization. It also describes how a person perceives his own situation. The concept of role helps to clarify the structure and to define the pattern of complex relationship within the group. Coupled with the components like role conflict, role overload, role behavior, these will conspicuously portray the co-existences and relationship to drive the desired results. This theory takes into cognizance the fact that each person is expected by his superiors in an organization to have a certain behavior trend called "role demand". Pareek (1993) defined role as a set of functions, which an individual performs in response to expectations of the significant members of a social system, and one's own expectations from that position or office. Rue and Byars (1992), explains role as an organized set of behavior belonging to an identifiable job. Waweru et al (2007) defines role theory as a way

individuals behave, how they feel, they ought to behave and they believe other people should respond to their actions. Quality Assurance and standards officers are required to explicitly portray certain skills above their counterpart, the teachers whenever they are out in the field carrying out their duties

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the role of Quality Assurance and standards officers in effective school supervision and performance. This design enabled the researcher to collect information, opinions and attitudes of different groups targeted. This design was also considered appropriate for non-experimental studies because it provides a detailed description of existing phenomena, with the intent of employing data to justify the current situation (Brook, 2013; Orodho, 2012). The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. A random sampling technique was used to sample nine (21.2%) secondary schools from a population of 46 schools and 82 teachers (10.1%) out of a population of 818 and all the 5 QASOs yielding a total sample size of 142 subjects. The study used three types of research instruments, namely; Quality Assurance and Standards officers interview schedule (QASOIS), Headteacher questionnaire (HTQ), and secondary school teachers' questionnaire (SSTQ) to collect data.

The researcher was granted by the Ministry of Education permission before conducting the research. All schools in the sample were visited in advance to make arrangement on when to administer the questionnaire. The data collection took six weeks. Before starting to collect data, the researcher sought a letter of introduction from the university. The head teachers of the schools under study were visited and notified in advance. The respondents were very cooperative and thus making the data collection exercise very successful. The data was collected in readiness for analysis. The quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer programme version 20.00 to generate mainly descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics. The generated data is presented in frequency distribution tables, percentages, charts and line graphs.

### III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Academic and Professional Achievement of Respondents

The first objective was to find out the academic and professional attainment of respondents, especially the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs). The respondents' academic and professional attainment is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: Academic and Professional qualification of respondents*

Education and Profession	Headteachers (%)	Teachers (%)	QASOs (%)
<b>Academic Achievement</b>			
University	88.9	89.9	90.0
A 'Level	11.1	8.7	0.0
O' Level	0.0	1.4	10.0
<b>Professional Achievement</b>			
Masters in Education	11.1	2.6	0.0
Bachelors of Education	77.8	65.8	70.0
PGDE	0.00	5.3	0.0
Diploma	11.1	11.8	10.0
P1	0.0	1.3	0.0
Other	0.0	7.0	20.0

The results carried in Table 1 shows that majority of the head teachers, teachers and QASOs have attained university level of education as they constitute 88.9 percent, 89.9 percent and 90.0 percent respectively. In terms of professional qualifications the data presented indicates 11.1 percent of head teachers and 2.6 percent of the teachers had attained a Masters in Education. Majority of the respondents had Bachelors in Education, that is, 77.8 percent of the Head teachers, 65.8 percent of the Teachers and 70.0 percent of the QASOs. The category of others comprises respondents who have other qualifications outside education such as Bachelor of Arts Degree and Masters of Arts among others. These are not considered professional degrees unless supported by a post graduate diploma in education.

This information reflects that the QASOs, head teachers and teachers meet the minimum qualification as stated in the education policy. It is worth noting that for the officers who do not meet the minimum requirements of diploma they are allowed to undertake a Teachers proficiency course and promoted from as low as P1 level to approved graduate teachers IV, III, II and I.

Figure 1 shows the experience of QASOs in terms of courses attended. It was also evident that most of the QASOs have attended several courses in which they acted as facilitators for teachers and headteachers.

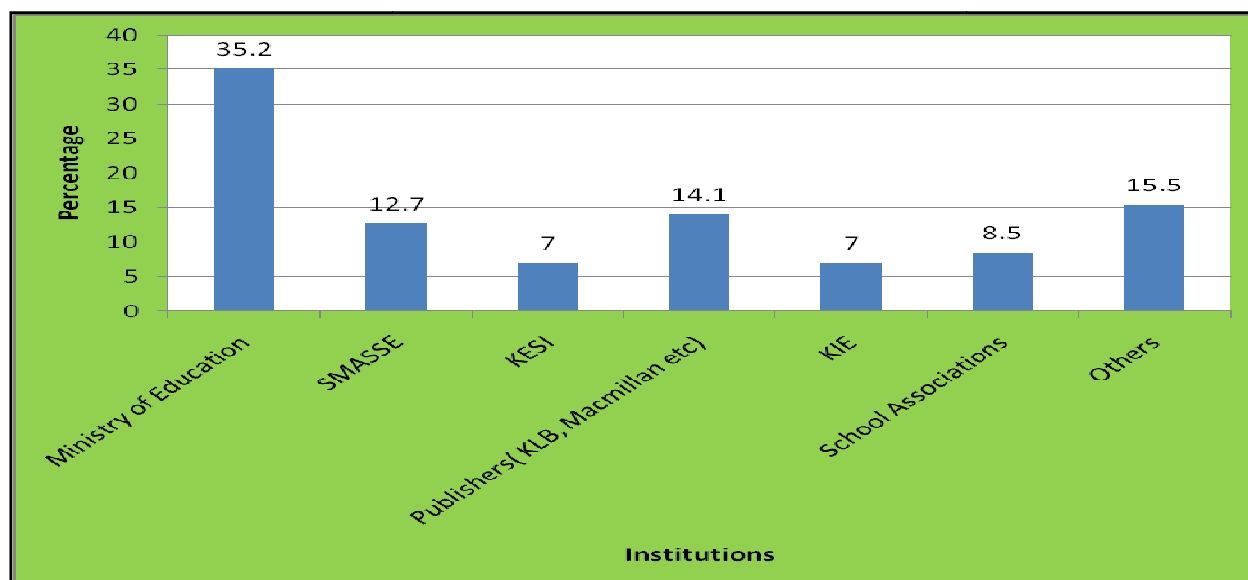


Figure 1 : Organizers of Induction Courses attended by the Teachers and QASO

It is noted that most of the induction courses were organized by the Ministry of Education (35.2 percent) followed by publishers (14.1 percent) and SMASSE (12.7 percent) as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The induction courses offered, range from pedagogical skills, content upgrading and financial management among others.

The results are in consonance with Wasanga (2004) and Oyaya (2007) who maintains that QASOs should have good academic qualification, specialized skills and well established staff development programs. They, however, both concur contends the department of Quality Assurance is hampered due to inadequacies in skills. This is mainly caused by lack of a specific policy on recruitment and deployment of Quality assurance and standards officers. Such a policy should take into account an officer academic background and experience and in the education sector.

### Factors Affecting the Quality of School Standard Assessment

The second task of the study was to find out some of the problems encountered during school assessment exercises by QASOs. In order to ensure delivery of the education curriculum, it is critical that supervisory activities are supported by the Ministry of Education. The Sessional paper No 1 of 2005 on education training framework identifies that, besides increasing access, emphasis was to be laid in ensuring quality. It is in this perspective that the revamping of the quality assurance department was enforced and resources enhanced.

The data presented in Table 2 represents the problems encountered by the QASOs during the supervision exercise. It can be seen that 80 percent of the respondents reported lack of transport facilitation as one of the problems followed by delayed in action on recommendation by the head teacher/Ministry cited by 60 percent of the respondents.

Table 2 : QASOs Stated problems encountered during inspection exercise (N=5)

Stated Problems	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Lack of transport facilitation	80	20	100
Incomplete information from Headteachers	40	60	100
Delay in action on recommendations by Head teacher/ Ministry	60	40	100
Distortion of information by head teachers	40	60	100
Inadequate funds	40	60	100
Non Supportive District Education Officer	20	80	100

The other factors which were cited by 40 percent of QASOs were distortion of information by headteachers, inadequate funds and incomplete information from headteachers. It is important to note that some District Education officers were rather unsupportive to the supervisory roles of QASOs.

These problems were not unique in the study district of Nakuru. The problems are supported by the Koech (2008) and Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) who documented that despite the government's effort in strengthening quality Assurance directorate by providing vehicles and motorbikes, there is an increasing concern on efficiency and effectiveness of quality assurance officers by various stakeholders. Parents because of the numerous school strikes have expressed major concerns, mismanagement of schools and poor performance in national examinations. (Koech Report, 2008; Republic of Kenya, 2012a)

### Head Teachers Perception of External Supervisors

The third Objective was to assess the perception of teachers and headteachers regarding the role of QASO supervision in improving school performance. Information was sought from the head teachers on how they viewed the external supervisors. It was established that 88.9 percent of the teachers positively viewed the external supervisors as compared to the 11.1 percent. Over the years, the perception of QASOs has changed with the Head teachers recognizing their role in supervision.

The respondents were asked further to provide reasons for their perception of the external supervisors. The data from Table 3 reveals that 22.2 percent reported that they gave professional advice, 11.1 percent, advice teachers on new trends of teaching and another 11.1 percent reported that they contributed to teachers' professional development.

*Table 3: Reasons given by the Head Teachers' who viewed positively the external supervisors*

Reason	Number	Percent
Advice teachers on the new trends in teaching	1	11.1
Give professional advice	2	22.2
Help them do their work diligently	1	11.1
It is advisory and eye opener	1	11.1
Make the school meet its education objectives	1	11.1
Contribute to teachers professional development	1	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This table shows that the other perceived benefits of external supervision include: the supervision helps the teachers to perform their work diligently, the supervision makes the schools meet their set educational objectives, and also the kind of supervision received makes it an eye opener on some issue not earlier known by the teachers.

On the overall, the teachers in the study locale perceive the supervisory roles of QASO very positively. The finding is in consonance with the *Ministry* of Education which has aptly pointed out that an inspector must have excellent professional skills and knowledge and demonstrates impartial judgment among other characteristics (MOE, 2005) therefore, the image and role of the QASO must be totally different from the former inspector of schools and must measure to the current trends as per the restructuring of the Ministry of Education.

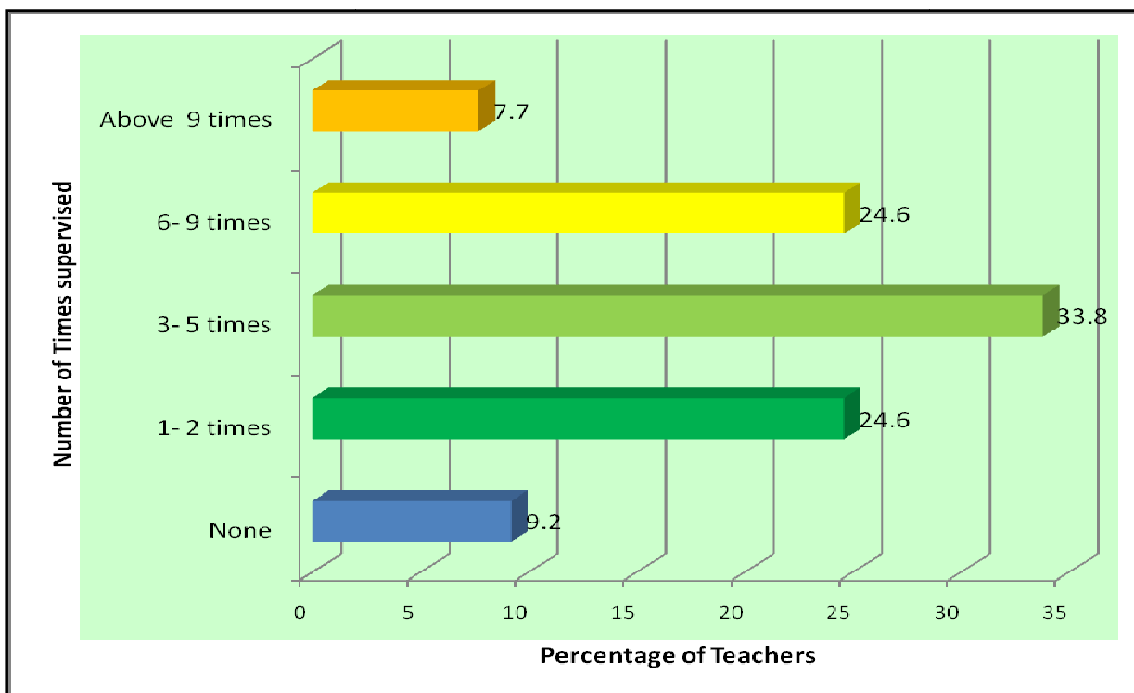
This finding is also supported by the works of Kimball (1967), Rono (1998) and more recent observation by Republic of Kenya (2012) and Orodho (2014) who concur that the supervisory roles of QASO is meant to enhance quality inspection and supervision since both the quality assurance and standards officer and the head teacher are expected to have a very good grasp of all curricular subjects, how best these should be delivered to the students and the optimum use of resources that can achieve effective teaching and learning. Kimball (1967) concurs that the central role of Quality assurance and standards is to control the quality of education at all levels. Rono (1998) hinted that it is regrettable that many quality assurance and standards officers respond as fire brigade. He noted that the method of appointing quality assurance officers in education was weak, Training of quality assurance and standards officers in relevant knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes is necessary for the adequate performance of their duties.

The finding is also in line with the observation made by Macharia (2008) who contends that quality assurance and standards officers should possess a repository of pedagogical skills, which could enable him, organize upgrading workshops for trainees and have capability and exposure to new approaches in Education. The whole aim is to improve performance and organization standards. According to UNESCO Global monitoring report (2004) attempts should be made in order to improve on the quality of education by traditionally embodying accountability measures where an outside body intervenes in the school or classroom area. Examples of these external interventions include school inspection (UNESCO, 2005a, 2005b).

### Supervisory role of quality assurance and standards and District KCSE performance

The final objective examined the impact of supervisory roles of QASO on the improvement of the performance of schools in Nakuru District. The teachers and principals were asked to state the number of times the teachers had been supervised in the current term. Their responses are portrayed in figure 2.

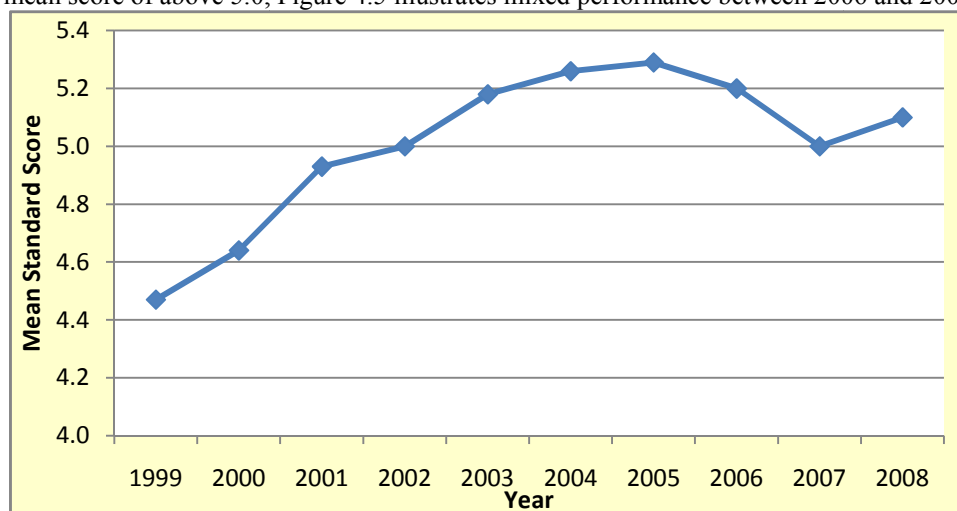




**Figure 2 :** Frequency of supervision of Teachers in general

The results in Figure 2 show that over 90 percent of the teachers had been supervised by QASO at least once in the current term during the study. Majority of the teachers, constituting 33.8 percent had been supervised between 3 and 5 times. It was also noted that 7.7 percent of the teachers had been supervised more than 9 times. The overall message carried in Figure2 is that the QASO in Nakuru District were performing their duties diligently as expected, except for the few isolated cases.

Finally, an attempt was made to determine the influence of supervisory roles of QASO on school performance in the district. The data presented in Figure 3 shows the performance of KCSE examination in Nakuru district for the years 1999 to 2008. Before 2004, when the schools were being supervised by inspectors, the data indicates that national KCSE examination mean score in Nakuru district was as low as 4.47 in 1999 rising to 5.18 in 2003. This performance was low though showing steady upward trend was witnessed during the period when supervision was being carried out by the inspectors. In 2004, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards was established, giving the officers a new dimension from inspectors into quality assurance and standards officers. This completely changed their attitude from harassing of teachers to colleague relationship, thus enhancing professionalism. The outcome of the association saw improvement in performance from a mean score of 5.26 in 2004 to 5.29 in 2005. Though there has been improvement in performance with the district attaining a mean score of above 5.0, Figure 4.5 illustrates mixed performance between 2006 and 2008.



**Figure 3:** Trends in KCSE Performance in Nakuru Districts secondary schools, 1999-2008

The finding that the supervisory roles of QASOs is yielding positive results in the study locale is indeed in tandem with the mission and vision of the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards in Kenya. According

to “Kenya position paper” UNESCO (2004), the mission and vision statement of this department shows clearly that the DQAS is a very central department in the provision of quality Assurance in education. It further states that the legality of the department of quality assurance and standards is stimulated in the education act chapter 211 section 18 of the laws of Kenya. The mission is, ‘establishing, maintaining and improving education standards’ and the vision is ‘to provide quality assurance to all education stakeholders’, create the operational climate or ethos of the QAS, it provides an overall code of conduct and overall criteria for the public to evaluate the performance of the DQASOs as an institution.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of QASOs school supervisory roles and its impact on students’ academic performance. In terms of training and experience, it was established that training level and experience of the QASOs have a direct impact on their ability to effectively undertake quality and assurance assessment. This is in tandem with the level of training of the teachers and the headteachers towards meeting their teaching responsibilities. The results show that the QASOs have the necessary training and experience that matches with the role and supervisory expectations for the teachers and head teachers though the duration may not be sufficient.

With regard to quality school standards assessment, it was established that the quality of school standards assessment is impacted by various factors that include; workload, coordination, facilitation, accountability, type and level of assessment among others. The QASOs are under the direct supervision of the DEOs who are required to provide the necessary support, hence the DEO becomes a critical facilitator for an effective quality school assessment, being the Authority to incur Expenditure (AIE) holder. Also, at school level, the head teacher has a dual responsibility of teaching and ensuring quality of education provision. It is therefore important that after the supervisory visits follow up mechanism must be integrated in the process from either internally or externally.

In respect to roles, and policy in quality assurance and supervision, it was evident that the effective implementation of a quality assurance and standards assessment requires that all the actors understand their roles and the outcome of their supervision. Over the years, the role of QASOs was seen as inspectors whose work was to look for mistakes and recommend disciplinary action. This led to change of the designation name from inspectors to quality assurance and standards officers. The study shows that the image has indeed changed and the relationship between QASOs and teachers is positive .

With regards to effectiveness of QASO in assessment reports and school performance, it was strongly argued that it is a requirement that all supervisory visits should have reports presented and shared with the aim of improving teaching and learning and eventually the school examination performance. The positive perception of QASOs was as a result of the benefits that included; professional advice, imparting of skills in new teaching trends, making a school achieve its learning objectives and contribution to teacher development among others. It was also noted that the QASOs role ranges from advisory, assessment, data collection, analysis and interpretation and monitoring and evaluation among others. These aspects when well engaged, contribute enormously to the improvement of the learning outcomes at school level.

In terms of QASO supervision and school performance it was evident that the role of quality assurance and standards is to ensure effective curriculum implementation with the outcome being improved performance in both formative and summative evaluation. The interaction and attitude between the teachers and the QASOs has immensely improved. The outcome is reflected in the steady rise in KCSE mean scores for Nakuru district. It also evident that the Head Teachers play a significant role in supervising teachers especially when they have less teaching work load, hence increased supervisory responsibilities, leading to improved performance in KCSE. Though the QASOs started very well with an upward trend in KCSE mean score in 2004 and 2005, however, the impact is unpredictable with fluctuations of the mean score between 2006 and 2008. This can be attributed to increased workload, bottlenecks such as transportation and their inability to provide immediate feedback. These factors are detrimental to the schools performance in the national examinations, since there is no value from the supervision visits.

The following recommendations emerging from the research findings were put in place to enhance the supervisory roles of the QASOs and make them effective in their role in quality assurance and standards schools assessment and improve school performance:

1. The Government should increase the number of QASOs to effectively participate in the schools standards assessment so as to reduce the number of schools and distance covered. This will make the QASOs concentrate and avoid generalized fallacies with unspecified complaints.
2. The Government should provide adequate resources to the districts that will allow more frequent supervision visits, increased in-service training and allow for sharing of experiences in quality assurance assessment. Instead of the usual 2 weeks induction courses, they should be trained for at least one month coupled with constant evaluation by the Director Quality Assurance and Standards.

3. The head teacher and departmental heads should play a key role in implementing internal quality assurance through development of appropriate guidelines that should be followed.
4. The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards should develop appropriate guidelines and instruments to facilitate a common platform for supervisory reports to hasten actions on recommendations at all levels.

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