Journal of Education and Practice
ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online)
Vol.7, No.32, 2016

Institutional Dynamics of Education Reforms and Quality of Primary Education in Uganda

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Abstract
This article scans Uganda's topical responsibility to transformation of the country's primary school education arrangement with attention to the Institutional dynamics that constitute school factors such as the curriculum, assessment methods, course content, subject composition, teaching methods, and instructional materials; among others that influence the likelihood of the education reform processes to promote the quality of teaching and learning at the school level. The Government of Uganda/Ministry of Education (GoU/MoES) undertook a series of education reforms meant to improve the quality of basic education, which include large-scale changes in the primary curriculum, language of instruction for the lower primary sub-sector, provision of basic learning materials, primary teacher development, establishing and maintaining education standards. Given that the institution's own capacity for change is a key driving force behind the successful implementation, and ultimately sustainability, of an education reform.

1. Introduction

The overview brings in the analysis of the literature pertaining to the link between the institutional dynamics of education reforms and the quality of education. For instance, the study cites [1]research that compared what he termed as star and problem performances in the schools implementing education reforms[2]. The study of schools involved in a partnership reform programme pointed to the star schools' institutional capacity or organizational cultural capital to envision change, as well as to accommodate potentially negative situations. Conversely, problem schools were not entrepreneurial in their approaches to impending challenges on the horizon. Similarly[3]notes an analogous pattern among a sample of American schools sustaining comprehensive school reform initiatives. From a school capacity perspective, she found that successful schools are intentionally savvy in dealing with their policy environments; which could be viewed as threats to reform sustainability and indeed had led to failure of reform in other schools. What the studies do not elaborate, however, are the institutional factors responsible for the right organizational cultural capital.

To elaborate that the only way schools will survive the future is to become creative learning organizations[4]. Learning communities know how to deal with change because they have a collective understanding of where they are going and what is important. Describing learning communities[5] as consisting of groups of people who take an active, collaborative, learning-oriented approach towards the problems and perplexities of teaching and learning. Such institutional inquiry habit of mind can serve as a methodology for sustainable school improvement [6]. However, monitoring of the change effort is important if changes are to be integrated into the fabric of the school [7]. Schools therefore need to be able to gather and use data to assess performance. Only then will they know what has worked in their programmes and be able to use that knowledge to make necessary changes[8].

Secondly, the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) [2] study highlights understanding as a key determinant of large scale education reforms, which in this respect could be considered one of the dynamics of education reforms at institutional level. The study shows that reforms designed to make dramatic changes in practice; such as the primary curriculum reform and the language of instruction policy for the lower primary sub-sector in Uganda [9] depend on the extent to which the teachers understand the reasoning that lies behind the changes in curriculum and teaching. In this respect, sustainable change is predicated on individuals within the schools' coming to understand the reforms and being able to apply them. More often than not, the reasoning and principles are not obvious to reform recipients at the school level. When educators use their prior experience to make sense of the reforms, they sometimes misunderstand or misinterpret the expectations and transform the reform into something that makes sense to them, but is not at all similar to the policy intentions [10].

This leads to the issue of central direction and local autonomy discussed in the C*f*BT report[2] study as a key determinant of reform success at the institutional level. The goal of large-scale reform like Universal Primary Education (UPE), thematic curriculum, and primary teacher development[9], among others is that all schools will become effective schools in which educators have the motivation, capacity and support to serve their pupils well.

In this scenario, the clear and firm central focus serves to direct attention, garner resources, and galvanize action both centrally and locally. At some point, however, centralized efforts fade and lose momentum, and at this point, the impetus for improvement becomes internalized as an important dimension of the work at the institutional level. However, reforms at the institutional level may be superseded by other initiatives that seem more 'today' or may be set aside as no longer in need of attention. A key dilemma here is the tension between central prescription and school autonomy or even reality. Central direction works well in the early phases, when clarity and focus are what is needed. In later phases of the reform's life cycle, however, the situation becomes messier.

Besides, the central government is well suited to setting national priorities, targets, providing resources and setting up a structure of support. The central government however is not well equipped to address a myriad of complex institutional issues. A study of the literature and of several specific cases of large-scale reform suggests how infrastructure might be shaped and directed to manage the transition of reform from a predominantly central responsibility to one that is increasingly in the hands of Local Education Authorities (LEAs)/districts and schools. This reform sustainability requires building ideological commitment and ownership among teachers[11]. The challenge here is to strike a balance between commitment and innovation.

The infrastructure should be increasing the ownership, commitment and capacity of schools to sustain the principles that underlie the reforms and to provide support for ongoing school improvement efforts. This will involve making clear what the key principles are that all schools are expected to meet or follow but, equally critical is to emphasize where schools can, on their own or with other schools, work out what makes most sense for their pupils. Schools need to see and understand the threads and themes that tie the reforms together, so that they can see how to build on what they have already accomplished, rather than having to discard it as new policies come into effect.

It is not clear where in the trajectory of reform; the shift from central to local control ought to occur. Central reform leaders often contend that letting go would be completely inappropriate. They are right in many circumstances. Without a clear policy framework including incentives, schools tend to slide away from key principles of any reforms. As well, the gap between high and low-performing schools tends to increase, as those with strong institutional capacity continue to improve and those with weak institutional capacity continue to decline or at best, drift along.

At the same time, reforms are in danger of losing momentum without institutional energy and commitment and could fade away with a change in leadership or in policy priorities. The work [12] in the external evaluation of National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) suggests that to date, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have not yet captured the hearts and minds of teachers. Considering survey and interview evidence, they estimate that up to one-third of teachers remain skeptical about the balance of costs and benefits associated with the strategies. In this case, while there are many schools ready to move forward with teaching reforms, there are also many schools where the absence of central directives would result in a return to earlier practices.

Large-scale reform and school improvement are fundamentally about change. This means that people who work in contemporary schools will always have to be learners themselves. Improving the experience and the outcomes of schooling for all children is like a rotating puzzle; over and over again, educators are working with available information and approaches to fashion the best resolution. Professional knowledge of content, learning theory, pedagogy, emotions, and so on, provide the base for these ongoing decisions about teaching, resources and relationships. This kind of professional learning is important not only for people new to the profession, but also for veteran teachers, as well as leaders in schools and LEAs.

Certainly, newly qualified teachers require a solid induction into the principles and practices that make up the reforms; they will also need ongoing support as they gain experience and make connections across the many aspects of school life. Experienced teachers confront new ideas, new classroom practices and new ways of thinking about the children that they teach. Changing beliefs, practices and habits has proven to be extremely difficult work, as adults are forced to reconsider positions that they have taken to be 'true' for most of their lives.

Leaders not only experience the same dissonance and discomfort as veteran teachers, but also face new learning in areas that have not been part of their training and experience, such as using data, handling public relations and establishing budgets. Creating the conditions for educators to engage in continuous learning is not easy therefore professional learning requires clear goals, practical images of the learning, support from peers, opportunities to process and practice regular feedback and self-evaluation [13]. Although teachers may ultimately be responsible for their own learning, they will need substantial encouragement and support if professional learning is to be comprehensive and focused.

It is therefore important to recognize that there are no right answers and no perfect solutions to sustaining educational reform into the mature stage of a reform life cycle. The literature confirms the importance of central policy, school capacity and the intervening infrastructure. With no firm right answers, however, policy makers and implementers are faced with a series of dilemmas and decisions as they travel the path of reform. Governments must maintain and balance 'high pressure and high support', while encouraging the local adaptations and

innovations that are critical for building a sense of ownership and extending the reform in the service of learning for pupils.

Building professional communities of practice as highlighted in the study[2] could be taken as another institutional dynamic of educational reform that if ignored can undermine the reform effort. Professional communities of practice, within and across schools, build local ownership, embed reform ideas and broaden the base of leadership. Discussions and planning have the potential to embed the reform vision into the routine practices of the school where teachers and head teachers work together on reform issues. Therefore learning communities can deal with and creatively take charge of change because participants have a collective understanding of where they are going and what is important. They are open to new ideas and can create new ways of working to deal with complex situations.

School networks are one strategy that can be used both by those inside and outside of schools to enhance the positive influences on internal capacity. Traditional professional development is not sufficient to change educational practice in sustainable ways; teachers need professional networks that allow them to interact with each other around problems of practice[14]. Recent comprehensive school reform studies have found that networks and collaboration for teachers within–and especially across–schools are important for successful change [15-17].

Such networks appear to be a way of engaging school-based educators in better directing their own learning, allowing them to side-step the limitations of institutional hierarchies and geographic locations, and encouraging them to work with different kinds of people [18]. Networks of practice are not just groups of teachers getting together for social contact. Citing the results of one of the most extensive studies of networks, identified the following five 'key' ingredients of effective networks[18]: a strong sense of commitment; a sense of shared purpose; a mixture of information sharing and psychological support; voluntary participation and equal treatment; and, an effective facilitator.

These criteria are the necessary beginnings of the work of networks. Once such initiatives are in place, the agenda and focus of the meetings will determine how far the group will go in embedding new ideas into their understanding of effective schools. Building functional networks requires expertise and leadership within the infrastructure to provide the critical friendship and facilitation for success. Again, the balance of ownership is an ongoing challenge. True professional networks are not under the direction of the central authority. If they are, such networks will simply become central control, under a new guise.

The systematic and intentional use of classroom assessments as feedback mechanisms, for example, is one of the hallmarks of data-driven classroom improvement[19, 20]. The successful use of data often has less to do with whether measurement systems were developed and more to do with whether the organizations were able to create a culture that valued self-evaluation. This latter organizational capacity is what has been referred to as an 'evaluation habit of mind', a set of beliefs and practices that includes data-driven goal-related inquiry, systematic reflection and planning, and the presence of an evaluation minded culture within each of the schools[6].

2. Methodology

A cross-sectional survey research design was used because it allowed for the collection of data from different groups of respondents and gave greater scope of obtaining large samples, which allowed better generalizations. It was an appropriate method of data collection, not only because surveys are among the most commonly used tools to collect data [21], but also because they permit for a systematic investigation of the phenomenon through the collection of a large amount of data from a diversity of respondents in a relatively short period of time [22-25]. Furthermore, a survey was deemed profitable in this study because it accommodates a variety of methods with a data gathering strategy that can facilitate a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the study problem[23, 25].When applying this design, data is collected using mainly interviews and questionnaires and is often analyzed using descriptive analysis[26]. However, in this particular study, a two-pronged approach of quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted.

3. Sampling

The purposive sampling technique used in the selection of the respondents included; Members of Parliament (MPs), Education officers, Policy analysts, SMC & PTA members. Purposive sampling enabled the study to select respondents on the basis of their knowledge about primary education reforms and their experience in managing primary school affairs. According to[27] ,purposive sampling enables the study to acquire an in-depth understanding of the study. The four districts were purposively selected from rural and urban areas of the four regions in Uganda.

On the other hand, the simple random sampling technique was used to select Headteachers/School Directors/Deputy Headteachers and Teachers. Random sampling in this respect strengthened the external validity of the study [25]at least at the district and regional levels. Besides, the simple random method facilitates generation of quick responses especially with large samples and allows equal chance and independent chance of being selected for the sample[25, 27]. This facilitates predictions and generalization about the population, on the basis of

statistically valid results [28]Random sample was therefore the best way to obtain representative samples for the study. The sample was based on [29]the table of samples for finite populations.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected in this paper was organized, sorted and interpreted to attach meaning to it [30]. It was collected directly from different schools; the unit of analysis was at the school level, which was the preferred approach when examining school performance [24, 31]. During data collection, careful scrutiny of the captured data was done to ensure consistency, accuracy and completeness of the questionnaire and in-depth interview guides. Later, data was edited, coded and entered into the computer and subsequently analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Data was both quantitative and qualitative.

5. Results and Discussion

In principal, the study intended to originate the stakeholders' view around the degree to which institutional dynamics affect the quality of primary education. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Extent to which institutional dynamics affect the quality of primary education

Items relating to Institutional Dynamics	Agree (n/%)	Not sure (n/%)	Disagree (n/%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Curriculum is followed in the school	342 (95%)	4 (1.1%)	15(4.1%)	4.63	.581
Assessment of learners is carried out	340 (94.1%)	1 (0.3%)	20 (5.5%)	4.44	.739
Course content is followed	340 (94.1%)	2 (0.6%)	19 (5.3%)	4.17	.754
Subject composition is considered	323 (89.5%)	3(0.8%)	35 (9.7%)	4.15	.891
Teaching methods are applied/varied	280 (77.5%)	5 (1.4%)	76 (21%)	3.88	1.013
In-service Teacher training is conducted	279(77.2%)	2 (0.6%)	80(22.1%)	2.86	1.119
Teaching aids are provided	258 (71.5%)	28 (7.7%)	75(20.8%)	3.59	1.157
Gender balance is considered	302 (84%)	3 (0.8%)	56(15.5%)	2.86	1.186
Academic excellence is highly emphasized	325 (90.1%)	2 (0.6%)	34 (9.4%)	4.32	.896
The school learning environment is conducive	338 (93.6%)	1 (0.3%)	22 (6.1%)	4.17	.874

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that out of the 361 respondents, 342(95%) agreed that curriculum is followed in the school, while 15 (4.1%) disagreed and 4(1.1%) where not sure. These discoveries specify that majority of the respondents agree that if curriculum is followed in the school this would eventually lead to quality education. In respect to assessment of learners if it is carried out effectively this shall yield quality education, majority of the respondents 340(94.1%) agreed, only 1(0.3%) was not sure, and 20(5.5%) disagreed. These outcomes show that assessment of learners affects the quality of education very much and therefore the reformers have to pay close attention to its designing.

As for considering the course content 340(94.1%) agreed, only 2(0.6%) were not sure, and 19(5.3%) disagreed. The results illustrates that the magnitude and substance of the course (syllabus content) is of prominence in determing the quality of primary education. The findings in Table 1 further disclose that 323(89.5%) respondents agreed that subject composition (subjects offered for instance maths, English, science and others) matters and if considered and varied this would enhance the quality of education. Whereas 3(0.8%) where not sure and 35(9.7%) disagreed. The results on subject composition shows that the variety of subjects offered, theoretically and practically shall contribute to the quality of primary education.

Regarding the teaching methods that are applied or varied in the classes, results indicate that, 280(77.5%) respondents agreed that teaching methods and their variation do affect quality of primary education, whereas 76(21%) respondents disagreed and only 5(1.4%) respondents were not sure. These discoveries reveal that if teaching methods are applied and varied to avoid monotony, this keeps the learner and teacher interaction interesting and therefore contributes to the quality of education. On the aspect of conducting in-service training for teacher's 279(77.2%) respondents agreed that in-service training affects quality of primary education, 2 (0.6%) respondents were not sure, and yet 80(22.1%) respondents disagreed. The results show that there's an effect on the in-service training of teachers and the quality of primary education. Meaning that if teachers receive re-fresher courses the quality of education is enhanced and if not this affects the quality negatively.

In regard to teaching aid being provided 258(71.5%) respondents agreed that teaching aids affects quality of primary education, 28(7.7%) respondents were not sure and 75(20.8%) respondents disagreed. These findings demonstrate that education managers appreciate the availability of teaching aids and its effect on the quality of education. Therefore in schools were teaching aid is provided or improvised by the teachers the quality of primary education is enhanced. On the feature of considering Gender mainstreaming in schools 302(84%) respondents agreed, 3(0.8%) were not sure, plus 56(15.5%) who disagreed. The outcome shows that gender issues, gaps, or

inequalities are barriers to quality education, therefore mainstreaming gender and balancing of gender issues in schools greatly contributes to quality of primary education.

The high emphasis on academic excellence was endorsed by 325(90.1%) respondents who agreed, 2(0.6%) where not sure, and 34(9.4%) disagreed. The result displays that if high emphasis in a school is put on academic excellence the quality of primary education is boosted with excellent grades. As for the school's learning environment being conducive 338(93.6%) respondents agreed, 1(0.3%) respondents were not sure, 22(6.1%) and respondents disagreed. This discovery reveals that a conducive learning environment affects the attitude of the learners which ultimately affects the quality of the education.

Overall, results in Table 1 show that among all the items that were used to assess respondents' views on institutional dynamics and their effect on the quality of primary education, approved curriculum being followed in school, (M=4.64; SD =.580) and carrying out effective assessment of learners' (M=4.44 and SD = .739) registered the highest number of respondents indicating agreement. This therefore means that the curriculum and assessment of learners' have a paramount influence on education reforms and consequently, on the quality of primary education.

During interviews, the study sought to establish how the curriculum is followed and implemented in school, and how this effects the quality of Education. One respondent noted that the curriculum did not cater for a multilingual class, which implied that some learners, especially in the lower classes, might miss out on the learning experience. Yet another respondent stated that some teachers thought that teaching in mother languages affected performance in the upper sections and had retarded children's performance.

To make emphasis on the teaching of mother tongue, one other officer pointed out that;

''....the children fail PLE because they are taught in local languages, yet PLE is set in English. In many cases, due to limited knowledge of English, they fail to interpret questions.'' This clearly shows how ignoring the influence of institutional dynamics can undermine an otherwise well-intentioned curriculum reform.

And yet another added;

"The teacher's on the other-hand can make or injure the school curriculum; consequently their competence and quality such as qualification, experience, attitude and personality for enhanced services provision needs to be evaluated by the school authority consistently, so that pupils academic performance won't be endangered.

In regard to, whether assessment of learners is carried out, various responses were generated where one respondent observed, that majority of the teachers complained about the large number of learners in the class-rooms, which stretched the teachers' ability to manage the classes effectively.

"One respondent reported that learners did not like undertaking exams due to the government's policy of automatic promotion. According to this respondent, an effective assessment system of learners' achievements by teachers should include giving exercises and homework to pupils. Yet this was not possible for large classes. As a result, teachers did not cater for individual differences and in most cases not all learners' work got marked by teachers.

The study further established that given the circumstances, the main assessment strategies were tests, which rendered the idea of continuous assessment almost impossible. Besides, the idea of continuous assessment was not fully grasped by the teachers. Even in cases where some teachers made attempts at continuous assessment, keeping assessment records was poor.

And another respondent added;

"The important role of teachers in the assessment process is unquestionable. Teachers have been said to have a lot of effect on their assessment practices. Teachers should have and apply explicit assessment skills and capabilities that can be reflected in their pupil's performance in the subject they teach, in which the pupils will be able to make connection between what is taught in school and its assessment in real life problem solving.

Explaining further whether course content is followed and its effect on the quality of education, many respondents had serious misgivings about introducing English as a media of instruction in Primary Four. The reasoning was that many learners could not cope even up to the time they reached P7 (Primary Seven). This issue was cited as the major reason why many pupils in Government-aided schools were failing Primary Leaving Exams, since the exams were set in English. The study also observed that some teachers had poor writing skills and many relied on teacher-centered methods of instruction. Further observation, especially of upper classes, depicted low levels of reading and writing in the English language. Learners had difficulty to comprehend written texts or to express themselves in writing. One respondent made the following comment:

> *''It is clear that the writing and reading skills of most pupils are poor because pupils are not adequately taught and even UNEB examiners comment about it. This is unfortunate because it seriously undermines all the curriculum reforms which means the quality of primary education will not improve.''*

Further probing revealed that even PTA members agreed that the above elements of institutional dynamics had an effect on the quality of primary education. They, however, expressed disappointment about the lack of the reforms to promote the quality of education in the country. Many were of the view that the reforms had not improved pupil performance and it had not imparted the skills that the children needed to be productive members in the society.

Parents too looked at reforms such as the new curriculum as one that would instead retard their children's learning capacity. Some people had even adulterated the popular slogan "*Bonna Basome*" (Education for All) into *"Bonna Bakone" (with* ugly connotations of cooking food that does not get ready), to transmit the message that the education reforms have not yielded the desired results.

When asked about the teaching methods commonly used with the aim of enhancing quality in primary schools in the region one of the respondents said,

"That any good teacher knows that all learners don't learn in the same way. Therefore it's common for a class of learners to be at a variety of levels in any particular subject. Teachers need to use different teaching methods in order to reach all pupils effectively". (October 2012)

Another responded added;

"The first step to selecting a teaching method is to assess the learners. This assessment can be formal and informal. Formal assessments include regular tests, from the curriculum used or teacher generated tests. These can give a teacher an idea of the previous instruction that the schoolchildren have received as well as their academic level". (October 2012)

Yet another emphasized;

"Once you have evaluated the learners, then the teacher needs to plan for different teaching approaches. The young ones need more engaging, hands on strategy, in order to learn effectively. Cooperative learning is yet another teaching method that is considered very effective when done correctly. With cooperative learning pupils are organized in small clusters by ability". (November 2012)

Commenting about in-service training of teachers, an officer from the Central region was of the view that teacher development programmes like training and refresher courses facilitate quick adoption of the reforms since teachers are the implementers of education reforms.

"He said, ''A teacher is an agent of change and to some extent influences some school programmes through fellow teachers, pupils, parents and non-teaching staff.'' (November 2012)

It was, however, established that the in-service training of teachers was not exhaustive and limited efforts had been made to give teachers more refresher courses or conduct regular Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for teachers to ensure that the curriculum was understood by everyone.

Yet another one said,

"That there was minimal effort by government to take care of teacher training; a situation that created huge gaps in terms of teachers' awareness about the reforms, as well as their capacity to implement the reforms, right from the teacher training institutions". (October 2012)

To emphasize on the aspect of in service training, another respondent answered;

''It is disturbing that in this time of changes, government does not take the trouble to train all the serving teachers. Even with the training that has been done, few teachers were trained, which makes the delivery of the new curriculum to pupils a problem. Some teachers have inadequate knowledge of the new curriculum, yet they are expected to deliver it to the learners'' (October 2012)

In probing further,

Another respondent noted that while in-service teacher training was key to quality education, the idea of training teachers during the school term meant that some learners would have to miss lessons. (October 2012)

When the respondents were asked about availability of teaching aids and its effect on quality of education and why teachers did not improvise by creating some teaching aids using available material, one respondent from the Northern region said;

> *''We are not motivated enough to consider improvising, and besides, we do not even have the resources required to do so. Textbooks and other reference books are also not available, which makes our work really complicated.'' (November 2012)*

Respondents reported that schools received little funds, which made it difficult to supply enough learning materials. Many of them observed that while pupils were eager to learn, the learning aids were not enough, yet making instructional materials by teachers would take a lot of teachers' time, and take a toll on the actual teaching time given to the learners.

Explaining how considering gender balance in the school affected the quality of education, one respondent from the Eastern region observed;

"That increasing attention has been given to the importance of achieving gender equality in education. To date, however, most efforts have focused on addressing gender parity-an equal number or proportion of girls and boys accessing educational opportunities. (November 2012)

Yet another one said;

"One of the key impediments to achieving gender equality in education is that it cannot be addressed in a vacuum, rather, educational institutions are products of inequalities that exist in larger societies". (October 2012)

This was supported by another who responded that;

"Educational establishments are formed by the communal forces that propagate gender-based perception; yet, they can also be important apparatuses to effect great transformation throughout a community or social context. Behaviors and beliefs formed in schools and educational organizations can have a permanent effect on gender relations in society".

In one of the interviews when asked how emphasizing academic excellence affect quality of education a respondent from the central region, observed that;

"Excellence in early childhood education and the demand for early childhood care and education programs continues to increase not only in response to the growing demand for out of home childcare but also in recognition of the critical importance of educational experiences during the early years". (October 2012)

Yet another one added,

"We must develop an integrated system of early childhood care and education that includes comprehensive approaches that directly involve families and communities in program, implementation and evaluation". This respondent noted that high quality early experience's make a difference in children's lifelong academic and social success. (November 2012)

In regard to, whether a conducive school learning environment has an effect on the quality of education, one respondent observed: Many schools did not have enough seats for the learners, with many pupils sitting on the floor, pieces of woods, bricks and pieces of cloth. One respondent noted that pupils wrote poorly because they did not have enough seats. All stakeholders were concerned about lack of mid-day meals at schools where teachers and learners went without lunch. Such an un-conducive school environment, according to many respondents, promoted absenteeism, lack of concentration, and low motivation to study. This issue was compounded by poor home background of learners, poor facilities at home such as shelter, utilities, medical care, poor feeding, persistent sickness, poor mental development, and low income which made it difficult to provide the necessary learning resources. As a result, there was low achievement in class, which affected the quality of primary education. One policy maker from the western region made the following observation:

> *''...while children are required to attend school every day, there is no serious learning at most of the UPE schools...how do you expect young children to learn on empty stomach?...children sit on the dusty floor, have no books and teachers are not any better...if government really means to give children education, it should start by making the school environment attractive to the children like the situation is in private schools...'' (October 2012)*

It was also established that the school environment lacked programmes that could meet the needs of children living with HIV/AIDS, yet such children were extremely delicate and needed to be given extra care at school given that their immunity was deficient. The schools had no programmes to assist orphans or even facilities for special needs pupils. Such issues depicted gaps in the design of the education reforms which affected the quality of primary education.

Commenting about children living with HIV/AIDS, one respondent in the Eastern region had this to say: ''yes we have HIV positive pupils but what can we do? Sometimes NGOs help some sick children but for us, we just send them home.'' (October 2012)

To establish the strength and direction of the relationship between institutional dynamics and quality of primary education, a Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The relationship between institutional dynamics and quality of primary education

		Institutional dynamics	Quality primary education
Institutional dynamics	Pearson Correlation	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	361	361
Quality primary education	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	361	361
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Primary data

Results in the Table 2 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between institutional dynamics and quality primary education as given by the coefficient of correlation **.453**** Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis that there's a significant effect of institutional dynamics of education reform on the quality of primary education was affirmed (upheld). This means that a positive relationship exists between assessment methods, teaching methods, teaching aids, academic excellence and the quality of primary education. A high correlation, however, does not imply causation. A simple regression analysis was therefore conducted to establish the degree to which institutional dynamics predict (explain) quality of primary education below in Table 3 are the results.

Table 3: Regression model results, showing the effect of institutional dynamics on the quality of primary education

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.453[a]	.205	.203	.385	.205	21.809	1	359	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), institutional dynamics									

Source: Primary data

The results in the above table indicate that institutional dynamics explain 20.5% variation in the quality of primary education and the rest of the variation could be attributed to other factors. This means that the institutional dynamics account for 20.5% of the variations in the quality of primary education. Therefore, if institutional dynamics were considered, the quality of primary education would improve by 20.5%, and if they were ignored, quality of education would decline by the same percentage. It was therefore established that institutional dynamics of education reforms affect the quality of Primary Education. However, analysis of quantitative and qualitative data shows that failure to adequately address the institutional dynamics of education reforms had rendered the reforms ineffective in improving the quality of primary education.

Effect of institutional dynamics on the quality of primary education

In addition, the study employed the regression analysis to establish the effect of institutional dynamics on the quality of primary education. This was done in a way that shows the views of the different respondents in terms of how they considered the effect of institutional dynamics on the quality of primary education, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Regression analysis showing the effect of Institutional dynamics and quality of primary education

In assessing the effect of institutional dynamics, various items were considered. These included; Education curriculum, Learners' assessment, Course content, Subject composition, Teaching methods, teacher training programmes, Teaching aids, Gender balance, Academic excellence, Academic excellence, and a conducive academic learning environment as shown in Table 4 below.

Coefficients

Institutional Dynamics (Elements)	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	.730	.104		7.051	.000
Education curriculum followed	.176	.030	.276	5.923	.000
Learners' assessment is carried out	.111	.035	.157	3.158	.002
Course content is covered	.042	.035	.058	1.211	.227
Subject composition is considered	.082	.029	.137	2.839	.005
Teaching methods followed	.044	.020	.100	2.178	.030
There are teacher training programmes in the school	.105	.024	.207	4.360	.000
Teaching aids are provided to teachers in the school	.021	.015	.068	1.455	.147
Gender balance is considered in the school	.007	.010	.031	.670	.503
Academic excellence is highly emphasized	.041	.029	.067	1.419	.157
The school provides a conducive academic learning environment	.036	.032	.052	1.121	.263

Dependent Variable: Quality

Source: Primary data

Table 4 shows that the curriculum affects the quality of primary education (Beta = 0.276, Sig. = 0.000); assessment featured prominently (Beta= 0.157, Sig. = 0.002); subject composition at Beta of 0.137 and a corresponding significance value of 0.005; teaching methods followed at (B=0.100, Sig. =0.030); and, teacher training programmes at (B=0.207; Sig =0.000).

Table 5: Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.838	1	6.838	21.809	.000[a]
	Residual	112.563	359	.314		
	Total	119.402	360			
a. Predictors: (Constant), institutional dynamics						
b. Dependent Variable: quality primary education						

Source: Primary data

The results in Table 5, above shows the F statistics, as well as degrees of freedom (df), sum of squares, mean square, and a p value, which indicates the probability that the null hypothesis is correct. From the table, F = 21.809, the degree of freedom (df) = 1, p =0.000 <.05. Since the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that the results are statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that institutional dynamics significantly affect the quality of primary education is accepted. Further analysis was done using the regression model summary, as shown below:

Table 6: Table of Coefficients

Coefficients[a]								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.002	.096		10.415	.000	.981	1.276
	institutional dynamics	.489	.051	.453	9.629	.000	.138	.338

a. Dependent Variable: quality primary education

Source: Primary data

The regression coefficient in table 6 shows a standardized coefficient Beta of 0.453, which further confirms the earlier correlation results. The significance value 0.000, shows that the results are statistically significant, implying that institutional dynamics do significantly affect the quality of primary education. Thus, quantitative and qualitative results are consistent in confirming that institutional dynamics on education reforms significantly affect quality of primary education.

6. Conclusion

Findings on education curriculum showed that it significantly affected the education reforms and quality of primary education. The education curriculum is a key determinant of what is actually taught in the class and it sets the trend for effective teaching and learning. When teachers, who are the curriculum implementers, adhere to what is spelled in a given curriculum, they deliver to the learners the necessary knowledge and skills for effective learning, which is the essence of what quality education implies.

Findings also showed that the kind of assessment carried out on the learners can affect education reforms and quality of primary education. Conducting assessments is a key measure of progress attained and it further acts as a measure of achievements for both the learner and the teacher. In addition, it helps to identify areas of weakness and coming up with solutions to them, therefore, contributing to the education reforms and enhancing quality education.

Findings on whether subject composition is considered indicated a significant effect on education reforms and quality of primary education. It should be noted that in most cases, having the curriculum alone, without emphasis on its implementation in terms of subject composition may not necessarily translate into quality education. Effective and logical arrangement of themes in a given subject helps the learners to stay focused and retain more out of their learning experience, which in one way or the other contributes to the education reforms and therefore, quality of primary education. Besides, subject composition also plays a crucial role in terms of delivery and logical flow of the lesson by the teacher.

Finally, availability of teacher training programmes in the school has a significant effect on education reforms and quality of primary education. When teachers are regularly retooled, it helps to keep them afloat with the current trends in education. In addition, it also boosts the morale and confidence of the teachers, who eventually translate their knowledge in terms of effective teaching. Besides, refresher courses help to generate immediate feedback from the teachers, which can be used to inform policy. This can help to improve the reforms and therefore enhance the quality of primary education.

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