

The Role of Internal School Quality Assurance Officers in Monitoring Teachers' Instructional Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Ubungo Municipal Council, Tanzania

Banda, Alana N.¹; Dr. Kassim S. Kimweri²; Dr. Makiya Rosemary³

¹Candidate, the Open University of Tanzania

²Department of Curriculum and Instructions, the Open University of Tanzania

³Department of Educational Policy, Planning and Administration, the Open University of Tanzania

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Abstract: This study assessed the role of Internal School Quality Assurance Officers (ISQAOs) in monitoring teachers' instructional practices in public secondary schools in Ubungo Municipal Council, Tanzania. Guided by the pragmatist research philosophy, a convergent mixed-methods design was employed, collecting data through questionnaires, interviews, and documentary review from a targeted sample of 356 respondents, with 306 successfully involved, selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The study revealed that the role of ISQAOs officers included monitoring teachers' instructional practices by maintaining established standards, evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, and providing feedback. The study concludes that ISQAOs significantly enhance instructional practices through quality monitoring, adherence to standards, and feedback mechanisms, although their accountability function remains weak. It recommends strengthening accountability systems, enhancing ISQAOs' involvement in setting instructional standards, and supporting continuous professional development for teachers. Further studies should employ a descriptive cross-sectional design, include more schools, and be conducted in other municipal councils to enhance generalizability.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Instructional Practices, Academic Standards, Academic Performance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance systems in public secondary schools have experienced significant modifications over time as a result of the shifting educational landscape and the growing emphasis on accountability and quality (Maiyo et al., 2017). The growth of higher education and the necessity for quality assurance methods that are responsive to multiple stakeholder interests have significantly impacted the evolution of quality assurance systems (Kayyali, 2023). This evolution also took a different course in accordance with each country's perspective on education. In the United States of America (USA), for instance, superintendents initially inspected schools, a job that was later delegated to school principals (Lingard et al., 2017). Based on this, grading students' achievement according to the personal 'standards' of individual academic teachers or assessors is regarded as a key component of academic freedom in the

USA (Sadler, 2017). At the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 in Thailand, quality assurance and control in education became a developing policy perspective not only in developed countries but also in developing nations (Katete, 2023). In particular, African countries adopted quality assurance and control by integrating these practices into their developing policy frameworks.

Specifically, nations like Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa adopted the concept of ISQA long before they attained independence (Peter & Mkulu, 2022). For instance, in Kenya, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) was formed to cater to ISQA, thereby improving students' performance (Ismail, 2010). In Ghana, internal school quality assurance mechanisms were aligned with the National Teaching Standards by 1998 (Banson, 2022). Likewise, schools in Ghana utilize student performance data to evaluate teaching effectiveness,

fostering a data-driven approach to identify areas for improvement (Elvis, 2021). In Nigeria, internal quality assurance was very active, and it helped workers become more committed to their jobs compared to traditional supervision and daily monitoring (Iyala et al., 2022). It is obvious that a well-planned school quality assurance system enhances teachers' commitment, which ultimately improves students' academic performance.

In Tanzania, the term "ordinary inspection" was replaced by "quality assurance" in 2016 by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). This led to the introduction of internal quality assurance in schools to complement the role of external quality assurance, focusing on monitoring, assessing, and evaluating curriculum implementation (MoEST, 2017). The formulation of the Education and Training Policy of 2014 further supported these reforms (Gillard, 2019). Quality assurance guidelines put more consideration on strengthening the School Quality Assurance System (SQAS), with the internal unit providing continuous feedback to improve the monitoring of teachers' instructional practices (MoEST, 2017). The new school quality assurance framework focused on six guidelines, where five key priority areas emphasized strengthening the SQAS (URT, 2017). Critical elements in this strengthening process included improving internal school quality assurance evaluation, enhancing information and communication systems, proper staffing, and creating an enabling environment (Medard & Mwila, 2022).

Although these ISQA guidelines are indispensable elements in maintaining educational quality and effectiveness, students' achievement has continued to deteriorate (Chakupewa, 2018). For instance, in Ubungo Municipality, out of a total of 4,466 students who sat for the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) in 2016, 43.1 percent failed (URT, 2019). Previous literature has attributed such failures to socio-economic and cultural factors, lack of guidance and counseling, lack of role models, lack of basic needs in the school environment, child labour, long distances to and from school, lack of dormitories, and sexual harassment (Komba, 2015). However, despite the government introducing internal school quality assurance sections in each school since 2016 to promote quality education, teachers' instructional practices still do not match government expectations (Stanley & Mhagama, 2022).

The rate of CSEE failure remains alarmingly high, yet little empirical attention has been paid to the internal structural dynamics of school oversight. Existing studies heavily attribute poor academic performance to external student-centered and socio-economic factors, leaving a conceptual gap regarding the performance of internal quality assurers. It remains unclear how ISQA functions to improve the monitoring of teachers' instructional practices and ultimately enhance students' performance amid constraints like limited school autonomy over budget-related decisions, resource deficits, and inadequate infrastructure. Therefore, this study assessed the role of internal school quality assurance officers in monitoring teachers' instructional

practices in public secondary schools in Ubungo Municipal Council.

II. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted in Iraq by Saeed and Saeed (2018) aimed at identifying the role of quality assurance in improving academic performance at Ishik University. The study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The findings demonstrated that the application of the quality assurance process resulted in fundamental improvements in teaching, learning, and research processes at the university.

Similarly, a study conducted in Ghana by Mensah (2022) investigated internal quality assurance practices in higher education in a Ghanaian university. The study employed a descriptive survey design using questionnaires for data collection. The findings revealed that quality assurance systems and practices were operational at the university and that they improved the quality of internal processes influencing teaching and student learning.

Whereas the studies by Saeed and Saeed (2018) and Mensah (2022) were conducted in universities, the present study was conducted in public secondary schools. However, the use of questionnaires as the sole data collection tool in Mensah (2022) limited the study in several ways, including restricted depth of responses, potential response bias, difficulties in interpretation, and low response rates. Despite these limitations, the studies are relevant to the present study as they establish a relationship between internal quality assurance systems and the improvement of teaching and learning processes.

A study conducted in Kenya by Gogo (2009) examined how quality assurance can be established in secondary schools through increased school evaluation. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and participatory observation. The findings showed that increased school evaluation helps to establish quality assurance, maintain standards, ensure quality control, and enhance a conducive teaching and learning environment. The study is relevant to the present study in that it highlights school evaluation as a key quality assurance strategy in secondary schools.

A study conducted in Tanzania by Peter and Mkulu (2022) evaluated the impact of school quality assurance on the delivery of high-quality instruction in public secondary schools in Kwimba District. The study used a convergent parallel mixed methods design, with a sample of 93 drawn from a population of 720. Qualitative data were collected through interviews. The findings revealed that school quality assurance had limited influence on the provision of quality education due to various implementation challenges. However, the study provides insight into the role of school quality assurance in improving instructional quality.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by pragmatism philosophy. Based on pragmatist philosophy, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in which the data collection methods included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary review. This study adopted a convergent design. The target population of this study included 1 Municipal School Quality Assurance officer, 27 headmasters/mistresses, 993 secondary school teachers, and 27 internal quality assurance officers (URT, 2022). The

study engaged a sample size of 356 respondents who were selected by using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Quantitative data were analysed by classifying, tallying, counting, and computing into mean, frequency distribution and percentages, and presented in the form of graphs and tables. Likewise, the qualitative data were analyzed by using thematic analysis and presented with the help of quotations and phrases. The 5-point Likert scale was used as a measurement scale, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 The Role of ISQA Officers in Monitoring Teachers' Instructional Practices (n=285)

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Maintaining established standards is one of the significant roles of internal school quality assurance officer in monitoring teachers' instructional practices	29	10	38	13.3	19	6.7	66	23.3	133	46.7	3.8
Internal school quality assurance officer evaluates the effectiveness of teaching and provide feedback for improvement in monitoring teachers' instructional practices	48	16.8	48	16.8	14	4.9	89	31.3	86	30.2	3.4
Internal school quality assurance officer promotes transparency and accountability in schools as a way of monitoring teachers' instructional practices	89	31.3	95	33.3	19	6.7	57	20	25	8.7	2.3

Source: Field Data, 2025

➤ *Maintaining Established Standards*

When the respondents were asked if maintaining established standards was one of the significant roles of internal school quality assurance officers in monitoring teachers' instructional practices, 70% of the total respondents agreed, while 23.3% disagreed (Table 1). The mean score was 3.8 out of the possible 5, which demonstrated that the opinions of respondents were that ISQA had the role of maintaining established standards in monitoring teachers' instructional practices. This implies that ISQA had a significant role in ensuring that the monitoring of teachers' instructional practices was involved in maintaining established standards.

While answering the question which sought to establish how the ISQA maintained established standards when monitoring teachers' instructional practices, the majority of respondents (62.1%) indicated 'reviewing teaching and learning material,' and very few respondents (7%) indicated 'conducting regular classroom observation' (Figure 1). The findings, therefore, implied that 'reviewing teaching and learning material' was a significant way that the ISQA employed to monitor teachers' instructional practices and ultimately enhanced students' academic performance.

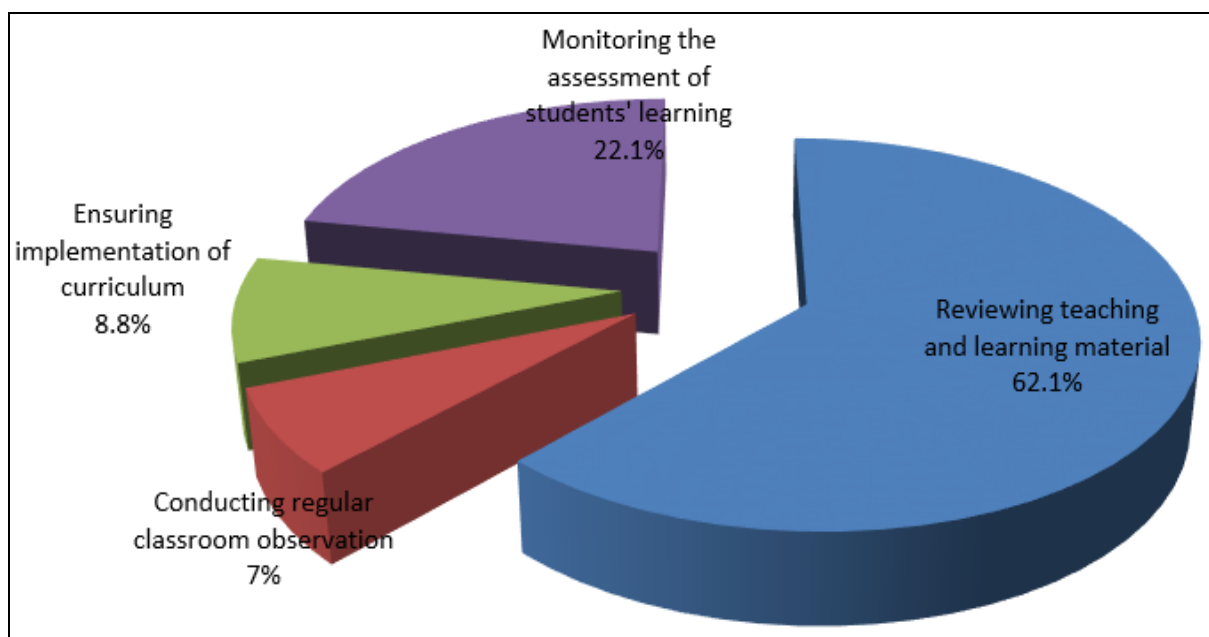


Fig 1 How ISQA Monitor Teachers' Instructional Practices
Source: Field Data, 2025

Figure 1 shows that ISQA officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by highly reviewing teaching and learning materials. The ISQA officers also moderately monitored teachers' instructional practices through monitoring the assessment of students' learning; moderately through ensuring the implementation of the curriculum; and very rarely through conducting regular classroom observation. This, therefore, implies that ISQA officers employed several techniques of monitoring teachers' instructional practices, but reviewing teaching and learning materials was the most preferred technique.

During the interview on whether maintaining established standards was one of roles of ISQA officers and how ISQA monitored teachers' instructional practices, one of the internal school quality assurance officers labelled ISQA 'A' said: ...maintaining established standards is one of our main roles. With the limited time we have to undertake our duties, we ensure that teaching and learning materials are regularly checked... Some of the teaching and learning materials we are fond of checking are lesson plans, scheme of work, and log books. These are the key items for ascertaining whether the curriculum is adhered to or not... (Interview with the ISQA 'A', on 9th of June, 2025).

The head of public secondary school labelled H/M 'A' said: ...the internal school quality assurance officers have the duty to ensure that the established standards are maintained... Although there are several techniques that they can employ to ensure that their duty is fulfilled, they only end up using only but a few... In fact, the most common techniques they use are reviewing teaching and learning materials and checking on lesson plans and logbooks... (Interview with the H/M 'A', on 9th of June, 2025).

However, the Municipal school quality assurance officer, labelled MSQA said: ...through the workshops and seminars, we hold with the internal school quality assurers, we highly emphasize maintaining established standards that are geared towards enhancing good teaching and learning practices... Some of the methods we emphasize on are reviewing teaching and learning materials, monitoring of the assessment of students' learning, ensuring the implementation of curriculum, and conducting regular classroom observation... (Interview with the MSQA, on 4th of June, 2025).

The interviewees were therefore of the opinion that, indeed, internal school quality assurance officers had the role of maintaining established standards, and they had even the techniques of undertaking such tasks, but the most commonly employed techniques were reviewing teaching and learning materials and ensuring the implementation of the curriculum. This implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by maintaining established standards through reviewing teaching and learning materials and ensuring the implementation of the curriculum.

The respondents' views were therefore consistent with the findings of the study by Nwosu (2013), which showed that ISQA assured standards in the learning institutions. Although the study was conducted in in the Nigeria universities, the results still emerged to be similar to the study that was currently conducted in Tanzania. The difference in period was not a significant factor that could bring the differences in the results as well. However, the relationship between the study and the present study was in their aim of ascertaining the relevance of quality assurance in the educational system. The respondents' views were also consistent with the results of the study by Agapiti and Kitula (2022), which found that SQA supervisory roles directly

influenced teachers' efficacy. Likewise, the study by Gogo (2009) showed that increased school evaluation helps to establish quality assurance to maintain established standards and ensure quality control, monitor students' performance, and assist teachers to select relevant textbooks, assess the school plant and ensure the adequacy of physical facilities and equipment for a conducive teaching-learning environment, among others. This, therefore, implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by maintaining established standards through reviewing teaching and learning materials and ensuring the implementation of the curriculum.

➤ *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Teaching and the Provision of Feedback*

When the respondents were asked if evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback was one of the significant roles of internal school quality assurance officers in monitoring teachers' instructional practices, 61.5% of the total respondents agreed, while 33.6% disagreed (Table 6.1). The mean score of 3.4 out of the possible 5 further demonstrated that the views of

respondents were that ISQA had the role of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision feedback in monitoring teachers' instructional practices. This implies that ISQA had significant role of ensuring that the monitoring of teachers' instructional practices involved evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision feedback.

While answering the question which sought to establish how the ISQA evaluated the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback when monitoring teachers' instructional practices, the majority of respondent (59.3%) indicated 'giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers on their teaching practices and minority respondents (10.5%) indicated 'making recommendations to school leadership on how to improve teaching and learning' (Figure 2). The findings therefore, implied that 'reviewing teaching and learning material' was a significant way that the ISQA employed to monitor teachers' instructional practices and ultimately enhanced students' academic performance.

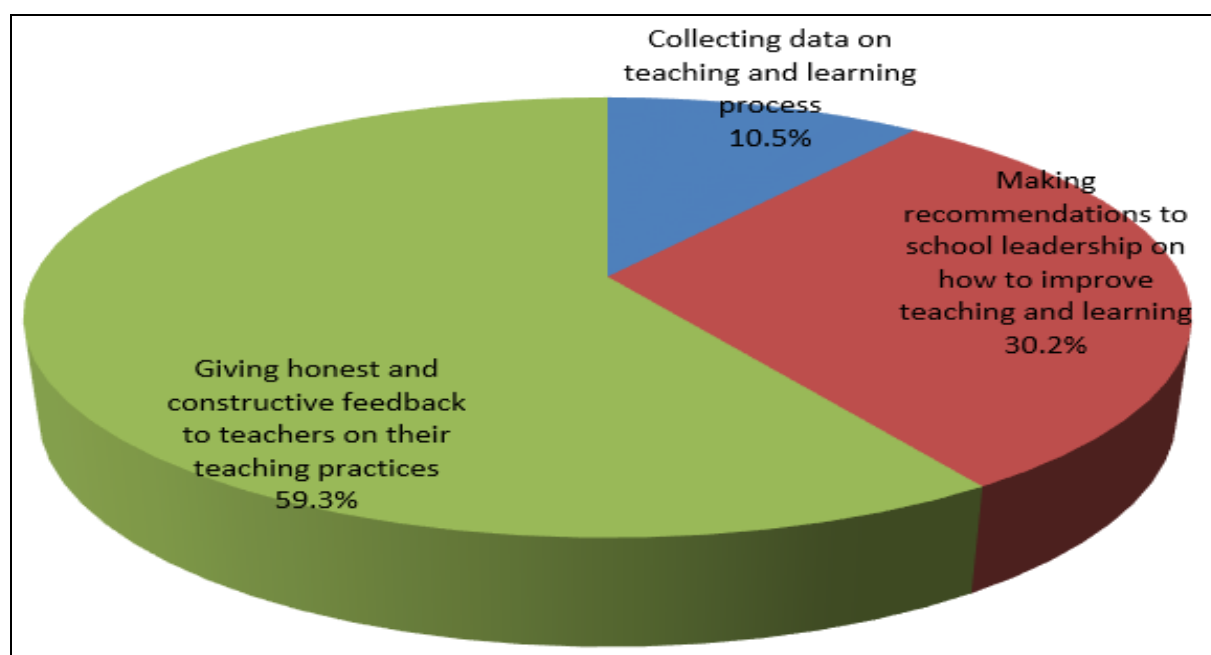


Fig 2 How ISQA Evaluate the Effectiveness of Teaching and Provision of Feedback
Source: Field Data, 2025

Figure 2 shows that ISQA officers evaluated the effectiveness of teaching and provided feedback by highly giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers on their teaching practices; by moderately making recommendations to school leadership on how to improve teaching and learning; and by lowly collecting data on the teaching and learning process. This, therefore, implies that ISQA officers had many ways in which they evaluated the effectiveness of teaching and providing feedback; however, giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers on their teaching practices was the most applied one.

During the interview on whether evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback was one

of the significant roles of ISQA officers and how ISQA OFFICERS monitored teachers' instructional practices, one of the internal school quality assurance officers labelled ISQA 'B' said: ...Among the roles of ISQA is to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback; however, because of overwhelming work, they end up not emphasizing on it. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the ISQA also have their regular duties to undertake daily, particularly involving teaching and marking assignments... So, they hardly get time to supervise their colleagues... (Interview with the ISQA 'B', on 10th of June, 2025).

The head of the public secondary school labelled H/M 'B' said: ...Internal school quality assurers have a lot of

activities to undertake that are really geared towards monitoring teachers' instructional practices, which include evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback... However, this is effectively done towards the closing of school for holidays in June and December when the teaching generally slows down to give room for revisions... (Interview with the H/M 'B', on 10th of June, 2025).

However, the Municipal school quality assurance officer labelled MSQA said: ...The internal school quality assurers have the duty of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and the provision of feedback. In their terminal reports, this is reflected by giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers... Otherwise, their comrades will not take them seriously... (Interview with the MSQA, on 4th of June 2025).

The interviewees were therefore of the opinion that the internal school quality assurance officers had the role of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and provision of feedback. This was mainly done through giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers. This implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and providing feedback through giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers.

The respondents' views were therefore inconsistent with the findings of the study by Kosia and Okendo (2018), whose results showed that there was a positive relationship between SQA officers' feedback and improvement in teaching and learning overall and in all school categories. The consistency of the present study and the study by Kosia and Okendo (2018) can be attributed to all studies being conducted in Tanzania, though in different regions. For

instance, the study by Kosia and Okendo (2018) was conducted in Arusha, while the present study was conducted in Ubungu, Dar es Salaam, but both regions followed the guidelines that were provided by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. This implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and providing feedback through giving honest and constructive feedback to teachers.

➤ Promotion of Transparency and Accountability in Schools

When the respondents were asked if promoting transparency and accountability in schools was one of the significant roles of internal school quality assurance officers in monitoring teachers' instructional practices, 64.6% of the total respondents disagreed, while 28.7% agreed (Table 1). The mean score of 2.3 out of the possible 5 further demonstrated that the views of respondents were that ISQA did not depict 'promoting quality and accountability in schools' as its role in monitoring teachers' instructional practices. This implies that ISQA did not exercise the role of 'promoting transparency and accountability in schools' as a way of monitoring teachers' instructional practices.

While answering the question which sought to establish how the ISQA promoted transparency and accountability in schools when monitoring teachers' instructional practices, the majority of respondent (69.1%) indicated 'by setting standards and minority respondents (3.9%) indicated 'by planning and delivering teachers' professional development' (Figure 3). The findings therefore, implied that 'by setting standards' was a significant way that the ISQA employed to monitor teachers' instructional practices and ultimately enhanced students' academic performance.

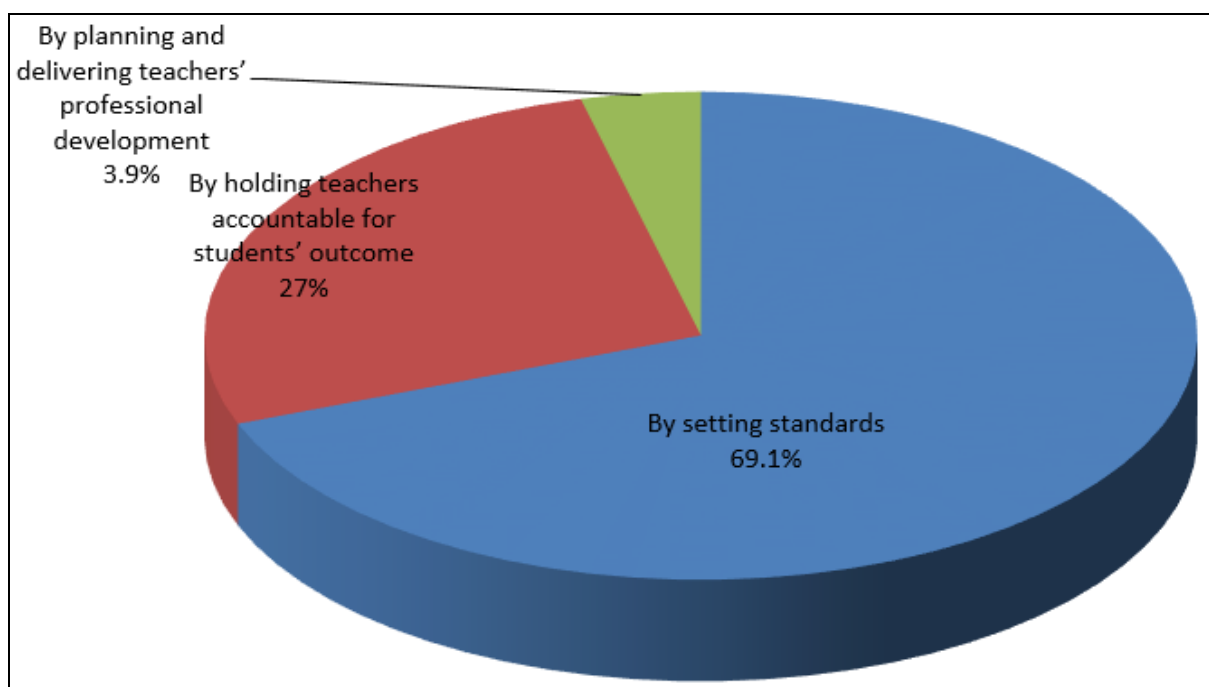


Fig 3 How ISQA promoted transparency and accountability in schools

Source: Field Data, 2025

Figure 3 shows that ISQA officers promoted transparency and accountability in schools by highly setting standards; by moderately holding teachers accountable for students' outcomes; and by lowly planning and delivering teachers' professional development. This, therefore, implies that although ISQA officers employed several means of promoting transparency and accountability in schools, setting standards was the most preferred.

During the interview on whether promoting transparency and accountability in schools was one of the significant roles of ISQA officers and how ISQA officers promoted transparency and accountability in schools, one of the internal school quality assurance officers labelled ISQA 'C' said: ...Indeed, the ISQA office is established in schools with the main aim of improving quality, something that ISQA officers strive to undertake; however, they hardly hold the teachers accountable for students' performance... It's just out of shame that the teachers whose subject is poorly performed may try to clear themselves by writing an explanation for it... (Interview with the ISQA 'C', on 11th of June, 2025).

The head of public secondary school labelled H/M 'C' said: ... Promoting quality of education in school is a significant role of ISQA, but they don't subject their colleagues to rigorous accountability for students' examination failures for fear of creating hatred... So, what they actually do is just set standards which can be followed by every teacher, including themselves... However, I recommend that they establish a platform that should not be treated with hegemony to harmonize the agenda on how best they can hold the teacher responsible for poor academic performance... (Interview with the H/M 'C', on 11th of June, 2025)

However, the Municipal school quality assurance officer labelled MSQA said: ... Well, this has been a subject of debate over a long period on how best ISQA officers can promote education quality and hold teachers accountable for poor academic performance... This is because ISQA officers are stakeholders in the decision arrived at... However, there are many avenues of promoting quality and accountability, such as setting standards and planning and delivering on professional development... (Interview with the MSQA, on 4th of June, 2025).

The interviewees were therefore of the opinion that the internal school quality assurance officers had the role of promoting transparency and accountability in schools, but they hardly exercised it. This could be best practiced by setting standards. This implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by not necessarily promoting transparency and accountability in schools.

In this respect, the respondents' views were inconsistent with the Seven Models (Cheng and Tam, 1997), which states that education quality is considered to mean continuous development and improvement. In a case where ISQA officers do not promote transparency and

accountability in schools, they hamper any form of improvement and development that could be realized according to the model. However, a study by Mwinyipembe and Orodho (2014) showed that SQA officers were faced with numerous and intertwined challenges hampering effective execution of their duties, which included inadequate logistical and financial facilitation as well as laxity by certain schools to implement the SQA supervisory reports on strategies. The ISQA officers at Ubungu Municipality would not be exceptional in encountering such challenges which would hamper them from fulfilling their role in promoting quality and accountability in schools. This implied that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by not necessarily promoting transparency and accountability in schools, which could otherwise be best done by setting standards.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that in Ubungu Municipal Council, the role of internal quality assurance officers included monitoring teachers' instructional practices by maintaining established standards, evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, and providing feedback. This was in contrast to the initial assumption that internal school quality assurance officers monitored teachers' instructional practices by promoting quality and accountability in schools. It was recommended that ISQA officers should get involved in setting standards, holding teachers accountable for students' outcomes; and planning and delivering teachers' professional development. It was further recommended that further study should employ a descriptive cross-sectional research design, increase the number of schools to twenty, and conduct the study in different municipal councils.

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