

## Evidence based impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in primary school education in Tanzania

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aimed to investigate the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in primary school education in Tanzania. The study was carried out in Mbeya region and data was collected qualitatively from 59 participants where 6 were head teachers, 44 classroom teachers, 8 school inspectors, and a District Education Officer (DEO). Data was collected through open-ended questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis. The findings indicate that school inspectors gave some advice to teachers on how to teach and help the pupils with learning difficulties. However, it was found that school inspectors did not regularly visit the classroom for lesson observations to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers for the improvement of teaching and learning. The findings also indicate that school inspectors focused on the professional documents when evaluating the teachers' work performance without classroom observation and helping teachers on how to teach the difficult topics that could be the added value of the school inspection. It was further found that school inspectors' working conditions were poor as they lacked allowances to facilitate their school visits and they lacked a means of transport. It is argued in this paper that for teachers to grow professionally and improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools, school inspectors need to carry out classroom observations and be trained based on the subject matter. Nevertheless, improvement of the school inspectors' work conditions and provision of a means of transport to the school inspectorate department is equally important*

**Keywords:** *Classroom, education, observation, primary school, school inspection, teachers*

### **INTRODUCTION**

School inspection has a long history in education systems and it can be

traced back from France under Napoleon's administration regime in particular (De Grauwe, 2007). The term 'school inspection' has sometimes been used interchangeably with 'school supervision' although in practice, the two share almost the same meaning and are used depending on the context of the activity that is deemed relevant at a particular time. However, many countries across the world are more interested to use the term '*school supervisor*' rather than '*school inspector*' (De Grauwe, 2007, p. 7).

Supervision is formative and interactive in nature while school inspection is a form of a summative evaluation and it takes place at the end of the year (Jaffer, 2010). Countries such as Lesotho, Senegal, and Tanzania use the term 'inspector' to signify the monitoring of compliance with rules, whereas the supervisor is there to advise and to stimulate teachers' creativity (De Grauwe, 2007). Malawi uses the term '*education methods advisor*'; Uganda '*teacher development advisor*' and Mali '*animateur pedagogique*' (De Grauwe, 2007, p. 710). In the United Kingdom (UK) and other English-speaking countries, both 'inspector' and 'supervisor' are used as mechanisms for fostering the teacher to perform and give an account for their teaching outcomes (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019; Ololube & Majori, 2014).

#### *What is a school inspection?*

Giving a definition of a concept such as school inspection is always problematic as different people have their ways of conceptualising the same term. For example, Richards (2001, p. 656) defines school inspection as the process of "observing work in schools, collecting evidence from a variety of other sources and reporting the judgments". To Wilcox (2000, p. 15), school inspection is a process of "assessing the quality and/or performance of the institutional services, programmes or projects". The only difference between school inspection and supervision is that the former is usually carried out by external authority, while the later is a routine practice and is conducted by someone within the school (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). In countries with long traditions in the field of school inspection such as the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany, education systems are controlled at the central level, signifying an external quality control of education (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019). In this paper, school inspection is perceived as a process of monitoring the teaching and learning concerning the compliance to

educational standards by collecting the evidence and providing recommendations for improvement purposes.

School inspection has been acknowledged to foster the quality of education and teachers' accountability for pupils' learning all over the world (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019; Hislop, 2017; Klerks, 2012). In the Tanzanian context, however, it has not been well known whether or not school inspection can play this key role. Previous works concentrated on school-based teachers' supervision, some focused on the perception of teachers, and others on the relationship that exists between school inspections and school improvement. See, for example, the studies by Dawo (2011), Haule (2012), Ehren and Visscher (2008), and Kasanda (2015). Nevertheless, the literature on school inspection is mostly based on ideas from the European countries, as these are the founders of the world school inspection systems with different styles and experiences. Even the original definitions of the term school inspection tend to be old such as that of Richards (2001) and Wilcox (2000). Thus, it was important to investigate what could be the impact of the school inspection on improving the teaching and learning in Tanzania. The key question in this study was: Can school inspection facilitate the improvement of teaching and learning in primary schools in Tanzania? The study did not investigate the inspection for the schools' financial resources and buildings, although they are also important for any meaningful teaching and learning.

### **Rationales of school inspection**

School inspection plays a significant role in education as it has been witnessed in different countries (Greatbatch & Tate, 2019; Hislop, 2017; Klerks, 2012; Enhen & Visscher, 2008). This paper provides the main six rationales, such as improving the quality of education that is provided to the citizens, fostering teachers' accountability for pupils' learning, it acts as a link between the Ministry of Education and the school, provision of professional support to teachers and helping the parents to choose a school that most fits for their children's education.

### *Improving the quality of education*

School inspection is an instrument for monitoring educational quality and it is an external control of education (Klerks, 2012; Hislop, 2017). Many authors have argued that if countries are to improve and monitor their education systems, then they have to foster external school supervision

(Greatbatch & Tate, 2019; Hislop, 2017; Klerks, 2012). According to Jaffer (2010), an external evaluation can help the Ministry of Education to judge the school's performance and how well the education system itself supports and promotes the quality standards in the institution. As observed by Akay (2016), however, many factors contribute to school effectiveness such as high expectations from pupils on the positive outcomes from education, educational leadership, positive school culture, monitoring progress, staff professional development, level of school resources, and parental involvement in the education of their children. Ehren and Visscher (2008) point more factors that are considered by parents to be significant for their children's learning, such as the quality of the school environment, the pedagogical process, climate, the learning instructional methods, the safety of the school, the school regulations, and school reputation.

#### *Fostering teachers' accountability for teaching*

School inspection, all over the world, aims at ensuring that teachers respect rules and regulations and meet educational objectives (Dawo, 2011). According to Greatbatch and Tate (2019), countries such as England, Estonia, Germany, Singapore, and Taiwan have been identified as high performing in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 2015 as they use a centralised system of school inspection. According to De Grauwe (2007), the traditional role of the school inspector has been to control the teacher's performance in the classroom by observing if teaching protocols are adhered to. In the Netherlands, for example, school inspectors have to visit the schools and observe the lessons in the classrooms. They also have a legal basis for taking actions against underperforming schools such as giving a warning letter (Enhen & Visscher, 2008; Greatbatch and Tate, 2019). In India, Tyagi's (2010) study found that school inspectors seldom visited the classroom from which they could give constructive feedback. According to Tyagi, these school inspectors tended to focus on mistakes that teachers did. This state of affairs as observed by Ball (2004) creates fear and uncertainty and thereby undermines teachers' confidence to teach. According to OFSTED (2019), however, teachers can improve their teaching in the school through self-evaluation. Hargreaves (1995) argues that the most effective evaluation of the school comes from neither internal nor external inspection and to him some combination of both probably does the job better.

Nevertheless, the use of a strong inspectorate generally tends to be part of an organised bureaucracy, a ‘*state centralist*’ system of education, which also selectively retains the chance for central control and interventions even when schools are operated by the local government (De Grauwe, 2007). As stated by Hislop (2017), in a decentralised plan school inspection, as an agent of accountability in education has to be reformed. This means that evaluation has to be carried out at the local level using people who are closer to the school. According to De Grauwe (2007), school-inspection reforms have partly taken place as a response to a new wave of democratisation in African countries, where supervisors of education have to work with teachers as friends and not enemies. This has resulted in demanding for school autonomy with a less hierarchical relationship between teachers and their supervisors.

While many countries, such as England and Wales and the Netherlands, are trying to move towards tight teachers’ accountability through school inspection to ensure that children receive the desired quality of education, some other countries are moving in the opposite way (Webb *et al.*, 1998). France employs both national and local inspections and Finland has no school-inspection system (Gaynor, 1998, Vainikainen, Thuneberg, Marjanen, Hautamäki, Kupiainen & Hotulainen, 2017). Previously, school inspection functions in Finland were provincially based until when it was totally stopped in 1991 when more emphasis was placed on self-evaluation frameworks (Webb *et al.*, 1998; Vainikainen *et al.*, 2017). In Sweden, the inspectorate functions have been taken over by the region, and Norway has no school inspection at all (Gaynor, 1998). Norwegian government, however, has thought to have state school inspections to safeguard the education provided in the country (Hall, 2018). According to Hall, New Zealand’s school inspection has been replaced by a separate body named the Educational Review Agency (ERA). The challenge for these countries, however, is how the national values and philosophical ends are to be monitored without examining what is produced in the educational system.

#### *School inspection as a link between the government and school*

School inspectors play an intermediate role in communicating with the Ministry of Education about what takes place in schools, and what should be done to ensure the achievement of the educational goals and objectives (De Grauwe, 2007; Jaffer, 2010). As observed by the Office for Standards

in Education [OFSTED] (2017) in the England and Wales, schools that tended to address school inspection findings-maintained quality after a short inspection. According to the Department of Education and Skills (2016), external inspection facilitates the improvement and changes of the school towards positive results. De Grauwe (2007), however, concludes that African countries, and many others in the world, are less capable of identifying the most relevant principles of school inspections in their own context.

#### *Provision of professional support to teachers*

School inspectors are supposed to give an ongoing academic support for teachers using appraisal mechanisms on school progress and performance (Jaffer, 2010). According to Macharia and Kiruma (2014), school inspection is likely to add value to schools if it pays attention to issues related to the improvement of teachers' effectiveness. To Hislop (2017), school inspection reports need to fulfil both improvement and accountability functions through the provision of guidance for affirming good practices. As stated by Sinay (2016), school effectiveness can be assessed by investing in assessment, improved pedagogy, and by using professional development programmes. De Grauwe (2007), therefore, has the view that a clear school inspection's vision should guide the identification of teachers' needs in relation to supervision including offering the services and support that respond to the school and teacher's specific needs.

#### *Provision of the feedback to teachers on what they do*

School inspectors as external feedback providers are the key tools for improving the quality of education (De Grauwe, 2007). Leeuw (2002) states that school inspection can improve teaching and learning when it is characterised by reciprocity between the teachers and school inspectors. To Leeuw, school inspectors should focus on *give-and-take* and *you too-me too* reciprocal relationship. The *give-and-take* relationship refers to the type of information that school inspectors need to receive from the school or teachers, and what schools/teachers get back after school inspection. The notion of *you too-me too*, suggests that school inspectors should apply the same evaluation criteria used to evaluate teachers or schools under school inspection. According to Diver, Vaughan, Médard and Lukacs (2019), reciprocity ideas stem from the premise that one cannot take without giving to others. Ehren and Visscher (2006) advise the

school inspectors to build the trust with a reciprocal relationship with the teachers if the aim is to improve teaching and learning in schools.

### *Parents' choice of the education for their children*

School inspection is common in countries that have been influenced by British and French models. In England and Wales, OFSTED publishes on the Internet the school-inspection reports so that parents and pupils can get access to information with regard to achievement or successful and unsuccessful schools (Ehen & Visscher, 2008). Each primary and secondary school in these countries has to be inspected on a four-year basis (Webb, Vulliamy, Häkkinen & Hämäläinen, 1998). Head teachers have to sign an agreement with the school inspectors and prepare an action plan regarding rectification of the weaknesses identified in the inspection report (Webb *et al.*, 1998; Ehren & Visscher, 2008). The published school inspection reports help the parents to make better-informed choices of the type of school they want for their children's education (Ehren & Visscher, 2008). As stated by Ehren and Visscher, this contributes to school improvement since well-performing schools tend to attract more pupils, unlike the weaker ones. Making a choice for education of the children, however, can mostly apply to the rich countries and for those people who can finance education for their children, which may not necessarily be the case for the poor families in developing countries such as Tanzania.

### **School Inspection in Tanzania**

In Tanzania, school inspection was introduced during the colonial regime, especially during the 1920s (De Grauwe, 2007). It was immediately strengthened after independence during the 1960s with intention of reforming the educational system. The main aim was to ensure that teachers provide a quality education that is useful for solving the problems encountered in daily life. The term school inspection has been preferred for many years in the country and school inspection has been one of the ministerial departments (Kiwia, 1994). While the English-speaking countries and particularly the UK still use the term school inspection, in 2016, the Government of Tanzania changed the name of the department to be Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), formally known as the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT). The Ministry of Education changed the name to strengthen the school inspectors so that

they apply more humanistic approaches and act like friends when dealing with teachers. Yet, it appears that the functions of the school inspection remain the same even if the name has been changed. School inspectors are required to visit the schools for classroom observation. They also need to give professional pieces of advice on what teachers need to improve based on the observation. They are as well required to write the reports on the findings to the school owners (the District/City director and Ministry of education) and what they recommend for actions and for improvements. Are school inspectors fulfilling these key obligations in schools? This question was central to this study.

### **METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

This study was carried out using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is more revealing and appeals to people lived experiences. Through this approach, participants were free and able to give their own experiences with regard to the school inspection system that has been conducted in their schools. On the part of the research, this approach provided an opportunity to give more clarifications on issues that could not be well understood and allowed the participants to ask questions on the issue that was unclear. It used an exploratory case study design where the data were collected in the Mbeya region. Mbeya region was selected to be a study area as it ranked in the higher position in the National Examinations such that it occupied in the fourth position among 26 regions in the country. Thus, the aim of the study was to investigate whether or not the school inspection contributed to such a success.

#### *Sampling procedures*

Purposive sampling was used to select the schools, school inspectors, and the head teachers. Teachers who did not have a class at the time of the school visit were the ones who participated in the open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussion. Three schools were located in the urban area and three schools were in the peri-urban area. The study included a sample of 16 males and 43 females making 59 participants in total, whereby 6 were the head teachers and 44 classroom teachers who came from 6 schools, 8 school inspectors, and 1 District Education Officer (DEO). The sample was obtained through saturation.

### *Methods of data collection*

The study used 4 methods of data collection. These were open-ended questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, and documentary analysis as follows:

#### *Open-ended Questionnaires*

Open-ended questionnaires were used for both head teachers and teachers. Open-ended questionnaires were used on issues that needed freedom of expression of the teachers to give out their views on school inspection. Since questionnaires tend to have a low rate of return especially when are mailed or just given to the participants without restrictions, they were administered by visiting the schools according to the appointment made.

#### *Interviews*

Interviews were employed for the school inspectors and head teachers. Through interviews, it was easy to seek clarifications on issues under discussion on how head teachers viewed school inspection and its impact on improving teaching and learning in primary schools. The interviews were carried out with the head teachers and the school inspectors during working hours. Interviews sometimes may be dominated by the researcher if not careful and it is not a good method for sensitive issues. In this study, it was important to leave the teachers to express themselves on what they felt to be the work of the school inspectors and the questions did not involve sensitive issues. School inspectors as well were free to give their views, especially on challenges that make them unable to accomplish their inspection plan of action.

#### *Focus Group Discussion*

Focus group discussion (FGD) involved 7 teachers from 2 neighboring primary schools (School B & C). Four (4) teachers came from the hosting school and three (3) from a neighboring school. These teachers were those who did not have classroom sessions at the time of visit. The technique was useful in collecting huge data as one response triggered other responses. Some of the members in the group, however, tended to go astray, but it was moderated that they follow the issue in question. Some of the questions asked in FGD were: In your own views do you see any value of school inspection in facilitating teaching and learning? How school inspection can be organised to have a greater impact on the

improvement of your work performance? In a focus group discussion, however, participants may extend and dominate the discussion. If not controlled participants may also go astray from the issue under study. It was important to moderate the discussion and make sure that every member had an opportunity to give out his/her views.

#### *Documentary review*

This study also employed the document review for data collection. The documents that were surveyed include the schemes of work, lesson plans, and educational policies. Official reports such as that of the OFSTED served as a useful source of information and secondary literature in the form of books, papers, and journal articles were important and readily available including the empirical studies. Some papers were obtained in the library in a hard copy form and others were downloaded from the Internet and they were useful for the collection of information for this study and they complemented the data collected through focus group discussion, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. To the highest extent possible, the secondary sources were cross-checked before use.

Secondary data can, however, be outdated or may have been collected for a different purpose and background (Hassan, 2007). Some of the surveyed documents were dated back to 1900s to 2000s, but since they had relevant information to this study, they were still taken on board. As stated by Cohen *et al.* (2001), information from documents may also lack objectivity or be unduly selective. The documents surveyed in this study, however, were limited to the specific research purpose. Literature was scrutinised so as to communicate and get accurate information.

#### *Data analysis and research ethics*

Data analysis was carried out by transcribing and then coding by using themes and sub-themes after checking their relevance and similarities. Later on, data were organised in tables and were supported by the voices from interviews, focus group discussions, and from the open-ended questionnaires. All research ethics were observed including obtaining the research clearance. Participants were to consent to participate in the study and plagiarism was avoided by paraphrasing or giving the quotations and acknowledging the sources of information.

## FINDINGS

### *School inspection's role in improving teaching and learning*

The major aim of this study was to investigate how school inspection leads to improved teaching and learning in primary schools in Tanzania. The majority of teachers (92%) indicated that school inspection did so (Table 1). Teachers acknowledged that school inspectors gave some advice to teachers on how to teach their pupils and helped the individual pupils with learning difficulties. A teacher from school 'C' commented during the focus group discussion:

Teachers as other human beings have some weaknesses and sometimes do things inappropriately. Thus, they need support from the school inspectors. It could be good if the school inspectors visit the schools regularly to remind the teachers of their key role towards pupils' learning, but they need to go further by supporting the teachers on how to teach a subject.

**Table 1: Teachers' responses on school inspectors' support to improve teaching and learning and provision of professional support**

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Total (%)
1.			
2. School inspection improves the teaching and learning.	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	50 (100%)
3. School inspectors support teachers professionally.	6 (12%)	44 (88%)	50 (100%)

Some teachers, however, commented that school inspectors placed more focus on schemes of work, subject logbooks, lesson plans, and the teaching and learning materials as they are regarded as important tools for teachers' work performance. To teachers, school inspection could have an added value if they could be supported by identifying and helping them on how to solve the identified weaknesses/problems. One of the head teachers at School 'D' stated during the interview:

It is quite common to find that the school inspectors directing the teachers to collect professional documents and the teaching and learning materials to evaluate their teaching. School inspectors, however, are required to visit the classrooms in order to help the teachers to improve their teaching. I think that relying only on professional documents without helping the teacher on how to perform better has nothing to do to improve teaching and learning.

Another head teacher at the school 'E' commented on the same issue that school inspectors collected the schemes of work, lesson plans, pupils' exercise and logbooks without helping them based on classroom findings and he stated:

Teachers are blamed by the school inspectors for their work performance being poor. You wonder how teachers could improve teaching and learning if the school inspectors rely on professional documents and do not give proper support in the classroom on how to teach a specific subject. One may be very good in lesson preparations but not in teaching.

The comments from teachers suggest that despite recognising the contribution of a school inspection to improve teaching and learning, the interviewed teachers still needed further support in order to improve their teaching. They also demanded to be supported in solving the problems that face them in teaching rather than a mere collection of professional documents as a means of judging their work performance.

#### *Provision of professional support to teachers*

It was also the intention of this study to explore whether or not the school inspectors provided professional support to teachers. The majority of the teachers (88%) indicated that school inspectors did not offer professional support to them (Table 1). Teachers were of the opinion that school inspection is very important for teachers to improve the quality of education standards if they support them with practical advice and professional knowledge related to the specific subject matter. A teacher from School 'C' commented during the focus group discussion:

I see that the school inspectors put more attention on how many lesson plans are prepared and the exercises that are provided to pupils. They also check the availability of the schemes of work, lesson plans, and subject logbooks. It could be good if school inspectors could help teachers on how to teach difficult topics of a particular subject instead of focusing on the pupils' exercises and other materials that teachers prepare.

A head teacher from School 'F' also stated during the interview that school inspectors blamed the teachers on the pupils' poor performance and did not help them on how they could teach difficult topics so that they cope with the changes in the curriculum and he had this to say:

School inspectors do not help teachers on how to teach difficult topics and cope with this issue of frequent changes in the curriculum. They just come and blame the teachers on the failure of curriculum implementation and pupils' poor performance without any efforts of ensuring that teachers are prepared to cope with the reformed curriculum. For example, the Vocational Skills subject was implemented prior to teachers' preparation. Who is to be blamed for the pupils' failure?

Findings suggest that teachers would like to be supported professionally by the school inspectors on how to teach difficult topics in specific subjects. Teachers also demanded to be oriented on the changes of the curriculum before its implementation rather than blaming them on pupils' poor performance in the National Examinations. To teachers, professional support could be the added value of the school inspectors' visits to schools.

#### *Classroom observation by school inspectors*

The study intended to explore whether or not school inspectors visited the classroom as their key role towards observing what is taking place in the classroom setting. The majority of teachers (80%) responded in the open-ended questionnaires that school inspectors did not undertake classroom observation that could help the identification of the challenges that teachers face in teaching (Table 2).

During the interviews with the head teachers, it was also confirmed that school inspectors did not visit the classroom for lesson observation to improve the teachers' work performance. Teachers were of the view that classroom observation could help the school inspectors to identify the weaknesses of the teachers during teaching and learning and thereafter provide professional support. A head teacher from School 'D' stated during an interview:

When school inspectors visit our school, they do not observe classroom teaching. In most cases, they stay in the office and direct the teachers to collect the schemes of work, lesson plans, subject logbooks, and the pupils' exercise books. Thus, the school inspectors judge the work of the teacher based on that material evidence and it is very hard to discern the areas of weaknesses that need improvements.

**Table 2: Teachers’ response regarding classroom observation by the school inspectors and the creation of tension and fear to teachers**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Classroom observation is carried by the school inspectors when they visit your school.	10(20%)	40 80%)	50 (100%)
2. School inspection brings about tension and fear to teachers in schools.	44 (8%)	6 (12%)	50 (100%)

Another head teacher from School ‘B’ stated the same that school inspectors did not visit the classrooms for lesson observation and she had this to say during the interview:

School inspectors do not care about classroom observation. They sometimes do it for a very short time up to 20 minutes and sometimes they do not do it at all. As school inspectors are very few compared to the available teachers, they cannot afford to visit all classrooms. What they do is to check the pupils’ exercise books, schemes of work, and lesson plans. This is a big problem as they cannot be able to understand what takes place in the classroom setting and help teachers to improve teaching.

The repeated comments from the teachers on excessive concentration on the professional documents by the school inspectors suggest that classroom observation was rarely carried out, although it is stipulated to be their role that they need to play. The school inspectors evaluated the teachers’ work based on the preparatory stage while overlooking classroom observation which is very important for them to discern the weaknesses that may detrimentally affect teaching and learning.

*Creation of fear and tension among teachers*

The study was also intended to explore if at all school inspectors created fear and tension among teachers as it has been frequently reported in the literature. The majority of teachers (88%) indicated that school inspection to do so as teachers know that school inspectors have to write the inspection reports on strengths and weaknesses for each one of them (Table 2). During the focus group discussion, teachers mentioned that the experienced fear and tension were contributed by their poor preparation.

When teachers were not well prepared and that school inspectors sometimes visited the schools without notification, then it was obvious that teachers found themselves under tension. A teacher from School 'B' stated during the focus group discussion:

Teachers tend to be under pressure during the school inspection period. The tension and fear are created as some teachers are careless and some do not prepare themselves for teaching. Weak teachers cannot be happy to see the school inspectors as they tend to just put their things right to impress the supervisors. Indeed, this is bad as it is a false kind of respect that has nothing to do with improvement of teaching and learning.

Another teacher from School 'E' wrote in the questionnaire on the same issue that weak teachers usually do not care about their profession and that they only prepare themselves after they hear that school inspectors will visit the school and she stated:

In my view the school inspectors are not supposed to inform the schools of their visits. When they do this, it is the very time when the teachers and the head teachers become busy making preparations. When school inspectors come find things in order and the school can just be evaluated positively while in actual sense it is very poor. After the school inspection week, teachers relax without taking into account the school inspectors' recommendations. This is what makes schools not improve in their pupils' performance.

As it can be observed, the findings indicate that tension and fear occurred when teachers were not well prepared to meet with the school inspectors. Yet, some teachers may work properly and be well organised but seeing that school inspectors are coming and knowing that they are external to the school, at the same time they will write the report on individual teachers' work performance, tension and fear may be experienced.

#### *School inspectors' work conditions*

Findings indicated that school inspectors encountered various challenges which affected their work performance. These challenges include; a lack of means of transport to visit their schools, particularly those schools that were located in remote areas. Although school inspectors declared that sometimes the DEO supported them with the means of transport, school inspectors believed that such support was inadequate. This was necessarily the case because the cars from the DEO were provided under

the condition that they had to fill in the fuel in their own expenses. Therefore, because of receiving insufficient budget from the MoEST, school inspectors visited only a few schools. One of the school inspectors stated:

Our department does not have even a single car. We use the DEO's car when visiting the schools. Sometimes the DEO has different programmes which are not compatible with our school inspection timetable. Thus, it becomes very difficult to accomplish our school inspection target as you have no freedom of using the car. The other problem is related to fuel. As we use our own fuel budget in a car that does not belong to us, then the number of litres of fuel that remain after finishing the work are not used for the next day as the DEO might have other activities to perform, so we misuse the fuel that have been allocated for school visits and when we need the car we have to purchase the fuel again.

In connection with the lack of transport, school inspectors reported that they visited the schools without being paid the allowances. Because of this, the school inspectors commented that they only worked because of the fear they had of their bosses. This demoralised them and they explained that were the reasons why they focused on the professional documents rather than classroom teaching observation. One of the school inspectors commented:

Why should one expect me to do my work properly without a caring work environment? I cannot pay the transport fare by using my own salary which can be used to support my children. It is very difficult to expect that I can go to the classroom. What we do is a mere sign-up that we have inspected the schools. This discourages us as we think; the government does not care about the School Inspection Department. The Government needs quality education, but it does not support the school inspectors. How can you expect me to perform in a poor working environment!

These voices from the school inspectors indicate that they were not happy with their work conditions. It is quite impossible for one to expect good performance from a person who is uncertain, who lives under miserable life, and depends on someone else's favour in performing the key duties.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Findings indicated that school inspectors gave some advice to teachers on how to improve teaching but, they did not visit the classroom for lesson observations to check how the teaching and learning took place and that

they concentrated on checking the documents such as the schemes of work, lesson plans, and subject logbooks in judging the work performance of the teacher. To teachers, this was not enough to enable the school inspectors to identify the weaknesses that teachers faced in teaching so that they can improve. Teachers also required more support from the school inspectors, particularly on how to teach difficult topics. As suggested by Earley (1998), Wilcox (2000), MacBeath and Martimore (2001), Ehren, Leeuw and Scheerens (2005), Ehren and Visscher (2008), and Macharia and Kiruma (2014) teaching a particular subject and professional support to teachers could be the added value of the work of the school inspectors to improve the quality of education. Wilcox (2000) and Jaffer (2010) argue that school inspectors are supposed to support teachers with pedagogical skills. This may contribute to teachers' professional development and thereby being able to cope with frequent curriculum changes (Barrett, 2005).

The findings also support what Wilcox (2000) has suggested that if teachers are to be happy to be inspected, they need a school inspector who helps them to teach difficult topics. Thus, school inspectors are challenged to be competent in the subject areas. As argued by Su (2017), teachers are the most precious resources and the soul for the core competencies of the school. Hislop (2017) considers that school inspection is an important instrument for the improvement of school effectiveness. Thus, helping the teacher professionally on how to teach a particular topic could be the value added of the school inspection to school. However, for the school inspectors to help teachers improve, they have to understand that teachers may know better about their strengths and weaknesses and so they can be in a better position to find out the solutions to the problems they encounter. De Grauwe (2007) comments that the school inspector needs to have a mutual understanding and needs to be a facilitator and not a master of what should be done by the teachers. It is, thus, important that teachers are involved in the decision-making and in finding out the solutions they face in their teaching. This may create a feeling of being respected among them and thus improve their work performance. As it has been stated earlier, Leeuw (2002) and Diver *et al.* (2019) recommend the *give-and-take* and *you-too-me-too* reciprocal relationship between the school inspectors and teachers if the aim is to improve pupils' learning.

Judging the work of the teacher based on the collection of the subject logbooks, schemes of work, and lesson plans as it was reported by the teachers in this study is unfair. One may be very good at preparing the materials but not in classroom teaching. Thus, a classroom observation is warranted as far as the improvement of the quality of education is concerned. As observed by Hislop (2017), the focus of the school inspectors needs to be on the improvement side rather than placing sanctions on teachers. As Rogers and Freiberg (1994) suggest, school inspection attention should be on how and what pupils learn. This is because what pupils learn has a great influence on their real-life situations. Black and William (2001), have the common thinking that school inspection practice that tends to ignore classroom observation may not effectively be able to give proper guidelines to improve teaching and learning. Coombe, Kelly, and Carr-Hill (2006) state that teaching and learning are what ultimately make a difference in the minds of the pupils and affect their knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are meaningful to society. For this to be practical, then, classroom observation in the classroom setting has to receive special attention from the school inspectors rather than relying on professional documents.

Lack of field allowances and a means of transport to visit the schools for the school inspectors contributed to their negative feeling. They felt overlooked and powerless to the DEO when they were unable to perform their duties. This limited their work performance in accordance with their action plans for the schools to be inspected. Su (2017), states that improving school inspectors' work conditions may help them improve their monitoring of the teaching and learning. According to Wilcox (2000) and Earley (1998), school improvement in teaching and learning can be largely influenced by the school inspection based on the extent to which the government allocates adequate resources. Gaynor (1998) asserts that school inspection is labour-intensive from the planning process, a compilation of the school inspection reports, report writing, and dissemination of the inspection findings to the key stakeholders. To achieve this, school inspectors need financial resources to undertake their responsibilities one of them being the provision of pedagogical support to teachers.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study investigated the school inspection and its impact on teaching

and learning in Tanzania. Evidence from both the head teachers and teachers indicated that school inspectors gave some advice to teachers to improve teaching and learning but, they did not visit the teachers in the classroom setting where they could identify the areas for improvement. Teachers as well wanted to be supported professionally by the school inspectors especially when it comes to teach difficult topics. It was further found that school inspectors created fear among teachers but this was due to poor preparation in the part of the teachers beforehand.

As many countries and Tanzania, in particular, strive for quality education, and that school inspection is seen as a tool for monitoring the educational standards, the Tanzanian Government must ensure that school inspectors are exposed to professional development programmes for them to be able to help the teachers on difficult topics. For this to be in practice, school inspectors have to be trained in respective specific subjects so that they offer a support to teachers on difficult topics. Teachers also have to identify their weaknesses in teaching and learning that need the attention of the school inspectors if they are to be effectively supported. This has an implied meaning that internal evaluation under the head teachers in schools is also required.

Nevertheless, since we live in an optimistic age where education is regarded to have a powerful influence on individuals' well-being and their nations (Brown & Lauder, 2006; Becker, 2006), monitoring the quality of education remains to be a necessary evil. Indeed, for nations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal number four that stresses an equitable quality education, governments of the world have to make sure that schools are properly inspected. School inspectors also have to ensure that they perform their key obligations of supporting the teachers so that they improve teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning are considered to be the major means through which teachers' obligation and caring profession can be fulfilled for bestowing values on pupils' unique dreams and best future possibilities achievement (Garrison, 1997). Thus, it is the role of the teachers to help the pupils in actualising their unique potential and their best position in society, which may not take place without proper monitoring of what is taking place in the classroom setting by the school inspectors. For the Government to achieve the improvement of the quality of teaching and

learning in primary schools; school inspectors need to support the teachers to grow as professionals that could improve the academic performance of the pupils and schools in general and provision of financial allowances and means of transport by the Government to the School Inspectorate Department (SID), the now known as Quality Assurance is important.

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