The Influence of School Quality Assurance Practices on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Moshi Municipality, Tanzania

Jacqueline Wilbald Tarimo[1] & Karoli John Mrema[2]
[1]Moshi Municipality Council
jacktarimo1999@gmail.com
[2]The Open University of Tanzania
karol.mrema@out.ac.tz

Abstract
This study examined the influence of School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Moshi Municipality. It focused on key quality assurance components, including inspections, teacher evaluations, and curriculum implementation checks. The study adopted ISO 9000 Theory as its theoretical framework, recognising it as a global standard for quality management and assurance practices. A mixed-methods approach with a convergent design was employed, involving a sample of 260 respondents. Teachers were randomly selected, while headteachers and School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) were purposively sampled. Data collection involved questionnaires with closed-ended questions for teachers and in-depth interviews with headteachers and SQAOs. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics with IBM SPSS v20, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that over 83% of teachers reported that SQA practices—particularly through formal reports—had a moderate to significant positive impact on pupils' academic performance. This impact was attributed to improved curriculum implementation, qualified teaching staff, and the use of appropriate instructional materials. However, several challenges hindered effective SQA implementation. These included inadequate instructional resources, limited motivation among SQAOs, time constraints during inspections, and teachers' reluctance to implement recommended changes. The study concludes that while SQA practices contribute meaningfully to academic improvement, their impact is undermined by infrequent visits and systemic limitations. It recommends the development of a digital monitoring system, increased investment in SQAOs' professional development, and enhanced resourcing to support more effective and timely quality assurance processes.

Keywords: *Quality assurance, academic performance, standards, school visits, feedback*

Introduction

School Quality Assurance (SQA) plays a vital role globally by ensuring that educational institutions comply with national standards and contribute effectively to the achievement of national education objectives (Afriadi *et al*., 2023). Beyond the basic functions of monitoring and evaluation, SQA encompasses initiatives aimed at improving and modernising teaching and learning processes (Ismail *et al*., 2023). These enhancements are instrumental in supporting both the academic and professional development of learners, highlighting the importance of robust quality assurance systems within educational organisations. Although often linked to contemporary education systems, SQA has deep historical roots. raditionally referred to as "school inspection," this practice dates back centuries and has long served as a foundational mechanism for monitoring and improving educational quality. For example, France introduced school inspections during the Napoleonic era in 1801 (Makiya *et al*., 2023), and England formalised its inspection system in 1839 under the leadership of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (De Grauwe, 2007). Over time, these initiatives expanded across Europe and America (Eziamaka *et al*., 2022). Globally, improving educational quality and maintaining standards remain priorities, as highlighted by UNESCO (2007). Many governments reinforce their commitment to quality education by consistently monitoring academic institutions (Omolewa, 2007). The primary objective of SQA is to assess the effectiveness of curricula, evaluate teaching and learning quality, and track student achievement. Without proper oversight, schools risk implementing curricula that are either misaligned with pupils' learning needs or beyond their capabilities, making supervision essential in ensuring educational integrity (UNESCO, 2007).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the introduction of formal public education coincided with the establishment of school inspection services (De Grauwe, 2007). Following independence, many developing nations strengthened their inspection services to enhance educational quality. However, rapid school expansion often outpaced the availability of trained supervisors and inspection officers (De Grauwe, 2007; Matete, 2009). In Nigeria, for example, the effectiveness of quality assurance programmes in public secondary schools is hampered by several challenges, including inadequate funding, teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, weak supervision, and examination malpractice (Obiakor, 2023; Olowe, 2023). Kenya introduced its quality assurance system in 2004 (Ward *et al*., 2006; Wanjiru, 2014). However, its effectiveness was limited, as many teachers did not attend training seminars and often implemented educational reforms based on personal experience rather than structured guidelines. (Mtitu *et al.,* 2023).

In Tanzania, school inspection services have a long history, tracing back to the German and British colonial periods. The evolution of these services can be categorised into four key phases: The German colonial rule (1903–1919), the British administration (1919–1925), the pre-independence period (1925–1961), and the post-independence era (1961 onwards). Initially, school inspections were designed to support teachers in fulfilling their instructional responsibilities (Mbwana & Onyango, 2021). Following independence, the Tanzanian government implemented various policies to improve education quality. Notably, the Education Act No. 25 of 1978 led to the establishment of the Department of School Inspection (URT, 2011). This Act was intended to uphold high educational standards by monitoring teaching practices and ensuring alignment with the national curriculum. Its overarching aim was to provide effective oversight, enhance the quality of education delivery, and offer constructive feedback to educational stakeholders. Notwithstanding these efforts, the school inspection framework introduced in 1978 failed to yield significant improvements in student outcomes (URT, 2017). The system remained largely diagnostic, lacked clear standards and regulations, and provided minimal quality assurance support.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) in Tanzania transitioned from traditional school inspection to a School Quality Assurance (SQA) model. This reform introduced key elements including school development planning, the setting of learning objectives, capacity building through self-evaluation, inter-school collaboration, and increased community involvement (URT, 2017). Unlike the earlier model, which centred on procedural inspections, the revised framework focuses on outcome-based evaluations and strengthening institutional capacity to drive sustainable improvements in education quality (URT, 2017). However, implementation challenges persist, including inadequate facilities, a shortage of School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs), poor transportation infrastructure, and delayed reporting (Makiya *et al.,* 2022; Mwoshe & Festo, 2021). Studies also highlight obstacles such as frequent curriculum changes, insufficient funding, inadequate training for quality assurers, and suboptimal working conditions (Dismas *et al.,* 2023; Mwoshe & Festo, 2023).

Despite recent reforms, School Quality Assurance (SQA) remains largely ineffective in enabling public primary schools to meet established quality standards (Jeremiah, 2016; Joseph, 2018; Mutabaruka *et al*., 2018). Previous studies have highlighted a crisis in Tanzania's SQA practices (Kambuga & Dadi, 2015; Mutabaruka *et al*., 2018). findings in these studies has shown that some pupils complete primary education without acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. For instance, Makiya, Mnyanyi, and colleagues (2022)

reported that certain students graduate without proficiency in reading, writing, or arithmetic. Similarly, Chikoyo, Nzalayaimisi, and Telli (2019) found that many educators in Kilimanjaro fail to prepare lesson plans, instructional aids, or daily lesson notes. These findings raise critical concerns about the effectiveness of current SQA practices. As such, this study seeks to evaluate the extent to which school quality assurance contributes to enhancing pupils' academic performance. Specifically, this study assesses the extent to which school quality assurance reports are used to enhance pupils' academic performance and examines challenges hindering the effective implementation of quality assurance practices in primary schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by ISO 9000 theory. The theory comprises a set of international standards on quality management and quality assurance, developed to help organisations establish and maintain effective quality systems (Singh *et al*., 2011). ISO 9000 standards are not industry-specific and can be applied across organisations of varying sizes. As one of the five ISO 9000 Quality Management System (QMS) standards, it supports institutions in meeting stakeholder expectations while ensuring compliance with relevant regulations. In the context of education, ISO 9000 has been applied to both primary and secondary levels to enhance teaching and learning quality, graduate employability and mobility, credit recognition and transfer, and education internationalisation. The framework promotes systematic planning, execution, monitoring, and continuous improvement of quality assurance processes. ISO certification serves as evidence that an institution meets established standards, improves academic performance, increases operational efficiency, and supports graduate success in broader markets.

Literature Review
School Quality Assurance Practices and Frameworks

chool Quality Assurance (SQA) is a fundamental component of the education system, ensuring that schools deliver high-quality education. ISO 9001, a globally recognised Quality Management System (QMS), was originally developed for industrial applications but has since been adapted for use in educational settings. In this context, it supports the improvement of educational processes, addresses the needs of pupils and communities, and promotes continuous improvement (ISO, 2015). Key components of ISO 9001 in education include leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement (pupils, parents, and communities), staff participation, a process-oriented approach to managing learning activities, and evidence-based decision-

making. These elements collectively promote regular evaluations aimed at enhancing curriculum delivery, teaching quality, and pupil achievement. Complementing ISO 9001, UNESCO's Quality Assurance Framework underscores the importance of measurable learning outcomes, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and life skills—essential indicators of educational quality (UNESCO, 2022). UNESCO's approach advocates for a comprehensive quality assurance system encompassing curriculum design, instructional methods, resource allocation, and effective student assessment. These international standards allow countries to adapt and implement robust quality assurance systems tailored to local contexts while maintaining alignment with globally recognised benchmarks.

At the national level, many countries have established customized frameworks for School Quality Assurance to regulate student outcomes, curriculum standards, teacher competencies, and performance in schools. Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 is the primary driver of the implementation of SQA practices, with a particular emphasis on the Whole School Approach (WSA) in Tanzania. To guarantee that schools satisfy national quality standards, this methodology involves community stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and parents (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 2014). Regular school inspections, teacher evaluations, and the integration of ICT in quality assurance procedures are essential components of Tanzania's SQA system. Senkoro (2022) argues that these measures are intended to enhance the efficacy of teaching and the learning outcomes of pupils.

The Impact of School Quality Assurance on Academic Performance
Providing high-quality education is essential for national development, as it equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for social and economic advancement (NSQAF, 2017). In Tanzania, improving the quality of secondary education is a strategic priority due to its significant influence on labour force participation and access to higher education (Fomba *et al*., 2023; Hakielimu, 2017; Leonard & Ibrahim, 2021; Medard & Mwila, 2022; Mrema *et al*., 2023). The importance of quality assurance in education gained global attention during the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, convened by UNESCO in Jomtien, Thailand. At this conference, participating nations committed to improving measurable learning outcomes—particularly in literacy, numeracy, and life skills—as a foundation for inclusive and equitable education (UNESCO, 2022; Katete, 2023). Effective quality assurance entails setting clear learning objectives, ensuring adequate teaching resources, monitoring progress, and evaluating success (Katete, 2023).

School quality assurance has been widely recognized for improving education across Africa, though its implementation faces challenges such as a shortage of trained inspectors, limited resources, and weak policy enforcement. In South Africa, school inspections and quality monitoring have improved literacy and numeracy, though rural areas face resource disparities (Spaull & Taylor, 2022). Similarly, in Nigeria, external evaluations and school visits have enhanced student performance, particularly in science subjects, though resistance from teachers sometimes hinders effectiveness (Owan & Bassey, 2021). In Kenya, structured quality assurance mechanisms, such as teacher evaluations and school audits, have improved national examination performance, but issues like corruption and insufficient training for quality assurance officers remain barriers (Wanjiru & Mukolwe, 2023).

The Tanzanian government has introduced several quality assurance initiatives under the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014, with an emphasis on curriculum monitoring, teacher evaluations, and regular school inspections. Research by Senkoro (2022) indicates that frequent inspections have a positive impact on student academic performance. However, the effectiveness of these efforts is often undermined by persistent challenges, including inadequate funding, limited training opportunities for inspectors, and weak communication between inspectors and teachers (Mtitu & Komba, 2023). To strengthen quality assurance mechanisms, increased investment in teacher professional development and the integration of ICT-based monitoring systems are recommended (Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2023).

At the district level, evidence highlights the positive impact of SQA on academic performance. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms have been linked to improved student achievement in public secondary schools (Ombay & Mrema, 2024). In Missenyi District, frequent school visits by quality assurance officers were reported to have contributed to better student outcomes (Phillymon, 2020). Similarly, in Rombo District, internal SQA feedback has enhanced instruction, problem-solving skills, and supportive learning environments (Assenga, Muteti, & Mbua, 2024). However, these benefits are often limited by challenges such as inadequate facilities and teacher non-compliance with SQA recommendations (Ombay & Mrema, 2024; Phillymon, 2020).

Barriers to Effective SQA Practices
Across Africa, several factors ae being registered to hinder the effectiveness of SQA. In Zambia, issues such as insufficient staffing, weak communication strategies, and inadequate system support were noted to restrict quality

education implementation (Changwe & Zulu; Kaunda, 2023). In Nigeria, major obstacles include lack of funding, shortages of professional teachers, poor infrastructure, corruption, and examination malpractice (Obiakor, 2023; Olowe, 2023; Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021). In Kenya, despite efforts to monitor and evaluate education quality, challenges such as teachers' reluctance to attend training sessions and slow implementation of reforms were noted to undermine progress (Mtitu *et al.,* 2023; Muricho, 2023).

In Tanzania, the Whole School Approach (WSA) was introduced to replace the outdated inspection system, involving community members and stakeholders in SQA implementation (Mritha & Onyango, 2022). While initiatives have been taken to align education with national and global demands (Ochieng'Opalo, 2023), concerns remain regarding declining of student performance and the effectiveness of SQA in improving educational outcomes. Studies indicate that factors such as frequent school visits, timely feedback, professional development support, and involvement of teachers in SQA practices contribute to improved learning achievement (Makiya *et al.*, 2022, 2023; Mritha & Onyango, 2022). However, implementation is often hindered by insufficient SQA facilities, shortage of quality assurance officers, poor transportation infrastructure, and delayed feedback reports (Makiya *et al.,* 2022; Mwoshe & Festo, 2021).

Moreover, studies by Mtitu *et al*. (2023), Mwoshe and Festo, and Dismas *et al*. (2023) have identified several challenges affecting School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices. These include frequent curriculum changes, insufficient funding, lack of training for external quality assurers, poor working conditions, frequent school visits, and a shortage of qualified external quality assurers. While SQA is crucial for ensuring proper curriculum implementation, it may not be sufficient on its own to guarantee effective outcomes (Burra & Fanuel, 2021). Therefore, this study is particularly significant as it evaluated the role of school quality assurance practices in enhancing pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Moshi Municipality, Tanzania

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, which enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure corroboration and enrich the findings. The use of mixed methods addressed the limitations inherent in each type of data, allowing the strengths of one to complement the weaknesses of the other. A convergent design was adopted, wherein both data types were collected in a single phase, analysed separately, and then compared to determine whether the findings confirmed or contradicted one another (Creswell *et al*., 2021). This approach provided a robust means of

validating and verifying information from multiple sources. The study targeted a total population of 798 respondents. To obtain a representative sample, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. A total of 234 teachers were randomly selected from public primary schools using probability sampling, while 25 headteachers and one School Quality Assurance Officer (SQAO) were purposively selected based on their roles and relevance to the study. This resulted in a final sample size of 260 respondents. Data collection instruments included a questionnaire with predominantly closed-ended questions for teachers and in-depth interview guides for headteachers and the SQAO. The study achieved a 100% questionnaire return rate.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics—frequencies and percentages—with the assistance of IBM SPSS version 20. Thematic analysis was used to interpret qualitative data. The validity and reliability of research instruments were ensured through content validation and pilot testing in one public primary school not included in the main sample. Reliability was further confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.8, indicating high internal consistency. Ethical procedures were carefully observed. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Director of the Moshi Municipal Council (DED), and informed consent was sought from all participants. Participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were respected throughout the research process.

Results
School Quality Assurance Reports for Pupils' Academic Performance
Teachers were asked whether School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) observe them during classroom instruction. Among the 234 teachers surveyed, the vast majority (98.3%) confirmed that they had been observed by SQAOs during the teaching and learning process This reuslt is consistent with the findings during in-depth interviews in which most of the participants said that the teachers were observed by SQAOs when they were teaching in the classroom as narrated by one of the head teachers:

> During a quality assurance officer's visit, teachers are observed in the classroom while teaching to assess how the curriculum is being implemented to meet pupils' needs. Additionally, they are monitored to follow up on the previous recommendation report to determine whether they have improved their teaching techniques to enhance student performance (R 16, 2024).

The head teacher's statement highlights the critical role of School Quality Assurance in monitoring and enhancing teaching effectiveness. Through classroom observations, SQAOs help ensure that the curriculum is implemented appropriately to meet pupils' learning needs. Follow-up on

previous recommendations also plays a vital role in supporting continuous professional development among teachers. However, the overall effectiveness of this process is influenced by the frequency of school visits, the quality and depth of feedback provided, and teachers' willingness to implement suggested improvements. In addition, teachers were asked whether SQAOs provide a report following their visits to the school. Almost all agreed that the report was provided as narrated here:

> They provide a report for the teacher individually orally and for all staff as a meeting and then after visiting the school send report written and provide card which shows goods and area to correct for better academic performance (R 8, 2024).

The statement outlines the feedback process employed by School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) following their school visits. Teachers receive individualised oral feedback on their performance, while collective feedback is delivered during a staff meeting. Additionally, a written report is submitted to the school, highlighting key strengths and areas requiring improvement. A performance card accompanies the report, summarising major findings and providing actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing academic outcomes. This multi-layered approach ensures that teachers receive both immediate and documented guidance, thereby fostering accountability and supporting continuous improvement in teaching practices. Another respondent added that:

> Yes, we usually receive a report, but sometimes it takes a long time to arrive. By the time we get it, some of the issues raised may no longer be relevant, or we might have already found our own solutions. A timely report would be more useful in guiding school improvements (R 1, 2024).

This statement underscores the issue of delays in the delivery of School Quality Assurance (SQA) reports. Although reports are typically provided, the extended time taken to issue them often results in diminished relevance, as schools may have already addressed the identified issues independently. This delay limits the effectiveness of the feedback in guiding timely school improvements. A prompter reporting process would enhance the utility of these reports, allowing schools to act swiftly on recommendations while the challenges remain current and actionable. Furthermore, another respondent revealed that formal written reports were not consistently provided after every visitation. In some cases, visits concluded without the delivery of a documented report, raising concerns about the consistency and transparency of the quality assurance process as was noted by one of the participants:

> Not always. Some officers provide verbal feedback at the end of their visit, but we don't always get a formal written report. This makes it difficult to follow up on their recommendations, especially when planning for the next academic term (R 4, 2024).

The statement reveals inconsistencies in the provision of school quality assurance reports. While some SQAOs offer verbal feedback at the conclusion of their visits; formal written reports are not consistently provided. This lack of uniformity hinders teachers and school administrators from effectively following up on recommendations, especially when planning for subsequent academic terms. In the absence of documented feedback, it becomes challenging to monitor progress, implement suggested changes, or ensure accountability. These findings underscore the need for a more reliable and structured reporting system to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent of the impact of the quality assurance reports on the pupils' academic performance. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of the respondents (60.3%) thought that the quality assurance reports had a moderate impact, while about a quarter (23.5%) indicated a major impact on pupils' academic performance. However, 9 (3.8%) of the respondents indicated that the impact of School Quality Assurance was either negligible or minor.

Figure 1:
Quality Assurance Report and Student Academic Performance (n=234)
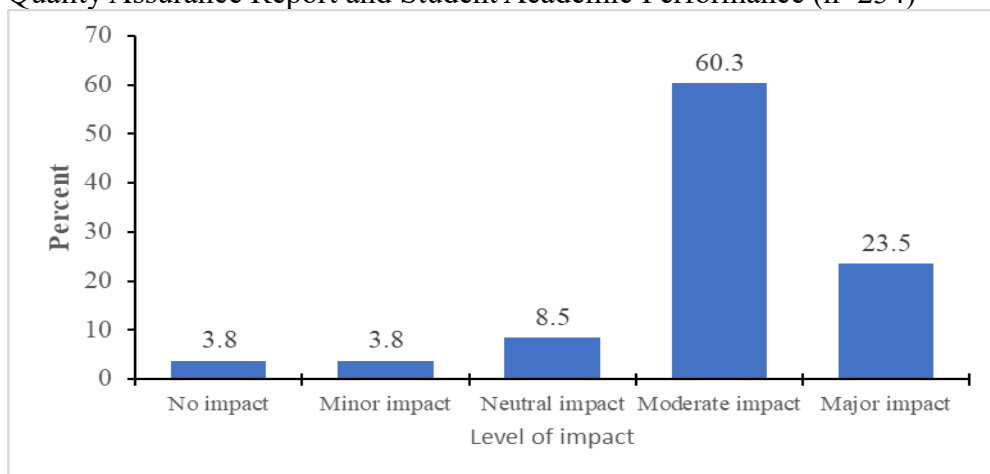
The fact that over 80% of respondents rated the impact of School Quality Assurance Officers' (SQAOs) reports as having a moderate to major effect indicates that these reports play a significant role in improving academic performance in primary schools. This suggests that school quality assurance reports are highly valuable in enhancing pupils' academic outcomes in public primary schools within Moshi Municipality. Respondents were further asked to specify how quality assurance practices contribute to improved academic performance. As shown in Table 1, approximately 29.1% of respondents

highlighted that quality assurance ensures the proper implementation of the curriculum. Additionally, 30.3% pointed to the verification of teacher qualifications and the effective use of teaching and learning documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, and instructional notes. A smaller portion (6.4%) cited teacher motivation as a contributing factor.

Table 1
Quality assurance practices and academic performance (n=234)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
It motivates teachers in teaching	15	6.4
Because quality assurance practice ensures teaching rules and regulations are followed by the teacher and school leadership.	50	21.4
It makes sure that the curriculum is implemented well in and out of the classroom setting.	68	29.1
The qualifications of the teachers together with the presence and proper use of the teaching and learning documents are investigated.	71	30.3
Through quality assurance practices, teachers, school administration, and other education stakeholders become accountable.	30	12.8
Total	**234**	**100**

Overall, the respondents reflected positively on the role of quality assurance practices in enhancing pupils' academic performance in primary schools. Additionally, they were asked to explain how quality assurance supports the implementation of teachers' duties. As presented in Table 2, the majority (54.3%) indicated that quality assurance practices help ensure the effective use of teaching aids and foster a conducive teaching and learning environment. Another 45.7% noted that these practices assist in evaluating teachers' strengths and weaknesses in curriculum implementation. These findings suggest that quality assurance plays a crucial role in guiding and shaping teachers' responsibilities in line with established educational standards.

Table 4
Quality Assurance practices and the implementation of teaching Duties (n=234)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Quality assurance practices assist in the implementation of teaching duties because the practice shows the weaknesses and strengths of teachers toward the implementation of the curriculum.	107	45.7
Quality assurance practices help the teacher with many issues like the use of teaching aids during the lesson, evaluating the school's environment for better student learning, and giving advice on the good method of teaching like the application of ICT materials.	127	54.3
Total	**234**	**100**

This indicates a strong recognition of QA's contribution to educational quality in both enhancing instructional quality and guiding teacher development in return facilitating the improvement of pupils' academic performance in primary schools. However, the relatively close percentages imply that while QA is valued, there may be variations in how it is perceived or implemented across different schools.

Moreover, participants' in-depth interviews reaffirmed this finding as the following narrative indicates: "Quality assurance report impacts academic performance because it shows strengths and weaknesses of the visit generally and also shows how to do for better performance." (SQAO,2024). The statement emphasizes that the school quality assurance report has a direct impact on academic performance. It provides a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the visit, helping the school understand what is working well and what needs improvement.

Overall, the study found that school quality assurance reports provide valuable guidance on addressing identified weaknesses and enhancing school performance. This feedback serves as a critical tool for informed decision-making and the implementation of strategies aimed at improving teaching practices, increasing student engagement, and strengthening overall academic outcomes.

Challenges on Effective Implementation of Quality Assurance Practices
The respondents were asked to mention the challenges they encountered in the course of quality assurance practice. As shown in Table 5, challenges such as inadequate motivation among school quality assurance officers (30.3%); lack of adequate motivation among school quality assurance officers (10.7%); short time for performing quality assurance tasks (7.7%); teachers' unwillingness to accept recommendations from SQAOs (6.0%); and

lack of instructions on modern quality assurance techniques (5.6%) hinder effective implementation of SQA practices.

Table 5
Challenges by quality assurance practices for student academic performance (n=234)

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of instructions on modern QA techniques	13	5.6
Teachers' unwillingness to accept recommendations from SQAOs	14	6.0
Lack of adequate motivation among SQAOs	25	10.7
Short time for performing QA tasks	18	7.7
Inadequate resources for instruction and learning	71	30.3
All the above challenges	93	39.7

Note: QA = Quality Assurance; SQAO = School Quality Assurance Officer

The data reveal several critical challenges affecting the implementation of School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices. The most prominent issue is inadequate motivation among SQA officers, reported by 30.3% of respondents. This is followed by a general lack of sufficient incentives (10.7%), indicating widespread dissatisfaction among quality assurance personnel. Other notable challenges include limited time allocated for conducting quality assurance activities (7.7%) and teachers' reluctance to adopt the recommendations provided (6.0%). Furthermore, the lack of training in modern quality assurance techniques (5.6%) highlights a gap in ongoing professional development. Addressing these issues through enhanced support, targeted training, and stronger collaboration between stakeholders is essential to improving the overall effectiveness of quality assurance practices in schools. On the other hand, most of the participants in the qualitative component mentioned the short time of performing tasks and lack of motivation among SQAOs as the main challenges as indicated by the following narrative: "Lack of adequate motivation among SQAOs and short time limit for performing quality assurance tasks are important challenges of implementing quality assurance practices in schools" (R1, R6).

This means that there are challenges facing both sides, that is, SQAOs and the teachers that hamper the improvement of academic performance in primary schools in Moshi municipality. Additionally, another head of school cemented the findings, when he said:

> Some teachers at my school do not acknowledge the role of SQAOs. They tend to resist change by distrusting SQAOs and rejecting their recommendations. This resistance stems from the fact that not all quality assurance officers have undergone training on quality assurance practice guidelines. Instead, they typically attend seminars and workshops to enhance their quality assurance skills. Some teachers argue that school quality

> assurance officers have nothing new to offer, as they are also teachers
> without any additional college certification in their field (R29, 2024).

The statement highlights key challenges in the implementation of School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices, particularly teacher resistance and concerns about the credibility of School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs). Some teachers express distrust toward SQAOs, often questioning their authority and rejecting their recommendations due to the perception that many lack formal training in quality assurance. This scepticism stems from the fact that most SQAOs acquire their skills through short-term seminars and workshops rather than through specialised certification. Such perceptions undermine the effectiveness of SQA efforts, as teachers may disregard valuable feedback that could otherwise contribute to instructional improvement. Addressing these issues requires targeted professional development for SQAOs, fostering collaborative relationships between educators and quality officers, and building trust through open communication and sustained capacity-building initiatives.

Affirming the above views on the challenges encountered in the course of quality assurance practice for the improvement of student academic performance, another school head said the following during an interview:

> One significant challenge I've noticed is that many SQAOs lack up-to-date
> training in current quality assurance methodologies. Education is continually
> evolving, with new teaching strategies, technological integrations, and the
> current updated or revised primary school curricula. However, some SQAOs
> haven't received adequate professional development to keep pace with these
> changes. This gap can lead to evaluations that don't fully align with
> contemporary educational practices, potentially hindering the effectiveness of
> their assessments and the subsequent support they provide to schools (R5,
> 2024).

This statement underscores a significant challenge in school quality assurance: many School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) lack up-to-date training in contemporary educational methodologies. Despite ongoing changes in teaching strategies, technology, and curricula, some SQAOs have not received sufficient professional development to keep up. TThis gap can result in evaluations that are misaligned with modern educational practices, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of SQAOs' assessments and their ability to provide meaningful support for improving student performance. Evidently, lack of enough allowances, inadequate resources for instruction and learning, short time for performing quality assurance tasks, and teachers' rejection of recommendations from SQAOs or resistance from teachers were the reasons for school quality assurance officers to be demoralised. Affirming the above finding, one of the SQAO had the following to say:

> School Quality Assurance Officers face challenges in improving education quality. The challenges include lack of motivation, time constraints, resistance from school leaders and teachers, overcrowding in public schools, and insufficient resources. These issues hinder their effectiveness in ensuring better learning outcomes. To improve, they need better funding, structured follow-up mechanisms, and improved working conditions, as well as better working conditions (SQAO, 2024).

Similarly, the SQAO went on by asserting that:

> Lack of financial resources also affects our work. Sometimes, we do not have funds for transport, accommodation, or necessary materials to conduct effective school assessments. Budget constraints make it difficult to visit all schools as frequently as needed, and this weakens the overall impact of quality assurance efforts (SQAO, 2024).

This indicates that there are multiple challenges that affect both School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) and teachers, ultimately hindering efforts to improve academic performance in primary schools within Moshi Municipality. Among the key issues are inadequate motivation stemming from low allowances, minimal incentives, and limited opportunities for career advancement—factors that diminish morale and reduce commitment to comprehensive school evaluations. Time constraints further exacerbate the problem, as SQAOs are tasked with visiting several schools in a short span, conducting assessments, offering feedback, and submitting reports, often without sufficient time for thorough analysis or meaningful follow-up. Resistance from some school leaders and teachers—who perceive these visits as punitive rather than supportive—adds to the difficulty in implementing constructive changes. Moreover, systemic issues such as overcrowded classrooms, resource shortages, and financial limitations, including lack of funding for transport, accommodation, and materials, significantly weaken the impact of quality assurance efforts. Without improved funding, clearly structured follow-up mechanisms, and enhanced professional support, the effectiveness of school quality assurance in advancing educational outcomes remains severely compromised.

Discussion
School Quality Assurance Reports and Pupils' Academic Performance
The findings of this study indicate that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) routinely provide reports following their visits, which significantly contribute to improving academic performance in primary schools. These reports play a critical role in enhancing curriculum delivery, reinforcing teacher accountability, and aligning instructional practices with ISO 9000 principles of systematic quality management. The majority of respondents perceived these reports as having a moderate to major impact on pupil

performance. This finding aligns with several previous studies. For instance, Ruga (2017) found that teachers positively acknowledged the improvements in academic performance following SQA visits, attributing this to support in curriculum interpretation. Similarly, Kassim *et al*. (2024) noted that SQA not only informs government policy but also enhances teacher support and accountability. Kosia and Lymtane (2018) further asserted that the feedback and formal reports provided by SQAOs post-classroom observation improve teaching and learning. The current study also revealed that SQA enhances academic performance by ensuring proper curriculum implementation, monitoring teacher qualifications, and evaluating the teaching and learning environment. Implementation of the recommendations from SQA reports improved teacher performance, further supporting findings by Allais (2017), who stressed that SQA involves monitoring, assessing, and reporting to uphold educational standards.

Similar findings were reported in Kenya by Ruga (2017), who found that supervisory roles of SQAOs positively influenced academic performance in Kiambu County. Paulo (2022) reported similar outcomes in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. However, divergent findings emerged in a study by Peter and Mkulu (2022) in Kwimba District, where SQA had limited impact due to communication challenges, resource constraints, and poor feedback implementation. These inconsistencies may be attributed to contextual differences, such as rural infrastructure limitations that hinder regular school visits.

Challenges Hindering Effective Implementation of Quality Assurance Practices
Despite the potential benefits of SQA, the study revealed several challenges that undermine its effectiveness. Key issues include inadequate motivation among SQAOs due to low allowances, minimal incentives, and restricted career advancement opportunities. These factors negatively affect morale and reduce the commitment to thorough school evaluations.

Time constraints were also identified as a major issue, with SQAOs required to visit multiple schools, conduct assessments, provide feedback, and submit reports within limited timeframes—often without adequate opportunities for follow-up or in-depth analysis. Resistance from school leaders and teachers, who may perceive the SQA process as punitive rather than developmental, further complicates the effective implementation of recommendations. The study also identified a lack of training in modern quality assurance techniques, which delays ISO 9000 certification and weakens the credibility of SQAOs in the eyes of teachers. This gap leads to scepticism about the

relevance and validity of their recommendations, particularly when SQAOs lack formal certification and rely primarily on workshops and seminars for their training.

These findings are consistent with other studies. Mritha and Onyango (2022), in their research in Kilimanjaro, reported challenges such as lack of motivation, inadequate resources, limited training, and insufficient time for quality assurance activities. Similarly, Peter and Mkulu (2022) noted poor communication skills, inadequate staffing, and limited funding as barriers in Kwimba. Makiya *et al*. (2022) added that weak cooperation from teachers and mismatched subject expertise further hindered effective quality assurance in Arusha. The 2017/18 Global Education Monitoring Report echoed these concerns across countries in Africa and Asia, including Tanzania. The report highlighted irregular inspections, lack of resources, and negative teacher attitudes toward inspection as key barriers—issues also reflected in this study. Notably, these findings contradict the expectations outlined in the Tanzania Revised School Quality Assurance Handbook (2024), which prescribes that SQAOs should dedicate over 80% of their visits to observing teaching and learning and gathering evidence on the school's effectiveness.

Finally, this study supports findings by Medard and Mwila (2022), who observed that although SQA guidelines were partially implemented in Temeke Municipality, where issues such as underfunding, lack of personnel, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate workspaces impeded meaningful school improvement. In sum, while SQA practices are acknowledged as crucial for enhancing academic performance, their impact is significantly limited by structural, operational, and capacity-related challenges. Addressing these issues through policy reform, increased funding, improved training, and collaborative engagement with school staff is vital for strengthening the role of SQA in Tanzania's education system.

Conclusion
This study concludes that School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) visit most public primary schools in Moshi Municipality at least once annually. Participants widely acknowledged the important role of School Quality Assurance (SQA) practices in enhancing academic performance, with the majority reporting a moderate to significant impact on pupils' learning outcomes. However, a small number of respondents perceived the impact as minimal or negligible.

The study identified several barriers affecting the effectiveness of SQA practices, which emerged from both sides—SQAOs and school teachers. Key

challenges included low motivation among SQAOs and teachers, teachers' reluctance to implement the recommendations provided in SQA reports, and the limited duration allocated for quality assurance exercises. Additionally, a lack of adequate teaching and learning resources was frequently cited as a constraint to successful implementation.

To improve the effectiveness of school quality assurance practices, the study recommends more frequent and comprehensive school visits, enhanced follow-up mechanisms, and expanded training opportunities for SQAOs. Providing incentives for teachers, ensuring better allocation of resources, fostering stronger collaboration among stakeholders, and incorporating digital tools are also essential steps toward improving school monitoring and raising academic performance in primary schools.

To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Target 4.1—which aim to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all—strengthening school quality assurance (SQA) strategies is essential for delivering relevant and effective learning outcomes by 2030. It is recommended that the government develop a digital monitoring system to streamline SQA processes and allocate sufficient funding for the training of SQA Officers in modern evaluation methodologies. Furthermore, improving teacher cooperation, increasing the number of qualified personnel, and providing modern facilities—including vehicles and ICT equipment—will enhance the frequency and quality of school visits and support the timely production of comprehensive SQA reports. Since this study focused solely on a single municipality, future research should consider expanding to rural areas and secondary schools across Tanzania to provide a broader understanding of quality assurance practices in diverse educational contexts.

References

Adegbesan, I. A. (2021). *Bodily autonomy of young children: Mothers' perspectives of appropriate acceptance or rejection of affection for their toddler and preschool aged children*. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

AFRIADI, B., Fatkar, B., Mirza, M., Fitri, F., Nur, M., Sobirov, B., Oli, M. C., Simorangkir, M. R. R., Isnaniah, I., & Prastowo, S. L. (2023). Systematic review of education quality assurance management in schools method matching. *International Education Trend Issues*, *1*(2), 58-67. https://doi.org/10.56442/ieti.v1i2.146

Allais, S. (2017). Labour market impact of National Qualification Frameworks in six countries. *ILO*.

Assenga, P., Muteti, C. M., & Mbua, F. M. (2024). Extensiveness of internal school quality assurance feedback in enhancing learners' achievement in public primary schools in Rombo District, Tanzania. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management, 12*(9), EL-05. https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsrm/v12i09.el05

Burra, L. T., & Fanuel, I. M. (2021). The role of school quality assurance in improving curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Tanzania, 12(2)
  DOI: 10.7176/JEP/12-2-10

Dismas, S., Nzima, I., & Kimaro, A. Competence-Based Curriculum in Tanzania: District school quality assurance officers' understanding and practices. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, *0*(0), 10567879231217458. https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879231217458

Elizabeth, C. M., Noel Mark, M., Rwegasha Peter, I., & Benedicto William, M. (2023). Internal quality assurers' conception on Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process: Examining lived experience of secondary School Academic Member of staff within Njombe Region, Tanzania. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities (IJRSS) ISSN:2582-6220, DOI: 10.47505/IJRSS*, *4*(7), 36-45. https://doi.org/10.47505/IJRSS.2023.V4.7.7

Eziamaka, C., Manafa, F. U., & Iheanacho, R. (2022). Influence of quality assurance measures on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra state. *Journal of Educational Research & Development*, *5*(2), 62-76.

Fomba, B. K., Talla, D. N. D. F., & Ningaye, P. (2023). Institutional quality and education quality in developing countries: Effects and transmission channels. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, *14*(1), 86-115. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-021-00869-9

Fulmes, E. Z., Mwila, P. M., & Onyango, D. O. (2024). Effect of educational equity on the quality of education in selected schools in Kwimba District, Tanzania. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, *22*(3), 72-82. DOI: 10.9734/ARJASS/2024/v22i3524

ISO *9001*. (2015). *Quality management systems – requirements*. *International Organization for Standardization.* https://www.iso.org/iso-9001-quality-management.html

Ismail, O. A., AlRiyami, R. M., & Alhosani, M. (2023). The art of assuring quality education: Internal approaches and best practices. In *Restructuring Leadership for School Improvement and Reform* (pp. 182-201). IGI Global.

Joseph, B. M. (2018). Influence of school quality assurance practices on curriculum implementation in public primary schools in Tarime Town Council, Tanzania.

Kambuga, Y., & Dadi, H. (2015). School inspection in Tanzania as a motor for education quality: Challenges and possible way forward. *Review of knowledge economy*, *2*(1), 1-13. DOI: 10.18488/journal.67/2015.2.1/67.1.1.13

Kassim, K. S., Matete, R. E., Mwinjuma, J. S., & Ali, H. D. (2024). The contribution of school quality assurance for the improvement of instructional practices in secondary schools in Zanzibar. *Journal of Issues and Practice in Education*, *16*(1), 100-118.

Katete, S. (2023). Ensuring students' academic achievement through quality assurance and control in Tanzania: Evidence from government technical institutions. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*, *11*(2).

Kaunda, J. K. (2023). *Implications of smart cities on the adjacent land uses: A Case of Konza City in Kenya* University of Nairobi.

Komen, A. Y., & Nyandoro, K. (2023). Evaluating the influence of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP) on quality education in public primary and secondary schools in Kenya: A Case of Marigat Sub-County. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, *4*(1), 219-226.

Kosia, E., & Lymtane, E. (2018). Effectiveness of school quality assurance officers' communication styles on improving teaching and learning in Arusha city public secondary schools. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, *5*(8), 160-168.

Kukali, A. (2023). The relationship between quality assurance and standards assessment and public primary schools performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Examinations. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, *7*(1), 13-30.

Makiya, R., Mnyanyi, C., & Ngirwa, C. (2023). Examining school quality assurance criteria for enhancing learning achievements in public primary schools in Arusha Region, Tanzania. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, *20*(2), 1-13.
DOI: 10.9734/ARJASS/2023/v20i2442

Mbwana, S., & Onyango, D. O. (2021). Perceived influence of financial disbursement on school quality assurance in Nyamagana District, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, *2*(2), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2021v02i02.0070

Medard, G., & Mwila, P. M. (2022). School quality assurance guidelines: Its implementation and challenges in public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *6*(10), 124-133.

Mrema, D., Ndayambaje, I., Ntawiha, P., & Ndabaga, E. (2023). The Initiatives for enforcing the quality assurance standards in fostering

Universities' Compliance in Tanzania. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, *4*(2), 1298-1313. https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.4.2.131

Mtitu, E., & Komba, W. (2023). Enhancing teacher professional development through school quality assurance in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development,* *60*(1), 33-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/ijed.2023.158700

Muricho, P. W. (2023). Analysis of education reforms and challenges in kenya: A historical perspective. *International Journal of Current Innovations in Advanced Research*, *6*(1), 36-41. https://doi.org/10.47957/ijciar.v6i1.148

Obiakor, M. (2023). Management of policy implementation process on universal basic education (UBE) in Enugu education zone. *UNIZIK Journal of Educational Management and Policy*, *5*(1), 129-145. https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/ujoemp/article/view/2170

Ochieng'Opalo, K. (2023). What is the point of schooling? Education access and policy in Tanzania since, 1961. *RISE Political Econ. Pap.* https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-2023/PE07

Ogega, D., & Ogochi, G. (2020). Influence of teacher trainings organized by quality assurance and standards officers on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Gucha Sub-County, Kenya.

Olowe, M. (2023). Quality assurance: An imperative for effective implementation of business education programme in Nigeria. *Quality Assurance*, *4*(8), 1-9. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8237309

Olowonefa, G., & Ogunode, N. (2021). Quality assurance programme in public secondary schools in Nigeria: Problems and the way forward. *Middle European Scientific Bulletin*, *19*, 46-58.

Ombay, S. J., & Mrema, J. K. (2024). The impact of school quality assurance Practices on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Mafia District, Tanzania. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, *8*(4), 579-587.

Omolewa, M. (2007). Traditional African modes of education: Their relevance in the modern world. *International Review of Education*, *53*(5), 593-612. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-007-9060-1

Owan, V. J., & Bassey, B. A. (2021). External school evaluations and student performance in Nigerian secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Studies,* *39*(4), 55-75. https://doi.org/10.1016/afjes.2021.00392

Paschal, M. J., Pacho, T. O., & Adewoyin, O. (2022). Teaching methods applied in higher education during C0VID-19 pandemic in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, *9*(1), 27. https://doi.org/10.15739/IJEPRR.22.003

Paulo, P. S. (2022). *The contribution of school quality assurance practices on Secondary Schools Academic Achievement in Municipality*. The Open University of Tanzania.

Phillymon, D. (2020). *The contribution of quality assurance and control on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Missenyi District, Kagera Region, Tanzania.* Master's thesis, The Open University of Tanzania

Ruga, T. W. (2017). *Teachers' perceptions on the influence of quality assurance and standards officers' supervisory role on pupils' academic improvement in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.*

Senkoro, M. (2022). The impact of school inspections on student learning outcomes in Tanzania. *Tanzanian Journal of Educational Research, 14*(2), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.1080/tjer.2022.147598

Spaull, N., & Taylor, S. (2022). School quality and learning outcomes in South Africa. *Journal of African Educational Research, 45*(2), 201-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/00336287.2022.1468904

Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE). (2023). The role of technology in quality assurance for improved student performance. *TIE Research Report*. Retrieved from https://www.tie.go.tz/research2023

Tanzania Ministry of Education. (2014). *Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014*. Government of Tanzania.

UNESCO. (2022). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Quality assurance in education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sdg

Wale-Oshinowo, B. A., Omobowale, A. O., Adeyeye, M. M., & Lebura, S. (2023). Least developed countries in Africa. In S. N. Romaniuk & P. N. Marton (Eds.). *The Palgrave encyclopedia of global security studies* (pp. 882-897). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74319-6_346

Wanjiru, F. & Mukolwe, E. (2023). The role of school quality assurance in improving academic performance: Evidence from Kenya. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 5*(1), 98-110. https://doi.org/10.1080/eaess.2023.100589

.