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The Significance of Implementing Quality Assurance in Schools to Enhance Learner Performance

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Abstract. The study reported on this paper explored the significance of implementing quality assurance measures in schools to enhance learner performance. The research was conducted in six secondary schools within the Tshwane West District, with two principals, two deputy principals and two departmental heads purposively selected as participants. As integral members of the School Management Teams (SMTs), these individuals play a pivotal role in managing school operations and ensuring effective teaching and learning. Using a qualitative research approach, data were gathered through interviews which were transcribed and analysed within an interpretive paradigm to uncover recurring themes in participants' perspectives on quality assurance. The findings indicate that while SMTs acknowledge the critical role of quality assurance in upholding educational standards, challenges such as time constraints and workload often impede effective implementation. The study advocates for the empowerment of SMTs and other relevant stakeholders through the provision of greater authority and resources to develop and implement school-specific quality assurance frameworks. This support is essential for fostering sustained improvements in educational delivery and learner outcomes. The study concludes that quality assurance facilitates monitoring, supervision, control

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and moderation as key processes in upholding educational standards.

Keywords: quality assurance; school management teams; learner performance; teaching; education standards

1. Introduction

This study investigated the importance of implementing quality assurance measures in schools as a strategy to improve learner performance. The focus is on six secondary schools in the Tshwane West District, where two principals, two deputy principals and two departmental heads were purposively selected to participate. These School Management Team (SMT) members hold key responsibilities in managing and assuring the quality of teaching and learning within their schools. Quality assurance involves systematically managing, evaluating and enhancing educational processes to ensure that outputs, plans and services meet established standards. However, in many Tshwane West schools, SMTs are not fully executing their roles in ensuring effective teaching and learning owing to various systemic and operational challenges.

Several reasons contribute to poor education quality, including inadequate curriculum design, limited resources and infrastructure, unfavourable learning environments, ineffective policies and insufficient staff development (Zickafoose et al., 2024; Ngobeni, Chibambo, & Divala, 2023; Klöker et al., 2024). Moreover, school leadership often emphasises quality at the strategic level, influenced by external support and funding tied to performance improvement. According to Afriadi et al. (2023), quality assurance ensures that the educational process aligns with regulatory and quality benchmarks, creating inclusive and high-performing learning environments.

Khamidi, et al. (2024) further assert that implementing quality assurance systems involves planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation and ongoing improvement to achieve excellence. This study aimed to assess how SMTs influence the quality of teaching and learning and identifies ways schools can be supported through effective monitoring, evaluation and developmental strategies to ensure high-quality education and improved learner outcomes.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the significance of implementing quality assurance measures in schools to enhance learner performance. By examining the practices, perceptions and challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs), the study sought to understand how structured quality assurance processes contribute to maintaining high educational standards and improving teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools. Quality assurance plays a critical role in enhancing learner performance by ensuring that all educational activities are carried out with a commitment to quality. According to Musaigwa (2023), organisational change failure differs; it may be minor technical errors, breakdowns and large-scale failure caused by transformational change strategies

and mistakes that happen during incremental change. However, effective quality assurance cannot be achieved without strong leadership and management. Nadeem (2023) emphasises that amid the diversity of quality assurance strategies, the pivotal role of leadership in guiding their implementation and effectiveness cannot be overstated, particularly principals and members of the SMT, to foster the engagement of all stakeholders. Grounded in qualitative methodology, data were collected directly from SMT members through individual interviews. Thematic analysis is a highly popular technique among qualitative researchers for analysing qualitative data, which usually comprises thick descriptive data (Naeem et al., 2023).

The qualitative approach enables rich, detailed analysis by focusing on participants' insights and interactions within their specific contexts. This method prioritizes contextual understanding and seeks to uncover meaning through interpretative engagement with participant narratives (Toner & Call-Cummings, 2024). Data analysis is guided by participant meanings and is iterative in nature; the researcher continually revises the research plan in response to emerging patterns and insights (Karcher et al., 2024).

Interpretation of data involves a reflexive stance, integrating both participants' voices and the researcher's perspective while remaining grounded in the realities of the educational setting (Ide & Beddoe, 2024). The depth and flexibility of qualitative research—especially its capacity for adaptation and responsiveness—make it particularly well-suited to studies investigating complex educational phenomena such as quality assurance implementation (Banks et al., 2023; Carless & Young 2024).

1.2 Main Research Question:

What is the significance of implementing quality assurance measures in schools for enhancing learner performance?

1.3 Background of the study

Advancements in instructional practices and overall school management are significantly driven by the implementation of structured quality assurance (QA) processes, often overseen by QA and Whole School Evaluation (WSE) officers through scheduled visits. These external evaluations are designed to uphold rigorous educational standards and assess their real impact on school improvement (Mcheka & Mislav, 2025). In Kenya, QA and WSE officers collaborate to identify strengths and gaps in curriculum delivery—spanning teaching, learning and related activities—thereby enhancing instructional effectiveness (Lukorito et al., 2023).

Quality assurance strategies also serve to enrich teaching and learning resources, expand professional development and bolster support in curriculum management, assessments and in-service training (Chamba & Chikusvura, 2024; Sortwell et al., 2024). While QA officers hold primary responsibility for ensuring delivery of quality education, school leadership—such as department heads and deputy principals—play a critical role in maintaining internal institutional

quality, which must be established prior to external evaluations (Mcheka & Mislav, 2025).

Novoria (2022) asserts that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers must evaluate curriculum implementation at the school level, underscoring that school management bears daily responsibility for maintaining educational standards. Despite these mechanisms, many schools continue to face significant challenges in achieving strong academic performance. Effective quality assurance cannot occur without strong leadership. As Mononyane (2022) notes, managing quality assurance requires a steadfast commitment from principals and SMTs to build understanding and foster collaboration with stakeholders. The study's novelty lies in its situated, leadership-focused and practical examination of quality assurance in schools, offering actionable recommendations grounded in firsthand accounts of school managers.

2. Literature Review

South Africa's current education system is failing most of its youth, largely owing to the repeated implementation of unsuccessful initiatives aimed at monitoring educational quality. Despite high public education spending – nearly 20% of the total national budget – the system continues to produce low learning outcomes, especially in foundational literacy and numeracy. For example, approximately 78% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning, and the country performs significantly below international averages in TIMSS and PIRLS assessments (Dube-Londt, 2025; Mail & Guardian, 2023).

Efforts to reboot education have included policy changes, but these have struggled with inadequate implementation, governance failures, underqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and decaying infrastructure (Siwali, 2025; Mail & Guardian, 2023). Youth unemployment remains persistently high – over 60% among 15–24-year-olds – largely attributable to an education system that leaves graduates ill-equipped for both tertiary study and the job market (Siwali, 2025; Naidoo, 2024). Therefore, while improving education quality, skills development and innovation are cited as key priorities, the country continues to be hampered by fragmented policies and systemic dysfunction. The result is that most youth continue to miss out on meaningful learning, limiting both personal and national development prospects (Kahkonen et al., 2025; Siwali, 2025).

The Commission emphasises the need for ongoing policy reform, particularly given the inadequate quality of education experienced by many black learners. This lack of effective quality assurance and limited teaching and learning efforts contribute to diminished employment prospects and restricted upward mobility, ultimately impeding national economic potential. Several systemic issues further hinder educational progress in South Africa, including poor management, underqualified school principals, lack of accountability and teacher underperformance. Research consistently underscores that teachers are the single most critical factor in student outcomes, directly influencing academic achievement (Olawale, 2023; UNESCO & ITF for Education 2030; 2025). While external factors such as learners' socioeconomic background remain significant,

teacher quality remains a controllable and pivotal element (Olawale, 2023). As renowned education economist Hanushek notes, “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” (Hanushek, 2025).

2.1 The Importance of Quality Assurance in Schools

Quality assurance in teaching and learning is indispensable. In response to persistent underperformance in secondary schools, stakeholders have increasingly called for strengthened accountability and elevated educational standards (Ndlovu, 2024). Education is widely recognised as a foundational tool for societal development and nation-building (Klinck et al., 2023). For quality outcomes, SMTs must coordinate efforts among teachers, learners and the school environment—ensuring competent educators, student readiness and adequate infrastructure (Ndlovu, 2024; *Frontiers in Education*, 2023).

Establishing clear, shared expectations within the SMT and across broader school structures is essential for driving effective quality assurance processes (*Frontiers in Education*, 2023). Quality assurance initiatives support accountability, inform learners and facilitate institutional accreditation (Kumar et al., 2024; Arja et al., 2025). Active SMT involvement in quality initiatives fosters teacher ownership of challenges and their resolution (Mononyane, 2022).

This collaborative culture enhances team cohesion and interpersonal relationships among educators, fostering empowerment and commitment to continuous improvement. Moreover, active engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs), where teachers critically reflect upon practice and address instructional challenges together, has been shown to promote reflective dialogue and deepen professional commitment (Pilotti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, embedded quality-assurance feedback systems—whether peer, student or administrative—foster constructive dialogue and reflection on both internal and external standards, which is critical for reinforcing shared expectations and advancing teaching quality (Pilotti et al., 2024). Ultimately, fostering a culture of quality leads to increased staff knowledge, motivation and engagement.

2.2 Strategies for establishing quality assurance in schools.

SMTs should cultivate professional, dynamic leadership that fosters collaboration and unity between SMT members and teachers in pursuit of the school’s goals. Effective leadership involves setting a strong example and serving as role models for others (Nguyen & Ng, 2022). Participatory and transparent management practices—where SMTs delegate responsibilities with developmental intent—are shown to be effective in promoting school improvement (Masoge & Mataboge, 2021). When delegating tasks, it is essential to provide clear explanations and set well-defined expectations to ensure accountability and clarity (Lekoloane, 2023).

Incentivising high performance through strategic allocation of funds can enhance teacher motivation and reduce resistance to institutional changes. Ndlovu (2025) emphasises that involving learners in formative assessment discussions helps to shape teaching practices and positively impacts education quality. Teachers must

be attuned to learners' developmental stages and adapt their instruction, accordingly, using optimal methods and support structures. The necessity for highly competent teachers in delivering quality education remains critical and cannot be overstated (Fatima, 2023).

2.3 Barriers to implement quality assurance in schools.

The persistent failure of quality assurance in teaching and learning across many schools remains a significant concern for government authorities, SMTs, educators, parents and other key stakeholders. SMTs often face considerable challenges, including insufficient time and the sustained commitment required for effective implementation. Their daily responsibilities are typically fragmented by numerous short interactions with various stakeholders, making it difficult to allocate time for crucial activities such as curriculum evaluation, lesson observation and professional dialogue with teachers (Maphalala, et al., 2023).

Additionally, differing teacher perspectives on instructional methods can further complicate the implementation of quality assurance frameworks (Mohzana et al., 2024). SMTs may also lack up-to-date curriculum knowledge and instructional expertise owing to evolving pedagogical trends, limiting their capacity to guide and support teaching and learning effectively. Moreover, teacher commitment, professional competency and the lack of clear role adaptation, along with weak policy implementation and inadequate technical support, often result in quality assurance becoming more rhetorical than actionable in practice.

School culture presents another challenge. Defined by the environment and individuals within it, a school's culture can either support or hinder quality assurance efforts (Tamadoni et al., 2024). External issues such as break-ins by local criminals can create unsafe conditions for both staff and learners, while theft often depletes critical school resources (Mohzana et al., 2024). Broader societal issues – such as poverty, lack of transportation, low household income, illness, unplanned pregnancies and substance abuse – also contribute to learner absenteeism, thereby obstructing the successful implementation of quality assurance initiatives (Kanu et al., 2024).

The application of professional norms and the internal dynamics of decision-making within SMTs significantly influence their operational effectiveness. Recent research has shown that SMTs often navigate complex power relationships in school environments, which can lead to prioritising consensus and teacher compliance over instructional leadership (Monyane, 2024; Nyoni et al., 2024). In contexts where SMTs lack the capacity or confidence to assert formal leadership roles – often due to political appointments or insufficient training – they may deliberately relinquish formal authority to maintain staff cohesion (Monyane et al., 2023).

This compliance-oriented leadership model, while seemingly cooperative, frequently undermines instructional supervision and weakens the structures needed for consistent quality assurance. Moreover, SMTs that adopt autocratic or hierarchical professional norms tend to suppress participatory decision-making,

which further alienates teachers from the school's instructional mission and reduces the potential for reflective professional growth (Nyoni et al., 2024). Therefore, the internal decision-making dynamics within SMTs, when shaped by professional norms that emphasise control or appeasement, can detract from their intended role as pedagogical leaders and quality custodians.

2.4 Roles of SMTs in assuring quality of teaching and learning

Kilag et al. (2023) found that teacher effectiveness is significantly influenced by the empowerment of school management. When school leaders are empowered, they are better positioned to provide timely resources and support, which can lead to increased teacher motivation and job satisfaction. More importantly, strategic resource allocation and fostering collaboration among teachers enable school leaders to cultivate professional learning communities that promote continuous improvement in instructional practices. These efforts ultimately contribute to enhanced learner outcomes.

The SMT, therefore, plays a critical role in shaping the success of educational institutions. Leadership approaches that emphasise shared decision-making and a supportive school climate have a positive effect on teacher performance. When educators are included in the decision-making process and their input is valued, they feel recognised and are more committed to improving student learning experiences. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and learning, SMTs adhere to established procedures and apply appropriate supervision strategies. It is their responsibility to enhance teacher competencies and overall performance – an essential function in driving school growth and academic success (Uy et al., 2024).

According to Munna (2023), leadership in educational management significantly contributes to the advancement of instructional leadership (IL), which serves as an alternative pathway to high-quality professional development. The instructional leadership framework focuses on building productive interactions between SMTs and teachers, thereby raising instructional standards. This framework integrates elements such as knowledge development, curriculum alignment, professional growth and goal-oriented strategies. Key approaches within this framework include mentoring, modelling best practices, fostering leadership skills and adopting learner-centred methodologies to improve teaching quality and institutional effectiveness.

2.5 Achieving quality assurance in schools.

Quality serves as the benchmark in all areas, and within education, it signifies the achievement of learning objectives – commonly referred to as educational quality. To attain this level of excellence, schools must implement a robust quality assurance system. The overall quality of a school is reflected in how it effectively utilises available resources to meet its goals. This quality is not limited to academic outcomes but is shaped by the collective performance of all school components, including the principal, deputy principal, heads of department, teachers, support staff, learners and the school governing body (Mohzana et al., 2024).

Olawale (2023) found that teacher peers with stronger academic qualifications, extensive teaching experience and higher pedagogical-content knowledge significantly improve learner engagement and academic performance in South African schools.

Continuous professional development is essential to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in the teaching and learning process. However, Idris et al. (2022) caution that not all educational institutions are equipped to deliver high-quality education owing to various systemic and structural challenges. To foster a culture of quality assurance, educational institutions must be guided by structured training, clear standards and continuous evaluation. Establishing and maintaining quality requires standardised procedures aligned with the National Quality assurance in education programmes supports institutions in meeting established standards, therefore, playing a crucial role in enhancing the internal quality of education.

3. Research Method

3.1 Data Collection

In this study, six secondary schools in the Tshwane West District were purposively selected to capture the perspectives of SMTs—specifically, two principals, two deputy principals and two departmental heads. The methodology employed is qualitative, ideal for exploring the lived experiences and decision-making processes of SMT members without imposing predefined frameworks (Shitiba et al., 2023; Wilson et al., 2022). Qualitative approaches prioritise non-numerical data collection, interpretation and participant narratives—allowing in-depth exploration of contextual language, behaviours and perceptions (Cohen et al., 2023).

Commonly used tools include semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations, which enable rich data triangulation and holistic understanding (Shitiba et al., 2023; Wilson et al., 2022). Researchers follow structured stages such as informed consent, audio or written transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and measures to ensure credibility—including peer debriefing and audit trails (Shitiba et al., 2023). As Rutberg and Bouikidis (2024) emphasise, rigorous qualitative designs require careful planning, reflexivity about potential researcher bias and methodical triangulation to validate findings. This approach is particularly well-suited to contexts where SMT internal dynamics and instructional leadership practices are under-researched and not yet clearly understood.

3.2 Selection of participants

Researchers must determine the appropriate number of individuals, groups or entities to be observed in a study, a decision largely guided by the research design and goals. Sampling refers to the process of intentionally selecting particular people, settings, events or behaviours for inclusion in a study. It offers several practical advantages. First, it simplifies the research process by enabling the study of a representative segment of the population rather than the entire group, therefore, making the analysis more focused and manageable (Stratton, 2024; Bakarich et al., 2023). Second, it saves time, especially when dealing with large or

geographically dispersed populations, where gathering data from every individual would be logistically unfeasible and time-intensive (Tufford et al., 2023). Third, sampling reduces costs, as conducting interviews, administering questionnaires, or observing all members of a target population may require significant financial resources. Effective sampling allows researchers to balance methodological rigor with budgetary and logistical constraints while still producing reliable and meaningful results (Stratton, 2024; Tufford et al., 2023). These advantages make sampling a core component of research methodology, particularly in qualitative and mixed-methods studies where depth and contextual understanding are prioritised.

3.3 Data Analysis:

The researchers purposively selected six secondary schools from the Tshwane West District to explore the role of SMTs in quality assurance. The sample included two principals, two deputy principals, and two departmental heads. They were chosen for their direct involvement in instructional oversight. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, audio-recorded and manually transcribed.

Data analysis followed six-phase thematic analysis—beginning with familiarisation, then coding to identify recurring patterns, followed by theme development, reviewing, defining, and writing up findings—aligning with Braun & Clarke’s model and incorporating advancements such as explicit keyword selection and conceptual modelling (Ahmed et al., 2025; Naeem et al., 2023). The process was situated within an interpretive paradigm, enabling the researchers to engage deeply with participants’ contextual meanings and subjective experiences of quality assurance in teaching and learning (Naomi et al., 2024; Arora, 2023).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

Participants emphasised the critical role of quality assurance in schools, highlighting its importance in monitoring, supervision, control, and moderation, all of which are essential for standardisation. They noted that effective quality assurance not only helps to sustain national education standards but also upholds internal school performance benchmarks.

The nature and extent of required monitoring and supervision are influenced by factors such as school size, scope of oversight and geographical coverage. Jordan et al. (2024) and Hepriyanti et al. (2023) identified several types of supervision, including full-scale monitoring and supervision; routine monitoring and supervision; follow-up monitoring and supervision; emergency monitoring and supervision; developmental monitoring and supervision; accreditation monitoring and supervision; and internal monitoring and supervision. The educational landscape is inherently complex, shaped by diverse elements such as curriculum content, learning environments, school leadership, learner preparedness, funding, and systemic organisation. There is no single solution to these multifaceted challenges.

In South Africa, various organisations are working to develop effective quality assurance processes. However, in regions such as Tshwane West, systemic policy challenges have left many SMTs uncertain about proper quality assurance procedures. Assistance is needed to guide schools through these processes. Quality assurance bodies should function as supportive entities rather than burdensome regulators. For example, the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) report could be used as a constructive tool to inform improvements and guide change.

Although it is difficult to make definitive educational judgments—given the diverse contexts and challenges—monitoring remains essential to improving quality. Even within underperforming and evolving education systems, consistent monitoring and feedback are necessary. SMTs must remain open to external critique, which can play a vital role in informed decision-making and institutional growth. In severe cases, quality assurance bodies must be willing to make difficult decisions, including discrediting institutions whose programmes are significantly misaligned with expected standards, and which negatively impact their school communities.

A dedicated SMT member can drive improvements in teaching and learning and cultivate a culture that prioritises continuous quality enhancement. Teachers, as the most valuable instructional resource, must possess deep subject knowledge, pedagogical skills and the capacity to deliver content effectively while providing meaningful feedback. Schools also require strong internal and external operational systems to ensure the efficient use of human, technological and material resources—critical foundations for sustainability and institutional development. The educational training system should be centred around the learners' needs, with a continual focus on improving both the delivery and evaluation of learning outcomes. This learner-focused system ensures that schools can consistently meet and assess the desired educational goals.

4.2 Discussion

Participants in the study emphasised that quality assurance is fundamental in ensuring effective teaching and learning in schools. It plays a critical role in monitoring, supervision, control and moderation, thereby promoting standardisation and maintaining both national and institutional benchmarks (Mensah, 2022). In this region, as elsewhere, schools face issues like policy ambiguity, insufficient training and inadequate support structures, which undermine the operationalisation of quality assurance frameworks (Bakare & Tiamiyu, 2025; Mahdi et al., 2025).

Research has shown that quality assurance must not be perceived as a burden but rather as a supportive mechanism. Tools like the WSE report can be used constructively to guide schools in identifying performance gaps and improving existing practices (Bariham et al., 2025). However, many SMTs struggle with time constraints and heavy workloads, which prevent them from fully engaging in instructional supervision and curriculum evaluation (Cansoy et al., 2025).

A committed SMT, supported by strong instructional leadership, can foster a culture of continuous improvement and high performance. Such teams are critical in empowering teachers – who remain the most valuable resource in the learning environment – to engage in reflective practices, develop pedagogical competencies and deliver content effectively (Jayadi et al., 2025).

For quality assurance to be sustainable, schools must also strengthen their internal systems – covering human resources, infrastructure, technology and data management – which are foundational to institutional growth (Ashraf et al., 2024). Furthermore, the educational training system must be learner-centred, constantly adapting to meet the evolving needs of students through systematic monitoring, feedback and evaluation. Eventually, the discussion highlights that instructional supervision is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process embedded in school culture. Effective quality assurance requires strategic leadership, stakeholder engagement and a robust framework that aligns with both national policies and localised school contexts (Mahdi et al., 2025; Bariham et al., 2025).

5. Implications For Policy and Practice

The findings of this study reveal several key implications for educational policy and school-level practices aimed at enhancing quality assurance and learner performance. Firstly, education policymakers must recognise the strategic importance of quality assurance not only as a compliance mechanism but as a developmental tool that facilitates continuous improvement. Participants emphasised its role in enabling structured monitoring, supervision and standardisation across schools. In districts like Tshwane West, where SMTs report uncertainty around quality assurance processes, capacity-building policies are essential (Klinck et al., 2023).

Training and mentorship should be prioritised to strengthen the competencies of SMTs in both instructional leadership and performance monitoring (Bakare & Tiamiyu, 2025; Cansoy et al., 2025). Moreover, quality assurance should be embedded into the school improvement cycle, supported by practical instruments such as the WSE report. This tool should be reframed from being an evaluative burden to a collaborative guide that identifies gaps and recommends data-informed solutions (Bariham et al., 2025).

Secondly, policy directives must also ensure that quality assurance bodies act as partners rather than punitive regulators. Involving schools in co-designing improvement plans and offering targeted support will foster trust and enhance implementation fidelity. Open channels for external critique, when constructively received, can significantly enrich institutional decision-making and long-term school growth (Ashraf et al., 2024).

For school-level practice, SMTs must adopt a leadership approach rooted in collaboration, feedback and professional development. Empowered SMTs can foster a positive school culture that encourages innovation and teacher autonomy, both of which are critical to driving quality instruction (Jayadi et al., 2025). As frontline instructional leaders, principals and departmental heads must be given

the time, resources, and authority to engage meaningfully in classroom supervision and pedagogical mentoring (Cansoy et al., 2025).

Thirdly, policy and practice must converge around a learner-centred model of quality education; one that is responsive to the evolving needs of learners and grounded in continuous assessment and reflection. Sustainable quality assurance systems should be underpinned by effective use of data, robust infrastructure and a commitment to equity and inclusivity (Ashraf et al., 2024).

6. Recommendations

6.1 Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Standards

SMTs should adopt and sustain a framework built around the four "E's" of quality assurance:

Effectiveness: SMTs should foster environments that positively influence teacher motivation, professional capacity and classroom practices. Their impact, though often indirect, is shaped by multiple variables, including, staff dynamics and institutional culture.

Efficiency: Teachers must demonstrate content mastery and utilise effective instructional strategies to positively influence learner performance. SMTs should ensure proper content delivery.

Evidence: Systematic in-service and pre-service training should be conducted to address SMT-identified challenges. Skills should be contextually relevant to ensure credibility and practical implementation. **Equity:** SMTs should prioritise inclusive access to academic success by creating enabling conditions that support all learners equitably.

6.2 Development of Observable Quality Indicators

To remain responsive to evolving educational demands, SMTs must identify and act upon clearly defined quality indicators, as outlined by Cooke, Schuler, and Varma (2021):

Post Practices: Reflecting on previous practices to assess progression.

Current Practices: Evaluating how present approaches align with best practices.

Next Practices: Envisioning future strategies for growth and excellence.

Best Practices: Recognising practices that have proven successful and promoting their widespread implementation to elevate the current standard. This shifts the focus from traditional teaching methods (teacher-centered, content-focused) to learner autonomy, competency development, and measurable outcomes. It aligns with global trends in education such as Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Constructive Alignment. Quality is no longer seen as a static goal (meeting a standard once) but as a dynamic process requiring regular monitoring, feedback, and enhancement.

7. Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of quality assurance in enhancing teaching and learning within secondary schools. Participants affirmed that quality assurance facilitates monitoring, supervision, control and moderation—key processes in upholding educational standards. They emphasised that effective quality assurance not only supports the broader basic education system but also helps to sustain each school's internal standards. The nature and extent of monitoring and supervision required are influenced by factors such as school size and regional coverage capacity.

Despite its importance, education remains a multifaceted system, complicated by variables such as content, management, resources, and learner readiness. In the Tshwane West District, quality assurance remains a pressing concern owing to ongoing policy challenges and lack of clarity among SMTs. These teams often struggle with implementation owing to heavy workloads and limited time. The study concludes that schools require more targeted support in developing and executing effective quality assurance strategies. Oversight bodies should provide guidance rather than impose burdens, using tools like the WSE report to inspire meaningful change.

Furthermore, SMTs must be receptive to constructive external feedback, which is vital for improvement and informed decision-making. A committed SMT can significantly enhance instructional quality and help foster a culture of continuous improvement. Teachers, as the most critical educational resource, must be well-trained and supported to deliver high-quality instruction. Finally, the school environment must be equipped with the necessary internal and external structures to ensure optimal use of human and material resources—forming a strong foundation for school growth and educational sustainability.

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