

**CHALLENGES FACING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
STANDARDS OFFICERS IN SUPERVISING IMPLEMENTATION
OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN GATANGA
DISTRICT, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Regina and Stanley who worked tirelessly to see me through my Education. It is also dedicated to my wife Mary and my children who gave me encouragement, moral and financial support during the programme.

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I acknowledge the support of my employer who gave me financial support and time in order to engage in this programme. I also acknowledge the support of my lecturers who took me through the course. Special thanks go to Dr. Libese and Dr. Ogeta who gave in their valuable time to assist me through the project.

ABSTRACT

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya brought with it challenges that could have a negative impact on quality of education. The purpose of the study was to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in facilitating the implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. The study was based on the theory of an Effective School by Lezotte (2001). According to this theory, an effective school, measured in student achievement, demonstrates the joint presence of quality and equity. Such a school demonstrates strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home – school relations, and opportunity to learn/time on task. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Information was sought from all the QASOs, the District Education Officer (DEO), and the headteachers from the 48 public primary schools in Gatanga District. Simple random sampling was used to select 10% of public primary schools. The study sample comprised of one District Education Officer, 5 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, 20 headteachers, and 40 teachers from 20 public primary schools in Gatanga District. The study employed two main types of instruments for data collection: interview schedules and questionnaires. Questionnaires gathered data from headteachers while interview schedules guided interviews to be held with the DEO and the QASOs. A pilot study was conducted to assist in measuring and improving the reliability and validity of the instruments. Qualitative data was analyzed by organizing it into similar themes and tallying the number of similar responses and reporting them thematically in line with the research questions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. Findings are presented in frequency counts, means and percentages. The results of data analysis are presented in frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts. The study established that most teachers of primary schools in Gatanga District have positive attitudes toward role of QASOs in education quality assurance. However, some teachers had negative attitudes; as a result they failed to implement recommendations made by QASOs after inspection. The QASO officers were not facing any major challenges related to attitude of teachers. This is in contrast to the past, when teachers feared QASO officers and considered them to be fault finders. The study concluded that although QASOs inspect some schools regularly, some schools are not often visited. This is mainly because of lack of reliable means of transport, lack of adequate resources for the QASO officers, and lack of cooperation from teachers and headteachers for instance failing to implement recommendations. The study is significant in that the findings could provide the Ministry of Education with data on the challenges that quality assurance and standards officers are facing in supervision of curriculum implementation in primary schools. This could assist the Ministry in coming up with necessary measures to improve quality assurance and standards of education. Based on the study findings, the government is likely to be in a position to come up with strategies to improve the skills of QASOs in order to be more effective.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEO	: Area Education Officer
DEB	: District Education Board
DEO	: District Education Officer
DQAS	: Department of Quality Assurance and Standards
ERS	: Economic Recovery Strategy
FPE	: Free Primary Education
GNP	: Gross National Product
KANU	: Kenya African National Union
KESI	: Kenya Education Staff Institute
KIE	: Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC	: Kenya National Examinations Council
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
MoEST	: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
OAU	: Organization of African Unity
PRSP	: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QASOs	: Quality Assurance and Standards Officers
TAC	: Teachers Advisory Centre
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	: Universal Primary Education
ZIS	: Zonal Inspector of Schools
SPRED	: Strengthening Primary Education
PRISM	: Primary School Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Abagi and Odipo (1997), education reform efforts in less industrialized countries have aimed at making education an effective vehicle for national development. Governments, policy makers, and civil society have emphasized that developing countries need to invest more in education and ensure that systems of education are efficiently managed, to maximize limited funds allocated to the sector to ensure cost-recovery measures are adopted. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2000), states that, many governments in developing countries allocated much of their resources to education after independence. This was in recognition of the fact that education was needed to foster national development. This resulted to considerable growth of educational activities world over. To date, according to UNESCO (2005), education is one of the largest sectors in most countries. Kenya is no exception to this trend of increasing allocation of resources towards education.

Since independence, Kenya has given education a very high priority. In her study, Mugo (2006) found that expenditure on education averaged between five and seven percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1991/92 and 2002/03 fiscal years. The level of educational expenditures declined in real terms during the early 1990s due to the economic declines of that time, but recovered to previous levels thereafter. According to Waweru (2004), Kenya appears to be spending significantly more on education compared with other African countries. Kenya's expenditure on education was 6.7 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1995 compared to 5.1, 4.7, 4.0 and 2.6 percent for Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia and Uganda respectively.

Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992) observe that when Kenya became independent in 1963 and was accepted as a member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), it adopted the Addis Ababa Conference recommendation on Universal Primary Education (UPE). Subsequently, the National Assembly adapted the recommendations. In 1963, the ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU) formulated the KANU Manifesto, which articulated the provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE) (Ministry of Education, 1994). In its efforts to fulfil this commitment, Republic of Kenya (1976) states that the government abolished payment of tuition fees in primary schools from standard one to four in 1974. This trend led to an increase in demand for education from the growing population. The total enrolment in primary schools shot up from 1,816,017 pupils in 1973 to 2,705,878 pupils in 1974, which represented an increase of 49 per cent (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Republic of Kenya (1988) on the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, chaired by Kamunge, recommended increased cost sharing between the government, parents and communities in the provision of educational services.

In a study Conducted in 30 public secondary schools from Rigoma Division of Nyamira District, Motuka (1999) evidently shows one of the consequences of cost sharing as a decline in school attendance and enrolment, since many parents cannot raise the amount of money required to meet the cost of their children's education. These costs include uniforms, textbooks and other instructional material. Also, the parents were to contribute to school construction and maintenance costs. Further, the inadequate provision of complementary inputs like textbooks meant that the effectiveness of teachers in delivering quality education was reduced significantly.

In 2003, the Kenya government implemented free and compulsory primary education. This government policy on free primary education brought Kenya in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Wealth and Employment Creation goal of achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015. Gatimu (2005) asserts that after the introduction of FPE, an estimated 1.3 million children, who were previously out-of-school, enrolled for primary education. A study by Siwolo (2004) established that in many schools, the headteachers found themselves with more children to enrol than before. She further states that since the government had not given an age limit, even those who were 'over-age' were enrolled in schools.

One criticism that came as a result of the introduction of FPE was that quality of primary education would be compromised. Government and stakeholders are obliged to ensure the provision of quality education for Kenya's children regardless of gender, status, ethics, social or cultural origin. This is not only necessary for the learner, but also for the achievement of other national aspirations and objectives like economic development, social progress, peace and democracy. The role of ensuring quality in educational institutions in Kenya rests with the inspectorate arm of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education (2000) states that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) are charged with the responsibility of inspection of schools and supervision of teachers to promote effective implementation of curriculum and ensure education programs are being delivered thus acting as an important quality audit.

As noted above, however, the introduction of FPE brought with it a number of challenges that could compromise quality of education. These challenges include over enrolment, shortage of teaching and learning resources, inadequacy of teachers as

well as enrolment of pupils with special needs. These challenges called for changes in the way schools are managed, and teaching/learning conducted. However, very little, if any, training was conducted to induct teachers and headteachers on how to handle their roles in the new environment. These challenges could influence the way QASOs conduct their business of school inspection and supervision of the teaching and learning process.

The study will find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. Before Gatanga became a district in 2009, it was one of the divisions within the larger Thika District. In 2008, Thika District was in position 74 nationally and last in Central Province in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations. Gatanga Division (now Gatanga District) held the last position in KCPE examinations of 2008. This shows that primary schools in Gatanga District performed poorly compared to other schools in the country. Since QASOs are charged with the responsibility of inspection of schools and supervision of teachers to promote effective implementation of curriculum, the study investigated the challenges faced by QASOs in the district, which could have contributed to poor academic performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

What challenges do QASOs encounter in facilitating the implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District? Although changes have been made in the Inspectorate arm of the Ministry of Education, little has been done to establish how the role of QASOs contribute to effective curriculum delivery in the public primary schools. The introduction of FPE in Kenya brought with it challenges that could have a negative impact of quality education. This means that QASOs are facing obstacles in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum. This is in

addition to previously identified challenges like negative attitudes toward QASOs by teachers and lack of proper dialogue mechanisms.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine how often the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers visit schools to facilitate school effectiveness.
2. Find out whether quality assurance and standards officers have adequate working tools and resources for effective school supervision in order to lead to school effectiveness.
3. Identify the opinions of teachers towards QASO's role in facilitating effective implementation of primary school curriculum.
4. Determine whether quality assurance and standards officers have been adequately trained to handle primary school curriculum supervision.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How often do Quality Assurance and Standards Officers visit primary schools in Gatanga District to facilitate school effectiveness?
2. What are the opinions and feelings of the teachers towards QASOs' role in facilitating effective implementation of primary school curriculum?
3. What problems do quality assurance and standards officers face in reference to attitudes of teachers toward supervision?

4. To what extent have quality assurance and standards officers been adequately trained to handle effective school curriculum supervision?
5. How can quality assurance and standards officers be assisted to offer effective school supervision to lead to effective schools in Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be of benefit to education planners, school headteachers and the government in the following ways.

- i. The findings of the study could provide the Ministry of Education with data on the challenges that quality assurance and standards officers are facing in supervision of curriculum implementation in primary schools. This could assist the Ministry in coming up with necessary measures to improve quality assurance and standards of education.
- ii. By investigating the challenges faced by QASOs, the government is likely to be in a position to come up with strategies to improve their skills in order to be more effective.
- iii. To QASOs themselves, the study acts as a self assessment tool. QASOs may benefit from the study in that they are likely to acquire information to guide them on the need to sharpen their skills in dealing with challenges of school supervision through further training.
- iv. Training institutions and other bodies charged with training of education staff, like the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI), could benefit from the study in that it may provide important information that may guide the training content for the current and future quality and standards officers.
- v. The study fills gaps in research and may prompt other researchers to do similar studies in other regions or levels of education.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in public primary schools in Gatanga District. The study investigated the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in facilitating implementation of primary school curriculum. Secondary schools were not covered. The study participants included the District Education Officer, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, headteachers, and teachers from public primary schools in Gatanga District. The challenges investigated were those faced by quality assurance and standards officers and not challenges facing quality assurance itself.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The following were the limitations of the study:

- i. One limitation of the study was that the obstacles faced by QASOs in school supervision may differ from one district to the other. Therefore, the findings of the study need to be generalized with caution.
- ii. Another limitation was that the study relied on information collected from QASOs and teachers using questionnaires and interviews. The responses of the teachers could be influenced by their perceptions and attitudes toward the role of QASOs.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following basic assumptions:

- i. That the study participants would be truthful in their responses.
- ii. That the QASOs and teachers were aware of the policy guiding Free Primary Education and its requirements.
- iii. That the QASOs and teachers who participated in the study had stayed in their work stations for a period long enough to be fully aware of the administrative

challenges in their schools, and the constraints faced during school supervision.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the Effective Schools Theory by Lezotte (2001). According to Lezotte (2001), an effective school is measured in terms of student achievement and demonstrates evidence of quality and equity. After a series of studies, Lezotte (2001) came up with seven correlates of effective schools – among them are strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home – school relations, and opportunity to learn/time on task.

According to Lezotte (2001), strong instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth. In the effective school, the work of quality and standards officers is to ensure that the principal and others act as instructional leaders and effectively and persistently communicate and model the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. Having a clear and focused mission means everyone knows where they are going and why. A clear focus assists in aligning programs and activities for school improvement. Lezotte (2001) feels that to effectively determine a specific focus, school leadership and stakeholders should use a collaborative process to target a few school goals and then build consensus around them.

A safe and orderly school is defined as a school climate and culture characterized by reasonable expectations for behaviour, consistent and fair application of rules and regulations, and caring, responsive relationships among adults and students (Lezotte, 2001). Classrooms are warm and inviting, and learning activities are purposeful,

engaging, and significant. Personalized learning environments are created to increase positive relationships among students and between students and their teachers. Students feel that they belong to the school community, and children are valued and honoured; their heritage and background are viewed as “assets,” not deficiencies. All these ingredients of an effective school are ensured when they are in place a well functioning quality assurance and standards system.

Lezotte (2001) states that, in a climate of high expectations, the mantra “all students can learn” must be followed by instructional practices and teacher behaviour that demonstrate that teachers believe in the students, believe in their own efficacy to teach students to high standards, and will persist in teaching them. Teaching advanced skills and teaching for understanding together with basic skills are required for all students to achieve high levels. He further says that frequent monitoring of teaching and learning requires paying attention both to student learning results and to the effectiveness of school and classroom procedures. Learning is monitored by tracking a variety of assessment results such as test scores, student developed products, performances, and other evidence of learning. Teaching is monitored by teachers themselves through self-reflection and by QASOs for program and teacher evaluation. Assessment results are used for planning instruction for individual students as well as for school-wide decision making and planning. Classroom and school practices are modified based on the data.

According to the Effective Schools Model (Lezotte, 2001), family and community involvement is a general term used to describe a myriad of activities, projects, and programs that bring parents, businesses, and other stakeholders together to support student learning and schools. Families and other adults can be involved in the education of young people through a variety of activities that demonstrate the

importance of education and show support and encouragement of pupils' learning. These are legitimate approaches for involvement and do not necessarily require adults spending time at the school site. QASOs are expected to guide schools to meet such goals.

Opportunity to learn and learner time on a task simply means that pupils tend to learn most of the lessons they spend time on. Time on task implies that each of the teachers in the school has a clear understanding of what the essential learner objectives are, grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject. Once it is clear what pupils should be learning, they should be given time to learn it. In an effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction on the essential skills. Pupils of all abilities, races, gender, and socio-economic status have equal opportunities to learn.

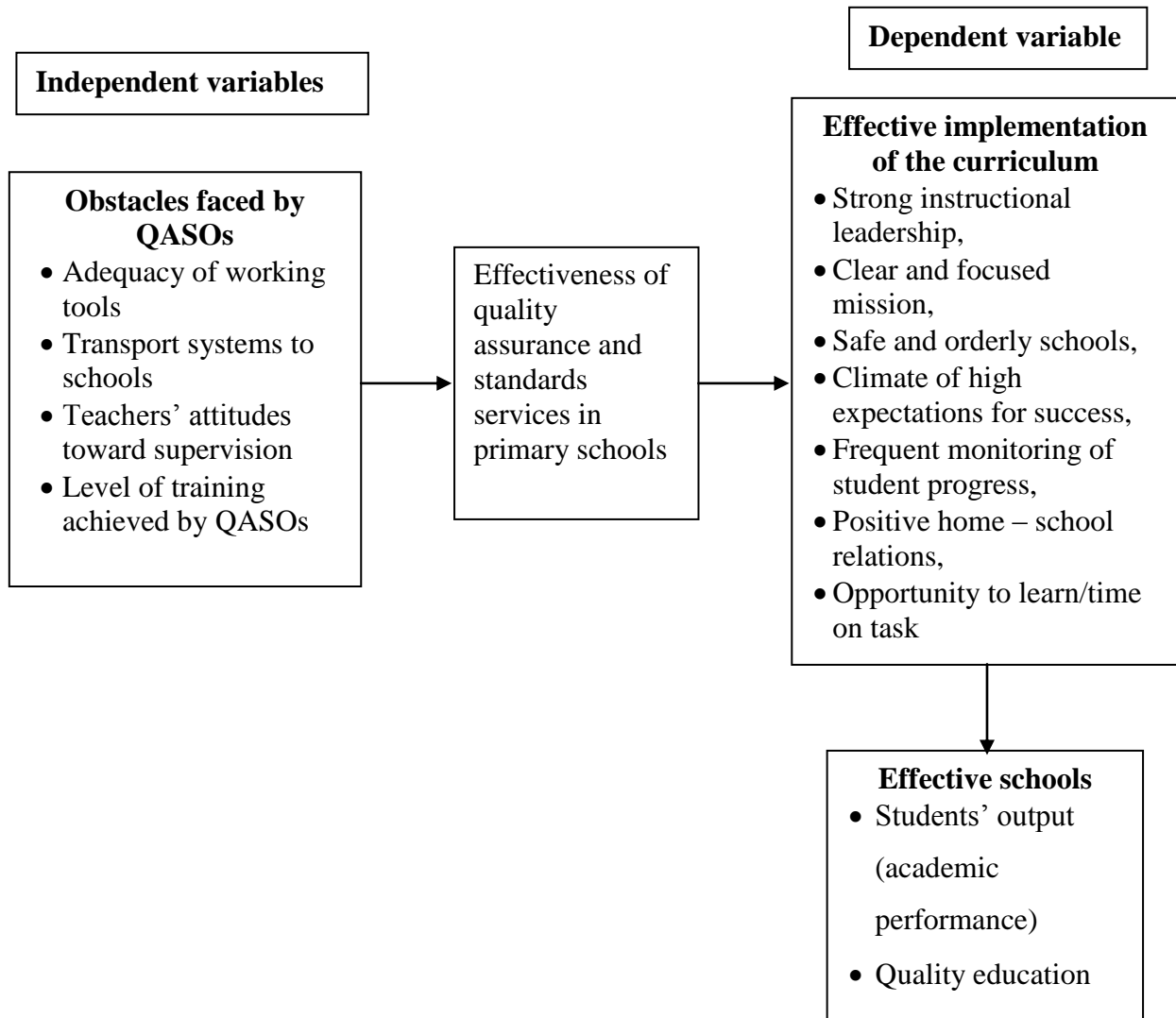
The theory is relevant to this study in that the seven correlates of effective schools require supportive work environments, with manageable teacher-pupil ratios and adequate physical and material resources. The study investigated the challenges faced by QASOs in supervision of the implementation of primary school curriculum in the context of Free Primary Education, which has strained teaching resources – both human and physical.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

From the Effective Schools Model (Lezotte, 2001) discussed above, it emerges that an effective school exhibits strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home-school relations, and opportunity to learn/time on task. Quality assurance and standards officers are charged with the

responsibility of ensuring that schools meet these qualities. However, the challenges related to Free Primary Education may lead to obstacles to effective work by QASOs. The study identified these obstacles by assuming the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Challenges faced by Quality Assurance and Standards officers



Source: Researcher (2009)

As shown in Figure 1.1, the independent variables of the study consist of the obstacles faced by QASOs in supervision of the implementation of the primary school curriculum. These include adequacy of working tools, transport systems to schools, teachers' attitudes toward supervision, and level of training achieved by QASOs.

These obstacles lead to quality assurance and standards services in primary schools being poor, which influences effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum, which is the dependent variable of the study.

1.12 Definition of Terms

Challenge: A problem or hindrance that affects effective performance of a given task.

Inspection: An organized examination or formal evaluation exercise. It involves the measurements, tests, and gauges applied to certain characteristics in regards to an object or activity.

Negative attitude: Predisposition to act unfavourably towards a certain object, situation, ideas or persons.

Perception: The way an individual views or interprets issues and everything in their surrounding. It is used synonymously to attitude to refer to a learned predisposition to respond positively or negatively to a certain objects, person, events, situations, ideas or institutions.

Positive attitude: Predisposition to act favourably towards a certain object, situation, ideas or persons.

Quality assurance: The process of assessing and reporting on educational institutions to ensure smooth co-ordination of the teaching/learning process.

Standards in education: How well the education offered can meet the set goals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers a review of literature on the study on the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum. The chapter covers the following sub-topics:

- Defining quality in education settings
- The Roles played by quality assurance and standards officers
- Challenges faced in educational quality assurance and standards
- Challenges faced in free primary education that could affect performance of QASOs
- Summary of the literature review

2.2 Defining Quality in Education Settings

The meaning of the word quality changes over time in response to changes in society and our own experience (Cuttance, 1995). All those involved in education are engaged in a constant process of learning and of developing their ideas, whether they are pupils, managers, teachers, parents or education officials. As our thinking develops, so does our view of what is ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ provision. Self-evaluation, change and improvement are therefore both natural and essential to an effective school. Schools are accountable to society, and as such teachers should be involved in agreeing aims and policies to promote and improve pupils’ learning and attainment.

A good school knows: what it is aiming to do, whether it is meeting its aims successfully, what needs to be maintained or improved, and whether changes are

working. If a school knows these things and acts on them, it is well on the way to having a good quality assurance system. School self-evaluation is at the heart of quality assurance.

Central to the quality movement, which is influencing public and private sector organizations worldwide, is the concept of quality culture and the development of such culture within organizations (Liberatore, 1993). The emphasis on culture in the corporate context reflects the holistic nature of organizational quality initiatives and incorporates the notion of transformation from existing commonly held assumptions, attitudes, behaviour, values and beliefs towards the development of an alternative paradigm. Such a quality culture is described by Saraph and Sebastian (1993) in the following way: “Quality culture is the total of the collective or shared learning of the quality-related values as the organization develops its capacity to survive in its external environment and to manage its own internal affairs” (p. 73).

Murgatroyd (1991, p. 14) associates the concept of quality with standards and values by offering three definitions of quality:

- Quality is defined in terms of some absolute standard and evaluations are based on the application of these standards to the situations experienced across a variety of organizations, irrespective of their strategy of differentiated services (*established standards* definition).
- Quality is defined in terms of the objectives set for a specific programme or process in a specific location at a specific time (*specific standards* definition).
- Quality is defined as “fitness for use” as attested by the end-users on the basis of their direct experience (*fitness for use or market-driven* definition).

Similarly, Cuttance (1995) identifies two definitions of quality by making the distinction between quality as the intrinsic values associated with a service or product and quality as the meeting of customer requirements. In this sense there is a need to meet customer expectations in relation to the perceived value or worth attached to a product or service, while also ensuring the product or service has intrinsic merit as defined by widely held professional standards. Cuttance (1995, p. 4) notes that it is the notion of quality as “value” or “worth” in relation to customer expectations that describes the nature of quality as interpreted within the quality management context.

Quality, therefore, can be perceived in relation to accepted quality standards associated with a particular sphere of interest, “appropriateness to purpose”, through the ability consistently to meet or exceed perceived customer needs and an organizational capacity for continuous improvement of processes and systems.

Berry (1997) however notes that while these notions of quality seem appropriate to organizations generally, they do not necessarily meet all of the criteria for quality in schools. Education is a process based on broadly accepted ethical values which constitute the moral fibre of society. Ultimately, educational quality cannot be isolated from these values which relate to what is perceived as culturally worthwhile in a society. These values provide an ethically justifiable platform for determining and evaluating educational processes and outcomes which might permeate the notion of quality culture in schools.

In discussing the nature of quality schooling, Aspin Chapman, Wilkinson (1994, p. 44) suggest that equity, excellence, democracy and justice provide the dimensions for a theory of quality for schools, which suggests that quality schools need to communicate civilization, meet the personal needs of students and ensure that students are responsive to the needs of society. Quality schooling, Aspin *et al.* (1994,

p. 45) suggest, "...is not so much about being equipped to operate as a qualified functionary in society, having the capacity to respond to economic norms and to perform competently in various modes of economic production. It is much more about the capacity of the individual to enhance and enrich the society of which he or she is being educated to become a part - someone who is going to be a giver, an enlarger and an enhancer, as well as an inheritor and recipient. Quality schooling is as much about the future of the society we see for ourselves, even if at several generations hence removed; a world better and richer than the one we currently inhabit".

In educational organizations quality can be explained as a specific form of culture which includes a long-term process of continuous improvement towards perceived standards of excellence within the context of core ethical values, standards of excellence, and a process of continuous improvement. The process of developing such an organizational culture can be referred to as quality management, and the most common approach to quality management in many private and public sector organizations is total quality management (TQM).

2.3 The Roles Played by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers

According to Wasanga (2004), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in 2003 was structured into departments which coordinate and oversee the implementation of all the education sector policies. These departments are: (1) Basic Education, (2) Higher Education, (3) Quality Assurance and Standards, (4) Technical Education, and (5) Educational Planning and Policy. The Department of Quality Assurance and Standards which was established in 2004 used to be called "*the Inspectorate*". It changed this in 2004 to be called the "*Department of Quality Assurance and Standards*". This demonstrates the importance the Government of Kenya is placing on issues of quality education. The mandate of this department is to

ensure quality and standards in Kenya by working closely with other stakeholders in the education sector.

According to Republic of Kenya (2000), the mission of the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) is ‘to establish, maintain and improve educational standards in the country’ while the vision is ‘to provide quality assurance feedback to all educational institutions in Kenya’. Wasanga (2004) cites that the purpose of quality assurance in education is to have an overview of the quality of education in Kenya based on agreed ‘All round performance’ indicators of the performance of an educational institute. According to Republic of Kenya (2000), experience has shown that some schools are good at recycling their inefficiencies in the name or under the cover of tradition and experience. Inspection is therefore carried out with the purpose of ascertaining whether the institutions have added value to the education of their pupils. To establish value added the QASO compare the entry behaviour of learners with the end results. Therefore, the DQAS does this with an aim of reporting back to the educational institutions, so that they can plan to improve the standards of education that are being offered to their pupils. It operates under two complementary objectives - quality assurance and quality development.

Quality assurance is achieved through inspection of institutions and reporting on these inspections to the institutions and to the MoEST. It is also achieved through assessing the curriculum through valid and reliable national examinations whose results are used as indicators of quality of education in the country. Quality development is achieved through the work of advisory services, the provision of staff development opportunities and the development of teaching and learning materials. Therefore, the major responsibilities of the DQAS include conduct of public examinations in conjunction with the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), approval of

syllabus as well as instructional materials before being used in schools in conjunction with Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), and inspection of learning institutions.

According to the Republic of Kenya (2000), the role of the DQAS is three fold: advisorial, inspectorial, and administrative. The advisorial role involves inspecting all educational institutions regularly and compiling appropriate reports, while administrative role involves establishing and maintaining professional linkages with institutions of higher learning and providing career guidance to educational institutions. It also involves establishment and maintenance of register for inspectors of these institutions. Wasanga (2004) spells out the role of the DQAS in depth as: -

- a) Inspecting all educational institutions regularly and compiling appropriate report.
- b) Advising the government on the type and quality of education being offered in the country.
- c) Advising the government on the trends in the learning institutions in areas of equity, access, equality, gender enrolment, wastage and retention among others.
- d) Reviewing the teaching and learning materials in collaboration with KIE.
- e) Advising on curriculum evaluation in collaboration with KNEC
- f) Assisting quality development service with the design of in-service training programmes for teachers.
- g) Advising stakeholders on education matters pertaining to curriculum delivery assessment and the provision of resources.
- h) Monitoring and advising on standards in education based on ‘all round standard performance’ indicators for various areas including: sports, games, drama, music, science congress and environmental conservation among others.

- i) Establishing and maintaining professional linkages with institutions of higher learning on matters of educational standards.
- j) Providing career guidance to educational institutions.
- k) Developing curricular based on market demands and aligned to the country's national goals and aspirations.
- l) Developing quality national examinations to assess the quality of education in the country.

The DQAS executes its responsibility through its officers known as Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO) or Educational Inspectors. An Educational Inspector according to the Republic of Kenya (2000) is an official of the MoEST who identifies and provides feedback on strengths and weaknesses in educational institutions so that these institutions can improve the quality of education provided and the achievement of their pupils. They do this by carrying out visits to schools during which they get to know the condition and quality of facilities, equipment, administration, and knowledge of the teacher in actual teaching. According to Ontiria (2003), this enables QASOs to make a report on any observations made and also recommendations to correct the situation. QASOs therefore play an important role in the education system and their work is aimed at achieving higher standards of education for pupils as well as professional development and individual fulfilment for teachers. They are seen as advisors who are expected to offer guidance to teachers and schools and also enforce certain rules.

According to Casteel (1999), the role of the QASO can be summarized as:

- Assessing and evaluating the educational programmes at all levels
- Assisting in identifying children with learning disabilities for the purpose of providing appropriate education programmes.

- Providing educational support to teachers
- Liaising with KNEC on all matters related to examinations setting, moderation, proof-reading, administration and supervision
- Co-ordinating inspection at all levels
- Co-ordinating donor funded project such as SPRED and PRISM
- Organizing and co-ordinating co-curricular activities

In inspection of the educational institutions, the officers carry out various types of inspections which according to Wasanga (2004), include: -

1. **Panel inspection** – It involves a full diagnostic and situational analysis of the institution to examine the strengths and weaknesses or limitations of the institutions while suggesting the type of intervention to be administered for the improvement of the educational standards.
2. **Subject-based inspections** – These are specialized inspections which are carried out by the inspectors in their areas of subject specialization. Such are planned and prompted by:
 - Performance trends in a particular subject
 - Inspectors program of work
 - Inquiring into teachers needs with a view to make suggestions for In-Service Training (INSET),
 - Monitoring visits to gather data and information about teaching and learning in subject areas
 - Assessing the interpretations and implementations of the curriculum
3. **Educational institutions registration inspection** – Carried out upon the request of the District Education Board (DEB) for the purpose of registering new institutions.

4. **Advisory inspection** – involves one or more inspectors who visit a school and sample some aspects of the school for purpose of giving advice accordingly.
5. **Inspection of teachers** – Teachers are assessed for the purpose of promotion, appraisal of competence, grading or re-grading and pre-service teachers and final teaching practice.
6. **Inspection for the introduction of a new subject in the school curriculum** - Usually prompted by a schools request to the DQAS to introduce a new subject which is being offered in the school for the first time.
7. **Block inspections** – Carried out as a block covering all or most schools in a given district. It is usually organized at national level with inspectors drawn from all over the country.
8. **Mass inspections** – Carried out for a specific purpose, like school awards, to determine to what extent recommendations have been implemented.

Other than the above specified duties, according to Republic of Kenya (2000), inspectors should also be: -

- Well informed and conversant with the government policies
- Conversant with the civil service code of conduct and regulations and code of regulations of teachers
- Able to collect, collate analyze and disseminate data
- Able to manage projects

The officer must also have excellent interpersonal skills which include: -

- Good communication skills
- Being well presented i.e. well dressed and groomed
- Being tolerant and caring
- Being gender responsive

- Being a person of high integrity
- Observing social etiquettes
- Being a good listener and responding positively to ideas and complains of other stakeholders in education
- Having ability and skills to make decisions
- Being a good role model for others in the education profession
- Respecting confidentiality where and when necessary.

Based on the literature presented above, it is clear that QASOs play an important role in ensuring that schools provide quality education and that education standards are maintained. However, performance of their duties could be affected by various challenges, which this study seeks to unearth.

2.4 Challenges Faced in Educational Quality Assurance and Standards

There is a growing concern by various stakeholders about the status of education in Kenya. Abagi and Odipo (1997) report that the government, parents, non-governmental organizations and donors recognize that although major strides have been made in education, there are serious shortcomings in the education system. There is a burgeoning national debate on the quality of teaching and learning, with Odhiambo (2008) noting that at the core of the challenges facing Kenya's education is quality.

In a widely read paper, Kenya's Ministry of Education Science and Technology recently admitted that there is a problem with the quality of the teaching force and blamed this for the lack of quality in Kenya's education. The ministry identified a number of factors affecting the quality of the teaching force in the country. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2004) states that these factors included the

fact that many teachers took teaching career as a last and only available option, others are trained or selected to join teaching not in the areas of their interest but in a field where vacancies existed, and the lack of comprehensive teacher in-servicing programme. It further states that apart from such challenges, ineffectiveness of the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards hampers the achievement of quality education that Kenya longs for. Yet, the vision of Kenya's Ministry of Education Science and Technology is "Quality education for development".

Wasanga (2004) noted that the work of the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards is hampered by the following:-

- i) Inadequate legal provision which limits enforcement of inspection recommendations;
- ii) Inadequacies in requisite skills. This is mainly due to lack of a specific policy on recruitment and deployment of Inspectors. Such a policy should take into account an officer's academic background and experience in the education sector;
- iii) Lack of a definite staff development policy. Although a number of inspectors undergo some induction course when they are deployed to the Inspectorate, others are never inducted at all. In addition, there are no regular in-service courses for Inspectors; and
- iv) Inadequate budgetary allocations and tools.

Wasanga (2004) recommended that in order to ensure that the education offered at the school level continues to be of good quality, various measures are necessary: first, the Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 should be revised to provide the Inspectorate function with the requisite legal enabling powers; second, a specific policy on recruitment and

deployment of inspectors; third, a staff development policy for Inspectors; and fourth, adequate budgetary allocations to facilitate quality assurance services.

Quality of education is determined by the inputs such as curriculum content, instructional materials and equipment, school culture, teacher pupil ratio, costs and guiding policies, quality assurance, learning duration and above all the quality of the teachers and management practices. It is also determined, by the products of an education system and the focus should therefore be broad and not limited to teacher performance only even though there is much, which needs to be done concerning the development of teachers. However, Odhiambo (2008) notes that most of these variables are lacking in Kenya's education system and those being introduced such as quality assurance lack details and are introduced without wide consultation with those involved especially the teachers.

2.5 Challenges Faced in Free Primary Education that Could Affect Performance of QASOs

In 2003, the Kenya government declared primary education free and compulsory. The government policy on free primary education is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Wealth and Employment Creation goal of achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015. (Gatimu, 2005) says, after the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE), an estimated 1.3 million children, who were previously out-of-school, enrolled for primary education. In many schools, the headteachers found themselves with more children to enrol than before. Siwolo (2004) adds that since the government had not given an age limit, even those who were 'over-age' were enrolled in schools.

Researchers like Mugo (2006) have indicated that a number of factors pose considerable challenges to implementation and quality of FPE. These factors include acute shortage of teachers, drought and famine, and enhanced pupils' enrolment. For example, the introduction of FPE resulted in increased enrolment, but the increase in enrolment was not coupled with increase in number of teachers, classrooms, desks, latrines, textbooks and other teaching and learning resources. The school heads had not been trained for the implementation of the programme as it was introduced without any prior strategic planning. These problems all could pose challenges in supervision of curriculum implementation, affecting the quality of teaching in public primary schools.

Apart from the above, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in Kenya are faced with a number of challenges. According to Casteel (1999), these problems include:

- a) Lack of strategic planning - There is no clear strategic planning for managing training parallel to the way in which an overall direction and strategic plan is emerging for inspection service. The directorate is faced by a lack of full advisory support structure to plan and deliver national training programs.
- b) Role ambiguity - There is confusion of roles between quality assurance (inspectorate) and quality development (advisory staff). Most of the officers do not know what is expected of them in these two areas and so they end up concentrating more on quality assurance, abandoning quality development.
- c) Lack of effective training and service provision - Casteel (1999) notes that there is poor staff selection and that the calibre of staff appointed as TAC tutors and Zonal Inspector of Schools (ZIS) are not always appropriate for the roles they have to undertake. Most of them are trained teachers, who receive

no training and also little orientation is given to them when they take up their roles. This has resulted into poor service delivery.

- d) Transport problems - Lack of useable transport is a key reason cited over the year for the inspection officers not being able to fulfil their duties.
- e) Inability to retain well qualified and experienced officers. Due to poor conditions of service, for example, lack of transport and lack of career structure for TAC tutors, there is consequent loss of trained staff to other posts.

According to an article, “Woes still linger despite reform” in the Standard (12th July 2006), the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards still experiences problems such as: -

- a) Shortage of staff - It is a major problem in the directorate because most provinces have a deficit of at least twenty officers. This has resulted to the staff available being overworked. As the article outlines, workload for the officials is nearly unmanageable with an officer supervising between fifteen and twenty schools.
- b) Lack of upward mobility - There is lack of career mobility. According to the reporter in this article, teachers who are an obvious choice are reluctant to join the field because they are not assured of upward mobility.
- c) Transport problem - Despite provision of vehicles at the district level and motorbikes at the zones, transport is still a problem. Bikes have been faulted and many argue that they favour men and are not helpful during the rainy season.

Wanjohi (2005) observes that most inspectors are accused of being autocratic and authoritarian; always insisting on maintenance and observance of departmental rules,

and that whenever they visit schools, they focus on fault-finding instead of advising and encouraging teachers. According to the Kenya Times Editorial (1995), the problem all along was the officiality with which the inspectors went about their duties, putting teachers on the defensive. Wanjohi (2005) contends that many inspectors went to schools not to make them better but to put teachers in their place. They only visited schools whenever there was a crisis and when their advice was least likely to be sympathetic to the plight of teachers.

Wanjohi (2005) further states that, there was a time when the mention of ‘school inspector’ was enough to make teachers faint. The officials caused terror as they looked for teachers mistakes. They were known of storming in to schools where they harassed, victimized and scared teachers by threatening to write negative reports about them. They would abuse or slap teachers as pupils watched and teachers used to refer to them as ‘flying squads’. It also observes that the inspectors would descend on a school without notice, carry out their work and not inform the headteacher of their findings. They wrote reports without consultations and would leave the school without a word.

As a result of the mistrust teachers had of the inspectors, many teachers viewed the inspectors’ role with a lot of fear, suspicion and hostility. Wanjohi (2005) contends that teachers perceive inspectors as faultfinders who are only interested in reporting them to the MoEST instead of giving them advice to enable them improve their teaching techniques. This results in a poor relationship between them and the inspectors.

2.6 Summary

Literature reviewed in this chapter has shown the important role played by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in school supervision. Literature review shows that quality has always been an issue of concern in education. The introduction of free primary education introduced new challenges that require school inspectors to be more vigilant to ensure that quality of primary education is not compromised. Previous studies on quality of primary education have concentrated on the challenges faced by headteachers in school management, while the obstacles faced by QASOs in supervision of curriculum instruction have not been documented. This study therefore sought to fill this research gap by investigating the obstacles facing QASOs in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the procedures that were used to conduct the study. It focuses on research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, and data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the challenges facing QASOs in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum. According to Orodho (2002), descriptive survey designs are used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) on the other hand give the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are without manipulating the variables. Borg and Gall (1989) noted that descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators.

The study was conducted in primary schools in Gatanga District, Central Province of the Republic of Kenya. Gatanga is to the North West of Thika District. The district is divided into four locations for both educational and administrative purposes, which include Kihumbu-ini Location; Gatanga Location; Kariara Location and Kigoro Location. Internally, the District has a well-maintained road network. The economic activities of Gatanga include agriculture, particularly in the horticulture (exports mainly to Europe) and coffee industry (exports mainly to the USA and Europe).

As Singleton (1993) notes, the ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher and should be that which permits instant rapport with the informants. The choice of Gatanga District was a result of its accessibility in terms of communication, convenience and suitability of the study given that no similar study has been conducted in the district.

3.4 Target Population

Borg and Gall (1989) define target population as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research study. The target population for this study consisted of all the eight Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in Gatanga, one District Education Officer (DEO) as the one in charge of Education management in Gatanga District, teachers, and headteachers of the 48 public primary schools in Gatanga District.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population. Orodho (2002) states that any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population. It is however, agreed that the larger the sample the smaller the sampling error. For this study, the DEO and QASOs were automatically selected, since they are not many.

The researcher used random sampling to select 20 public primary schools from the 48 public primary schools in Gatanga District to participate in the study. This was equivalent to 41.7% of the target population. Gay (1992) recommends 20% minimum sample size.

From each of the 20 schools, all the headteachers were included in the study. Together with the headteachers, simple random sampling was used to select 2 teachers per school to take part in the study, giving a total of 40 teachers. Therefore the study sample comprised of one District Education Officer, 5 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, 20 headteachers, and 40 teachers from public primary schools in Gatanga District.

3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed two main types of instruments for data collection: interview schedules and questionnaires. Questionnaires were found appropriate for the study because as Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), note they allow measurement for or against a particular viewpoint, in this case the views of head teachers on obstacles experienced by QASOs in supervision of curriculum implementation. They also enable a researcher to collect large amount of information in a reasonable quick space of time. The questionnaires were used to gather data from headteachers and teachers on the frequency of QASOs visits to schools and the challenges related to quality assurance and standards in education.

On the other hand, interview schedules are recommended when the respondents are few. An interview schedule allows the researcher to probe, thus enabling him/her to get in-depth information. Interview schedule also allows the researcher to gather a large body of data as it does not restrict to seek for clarification from the respondent. It also helps the interviewer to cover all dimensions of the investigation (Gay, 1992). Under normal circumstances, more people are willing to communicate orally than in writing so, it provides data as it does not restrict the respondent. Two interview schedules were used for data collection, one for the DEO and one for the QASOs. Details about the instruments are given below.

3.6.1 Questionnaire for Headteachers

This questionnaire was used to collect data from headteachers on the challenges related to quality and standards assurance and inspection of schools by QASOs. The questionnaire had three sections. Section one gathered the background data of the headteachers, including their working experience and academic qualifications; section two gathered data on the roles played by QASOs in their schools and the challenges related to inspection; while section three gathered data on headteachers' attitudes towards role of QASOs.

3.6.2 Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaire for teachers was designed to collect data from the teachers on their experiences with QASOs in the course of their teaching work. The questionnaire had three sections. Section one collected background data of the teachers, including their gender, age, teaching experience and academic qualifications; section two gathered data on the roles played by QASOs in their schools and the challenges related to inspection; while section three gathered data on teachers' attitudes towards role of QASOs.

3.6.3 Interview Schedule for QASOs

The interview schedule for QASOs was used to guide face-to-face interviews with QASOs on the obstacles they face in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. The interview schedule had a list of the main questions to be asked during the interview. The researcher was however free to ask additional questions based on the responses of the QASOs to the main interview questions. The interview schedule had items covering all the objectives of the study.

3.6.4 Interview Schedule for DEOs

This interview schedule was used to guide face-to-face interviews with the DEO for Gatanga District on the obstacles they face in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in the district. The interview schedule had items covering all the objectives of the study.

3.7 Piloting the Research Instrument

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), piloting refers to pre-testing of the research instrument by administering it to a selected sample of similar characteristics to the one under study. The instruments were piloted in two primary schools in Gatanga District, which were not included in the actual study. The pilot study helped improve the validity and reliability of the instruments.

3.7.1 Validity

According to Orodho (2005), validity is concerned with the degree to which empirical measure or several measures of a concept accurately represent that concept. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), say validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study. It has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study. To validate the research instruments of this study, the researcher sought the opinion of his supervisors on content, clarity, ambiguity, level of language used and any other additional information on the questionnaires to make the instruments more comprehensive and to ensure it measures the variables intended for the study.

3.7.2 Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability according to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) refers to the consistency of an instrument to yield the same results at different times. Bell (1993) noted that piloting is one way of checking reliability of instruments. Items that were left blank or unanswered in ways that the researcher did not predict were modified and clear instructions were given to respondents so as to avoid misinterpretation. Reliability of the instruments was also determined by establishing whether there are ambiguities in any item and whether the instruments elicited the type of data anticipated and also if the type of data desired were meaningfully analyzed in relation to research questions.

To test the reliability of the instruments, split-half technique of measuring reliability was used. This involved splitting the pilot questionnaires into two halves and then calculating the correlation coefficient (r) for the two halves. To do this, the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (r) was used. According to Gay (1992), a correlation coefficient of at least 0.7 and above for the two halves is considered sufficient. The researcher obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.67, which is close to the 0.7 recommended, and therefore concluded that the questionnaires were reliable enough for data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first sought permission from the MoEST and the District Education Officer (DEO) Gatanga District. Headteachers of the selected schools were informed in writing and an appointment made with them when the researcher would visit their schools for data collection. Data collection was done by the researcher

himself. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the respondents. The researcher allowed the respondents sufficient time to respond to the items on the questionnaires and the questionnaires were collected at an appropriate agreed upon time. The researcher then booked appointments with the DEO and the QASOs on an appropriate date when to conduct interviews. The researcher personally interviewed the respondents, and ensured that he created adequate rapport with them to allow for ease of information gathering.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection, the researcher coded all the data and entered it in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). As Martin and Acuna (2002) observe, SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it is also quite efficient. This research yielded data that required both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. The statistics used include frequency counts, means, and percentages. Borg and Gall (1983) hold that, the most widely used and understood standard proportion is the percentage. Qualitative data was analyzed by organizing it into similar themes and tallying the number of similar responses and reporting them thematically in line with the research questions. The results of data analysis are presented in frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis and discussion of the study findings. The purpose of the study was to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. Findings are presented on the basis of the five research questions as restated below.

1. How often do Quality Assurance and Standards Officers visit primary schools in Gatanga District?
2. What are the opinions and feelings of the teachers towards QASOs?
3. What problems do quality assurance and standards officers face in reference to attitudes of teachers toward supervision?
4. To what extent have quality assurance and standards officers been adequately trained to handle primary school curriculum supervision?
5. How can quality assurance and standards officers be assisted to offer effective school supervision services to primary schools in Kenya?

First, the background data of the respondents is given, after which data for each of the five research questions above is analyzed and discussed.

4.2 Background Data of the Study Participants

The sample for the study comprised of one District Education Officer, 5 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, 20 headteachers, and 40 teachers from 20 public primary schools in Gatanga District. Among the 20 headteachers, 11 (55%) were male while 9 (45%) were female. Table 4.1 shows the highest education levels attained by the headteachers.

Table 4.1: Education level of headteachers

Education Level	No. of headteachers	Percent
Untrained teacher	1	5.0
Diploma	4	20.0
Degree	2	10.0
ATS IV	4	20.0
P1	1	5.0
Trained 'O' level teacher	7	35.0
'A' level	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Table 4.1 shows that most of the headteachers were trained teachers, with qualifications ranging from trained O level teachers to university degrees. This shows that most of the headteachers were qualified for school administration, and as such would be expected to understand the importance of school inspection and supervision of teachers. This shows that most of the headteachers in the study were trained at least up to the level of 'Trained O Level Teacher'. Training of headteachers is necessary to equip them with the necessary skills for effective curriculum supervision. Adequately

trained headteachers would complement the recommendations made to teachers by QASOs, thereby improving curriculum implementation.

The experience of the headteachers in school administration is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Work Experience

Work Experience	No. of headteachers	Percent
11 - 15 years	4	20.0
16 -20 years	1	5.0
More than 20 Years	15	75.0
Total	20	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the headteachers had served for more than 20 years, with a few indicating that they had served for between 11 and 19 years. Headteachers with many years of work experience perform better than those with less years of experience in school management areas like curriculum supervision (Waweru, 2004). That most of the headteachers in the study had over 20 years of experience means that they had accumulated years of experience in curriculum supervision and that they had interacted with QASOs long enough to understand how the system of quality assurance operates.

Among the 40 teachers were 18 (45%) male and 22 (55%) female. Table 4.3 shows the highest level of education attained by the teachers.

Table 4.3: Teachers' level of education

Level of Education	No. of teachers	Percent
Untrained teacher	5	12.5
Diploma	11	27.5
Degree	3	7.5
ATS IV	4	10.0
P1	10	25.0
Trained 'O' level teacher	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that most teachers had trained up to diploma and P1 level, a few had also reached 'O' level while the rest had trained in different levels as shown in the table above. The finding that most teachers were professionally trained for teaching means that they could adequately implement curriculum and instruction in the classroom.

Table 4.4 shows the teaching experience of the teachers.

Table 4.4: Teaching experience of the teachers

Teaching Experience	No. of teachers	Percent
Less than 2 years	2	5.0
3 - 5 years	1	2.5
6 - 10 years	9	22.5
11 - 15 years	10	25.0
16 - 20 years	4	10.0
more Than 20 years	14	35.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that the teachers' experience ranged from 2 to 20 years with the majority having taught between 10 and 20 years. A few had taught for less than 5 years as shown in the table. The findings indicate that most of the teachers in the study had stayed in the schools for over 5 years. This means that they were likely to have had opportunities to have interacted with QASOs and therefore could rate their attitudes toward inspection.

4.3 Rate at which QASOs Visit Primary Schools

The first research question sought to find out the rate at which Quality Assurance and Standards Officers visit primary schools in Gatanga District.

The QASOs were asked to indicate the rate at which they inspect the primary schools within their area of jurisdiction. In response, two (40%) indicated that they visited schools two times per school per term for advisory and follow up so as to assure education quality in schools. Another two (40%) indicated that school are assessed as need arises. One (20%) QASO indicated that it depends on the number of primary schools in a district because the less they are the more they are assessed. The District Education Officer in charge indicated that each school is expected to be visited at least once per term.

A previous study by Kariuki (2008) conducted in public primary schools in Kangema division, Murang'a district established that 66.7% headteachers had been inspected over four times, 11.1% had been inspected thrice, while 22.2% had been inspected twice. In the past, however, there were reports that indicated that QASOs only visited schools whenever there was a crisis and their advice was least likely to be sympathetic to the plight of teachers (Mwanzia, 1985). The findings of this study therefore show that the situation is changing, whereby schools are being inspected more often.

When headteachers were asked to indicate the rate at which QASOs visit their schools, they responded as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Headteachers' ratings of rate at which QASOs visit their schools

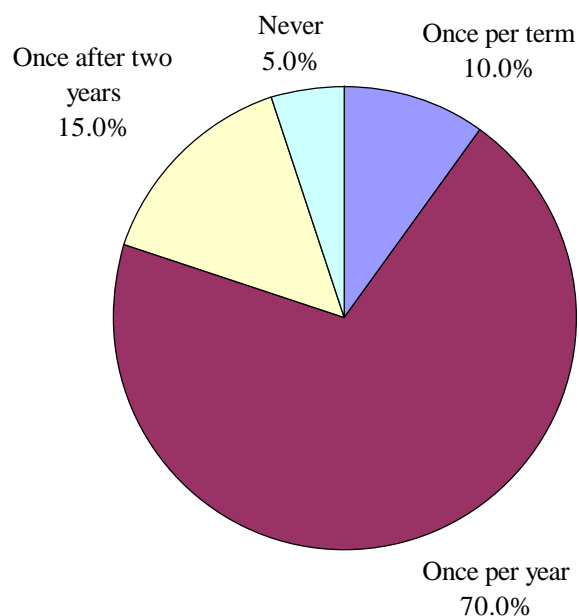


Figure 4.1 shows that majority (70%) of the headteachers indicated that QASOs visited their schools once per year, 15% indicated once after two years, 10% once per term, while 5% indicated that their schools had never been visited. This contradicts the MoE Service Charter (2009) and the DQAS circular 2/1A/Vol II/86 of 2009 that requires comprehensive standard assessment of all educational institutions be carried out by external Quality Assurance Officers at least once every three (3) years for secondary schools and once (1) every term for primary schools.

On the other hand, the teachers responded as shown in Table 4.5 when asked to indicate the rate at which they are inspected by QASOs.

Table 4.5: Teachers' ratings of rate at which QASOs inspect them

Teaching Experience	No. of teachers	Percent
Once per term	2	5.0
Once per year	12	30.0
Once after two years	25	62.5
Never	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 4.5 shows that 5% of the teachers were inspected once per term, 30% were inspected once per year, 62.5% were inspected once after every two years, while 2.5% were never inspected by QASOs. Based on these findings, it appears that QASOs were more frequent in some schools than in others. The findings also suggest that some teachers do not come into contact with QASOs when they visit their schools.

For school assessment to be successful, frequent visits are necessary so that the QASOs are able to monitor the extent to which their recommendations are implemented, and assess the impacts of such implementation. The Handbook for Inspection of Educational Institutions (MoEST, 2000) recommends that an educational institution be panel inspected after every three years. This is supported by Wasanga (2004) who noted that the work of the QASOs is hampered by inadequacies in requisite skills of the officers. This is mainly due to lack of a specific policy on recruitment and deployment of Inspectors. There is also lack of a definite staff development policy. Although a number of QASOs undergo some induction course when they are deployed to the Inspectorate, others are never inducted at all. In addition, there are no regular in-service courses for Inspectors.

4.4 Opinions and Feelings of Teachers towards QASOs

The second research question sought to find out the opinions and feelings of the teachers towards QASOs.

The teachers were presented with 8 items to measure their attitudes toward the role of QASOs in school inspection. They were to rate their opinions/feelings on each item on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Their responses to each of the items are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Teachers' opinions/feelings about the role of QASOs

Attitudes toward QASOs Role	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
The QASO exercise helps teachers to perform their teaching duties more effectively	22.5	65.0	2.5	10	0
Supervision provides a forum where teachers feel free to initiate positive changes in their schools	22.5	65.0	5.0	7.5	0
Comments from inspection panels help teachers become better educators	37.5	20.0	0	5.0	0
Inspection helps teachers become more organized and committed to their work, e.g. through lesson preparation	32.5	40.0	5.0	17.5	5.0
Supervision helps in developing innovative programs and changes in school management	22.5	60.0	7.5	10.0	0
The exercise makes teachers feel secure in their positions	12.5	37.5	10.0	27.5	12.5
The exercise is of no importance to teachers and they would rather do without it	2.5	0	10.0	40.0	47.5
Inspections are aimed at faultfinding and threatening teachers to make them work	7.5	12.5	7.5	40.0	32.5

As shown in Table 4.6 above, majority (over 50%) of the teachers agreed with the statements that:

- Supervision helps in developing innovative programs and changes in school management
- Supervision provides a forum where teachers feel free to initiate positive changes in their schools
- Comments from inspection panels help teachers become better educators
- Inspection helps teachers become more organized and committed to their work, for instance through lesson preparation
- The QASO exercise helps teachers to perform their teaching duties more effectively

On the other hand, majority of the teachers (over 50%) disagreed with the statements that:

- Inspections are aimed at faultfinding and threatening teachers to make them work
- The exercise is of no importance to teachers and they would rather do without it

These findings indicate that the teachers had positive attitudes towards the role played by QASOs in school inspection.

Figure 4.2 shows the overall ratings of teachers' attitudes toward the role played by QASOs in school inspection.

Figure 4.2: Teachers' attitudes towards role of QASOs

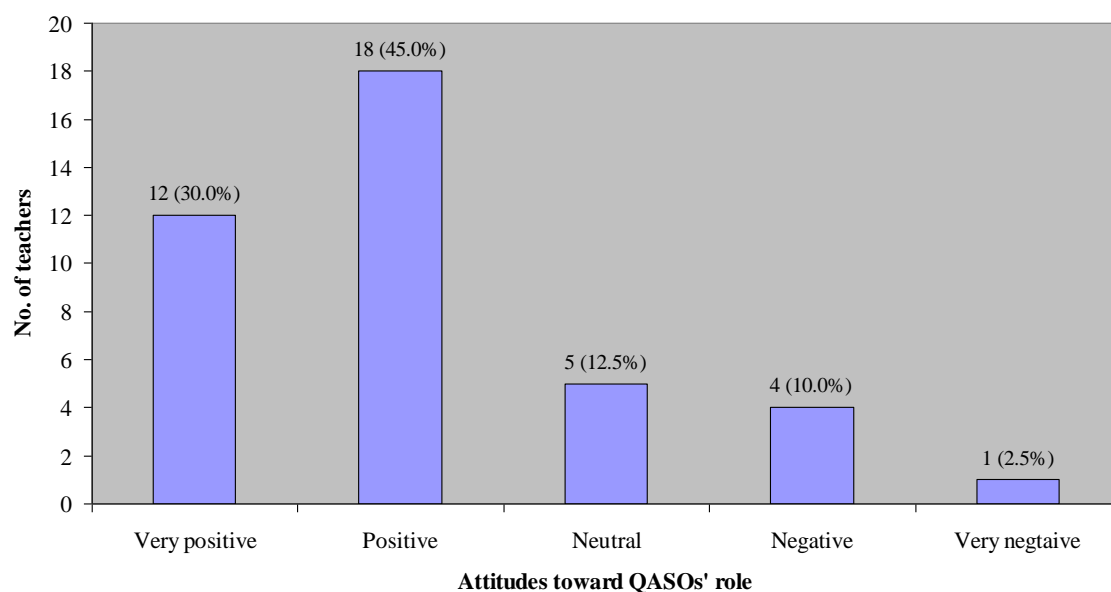


Figure 4.2 shows that 30% of the teachers had very positive attitudes, 45% had positive attitudes, 12.5% neutral, 10% had negative and 2.5% very negative attitudes toward QASOs' role in school inspection. The study findings are in line with those by Kariuki (2008), whose study on primary schools teachers' perceptions on role of QASOs in Murang'a District revealed that majority of headteachers and teachers had positive attitude towards QASOs' roles. This is different from the situation in the past, whereby researchers like Wanjohi (2005) noted that teachers viewed the role of inspectors with a lot of fear, suspicion and hostility and that they perceived them as fault finders who were only interested in reporting them to MoEST.

4.5 Problems Experienced by QASOs in Reference to Teachers' Attitudes

The third research question wanted to find out the problems that quality assurance and standards officers face in reference to attitudes of teachers toward supervision.

The QASOs were asked to indicate their observations regarding teachers' reactions to the inspection process. In response, three (60%) of the QASOs indicated that some of the teachers are appreciative, while others especially the lazy ones are hostile. Two (40%) QASOs added that it depends on how the QASOs present the assessment and the level of human resource management standard. Two (40%) other QASOs noted that teachers' attitudes were negative especially in the past, noting that this is changing especially after an assessment is done and teachers benefit on the findings. Figure 4.3 shows the ratings of QASOs regarding teachers' attitudes towards inspection.

Figure 4.3: QASOs ratings of teachers' attitudes toward inspection

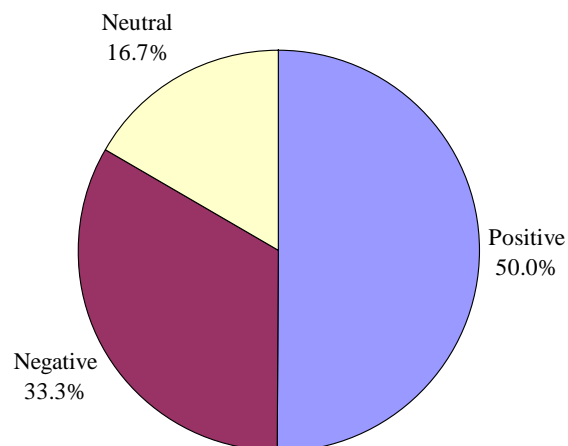


Figure 4.3 shows that 50% of the QASOs rated teachers' attitudes toward inspection as positive, 33.3% rated the attitudes negative, while 16.7% rated the attitudes neutral.

Table 4.7 shows the views of QASOs on the key factors that influence attitudes of teachers toward the inspection.

Table 4.7: Factors influencing teachers' attitudes toward inspection

Factors influencing attitudes of teachers	No. of QASOs	Percent
The presentation of inspection and attitude of the inspector	2	40.0
The degree of performance of the teachers e.g. the lazy ones hate assessment	1	20.0
Changes on guiding policies on standards	1	20.0
Negative perception by the teachers towards assessment	1	20.0
Total	5	100.0

Table 4.7 shows that according to the QASOs, teachers' attitudes toward inspection were influenced by the presentation of inspection i.e. attitude of the inspector (40%), the degree of performance of the teachers e.g. the lazy ones hate assessment (20%), changes on guiding policies on standards (20%), and negative perception by the teachers towards assessment (20%). A previous study by Kariuki (2008) concluded that headteachers and teachers past experience with QASO does not affect their perceptions of the role of QASO. On the other hand, with Evans (1978) argues that perception is highly dependent on experience, whereby those with past experiences with inspectors have positive attitudes.

The QASOs noted that in most cases teachers are unprepared for curriculum implementation, and those few who prepare are irregular. They added that they always give feedback of their assessment by leaving a summary on the same to the

teacher concerned and then to the school administration as they await full report. However, the QASOs noted that based on their observations, most schools do not implement their recommendations, which could be a result of negative attitudes or lack of understanding on the importance of the assessment exercise.

The DEO too noted that some teachers have negative attitude towards supervision, adding that this has a negative impact on curriculum delivery. As for the headteachers, they indicated that teachers fail to implement recommendations of QASOs, arguing that the work is too much for them and have little time.

4.6 Problems Related to Training of QASOs

The fourth research question was: To what extent have quality assurance and standards officers been adequately trained to handle primary school curriculum supervision?

Table 4.8 shows the academic qualifications of the QASOs who participated in the study.

Table 4.8: Academic qualifications of the QASOs

Academic qualifications	No. of QASOs	Percent
“A” Level and QASO I Diploma	1	20.0
B.Ed	2	40.0
M.Ed	2	40.0
Total	5	100.0

Table 4.8 shows that 40% of the QASOs had masters degrees in education, another 40% had bachelors degrees in education, while 20% had had A-level qualifications with QASO-I diploma.

In addition to these qualifications, the QASOs had attended other courses on school supervision, including primary school management (PRISM), KESI management courses, SEP sensitization seminars, and workshops and seminars on quality assessment and supervision. The DEO noted that QASOs are regularly in-serviced to enable them perform their school assessment duties effectively.

Training of QASOs is important especially on public relations. This is because the QASOs have in the past been accused of being cruel to teachers. For example Wanjohi (2005) reported that in the past most inspectors were autocratic and authoritarian who always insisted on maintenance and observance of departmental rules, and that whenever they visited schools, they focused on fault-finding instead of advising and encouraging teachers. Such QASO behaviour can have a negative impact on teachers' perceptions of the role of assessment, leaving the teacher demoralized. Training QASOs would help by making inspection/supervision an enjoyable exercise for both teachers and the officers.

4.7 Possible Solutions to Problems Experienced by QASOs

The fifth research question sought to find out how quality assurance and standards officers can be assisted to offer effective school supervision services to primary schools in Kenya.

The QASOs indicated that they faced the following challenges when performing their primary school curriculum supervision duties:

- Lack of headteachers' managerial skills, especially the newly appointed.
- Lack of reliable means of transport to and from the schools
- Inadequate working tools and resources, for example in some zones even foolscaps are not available.

- Lack of cooperation from teachers and headteachers for instance failing to implement recommendations.

The QASOs proposed that the following recommendations be considered in order for them to offer effective school supervision services to primary schools.

- Ensure adequate staffing both at the district and zone levels
- Adequate funding and provision of enough working tools.
- Provision of means of transport such as motorbikes
- teachers need to develop a positive attitude towards assessment
- Working conditions should be improved in all aspects; office equipments should be improved and all QASO expenses should be addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations arrived at. Suggestions for further studies are also provided in the chapter.

5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. The sample for the study comprised of one District Education Officer, 5 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, 20 headteachers, and 40 teachers from 20 public primary schools in Gatanga District. Given below is a summary of the study findings.

Two (40%) QASOs indicated that they visited schools two times per school per term for advisory and follow up so as to assure education quality in schools. Another two (40%) indicated that school are assessed as need arises. One (20%) QASO indicated that it depends on the number of primary schools in a district because the less they are the more they are assessed. The DEO in charge indicated that each school is expected to be visited at least once per term.

Majority (70%) of the headteachers indicated that QASOs visited their schools once per year, 15% indicated once after two years, 10% once per term, while 5% indicated that their schools had never been visited. On the other hand, 5% of the teachers indicated that they were inspected once per term, 30% were inspected once per year,

62.5% were inspected once after two years, while 2.5% were never inspected by QASOs.

The study established that 30% of the teachers had very positive attitudes, 45% had positive attitudes, 12.5% neutral, 10% had negative and 2.5% very negative attitudes toward QASOs' role in school inspection. These findings indicate that the teachers had positive attitudes towards the role played by QASOs in school inspection. Three (60%) of the QASOs indicated that some of the teachers are appreciative, while others especially the lazy ones are hostile. Two (40%) QASOs added that it depends on how the QASOs present the assessment and the level of human resource management standard. Two (40%) other QASOs noted that teachers' attitudes were negative especially in the past, noting that this is changing especially after an assessment is done and teachers benefit on the findings.

According to the QASOs, teachers' attitudes toward inspection were influenced by the presentation of inspection, that is, attitude of the inspector (40%), the degree of performance of the teachers e.g. the lazy ones hate assessment (20%), changes on guiding policies on standards (20%), and negative perception by the teachers towards assessment (20%). The QASOs noted that in most cases teachers are unprepared for curriculum implementation, and those few who prepare are irregular.

The study found that 40% of the QASOs had masters degrees in education, another 40% had bachelors degrees in education, while 20% had had A-level qualifications with QASO-I diploma. In addition to these qualifications, the QASOs had attended other courses on school supervision, including primary school management (PRISM), KESI management courses, SEP sensitization seminars, and workshops and seminars on quality assessment and supervision.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study as summarized above, the study concludes that most teachers of primary schools in Gatanga District have positive attitudes toward role of QASOs in education quality assurance. However, there are some teachers who had negative attitudes, who failed to implement recommendations made by QASOs after inspection. The QASO officers were not facing any major challenges related to attitude of teachers. This is in contrast to the past, when teachers feared QASO officers and considered them to be fault finders. The study also concludes that although QASOs inspect some schools regularly, some schools are not often visited. This is mainly because of lack of reliable means of transport and lack of adequate resources for the QASO officers.

5.4 Recommendations

- a. The Ministry of Education should offer more training programmes for QASOs, in order to equip them with necessary skills that would enable them to interact freely with teachers during supervision.
- b. The government should provide means of transport to schools for the QASOs in Gatanga District. They should also be provided with all the necessary working tools to enable them to work more efficiently.
- c. QASOs should handle the supervision exercise in ways that foster positive attitudes towards supervision among the teachers.
- d. QASOs should visit schools more frequently for supervision and where possible have follow-up mechanisms in order to ensure that their recommendations are implemented.
- e. Headteachers should ensure that teachers implement all the recommendations made by QASOs after assessment.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

- a. A similar study should be conducted in other districts within the country to establish whether similar challenges are experienced by QASOs.
- b. A study on the role of quality assurance exercise in improving the quality of education in the country.
- c. A study to find out the training needs of quality assurance and standards officers, and whether existing in-service programmes have the potential to meet the needs.

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APPENDIX A

HEADTEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is meant for academic purpose. It will try to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. Kindly you are requested to provide answers to these questions as honestly and precisely as possible. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please tick [] where appropriate or fill in the required information on the spaces provided.

Section 1 Background Information

1. Gender [] Male [] Female
2. Age [] 26-30 years [] 31-35 years [] 36-40 years
 [] 41-45 years [] 46-50 years [] 50 years and above
3. Highest level of education
 [] Untrained teacher
 [] Diploma
 [] Degree
 [] Post graduate
 Any other (specify)
4. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
 [] Less than 2 years
 [] 3 – 5 years
 [] 6 – 10 years
 [] 11-15 years
 [] 16-20 years
 [] More than 20 years
5. How long have you served in your current station Years
 [] Less than 2 years
 [] 3 – 5 years
 [] 6 years and above

Section 2 Role of QASOs

1. The following statements on the next page are among the roles played by the QASOs in maintaining quality assurance standards in education institutions. State to which extents at which the roles are carried out in your school using a 5-point scale provided:

No extent	A little extent	A moderate extent	A large extent	A very large extent
1	2	3	4	5

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
QASOs inspect my school regularly					
They monitor and advice my school on academic performance					
They monitor and advice my school on sports, games, drama and music					
They monitor and advice my school on environmental conservation					
Provide career guidance to my school					
Advice teachers on curriculum delivery and assessment					
Identify educational needs for improvement					
Advice on proper and adequate provision of physical facilities					

2. How do most of your teachers relate with the QASOs during the inspection process?

As enemies

As friends

As juniors and seniors (official)

They harass us

3. After the inspection, does the QASO give feedback to teachers for positive improvement?

Yes

No

4. (i) How frequent do your teachers implement the recommendations from the inspection process

Always

Frequently

Rarely

Oftenly

Never

(ii) If they rarely or never implement the recommendations give the reasons

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Section 3 Attitudes toward QASOs' Role

Please respond to the following statements expressing your attitude towards quality assurance and standards exercise. Please circle where appropriate.

Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Undecided 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
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1. The QAS exercise helps headteachers to perform their management duties more effectively **1 2 3 4 5**
2. Supervision provides a forum where headteachers feel free to initiate positive changes in schools management **1 2 3 4 5**
3. Comments from inspection panels help headteachers become better managers **1 2 3 4 5**
4. Inspection helps headteachers to curb unwarranted absenteeism and negligence in lesson preparation among teachers **1 2 3 4 5**
5. Supervision helps in developing innovative programs and changes in school management? **1 2 3 4 5**
6. The exercise makes headteachers feel secure in their positions **1 2 3 4 5**
7. The exercise is of no importance to headteachers and they would rather do without it **1 2 3 4 5**
8. Inspections are aimed at faultfinding and threatening headteachers to make them work. **1 2 3 4 5**
9. In your own views does inspection generate positive changes geared to effective teaching and learning? **[] Yes [] No**

(b) If no, give reasons

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10. What challenges do you face as a school administrator in relation to supervision of curriculum instruction?

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11. What role do the QASOs play in assisting you to overcome these challenges?

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12. What factors hinder the effective role performance of QASOs in primary school supervision?

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13. Suggest ways through which the QASOs can be assisted to overcome the obstacles they face

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14. What other comments do you have regarding the role of QASOs in supervision of curriculum implementation?

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APPENDIX B

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is meant for academic purpose. It will try to find out the obstacles facing Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) in supervising implementation of primary school curriculum in Gatanga District. Kindly you are requested to provide answers to these questions as honestly and precisely as possible. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please tick [] where appropriate or fill in the required information on the spaces provided.

Section 1 Background Information

1. Gender [] Male [] Female
2. Age [] 26-30 years [] 31-35 years [] 36-40 years
 [] 41-45 years [] 46-50 years [] 50 years and above
3. Highest level of education
 [] Untrained teacher
 [] Diploma
 [] Degree
 [] Post graduate
 Any other (specify)
4. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
 [] Less than 2 years
 [] 3 – 5 years
 [] 6 – 10 years
 [] 11-15 years
 [] 16-20 years
 [] More than 20 years
5. How long have you served in your current station Years
 [] Less than 2 years
 [] 3 – 5 years
 [] 6 years and above

Section 2 Role of QASOs

1. The following statements on the next page are among the roles played by the QASOs in maintaining quality assurance standards in education institutions. State to which extents at which the roles are carried out in your school using a 5-point scale provided:

No extent	A little extent	A moderate extent	A large extent	A very large extent
1	2	3	4	5

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
QASOs inspect our school regularly					
They monitor and advice our school on academic performance					
They monitor and advice our school on sports, games, drama and music					
They monitor and advice our school on environmental conservation					
QASOs provide career guidance to teachers					
QASOs advice teachers on curriculum delivery and assessment					
QASOs identify educational needs for improvement					
QASOs advice on proper and adequate provision of physical facilities					

2. How do you relate with the QASOs during the inspection process?

As enemies

As friends

As juniors and seniors (official)

They harass us

3. After the inspection, does the QASO give feedback to you for positive improvement?

Yes

No

4. (i) How frequent do you implement the recommendations from the inspection process

Always

Frequently

Rarely

Oftenly

Never

(ii) If you rarely or never implement the recommendations give the reasons

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Section 3 Attitudes toward QASOs' Role

Please respond to the following statements expressing your attitude towards quality assurance and standards exercise. Please circle where appropriate.

Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Undecided 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
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9. The QAS exercise helps teachers to perform their teaching duties more effectively
1 2 3 4 5
10. Supervision provides a forum where teachers feel free to initiate positive changes in their schools
1 2 3 4 5
11. Comments from inspection panels help teachers become better educators
1 2 3 4 5
12. Inspection helps teachers become more organized and committed to their work, e.g. through lesson preparation
1 2 3 4 5
13. Supervision helps in developing innovative programs and changes in school management?
1 2 3 4 5
14. The exercise makes teachers feel secure in their positions
1 2 3 4 5
15. The exercise is of no importance to teachers and they would rather do without it
1 2 3 4 5
16. Inspections are aimed at faultfinding and threatening teachers to make them work.
1 2 3 4 5
9. In your own views does inspection generate positive changes geared to effective teaching and learning? Yes No

(b) If no, give reasons

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10. What challenges do you face as a teacher in relation to supervision of curriculum instruction?

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11. What role do the QASOs play in assisting you to overcome these challenges?

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12. What factors hinder the effective role performance of QASOs in primary school supervision?

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13. Suggest ways through which the QASOs can be assisted to overcome the obstacles they face

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14. What other comments do you have regarding the role of QASOs in supervision of curriculum implementation?

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APPENDIX C

QASOs INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What roles do the QASOs play in school inspection?

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2. What are your educational and professional qualifications?

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3. What other training have you received in relation to school supervision?

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4. How often do you inspect the primary schools within your area of jurisdiction and for what reasons?

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5. What are the teachers' reactions to the inspection process?

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6. How do you rate the attitudes of teachers toward inspection exercise in education?

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7. What are the key factors that influence attitudes of teachers toward the inspection?

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8. In terms of curriculum implementation and evaluation, how well are the teachers prepared?

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9. Do you always discuss the inspection report with the individual teachers and the school administration?

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10. To which extent are the inspection recommendations implemented in these schools?

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11. What challenges do you face in relation to adequacy of working tools and resources for effective primary school curriculum supervision?

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12. What challenges do you face in relation to transport systems to primary schools in Gatanga district?

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13. How can quality assurance and standards officers be assisted to offer effective school supervision services to primary schools in Kenya?

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14. What are your comments regarding the working conditions of QASOs in this district?

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APPENDIX D

DEOs INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What roles do the QASOs play in school inspection?

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2. What is the frequency of quality assurance and standards officers' visits to primary schools in Gatanga district?

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3. What challenges do your quality assurance and standards officers have in relation to adequacy of working tools and resources for effective primary school curriculum supervision?

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4. What challenges do your quality assurance and standards officers have in relation to transport systems to primary schools?

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5. What problems do your quality assurance and standards officers face in reference to attitudes of teachers toward supervision?

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6. To what extent have your quality assurance and standards officers been adequately in-serviced to handle primary school curriculum supervision?

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7. How can quality assurance and standards officers be assisted to offer effective school supervision services to primary schools in Kenya?

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APPENDIX E

MAP OF KENYA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF GATANGA DISTRICT



