Investigating School Administrators' and Education Standards Officers' Monitoring and Evaluation of Teacher Performance in Nyimba District of Zambia

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Abstract

This study aimed at establishing whether there were any particular challenges that faced school administrators and Education Standards Officers (ESOs) in Nyimba district in their Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of selected secondary school teachers' performance. The objection of the study was to investigate the major challenges to monitoring and evaluation faced by school administrators and Education Standards Officers, if any. This study was conducted within the framework of mixed methodology using an embedded mixed design, the study collected data from 68 participants drawn from six secondary schools and the District Education Board Office in Nyimba. The data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The findings were that most teachers were faced with the challenges of inadequate teaching and learning materials at their schools, minimal feedback by ESOs, inadequate staffing of ESOs and minimal motivation of teachers. Moreover, some teachers feared to meet standards officers due to inadequate preparation. On the other hand, the district was also faced with inconsistent funding from the government and therefore making timely inspections in distant schools almost impossible. My recommendations for addressing the challenges that emerged from the findings included continuous professional trainings where Education Standards Officers and teachers in Zambia are inducted on professional ethics, shared vision, timely school visits by standards officers, the incorporation of ICTs into monitoring and evaluation, awarding of hard working teachers, recruitment of additional standards officers and the undertaking of cluster monitoring and evaluation teachers in schools.

Keywords: Challenges, evaluation, monitoring, shared vision, teacher performance

Introduction

In Zambia, Standards Officers through the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) were previously assigned to perform the duty of monitoring and evaluation of secondary school teacher performance (MoE, 1996). At that time they were referred to as inspectors of schools. The term 'inspectors' used to connote a person who came from above to see that policies developed at the central education were being implemented in schools. Wanzare (2006) concluded that this practice created a gap in communication between the inspectors and teachers. The move prompted the government to change it because teachers tended not to cooperate with the inspectors fearing that inspectors were on a fault finding venture or mission. Therefore, the title inspector changed to that of Standard Officers with the aim of harmonizing or removing the stigma associated with the inspection labeling and portrayed the officers as people concerned with improving quality of teachers' performance by working as partners with teachers. Not much is known about whether these changes are having the desired effect and if not what may be the challenges in this respect. This realization prompted the researchers to embark on a study to investigate the possibilities and types of challenges school administrators and Education Standards Officers (ESOs) in Nyimba district of Zambia may be experiencing in monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance despite the name change from inspection to ESO.

Studies in Pakistan suggested that lack of follow up and negative attitude towards Standards Officers (SO) acted as barriers to effective secondary school teacher inspection (Akram, 2010). Additionally, studies in India show that inspectors were burdened with administrative tasks leaving minimal time for pedagogical monitoring and evaluation (Aleesha, 2012). A number of studies also suggest that teachers are generally not happy with ESOs apparently common practice to not bother to provide feedback on their monitoring (Kasanda, 2015). Furthermore, studies in Zambia portray negativity about school monitoring and evaluation because it includes fault finding attitude by ESOs, the questionable techniques they use and their minimal post monitoring feedback (Chanda, 2011). Other studies demonstrate that inspection is rarely conducted in schools because of very inadequate funding by the government (Namfukwe, 2016).

Performance in Nyimba District as derived from the Nyimba District Strategic Plan for improving learner performance 2018- 2021, indicate that learner performance at Grade 12 Level in the period under review, Nyimba district 2015 and 2017 National Examinations was at 68% and 72.54% respectively. Results recorded in 2015 and 2017 were below the project strategic plan set targets of 70 and 80 percent respectively (MoGE-Nyimba, 2020). Hence, it could be stated that in 2015 the district was below target by 2.0% and in 2017 the district hit below the target by 7.47%. This study thus set out to investigate the major challenges school administrators and ESOs of Nyimba District in Eastern Province of Zambia face in their monitoring and evaluation activities aimed at improving teacher performance.

Problem Statement

Despite monitoring and evaluation of secondary school teachers' performance being conducted so as to improve the learners' academic performance at secondary level, the performance of learners still seems to be deteriorating in Nyimba District. The Grade 12 level academic performance in 2019 was 74.96% which was 3.1% lower than the planned academic performance in Nyimba District Strategic Plan for Improving Learner Performance

2018 – 2021. Hence, the need to conduct the study of how monitoring and evaluation of public secondary schools on teachers' performance can improve the academic performance of pupils of Nyimba district in Eastern Province of Zambia.

Research Question

This study asked the following question: What challenges do School Administrators and Educational Standards Officers face in carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities of secondary schools on teachers' performance in Nyimba District?

Rationale for the study

Studies that are qualitative in nature have shown that monitoring and evaluation of teachers positively contribute to the good academic performance of learners (Chizya, 2018; Daka & Changwe, 2020). However, the academic performance of Nyimba District went down in 2019 despite monitoring and evaluation secondary school teachers being conducted. Hence, this study used a mixed method approach to investigate the major challenges that school administrators and ESOs are facing in monitoring and evaluating secondary school teachers in Nyimba District of Eastern Province of Zambia.

Review of related literature

A study by Lupimo (2014) revealed that school inspection in Tanzania is not effective in improving teacher performance because the inspection was not conducted in a manner it was expected to improve teacher performance in that only one school among the four schools was inspected between 2008 and 2014. Further, a number of teachers viewed school inspection negatively and had not followed the recommendations effectively. On the other hand, the inspections also faced numerous challenges which included authority to take actions against who failed to adhere to teaching guidelines, transport problems, inadequate inspections as compared to the number of secondary schools, and inadequate budget allocations. Therefore, a knowledge gap still remains regarding how frequent monitoring and evaluation of schools should be conducted by Education Standards Officers to help improve the performance of teachers.

In a different study, Bagaya *et al.* (2020) carried out a research which concluded that school inspection does not seem to achieve its objection despite the value theoretical and policy debates attach to it towards the improvement of teacher performance. The findings were that this is because inspectors continue to think and act according to the traditional notions of school inspection as evidenced by the practices hinged on control. Under other conditions, Kasanda (2015) directed a study in Tanzania which found that teachers were not happy with the fact that most of the time; inspectors did not bother to provide feedback on their inspection.

Furthermore, Aguti (2015) carried out a study on secondary school inspection in Uganda which elaborated that after inspection, results were not effectively and efficiently communicated to schools. Even parents hardly got to know about the progress of the school. And worse still teachers expressed disappointment that they were not informed either with respect to the findings of the school inspection and possible recommendations to be put in place.

On the other hand, a study by Mohammad (2015) on the role of school monitoring and evaluation in secondary schools of Nigeria recommended that proper feedback to teachers should be provided to teachers so as to improve teacher performance. Furthermore, the study

recommended that more time should be given to monitoring and evaluation of secondary schools. In this study, one of the questions which were looked into was: what measures must be put in place to improve monitoring and evaluation of the performance of secondary school teachers not in the context of Nigeria but in this case of Nyimba District of Zambia.

A study in Zambia conducted by Chanda (2011) found that school monitoring and evaluation was characterized by the fault finding attitude of standards officers, the defective techniques used by monitors and the absence of post monitoring feedback practice that threatened its credibility and usefulness especially the failure to provide feedback to its good practice and areas of weakness for improvement of teacher performance. A gap that was yet to be filled here was the way in which school monitoring and evaluation must be managed meaningfully for head teachers and teachers and commit them to implementing a teacher performance improvement strategy.

Methodology

This study was conducted within the framework of mixed research methodology using an embedded mixed design. According to Creswell (2014), a mixed design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and 'mixing' both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study or series of studies (triangulation) to understand a research problem. The school sample size comprised of six (6) secondary schools of Nyimba District selected using systematic sampling technique. Patton (2002) argues that the advantages of this method are a large population that can be studied with every member of the population having an equal chance of inclusion and in doing so minimize biasness.

Sixty-eight (68) officials and teachers participated in this study comprising two Education Standards Officers at Nyimba DEBS, six (6) Head teachers, sixty-five (60) teachers of which 39 were male and 21 female. Stratified random sampling was used to select teachers in the participating secondary schools. The sampling involved dividing the population into homogenous sub- groups and then taking a simple random sample in each group. The sampling was informed by Kasonde (2018) declaration that stratified random sampling enhances equal and independent chance of being selected from each respective sub group. On the other hand, purposive sampling was used in the selection of Head teachers and Education Standards Officers. Kasonde (2018) argues that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting cases with rich information for in-depth analysis, related to the focal issue being studied.

Research instruments

In this study the researchers used self- administered questionnaires for the head teachers and teachers. Creswell (2014) and Daka (2019) argue that a questionnaire takes a quantitative approach to measuring perceptions and provides data upon which generalization can be made on the views of a given population on a particular phenomenon. The self-administered questionnaire was preferred in this study given that the targeted respondents was able to read and write and filled out the questionnaire appropriately without the researchers' assistance and also expressed themselves effectively. Moreover, open ended questions in interviews were used to obtain qualitative data from Education Standards Officers and Head teachers. Responses from the interviewees were double checked by reading them out to the respondents for the purpose of validation.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers obtained an introduction letter from the Assistant Dean (Postgraduate) in the School of Education at the University of Zambia to facilitate collection of data in the field. With the introduction letter from The University of Zambia, I then requested permission from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office to visit the selected Secondary Schools for data collection. Before meeting the Secondary School Teachers, the researcher requested permission from the head teachers of the respective Secondary Schools to distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews with the teachers. The researchers distributed questionnaires to teachers and head teachers and arrangements were made with them regarding a convenient time when completed questionnaires could be collected. With regards to interviews, consultations were made with respective Head Teachers and Standards Officers, and then appropriate dates were set for the interviews to be carried out by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Since the study followed the mixed methods approach for data collection, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to analyze data. All quantitative data was coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and descriptive statistic was used to analyze it in order to generate frequencies and percentages. For qualitative part, data from open ended participant responses was analyzed thematically by coding and grouping emerging themes into categories using the content analysis technique. The analysis involved coding and grouping data into categories and this involved identifying major themes that emerged from the categories.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers got clearance from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee before undertaking data collection. The researchers recognized the rights and privacy of respondents for maximum privacy of information he obtained from them and the need not to use it for any other purpose other than the intended purpose. In addition, the researchers got informed consent from the participants and respondents. Participants were informed about how long it would take to conduct the interview or to complete the questionnaire and they were free to withdraw from the study whenever they felt so.

Findings

Challenges faced by School Administrators and Education Standards Officers

The main aim of this part was to establish the challenges that teachers, head teachers and Education Standards Officers faced with monitoring and evaluation in Nyimba District. In order to establish the challenges faced by School Administrators and Education Standards Officers in carrying out monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance in Nyimba District, the respondents were asked to rate the statements by indicating their extent of agreement or disagreement. This was based on the five scalar likert of 1- 5 in which 5 represented- Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Uncertain, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree also translated as: 5= SA, 4=A, 3= U, 2= DA, 1= SD. Therefore, the researcher decided to generate means and standard deviation for each statement based on the responses by the target population. Since a scale of 1- 5 was used as standard mean reference X= 2.5 was adopted to be a benchmark for identifying the extent of agreement or disagreement on each

statement. It followed therefore that all means that were found to be less than 2.5 implied disagreements by respondents to the statement while any mean score more than 2.5, was taken as agreement to the respondents as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Challenges in School Monitoring and Evaluation of Teacher Performance

Total number of teachers= 60

Statements	Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	Majority
Inadequate teaching & learning materials	Teachers	3.933	1.087	Agreement
Inadequate staffing levels	Teachers	3.27	1.47	Agreement
I face challenges with regards to M&E	Teachers	3.933	1.087	Agreement
Fear to meet ESOs	Teachers	1.867	1.065	Disagreement

Source: Field Data, 2020

According to table 1 it is reviewed that teachers with a mean score of 3.93 and standard deviation of 1.08 agreed that they faced a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials. Therefore, it could be argued that the majority of teachers face challenges of inadequate teaching and learning materials at their schools as the mean score of 3.93 was above the standard mean reference X=2.5. Furthermore, all the six (6) head teachers interviewed allude that their schools did not have sufficient teaching and learning resources which converted into an immense barrier to the process of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance.

One Head teacher strongly echoed that, 'my school does not have sufficient teaching and learning materials especially in the languages, mathematics and physical education departments'. Moreover, one ESO interviewed related that 'most secondary schools in Nyimba District lack learning materials and this negatively affects the expected goal of monitoring and evaluation to improve teachers' performance'.

Table 1 also displays that teachers with mean score of 3.93 and standard deviation at 1.09 claimed that they faced challenges with the process of monitoring and evaluation. With reference to the standard mean of 2.5, this showed that the majority of teachers in Nyimba District face challenges with regards to the process of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance.

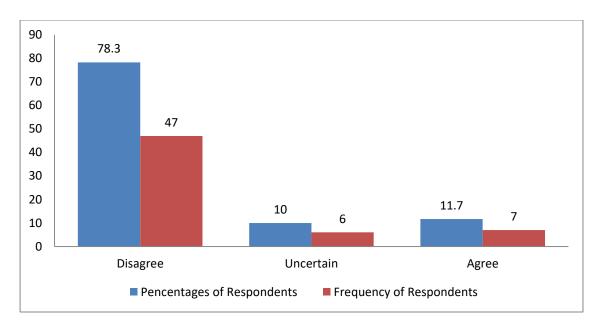


Figure 1: Respondent's fear to meet Education Standards Officers due to lack of preparation

Figure 1 validates that 47 (78.3%) of the teachers disagreed to fear to meeting ESOs due to lack of preparation. Figure 1 still demonstrates that 6 (10%) of the teachers were uncertain about this fear whereas 7 (11.7%) of the teachers were agreeable to the same statement. The mean in this assertion was 1.87 with a standard deviation of 1.06. Therefore, the mean was less than the standard mean reference of 2.5 hence showing that the majority of teachers disagreed to having fear to meet ESOs due to lack of preparation. From the findings above, it shows that the majority of teachers in Nyimba District was willing to meet ESOs and had interest in improving the learners' performance through monitoring and evaluation. However, the teachers were of the view that the support from ESOs seemed to be a mystery because they basically put emphasis on class work while overlooking other issues associated with teacher performance.

On the other hand, one head teacher interviewed stated that "some teachers think monitoring and evaluation is a fault finding venture and therefore a teacher who has not prepared will fake an illness and not report for work". Further still, one ESO interviewed maintained that "some teachers have a negative attitude towards monitoring and evaluation and would therefore avoid being monitored by going in the nearest bush".

Table 2: Head teachers' and Teachers' perceptions on the challenges faced with monitoring and evaluation of secondary school teacher performance

Views	Teachers (n= 60)		Head teachers (n= 5)		Ranking (n= 65)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
lack of motivation of teachers	6	10			6	9.2
No follow- up of recommendations	8	13.3	2	40	10	15.3
given to teachers by ESOs						
Negative attitude by ESOs	7	11.7			7	10.8
No feedback by ESOs	3	5			3	4.7

Results in table 2 show that 9.2% of the respondents declared that teachers lack motivation. This alluded to the suspicion that some teachers felt demotivated about being monitored because monitoring and evaluation was carried out in an intimidating manner by some ESOs.

The results also show that 15.3% of the respondents stipulated that there was no follow-up of the recommendations given to teachers by Education Standards Officers and hence posed as a hindrance to the monitoring and evaluation process. In agreement, one ESO interviewed maintained that 'there is inconsistence funding from the government and therefore it is very difficult to carry out timely monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance especially in very far areas such as Kacholola Boarding Secondary and Hofmeyr Day Secondary and apart from that, some roads become impassable during the rainy season therefore causing a barrier to monitoring and evaluation'.

On the other hand, table 2 postulates that 10.8% of the respondents indicated that negative attitude of ESOs posed as a barrier to monitoring and evaluation of teachers. Table 2 also shows that 4.7% of the respondents declared that ESOs' attitude of not giving feedback to teachers acted as a serious barrier to monitoring and evaluation. This contradicts the findings by Dedering and Muller (2011) that suggested that feedback by ESOs played an important role in the improvement of teacher performance.

Discussion

The study revealed that secondary schools in Nyimba District faced a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials in their schools. In addition, one ESO maintained that most schools in Nyimba Ditrict lacked sufficient teaching and learning materials. These results do not conform to the notion that suggests that availability of adequate teaching and learning materials is indispensable for the improvement of teacher and learner performance (Kakupa *et al.*, 2015; Mulenga – Hagane *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, they do conform to findings in a study by Namfukwe (2016) that suggested that inadequate teaching and learning resources were behind teachers' failure to raise their performance through monitoring and evaluation.

Findings in this study suggest that some teachers felt demotivated upon being inspected due to the intimidating manner in which some ESOs carried out inspections. The study further established that some teachers were lazy and did not want to be monitored. It further found that 11.7% of teachers expressed fear of meeting inspectors due to lack of preparation. Teachers that did not prepare falsified an illness and did not report for work. Some teachers thought monitoring and evaluation was a fault finding venture and hence avoided to be monitored. Therefore it should be noted that mutual trust is key to team work and efficiency that can result into better teacher performance. The study further established that negative attitude of inspectors posed as a barrier to monitoring and evaluation of teachers. This is in line with the study conducted by Bagaya *et al.* (2020) that despite the value attached to school inspection in the theoretical and policy debates towards the improvement of teacher performance, inspectors continue to think and act according to the traditional notions of school inspection as evidenced by practices that hinged on monitoring and evaluation.

Furthermore, the study found a challenge of no follow-up of the recommendations given to teachers by ESOs and hence posed as a serious hindrance to M & E. Besides, the study found that ESOs' attitude of not giving feedback to teachers acted as serious

obstruction to monitoring and evaluation. Findings in a study by Dedering and Muller (2011) echoed that feedbag by ESOs played a major role in improvement of teachers' performance. Findings in a number of studies added that feedbag from ESOs contributed to improved teacher performance (Daka & Changwe, 2020; Bomber *et al.*, 2020). It is at this point that Chizya (2018) suggests that ESOs should visit schools more frequently for monitoring and evaluation of teachers and have follow- up mechanisms in order to ensure that the recommendations are implemented.

The study further revealed that ESOs faced a challenge of inconsistence finding from the government and therefore it was very difficult to carry out timely inspections and follow-up recommendations especially to schools that are located far away from their offices such as Hofmeyr Day Secondary and Kacholola Boarding Secondary. In addition, the study established that some roads were impassable causing a barrier for monitoring and evaluation by ESOs especially during the rainy season. In view of a similar finding in her study, Namfukwe (2016) proposed that government through MoGE should improve funding and procure strong vehicles for Standards section in order to advance the frequency and effectiveness of M & E.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that verbal feedback on the monitoring and evaluation findings to teachers on how to improve was not always availed to the affected teachers. The study also established that delayed or no feedback by ESOs demotivated teachers at the selected secondary schools in this study. On the other hand, the study found that monitoring and evaluation of secondary schools caused fear and tension among teachers. The study further revealed that Education Standards Officers faced a challenge of inconsistent funding from the government and therefore it was very difficult to carry out timely inspections and follow-up recommendations. This study has also instituted that negative attitude of inspectors by creating fear and tension on teachers posed as a barrier to monitoring and evaluation of teachers.

Recommendations

In view of the findings in this study it is recommended that Government through the Ministry of General Education undertakes continuous professional trainings for ESOs and teachers in Zambia should include induction to professional ethics. This could be conducted at school, district and regional levels. Professionals should be made aware of what they are expected to do regarding monitoring and evaluation. Such consideration would be in line with Nkinyangi's (2006), that there is need for teachers to take a responsibility of improving teaching and learning and developing pupils' performance. However, this can be possible if the teachers are made aware of their professional ethics. Further, the Ministry of General Education should work hand in hand with teachers, head teachers and standards officers to revise monitoring procedures. Every so often, teachers are in shock to see standards officers in school corridors. In this era, the focus should be on supervision as opposed to inspection which can be done over a lengthy of time. Furthermore, there is need to resolve discrepancies that have been committed from the past years surrounding inspection. As suggested by MoGE (2016a), there is need to encourage teachers to develop positive attitudes towards school monitoring and evaluation. Also, the Government of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education and other relevant stakeholders should, among other measures;

- (a) Provide sufficient funds to enable timely visits of Educational Standards Officers to schools.
- (b) Provide sufficient learning and teaching materials in schools.
- (c) Recruit more Educational Standards Officers in the district in line with an established appropriate figure.
- (d) Find ways of awarding hardworking teachers.
- (e) Host Cluster monitoring and evaluation of teachers in schools.
- (f) Intensify head teachers' monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performances.

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