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## Principals' Attitude towards Quality Assurance and Standards Assessment: Implications to Secondary School Supervision in Nairobi, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Quality assurance and standards assessment enables a country measure whether the quality of education it provides to its citizens meets the set threshold, relevant and is continuously maintained. Principals as firstline and internal quality assurance and standards officers are challenged to embrace quality assurance and standards assessment for improvement of the various dimensions of supervision in their schools. Literature reviewed identified a gap connected to attitude, implying that principals' attitude towards the assessment have effect on the way they do supervision in schools. The study was guided by two question The study resonated with the Deming's supervision theory, Collegial and the Developmental supervision models. The embeded mixed research design. Questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guide were used to collect data. Nine (9) Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and 83 principals were the target population. The sample consisted of 9 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and 30 principals which was arrived at by use of purposive and stratified sampling techniques. All quantitative data from the questionnaires was entered into the SPSS computer program for descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was analyzed into frequency counts, means and percentages. The inferential statistics and regression analysis of results was done for statistical relationship variables. The major findings were that principals had some negative attitude towards assessment. They reported that quality assurance and standards assessments were important but infrequent in secondary schools' supervision. The study found out that principals were not happy with some of the approaches used by quality assurance and standards officers while conducting assessments, which made them have negative attitude towards assessment. They desired frequent assessments, a positive approach to assessment by the officers and mandatory follow-up assessments. The assessments. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between principals' attitude towards assessment and effective supervision ( $\rho = 0.527$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ ). The study recommends that the Ministry of Education employs more officers and to in-service existing ones to make them have a positive and collegial approach while carrying out assessments. The Ministry should also avail sufficient resources to the officers to enable them undertake their work effectively. All principals should also be sensitized on the process of quality assurance and standards assessment benefits for them to embrace it.*

**Keywords:** Quality assurance and standards assessment, attitude and dimensions

### **1. Introduction**

Quality assurance and standards assessment ensures desirable education standards are met and maintained in teaching and learning institutions. Assessment is a practice that should be embraced by principals in the supervision of their schools to ensure that the quality of education offered is acceptable. Principals may embrace assessment only if they have positive attitude towards it (Raouf, 2008). The great interest shown in education leadership since 20th century, could be due to the belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and students' outcome. Ekundayo (2010) posits that, national development cannot be achieved where secondary education is not effectively managed to accomplish its aims and objectives. He further states that principals as chief executive officers of schools are duty bound to modify staff attitude and motivate them to perform at their best for the achievement of the schools goals. This has a bearing on the principals' attitude towards assessment in order to improve their supervision. The organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD, 2011) reports that the aspects assessed in schools include; teaching and learning, students support, human resource management, financial and material resources.

In Germany, Dederling and Muller (2011) reported that 85% of principals found verbal feedback at the end of inspection and the report useful and meaningful for school development. This is a proof that the principals had a positive attitude towards assessment. Dederling and Muller further argued that a few months after inspection visits, development activities took place at majority of the schools. In Ireland where principals regard assessment positively, a draft inspection report is made and a post-inspection meeting held with the principal, staff and members of BoM (Perry, 2012). The fragmentation in the education segment in South Africa due to apartheid, led to the creation of Institution Development and Support Officials (IDSO) in the districts. Their role was to inspect schools by monitoring school leadership and management and creating supportive environment for provision of quality education. According to Raath (2012), principals looked forward to advice from the IDSOs. This implies that they had a positive attitude towards assessment.

What would be the case in East Africa? In Tanzania according to Mmbando and Hongoke (2010), the unprofessional conduct of some inspectors, have implications in teaching and learning. It leads to hostility between teachers and the inspectors. They further posited that teachers mistrusted inspectors and regarded assessment as a stressful experience due to fear of the unknown. Such an attitude is not different to the experience in Kenya, the locale of the study. According to M'Inoti (2012) the negative attitude by principals and teachers towards assessment affected schools' supervision and performance and recommendations by QASOs were hardly implemented in schools. Principals desired that assessments need not be carried out unannounced and that notification be given. There should also be a cordial relationship between the assessors and the teachers. Quality assurance and standards assessment brings out in feedback, strengths and weaknesses and what must be improved. Gichui (2012) pointed out that, education reforms often fail to achieve desired outcomes due to ineffective supervision. This could be due to principals' attitude towards assessment that prevented them from addressing corrective measures.

Proper planning is requisite for effective assessment to be realized in a school (Bruggen, 2010). The schools and data have to be accessed and a standardized National framework defining the educational quality put in place. The nine different types of Educational institution assessments conducted in Kenya include; Panel, Subject based, Advisory, Block, Assessment for registration, Assessment for introduction of new subject, Investigative assessment, and Follow-up assessment (Republic of Kenya, 2000). However, information on how principals view these assessments in secondary schools is limited. Assessments entail monitoring progress in secondary schools as it provides feedback for better school performance (MOEST, 2010). According to Whitby (2010) external findings are often communicated back to schools inspected within a few days of inspection. Statistically significant relationship existed between constructive oral feedback and overall satisfaction with the inspection process among the stakeholders (McCrone, Coghlan et al, 2009). But would happen is the external findings are received with hostility or an attitude that does create an atmosphere for quality supervision? This is the reason study attempted to find out principals' attitude towards assessments and if findings were addressed and followed up by effective actions to improve secondary school supervision.

The study was anchored on Deming theory of quality management (1986), Collegial model with contributions from; Dalin (1994), Whitaker (1995), Macroff (1993), Rowan (1993), Sergiovanni (1991), Bush and West-Burnham (1994). The Developmental model of supervision by Glickman (1987), Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2003) was also used. This was due to their implication on principals' supervisory roles in relation to quality assurance and standards assessment. The collegial and Developmental supervision models appear to have some parallels with Deming's "partnership for quality." Participative techniques such as; teamwork, quality circles, quality control, and quality assurance are just the beginning of the evolution and transformation to TQM in organizational life; and specifically, in a school setting. In line with Deming's theory (1986), this study focuses on the contributions of quality assurance and standards assessments in preventing defects and conforming to requirements in secondary school supervision. Deming's theory advocates for avoidance of wastage. Principals do this in their supervision through leadership that coordinates; curricular, co-curricular programs and general school supervision. This is because Deming asserts that quality issues in organizations arise from poor management.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

Studies have shown that among impediments that make principals give little attention to supervision of instructional activities in secondary schools include principals' attitude towards quality assurance and standards assessment. According to Ehren and Visscher (2008) in Denmark, Dederling and Muller (2011) in Germany, school stakeholders' discussion of feedback from assessment is important for school improvement. In Kenya, principals are supposed to discuss recommendations and implementation of assessment feedback with the teachers in order to enhance supervision (Gichui 2012). This however, may be influenced by their attitude. Studies by Whitby (2010), Ehren and Visscher (2008) and Gray and Gardner (2010) contend that studies on the effects of inspections or assessments and principals' attitude towards them are limited. This study seeks to find out principals' attitude towards quality assurance assessment and its influence on their supervision.

### *1.2. Research Questions*

- What is the attitude of principals towards Quality Assurance Assessment in the supervision of secondary schools in Nairobi, county?

- How does principals' attitude towards Quality Assurance Assessment influence the supervision of secondary schools?

### 1.3. Research Hypothesis

- Ho: Principals' attitude towards quality assurance and standards assessment feedback has no significant influence on their supervision of secondary schools in Nairobi County.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

In the conceptual framework, the principals supervision is the dependent variable whose indicators are effective supervision of all supervisory areas. The independent variable conceptualized in this study is the principals' attitude. The indicator is the positivity or negativity with which the principals regard quality assurance and standards assessment by implementing the resulting recommendations..

### 2.1. Literature Review

Teachers' supervision by Principals in the recent past has attracted more attention than ever before because of the expectations of the society. However, it would good to scan through how the teaching fraternity looks at the issue. In Northern Ireland, little is known about what the teachers think about school inspection, as posited by Gray and Gardner (2010). A study was done in England on perceptions and experiences of 70 Northern Ireland primary and secondary schools. The results were that most school principals considered the inspection program to be professional and supportive. However, there were reservations on the extent of anxiety induced by the process, the amount of time necessary to prepare for the inspection and the inclusion of lay persons in the inspection team. The study recommended the need for independent research into the inspection of schools. This is a gap that our study attempted to determine the thoughts and experiences of Nairobi secondary school principals on Quality Assurance Standards and Assessments.

A study in Germany in the states of Berlin and Brandenburg by Gaertner, Wurster and Pant (2013) with a control group, found out that principals and teachers felt that the school quality was highly stable, irrespective of inspection which had a low impact on the aspects of school quality measured there. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2007) reported that majority of the schools were satisfied with the inspection process and that the schools were implementing all recommendations for improvement and inspection had contributed to school improvement. However, Chapman (2001) in a study had negated this reporting that even though OFSTED itself claimed that inspection promoted improvement at both national and school level, it had only made limited contributions towards school development and improvement efforts. This view was also shared by Rosenthal (2004), who found out that there existed a small but well determined adverse negative effect associated with OFSTED inspection event for the year of inspection.

A study in Nigeria by Kolawole (2012) found that there was a significant relationship between instructional supervision of principals and instructional supervision of inspectors from the Ministry of Education. The study reported that the principals and the inspectors were able to effectively supervise instruction in schools. Positive climate existed in schools as a result of positive working relationship between the principals and the inspectors. Kolawole further said that principals and inspectors worked together in identifying problems, solving them and helping colleagues to teach well and maintain the required and adequate standards of education. Quoting Aiyepoku (1987), Kolawole said that principals and inspectors advise teachers during assessments, so as to improve education quality. Both the parties were experienced, helpful and genuinely enthusiastic about their jobs. This pointed to a positive attitude on the part of the principals towards assessment by the inspectors.

In the same development Raath (2012) argued that principals' experience and expectations of the role of Institutional Development Support officers (IDSO) in Gauteng province of South Africa, implied positive attitude. The supervisors advise Principals on leadership and share their expertise in school support to develop principals. In Tanzania, according to Machumu (2012), secondary school principals and teachers had positive attitude towards inspection. Whitby (2010) also reported that the composition and responsibility of external inspectors influenced a school's response to inspection. She further posited that schools should have faith in the competence and credibility of the inspection team and that ½ the team should be knowledge base specialists as in secondary. However, there is a grey area on how the positive attitude translated on the supervision by principals.

A study by Mosigisi (2012) on the role of Quality Assurance and Standards officers in the performance of Kenya certificate of secondary education in Kasarani District Nairobi County, asserts that quality assurance and standards is important for school success. This is in terms of the schools' mission, goals and objectives. It is therefore imperative that school leadership put in place mechanisms to ensure that quality assurance practices are being followed in their schools with a sole aim of improving education quality and standards. Mosigisi's study further pointed out that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers were viewed as outsiders by educational administrators and teachers who consider them as "intruders" into an area that they knew little about due to lack of special training in the area. A study whose purpose was to find out the impact of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in enhancing quality of education in secondary schools in Mombasa district (County) was done by Barrow (2011). The study revealed that principals and teachers saw the officers as fault finders. On their part the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers found the teachers inhospitable. However, the principals and teachers perceived the officers as being relevant in enhancing the quality of education. The principals and teachers reported that the

officers did not visit schools regularly and only did when there was need and even so, they did not give feedback to schools after assessments. The current study sought to find out the reason for principals and teachers viewing assessment and the officers negatively with their presence not being effectively felt in schools.

A study by Kipkirui (2013) in Bureti Sub-County Kericho County, examined the role performance of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in internal and external instructional supervision. The findings were that the attitude of teachers to Quality Assurance and Standards Officers was found to be good and majority indicated they were visited once per year. Koech (2014), in his study found out that teachers needed extrinsic rewards such as polite supervision, cordial relationship with their seniors such as QASOs and favorable teaching environment. Principals on their part found it important to discuss the findings of assessments with the QASOs for school's improvement. According to Kilonzo (2013), teachers' attitude towards QASOs was a major barrier to school improvement. He recommended that QASOs should use polite language, conduct diagnostic supervision and give adequate valuable feedback to teachers immediately after assessment. This together with positive interaction with teachers would encourage them to change their attitude towards assessment and QASOs.

Mohammed (2011) found out that there was no guarantee that teachers and principals would accept shortcomings identified by assessors. Furthermore, when alerted on an impending assessment, they were likely to be apprehensive and put up a show to impress QASOs. This indicates the suspicion with which principals and teachers viewed the assessment process. However, on his part, Irungu (2013) established that the frequent assessments by QASOs to schools would facilitate good rapport between teachers and QASOs. This present study attempted to find out if; regular assessments, feedback and follow up visits after assessments, cordial working relationship, and discussion of assessment findings would help secondary school principals change their attitude towards assessments and use the recommendations to improve their supervision.

In Kisumu County a study by Ajuoga, Indoshi and Agak (2010) concluded that the officers were of average competency and needed further training in supervisory skills. This may impact negatively on the secondary principals' attitude and their supervisory work, since they rely on the officers' feedback on assessment and advice so as to enhance their supervision. Mohammed (2011) found that in some instances, the officers' recommendations were not acted upon by either the principals or the Ministry of Education. Further, they lack legal powers to compel principals to implement outcomes of QASA (Kipkirui 2013). This might be one of the reasons that made principals have a negative attitude towards assessment.

In the same development, Gichuhi (2012) reported that inadequacy of staff and resources were work related challenges facing Quality assurance and standards officers. It was found out that teachers' negative attitude, and lack of cooperation affected assessments. Njogu (2012) in Nyandarua district (now County) argued that officers lacked resources to enable them work effectively. This, coupled with low academic qualification of QASOs made them uncomfortable in assessing secondary schools (Muriuki, 2012) and weak coordination by the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards, generated negative attitude in the teachers (Njogu). Consequently, this made teachers view the officers negatively as fault finders rather than partners and source of formative guidance in curriculum implementation.

Ehren, Altrichter, McNamara and O'Hara (2012) reported that there was little research knowledge on; school inspection, its most effective types of approaches and its contribution to improvement in schools. Findings from literature also showed that inadequate information existed on how assessment results were used, teacher attitude towards assessment and the frequency of assessments and the effectiveness and competence of QASOs. This study, sought to find out the influence of principals' attitude towards assessment in relation to their supervision of schools in Nairobi, Kenya and also attempted to fill some of the gaps in studies reviewed.

## 2.2. Research Design

The study used an embedded mixed research design, where phenomenological qualitative technique was embedded in a cross-sectional survey design which is a quantitative strand. The design was used in data collection and analysis so as to corroborate the research findings. The qualitative component was embedded in the quantitative method so as to supplement the data collection and analysis. This was to enable using of the qualitative interviews on the perception and experiences of quality assurance and standards assessment by principals and quality assurance and standards officers to help further explain the role of assessment in secondary school supervision. The complex nature of the study necessitated the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in the single study. This was as recommended by Johnson and Christensen (2008) and Tashakkori and Teddie (2010). They advocated for the combination in assisting to get a better and deeper understanding of the complex phenomenon, by capitalizing on the strengths of the two techniques, which offsets their weaknesses.

The study was carried out in schools in 9 Sub-counties of Nairobi, Kenya namely; Starehe, Embakasi, Makadara, Westlands, Njiru, Kamukunji, Langata, Dagoretti and Kasarani. The target population included 9 Quality assurance and standards officers from the 9 Nairobi Sub-counties of Nairobi and 83 Principals from the 83 public secondary schools in Nairobi County (Teachers' Service Commission, 2012 and Ministry of Education Science and Technology, EMIS 2015). Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed to sample the 30 schools in the form of; mixed day secondary school (MD), girls' boarding secondary school (GB), boys' boarding secondary school (BB), girls' day secondary school (GD), boys' day secondary school (BD) and mixed boarding secondary school (MB), and the 30 Principals and the Quality Assurance and Standards officers.

The researchers used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. These included; questionnaires, interview guide and document analysis. By triangulation, data collection methods of questionnaires, interview

guides and document analysis were used. This was to ensure internal validity, as qualitative approaches were also used. The instruments in this study were given to experts such as QASOs not part of the study, the researcher's supervisors and lecturers at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. The researchers also gave other researchers the instruments in peer evaluation as recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). Pilot testing was done on the research tools in 2 secondary schools and 4 QASOs who were not part of the study.

The interview guides and some parts of section V of the questionnaire were subjected to the credibility test. For dependability testing, the instruments were presented to colleague researchers and QASOs who were not part of the study. Triangulation in this study also involved the officers and principals in member checking of the interview guide as recommended by Creswell (2003). The researchers-built rapport with the participants and at the conclusion of the interviews so as to get a true reflection of what they had given. In this study the reliability of the instruments was tested by using the split half design. The closed ended items provided this data. All the alpha coefficients ranged between 0.60 and 0.80. Therefore, based on the coefficient values, the items tested were deemed reliable for this study. Effective supervision had been liability Cronbach's Alpha of 0.658, assessment had 0.733; Quality assurance officer's feedback had 0.698. Therefore, all were accepted. The study used mean, correlation and regression to analyze data. All quantitative data from the questionnaires was entered into the SPSS computer program for descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was analyzed into frequency counts, means and percentages. The inferential statistics and regression analysis of results was done for statistical relationship variables. Hypothesis was tested through regression analysis. Qualitatively data was collected by interviews and document analysis and was transcribed, organized thematically, as they emerge in the ongoing process, then analyzed using statistics to indicate percentages. Thematic analysis, categories and patterns were used in interpretation of data. Graphs, charts and tables were used to present descriptive data analysis results. On ethical consideration, the researchers sought authority to conduct the research and informed all the participants the purpose of the study. Consent was sought from the respondents and their confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed as recommended by Cohen and Manion (1994). The principals' questionnaires return rate was 80% (24). The study interviewed 6 principals representing 20% and 6 Quality assurance and standards officers (67%).

### 3. Results and Discussion

Most problems with quality in organizations are attributed to the management (Deming, 1986). In school's principals are the managers. The principals thus need to implement policy as required and set goals in their schools so as to pursue quality and therefore proper leadership ought to be in place. This action may encourage workers to either have positive or negative attitude towards their work. According to Whitby's report (2010), when schools have faith in the competence and credibility of the inspection team, it influences the perception of the teachers on the QASA process. This hinges on the attitude of the principals and teachers, an aspect that this study aspired to find out.

Likewise, the way QASA is done may affect the principals and teachers' perception to make them either embrace it or not. In order to study the attitude construct in relation to the research question, this study looked at; the principals' perception of the influence of assessment on secondary school supervision. This included their awareness of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers activities, the conduct of the officers while carrying out assessments and the respondents' evaluation of the frequency of QASA in their schools. Principals Attitude towards Quality Assurance and Standards Assessment and secondary School Supervision. The study sought to find out the attitude of principals on the influence of quality assurance and standards assessment on secondary schools' supervision. The summary is depicted in Figure 1.

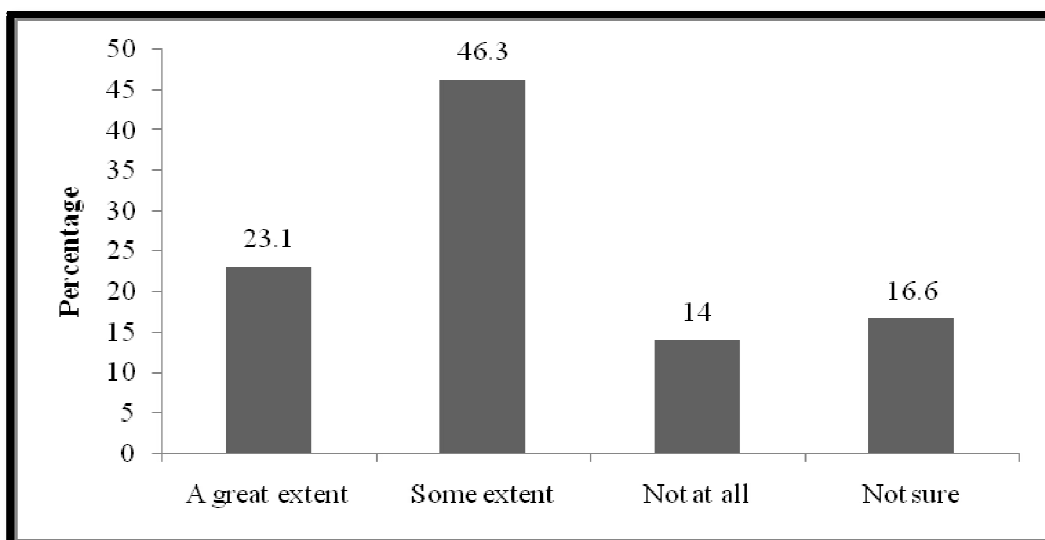


Figure 1: Influences of Quality Assurance and Assessment on School Supervision

A total of 46.3% of the respondents agreed that quality assurance and standards had some impact on school supervision, while 23.1% of the respondents stated that it had a great influence on school supervision. Another group of 14% felt that quality assurance had no influence at all on school supervision while 16.6% were found to be unsure of any influence. Given that a total of 69.4% supported the construct, it implies that principals opined that quality assurance had a significant influence on school supervision. This fact is corroborated by Akinwumiji and Agabi (2008), when they reported that inspection or assessment is carried out to specifically ensure minimum standards are maintained in the process of teaching and learning. Through assessments, schools are accorded opportunities to know and address challenges facing them and a considerable level of success achieved in pursuit of school goals. Deming (1986) also supported the fact that continuous inspection forestalls challenges that may be faced by organizations.

Most principals accepted that advisory assessment by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers assisted them on areas of curriculum organization, implementation and supervision. The advisory assessments helped the principals when they faced challenges in teaching and learning. Most of the principals were found to be well versed with what quality assurance and standards, assessments entail, however a significant proportion making 21.9% of the principals who participated in the study were either unsure or did not have idea on QASA. This implied that there was still need to improve the leadership quality through assessment. No wonder, Raath (2012) posited that in South Africa, principals' experience and expectation of their role needed interactions with QASA to enable them help schools achieve their goals. Gichuiri's (2012) found out that administrative problems encountered by principals in Trans Nzoia, identified finance and business management as the major challenges that ought to be addressed by advisory assessment. This study confirmed hope of advisory assessment being in position to tackle those challenges since majority of respondents in the study (61.6%) indicated they were being solved by advisory assessments. A principal reported that "Advisory assessment if treated positively it can be used to correct professional practices in relation to teaching documents such as lesson plan" as articulated by Principal D (19th Nov., 2015). Further, this study revealed that 51.5% of the principals who participated in the study were in support of follow-up assessment by officers in finding out how well they had implemented recommendations from previous assessments. However, there were a significant number of respondents in the study (22.8%) who were not sure of the assistance of follow-up assessment as done by QASOs since it was rarely done.

This study however contradicted the findings from Mosigisi's (2012) on QASOs performance in Kasarani District. He reported that the officers were viewed as intruders who lacked special skills in training on the assessment area. In the current study majority of the respondents (72.3%) believed that the officers were of great help in improving the supervision of secondary schools. Moreover, due to close supervision by the officers, areas such as curriculum organization and implementation had improved regularly as expressed by 75.2% of the respondents in support. This means that QASOs were all-rounded and did not only focus on few areas. This is in line with what Klerks (2012) found out that interactions between different characteristics, among them between inspectors and schools contribute to school improvement.

For supervision to improve, principals need to cooperate more with the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers so that they will be able to execute their mandate. As seen, the follow-up assessment as conducted by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers needs to be more thorough as the findings showed a good number of respondents having not felt their effects. It could be that only a few principals had interacted with the assessment process. This is as Bush (2003) posited in the collegial model that shared leadership and collective sense of responsibility enabled schools fulfill their goals. Deming's theory (1986) asserted that quality control issues arose from poor management. Quality assurance and standards assessments therefore can benefit principals if Quality Assurance and Standards Officers are committed to it. The principals therefore are expected to be open minded and positive towards Quality Assurance and Standards assessments. This encourages collegiality not only among the teachers, but also between the principals and the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. According to Fink and Resnick (2004), principals are challenged to embrace collegiality and collaboration for them to create intellectual and social capital, thereby meeting the school goals. This is in reference to the Deming's Theory (Deming, 1986) and Collegial model (Bush, 2003) that advocate for partnership for quality, teamwork in the process of QASA, would benefit not only the school, but also other stakeholders.

In line with the principals' evaluation of the frequency of assessments, the researchers also sought to find out from the principals the number of times the quality assurance and standards officers had assessed their schools in the past four years. The results were as displayed in Figure 2.

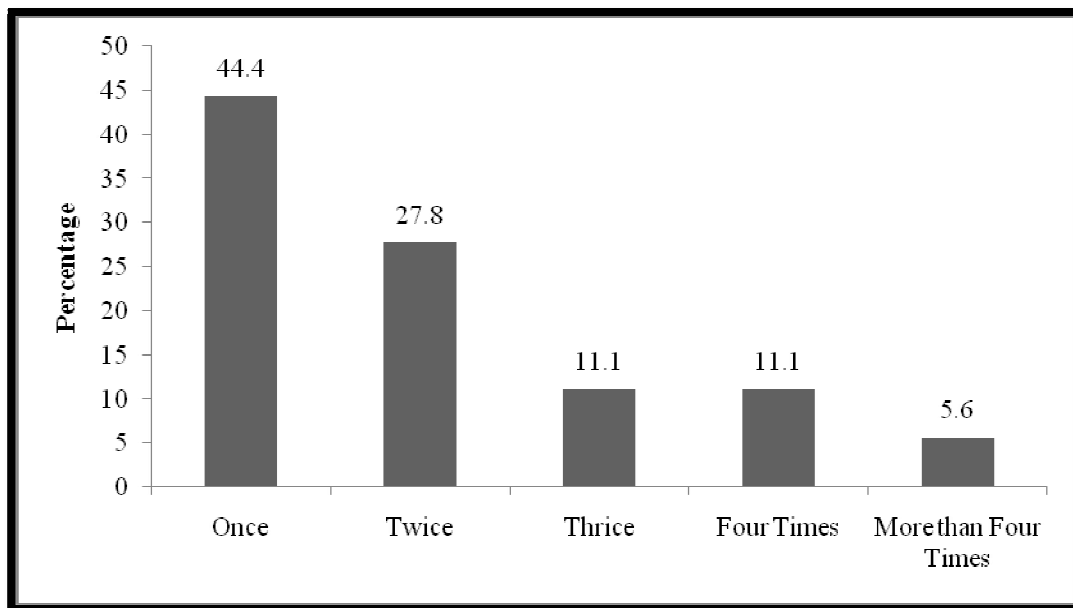


Figure 2: Frequency of Assessments According to the Principals

Most of the principals (44.4%) reported that their schools had been assessed only once, followed by those who had been assessed twice (27.8%). The rest admitted that had been assessed thrice and four times while 5.6% reported four times as shown in Figure 2. This means that principals had at least undergone the assessment process. However, they would have preferred more assessments. One of the principals reported that, "Assessment visits haven't been frequent at all therefore weaknesses still exist in supervision areas for example in curriculum implementation", Principal K (29th Jan., 2016).

In a review of the outcome measures of school inspection, Klerks (2012) argued that inspections only did not improve schools. He opined that school improvement was complex and involved other processes other than inspection. In contributing to the discussion, Raath (2012) appreciates the role of inspection in advising school leaderships in achieving set goals. However, the study by Gichuri (2012) found out that principals faced problems in their duties as supervisors. In addition, the current study argues that Quality assurance and standards assessment was important in schools success; although it was observed that there was inadequacy of the Quality assurance and standards assessment practice. Watsulu and Simatwa (2011) posited that schools were not assessed as many times as they should, whereas respondents recommended termly.

Principals attitude and Quality Assurance and Standards Assessments

The conduct of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers while undertaking assessments should also be looked at as it influenced the principals' attitude towards quality assurance and standards assessment. The principals were required to state their stand on whether approaches used by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers had negative effects on their perception of assessment. As in Table 1, 33.3% principals disagreed, 27.8% were unsure of which position to take, 22.2% strongly agreed, while 16.7% agreed that QASOs approaches impacted negatively on assessment. This implies that 38.9% of the respondents viewed QASOs' conduct negatively. Added to the unsure 27.8%, this gave 66.9%, a number that was big and suggested that a gap existed in this area and needed remedial measures.

One QASO posited that "Quality assurance and standards assessment only influences supervision of secondary schools in Nairobi, only if principals have positive attitude but with negative attitude of principals there is no influence", (QASO FF, 8th April, 2016). It implies that the principals regarded the QASOs negatively in relation to QASA, which made them not embrace outcomes of assessments in their supervision. One principal specifically asserted that "Teachers feel they are being witch-hunted and yet they are not working due to the lapse- if it was done regularly teachers would understand and would take it positively", (Principal E 6th Jan., 2016). This finding corroborates with that of Barrow (2011) that teachers and principals viewed QASOs as fault finders. Mohammed (2011) earlier on had noted that QASOs roles were viewed positively by principals with expectations towards improving institutional performance. Mohammed's assertion that principals view QASOs roles positively seems to suggest that principals value QASOs roles. The findings are illustrated in Table 1.

	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principals' Ratings of assessments	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F%			
QASOs negative approach affects the principals' perception of assessment.	3	19	5	33.3	7	27.8	4	16.7	5	22.2	3.3	1.2
Advisory assessments results by QASOs, don't impact positively on improvement of school supervision in curriculum organization and implementation.	5	22.2	11	44.4	5	22.2	3	11.1	0	0	2.2	0.9
Advisory assessments do not improve in the teaching and learning and students' assessment.	4	16.7	13	55.6	7	27.8	0	0	0	0	2.1	0.7
Advisory assessments don't assist in challenges faced in management of finances, staff and physical facilities.	3	11.1	8	33.3	11	44.4	1	5.6	1	5.6	2.6	1.0
Discussion of advisory assessment reports with the QASOs doesn't make the supervision of the teachers any easier for principals.	4	16.7	7	27.8	5	22.2	7	27.8	1	5.6	2.8	1.2
Discussion of advisory assessment reports with the teachers in school hasn't made their supervision any easier for principals.	4	16.7	9	38.9	11	44.4	0	0	0	0	2.3	0.8
Release of follow-up assessment findings by QASOs enables principals address areas of challenges in their schools.	1	5.6	11	44.4	5	22.2	5	22.2	1	5.6	2.8	1.1

Table 1: Principals' Ratings on Conduct of Qasos in Quality Assurance and Standards Assessments in Schools (N=24)

The approaches that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers use in assessment ought to be improved to bridge the gap between the roles of the officers and approach to assessment. Eradication of fear among workers enables them to contribute effectively towards the achievement of the organizational objectives as posited by Deming Theory. Further, the collegial model by Bush (2003) and Glickman's (1990) contribution to the Developmental model underlie the need to assume participatory and collaborative approaches in QASA for it to succeed. Both principals and quality assurance and standard officers should take each other as colleagues.

Secondly, principals' response on whether advisory assessment done by QASOs had not improved the supervision of curriculum organization and implementation their school was sought. The principals who disagreed with this statement were 44.4%, while 22.2% strongly disagreed thus 66.6% opposed the statement. Only 11.1% agreed to the fact that no improvement has been realized after advisory statement. Overall this statement had a mean of 2.2 and standard deviation of 0.9 implying majority of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The 33.3% who reported no improvement by advisory assessment was still an indicator that all was not well in the area of advisory assessment as a significant number of the respondents negatively viewed QASA's contribution to curriculum supervision.

When asked if advisory assessment had made no contribution to improvement of teaching, learning and students' assessment, 55.6% disagreed, 27.8% were undecided and 16.7% strongly disagreed. This meant that advisory assessment had contributed to teaching and learning significantly, showing a positive attitude towards the construct.



Further investigation on whether principals had received any assistance in time of challenges such as in the management of finances, staff and physical facilities, showed varied results. The principals who ascertained to having received assistance were 44.4% while another group comprising of 44.4% were indecisive, and only 11.2% who denied having received any assistance with a mean of 2.6 and standard deviation of 1.0. This indicated that the principals viewed QASA both positively and negatively. From the Developmental supervision model that this study hinges on, Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2003) posit that some prerequisite skills that include; knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills are important in unifying an organizations goals and meeting teachers' needs that are part of a secondary school's supervision. In the case of QASA, the fact that only half the number of principals admitted that advisory assessment reports assisted in various areas of supervision indicated the existence of gaps.

In addition, principals were asked if discussion of advisory assessment reports with the QASOs had made the supervision of the teachers any easier. In response to the question, 27.8% principals agreed 27.8% disagreed while, 22.2% were unsure if the reports had assisted them or not. Calculated mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of 1.2 show that there was great variability. It was clear that half the respondents had a positive attitude towards discussions of advisory assessment reports with QASOs, while the other half were negative. The observation was confirmed by one the QASOs, who said, "If assessment is done correctly, the report normally has a positive improvement in staff supervision in secondary schools. If done wrongly, teachers take it negatively." (QASO EE, 10<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2016). The professionalism in the supervision needed to be addressed if all principals are to embrace quality assurance and standards assessment for improvement of school supervision.

Finally, an investigation of the impact created by the release of follow-up assessment reports by QASOs in enabling principals to address areas with challenges in schools was studied. Respondents who disagreed were 44.4%, followed by 22.2% undecided, and 22.2% agreed. The principals' responses showed there is a challenge in the release of follow-up assessment reports in QASA. One of the principals posited that "Follow-up assessment is a problem because very little follow-up assessment is done and no written feedback is ever given", (Principal C, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2015). A Quality Assurance and Standard Officer attested that, "Strategies need to be put in place to improve QASA's weakness on follow-up assessment to be improved by having more personnel and more resources should be availed, with frequent inductions for officers," (QASO EE, 10<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2016). This implied that the principals were not happy with the conduct of follow-up assessments and had negative attitude towards them.

The gaps identified in the conduct and release of panel, advisory and follow-up assessment reports were similar to those posited by Muriuki (2012) on the role of school inspectors in maintenance of educational standards in Mwingi. He found out that some QASOs had been appointed from primary schools directly and were thus uncomfortable assessing secondary schools. This was majorly due to the fact that they lacked formal training, which may impact negatively on QASA as they lacked capacity to advise secondary school teachers and the principals. Principals viewed the officers negatively and by extension had negative attitude towards assessments conducted by them.

This study refers to Developmental model of supervision (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2003) on teachers' level of performance as a need to be identified, after which they are encouraged to embrace self-growth and earn positive regard from the officers. Such an attitude is only possible if the QASOs who are the supervisors possess the requisite skills and knowledge. Mohammed (2011) also recommended that due to QASOs wide range of supervisory roles, they ought to be given in-depth training on utilization of assessment techniques so as to provide informed advisory role to principals and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. He also posited that the inspectors be positively viewed so as to eradicate fear, for them to work well with the principals as partners.

The findings indicate divided opinion on whether impact of QASOs has created an improvement in curriculum organization and implementation; however, a case in Germany by Gaertner et al., (2013) showed little or no impact at all on adding quality to the inspected schools' curriculum. Similarly, Barrow (2011) in a study in Mombasa County, showed that physical presences of QASOs had not been felt effectively in schools as they only visited when there was need and to make matters worse they failed to give feedback after school assessment, a lacuna that need attention if future assessments are to bear meaningful fruits.

The assessment is not usually limited to curriculum implementation but covers a wide range of areas such as management of finances, staff and physical facilities. Consequently, many of the respondents agreed that advisory assessment had contributed to improvement in teaching, learning, and students' assessment, management of finances, staff and physical facilities. However, it was observed that QASOs met many challenges in the course of their work. Key among them, as posited by Kipkirui (2013) are understaffing, recommendations on reports not being implemented and sometimes uncooperative District Education Officers

It was quite important to gauge the nature of the relationship, direction and significance of the bivariate relationship between variables in the study following (Sekaran, 2010). Pearson correlation analysis was used to show the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables, while multiple regression analysis was used to show the nature of the relationship between the variables. As concerns the decision rule, in this study, the Significant levels were tested at  $\alpha=5\%$ . Therefore, the cut off point for the p-value were at a maximum 0.05. The decision was that if a p value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis. In contrast, if the p value was greater than 0.05 then there was no significant influence of the particular variable on the dependent variable and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Correlation analysis between the dependent variable (effective supervision) and independent variables; Assessment and, the officers' conduct in feedback yielded the results as presented in Table 2.

		Effective supervision	QASA Assessment	QASO Conduct	Principals' Attitude
Effective supervision	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
QASA Assessment	Pearson Correlation	.594**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00			
QASO Conduct/feedback	Pearson Correlation	.447*	-0.049	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0.408		
Principles Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.527*	.415**	-0.089	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.03	0	0.132	

Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Dependent and Independent Variables

From the results in Table 2 there is a positive and significant relationship between effective supervision and quality assurance standards assessment ( $\rho = 0.594$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ ). This implies that a unit change in assessment increases effective supervision by 59.4%. This finding is similar to Raath's study (2012), where principals' appreciated the value of inspection in advising leadership within schools in order to achieve set goals. A study by Gichuhi (2012) earlier on argued that lack of assessment in connection to principals' supervision leads to inefficient systems that affects curriculum implementation and standards in schools.

The results further shows that there was a positive and significant relationship between principals' attitude towards assessment and effective supervision ( $\rho = 0.527$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ ) whereby a unit change in principals' attitude increases effective supervision by 52.7%. The finding concurs with Whitby (2010) who reported that the perception of teachers towards assessment process is affected by the competence and credibility of the inspection team thereby affecting effective supervision.

The Hypothesis of the study sought to examine the influence of principal's attitude on quality assurance assessment in secondary schools principals supervision. To achieve this a multiple regression with the independent variables was carried out. The results are as shown in the subsequent Tables.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.693a	0.480	0.466	0.972

Table 3: Model Summary with Principal Attitude

a. Predictors: (Constant), QASO Conduct(Feedback), QASA, QASO Conduct (Feedback) \* Principal Attitude, QASA \* Principle Attitude

An R squared of 48.0% shows that 48% of the variation in principal supervision is influenced by, QASOs' feedback \* principals' attitude and QASA\* principals' attitude while the remaining percentage can be explained by other factors excluded in the model. The study further determined the influence of principals' attitude on the conduct of the assessment. The summary as in Table 4.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	456.054	6	76.009	8.603	.000a
	Residual	2500.459	283	8.836		
	Total	2956.514	289			

Table 4: ANOVA for Principals Attitude Influence

a. Predictors: (Constant), QASO Conduct(Feedback), QASA, QASO Conduct (Feedback) \* Principals' Attitude, QASA \* Principals' Attitude  
B. Dependent Variable: Effective Supervision

Results in Table 4 shows a combination of both independent variables and moderated independent variables have a joint significance on principals' supervision since the  $F=8.603$  and  $p$  value  $<0.05$ . It was also necessary to do the regression analysis to further determine the relationships between the variables. The results are presented in Table 5.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.949	1.344		8.145	0.00
	QASA	0.182	0.242	0.209	0.752	0.453
	QASO Conduct(feedback)	0.585	0.179	0.858	3.27	0.001
	QASA * Principal attitude	0.018	0.09	0.626	1.997	0.044
	QASO * Principal Attitude	0.029	0.008	1.148	3.833	0.00

Table 5: Regression Coefficients with Principals' Attitude  
a. Dependent Variable: Effective Supervision

The findings in Table 5 indicate that principal attitude had a positive and significant influence on QASA ( $\beta = 0.018$ ,  $p$  value  $<0.05$ ). This implies that a unit change in QASA \* principals' attitude increases the level of principals' supervision by 0.018 units. Secondly, QASO feedback \* principal attitude had a positive and significant influence on principals' supervision ( $\beta = 0.029$ ,  $p$  value  $<0.05$ ). This implies that a unit change QASO's feedback \* principal attitude increases principals' supervision by 0.029 units.

#### 4. Conclusions

From the findings presented the following conclusions were made:

Quality Assurance and Standards Assessments as done by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers can be of great assistance in the improvement of supervision of secondary schools. Thus if the assessments reports are used by principals in the supervision of teachers, they enable teachers to prepare their professional teaching documents on one hand and on the other hand assist principals to know supervisory areas with loop-holes to be addressed.

Principals' attitude greatly influences the reception of assessment feedback which in turn affects the supervision of teachers in secondary schools. This implies that if the teachers are effectively supervised then the ripple effects will be felt in the way they implement the curriculum for good academic performance in the respective schools. Consequently, the QASOs should ensure that they work on the negative attitude where it exists to ensure that positive attitude is developed appropriately.

#### 5. Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should employ more QASO and regularly in-service the existing ones for them to keep abreast with new trends in education and enough resources availed to them to perform their duties effectively. They should also be encouraged to be innovative and have a collegial and developmental supervision approach to assessment. This will address the concerns of principals who felt that the approach by QASOs negatively affected the principals' perception of assessment. The study also recommends that the Ministry of Education ensures that follow-up assessments are done if principals are to benefit from them in their supervision.

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