

Teachers' Perspectives on the Role of Integrated Quality Management System in Enhancing Quality Teaching and Learning in Selected King Cetshwayo District Secondary Schools, South Africa

Phiwokuhle Bongiwe Ngubane

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3756-8225>

University of Zululand, South Africa

NgubanePB@unizulu.ac.za

Lindubuhle Effort Sibeko

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1565-1058>

University of Zululand, South Africa

virgo65s@gmail.com

Abstract

The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is a nationwide policy aimed at enhancing teacher productivity. It serves as a school quality management system with the dual objectives of fostering teacher professionalism and reinforcing accountability in educational institutions. This article explores teachers' perceptions of the IQMS's role in improving teaching and learning at secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District in South Africa. The study employed a qualitative research design aligned with an interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling was used to gather data through semi-structured interviews with 17 participants from five Circuit Management Centres in the King Cetshwayo District. The interview data were transcribed and subsequently processed through coding, thematic analysis and interpretation to extract meaningful insights and address the research question. The findings indicate that the IQMS has been ineffectively implemented, which resulted in persistent challenges to enhancing teaching and learning in schools. Despite this, the participants expressed a belief that the management system has positively affected the teaching and learning process. The study concludes that the inadequacy of the IQMS in enhancing teaching and learning in secondary schools can be attributed to its initial distortion. Originally designed to foster teacher professionalism and support educational quality, the IQMS has become intertwined with pay progression policies. Consequently, the original developmental purpose of the IQMS has been compromised, which led to an emphasis on performance metrics rather than meaningful improvements in teaching practices. The study recommends prioritising learner pass rates and scores in assessment standards to realign the focus towards enhancing educational outcomes.

Keywords: integrated quality management system; quality teaching and learning; teacher perceptions; school quality management; South African education system



International Journal of Educational Development in Africa
Volume 10 | Sup | 2025 | #17370 | 17 pages

<https://doi.org/10.25159/2312-3540/17370>
ISSN 2312-3540 (Online), ISSN 2312-3540 (Print)
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Introduction and Background

The South African education system has been undergoing a reform process since 1994, which had a significant impact on the overall improvement of quality teaching and learning. The objectives of implementing the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) have not been completely realised at present. The IQMS is an educational performance management framework that was designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning that would hopefully have a positive impact on overall school performance through the monitoring of teachers' performance and the whole education system in South Africa (Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2003).

In addition, the IQMS aimed at the development of teachers based on competencies and support opportunities. Despite 15 years of IQMS implementation, international assessments continue to reveal that learner achievement remains at suboptimal levels. Concerns are therefore raised regarding the quality of education provided in comparison with other countries using the pass rate. In 2019, the percentage of grade 12 learners who successfully passed their examinations was recorded at 79.3% (Department of Basic Education (DBE) 2021). Among these learners, 36.6% could attain bachelor passes, which indicate a significant proportion of learners who met the academic requirements for pursuing higher education.

South Africa's solution to address the challenge of the education system was perceived to revolve around the calibre of teachers it has. Spaul (2015) presents a sombre assessment of learners' achievement in South Africa and highlights the concerning patterns of underperformance for grade 12 in secondary schools both in the country and on a global scale. In her media release, Angie Motshekga, the then South African Minister of Basic Education, acknowledges the existence of ongoing issues but highlights a consistent improvement (DBE 2016). The year 2023 produced an even higher performance at 82.9% which was hailed as "extraordinary" by the Minister of Basic Education (DBE 2019).

According to Spaul (2015), South Africa was ranked 75th out of 76 nations in a list of education systems compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2015. According to the International Association for Evaluation Education Achievements, South Africa ranked 32 among the 34 countries assessed with regard to performance in grade 8 Mathematics, while it held the last position in Science.

This challenge is compounded by unfavourable teaching and learning circumstances prevalent in many schools. To address this issue of unsatisfactory learner performance in schools and as an attempt to enhance the quality of education, the IQMS was introduced by the ELRC (2003). It is important to note that this study was limited to a small number of schools in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal, intentionally excluding 11 districts in the province, which represent a significant portion of the total districts.

Problem Statement

The IQMS was introduced, among other reasons, to evaluate teachers' performance, to develop teachers based on the teachers' competencies, and to provide support and opportunities for development (More 2016; Tsotetsi and Mahlomaholo 2013).

The introduction of the IQMS in 2003 does not seem to have maximally achieved the expected effects in improving teaching and learning in King Cetshwayo District schools, as indicated by poor performance in standardised international assessments (Simpson 2017). Standardised international assessments continue to paint a gloomy picture of learner attainment in South African schools. Although there is improvement in the grade 12 pass rate, the quality of passes is concerning looking at the low number of learners achieving bachelor passes and those who dropped out before writing the matric examinations (Le Cordeur 2024). Simpson (2017) notes that as many as 60% of learners who started schooling in grade 1 dropped out before writing grade 12 examinations and among those who passed a mere 12% went to university. These learners miss out on the opportunities to attain degrees that have a positive impact on the workplace and therefore fail to contribute to the growth of the South African economy.

The central question is whether the IQMS had a positive impact on teacher quality for the benefit of learners and the nation as a whole. Very limited research has been done on this topic in South Africa, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. Ndaba (2023) similarly lamented a paucity of research on an educational intervention as explored in different contexts as problematic. Consequently, this study aims to determine whether the IQMS has been effective in improving teaching and learning in schools in South Africa, especially in the King Cetshwayo District, where it has been implemented for the last 15 years. To explore teachers' perceptions, the study poses the following research question: What are teachers' perspectives on the role of the IQMS in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning?

Literature Review

The literature review section provides a comprehensive analysis of the IQMS, its theoretical underpinnings and the challenges associated with the implementation of the IQMS.

Integrated Quality Management System

According to Booyse (2018), performance management has emerged as a significant tool in numerous countries, and aimed at enhancing educational outcomes and promoting greater teacher accountability (DBE 2021). The ELRC (2003, 2) describes the IQMS as an educational performance management framework designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the monitoring of teachers' performance and the whole education system in South Africa. In a similar vein, Malema (2013) and

Thobela and Mtapuri (2014) assert that according to the DBE (2019), the IQMS serves as a quality management initiative with a dual objective: to foster teacher professionalism and enhance accountability in educational institutions. Integral to teacher professionalism is the improvement of curriculum delivery, which is essential to enhancing learning outcomes.

Components of the Integrated Quality Management System

The IQMS integrates the following three distinct quality management systems (ELRC 2003):

- Developmental Appraisal (DA) is designed to assess individual educators transparently. This component focuses on identifying strengths and areas for development, and facilitates tailored professional growth programmes that aim to enhance educators' skills. DA fosters a reflective practice that encourages teachers to engage in continuous improvement, which is crucial to effective teaching and learning.
- Performance Measurement (PM) focuses on evaluating educators to ensure accountability and recognise performance, often linked to incentives or progression. PM not only motivates educators but also reinforces the importance of high standards in teaching practices.
- Whole School Evaluation assesses the overall effectiveness of a school. This component considers various factors, including management practices, teaching quality and learner achievements.

It is worth noting that an essential characteristic for the successful execution of the IQMS is the interdependence and reinforcement of the three distinct programmes, which ensure the absence of redundant structures and operations (DBE 2019). IQMS can be classified as a quality management system. Emphasising the interdependence of these components therefore highlights the holistic approach of IQMS in enhancing educational quality.

Adding to the components above, it is of fundamental importance to mention the objectives of performance appraisal. The primary objectives of performance appraisal using the IQMS processes are twofold. First, the primary objective is to enhance the teachers' professional practice by discerning their strengths and weaknesses through relevant feedback and providing them with opportunities for professional development. Second, its purpose is to ensure optimal teacher performance to improve learner achievement, therefore serving as an accountability mechanism, according to the DBE (2019). The manifestation of enhanced learning outcomes can be observed through an increase in the pass rate and the progression of learners upon completion of grade 12 (Tachie and Mancotywa 2021).

Total Quality Management

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is grounded in the Total Quality Management (TQM) theory. Hashmi (2007) asserts that TQM is a management approach that emerged in the 1950s and has gained significant traction over time. The author provides additional clarification that comprehensive quality encompasses an organisational culture and mindset that strives to deliver products and services that effectively fulfil the requirements of customers. The DBE aligns with this perspective by offering educational services to learners and the wider community. The pioneering figures in the development of quality management include W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, Amand V. Fiegonbaum and Philip B. Crosby (Hashmi 2007). The efforts made by these individuals led to the development of a TQM model consisting of eight foundational principles. Three of these principles are especially pertinent to the educational context, as follows:

- Customer focus in education translates to prioritising the needs of learners and other stakeholders and ensures that services meet or exceed expectations.
- Continuous improvement encourages ongoing efforts to enhance all aspects of the educational process, from curriculum design to teaching methodologies.
- The involvement of people underscores the importance of engaging all members of the educational community, including teachers, administrative staff, students and parents in the pursuit of quality teaching and learning.

Challenges in IQMS Implementation

Although the review outlines the structure, objectives, components and principles of IQMS, acknowledging potential challenges is a necessity. The successful implementation of the IQMS was impeded by various factors, which were identified by empirical research. These factors include the insufficient advocacy programme initiated by the Department of Education (DoE) to introduce the IQMS to schools, subpar training provided in certain provinces, inadequate leadership demonstrated by principals, and resistance exhibited by teachers towards the process (Centre for Development and Enterprise 2015). Booyse (2018) similarly conveys the sense that the IQMS, being the sole formal performance management system in secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District, possesses several deficiencies, and school principals do not use it effectively for performance evaluation or enhancing school strategy.

It is commonly assumed that senior-level officials possess the requisite evaluation skills. However, Tachie and Mancotywa (2021) argue that evaluators often lack specific knowledge about the subject areas in which they assess teachers, particularly in secondary education. Moreover, the frequency and extent of professional development opportunities for evaluators are limited. The educators expressed doubts regarding the proficiency and reliability of the individuals responsible for evaluating them, as these

evaluators were found to be lacking in the necessary skills for accurately assessing the performance of teachers (Queen-Mary and Mtapuri 2014).

A review of the relevant literature revealed a multitude of potential factors contributing to the lack of success in implementing performance management in educational institutions. Several studies have found that performance management systems and objectives were implemented without seeking input from all relevant stakeholders (Booyse 2018).

Teachers' Perspectives on the Role of IQMS in Enhancing Quality Teaching and Learning

This section presents insights into teachers' attitudes towards the IQMS. It discusses challenges such as the lack of adequate training, insufficient resources, and the perception of IQMS as a tool primarily for salary progression rather than genuine professional development. The narrative underscores the importance of teacher buy-in and the need for continuous quality-assured training to ensure the system's effectiveness. According to the National Development Plan 2030, the fundamental business of schools is learning and teaching, and the principal's primary responsibility is to ensure that the school's culture supports these priorities (DBE 2019). The success and failure of a school system must be determined by the extent to which teaching and learning gratify the learner as the primary customer.

End-user or customer acceptance is crucial to the successful implementation of a programme. A successful programme may falter if buy-in from teachers is not achieved (Centre for Development and Enterprise 2015). The inability to secure the buy-in of teachers to provide adequate training to increase school capacity, and to address the unproductive teaching and learning environment in the public school sector rendered the implementation of the IQMS ineffective. If these factors are not addressed, they will impede the implementation of future systems (Centre for Development and Enterprise 2015). During the implementation years, pay progression continued to be paid to teachers, thereby reducing the programme to a compensation programme rather than a performance management system. In general, employees form opinions about others and objects based on the benefits they can obtain. They would support more beneficial activities, whereas activities that are assumed to be expensive will be perceived negatively (Mbanga 2018). Teachers perceived the IQMS as a DBE tool that provides no benefit to the internal management of schools (Booyse 2018).

The perceptions of teachers regarding performance and assessment in schools include aspects such as school heads abusing the performance management system, schools not conducting staff development programmes with their staff, no meaningful reward for teachers who perform well, teachers' lack of training despite a performance management system, and a lack of resources and materials in schools (Tachie and Mancotywa 2021). The point about inadequate teacher training was reiterated by Pylman (2015), who stated that training for the IQMS is not ongoing and quality-

assured, but one-time and based on the cascade model where teachers will attend the workshop and come back to cascade the information to the colleagues who did not attend.

According to Queen-Mary and Mtapuri (2014), the morale appeared to be low, and some teachers felt that the IQMS did not meet their developmental expectations, as even those who were intended to develop them did not appear to have the correct responses. They further elaborated that teachers believed the department implemented the IQMS too quickly. For any change to be successful, stakeholders must share a common vision of the system, and the beneficiaries must feel a sense of ownership and empowerment. According to the DBE (2019), inappropriate expenditure of financial resources may prevent an organisation from achieving its goals. The failure of the government to provide resources aided unions that claimed the playing field was not level, and it transformed the IQMS from a performance management system to a pay advancement programme. Teachers were frustrated by the improper application of the IQMS. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some teachers are contemplating early retirement because of their dissatisfaction with the IQMS. This may compromise the content of instruction and learning (Queen-Mary and Mtapuri 2014).

Methodology

The present study employs an interpretive paradigm to examine the teachers' perspectives on the role of IQMS in enhancing quality teaching and learning in King Cetshwayo secondary schools. The selected paradigm is consistent with the qualitative approach to data collection which allows participants to express their views, perceptions, meanings and understandings of the phenomenon under investigation (Ngema and Lekhetho 2019). The study adopted a qualitative research design which aligns with the interpretive paradigm (Ngema 2020) and adopts a phenomenological approach. This choice reflects a deliberate intention to explore the lived experiences of teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. According to Jansen and Laurie (2016), the use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research methodology allows for responses that are derived from personal introspection, knowledge and experience.

Buthelezi (2016) provides a comprehensive list of various tactics that can be employed to ensure the validity of the research findings. The aforementioned examples encompass various methods employed in academic research, including triangulation, member checks, peer assessment of data, gathering and comparison, comprehensiveness, and dense description. The present study employed member checks as a methodological approach. To ensure reliable outcomes, it is imperative to obtain consistent results when employing the instrument on multiple occasions. The researchers used the assistance of their peers to perform the recording and cross-validation of codes, which intended to determine the level of equivalence or proximity between the original codes and the

secondary codes. The study's validity and reliability were ensured by using Guba's trustworthiness model, as proposed by Steyn (2010).

The study used purposive sampling as the approach for selecting 17 participants from each of the five Circuit Management Centres (CMCs). In each CMC one educator coded as PL1–5, one Head of Department (HoD) coded as HoD1–5, one school principal coded as P1–5, and two Circuit Managers coded as CM1–2 were selected. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that entails the deliberate selection of a sample based on certain characteristics relevant to the investigation (Wood and Smith 2016). The selection method entailed the researcher's identification of educators who possess a minimum of five years of teaching experience. The process of gathering, interpreting and analysing data was conducted to address the study question. The analysis of recorded interviews was conducted following Creswell's (2014, 196) six-step approach. The TQM theory underpinning this study, principle number eight which is mainly about mutual benefit, will be used in the interpretation of the study findings. This study has undergone ethical review and obtained approval from the university. The researchers undertook to adhere to ethical standards, by, for instance, respecting the dignity, safety and well-being of others, including the graffiti writers, and, unless express written permission is given, the anonymity and confidentiality of the data. More importantly, in responding to the interviews, the participants did so voluntarily. Each participant was requested to sign a consent form, which was included on the first page of the instrument used.

Findings

This section aimed to determine whether teachers believed that the implementation of an IQMS has improved teaching and learning in high schools in the King Cetshwayo District. The findings revealed that the implementation of the IQMS has positively contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning in secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District.

Teacher's Perspectives on the Role of IQMS in Enhancing Teaching and Learning

This theme sought to determine whether teachers believed that the implementation of an IQMS has improved teaching and learning in secondary schools. Certain participants acknowledged that, although there was some improvement, it was just partial. This finding revealed that all teachers do not agree about enhanced teaching and learning after the implementation of the IQMS in all schools. This is what the post-level teachers sampled said, which gave rise to this theme:

Yes, it has sir, teaching and learning have drastically improved, sir. Yes, it has taught us as teachers to be, to always come to school fully prepared. For that reason, yes. So IQMS has helped us a lot as teachers to know our story. Yes. As they put it. (L2)

Since IQMS was introduced in my school, learners' pass rate has drastically improved in a sense that teachers come to class, or rather come to school fully prepared, and their files are always in order and even after having to conduct tests, the learner's marks are timeously recorded, so I think, yes, there has been a great change since IQMS was introduced. It has drastically improved pass rates in the last 10 years. (PL2)

Yes, because it determines the teaching ability of an individual teacher, firstly, secondly, its improvement. If the teacher is lacking in something, it helps that person to improve due to the teaching and learning, they're assisted and encouraged to maximise their teaching potential, through improving the teaching and learning. And it made the teachers to be able to account for their work. (HoD2)

Well, I think it did, because it pointed out the challenges that would be faced by the teachers in the classroom, the issues classroom, like management, where maybe sometimes we find teachers that have some challenges in in teaching itself. So, the heads of departments get an opportunity to capture those challenges early and give support to the teachers to improve teaching and learning. It also assists even the school in general to identify other skills, right, that certain teachers may have possessed, right, which we would not have known about, if we didn't conduct those class visits, and we avoid some duplication and we transfer the skills and maybe we change the teacher, may be offered that particular teacher to another subject, then the subject which was afforded to in the first place. (P5)

It assisted because over and above the training that colleagues get from the social institutions, but IQMS now brings to the person employed the fact that now at work, one, what is your job description? And number two, what do you want to be developed on, what are their strengths? What are your weaknesses? as a person who is employed. So, along the way, once you understand that, a programme for the staff development will come in, thrown up by the SDT [Staff Development Team], and then immediately what they will do, they will draw a plan that will be supportive of the educator, they'll draw a plan that will be assisting the educator to improve. (CM2)

Yes, it has, it has happened. Like I said, if the IQMS is followed accordingly and effectively, yes, it does have a link with the improvement of the teaching and learning and also the results consequently. Okay. So, you can then say, yes, IQMS did improve teaching and learning. Yes, it has improved teaching and learning. (PL1)

Yes, it did. It did in the sense that it kept the teachers on their toes. So that they will be always ready to go and teach, because they know that, there is a like, the other eye that is looking after the teacher so to say, even if the teacher is lacking some confidence, that teacher when getting support from the DSG [Developmental Support Group]. So, the teacher feels free and gains confidence in teaching even much better than a person was before. (P5)

Yes, it did. Teachers are developed, teachers are engaged in all activities that need to be done to make this teaching and learning effective, professional. (HoD3)

IQMS played a very important role, remember the IQMS it is linked to the financial remuneration, that pay progression. So, teachers get motivated because of that, but in return the way teachers present themselves and after the IQMS after development, because remember, for the IQMS there is a pre- and post-pre-discussion or an end post-discussion. So, after those discussions, the teacher will have a different view or a different method, or a different perspective on how the class be attended. Remember, the IQMS addresses several roles, whether it's ensuring that the environment is clean, whether the content is relevant, or whether the file is in order. So, after that, the teacher becomes a new person. So, I would say the IQMS, did acquaint teachers, in ensuring that they teach properly, and learners learn properly. (PL4)

Some participants agreed that the IQMS improved teaching and learning in King Cetshwayo High Schools, but only slightly:

It partly does, because when people are encouraged to some extent by the demands of IQMS to do their work, but the only thing is the meetings which are supposed to be consistent, do not happen. But in terms of contribution, I would say it partly contributes because, at some point, somebody's going to be assessed on how they are doing on their duty teaching and learning, so it can be that. (P2)

But it was a 50/50 thing. It was developing, but at the same time it was not developing because the old teachers would say, no, I know my stuff, I know how it worked, I cannot be changed by this. And sometimes, because of time, the team would not come back to you, to tell you where you went wrong and where you went, right? What did you do wrong? And what did you do, right? And in that way, that is when you get developed, because you need feedback on what has happened in the class, and how you performed in the class. (PL3)

Participant CM1 showed confusion on the matter but agreed that there was improvement in secondary schools. Although primary schools are not part of the scope of this research, it is worth noting what participant CM1 said about primary schools as feeders of secondary schools:

I think it's a big no. It is a big no for me. Maybe one can say yes to some high schools. For primary schools. It's a big no. That would be my short answer. Okay. But with secondary schools, there are some that it has assisted in improving teaching and learning. Yes, because you have a way of measuring whether there is improvement in terms of curriculum delivery in terms of performance of each individual teacher, you also look at the end results when national senior certificate results are released. So, in high schools, yes.

Participant CM1 made a concerning statement about IQMS installation when he stated:

The level where I am is that at the circuit management level, one has quite a variety of issues to attend to. And because of that, it becomes so difficult to do justice in terms of implementing IQMS. We tend to do it for compliance reasons. And I do have a feeling that even at school level, where principals, deputies, and HoDs have to do it, they also do the same because of other pressures, where they have to attend to different issues.

Participant CM1 appears to be acknowledging that, although IQMS has benefits in some high schools, its proper implementation is hindered by the broader administrative challenges they face.

Participant CM1 acknowledged that IQMS implementation is more effective in high schools, particularly in measuring teacher performance through student outcomes. However, he also highlighted the difficulties in fully implementing the system owing to the overwhelming administrative workload at the circuit management level, which may hinder thorough assessments and follow-up.

In summary, while the implementation of IQMS has contributed to some positive changes in teaching and learning, the effectiveness of the system is contingent on consistent implementation, regular feedback and active participation from all educational stakeholders.

Discussion of Findings

Teachers' Perspectives on the Role of IQMS in Enhancing Teaching and Learning

This theme aimed to determine teachers' perspectives on the role of an IQMS in enhancing quality teaching and learning secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District. The findings revealed that most teachers felt that the implementation of the IQMS has contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the district. Certain participants acknowledged that, although there was some improvement, it was just partial (Mthembu 2017). The teachers believed that the implementation of the IQMS led to an enhancement in teaching and learning, as the teachers arrived in class adequately prepared and eager to teach.

Improved Teacher Preparedness

The IQMS has enhanced the methods by which teachers evaluate, organise and maintain records (Sommer 2023). The enhancement in teaching and learning can also be credited to the professional development opportunities that teachers receive after identifying areas of improvement through IQMS assessments. Another contributing element that led teachers to conclude that the implementation of the IQMS enhanced teaching and learning is the provision of financial remuneration. The 1.5% wage increment incentivised teachers to enhance their performance (Tachie and Mancotywa 2021). This

conclusion is derived from a limited viewpoint that only examined the successful implementation of IQMS from the perspective of teachers, without considering the feedback from learners who are the recipients of the teaching service.

The favourable reactions stem from the rationale that, when teachers undergo professional growth and receive monetary motivation, their performance improves. The discovery is consistent with the study conducted by Díez et al. (2018) in Spain, which determined that the implementation of the quality management system was crucial and led to favourable results. The literature depicts a well-developed adoption of a school quality management system on a global scale, while in South Africa, the situation was bleak, as evidenced by Mthembu's (2017) study. Mthembu (2017) found that the implementation of the IQMS policy posed challenges for most teachers. Such challenges include but are not limited to the assessment of teachers, the reluctance of principals to actively participate in the process and effective classroom management by teachers.

According to the TQM theory underpinning this study, the eighth principle is mutual benefit. Radoica (2015) contends that the concept under consideration should offer a significant benefit regarding the ability to create value for all involved parties. Although teachers may receive financial incentives from their profession, it is imperative that learners also receive fair rewards in the form of teaching to enhance their academic achievements. The learners' ability to demonstrate benefits resides in their high academic performance, as evidenced by a strong pass rate of good quality, where learners pass at a bachelor level. The high pass rate serves as compelling evidence that the IQMS has truly enhanced the quality of teaching and learning. The case in point is the 2023 matriculation results that saw KwaZulu-Natal not only clinching the second spot and improving from the previous year but also producing the highest number of distinctions, many of which came from poor rural schools. Yet, the concern about the number of young learners who drop out of school before they can write the matric examinations should not be ignored (Le Cordeur 2024; Sommer 2023; Statistics South Africa 2021).

Although many teachers reported significant improvements, others voiced concerns about the practical challenges of IQMS implementation, such as inconsistent feedback, insufficient resources and the overwhelming administrative workload. These challenges may explain why the positive effects of IQMS were not fully realised across all schools.

Learner Performance

It cannot be assumed that the development of teachers automatically leads to the improvement of learner performance. Ashdown (2014) defines a performance management system as a systematic approach that aims to improve organisational performance by focusing on the development of individual performance. Nevertheless, it is vital that the advantages of teacher development likewise extend to the customers, specifically the learners in this scenario. As stated by Hashmi (2007), the initial

principle in the TQM theory is customer care, wherein the organisation places the consumer at the forefront of its attention. If teachers believe that IQMS implementation sharpened their teaching skills, why are they not keen to include learner pass rate as one of the performance standards? Their sharpened teaching should give teachers confidence. This discussion highlights the importance of learners benefiting from the IQMS. However, it suggests that the study's limited scope focused on teacher perspectives, which prevented a more complete analysis where learners are equally involved.

Exploring Teacher Motivation Beyond Financial Remuneration

Although financial remuneration plays a significant role in motivating teachers, it is equally important to consider other forms of support, such as continuous professional development, peer collaboration and recognition of teacher efforts, as integral components of the IQMS framework.

The Role of Circuit and District Authorities

Circuit and district authorities should play a critical role in the design and delivery of teacher development interventions. These interventions should be customised to address the specific performance gaps revealed during IQMS assessments and ensure that teachers receive targeted support in areas where they need it most. Regular workshops should be held at least once a term and focus on different aspects of the IQMS policy. The content of these workshops should include updates to the policy, practical strategies for implementation, and case studies of successful applications. Ensuring that school management teams (SMTs) are well-prepared before workshops with teachers will also increase the effectiveness of the process.

Conclusion

The implementation of the IQMS neglected a critical beneficiary element, which is the client in their capacity as learner. The inadequacy of the IQMS in enhancing teaching and learning in secondary schools in the King Cetshwayo District can be attributed to this initial distortion. A partial implementation of the IQMS was carried out. Although teachers received a 1.5% salary increase, they did not receive the necessary training to overcome performance gaps discovered by the IQMS evaluation. The primary interventions consisted of standardised workshops, which the participants did not correlate with the detected performance gaps. This suggests that the IQMS implementation did not close performance gaps identified during IQMS assessments.

The findings indicate that the implementation of IQMS was compromised from the beginning owing to the absence of a standard that connects IQMS performance with learner performance. At the point of implementation, the initiative had transformed into a scheme focused on raising teacher compensation rather than enhancing teaching and learning for the benefit of learners and the broader society.

The preceding discourse suggested that there were flaws in the application of the IQMS. The IQMS was initially perceived as an independent endeavour during its deployment, but it is an integral component of regular school operations. The teachers distinguished the implementation of IQMS from the effective and efficient operation of the school. This is predicated on the perspective of teachers who believe that there is insufficient time for the introduction of the IQMS. Upon careful examination, the specific period serves as a platform for the production of the IQMS scores. This demonstrates a lack of comprehension regarding the annual cycle of a performance management system.

Recommendations

- At the beginning of the performance cycle, the supervisor and the supervisee must agree on performance targets which include learner pass rate so that when teachers benefit from pay progression, learners evidently achieve good quality passes at a bachelor level.
- The IQMS assessment standards should incorporate the learner pass rate and score as their highest priority, in comparison to all other assessment standards. A reflective examination of the impact of the IQMS on education and learning can be achieved in this manner. The findings suggest the implementation of a uniform strategy for teacher development, in which circuit and district authorities intervene through standardised seminars. It is advisable to design interventions based on the performance gaps discovered during the IQMS assessment. Attendance at the workshop is mandatory only for teachers identified to be encountering difficulties in a certain area unless the DoE is introducing a new programme or intervention.
- To fully integrate learner outcomes into the IQMS, it would be essential to revise the assessment criteria so that student pass rates, especially at the bachelor level, are considered part of teacher evaluations. This revision could be accompanied by training for teachers on ways in which to link their teaching strategies with measurable improvements in student performance.
- Regular workshops for teachers about the IQMS policy can yield favourable outcomes. The same team should workshop the policy with all the SMTs to prevent the distortion of information and ensure that all members of the SMT are fully committed to implementing the policy. Before the SMT workshopping teachers at a school level, SMTs should have at least two meetings with the workshopping team to gain a comprehensive understanding of the policy before disseminating it to other teachers.

- This study was conducted with a total of 17 participants, at the King Cetshwayo District under the jurisdiction of the DoE. The delivery of the curriculum commences not just in high school, but also at grade R in the foundation phase. It would be highly advantageous to replicate this study throughout the foundation phase (grades R–3) and intermediate school phase (grades 4–6). Further investigations of this topic might be carried out in high schools located in other educational districts. Replicating the study in the foundation and intermediate phases will allow for a deeper understanding of the ways in which the IQMS affects teaching and learning at different stages of education. It will be important to consider the varying challenges and resources available at each phase and adjust the interventions accordingly.

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