

Teachers' Perception and Implementation of Peer Teacher Evaluation in Kenyan Schools

Wilfrida Arnodah Itolondo

Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844 – 00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract

This paper analysed the extent to which Peer Teacher Evaluation (PTE) has been institutionalized, the role of the Directorate of Quality Assurance in Education (DQUASE) in PTE and teachers' perceptions of the purpose of PTE in Kenyan schools. This study involved 10 Kenyan secondary schools from three districts of Western Province of Kenya. Four (40%) provincial schools, five (50%) district schools and one (10%) private school were selected using a descriptive survey design. Data was collected from school head teachers, senior teachers, heads of departments and teachers using questionnaires, interview schedules and a document analysis guide. The findings revealed that all schools that practised PTE fulfilled most of the characteristics of an effective teacher evaluation practice such as: frequent observation of teachers; the use of individual teacher observation guide; holding of post-teacher evaluation conferences; programming of the PTE; storage facilities for utilized observation schedules and administrative support.

Keywords: Teachers; Perception; Implementation; Peer Teacher Evaluation; Quality Assurance; Free Primary Education; Teacher Observation; Teacher Observation Guide; Observation Schedule.

1. Introduction

Despite the fact that recommendations have been made by some education commissions and other studies on how to address the problems of poor performance among teachers, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) in relation to teacher evaluation in Kenya tends to suggest that there is a problem with the practice of SBTE that entails PTE. For example, the report of the Commission of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (Republic of Kenya, 1988) and the report of the commission on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 1999) recommended that senior teachers and heads of schools be utilized to assist with the inspection and guidance of teachers in schools as a cost-effective measure in education in the country. This was because during the investigations by the two commissions, it was found that inspection of schools was not being done effectively due to inadequate and incompetent inspectors of schools. The inspectors lacked funds to expend on their training and provision of facilities like means of transport which would enable them make frequent visits to schools. As a result, the inspectors hardly coped with the demand to inspect all schools and various subjects taught in secondary schools in the country.

In the same light, a study by Wanzare (2002) on teacher evaluation in the third world countries with focus on Kenya cites problems of teacher evaluation in Kenya to include: top-down bureaucratic character; lack of a comprehensive teacher evaluation policy; inadequate evaluations; lack of productive feedback and lack of empirical research on teacher evaluation. Though the study went further to propose strategies for improvement of teacher evaluation in Kenya, it was very categorical that the strategies were unlikely to bring about any meaningful contributions in teacher evaluation without considering among other things the importance of having a clear vision relative to SBTE. It was in view of the recommendations that the author in this paper noted that there was a problem with the practice of SBTE and decided to analyze the process and perceptions about the role of PTE which is one of the modes of SBTE in secondary schools with the purpose of coming up with suggestions that may help bring about improvement in the practice in order to strengthen it in schools.

1.1 The process and teachers' perceptions of evaluation

Most literature reveals that there is no single process of evaluating teachers that is widely employed whether conducted by an external or internal evaluator. However, according to Barber and Klein (1983), Elliot and Chadley (1985) and Wanzare (2002), most current teacher evaluation systems heavily depend on classroom observation and examining teachers' professional tools such as: schemes of work; lesson plans; tests and graded assignments. Classroom Observation entails pre-teacher evaluation conference, the actual classroom observation, post-teacher evaluation conference and follow-up (Maynes et al., 1995; Tennessee State Board of Education, 2006). Some of the purposes for which teacher evaluation is conducted like demotion and dismissal from service in some education systems can be very threatening. That is why studies stress that well planned and co-ordinated awareness and in-service programmes are pre-requisites for any teacher evaluation programme. Through awareness programmes, teacher evaluation purposes can be discussed and agreed upon before the implementation of any evaluation programme.

Awareness programmes are also used to orientate new teachers in the teaching profession and teacher evaluation activities of a learning institution. Millman and Hammond (1990) stress that purposes are foundations of teacher evaluation because they have a direct effect on the performance expectation set for teachers as well as how they are evaluated. They go further to explain that teachers require knowledge in goal setting and reflection which can be realized through awareness activities for positive attitude building. A unified vision about why teachers should be evaluated is necessary before efforts to improve evaluation procedures can have much impact.

Nevo (1995) is very emphatic on the need of awareness programmes before any form of teacher evaluation. These are so crucial that any institution intending to establish [and even those with established teacher evaluation practices] should spend more time trying to make teachers understand and appreciate why they have to be evaluated (Ibid.). Well co-ordinated awareness programme prevent incidents of anxiety and suspicion. Awareness programmes should be continuous because teachers like any other human beings tend to forget and so the need to be reminded. Consequently, new teachers who join the teaching profession need to be inducted into understanding the purpose of teacher evaluation at the school level.

McLaughlin and Pfeiter (1998) see teachers' suspicion of the evaluators' motive and dislike of methods used to assess their work not so much a primary obstacle to initiating and carrying out meaningful teacher evaluation. Winning the trust of teachers, they say, is a necessary pre-condition for successful teacher evaluation systems as they note that the most difficult problem of teacher evaluation then, is not only to develop a better instrument. It involves organizational questions of 'getting started' how to overcome the resistance and negative attitudes that exist about teacher evaluation (p. 5). 'Getting started' entails ensuring that purposes are clearly understood and shared among all stakeholders which can be realized through well organized and co-ordinated awareness programmes. It also means commitment to the idea of improvement. Sawa (1995) warns that without shared understanding and commitment, teacher evaluation descends into a pointless and in many ways a hypocritical game in which teachers and administrators in their own ways, tacitly, conspire to protect their own and each other's territory.

Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2002) are even more categorical about the need for a clear understanding of purposes of teacher evaluation before it is implemented or the need to remind the participants of a teacher evaluation process about the purposes. They caution that schools cannot 'implement' teacher evaluation systems if they do not know why they are doing so. Finding answers to 'why' – answers that are acceptable to all stake holders will require solid investment of time and energy (Ibid.). Nonetheless, reassessment and clarification of the purposes of teacher evaluation in relation to various interests is an essential step for any school system that is struggling to make teacher evaluation work' (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2002, p. 3). The attitude of teachers towards their evaluation will be influenced by the purposes for which it is practised and hence the need for continuous awareness programmes focusing on the purpose of teacher evaluation (Love, 1981).

Apart from awareness programmes, in-service training for teachers is very important in the process of teacher evaluation. Eraut (1988) observes that teachers and educational evaluators are normally not trained in evaluation skills during their pre-service training and so it is important that they are trained for the activity of evaluation if it has to achieve any purpose of professional development.

Teachers in schools planning to engage in organized evaluation for the first time must undergo some training in teacher evaluation in order to be equipped with knowledge and skills relevant to teacher evaluation. Possession of knowledge and skill instills confidence in the teachers which in turn influences their attitude towards the practice. Training of both the evaluators and evaluatees in teacher evaluation according to McLaughlin and Pfeiter (1988) and the Toledo Federation for Teachers (1996) is very crucial because evaluatees as well as evaluators should know how to use the evaluation instrument to collect useful objective data, interpret results and also utilize those results. In-service education arising from a teacher evaluation process is used to address weaknesses prevalent among teachers and thus becomes a very important tool for professional and educational improvement according to Worthen and Sanders (1987) and Agezo (2005). Generally, training is important because it brings about improvement and growth in teachers which in turn helps achieve educational goals.

Apart from awareness programmes and in-service education targeting teacher evaluation, studies have come up with guidance on what is essential for an effective institutionalized teacher evaluation process which teachers and administrators should be concerned about. Kopp and Zufelt (1974) stipulate the following as essentials of an effective teacher evaluation programme: clearly stated objectives which will guide the evaluation process; regular and systematic evaluation programme activities which include well prepared and validated criteria; pre- and post teacher evaluation conferences and an information storage and retrieval system.

Regular and systematic evaluation together with the use of well prepared criteria or evaluation guides have been identified as indispensable attributes of an effective or successful teacher evaluation system because they make the practice focused and part and parcel of the school system. A well prepared and reliable criterion for teacher evaluation provides reliable information about teachers which in turn leads to correct decisions about them. Sawa (1995), acknowledging studies by Stein (1992) and Gray et al. (1992), observes that frequency of teacher evaluation is one of the several practices that can be identified from literature which over the past decades or so has been reported as one of the characteristics of effective teacher evaluation practice. Rather than relying on the 'annual' formal visit, many visits are required for better understanding of teacher performance. By making frequent visits to classrooms, administrators can reinforce and praise good teaching, gather data regarding curriculum implementation and address instructional problems before they become crucial.

Hansen (2002) opines that coming up with a judgement about a teacher's teaching based on a single visit to a classroom may be a biased sample of the teacher's ability. In a survey study examining the relationship between teacher perceptions of the frequency of evaluation activity and assessment of their efforts and effectiveness using 182 teachers in inner-city middle schools in Britain, the results indicated a positive correlation between frequency of evaluation and teacher leverage. Teachers who reported more frequent evaluation activity experienced a high degree of effectiveness in relation to the effort of their teaching task (<http://www.deepdyve.com/lp/sage/>).

For any teacher evaluation to be successful, it should be preceded by pre-teacher evaluation conference which is a discussion session about the objectives, expectations and procedures of the evaluation (<http://teaching.about.com/od/TeacherEvaluation/tp/Teacher-Evaluation-Process>). Pre-teacher evaluation can also be described as a goal setting session where the evaluator together with the evaluatee discuss and agree on the parameters of the evaluation process in relation to why the evaluation has to be conducted, when, how and areas of focus. This session is important because it prevents incidents of suspicion from the evaluatee, for example, in situation where an evaluator enters a classroom unannounced to observe a lesson.

An evaluation activity should be followed by a post-teacher evaluation conference which is a session that allows the evaluator and evaluatee to reflect on an evaluation session through some discussion. During the post-teacher evaluation conference, strengths are complimented and weaknesses pointed out for improvement purposes. The teacher is given the first opportunity by the evaluator to make a brief assessment of the lesson in case of lesson observation (Republic of Kenya, 2000). According to Kopp and Zufelt (1974), McCormick (1989), Millman and Hammond (1990) and Nevo (1995), the findings of an evaluation activity whether internally or externally conducted remain known to the evaluator unless some forum for discussion or conference is availed. In a paper, *Improving Teacher Evaluation*, Boyd (1989) notes that teachers who want to improve their teaching are eager to know how other teachers view them. A post-observation conference becomes an important tool for providing teachers feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

When reporting the results, evaluators should remember to: deliver the feedback in a positive and considerate way; offer ideas and suggest changes that make sense to the teacher; maintain a level of formality necessary to achieve the goals of the evaluation; maintain a balance between praise and criticism and give enough feedback but not too much that the teacher is overwhelmed.

Teacher evaluation outcomes should be discussed in meetings at the department and school levels especially for mutual learning. Discussions at these levels should be recorded and stored along with reports of individual teacher evaluation for daily use by teachers, administrators and for future reference (House, 1973; Holt, 1981; Nevo, 1995). Nevo (1995) observes that a school which has institutionalized school-based-evaluation (SBE) will apart from records of teacher evaluation outcomes have a collection of sample instruments; an items' bank for student assessments; sample instruments for other evaluations such as school projects and programmes, instructional materials, administration, the school as a whole and recent publications on various topics relevant to SBE for teachers to refer to in order to improve their evaluation skills and the school as a whole. The availability of a well defined evaluation storage system according to Nevo (1995) is one of the indicators of an evaluation culture in the school because it reveals the frequency and quality of evaluations and how the results are utilized by the school.

Peer teacher evaluation is supposed to be an on-going practice in the school curriculum in Kenya under the umbrella of SBTE. According to the *Handbook of Inspection of Educational Institutions in Kenya*, the Individual Teacher Observation Schedule: Schedule 8 found in the handbook will be a key professional development tool for teachers. It is noted that apart from its use in [external] inspection [evaluation], it can also be used by college principals and heads of schools for regular monitoring of teachers or by teachers observing each other. Schools are expected to use it for professional development and school improvement before the routine external inspection [evaluation] takes place. On the day of external inspection [evaluation], schools will be expected to submit among other documents and reports, schools internal audit and review reports (Republic of Kenya, 2000).

1.2 Limitations

This paper only analysed the extent to which Peer Teacher Evaluation (PTE) has been institutionalized, the role of the Directorate of Quality Assurance in Education (DQUASE) in PTE and teachers' perceptions of the purpose of PTE in 10 Kenyan secondary schools from three districts of Western Province of Kenya using: four (40%) provincial schools; five (50%) district schools and one (10%) private school.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study population and sampling techniques

A survey was conducted using 514 respondents from 37 secondary schools for a larger research study out of which 10 (27%) schools were sampled for this paper. Administratively, Kenya was divided into eight main regions, known as provinces, by the time the larger study was conducted. The division had a bearing on the organizational structure of education in the country. Each province was made up of several districts depending on the size of the province. The schools were and are still classified into two main groups, namely: public and private schools. Public secondary schools in Kenya are further classified into national, provincial or district schools. National schools admit top performing students in academics from primary schools all over the country.

All national schools are high-cost, offering boarding facilities. Provincial schools are next in the order of hierarchy, admitting the next top performing students from primary schools. The majority of provincial schools are also boarding, middle-cost with good staff establishment as well. At the lowest level of the hierarchy are the district schools. They are the majority admitting the students not selected by the top performing schools. Most of them are low cost day schools with poor staff establishment of the teachers. It was in view of this understanding that the schools were stratified into provincial, district and private for representation and some comparison purposes. The province where this larger study was conducted had no national schools. To prevent biasness, simple and systematic random sampling procedures were used to select four (40%) provincial schools; five (50%) district schools and one (10%) private school from the 37 schools of the larger study. This gave a sample size of 27%. The preliminary information guided the researcher to further stratify the schools according to those that practised PTE and those where analysis of professional tools of teachers was the only mode of SBTE.

Using simple and systematic random sampling procedures, four schools where PTE was practised and six schools where analysis of professional tools of teachers was the only mode of SBTE were respectively sampled from the 37 schools of the larger study. Though the focus of this study was on PTE, information from the six schools where it was not practised was also analyzed because it was expected to provide information especially on why PTE was not practised and the respondents' perceptions about the practice. Information from 165 (32.1%) respondents (8 head-teachers; 10 senior teachers, 19 HoDs and 128 teachers) from the 10 schools was analyzed for this study. Out of the 165 respondents whose data was analyzed, 70 (4 head-teacher, 4 senior teachers, 8 HoDs and 54 teachers) came from the four schools where PTE was practised. All the four schools were provincial schools. Ninety-five respondents (4 head-teachers, 6 senior teachers, 11 HoDs and 74 teachers) came from the six schools where PTE was not practised.

2.2 Research Instruments

Three research instruments, namely a questionnaire for teachers and separate interview schedules for HoDs, senior teachers, head-teachers and document analysis were used to collect information. Because of the large sample of respondents involved in the study and the nature of the instruments that had both closed and open-ended items, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Implementation and institutionalization of peer teacher evaluation practice

For any form of teacher evaluation to be conducted effectively, it must be apart from well prepared and coordinated awareness and training programmes embrace properly laid down implementation and institutionalization strategies such as: frequent or regular evaluations; pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferences; the use of specified evaluation criteria or guides, storage facilities and involvement of the external evaluator. The findings revealed that analysis of professional tools of teachers which is one of the components of any type of teacher evaluation was done in all schools that participated in this study. Observation of teachers during instruction was done in schools where PTE was conducted only. The implication, therefore, was that analysis of professional tools was almost the exclusive mode of SBTE in most schools. Though studies recognize analysis of professional tools of teachers as a component of any type of teacher evaluation, Wanzare (2002) and Tennessee State Board of Education (2006), among others, report that any teacher evaluation heavily depends on observation of teachers during instructions. This is logical considering that observation of teachers can only take place during curriculum implementation which is core to an education process. Analysis of professional tools alone may not reveal aspects such as teacher interaction and rapport with learners apart from content mastery and the ability to expose that content to learners.

The findings further revealed that understaffing, as reported by all head teachers during the interviews, was the main reasons preventing six of the 10 schools from engaging in PTE. Because of understaffing, teachers had heavy work-load which did not allow them enough time to engage in PTE. Time factor is very crucial in SBTE and that is why it may pose a problem to schools that are understaffed especially if the activities are not properly planned or planned at all. Though studies by Barber and Klein (1983) and Elliot and Chadley (1985) appreciate the formative role of clinical evaluation and PTE, they warn that time consumption and possible conflicts as unavoidable problems. To curb the problem, Elliot (1979), McCormick (1989) and Nevo (1995) advise that SBTE should be programmed along with other activities, a practice that was noted in schools where PTE was practised. Programming PTE along with other activities in the school prevents it from being seen as some kind of semi-voluntary extra-curricular activity.

According to McCormick (1989), teachers are already over-burdened and so if teacher evaluation is not timetabled along with other activities, teachers may resist it because they may view it as an extra burden. To underscore the importance of PTE, Sawa (1995) recommends that substitute teachers should be hired to enable school administrators visit classrooms and to permit teachers visit each other's classrooms. The recommendation is closely related to a suggestion made by over 90% of the respondents that schools should be properly staffed as one of the measures of improving and strengthening the PTE practice. On their part, four (66.7%) and eight (72.7%) of the senior teachers and HoDs respectively reported that they were aware that PTE was practised in some school but it was failure of the head-teachers to initiate and enforce it in their school. They were, however, reluctant to expound on why they felt it was failure of the head-teachers to initiate and enforce it.

With regard to frequency of PTE practice, which is one of the characteristics of an effective teacher evaluation system, according to Stein (1992), Gray et al. (1992) and Sawa (1995), fifty-six (80%) of the 70 respondents from schools where PTE was practised reported that they had been observed by some of their colleagues during instruction three times in the past one year by the time this study was conducted. This brought to an average of one observation per term. Though no study has come out very clearly to suggest the appropriate number of times a teacher should be observed, it is opined that an average of one observation per teacher per term may be appropriate considering that apart from teaching, they engage in many other activities like preparation of lessons, marking learners' exercise books, participation in co-curricular activities among others that require a lot of time. Peer Teacher Evaluation sessions, require that teachers use their free time to observe fellow teachers. Therefore, it may be too demanding if the observations are done on very frequent basis, for example, two to three times a term. Findings also revealed that 44(78.6%) of the 56 respondents who had been observed three times in one year came from three provincial schools while five (8.9%) and seven (12.5%) came from district and private schools respectively. Though staffing was not one the variable addressed by the objectives of this study, it was revealed during the sampling of HoDs and teachers that provincial schools were better staffed than the district schools especially. This was the main factor contributing to more respondents from provincial schools having been observed more times as compared to those from district and private schools.

Pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferences are also identified as important attributes of an effective teacher evaluation (Nevo, 1995; Millman and Hammond, 1990; Sawa, 1995). The findings of the study revealed that no conferences were held before any PTE. Teachers were only encouraged to meet on individual basis to agree on when the observation exercise would take place so long as it was within the programmed period. On the contrary, 65(93.3%) of the 70 respondents from schools where PTE was conducted reported that there were some discussions held after the observation of teachers. Out of the 65 respondents who reported that discussions were held after observation of teachers, 40(61.5%) came from provincial schools while the remaining 25(38.5%) came from the district and private schools. As already reported, PTE was practised in provincial schools mostly because they were well staffed. This again was a factor behind the prevalence of post-teacher evaluation conferences in provincial schools. Like the classroom observation, pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferences can only be held during the 'free' time of the teachers. Therefore, it is difficult to hold such conferences where there is understaffing because the teachers may not have enough time to engage in the conferences.

Through the findings, it was also established that though there were no pre-teacher evaluation conferences held in the schools that practised PTE, most of the teachers represented by 62(88.9%) and 67(96.3%) supported pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferences respectively. Only 8(7.4%) and 3(3.7) teachers were against pre- and post teacher evaluation conferences respectively. The respondents who were for pre- and post teacher evaluation conferences seemed to have an understanding of the roles of those conferences in PTE. Understanding the purpose of an evaluation activity is very important more so that some purposes like demotion and dismissal from the teaching service based on an evaluation feedback for some education systems can be very threatening. That is why studies have advised the need for a pre-teacher evaluation conference. According to Mayness et al. (1995) and Nevo (1995), pre-teacher evaluation conference helps curb incidents of suspicion and also makes teachers understand the purpose of an evaluation exercise, reasons provided by close to 80% and 70% respectively of the 48 teachers who were for pre-teacher evaluation conference as reflected in Table 1.

In the same vein, over 96% and 80% of the 62 respondents supported the need for post-teacher evaluation conferences mainly because it could lead to their improvement especially if weaknesses are pointed out with humour and could also lead to school improvement respectively, purposes that have been identified by most studies on teacher evaluation. Classroom instruction is known to be a private and individualistic affair. Post-teacher evaluation as component of a PTE removes teacher-teacher isolation and enables the teachers to talk to each other as colleagues on matters relating to their profession. It enables them to learn from one another and also increases chances of creating a good rapport between them, a purpose Connelly (1993) uses to argue for PTE. The importance of post-teacher evaluation is echoed in a study by Sawa (1995) who recommends that substitute teachers be hired to enable teachers hold the post-teacher evaluation conferences. Though very few of the teachers as already reported were against pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferences, some of the reasons they provided for being against the two activities showed lack of understanding about the process and purpose of the two activities. The teachers were against pre-and post teacher evaluation conferences because they would serve no purpose.

They went further to note that pre-teacher evaluation conference would lead to cheating. This problem may partly be attributed to either lack of awareness programmes and in-service provisions for majority of them as already reported. Even where these two were available, they were unfocused. Awareness and in-service programmes are avenues through which teachers can get to know the purpose of their evaluation, components of an effective teacher evaluation process, the purpose and importance of each activity during the evaluation process.

For systematic and accurate data to be collected, the use of an evaluation criterion or guide is very necessary according to Kopp and Zufelt (1974), Sawa (1995) and Wanzare (2002). The study established that evaluation criteria or individual teacher observation guides were used in all the schools where PTE was practised. All the four head-teachers, four senior teachers and eight HoDs of schools where PTE was practised who were interviewed reported that the observation guides were a modification of the universities' teaching practice observation guides. A comparison of the individual teacher observation schedules used by the schools with the one used by one of the universities in Kenya during teaching practice available to the researcher revealed by 85% that the items on the two guides were similar. The study established by 100% that the schedules were utilized by the schools. Most of them had detailed comments, some citing areas of weaknesses, complimenting and even making suggestions for improvement. There were, however, a few cases noted with vague comments such as 'okay'. Copies of utilized individual teacher observation schedules were kept in files at the departments which is an attribute of a well established evaluation system.

Head teachers, on several occasions, have been referred to as 'inspectors [evaluators] number one' (Republic of Kenya, 1988). This is so because they are always within the school and so can have the opportunity to evaluate teachers on more frequent basis than the external evaluator. A very encouraging finding of the study was the involvement and support of the head-teachers in PTE. All the four senior teachers and seven of the eight HoDs of schools where PTE was practised reported that they got support from the head-teachers. Some of the support involved sponsoring them for seminars; encouragement; showing concern in their work; attending departmental meetings and provision of resources such as stationery; teaching-learning aids and text books.

Any form of SBTE, according to Worthen and Sanders (1987), Nevo (1995) and Wanzare (2002), is supposed to have the involvement of an external evaluator to give it legality and also for objectivity. In Kenya, external evaluation of teachers is first and foremost the responsibility of the QASO operating under the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS). *The Handbook for Inspection of Educational Institutions* (Republic of Kenya, 2000) is very categorical that schools are expected to use the Individual Teacher Observation Schedule: Schedule 8 for professional planning before the [external] inspection [evaluation] takes place. Apart from its use in [external] inspection, it can also be used by college principals and heads of schools for monitoring of teachers and by teachers observing each other. A report of findings based on internal evaluation will be one of the audit and review reports during the [external] inspection [evaluation]. The findings of this study revealed that QASO were not operating in accordance with what is stipulated in the handbook. One hundred and thirty-five (81.8%) of the respondents reported that QASO show very little concern about PTE. Only one of the 10 schools of this study had the Handbook of Inspection of Educational Institutions. The rest even had no idea that such a document was in existence. This was a weakness on the part of DQAS because it was supposed to make sure that schools are not only aware of the document but are also in possession of it and know how to use it.

It was, therefore, not surprising that among the suggestions made by the respondents for the improvement of PTE, the need for a clear government policy about SBTE practice and more especially PTE was ranked among the top three suggestions. The finding concurred with a study by Wanzare (2002) in which he cited lack of a comprehensive evaluation policy as one of the problems of teacher evaluation system in Kenya which among other things, would specify the purposes of evaluation, evaluation criteria and evaluation procedures. As a result according to Wanzare, there is great a deal of confusion especially regarding the purposes served by teacher evaluation. The study among others recommended for the formulation of a comprehensive teacher evaluation policy which should address among other things, the philosophy and purposes of evaluation, the practices and procedures of evaluation, teacher evaluators, the criteria for evaluation and the provision of evaluation feedback and follow-up plans, the frequency of evaluation and legal concerns.

3.2 Perceptions about the purpose and role of PTE

Many studies stress that understanding the purpose of an evaluation activity before it is conducted is very important because it has a lot of bearing on the kind of attitudes towards it especially by those being evaluated. For example, evaluation outcomes for teachers in some education systems according to Kremer (1988) can be used as a basis for demotion and dismissal from the service. Therefore, unless teachers in such systems know why they are being evaluated, they may become suspicious and fearful. This study sought to find if the respondents perceive PTE to be very necessary, necessary, unnecessary and very unnecessary. The respondents were further expected to provide three most important reasons for the kind of perceptions.

Despite most schools not engaging in PTE, it was encouraging to note that even respondents from schools where PTE was not practised were of the view that it was either very necessary or necessary. Out of the 165 respondents, 136(82.4%) (8 head-teachers; 6 senior teachers, 11 HoDs and 111 teachers) respondents were of the view that PTE practice was either very necessary or necessary. Further analysis revealed that all the 70 respondents from schools where PTE was practised and seventy-one (74.7%) of the 95 respondents from schools where PTE was not practised were of the view that PTE was either very necessary or unnecessary. Only twenty-four (25.3%) respondents who all were teachers were of the view that PTE was unnecessary.

Despite the general favourable view about PTE, the respondents seemed not to have a mutual understanding about the role or purpose of the practice. This was reflected in the many varied reasons provided by respondents to show why PTE practice was either very necessary or necessary as depicted in Table 2, a variation that was noted even among respondents from the same school. Table 2 shows that none of the reasons provided to show why PTE was either very necessary or necessary were provided by 39% and above of the respondents. As already noted, most literature observes that the main purpose of any form of teacher evaluation is to lead to professional development of the teachers and school improvement. Though these two reasons were ranked among the first three reasons as to why PTE was either very necessary or necessary, they were provided by less than 35% and 40% of the respondents respectively as reflected in Table 2. Lack of mutual understanding about the role of PTE may be attributed to lack of awareness programmes and unfocused in-service courses, activities the study found wanting.

Focused awareness programmes and in-service courses preferably school-based can be used to provide a theoretical base to teacher evaluation by conducting some literature review especially on the purposes and roles of teacher evaluation and also reflecting on the evaluation outcomes. Awareness programmes can also provide the teachers the opportunity to come up with a mutual agreement, for example, on why PTE should be practised in their schools before engaging in the practice. Failure to hold forums to discuss on why and how teacher evaluation should be conducted may lead to a scenario like the one reflected in Table 2 where the respondents did not have any mutual purpose for the practice of PTE.

Lack of mutual understanding as to why PTE is either very necessary or necessary also confirms a study by Wanzare (2002) which highlights confusion about purposes teacher evaluation serves as one of the problems of Kenya teacher evaluation system. Wanzare cites studies by Mwanzia (1985) and the Ministry of Education (1994) which identify this problem by noting that there is a lot of confusion regarding the dual roles of evaluators in Kenya. The resultant confusion in mission and appropriate methods leads to unproductive teacher evaluation system a view echoed by Stonge (1991) who observes that an evaluation system without a clear purpose is a meaningless activity. To address this problem, Nevo (1995) stresses that awareness programmes to discuss the purpose of teacher evaluation are indispensable and should be a continuous activity.

4. Conclusions

The involvement of DQAS in PTE is very important because it is expected to bring objectivity and expertise to the practice. The QASOs are also evaluators of an evaluation process according to (Nevo, 1995). Failure by QASOs to involve in the practice of PTE may have been as a result of the usual perennial problem of inadequate evaluation due to scarce resources. For example, the report of the commission on the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond in Kenya reported that there were infrequent evaluations by QASOs in schools because the number of QASOs was quite small and hardly coped with the demand to evaluate schools and various subjects taught (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

The same is replicated by the report of the commission on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 1999) and also cited by Wanzare (2002). Wanzare (ibid.) goes further to cite lack of needed resources to support evaluation activities in Kenyan schools which was not part of the scope of this study. The QASO can only make effective contribution toward the practice of PTE by making frequent visits to schools to get first hand information on what is happening in relation to the practice.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and the subsequent conclusions, it is recommended that the government should make it a policy that all schools engage in the practice of PTE. The government can emulate some of the states in the USA that provide professional development of teachers subsidies to schools that engage in Peer Teacher Review by coming up with some measures that will compel schools to engage in PTE. The government should through the DQAS be more involved in the practice by ensuring that it is practised in all schools. The QASO should oversee it as external evaluators to give it credibility and objectivity. The government should facilitate QASO by providing the needed resources so that they can make frequent visits to schools to provide support and guidance to the practice. Where PTE is not practised, QASO should ensure that it is initiated, implemented and institutionalized in schools.

Moreover, despite the lack of shared understanding of the purpose of PTE by most respondents, it may be possible in future to focus more clearly on professional development and school improvement as major purposes of SBTE. In other words, teachers should be shown if possible with concrete examples based on some empirical studies how PTE can lead to professional development and school improvement. This will help to strengthen and intensify it partly through the practice of PTE more so that most respondents were of the view that it was either very necessary or necessary.

6. References

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7. Tables

Table 1: Reasons for pre- and post-teacher evaluation conferencing

Time	Pre		Post	
	n=62		n=67	
Reasons	f	%	f	%
1) Will help teachers improve especially if weaknesses are pointed out with humour	-	-	64	96.2
2) Can lead to school improvement	-	-	54	80.8
3) Can prevent incidents of suspicion	49	79.2	-	-
4) Will make teachers understand it's purpose	41	66.7	-	-
5) It is another way of learning	-	-	41	61.5
6) It will make the exercise focused and objective	34	54.2	-	-
7) Can lead to harmonious relationships	26	41.7	28	42.3
8) Others	14	22.9	12	17.3
9) Undecided	5	8.3	4	5.8

Key: n- number of respondents f - frequency

Table 2: Reasons for the Practice of Peer Teacher evaluation

Respondents	H/tr n=8	S/t n=10	HoD n=19	Tr n=128	Total n=165
Reasons					
1) Can/leads to school's academic improvement	3	3	5	52	63 (38.2)
2) Can/leads to cordial relationship among teachers	6	4	7	33	50 (30.3)
3) Can/leads to professional development of teachers	-	-	5	29	34 (20.6)
4) A tool for monitoring curriculum implementation	3	4	5	15	27 (16.4)
5) Teachers can/learn from each other	-	-	-	23	23 (13.9)
6) Can/leads to team work	2	-	-	19	21 (12.7)
7) Can/makes the teacher more confident	1	1	3	9	14 (8.5)
8) Can/leads to effective teaching and learning	2	1	-	6	9 (5.5)
9) Can/makes the teacher well prepared	-	-	-	8	8 (4.8)
10) Has made the teachers to be more hard working	-	-	1	6	7 (4.2)
11) Makes me know my weaknesses	2	2	-	4	7 (4.2)
12) Can be done on more frequent basis	-	-	-	5	5 (3)
13) It is easier for a fellow teacher to correct you	-	-	-	4	4 (2.4)
14) Enhances curriculum delivery	-	-	-	3	3 (1.8)
15) Supplements the DQASE	1	-	-	2	3 (1.8)
16) Others	3	2	1	20	26 (15.8)

Key: *H/tr - Head-teachers**S/t - Senior Teachers**HoD - Heads of Departments**Tr – Teachers**n - No of respondents*