

Review Article

# The Assessment on the Process of Carrying out Quality Assurance of Educational Materials in Tanzania

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## Abstract

Teaching and learning materials enhance teaching and learning by providing information, understanding concepts, developing problem-solving skills, encouraging reflective thinking, and being scripted to ensure children's success. Careful planning, monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance processes like internal and external critical review, ethics, and copyright approval are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of learning materials. The study aimed to assess the quality assurance process of educational materials in Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative research approach, and data were gathered through the literature review. The United Republic of Tanzania's education and training policies, curriculum framework for basic and teacher education, basic, secondary, and teacher education quality assurance framework, and other related materials were consulted as the primary data sources. Content analysis of data was used to come up with a clear interpretation of information and a conclusion of the results. The finding shows that the Tanzania Education Policy talks about quality education and needs to give a straightforward guide on developing quality assurance tools for implementing the policy. The study found that the Tanzania Institute of Education has an excellent and well-organised guideline for the educational materials quality assurance process that can be adopted and included in the policy. The study recommends the inclusion of statements directing the quality assurance of educational materials in the education policy. Also, the study suggests requiring teachers to be included and involve student teachers in quality assurance since they are the critical implementers and users of educational materials.

## Keywords

Education, Educational Materials, Quality, Quality Assurance, Quality Control

## 1. Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) is a quality management process that establishes standards, guidelines and procedures to maintain the product's or service's integrity throughout its development [2]. Quality assurance is a structured activity ensuring education delivery quality, equity, and effectiveness through internal and external mechanisms like large-scale

student assessments, educational material assessments and staff evaluations [3, 4]. Quality assurance is a crucial process that ensures the quality of staff, teaching and learning materials, equipment, supplies, a conducive teaching and learning environment, and high-quality teaching by qualified teachers. These attract mass enrolment and quality delivery of lessons

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through quality teachers.

The development of science and technology in the 21st-century world has risen rapidly on the influence of all facets of education. Suitable learning materials constitute a significant factor in a high-calibre educational experience, but the quality of the content is still a concern [1, 5]. This is because educational materials have a tangible and lasting impact on a child's attitudes and perceptions [6, 7]. That is why even the international conversation about education is shifting from academic access to academic quality [6]. The nation must ensure students access high-quality curriculum materials for effective teaching and learning [8].

The rapid development of technology in education has significantly increased the influence of various aspects of education, such as primary, secondary, and higher education. In due regard, a solid educational materials quality assurance process and mechanism is the most critical factor. Quality engagement is crucial, and high-quality learning materials are essential for a successful learning experience [6, 8, 9]. Despite advancements in software and hardware, there are limited standards for evaluating the calibre of educational materials, particularly regarding pedagogic value [5]. Tanzania is among the developing countries where the quality of education materials is questionable [9]. For example, on 14 February 2023, the Minister of Education, Science and Technology burned sixteen (16) textbooks in Tanzanian schools. In line with this, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT) Honourable Phillip Mulugo admitted to parliament that the Educational Materials Approval Committee (EMAC) is incompetent during a debate on MOEVT's 2013/14 budget estimates [9]. This justifies the loss of quality assurance of Tanzania's teaching and learning materials mechanism. Unfortunately, the literature on quality assurance procedures primarily focuses on teaching and learning issues, leaving aside educational materials [3, 10]. This study investigates the process of ensuring the quality of educational materials in Tanzania.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a library search approach to collect information. A qualitative research approach informs it. Data about the quality assurance process in teaching and learning curriculum material was collected from the existing data. Tanzania's education policy and Tanzania Institute of Education Guidelines for Writing and Evaluating Textbooks, together with the research reports, were reviewed. The data were analysed using the content analysis method.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. The Quality Assurance Structure in Tanzania

The quality assurance structure in Tanzania comprises the

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), Agency for Development of Educational Managers (ADEM), Tanzania Institute of Adult Education (TIAE), National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA), National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) and Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) [11]. The other organs are the President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) and Non-State. Moreover, the structure involves School Quality Assurers (SQA), Heads of Schools and Colleges, School/Classroom Teachers and College Tutors and parents or guardians. All these organs work concurrently to ensure education quality in the respective authority assigned.

#### 3.1.1. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) coordinates the formulation of educational policies that give direction to the education systems in Tanzania [11]. MoEST is responsible for creating educational policies, supervising implementation, training qualified teachers, and overseeing community college development. It unifies national technical education and ensures the integrity of the educational system. MoEST's mission is to advance STEM applications and manage S&T research. It also focuses on human resources development, professional moral conduct, teacher assessment, quality assurance, educational agencies, programs, and organisations [11, 12]. The MoEST delegates some of its power to TIE, NECTA, NACTE, TCU and ADEM.

TIE is among the critical actors in the quality assurance process since it plays several roles. TIE designs, reviews, develops and disseminates curricula materials for pre-primary, primary, secondary and teacher education levels [11]. Regularly, TIE reviews and updates curricula at various levels and conducts academic research and ongoing teacher training to meet global trends, technological developments and local labour market demands [11].

The Education Circular No. 4 of 2014 mandates TIE to write textbooks and start evaluating and approving all books destined for use in pre-primary, primary, secondary, and teacher education levels [13]. To implement these roles, TIE developed Guidelines for Writing and evaluating textbooks [13]. This gives credit to the process of quality assurance of education materials. The domain and area of focus of guidelines focus on essential elements of education materials, influencing the improvement of learning materials. These domains provide a framework for assessing educational material quality and can be utilised by internal and external quality assurance teams to ensure focus on the most critical aspects [9, 14].

The Agency for Development of Educational Managers (ADEM) and Tanzania Institute of Adult Education (TIAE) play vital roles in educational materials quality assurance through developing and implementing educational leadership

and supervision courses for various Educational Leadership Card holders [11]. Moreover, they offer technical advice, research, consulting services, and educational materials for educational leadership and supervision, identifying gaps and finding solutions [11].

NECTA develops examination policies in Tanzania, ensuring compliance with education and training policies, self-reliance education principles, and assessment standards [11, 15, 16]. They oversee primary, secondary, and teacher education levels, provide testing locations, and collaborate with others to develop an orderly system [11, 15, 16]. They conduct exams, award diplomas, certificates, and council awards, and produce public reports. They also facilitate, manage, and oversee foreign examinations in Tanzania. NECTA receives and reviews examination policy as needed. The measurement and evaluation are the tools for determining the quality of the learned materials. If the education materials are of higher quality, the literature said that links to better performance of the students [14]. That is to say, educational materials significantly correlate with academic performance.

TCU and NACTE are responsible for registering and accrediting public and private colleges, universities, and technical education and training institutions, respectively [11, 12]. TCU and NACTE ensure the education system is relevant to the labour market's demands and establish quality control and assurance systems in higher learning institutions. Autonomy organs develop their quality assurance guidelines as the directives for each established institution, and the institute uses them to create its policy. In general, TCU and NACTE play the role of regulators.

The review of the TCU and NACTE quality assurance guidelines showed that the part of quality assurance of the educational materials is not captured. The regulator bodies (TCU and NACTE) have left the crucial responsibility of material evaluation that may destroy society. The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) [5] advocates that suitable learning materials constitute a significant factor in a high-calibre educational experience. Conversely, quality assurance provides a systematic framework for exceeding community expectations [17]. Hence, having clear guidelines for material selection, monitoring, and evaluation may destroy the nation.

### 3.1.2. President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG)

President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) is in the managerial position of ensuring and controlling the provision of quality education from pre-primary to secondary schools and teachers' education. PO-RALG, together with guaranteeing inclusive enrolment, retention and completion, quality furniture and infrastructure, managing teacher hiring, placement, and parental involvement in children's education, also provides the quality of teaching and learning resources like books [11]. Despite articulating the mandate of ensuring the quality of education

materials, the PO-RALG have been practising the role of monitoring and inspecting the teaching and learning process and the physical resources. Under this ministry, school quality assurance and REO, RAO, DEO, DAO and WEO operate.

### 3.1.3. School Quality Assurance (SQA)

The role of SQA is to achieve the accreditation and quality assurance of schools/colleges and to ensure the availability of the necessary resources for implementing the schools/colleges curriculum and their proper and appropriate use and maintenance [11]. SQA employs standard quality assurance tools to evaluate the qualifications, skills, and values of school/college administrators and teachers, as well as their attendance and classroom performance [18, 19]. It offers professional support to teachers and school/college leaders to enhance teaching methods and effectively implement the curriculum.

The SQA department encourages heads of schools/colleges and ward education officers to participate in activities evaluating student achievement, teaching and learning standards, curriculum, management, and school resources [12]. This shows that there is still a need to strengthen the quality assurance of educational materials. The quality assurance process of scholarly material has been left to TIE, while the organ that is very close to the actual implementation is SQA.

School quality assurance is successful globally when guidelines focus on all areas and domains for improvement. Domains, the most influential educational components, provide a framework for assessing a school's calibre [14]. Internal and external quality assurance teams can use these guidelines to ensure focus on crucial issues. Hence, the establishment of guides on how to perform the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning materials is inevitable.

### 3.1.4. Regional, District and Ward Education and Academic Officers

The Regional Education Officer (REO), Regional Academic Officer (RAO), District Education Officer (DEO), District Academic Officer (DAO) and Ward Education Officer (WEO) play significant roles in the process of quality assurance. Their roles, according to the studies, are: [11, 12]

1. The task involves managing the shift in mindsets and attitudes of school leaders and teachers while introducing a new curriculum.
2. Organising and coordinating the training of principals, heads of schools and teachers at their respective levels,
3. Supervises and supports college principals, heads of schools and tutors/teachers through:
4. Maintain regular communication with teachers to offer advice and support, facilitate teacher-to-teacher interactions, and foster connections with students and parents.
5. Emphasis on clear communication that explains the role, terminology, possible assessment methods, and answers frequently asked questions.

6. Offering support services such as curriculum explanation, materials provision, role modelling, fostering a safe and trusting environment, and motivating teachers.
7. Compensation for successful performance includes rewards like praise and recognition, which are considered essential.
8. Evaluating the curriculum implementation at their respective levels.

### 3.1.5. Heads of Schools and Colleges

Heads of schools and college principals also play an internal role in the quality assurance process. They ensure that the curriculum is implemented per quality assurance guidelines. Their roles are: [13]

1. The school or college heads must ensure that the school or colleges adhere to the curriculum developed by the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE).
2. To ensure the curriculum is implemented in line with established procedures and standards, including the availability of teaching staff to cover the curriculum's subjects.
3. Identify curriculum requirements, necessary teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure and inform relevant authorities.
4. Appropriately utilises and maintains the availability and adequacy of resources.
5. Ensures the efficient and effective execution of each institution's teaching and learning process while maintaining accurate school schedules and timetables.
6. The school or college leader leads, motivates, and manages staff in line with National School/College Leadership Guidelines by delegating responsibilities, setting expectations, and evaluating performance against established targets and objectives.
7. Use the observation checklist to guide teachers/instructors through classroom observations and interviews.
8. Organises and oversees professional development programmes for school and college staff.

The guideline fails explicitly to explain the role of school or college heads in monitoring, assessing and evaluating teaching and learning materials such as textbooks. This role is crucial as in Tanzania, there are a variety of textbooks and supplementary books that differ in content, illustration, language and methodology [11]. The quality of education is compromised by leaving out solid and effective teaching and learning quality assurance guidelines for school and college heads.

### 3.1.6. Subject Teachers/Tutors

The subject teachers and tutors have significant roles to play regarding quality assurance. Teachers/tutors are the key players in the quality assurance of the educational material process. Teachers and tutors are responsible for obtaining and analysing curriculum materials to ensure familiarity with its

components, requirements, objectives, standards, resources, and recommended teaching strategies [13]. That is why [8, 9] emphasise that teachers should be equipped in the art and science of writing and evaluation of textbooks through professional development in the curriculum context.

On the other hand, they interact with materials when assisting students with curriculum, teacher/college instructor guidance, and resources, using assessment tools to measure adherence and goal achievement and make necessary adjustments.

Using specialists that have been out of the traditional classroom teaching process (even though they may have taught in the past) and their selections may lack credibility with working teachers, so it is doubtful that they should ever be given sole responsibility for choosing materials [8]. From this point, the importance of equipping teachers and tutors in selecting and evaluating learning materials is declared.

### 3.1.7. Parents/Guardians

The parents or guardians are responsible for quality assurance by providing children with primary and proper care and guidance towards good behaviour. They have the role of supporting children's general development and protecting them so they can experience standard patterns of growth and development [8]. The task involves teaching children basic personal care skills such as toilet training, meal preparation, table manners, washing, and dressing.

The parent or guardian ensures that the child follows, remains and completes the allocated training cycle. It also helps their child with their tasks, including homework. They must provide immediate feedback to the school/college on any positive or negative changes observed in children's knowledge, behavioural skills and other characteristics that may impact the curriculum.

They play a role in their child's education by attending parent meetings or school councils/committees to discuss school issues, including school/college performance in local and national examinations, state of resources and infrastructure, finances and other issues. This can represent directly or indirectly the implementation of the curriculum.

### 3.1.8. College Boards/ School Committee

The college board/committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing school performance. They establish budgetary policies for the schools and approve the school budget, establishing strategic direction and priorities for schools [13]. Moreover, they have a role in developing relations between the school and community, making recommendations on issues affecting schools, establishing policies for efficient and effective use of school assets, and managing financial risk. Gall (1982) points out that the choice of curriculum materials falls primarily on administrators. The cost of curriculum materials is a significant line item in school budgets, and school boards anticipate that funds will be used to buy high-quality and economical materials.



### 3.2. The Review of Educational Policy, Framework and Guidelines

The policy mirrors what is required and what should be done. It puts down guidelines for the operation of a particular system. The review of Tanzania's Education Policies since independence indicates that quality assurance is inevitable at all levels of education for the nation's sustainability [15, 20]. Although, policies did not articulate in detail based on the quality of educational materials. Policies show the direction of the access, equity and provision of teaching and learning resources. It deals with what [8] terms as the material supply, not educational materials. Gall said:

*Curriculum materials differ from curriculum supplies in that they are representational. Paper, pencils, scissors, some types of scientific equipment, living things, and automobiles in driver education classes are examples of curriculum supplies rather than curriculum materials because they support the learning process but do not substitute for actual curriculum materials [8].*

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for putting in place criteria for evaluating and ensuring that only quality teaching and learning materials will be selected to present the teaching and learning in the classroom at the national level. Hence, the emphasis should be placed on the national education policy rather than leaving them to be accommodated in the guidelines only.

Another supporting tool for education policy that the MoEST has developed to ensure quality education is the School Quality Assurance Framework of 2017. The framework provides the functions and guidelines for the quality assurance organs to implement. The framework assessment shows that Tanzania's quality assurance program evaluates student achievement, instruction, learning, assessment, curriculum, leadership, management, and resources and facilities to ensure adequate school management and resources [14, 16, 18]. The face look of the framework statements indicates that the quality should look at the curriculum and resources that might be interpreted as the evaluation of the educational materials. However, in the eye of critical analysis, the mask of curriculum and resources covers the actual meaning of educational material evaluations.

### 3.3. Research About Curriculum Materials and Their Selection

Researchers did not give much attention to the study of curriculum materials and the selection process until recently, for example, among the few studies investigating educational materials [5, 9]. The majority of work, however, was focused on the study of teachers, including their training, personal traits, interactions with students in the classroom, and instructional strategies [2, 10, 17-18].

Gall argues that studies on curriculum materials are less

prioritised than those on teachers and the teaching and learning process, as teachers and process possess unique personalities and make learning more engaging [8]. Gall adds that teacher salaries and costs account for over half of the average school budget, while materials rarely exceed 1% of total spending. Teachers are available for research in the public sector, while private publishing companies dominate curriculum material development and distribution [8]. Gall's arguments concur directly with the trend of research in Tanzania, which was mainly directed to another education process in curriculum implementation. For example, [21] examined practices of students' involvement in quality assurance processes in public Teacher Colleges in Tanzania, finding that student teachers are not well involved in practising quality assurance. These results concur with [9] finding that teachers are not competent in the production of textbooks and have the ability to select quality textbooks. Teachers college is an industry that produces teachers who are expected to go to the schools to implement internal quality assurance; what miracle will they perform afterwards if they are not involved in their training process? Skills and knowledge are developed and practised during pre-service capacity building. In-service supplements the capacity development process from what is already known.

On the other hand, the study of the enrichment of school quality assurance (SQA) practices in public primary schools (PPSs) in the Arusha region, Tanzania, found that in-service capacity development faces many implementation challenges [18]. One of the challenges mentioned is the insufficient funds for professional development facilitation. This can be drawn from the limitation of the education policy that does not give a clear directive on implementing quality assurance, particularly on the assessment of educational materials. The lack of explicit statements that show precisely what is required and which is a proper way of conducting quality assurance in the policy leads to short fund allocation. Therefore, the less mentioned and less emphasised quality assurance component will not be considered necessary when selecting what to put in and what to leave out due to insufficient funds.

## 4. Conclusions

The study found that the educational materials quality assurance guidelines in Tanzania at all levels of education have not been covered well. Only one organ (TIE) has guidelines on the quality assurance of educational materials. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology are responsible for reviewing the national educational policy to include the directives on quality assurance of materials directly. On the other hand, the national academic quality assurance framework should provide guidelines for evaluating educational materials, selection, monitoring and production. Professional development in the production, selection, evaluation and monitoring process for teachers

and tutors is inevitable.

## Abbreviations

ADEM: Agency for Development of Educational Managers

DAO: District Academic Officer

DEO: District Education Officer

EMAC: Educational Materials Approval Committee

MoEST: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

MOEVT: Minister of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

NACTE: National Council for Technical Education

NECTA: National Examinations Council of Tanzania

PO-RALG: President's Office–Regional Administration and Local Government

QA: Quality assurance

RAO: Regional Academic Officer

REO: Regional Education Officer

SQA: School Quality Assurers

TCU: Tanzania Commission for Universities

TIAE: Tanzania Institute of Adult Education

TIE: Tanzania Institute of Education

WEO: Ward Education Officer

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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