



# Implementing Internal Quality Assurance Systems in the In-Service Teacher Education Programmes in Zimbabwean Universities: The Quality Discourse

Albert Mufanechiya<sup>1</sup>  & Bekithemba Dube<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> University of the Free State, South Africa.

## ABSTRACT

The emerging discourses in the Zimbabwean teacher education system have been on the capacity of in-service teachers to be transformative through their preparation at university. The call, then, has been on universities to improve their quality assurance and its effective implementation for quality programmes and learning outcomes. There have been growing indications and expectations that university in-service teacher graduates should lead in transforming the educational and economic systems of nations presenting a strong explanation for effective quality assurance structures in universities. In this article, the researchers contended that without robust quality assurance systems at Zimbabwean universities' teacher education programmes, the nation may not achieve the desired educational vision. The paper reports, analyses practices and lessons learnt on the implementation of internal quality assurance systems on in-service teacher education programmes at one state university in Zimbabwe. Underpinned by the sociocultural theory, the qualitative case study used semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. One quality assurance directorate, four departmental quality assurance lecturers drawn from each of the four School of Education departments and twelve final years in-service students were purposefully sampled. The results indicated that the university had weak internal quality assurance management structures failing to continuously monitor and evaluate in-service programmes and their implementation. The study recommended that the institution reconstitutes the quality assurance body by bringing together all stakeholders including in-service students to a dialogue table to discuss how quality assurance standards and practices can be designed, implemented and evaluated.

Correspondence

Albert Mufanechiya

Email:

MUFANECHIYA66@gmail.com

Publication History

Received 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023

Accepted 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2023

Published online 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

**Keywords:** *Implementation, internal quality assurance, university, teacher education. in-service*

## INTRODUCTION

Conceptions of internal quality assurance in the in-service education programmes have been approached differently and at times with conflicting understandings at universities in Zimbabwe. In-service professional teacher development programmes and their worth are shaped within the context of the process-product nexus informed by critical quality assurance dimensions. In-service should be understood as a higher qualification than a diploma in education with a stronger academic and professional thrust capable of leveraging the Zimbabwean education system. The crux of the matter is

that structural changes such as tertiarisation, technological evolution and globalization have driven post-industrial economies towards an increasingly skilled and knowledgeable workforce.<sup>1</sup> Education has to respond through in-service teacher knowledge and professional capacity building programmes. In-service which is part of teachers' conscious effort to enhance, upgrade and build their capacities by upskilling themselves becomes relevant to meet these new demands. These emerging issues require transformational thought leaders who can shape institutional practices towards effective quality in-service programmes at the university level.

In this study, the researchers explore the implementation of internal quality assurance structures at one university as system actors construct and articulate their own experiences. The compelling reason for focusing on quality assurance and in-service programmes at the university level is that many teachers are enrolling in-service programmes, yet the Zimbabwean education system is facing a decline in quality. Furthermore, there are limited research and few publications on university internal quality assurance and in-service professional development in Zimbabwe, yet these are the areas that have a huge bearing on the provision of quality education. In-serviced teachers can make a difference by accommodating changes, bringing about innovations and keeping informed about new developments in education. The in-service programmes, thus, are regarded as an investment in new knowledge and skills. If teachers do not update their practice knowledge and teaching skills and remain relevant and current, they become 'professional dead wood.' Thus, quality assurance in the in-service programmes has remained the cornerstone, yet the university has struggled to implement it. Without effective quality assurance structures and implementation strategies, in-service teacher education programmes may not yield the desired goals and outcomes. The questions the study addresses are:

- What are the experiences of internal stakeholders in implementing quality assurance in university in-service teacher education programmes?
- How can quality assurance implementation be improved?

The research was a qualitative case study where the researchers objectively reported on the quality assurance data obtained on-site through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires.<sup>2</sup> The study starts by providing a motivation that supports the need to effectively implement quality assurance measures as a prerequisite for quality in-service programmes. The researchers provide a review of related literature on quality assurance systems and their role in the quality debate in education in general and in-service in particular. The study then presents the research methodological procedures in terms of how the data are collected and processed to arrive at meaningful conclusions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

University education has become a critical asset for the labour market integration in modern knowledge societies.<sup>3</sup> Governments the world over have placed a huge load on universities to nurture graduates who generate new knowledge and skills that speak to multiple social, economic and political challenges bedevilling their nations.<sup>4</sup> In that regard, higher education institutions have become critical determinants in national economic development discourses. One priority area in the education narrative has been the provision of in-service teacher development to develop innovative, reflective teachers and critical thinkers whose university experiences would help them to respond to curriculum

---

<sup>1</sup> Delia Pisoni, "Between Idealism and Pragmatism: Social Policies and Matthew Effect in Vocational Education and Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Switzerland," *Social Inclusion* 6, no. 3 (2018): 289–300.

<sup>2</sup> J.W. Creswell, *The Mixed Methods Reader* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Pisoni, "Between Idealism and Pragmatism: Social Policies and Matthew Effect in Vocational Education and Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Switzerland."

<sup>4</sup> Paul Netalisile Malunda, Proscovia Namubiru Ssentamu, and Juliet Atwebembeire, "Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Andragogy in Higher Education Institutions: Implications for PhD Training in Uganda," *African Journal of Governance and Development* 10, no. 1 (2021): 215–31; Loc Thi My Nguyen et al., "Factors Affecting Successful Quality Assurance Implementation in Vietnamese Higher Education: A Qualitative Study," *The Qualitative Report* 26, no. 2 (2021): 625–36.

practice in the education system. Universities have become important knowledge and skills development hubs where practising teachers can be nurtured and improve their teaching skills.<sup>5</sup> To achieve this goal there is a need for a strong internal quality assurance system to monitor the quality of the in-service teacher education programmes' performance and their evaluation. Furthermore, there is hope in teachers to continually upgrade their content knowledge and practices at the university level. Quality educational provision involves a process which in the end allows in-service teachers to create meaningful existence and add value to the well-being of the entire society.<sup>6</sup> Alwan raises the following important requirements if universities are to design impact in-service programmes:

- In-service teacher education should be dependent on a national survey of teachers' training, national human capital needs and inspired by global educational trends, and
- On-going evaluation is essential to ensure the maintenance of the relevance and quality of the programme.<sup>7</sup>

Given the key roles of universities as centres of excellence in knowledge generation, skills development, research and teaching and learning, issues of compliance to defined standards, criteria and requirements as a function of quality assurance come to the fore.<sup>8</sup> Ferdousi, Ahmed and Momen observe that assuring the quality of education is a fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining the credibility of programmes, institutional and national higher education systems.<sup>9</sup> Assan states that to be committed to a quality product is to be committed to all the processes, which ensure that the product is of a high standard all the time.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, institutions of higher learning and other sectors of the economy are facing challenges due to the fast pace at which globalization, economic, political, environmental, educational and technological changes are taking place.<sup>11</sup> This requires that universities should engage the services of academic staff to produce in-service students who are equipped with relevant teaching and technical skills, attitudes and knowledge that need to be perpetually renewed, changed, and improved.<sup>12</sup> The changes, developments and growth of knowledge in teacher education have prompted institutions across the education divide to heavily invest in quality assurance strategies to prepare teachers to adjust and to suit the changes taking place in the education environments. Ayeni observes that teachers who are deficient in professional and practice are not likely to make an impact in meeting challenging and changing educational demands.<sup>13</sup> In the same vein, Denby and Hyasat posit that quality assurance

---

<sup>5</sup> A N Shigwedha et al., "The SACMEQ LV Project in Namibia-A Study of the Conditions of Schooling and the Quality of Primary Education in Namibia," *Ministry of Education: Arts, and Culture: Windhoek, Namibia*, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Buabeng Assan, "Perceptions of Lecturers on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Process," *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2014): 339–47.

<sup>7</sup> Fatma Hamad Alwan, "Towards Effective In-Service Teacher Development in the United Arab Emirates: Getting Teachers to Be in Charge of Their Own Professional Growth.," *Online Submission*, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Malunda, Ssentamu, and Atwebembeire, "Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Andragogy in Higher Education Institutions: Implications for PhD Training in Uganda"; Viktoria Kis, "Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects," *Tertiary Review: A Contribution to the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education* 14, no. 9 (2005): 1–47.

<sup>9</sup> Farhana Ferdousi, Amir Ahmed, and Md Abdul Momen, "Evolution of Quality Assurance Practices in Enhancing the Quality of Open and Distance Education in a Developing Nation: A Case Study," *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal* 17, no. 2 (2022): 147–60.

<sup>10</sup> Assan, "Perceptions of Lecturers on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Process."

<sup>11</sup> P Evans, V Pucik, and J L Barsoux, "The Global Challenge: Framework for International Human Resource Management McGraw-Hill," *Irwin, New York, NY*, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Baum, "Human Resources in Tourism: Still Waiting for Change?—A 2015 Reprise," *Tourism Management* 50 (2015): 204–12.

<sup>13</sup> Adeolu Joshua Ayeni, "Teachers' Professional Development and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Secondary Schools.," *World Journal of Education* 1, no. 1 (2011): 143–49.

should perpetually renew programmes and the process should be planned, ongoing, well-defined, well-managed, monitored and enhanced.<sup>14</sup>

### Why Quality Assurance in the In-service Programmes?

The in-service teacher education programmes are critical to teacher development conversation given that these practising teachers need skills and competencies that are of immediate impact in their teaching-learning contexts.<sup>15</sup> In most cases, the reason why teachers come for in-service is because there may be a difference between the teachers' existing competencies and their actual needs to perform well in the classroom. The in-service teacher education programme becomes a useful intervention strategy to help teachers upgrade themselves for value-addedness<sup>16</sup> and to keep them up to date and extend knowledge and skills in fast changing educational world.<sup>17</sup> Altun further observes the role of the in-service teacher education as to:

- augment teachers' knowledge of the subjects being taught,
- perfect teaching skills in the classroom,
- keep up with growth in the individual field and education in general,
- generate and contribute new knowledge to the profession, and
- increase the ability to monitor students' work in order to provide constructive feedback to students and appropriately redirect teaching and learning.<sup>18</sup>

According to Pollard and Bourne, if in-service teachers do not update their knowledge and teaching skills as noted by Altun they become 'dead wood'.<sup>19</sup> Sound in-service teacher education programmes is a source of competitive advantage in the current education environment and market.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the in-service teacher education programmes become a critical strategy for the development of the Zimbabwean education sector and thus issues of quality assurance become very relevant if the programmes are to make an impact and take their vital role in education development. It should be in order, then, that a teacher who has undergone in-service teacher education, where issues of quality assurance have been taken seriously, should emerge with a repertoire of knowledge and skills and with a high probability of using strategies that enhance learner development and improved education quality.

It is, therefore, vital for institutions of higher learning to keep track of the quality of the knowledge and skills that will keep in-service teachers relevant. Effective quality assurance enhances individual as well as group performance as it improves both the lecturers and the in-service teachers' knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and behaviors. In-service programmes have important ramifications for the whole education system in Zimbabwe.

### Definitional Contestations

The anchor word in the quality assurance conversation is quality. Defining quality is a prerequisite for defining quality assurance. Quality is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept and relative to context, country and culture. It is dynamic and ever-changing. Quality in one context may not be the same in another. This explains why students in general associate quality with their own institutions

---

<sup>14</sup> Steve Denby, "The Importance of Training Needs Analysis," *Industrial and Commercial Training* 42, no. 3 (2010): 147–50; Ali S Hyasat, "Examining Tourism and Hospitality Curriculum Based on the Business Employers' Needs," *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 11, no. 1 (2022): 60–70.

<sup>15</sup> Shui-Che Fok et al., "In-Service Teacher Training Needs in Hong Kong.," *Online Submission*, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Fok et al., "In-Service Teacher Training Needs in Hong Kong."

<sup>17</sup> Taner Altun, "INSET (In-Service Education and Training) and Professional Development of Teachers: A Comparison of British and Turkish Cases.," *Online Submission*, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Altun, "INSET (In-Service Education and Training) and Professional Development of Teachers: A Comparison of British and Turkish Cases," 847.

<sup>19</sup> A. Pollard & J. Bourne (eds). *Teaching and learning in the primary school*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Altun, "INSET (In-Service Education and Training) and Professional Development of Teachers: A Comparison of British and Turkish Cases."

and the programmes they enrol in. In the same vein, Basera, Mwenje and Ruturi say that if you ask ten people to define quality, you will probably get ten different definitions.<sup>21</sup> However, some common elements of quality can be thought of in two dimensions, and the process quality which deals with the quality of interactions in the teaching–learning context and structural quality which comprises regulations and other support services.<sup>22</sup> Basera, et al identify three critical quality dimensions as:

- Standards to be adhered to,
- Monitoring implementation in actual settings, and
- Evaluation- the impact of the standards and procedures towards improving the relevance and efficiency of the programme.<sup>23</sup>

According to students, quality is seen as the ability of the lecturer to provide them with services such as strategies for learning, the provision of teaching which ensures the acquisition of knowledge, skills, sufficient and helpful feedback on their assignments and lecturers being available for consultation on student problems.<sup>24</sup> Thus, some quality definitions are standards-driven focusing on meeting pre-defined specifications and requirements while others are stakeholder–driven emphasising accountability to the public or providing transformative learning experiences to benefit students and the nation. While these quality issues seemingly appear generic, the fundamental question is whose standards? Pirsig in Niedermeier also asks one other critical question, what is quality?<sup>25</sup>

Attempts have been made to come up with an all–encompassing and exhaustive definition of quality assurance. One such definition is by Ayeni and Nguyen et al that quality assurance is an ongoing systematic review and evaluation of education programmes and processes that include monitoring, assessing, guaranteeing, maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education systems, institutions and programmes.<sup>26</sup> Van Nuland observes that quality assurance involves the inculcation of relevant strategic and systematically organised skills and activities which can be applied to problem–solving contexts thus connecting what the students learn with their teaching responsibilities.<sup>27</sup> Kis and Ferdousi et al define quality assurance as systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement of products and outcomes.<sup>28</sup> Another useful definition is by Karakhanyan and Stensaker that quality assurance consists of many interconnected aspects and serves several purposes such as accountability, quality control, evaluation, measurement and continuous improvement.<sup>29</sup> A successful quality assurance process establishes stakeholder confidence in the provision, input, process and outcomes. However, another fundamental question is, using whose lens?

The quality and quality assurance debate has raised many questions that remain substantially unanswered making our understanding of these terms not an easy task let alone its implementation.

<sup>21</sup> Vitalis Basera, Judy Mwenje, and Samson Ruturi, “A Snap on Quality Management in Zimbabwe: A Perspectives Review,” *Annals of Management and Organization Research* 1, no. 2 (2019): 77–94.

<sup>22</sup> K. Anderson & M. Soonarane, *Guide on early childhood education quality assurance systems for Africa*. (Research Technical Assistance Centre, 2021).

<sup>23</sup> Basera, Mwenje, and Ruturi, “A Snap on Quality Management in Zimbabwe: A Perspectives Review.”

<sup>24</sup> Assan, “Perceptions of Lecturers on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Process.”

<sup>25</sup> Robert M Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* (Random House, 1999); Frank Niedermeier, “Designing Effective Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions-Training on Internal Quality Assurance Series| Module 1,” *Training on Internal Quality Assurance Series (TrainQA)* 1 (2017).

<sup>26</sup> Ayeni, “Teachers’ Professional Development and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Secondary Schools.”; Nguyen et al., “Factors Affecting Successful Quality Assurance Implementation in Vietnamese Higher Education: A Qualitative Study.”

<sup>27</sup> S. Van Nuland, *ICET 2014: 58th Yearbook of Teacher Education: Moving Forward in Curriculum, Pedagogy and Leadership* (Ontario: University of Ontario Institute of Technology, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Kis, “Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects”; Ferdousi, Ahmed, and Momen, “Evolution of Quality Assurance Practices in Enhancing the Quality of Open and Distance Education in a Developing Nation: A Case Study.”

<sup>29</sup> Susanna Karakhanyan and Bjørn Stensaker, “Global Trends in Higher Education Quality Assurance: Challenges and Opportunities in Internal and External Quality Assurance,” 2020.

The fact is that quality and quality assurance remain elusive terms. Amid the surrounding debate on quality and quality assurance, Van Nuland concludes that teacher quality is the product of teacher training.<sup>30</sup> Basera et al agree that quality and quality assurance are not fixed concepts. They are contextual and situational.<sup>31</sup>

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used the Sociocultural Theory as a lens to understand how internal quality assurance has been implemented at the university level. The Sociocultural Theory is credited to the 1920s initial work of Russian psychologist Vygotsky. The work has been widely used in teacher education and other education-related literature and contexts.<sup>32</sup> It is based on the theoretical framework and ideas that quality assurance does not reside in individuals but is constructed and takes place in a socio-cultural context with interaction between and among internal stakeholders. Education is a social and cultural process and has the power to train people to analyse and understand problems through collective experiences. The researchers consider the theory relevant because the university teaching-learning context, where the quality assurance issue is at stake, comprises social groups in which the quality assurance directorate, lecturers and in – service students are significant players. In this environment, each group develops individuals and the individual enriches the group as both have experiences regarding quality assurance which contribute to the educational benefit.<sup>33</sup> Sociocultural theory sees knowledge as socially and culturally constructed and acknowledges the important contribution of all the stakeholders and what they bring to the institutional quality assurance discussion table.<sup>34</sup> Thus, Schiro observes that what to achieve is informed by experiences and becomes important in the internal quality assurance narrative.<sup>35</sup>

The theory helped the researchers to understand the intricate connection between ideas and practice in real-life contexts. The negotiated meaning of quality assurance helped stakeholders to read from the ‘same hymn book’ as it were, making in–service programmes implementation possible. What prompts institutions to implement quality assurance processes is a result of mediation by both internal and external society needs yet the process is internally controlled by individuals who are tasked with the responsibility.<sup>36</sup> The individual would have internalised what needs to be done in the practice community. Thus the development and implementation of quality assurance systems in universities is a product of broader networks that transcend individuals but involve dialogic processes, systems of social interactions, connections and social cooperation to arrive at a consensus of what constitutes quality in–service teacher education programmes.

The theory, therefore, encourages the stakeholders to jointly construct the quality assurance purpose, standards and processes for the in–service programmes as well as monitor implementation and their evaluation. Shared construction of knowledge about quality assurance through exposure to other perspectives appears to be essential for the development and implementation of quality in–service programmes.<sup>37</sup> The theory affords the quality assurance stakeholders opportunities to build a mutually agreed and sustainable quality assurance infrastructure which ensures the quality of in–service students’ experiences. According to Shi, a top–down in–service model of training may not

---

<sup>30</sup> Van Nuland, *ICET 2014: 58th Yearbook of Teacher Education: Moving Forward in Curriculum, Pedagogy and Leadership*.

<sup>31</sup> Basera, Mwenje, and Ruturi, “A Snap on Quality Management in Zimbabwe: A Perspectives Review.”

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Newman and Ashkan Latifi, “Vygotsky, Education, and Teacher Education,” *Journal of Education for Teaching* 47, no. 1 (2021): 4–17.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Schiro, *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns* (Sage, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> K Bargate and S M Maistry, “Writing-to-Learn in a Higher Education Writing Intensive Tutorial Programme: Student Collaboration and Confidence Building,” *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29, no. 4 (2015): 35–49.

<sup>35</sup> Schiro, *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns*.

<sup>36</sup> Hui Shi, “The Theoretical Interpretation of EFL Teacher’s Professional Development from the Perspective of Sociocultural Theory,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 7, no. 11 (2017): 1059–64.

<sup>37</sup> Bargate and Maistry, “Writing-to-Learn in a Higher Education Writing Intensive Tutorial Programme: Student Collaboration and Confidence Building.”

meet the scheme of teachers' needs.<sup>38</sup> Using this theory, lecturers can also implement a participatory in-service training model informed by quality assurance practices to develop an improved and impact in-service programmes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a qualitative case study informed by the tenets of sociocultural theory. Consistent with the values of the theory, the research design allows the groups in quality assurance structures to construct meaning of what they wanted to achieve in the in-service teacher education programmes. The research dealt with a specific context which may not represent the generalised experiences of all the universities in Zimbabwe. The case study is subjective, in-depth, open-ended, exploratory and interpretive in nature; it is conducted on entities in their natural settings.<sup>39</sup> It is these qualities of the case study that the researchers exploited in this study.

### **Sampling and Sample**

Purposeful sampling was employed to select rich cases for an in-depth study. The selected research participants were significant internal assurance players at the university. They included one from the quality assurance directorate, four departmental quality assurance lecturers and twelve completing in-service student teachers. The choice of completing in-service students were motivated by the fact that they were mature practising teachers who had an appreciation of the concepts; of quality, quality education and quality assurance as expected at the school level. Their knowledge would add value to the quality assurance discussion.

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

The study used semi-structured interviews to uncover knowledge through interactions and conversations from the life experiences of the university quality assurance directorate and departmental quality assurance lecturers and in-service student teachers to arrive at multilayered conclusions.<sup>40</sup> In addition, semi-structured interview was used in the study because it allowed the researchers to acquire in-depth information and evidence in a flexible and adaptable manner but with the direction being fully controlled by the researchers. In the same vein, DeJonckheere and Vaughn point out that semi-structured interviews consist of a dialogue between the researcher and the participant, guided by a flexible interview schedule and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments.<sup>41</sup> The semi-structured interview, consistent with the sociocultural theoretical framework used in this study, operated from the premise that knowledge is situated, therefore contextual and the task of the researchers was to ensure that the relevant contexts and main points of interest were brought into focus.<sup>42</sup> Thus the researchers managed to understand the quality assurance and in-service teacher education worlds from the point of view of participants where responses were openly designed and meaning was negotiated through the guidance of the researchers.

#### **Open-ended Questionnaire**

The study used open-ended questionnaires to solicit information from participants about the implementation of quality assurance in the in-service teacher development programme. The open-

---

<sup>38</sup> Shi, "The Theoretical Interpretation of EFL Teacher's Professional Development from the Perspective of Sociocultural Theory."

<sup>39</sup> Simon Bheki Khoza, "Student Teachers' Reflections on Their Practices of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29, no. 4 (2015): 179-97.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Kakilla, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Semi-Structured Interviews in Qualitative Research: A Critical Essay," 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Melissa DeJonckheere and Lisa M Vaughn, "Semistructured Interviewing in Primary Care Research: A Balance of Relationship and Rigour," *Family Medicine and Community Health* 7, no. 2 (2019).

<sup>42</sup> Jimmy O'Keeffe et al., "The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews for the Characterisation of Farmer Irrigation Practices," *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences* 20, no. 5 (2016): 1911-24.

ended questionnaires allowed the participants to answer questions using their own words generated in written form.<sup>43</sup> The choice of the open-ended questionnaire was basically to reveal the thought processes of the quality assurance directorate and departmental quality assurance lecturers with the freedom to decide the wording, the length, and the kind of matters to be raised in the responses and also provide the reasons for their responses.<sup>44</sup> The instrument allowed the participants to provide information without limitations. The data were not bound by premeditated and tailor-made choices as what obtains with a closed type of questionnaire. In his view, Rapley has this to say about open-ended questionnaires:

*...minimised the extent to which participants had to express themselves in terms defined by the researchers and raise issues that were important to them. It is suited to discover participants' own meanings and interpretations.*<sup>45</sup>

As indicated by O’Cathain and Thomas, the idea of using open-ended questionnaires in the study was to understand the participants’ experiences with the implementation of quality assurance through their word-based handwritten stories.<sup>46</sup> These stories presented a holistic nature of the quality assurance in the in-service programmes as experienced, understood and expressed by the sampled participants. Together with the semi-structured interviews, qualitative data were generated achieving triangulation thereby increasing the data quality.

### Data Collection Strategies

Data were collected from significant players in quality assurance at the university. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews in respect of the quality assurance directorate and lecturers and open-ended questionnaires with in-service students. In Maxwell’s assertion, using multiple methods is beneficial for various reasons namely; one method serves as a check on the other and seeing how the methods’ different strengths and limitations all support a single conclusion.<sup>47</sup> Collecting data using these two methods reduced the risk of conclusions reached reflecting only biases of one method. It was a more secure way of understanding the implementation of quality assurance in the in-service programmes.

In terms of ethical considerations, the sampled participants were protected by means of separating data from identifiable individuals. In the study, the researchers did not use the real names of the participants to ensure that the collected data were not traced back to them. For example, L for lecturers, QAD for quality assurance directorate and IS for in-service students.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative research generates knowledge grounded in human experiences.<sup>48</sup> Thus qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data from those experiences.<sup>49</sup> The collected qualitative data were analysed using the thematic analysis strategy. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns.<sup>50</sup> The authors considered using the thematic analysis approach because of its flexibility to be used with a wide range of research questions, designs and sample sizes. Kiger and

<sup>43</sup> David E Gray, “Doing Research in the Real World,” *Doing Research in the Real World*, 2021, 1–100.

<sup>44</sup> Martyn Denscombe, “The Good Research Guide for Small Social Research Projects” (Glasgow, McGraw-Hill House, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Timothy John Rapley, “The Art (Fulness) of Open-Ended Interviewing: Some Considerations on Analysing Interviews,” *Qualitative Research* 1, no. 3 (2001): 303–23.

<sup>46</sup> Alicia O’Cathain and Kate J Thomas, “‘Any Other Comments?’ Open Questions on Questionnaires—a Bane or a Bonus to Research?,” *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 4, no. 1 (2004): 1–7.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph A Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (Sage publications, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> Lorelli S Nowell et al., “Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 1609406917733847.

<sup>49</sup> John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

<sup>50</sup> Michelle E. Kiger and Lara Varpio, “Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data: AMEE Guide No. 131,” *Medical Teacher* 42, no. 8 (August 2, 2020): 846–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>.

Varpio note that thematic analysis is an appropriate and powerful method to use when seeking to understand a set of experiences, thoughts or behaviours across a data set.<sup>51</sup> Consistent with the sociocultural theory, thematic analysis is designed for collective common or shared meanings and is less suited for examining unique meanings or experiences from single person or data item.<sup>52</sup> Thus thematic analysis helped the researchers to group related concepts, broad salient themes and recurring ideas that linked the participants and the settings.<sup>53</sup> Using this approach, the participants' lived experiences and stories regarding the implementation of quality assurance in the in-service teacher education programmes were categorised in ways that could be summarised.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There was a general consensus among the participants that an efficient and effective quality assurance implementation structure contributes to improved in-service programmes delivery as the outcomes and outputs of the programmes and practices are enhanced. Generally, the participants held the view that quality assurance remains an important cog in the growth and development of in-service teacher professional development system in Zimbabwe, yet it shows a decline at the institution. From the collected data and using the thematic analysis approach the following themes emerged: Quality assurance structures and efficiency, in-service students' involvement, staffing, lecturer autonomy and quality assurance and resources.

### Theme 1: Quality Assurance Structures and Efficiency

This section examines the quality assurance structures and their efficiency at the university from the participants' viewpoints and the impact on the in-service teacher education programmes. From the results, the study participants noted the presence of some quality assurance structures at the institution. The structures included the quality assurance directorate and departmental quality assurance lecturers.

*The university has done well to put in place quality assurance structures as required by Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE). The structure is led by a directorate and this is cascaded to departments where we have departmental quality assurance representatives. The idea is to ensure that quality assurance issues are discussed and implemented at all levels of teaching and learning (QAD).*

*We are aware of the presence of the quality assurance director and we are supposed to represent the department when quality assurance meetings are held. There has been no programme evaluation and even modules have not been given any serious consideration. In short, there has been no activity in this area and it appears to be active only on paper (L2, L4).*

*It has been a top-down model of quality assurance in which we the lecturers who represent departments and teach on the in-service programme have had very little or no say about quality assurance issues (L1, L3).*

*I have not heard about the quality assurance directorate activities in organising any workshops, preparing materials on quality assurance and even evaluating the in-service programmes or any other programme at the institution. I don't remember any time sitting with the quality assurance directorate to discuss quality indicators and how to implement them in the in-service programmes (L2, L4).*

---

<sup>51</sup> Kiger and Varpio, "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data: AMEE Guide No. 131."

<sup>52</sup> Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria."

<sup>53</sup> A S De Vos et al., *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions* (Van Schaik Publishers, 2011), <https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=M5GEnQAACAAJ>.

The data collected showed that the University had quality assurance structures in place. The quality assurance structures should be able to monitor the implementation of high-quality academic in-service programmes, module outlines, and lessons using appropriate pedagogical techniques and timely information-rich feedback and a conducive teaching and learning environments. The implementation of these quality assurance issues requires a multi-stakeholder process to achieve desired success and impact with the quality directorate playing a leading role. However, the data provided some in-depth evidence that at the University, having structures was one thing and implementation another. Quality assurance in in-service programmes had not found a fertile implementation ground at the institution.

Despite having these structures in place they have not been effectively used as a tool and a strategic approach to achieve sustainable in-service teacher education improvement. From the findings, the institution did not have a vibrant and well-developed quality assurance infrastructure where knowledge is socially constructed. Literature (Hyasat, 2022; Baum, 2015) suggests that the successful implementation of quality assurance in education depends on how it is defined, planned, managed and monitored in a coordinated manner. The failure to work as a coordinated group contradicts the tenets of sociocultural theory where knowledge is socially and culturally constructed respecting all the views of stakeholders in the structure. The study also revealed that the institution had no tradition of module and programme evaluation. This requires professional leadership which the directorate did not adequately provide. This finding confirms Ahmed's concern that the lack of leadership in internal quality assurance practices negatively affects programme transformation and compliance.<sup>54</sup> The participants' reflections and responses suggest that the idea to accomplish the objectives of the in-service programme using quality assurance as an instrument to review and improve the in-service teacher education brand image and performance was never effectively and fully realised. The results provided evidence that for successful quality assurance in the in-service programmes there was the need to have a collectively enhanced understanding of what needs to be done, and how to monitor and evaluate them with everyone taking ownership and responsibility. The study findings point to cosmetic participation by in-service teachers in the quality assurance processes. Literature confirms that if teachers are to be effective teachers after in-service training, then they should fully participate in all aspects of quality assurance processes.<sup>55</sup> This is consistent with the sociocultural theory used in this study in which the construction of knowledge takes place in a social context and the ideas of all stakeholders are respected and considered important.

What the quality assurance directorate has not done is, together with the lecturers and in-service students, to produce a quality assurance checklist against which the implementation evaluation of the programmes can be done. The observation by Assan that to be committed to a quality product is to be committed to all the processes, which ensure that the product is of high standard all the times, becomes relevant.<sup>56</sup> The quality assurance systems at the institution need to identify its strengths and weaknesses in order to work for the relevance and improvement of the in-service programmes given the centrality of the programmes to the Zimbabwean education system.

## **Theme 2: In-service Students' Involvement**

There was a surprisingly notable absence of in-service students in quality assurance structures. Asked about the role and place of students in quality assurance issues, both the directorate and the lecturers confirmed the lack of involvement of students when quality assurance matters were discussed:

*I do not see how and where in-service students fit in the scheme of things in the quality assurance structure even if they are regarded as mature (QAD).*

*In-service students are not involved they are just beneficiaries of the process (L1, L2, L3, L4).*

<sup>54</sup> Ferdousi, Ahmed, and Momen, "Evolution of Quality Assurance Practices in Enhancing the Quality of Open and Distance Education in a Developing Nation: A Case Study."

<sup>55</sup> Ann Gravells, "The Award in Education and Training," *The Award in Education and Training*, 2014, 1-248; Claire McGuinness, *Becoming Confident Teachers: A Guide for Academic Librarians* (Elsevier, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Assan, "Perceptions of Lecturers on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Process."

The in-service students noted with concern that they have remained peripheral when critical decisions about quality assurance in the programmes have been made yet they remain the most important players in the programmes. The general consensus among the students was that there were no formal platforms for their ideas regarding quality assurance issues pointing to a very unfortunate situation at the institution.

*We do not know what you are talking about..... does this exist? Since we enrolled in this programme we never heard anything to do with quality assurance.... If it's there, then it happens without our input and knowledge (IS).*

The fact that they are practising teachers is insurance enough to value their contribution to the quality assurance discussion. The data from these student-stakeholders showed that meaningful quality assurance in the in-service programmes is dependent on creating an enabling discussion environment in which a wealth of knowledge and experiences obtained from these players can better direct the implementation of quality assurance at the institution. The quality assurance vision and construction of knowledge should be a shared and collaborated process as envisioned by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Involving in-service students, according to McGuinness would be a manifestation of the sociocultural intention to understand the interesting and emerging patterns of meaningful participation and collaboration by all important stakeholders in the quality assurance discourse.<sup>57</sup> In-service students' ideas and experiences should be taken seriously in order to develop quality knowledge and skills that work. The data suggest a top-down model. Shi disagrees with this approach with the notion that such a model may not meet the scheme of in-service teachers' needs.<sup>58</sup>

### **Theme 3: Staffing**

The in-service should be manned by qualified and experienced academic staff to ensure responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes. However, brain drain as a result of economic challenges in Zimbabwe in which the institution has lost senior qualified and experienced staff, has negatively affected the implementation of quality assurance. This has dealt a big blow to quality assurance issues in the in-service teacher education programmes.

*Generally, Zimbabwean universities are experiencing a serious brain drain as a result of economic challenges. It's not this institution alone. I admit, this has affected the quality of our programmes (QAD).*

*The remuneration level is an insult to academia. The US dollar which has a better buying power is the same regardless of grade. The situation has frustrated most of the experienced and senior academic staff and they have since left for greener pastures. Replacing them would be a tall order. Such important programmes such as in-service teacher education suffer as they require staff with knowledge and skills to help nurture students who can positively impact the provision of education (L1, L2, L3, L4).*

In-service student participants in the questionnaires weighed in:

*Almost every semester we could see new lecturers teaching us either as part-time or full-time. We never bothered to ask (IS).*

The success of quality assurance at the institution requires formidable academic staff retention strategies through promotions and attractive remuneration levels. Motivated lecturers serve as critical assets and leaders in the quality assurance debate and are capable of enhancing service quality at the institution and the in-service programmes. The result confirms findings by Nyongesa, Mbugua and Boit who point out that a worker who is not well treated and who gets insignificant investment will not

---

<sup>57</sup> McGuinness, *Becoming Confident Teachers: A Guide for Academic Librarians*.

<sup>58</sup> Shi, "The Theoretical Interpretation of EFL Teacher's Professional Development from the Perspective of Sociocultural Theory."

deliver quality results.<sup>59</sup> Having different lecturers, who are professors, doctors and highly experienced academic staff connecting together on the in-service programmes has an important bearing on the quality of the in-service teacher products. Hiring new and inexperienced lecturers every other semester may not be healthy for the in-service teacher development programmes. The evidence presented dovetails with Akinyemi and Abiddin's findings that management of the quality assurance processes depends on the quality of the human resource at the institution's disposal.<sup>60</sup> Without the services of knowledgeable human capital, the in-service programmes are impoverished.

#### **Theme 4: Lecturer Autonomy and Quality Assurance**

The study noted that, the university, just like other universities is an autonomous academic institution that develops its own quality assurance structures which give each university a distinct profile suited to its specific needs. The quality assurance discussion should start from the development of regulations and module outlines which are the in-service implementation documents. In their submission, the lecturers admitted that the process of module outlines was in their hands with little guidance from the quality assurance directorate.

*We have tried to come up with a module outline template to be followed by all lecturers. In terms of content we believe that lecturers are at the cutting edge of the areas of specialisation and can help each other come up with sound outlines that meet the standards (QAD).*

*The bottom line is that as individual lecturers we have the freedom to develop the outlines for the in-service modules we teach with very little guidance from the quality assurance directorate. We use our own knowledge and expertise. There are no checks and balances as to the quality of the outlines produced (L2, L4).*

*Autonomy should go with responsibility and supervision. What I have noted among lecturers is that module outlines have been monotonously routine, same module outline semester in and out, lecturer-centred, same notes, same approaches and examination-driven practices and this has adversely affected the quality of the in-service programmes and products (L1, L3).*

In-service students' ideas were summarised as:

*At the beginning of each semester, we just get module outlines from our respective lecturers. We are never part of the process of the construction of the module outlines (IS).*

The spirit of academic freedom where lecturers are entrusted with the responsibility to independently create a student road-map showing content, modes of transaction, assessment procedures and assignments to be written by the in-service students is consistent with Khan and Law's findings.<sup>61</sup> These documents reflect the lecturer's knowledge and beliefs about what is worthy of knowing, that is, what knowledge is most worthwhile, and what to include and exclude. Any changes to the module outline specifically take place at the individual lecturer level. What should be noted is the need for lecturers to strategically invest more in the in-service student voices and develop meaningful professional connections regarding quality assurance issues in the in-service programmes. If issues of quality assurance are seriously considered in the in-service programmes, then multiple perspectives are needed. In the process, active and interactive methods would be employed rather than narrowly focusing on examinations to assess in-service programmes. Without effective quality assurance structures, university curricula still mean lecturers define and measure objectives in terms of in-service students' test achievements. This result confirms Doherty's findings that the pedagogy

---

<sup>59</sup> Godfrey Nyongesa, Doris Mbugua, and Rose Boit, "Human Capital as A Determinant of Service Quality in Accredited Universities in Kenya," *European Journal of Business and Management Research* 7, no. 5 (2022): 155–59.

<sup>60</sup> Gbenga M Akinyemi and Norhasni Zainal Abiddin, "Quality Administration and Management in Higher Education in Nigeria: Implications for Human Resource Development," *International Education Studies* 6 (2013): 225–35.

<sup>61</sup> Mohammad Ayub Khan and Laurie Smith Law, "An Integrative Approach to Curriculum Development in Higher Education in the USA: A Theoretical Framework," *International Education Studies* 8, no. 3 (2015): 66–76.

at most universities has remained static commodities with simplistic input-output models of teacher education programmes.<sup>62</sup> Deduced from the findings, the reason may be that lecturers who regard themselves as knowledgeable professionals are specialists, who speak as other stakeholders, such as in-service students, listen.

The data demonstrated that lecturers had huge responsibilities in coming up with the module outlines and sadly so have not been guided and they have not collaboratively worked with the in-service students. Thus most in-service programmes decisions were made without a sound basis especially connecting them to quality assurance issues. Without the input of all quality assurance players, the quality of the in-service programmes may be compromised.

The success of quality assurance in the in-service programmes is a function of the human capital with knowledge and skills that make a difference. Collectively, this result indicates that the indices or inputs for quality education are the lecturers who must be qualitatively adequate, adequately educated and professionally prepared to produce a quality teacher product.

### **Theme 5: Resources**

The study results showed that quality assurance at the institution was implemented in a resource-constrained setting. Lecturers, mostly, raised the lack of institutional support and unsupportive working environments in which basic resources to perform important teaching-learning tasks were never availed.

*I admit that just like most developing countries, quality assurance mechanisms and the whole education systems face many challenges regarding the provision of resources given the poor performance and the ever-rising costs of goods and services. Every effort is being made to ensure the adequacy of resources to enable the unit to monitor and evaluate all programmes in the University (QAD).*

*We have operated with the barest minimum of resources. Imagine an office without a computer, poor network connectivity and the library away in town. In addition, time is one of the constraining factors in this quality assurance narrative (L1, L 4).*

*In-service students basically learn during holidays and their block session is usually two weeks. It is during that time that they are supposed to write assignments and presentations. It's not just practical to talk about quality given the time frame (L2, L 3).*

In-service students complained of a lack of learning materials and continued load shedding resulting in poor internet connectivity and time constraints. A summary of what the in-service students wrote:

*While we pay a lot of money for tuition but the University has not provided us with sufficient resources. The library is far away in town, the internet is not reliable and when you do not have lectures there is nowhere to find space to do your work. This has seriously compromised the quality of work we produce. We also note the short time that we are at the University for lectures. It is not enough to do some quality presentations and assignments (IS).*

For the in-service programmes to operate at an optimum level of performance and to meet the growing and ever-changing macro and micro-educational needs, critical resources have to be provided. Resources are an important quality assurance dimension. The results point to inadequate resources to properly implement quality assurance processes. The data from the study showed that the question of programme trust, efficiency and relevance which are the important pillars of quality assurance were compromised as a result of inadequate human, material and time resources. These point to the need for a budget for the quality assurance directorate to effectively monitor both quality assurance and quality control to drive the needed in-service programmes changes through timely correction. The issue of

---

<sup>62</sup> Geoff Doherty, *Developing Quality Systems in Education* (Routledge, 2003).

resources is central in literature in the whole quality assurance discussion with Ferdousi et al. noting that the quality of resource inputs, it is generally assumed, determines the quality of the outputs.<sup>63</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers suggest four ways which the institution can use to address the quality assurance challenges as follows:

- There is a need for the institution to reconstitute the quality assurance body by bringing all stakeholders, including in-service students, to a round table dialogue to discuss how the quality assurance standards and practices can be designed, implemented and evaluated.
- The lecturers are critical internal quality assurance elements and core implementers of quality assurance activities at the institution, they need to be capacitated and actively involved in the quality assurance processes with the support from management and quality assurance directorate.
- The effective implementation of quality assurance in the in-service programmes requires both financial and human resources. The study recommends that the institution invests heavily on the quality assurance directorate to enhance its activities given how central quality assurance is to the success of the in-service programmes.
- There is a need to motivate the whole quality assurance value chain to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the in-service teacher development programmes.

## CONCLUSION

The article has made a case for the implementation of quality assurance systems in the in-service teacher education programmes at one university in Zimbabwe. It has raised critical issues about the need for the institution to reactivate and nurture a quality assurance culture in the important in-service programmes for their health and the betterment of the Zimbabwean education systems. The study adds to the research concerning the implementation of quality assurance at institutional levels. It also signals a gap between quality assurance knowledge in the in-service programmes and familiarity quality assurance implementers have with the implementation strategies. The study suggests a bottom-up model for the development of a quality assurance template at the institution and its implementation. This is where all parties, including in-service students, identify the quality assurance dimensions and needs so that they co-create the implementation strategies. The study also realised that the social and political power associated with the implementation of quality assurance was held by very few individuals who relegated most of the important players to the fringes of effectiveness. These limited opportunities to be part of the quality assurance debate presented inhibiting factors and constraints in its implementation in the in-service programmes negatively affecting their quality at the University.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research was made possible through a grant by National Research Fund Grant Number: 129837.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, K. and Soonarane, M. Guide on early childhood education quality assurance systems for Africa. *Research Technical Assistance Centre*, 2021. [Adeanet.org/sites/default/files/retac](http://Adeanet.org/sites/default/files/retac). (Accessed 24/01/2023).
- Akinyemi, Gbenga M, and Norhasni Zainal Abiddin. "Quality Administration and Management in Higher Education in Nigeria: Implications for Human Resource Development." *International Education Studies* 6 (2013): 225–35.
- Altun, Taner. "INSET (In-Service Education and Training) and Professional Development of Teachers: A Comparison of British and Turkish Cases." *Online Submission*, 2011.

---

<sup>63</sup> Ferdousi, Ahmed, and Momen, "Evolution of Quality Assurance Practices in Enhancing the Quality of Open and Distance Education in a Developing Nation: A Case Study."

- Alwan, Fatma Hamad. "Towards Effective In-Service Teacher Development in the United Arab Emirates: Getting Teachers to Be in Charge of Their Own Professional Growth." *Online Submission*, 2000.
- Assan, Thomas Buabeng. "Perceptions of Lecturers on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Process." *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2014): 339–47.
- Ayeni, Adeolu Joshua. "Teachers' Professional Development and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Secondary Schools." *World Journal of Education* 1, no. 1 (2011): 143–49.
- Bargate, K, and S M Maistry. "Writing-to-Learn in a Higher Education Writing Intensive Tutorial Programme: Student Collaboration and Confidence Building." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29, no. 4 (2015): 35–49.
- Basera, Vitalis, Judy Mwenje, and Samson Ruturi. "A Snap on Quality Management in Zimbabwe: A Perspectives Review." *Annals of Management and Organization Research* 1, no. 2 (2019): 77–94.
- Baum, Tom. "Human Resources in Tourism: Still Waiting for Change?—A 2015 Reprise." *Tourism Management* 50 (2015): 204–12.
- Creswell, J.W. *The Mixed Methods Reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2013.
- Creswell, John W, and J David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage publications, 2017.
- DeJonckheere, Melissa, and Lisa M Vaughn. "Semistructured Interviewing in Primary Care Research: A Balance of Relationship and Rigour." *Family Medicine and Community Health* 7, no. 2 (2019).
- Denby, Steve. "The Importance of Training Needs Analysis." *Industrial and Commercial Training* 42, no. 3 (2010): 147–50.
- Denscombe, Martyn. "The Good Research Guide for Small Social Research Projects." Glasgow, McGraw-Hill House, 2010.
- Doherty, Geoff. *Developing Quality Systems in Education*. Routledge, 2003.
- Evans, P, V Pucik, and J L Barsoux. "The Global Challenge: Framework for International Human Resource Management McGraw-Hill." *Irwin, New York, NY*, 2002.
- Ferdousi, Farhana, Amir Ahmed, and Md Abdul Momen. "Evolution of Quality Assurance Practices in Enhancing the Quality of Open and Distance Education in a Developing Nation: A Case Study." *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal* 17, no. 2 (2022): 147–60.
- Fok, Shui-Che, Kam-Wing Chan, Kuen-Fung Sin, Anita Heung-Sang Ng, and Alexander Seeshing Yeung. "In-Service Teacher Training Needs in Hong Kong." *Online Submission*, 2005.
- Gravells, Ann. "The Award in Education and Training." *The Award in Education and Training*, 2014, 1–248.
- Gray, David E. "Doing Research in the Real World." *Doing Research in the Real World*, 2021, 1–100.
- Hyasat, Ali S. "Examining Tourism and Hospitality Curriculum Based on the Business Employers' Needs." *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 11, no. 1 (2022): 60–70.
- Kakilla, Charles. "Strengths and Weaknesses of Semi-Structured Interviews in Qualitative Research: A Critical Essay," 2021.
- Karakhanyan, Susanna, and Bjørn Stensaker. "Global Trends in Higher Education Quality Assurance: Challenges and Opportunities in Internal and External Quality Assurance," 2020.
- Khan, Mohammad Ayub, and Laurie Smith Law. "An Integrative Approach to Curriculum Development in Higher Education in the USA: A Theoretical Framework." *International Education Studies* 8, no. 3 (2015): 66–76.
- Khoza, Simon Bheki. "Student Teachers' Reflections on Their Practices of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29, no. 4 (2015): 179–97.

- Kiger, Michelle E., and Lara Varpio. "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data: AMEE Guide No. 131." *Medical Teacher* 42, no. 8 (August 2, 2020): 846–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>.
- Kis, Viktoria. "Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects." *Tertiary Review: A Contribution to the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education* 14, no. 9 (2005): 1–47.
- Malunda, Paul Netalisile, Proscovia Namubiru Ssentamu, and Juliet Atwebembeire. "Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Andragogy in Higher Education Institutions: Implications for PhD Training in Uganda." *African Journal of Governance and Development* 10, no. 1 (2021): 215–31.
- Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Sage publications, 2012.
- McGuinness, Claire. *Becoming Confident Teachers: A Guide for Academic Librarians*. Elsevier, 2011.
- Newman, Stephen, and Ashkan Latifi. "Vygotsky, Education, and Teacher Education." *Journal of Education for Teaching* 47, no. 1 (2021): 4–17.
- Nguyen, Loc Thi My, Trung Tran, Thuan Van Pham, Tien-Trung Nguyen, Hien Thi Thu Le, Thao Thi Phuong Trinh, and Thanh Thi Nghiem. "Factors Affecting Successful Quality Assurance Implementation in Vietnamese Higher Education: A Qualitative Study." *The Qualitative Report* 26, no. 2 (2021): 625–36.
- Niedermeier, Frank. "Designing Effective Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions-Training on Internal Quality Assurance Series| Module 1." *Training on Internal Quality Assurance Series (TrainIQA)* 1 (2017).
- Nowell, Lorelli S, Jill M Norris, Deborah E White, and Nancy J Moules. "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 1609406917733847.
- Nuland, S. Van. *ICET 2014: 58th Yearbook of Teacher Education: Moving Forward in Curriculum, Pedagogy and Leadership*. Ontario: University of Ontario Institute of Technology, 2014.
- Nyongesa, Godfrey, Doris Mbugua, and Rose Boit. "Human Capital as A Determinant of Service Quality in Accredited Universities in Kenya." *European Journal of Business and Management Research* 7, no. 5 (2022): 155–59.
- O’Cathain, Alicia, and Kate J Thomas. "‘Any Other Comments?’ Open Questions on Questionnaires—a Bane or a Bonus to Research?" *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 4, no. 1 (2004): 1–7.
- O’Keeffe, Jimmy, Wouter Buytaert, Ana Mijic, Nicholas Brozović, and Rajiv Sinha. "The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews for the Characterisation of Farmer Irrigation Practices." *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences* 20, no. 5 (2016): 1911–24.
- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*. Random House, 1999.
- Pisoni, Delia. "Between Idealism and Pragmatism: Social Policies and Matthew Effect in Vocational Education and Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Switzerland." *Social Inclusion* 6, no. 3 (2018): 289–300.
- Pollard A. & Bourne J. (eds). *Teaching and learning in the primary school*. London: SAGE Publications, 2002.
- Rapley, Timothy John. "The Art (Fulness) of Open-Ended Interviewing: Some Considerations on Analysing Interviews." *Qualitative Research* 1, no. 3 (2001): 303–23.
- Schiro, Michael. *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns*. Sage, 2012.
- Shi, Hui. "The Theoretical Interpretation of EFL Teacher’s Professional Development from the Perspective of Sociocultural Theory." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 7, no. 11 (2017): 1059–64.
- Shigwedha, A N, L Nakashole, H Auala, H Amakutuwa, and I Ailonga. "The SACMEQ LV Project in Namibia-A Study of the Conditions of Schooling and the Quality of Primary Education in Namibia." *Ministry of Education: Arts, and Culture: Windhoek, Namibia*, 2017.

Vos, A S De, H Strydom, C B Fouché, and C S L Delport. *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. Van Schaik Publishers, 2011.  
<https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=M5GEnQAACAAJ>.

### **ABOUT AUTHORS**

Dr. Albert Mufanechiya is a vastly experienced Educationist with experience at all levels of education in Zimbabwe having worked as a secondary school teacher, primary teacher training college lecturer and a senior lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University in the School of Education. His research interests include education curriculum issues and teacher education. Currently he is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Free State, South Africa.

Prof. Bekithemba Dube (Ph. D.) is Associate Professor in Curriculum Studies at the UFS. He is a wide reader and publisher in high impact journals, books and book chapters. He sits on various journals' editorial boards, and is an editor of *Alternation Journal*, *Journal of Cultures and Values*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, and *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*. He received outstanding and excellence service awards in Community Engagement Research, UFS' Vice Rector, 2019; most prolific Faculty of Education Researcher, 2019 and 2020 and recognition for Research Excellence Award, UFS, 2020. His research interests are in African studies, Decoloniality and Rural Education in Post-Colonial Africa.