



Perceptions on the Application of Guiding Standards by University Administrators to Promote Quality Assurance Practice in Selected Teacher Training Universities in Mozambique

Seviria Muvuti, Salome Odek & Paul Wahonya
Department of Educational Administration
University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya
Email: sevymvt@gmail.com

Abstract: *One of university administrators' key mandates is to close the gap between guiding standards and the practice of quality assurance. This study explored teacher trainees' perceptions of administrators' application of guiding standards during quality assurance practice in selected teacher training universities in Mozambique. Descriptive survey design, which has ability to collect precise opinions on targeted phenomena was used. The target population was students in fourth year in government teacher training universities in Mozambique. Permission for the study was obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology. Confidentiality was assured. All information would be used for research purposes. For validity, expert opinion was sought from the researcher's supervisors. Reliability was ensured at 0.93 using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Data was collected from 242 randomly sampled fourth year teacher trainees using questionnaires. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics were mainly used to analyze data. Findings showed that Administrators excelled in marketing developmental aspirations and in international cooperation. The study however showed the need to scale up on ensuring visibility of standard guidelines, peer assessment and marrying of theory and practice among others. These had heterogeneous standard deviations of 1.54; 2.19; 2.14 respectively. Key recommendations included: ensuring visibility of universities' standard declarations and the sourcing of more resources to ease the process of marrying theory with practice during teacher training. Also, that universities be well resourced in order to be more inclusive of disabled teacher trainees. Further, studies are required to explore practical acceptable ways of promoting peer assessment.*

Keywords: *Educational Administration, Guiding standards, Practice, control, Accountability, Inclusion*

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1. Introduction

Practice of guiding standards can be defined as a purpose-driven application of standards and guidelines related to university administrators' control, accountability,

improvement and inclusion functions (Christie, 2018; Gordon, 2013; Nadir & Auzarmi, 2021). University administrators are critical stakeholders in the implementation of effective and efficient quality assurance in teacher training institutions. They are expected to close the gap between guiding standards and the practice of

quality assurance. They have pivotal influence on ensuring a positive impact of the practice of quality assurance standard and guidelines in all the university departments (Jacob & Lawan, 2020). Studies have shown that most of the teacher training university administrators' best efforts towards quality assurance are hampered by limited teaching-learning resources, high annual expenditures on teacher training programs and lecturer burn-out, among other challenges (Shabbir et al., 2020; Zavale et al. 2015).

Globally, standards and guidelines for quality assurance have been perceived to yield different effects. Toh et al. (2021) argue that application of standards in training has potential to resuscitate dying or badly organized activities of the teacher training program, while helping students, academic staff and employees to remain goal-oriented and able to find innovative ways to meet the university's objectives. This implies that teacher trainee stakeholders can benefit from the well-controlled quality assurance mechanisms, while being pushed to discover creative means to achieve program goals. However, a study by Shabbir et al. (2020) revealed that in Pakistan, annually, the teacher training program is hampered by hopeless results, limited library resources and poor program achievement. This testimony confirms the challenges member states of INQAAHE (International Network of Quality Assurance Agency on Higher Education) face, in spite of their commitment to quality.

In Mozambique, A SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and Threats) analysis by Zavale et al., (2015, p. 14), which utilized Mozambique's instrument to discover the main hurdles of implementing internal quality assurance in African Higher Education institutions discovered that "...while experience and national prestige were Universidade Eduardo Mondlane's main strengths, teacher qualifications and research were some its main weaknesses and the research-led vision, its main opportunity, and the competitive Mozambican higher Education landscape, its main threat." The same study also revealed an imbalance in the curriculum which only offered 60% vacancies to core subjects while 40 % of the courses on offer were optional or complementary, resulting in students being limited on choices of courses that they could pursue to build their careers, undermining its graduates' potential to qualify for certain employment on the contemporary job market. (Zavale et al. 2015). This is contrary to the standards spelt out in the government universities' mission which aims to train quality technicians with a potential to creatively contribute to development in Mozambique. This therefore raises a query on the extent of the application of guiding standards by educational administrators in teacher training universities in Mozambique. This spells the need to ascertain key beneficiaries' perceptions on the application of practice of

quality assurance guiding standards in teacher training institutions.

In response to global millennium goals, Mozambican government prioritized education by investing a substantial amount compared to other government ministries and other surrounding countries from 2008, to achieve quality assurance. However, the service delivery study by Bassi et al (2019), which targeted only teachers working in 337 public schools, showed that 44% of the school principals were absent from duty, text-book provision was at 69% and the demonstration of teachers' knowledge was at 29%. This indicates a gap between the guiding principles for quality assurance and practice on the ground. Having received the financial support targeted at quality delivery improvement in education, limited progress had been realized in teacher performance. Other challenges included teachers who lacked sufficient academic training and pedagogical support to be able to teach core subjects successfully (World Bank, 2015). Without quality assurance, it will be difficult for Mozambique to implement and realize its commitment to supporting its nation's commitment to the global 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which place hope in education's potential to banish socio-economic challenges by broadening existing prospects and choices of improvement and well-being. The current scenario in education has a potential to negatively influence the quality of students' learning outcomes. This also creates doubts whether the practice in teacher training institutions is tapping sufficiently and effectively from the laid educational quality assurance standards and guidelines. It is against this background that this study sought to explore the extent of practice and application of teacher training standard guidelines by university administrators in Mozambique's teacher training universities, as perceived by teacher trainees. This is aimed at making a positive influence on the quality of graduates from teacher education programs.

Without the administrator's support and supervision, the mission, vision and core values remain displayed on university walls but practically invisible in the day-to-day operations of the university. Yet teacher training institutions are expected by communities, government and other stakeholders to play a leading role in the economic and social development, peace building and poverty reduction through producing competent teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge (UNESCO, 2014; World Bank, 2015, Guzman, 2013). The administration also ensures maintenance of an ideal learning climate and increased accountability as rationales for quality.

Globally, educational and business planners have placed hope on internationally agreed standard guidelines as the only way out of the contemporary societal hurdles (UNESCO, 2014). A study conducted in Afghanistan, Asia

by Nadir & Auzarmi, 2021, that focused on the impact of teaching facilities and resource provision and other standards in bilingual teacher training practice recorded a positive effect where standards were applied. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Jacob et. al. (2021) in Nigeria. However, the researchers of these two studies argued that effective implementation of quality assurance guidelines is hampered by insufficient financial resources, lack of qualified teaching staff, sub-standard execution of quality assurance policies, limited infrastructure, brain-drain, labor action, fraud and inadequate regulation of the teaching/learning process. This discovery was confirmed by other researchers (Langa, 2014; Guzman, 2013 & World Bank, 2015) who agreed that standard guidelines play an important role in improving the quality of teachers churned out of teacher training centers. These studies agree that the main function of administrators is to support the quality assurance department with targeted plans to train lecturers in order to increase the number of competent staff as well as provide financial and material resources. They also provide guidance to the rest of the academic faculties (Guzman, 2013; Nadir & Auzarmi, 2021).

Limited studies have been conducted on educational practitioners on the perceptions of the impact of the practice of guiding standards by educational administrators in Mozambique's secondary teacher training institutions. Langa (2014), whose study was on quality assurance in higher education in general, did not cover the perceptions on the practice of standard guidelines by educational administrators. His study however observed the "challenge of training technicians capable not only of formulating, analyzing and implementing higher education policies, compatible with the capabilities, needs and development priorities of the country..." It is against this background that this study sought to explore the perceptions on the application of guiding standards by university administrators to promote quality assurance practice in selected teacher training universities in Mozambique. The current study assumes that limited or ineffective practice of guiding standards compromises the achievement of quality assurance goals.

The research question that guided the study was: What are teacher trainees' perceptions of the application of guiding standards by educational administrators in teacher training universities in Mozambique as measured by their control, accountability, improvement and inclusion functions?

2. Literature Review

Leaders in the 21st century spend a considerable amount of their time collecting, recording and analyzing data about the students' learning success in order to implement the

necessary changes. In many instances, the university administrator must serve as the instructional leader, manager, diplomat, teacher and curriculum leader, sometimes all in one working day (Konakli, 2016). This shows that the university administrators' roles to ensure practice of standards guidelines in various aspects are broad. In this section, the researcher discusses different authors' perceptions on how the administration structure should work to achieve quality in teacher education. This study was guided by the Gaps Model, which was proposed in the 1980s by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry. This model focuses on the improvement of service quality and underscores five dimensions namely: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, confidence, and consumer orientation (Siami & Gorji, 2012). According to Zeithaml et. al. (1990), service quality is defined as "the gap or difference between the expectations of the consumer and his perception of the service." In order to improve service quality, an organization must identify the reasons for each of the five gaps and develop strategies to reduce them (Siami & Gorji, 2012). The range of gaps presented in this model is as follows:

Gap 1 represents the gap between consumer expectations and those of the management. Usually, the management does not know or understand neither the consumers' expectations nor why consumers form them. For this reason, Zeithaml et. al. (1990) proposed gap reduction strategies such as market research and complaint analysis targeted at improving management's knowledge of the consumers' expectations. At this level, the model also proposes improving the interaction between contact staff and management as well as reducing the levels of the bureaucratic structure between administrators and consumers.

Gap 2 focuses on the discrepancy between the expectations of the beneficiaries on their leadership and the actual meaning of service quality standards. In this case, administrators may correctly identify the consumers' preferences but do not give details of the procedural standards to achieve these expectations. However, setting clear objectives and standardizing the delivery of services can help narrow this gap.

Gap 3 is the discrepancy between set service quality standards and the real level of performance. This can be caused by difficult or unclear standards, a lack of or insufficient collaboration. Overwork or lack of motivation to meet the requirements of set guidelines pose some of the challenges. Properly selecting and training staff has been recommended as an effective way of reducing this gap.

Gap 4 is the discrepancy that exists when too little information is supplied to those responsible for delivering the service. Zeithaml et al., (1990) recommend that

organizational leaders should declare only what the consumer will receive and promise only what they can deliver. This places emphasis on information sharing. Where limited information is shared to support teacher training processes, trust in the system and its outcomes is reduced.

Gap 5 represents the difference between the anticipated and the perceived service. Narrowing the first four disparities has proved to be a possible solution to this gap (Zeithaml et al., 1990). The model was preferred for its ability to help educational leaders to single out the source of service quality problems. However, the model does pinpoint specific service quality errors that hinder progress in particular service organizations. Hence, each organization or educational institution must make it their goal to define their own expected standards of services for consistent quality assurance.

The researcher divided administration functions into control, accountability, improvement, and inclusion functions as suggested by the European Commission and the United Nations Sustainable Development goals (European Commission, 2018).

Control Function

Controlling involves measuring and monitoring performance, comparing results with plans and taking corrective action when required. It indicates how far the goals have been achieved and to what extent there is deviation from the plans. In educational administration, control means that the administrator does not merely regulate the expenditure of resources but also supports and balances vertical and horizontal, internal and external accountability in order to adapt to the changing needs of learners (United Nations, 2020). The focus is not only on improvement but also to promote innovation among lecturers and learners and to support quality, equity and efficiency (United Nations, 2020). Controlling is easy when there are established guiding standards to measure the performance of the institution or department. Guiding principles make it possible for administrators to observe any deviations from the expected standards. They expose the causes of such deviations and assist in taking corrective measures (Konakli, 2016). Jacob et. al. (2021) argue that administrator-led control enables the institution to acquire necessary inputs, refine the process and raise the standards of output in order to meet set goals.

According to Tanner (2021), control takes place in a four-step processes namely: (1) Establishing performance standards based on organizational objectives (for example Lecturers draw and submit course outlines for the semester) (2) Measuring and reporting on lecturers'

performance (through analyzing course content, lesson observations by Heads of Departments and random assessment of students' projects). (3) Comparing findings with performance and national and international standards so as to take corrective or preventive measures as needed and (4) determining where corrective measures are needed. This shows that administration control functions in a university are not performed by the senate or the provost only, but by the deans and heads of departments as well. Every member of the institution has some control and reporting functions to conduct as part of their responsibilities (Tanner, 2021).

The process of deciding on the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. It should be handled as a collaborative activity. While goal setting in universities is a corporate activity undertaken by formal bodies or informal groups, the control function is assigned to the administration. This often includes basic or interpersonal responsibilities such as the coordination, interaction with employees and information-sharing. Such roles involve handling and analyzing information. Control involves decision-making and decision-making requires acquisition of necessary skills.

Konakli (2016) argues that University administrators must develop political skills to enhance their control function. According to Konakli (2016), political skills are defined as the ability to efficiently understand and impress employees in order to enhance their individual as well as corporate goals. Ozdemir (2021), who agrees with Konakli (2016), ascribes 4 dimensions to political skills namely social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and genuine sincerity. Social astuteness involves observing the subordinates' behaviors and interpreting them accurately. Interpersonal skills entail the administrator's ability to observe details that are not obvious to others and the ability to persuade others to reach set goals.

The administrator's scope of control can also be classified as conceptual, interpersonal, diagnostic, leadership and technical. The conceptual aspect helps the administrator to analyze complex situations (Konakli, 2016). The interpersonal dimension is essential in communicating, motivating, mentoring and delegating responsibilities to subordinates. The diagnostic scope entails the ability to envisage the most appropriate reaction to any administrative situation while leadership is the capacity to direct and guide the organizational team. According to Konakli (2016), administrators need technical expertise in administration to enhance their control function. Appropriate training and experience are essential to build and augment administrators' control function in an ever-changing environment. This includes updating the institution's operations in line with modern technology. It also involves constantly updating outdated operation

systems to ensure that they are in line with the demands of the global market.

Viewed in the lenses of O'Donnell, the management pioneer, control is a continual process. A publication of North West University (2022) argues that: "Just as a navigator continually takes reading to ensure whether he is relative to a planned action, so should a business manager continually take reading to assure himself that his enterprise is on right course." This underscores the need for constant reference to standard guidelines to ensure quality assurance in the institution.

Characteristics of the controlling function of the university administration can be viewed as a terminal, pervasive function (performed by managers at all levels and in all type of concerns), and as a forward looking, dynamic process. Konakli (2016) envisages planning and controlling as two inseparable functions of administration, with planning preceding controlling and controlling succeeding planning. Areas in which university administration plays the control function include: student admission, lecturer recruitment, sharing training guidelines, peer assessment, providing assessment feedback and ensuring visibility of standard guidelines.

Promoter of set Admission Guidelines: Most university administrations have well stipulated procedures or guiding principles that explain eligibility requirements for applicants. These provide information in such things as application procedures, cancellation of enrolment, start and end dates for application, official language proficiency and some subject specific admission requirements. Admission guidelines also state the language proficiency level required as well as the minimum standardized test score accepted. Only prospective students who meet these stipulated requirements will be eligible for enrolment. To qualify as a freshman in Mozambique's system for example, one must show evidence of attaining at least 14 out of 20 points or the equivalent in the United States system: a 'B' average or a 3.00 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.00 GPA grading scale (James Madison University, 2022).

Training guidelines: Mentoring has been known to be a fulfilling leadership role. A mentor works with lecturers who have recently entered the classroom. Teacher training mentors develop relationships with new teachers and help them work through those first difficult years of teaching. Mentors advise new teachers on challenges they may face in their classroom, provide tips and teaching strategies, and inform them about the politics involved in their particular district. This is a rewarding role, but it requires a significant commitment on the part of the mentor.

Leaders with strong analytical skills can become data coaches to other lecturers who are not as savvy. As a data coach, the administrator can help a lecturer understand the data from their classroom and make recommendations for steps to take once they have analyzed their statistics. According to Sweeney & Mausbach (2019), an instructional leader's core business includes advocating for and prioritizing quality teaching, providing material and technical support for teachers, promoting effectiveness, communication, goal-setting, evaluating, managing the curriculum to promote quality learning. They also meet institutional staff on a regular basis to discuss how to do their jobs better and help students learn more effectively. These authors agree that the role of instructional leadership requires the university administrator to 'wear many hats'.

Peer Assessment: A study by Topping (2021), ascribes administrators the role to ensure peer assessment practice, as a control function in higher education. He argues that, if well performed, peer assessment has been proved to enhance the "speed quantity ...and quality" of feedback. It can be argued that administrators avoid peer assessment as it may require engagement of inexperienced student teachers, which may de-motivate lecturers or threaten their sense of security. However, if standard guidelines are well followed, peer assessment has the potential to benefit both the institution and student- teachers in training.

Assessment feedback: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines feedback as the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source" Brown (2019), who agrees with this definition exemplifies assessment feedback with "...a score or other information (for example, notes in the margin, written prose reactions, oral critiques, teacher conferences) that can enlighten the students and teachers about the effectiveness of the ...learning and teaching involved." Henderson (2019), in his study of the challenges of assessment feedback in higher education argues that, in spite of continued student and educator dissatisfaction with contemporary feedback practices assessment feedback is one of the most essential mechanisms in higher education practice. Ion et. al. (2019), who agree with Henderson (2019)'s observation adds that assessment feedback becomes more beneficial to instruction when it accommodates a peer feedback component.

Ion et. al. (2019) suggest that assessment feed can be transmitted in form of face-to-face dialogue, a gesture or official in written form. Feedback provides the academic stakeholders with proof of acquired knowledge and skills. Based on the findings of their study, assessment feedback facilitates the expansion of cognitive, affective, meta cognitive, and professional competences among both

trainees and lecturers. When given to trainees, it exposes the trainees' progress and levels of achievement which enable the institutional administrators to map the way forward and to make decisions. Feedback pushes lecturers to think critically about their performance and to reflect on possible steps needed to improve their knowledge. Feedback has also been known to diminish possible organizational conflicts among stakeholders and increase satisfaction among subordinates (Ion et. al., 2019). The major discovery of Ion's study was that feedback puts learners in charge of their own learning and it empowers them to strive to improve. To achieve the greatest advantages from assessment feedback, it must be accompanied by workshops and mentoring to enhance lecturers' connections with their task, address grey areas and get clarity on improvements suggested by administration.

Visibility of Standard guidelines: It is the administration's role to ensure visibility of standard declarations such as the vision, mission and core values to make them easily accessible to all the university stakeholders. This ensures that information about the institution's reason for existence, its products, services, targeted customers, geographic markets, philosophies, values and plans for future growth are known to all. This enables employees, suppliers, customers and the community to understand the driving force behind the university's operations and its expectations from its different stakeholders.

Accountability Functions

An administrator is expected to be highly accountable. According to Christie (2018), accountability is essential in public institutions in order to maintain public trust. This author argues that adhering to conflict-of-interest policies which require that staff and board members disclose all financial interests in the university is usually helpful in enhancing accountability (Christie, 2018). Lack of accountability on the part of the administration may affect their retention within their role. Educational institutions are in want of administrators who can be trusted to implement set standards. According to Christie (2018), "Individuals of integrity create organizations, build culture, adhere to standards and achieve accountability. They are essential as leaders and managers to build high integrity and performing organizations..." Hence, accountability entails dependability in the management of the physical, human and material resources of the university, demonstrating expertise as well as providing timely feedback.

The education administrator endeavors to promote the institution's community relations through the participation of the institution in community activities and projects, as

well as community involvement in some aspects of university life. The Parents Teacher Association (P.T.A) and other stakeholders in the university should join hands with the administrator to formulate policies and reach major decisions as the situation demands. Once the community is in harmony with the school organization, some measure of success is guaranteed. The educational administrator must be constantly alert to the objectivity with which the community perceives the institution. The education consumer is the public and to a large extent determines what goes on in the educational organization. For quality assurance, the education administrator identifies what the education consumers want from the institution and provides them accordingly.

As part of enhancing accountability, administrators are expected to verify that their program is meeting the specified standard guidelines requisite to the actualization of its goals (Jacob & Lawan, 2020). Administration is also required to conduct periodic assessment of academic departments; service units, stakeholder interest, the further development of processes for evaluating research and publication activities for quality assurance (Jacob & Lawan, 2020).

Lecturer Supervision: Although the university administrators are the first among equals, they are accountable for effective lecturer performance. As leaders of the organization, they have to harness the potentials of their staff to the great advantage of the organization. The administrator should allow subordinates to participate in the organizational governance especially as it affects them in their expertise and welfare. Under a good organizational climate, discipline and harmony naturally emerges.

Curriculum implementation supervision: Since the ultimate goal of educational administration is optimal quality teaching and learning, curriculum implementation supervision constitutes an important area. The educational administrators should ensure that instruction is directed to the requirements of examination bodies. They are the academic change facilitators and agents. They should, therefore, facilitate transformation of the curriculum, in consultation with other stakeholders as and when necessary to serve the needs and reflect the aspirations of the society. Langa (2014) says the administrators must ensure the development of centers of excellence through research. He adds that curriculum must be driven by the job-market and that if teaching is driven by research, the standard of delivery will improve (Langa, 2014).

Work scheduling is an important function of the school administrator as an instructional manager and supervisor. They should ensure the allocation of staff to their correct disciplines. Equally, the administrator should promote lecturer supervision to ensure that teaching contents are in

line with the current and relevant syllabus and that such contents get to the right students.

Orientation: To newly engaged lecturers, the university administrator is an instructional specialist. They oversee the induction and orientation program of the teacher training departments. The teachers' training leader plays the role of helping other instructors be more effective in the classrooms. Taping from their training and experience, they have been instructors themselves hence they can work as instructional specialists in collaboration with other lecturers to discuss which strategies work best in their classrooms (Lemoine et. al., 2014). Strategies discussed may deal with a particular subject or focus on different types of students and their learning abilities.

International Cooperation: The contemporary era of globalization has forced educational institutions to cooperate with international institutions as they are striving to adopt a culture of change and innovation (Howard, 2015; Wanjala, 2016). International cooperation is essential in order for educational institutions to maintain a vibrant and competitive position as they respond to the demands of an ever-changing global community resulting from an increased international travel and contemporary ease of communication (Niemi, 2021, Gordon, 2013). The advantage of international cooperation lies in its ability to develop scientific capacity, as well as the global exposure teacher trainees will gain when exposed to diverse cultures.

Improvement Functions

Combination of Theory with Practice: It is an administrative responsibility to ensure that course content is not only relevant, but it is built on the foundation of educational theory and also based on best practice (UNESCO, 2014). The curriculum design must mirror current educational standards guidelines. To ensure this is possible, there is a need for administration to facilitate constant evaluation of materials used in teacher training.

Sustainable Development Focus: It is one of the administrative roles to guide the teacher training program, plans and practice towards a sustainable development focus. Yuan et. al. (2021), in their study of the level of awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among senior high school students, and their application and importance, affirmed that introduction of lessons on SDGs in the classroom impacts students' career planning, well ahead of their graduation from high school (Yuan et. al, 2021). Lessons on SDGs also have potential to increase learners' interest and desire to make an impact in their society by preparing them to respond to societal challenges such as gender equality, quality education, reduced inequalities, no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-

being (Yuan et. al, 2021). In China, the Ministry of Education has prepared a model of Education for Sustainable Development for schools which other educational institutions around the world can adopt or adapt.

Positive reinforcement: In education, positive reinforcement is a behavior management technique that focuses on rewarding positive behavior and accomplishments as opposed to focusing on reprimanding subordinates or learners for undesirable behavior (Nickerson, 2022). According to Skinner's positive reinforcement theory, positive reinforcement heightens enthusiasm in both the giver and the receiver (in this case, the administrator and the lecturer or trainee). Furthermore, it facilitates mutual celebration of achievements.

Collaboration with Stakeholder: One of the university administration's major roles is to ensure collaboration with stakeholders in decision-making processes. This implies application of participatory leadership skills in engaging interested parties to ensure goal achievement. Various researchers view participative leadership as a leadership practice which recognizes abilities, talents and contributions of different levels of the hierarchy (parents, teachers, students and others) in decision-making, for high goal achievement and better organizational performance (Hayat et. al, 2019). Studies that support participative leadership styles argue that as our societies move toward more democratic political systems, organizations should move toward employee involvement and participation (Ngotngamwong, 2012). Collaboration with stakeholders is one of the practices outlined in the guidelines for quality assurance (UNESCO, 2014).

The School Community Relations Functions: The community is the next-of-kin of school organization and requires a joint responsibility of the administrator and the community (Jacob & Lawan, 2020; Adepoji et. al, 2019). Although the school serves the community, it is the function or duty of this administrator to make the first move of positive relationship with the community. The educational enterprise is an open system. A social organization thrives on effective interrelationships within it and with its relevant publics.

The administrator's networking function can be defined as the ability to connect with a new environment, making new friends, and building partnerships focused on achieving individual and organizational goals (Konakli, 2016; Ozdemir, 2021). The genuine sincerity dimension involves cultivating interpersonal skills and such qualities such as perception, honesty, sincerity and dependability. The managers with this ability demonstrate effective listening skills.

Inclusion Functions

Inclusion in education refers to putting people first in spite of their differences. It aims at empowering the less privileged and making learning institutions accessible to all in spite of their backgrounds. It is targeting number five of the global sustainable development goals for quality assurance in education. Oxford Biographies have placed value on studies that promote inclusion since the 1980s. This is with the aim to enhance full participation, full membership, and valued citizenship for all including students with disabilities (Cologon, 2013). Universities are therefore upheld to embrace human diversity, the rights of all adults, and understand human diversity as a rich resource and an everyday part of all human environments and interaction (Cologon, 2013). This is because education is a basic need for the dignity and survival of all humanity regardless of their race, class, or socio-economic background (Rahmat et.al, 2020). For this reason, quality assurance standards guidelines stipulate the need to make quality educational services accessible to all citizens including people with disabilities. The number of children with disabilities who have shown their talents when they are given an opportunity to compete against able-bodied students is rising, expressing the need for university administrators to ensure the establishment of a department that serves the needs of its varied students (Rahmat et.al, 2020).

Facilitates enrolment of disabled trainees: It is an administration function to ensure inclusive learning opportunities for all including individuals living with disabilities or in vulnerable situations as stipulated in quality assurance goal four for sustainable development. This requires including in the budget the needs of students who are blind, wheelchair bound by budgeting for infrastructure facilities and learning materials that meet their different needs in order to help them to excel as well as others.

3. Methodology

Research Design: The study utilized the descriptive survey design which allowed systematic collection of descriptive data in order to clarify the phenomena under investigation without manipulating the variables under study (Siedlecki, 2020).

Population and Sampling: The target population were final year students in the government teacher training universities in Mozambique. The simple random sampling method was used to select the universities from four out of nine provinces of Mozambique. The sample of 242 questionnaire respondents were selected using the formula for simple random selection suggested by Thomas (2023) as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Information:

n_0 = sample size

z^2 = abscissa of the normal curve that intersects the area of the side, or 1 – confidence level

e = desired level of confidence

p = the estimated proportion of an attribute in a population

q = 1 – p

n = sample size

z^2 = 1 – confidence level

e = desired level of confidence

p = the estimated proportion of an attribute in a population

q = 1 – p

Reliability of the Main Study

Before the main study, a pilot study involving 10 percent

(24 randomly selected participants) was conducted in a province with similar characteristics as those of the main study. This was done in order to validate the instrument, to

determine the instrument's reliability, as well as to reveal any problems that might compromise the findings of the main study as suggested by Doody and Doody (2015). A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.87 was established. This led to the revision of some items which were unclear due to translation from English to Portuguese, before the lengthy and costly study is conducted. To further ascertain reliability of the research instrument, the questionnaire items were compared with those from related studies as well as examined for clarity and usability by the researcher's supervisors. About 81.2% of the sampled participants returned completed questionnaires, exceeding the acceptable return rate of 60% recommended by Stedman et al. (2019), by 21.2%.

Statistical Data Treatment: Following data collection, data

Table 1: Verbal Interpretation Scale of Teacher Trainees' Perceptions Impact of Practice Standard Guidelines by Administrators for Quality Assurance

Scale	Response	Verbal Interpretations	Mean Intervals
4	Strongly Agree	Excellent performance	3.51 – 4.00
3	Agree	Satisfactory performance	2.51 – 3.50
2	Disagree	Minimal evidence	1.51 – 2.50
1	Strongly Disagree	Unsatisfactory performance	1.00 – 1.5 0

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Informed consent was also sought before participants proceeded with the completion of questionnaires. Participants were also informed of their freedom to withdraw from the study.

4. Results and Discussion

The following was the verbal interpretation table used to

Table 2: Scores obtained for Administration's Control Functions

(a) Admin.'s Control Functions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Standards guidelines visibility	242	3.11	1.54
Adherence to training guidelines	242	3.00	0.89
Marketing development plans	242	3.03	0.83
Adherence to recruiting guidelines	242	2.95	0.88

As shown on Table 2, the highest means obtained were on how effectively the administrators played their role of ensuring standards guidelines visibility in the university. A high mean score of 3.11 showed a fair homogeneity of scores. This, according to the verbal interpretation scale on

was thinned then uploaded into SPSS. The data thinning exercise involved the following stages: 1: removal of duplicate information, 2: excluding partially completed questionnaires as well as 3: validating and removing outliers from the data. SPSS version 29 was used to calculate means and standard deviations before the scientific data was analyzed. The verbal mean score interpretation scale was as follows:

Table 1 shows the scale that was used to interpret the scores obtained on items related to different administration functions. While very high scores showed that administration functions were rated excellent, very low scores showed unsatisfactory performance in the utilization of standards guidelines.

comment on the mean scores of the responses on the questions related to control, accountability, improvement and inclusion administration functions to ensure practice of quality assurance:

Administration's Control Functions

As shown on the verbal interpretation scale on Table 1, while very high scores showed that administration functions were rated excellent, low scores showed unsatisfactory performance in the utilization of standards guidelines.

Table 1, showed satisfactory performance by administrators in putting quality assurance standards and guidelines into practice. However, a high standard deviation of 1.54 showed that there was a wide variation of responses. It is possible that some teacher trainees

perceived that the institution’s public declarations were not displayed where all could see. As observed in gap 4 under the Gaps Model for quality assurance, there is a discrepancy that exists when too little information is supplied to those responsible for delivering the service. This limits the impact of any initiative towards improving quality. Hence Zeithaml et al. (1990), recommended that leaders should openly declare what the institution is set to deliver. Administrators should always ensure that the university’s vision, mission statement and core values are displayed where all can see, for the benefit of its stakeholders. With visibility of standard guidelines, all stakeholders are informed of what the university stands for, where it is coming from and where it is going, its products and its services as argued by Magdy (2017).

For setting and publishing admission guidelines, a mean score of 3.11 and a relatively low standard deviation of .89 were recorded on this item. This means that the distribution of responses was homogeneous. This shows that administrators were seen to play this role effectively, as it is in line with the common saying that goes, ‘garbage in, garbage out.’ This result shows that generally, universities

are striving to enroll quality students, with acceptable high school grades into the teacher training product to enhance program beneficiaries’ perceptions of the implementation of quality assurance guidelines. Lukas and Samardžić (2015) argue that poor trainee selection can affect students’ performance and achievement. This means that with clearly stated admission guidelines, only eligible applicants will be considered for training. This is supported by UNESCO (2014), which further stresses the need to consider inclusion, equity and equality and the removal of barriers in the process of imparting teaching skills across genders.

As shown in Table 2, other high mean scores that were obtained for the administration’s control functions were on marketing of developmental aspirations and the sharing of recruitment guidelines. However, adherence to training guidelines (3.00), according to the research respondents’ scores were satisfactorily adhered to.

Administration’s Improvement Functions: Table 3 shows the scores obtained on items related to administration’s improvement functions.

Table 3: Administration’s Improvement Functions

(b) Admin.’s Improvement Functions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provides teaching-learning resources	242	2.72	1.00
Sustainable development focus	242	3.03	2.07
Theory and practice combination	241	3.03	2.14
Positive reinforcement	242	3.13	2.11

Table 3 shows that respondents felt that university administrator’ improvement functions were only satisfactorily performed. The highest mean scores were obtained on: *provision of positive reinforcement* which had a mean score of 3.13. However, the standard deviation of 2.11 for the same item was high, showing heterogeneous participant responses. This is a cause of concern because lecturers thrive on a lot of positive feedback so that they can reflect on their performance and be able to compete well when evaluated against national and international quality assurance guiding standards (Malek and Mishra, 2016).

According to the verbal interpretation scale for mean scores for the other administration’s improvement functions such as provision of teaching-learning resources, sustainable development focus, encouraging combining of theory and practice and availing positive reinforcement

showed satisfactory performance. However, the standard deviations for the four improvement functions were high 1.00 to 2.14, signifying a high variation of responses. This study confirms the findings of Yuan et al. (2021)’s study on the impact of inclusion of sustainable development component into education. Their study affirmed that introduction of lessons on SDGs in the classroom impacts students’ career planning, well ahead of their graduation as well as increases their interest and desire to make a difference on contemporary societal challenges such as gender equality, quality education, reduced inequalities, no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being (Yuan et. al, 2021).

(c) Administration’s Accountability Functions: Table 4 shows the respondents’ scores of their perception of administrators’ accountability functions as follows:

Table 1: Administration’s Accountability Functions

(d) Administration’s Functions	Accountability N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Promotes international cooperation	241	3.04	0.86
Practice periodic student assessment	242	2.95	0.86
Lecturer supervision	242	2.95	0.92
Curriculum implementation evaluation	242	2.86	0.96
Value orientation	242	2.86	0.93
Promote peer assessment	242	2.86	2.19
Encourage self-evaluation	242	2.85	0.96
Tutor assessment	242	2.88	0.95
Provide assessment feedback	242	2.86	0.94
Involvement in decision making	242	2.93	0.90

Respondents agreed with administrators excelling in *international cooperation*, with the highest mean scores of 3.04 and a standard deviation of .86. In this globalized employment market, collaboration can help in academic cross pollination when students and lecturers engage on exchange programs. At institutional levels, professionals have a chance to learn from each other. Since the world is moving towards a global village, international cooperation has the ability to promote cultural competences, where students can learn about other cultures (Vaccari & Gardinier, 2019). This practice can be helpful in producing teachers who can fit in any school in the world where they may be required.

It is commendable that respondents allocated high scores on the administration’s accountability function. This is in line with the European Commission (2018), which argues that administrators demonstrate accountability when they meet the preferences of the institution’s stakeholders. Based on the verbal interpretation scale on Table 1, the

mean scores obtained for periodic student assessment, lecturer supervision, evaluation of curriculum implementation, orientation role, peer assessment, assessment feedback, allowing departments autonomy to make certain decisions and international cooperation showed satisfactory performance of the administrator role. The mean average scores ranged from 2.85 to 3.02. However, a standard deviation of 2.19 on administrator’ function on ‘*encouraging peer assessment*’ suggested that responses were widespread. A high number of respondents disagreed (were dissatisfied) with the extent to which this function was carried out. According to a study conducted by Topping (2021), peer assessment, if well performed, has been proved to enhance the “speed quantity ...and quality” of feedback. It can be argued that administrators avoid peer assessment as it may require engagement of inexperienced student teachers. Hence, further studies must be conducted to reduce the risks involved and to increase administrators’ confidence in this area.

Table 2: Administration’s Inclusion Functions

(d)Admin.’s Inclusion Functions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enrolment of disabled trainees	242	2.99	1.67
Supporting disabled students	242	2.85	1.04
Provision to teach disabled learners	242	2.78	1.02
Provide facilities for disabled learners	242	2.75	1.04

In this category of items, the highest mean score was in response to: The administration *facilitates the enrolment of disabled trainees*. The respondents agreed to this statement with a low mean of 2.99. The standard deviation

of 1.67 was however high, which shows heterogeneity of participants’ responses. Oxford Biographies have placed value on studies that promote inclusion since the 1980s to enhance full participation, full membership, and valued

citizenship for all including students with disabilities (Cologon, 2013). Universities are therefore upheld to embrace human diversity, uphold the rights of all adults, and understand human diversity as a rich resource and an everyday part of all human environments and interaction (Cologon, 2013). The mean scores for *facilitating enrolment of differently abled students* (2.99), *providing differently abled students opportunities to succeed in their study areas* (2.85), *providing facilities for the disabled* (2.75) as well as including the issue of inclusion into the teaching curriculum, learning how to *attend to learners with diverse physical, cognitive, academic, social and emotional difference* (2.78) in the teaching curriculum were barely satisfactory.

The standard deviations for all four questions on inclusion also showed that the scores were sparsely spread (from 1.02 to 1.66) as shown on Table 5, an indication of a need for university administrators' attention. High standard deviations on important questions such as reference to admission guidelines, and provision for the disabled indicate that responses are more spread out (Rumsey, 2021). This indicates a need for an improvement on the part of the university administration, in terms of observing the prescribed quality assurance standards guidelines in relation to providing a conducive and inclusive learning environment for the disabled. Other areas with relatively low scores included provision of teaching-learning resources, curriculum implementation and provision of exchange programs. These are critical given the need to prepare graduates who will fit into the contemporary diverse and dynamic global market.

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Administrators excelled in marketing developmental aspirations (control function), periodic student assessment and in international cooperation (accountability functions). There were institutions where guiding standards were not visible to some teacher trainees. The study however revealed satisfactory performance and a need for administration to scale up on ensuring visibility of standard guidelines (control function), peer assessment (accountability function), marrying of theory and practice, use of positive reinforcement and sustainability development focus among other matters (improvement functions).

The standard deviations for all four questions on inclusion of needy students also showed a necessity for university administrators' attention, since inclusion is one of the 2030 sustainable development targets for quality assurance in education (UNESCO, 2014). Administration needs to set

up plans to ensure that inclusion standard guidelines are put into practice during teacher training in order to promote equality of access to training across socio-economic, gender, disability and other vulnerable groups. Inclusion has the potential to reduce discrimination practices.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations from the study:

1. University Administrators must ensure visibility of standards declarations (the vision, mission and core values) driving the institution.
2. They should ensure resources are availed to lecturers to ease the process of marrying theory with practice during teacher training and to allow practical application of skills learnt.
3. The study also recommends that universities be well resourced in order to be as inclusive as possible of teacher trainees who are disabled.
4. Recommendation for Further studies: Further studies are required to explore practical acceptable ways of promoting peer assessment during teacher training to ensure effective teacher training practice for quality assurance.

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