

## Examining Middle Leaders' Quality Assurance Instruments in Assessing Classroom Activities: A Case of Six Schools in Two Districts of Gauteng Province

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© 2025 جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، المركز الرئيس عدن، اليمن. يمكن إعادة استخدام المادة المنشورة حسب رخصة مؤسسة المشاع الإبداعي شريطة الاستشهاد بالمؤلف والمجلة.

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### Abstract:

This study investigated the role of middle leaders in enhancing quality assurance practices within educational settings. Specifically, the research examined how middle leaders develop and utilize quality assurance tools to assess classroom activities and promote collaboration among teachers in assessment practices. The research adopted a quantitative research approach with the survey as a data collection instrument developed by the researcher. The instrument was finalized and given to experts in quality assurance for content validity. The research found that middle leaders can create effective quality assurance instruments for teaching and learning activities. Middle leaders demonstrated that they were successful at encouraging teachers to use tools for quality assurance activities. Future research could explore specific strategies that maximize the impact of middle leaders in quality assurance processes. Continuous future improvements could be fostered.

**Keywords:** *Middle Leaders, Quality Assurance Strategies, Quality Assurance Instruments, Assessment Activities.*

## فحص أدوات ضمان الجودة لدى القيادة الوسطى في تقييم الأنشطة الصفية: دراسة حالة لست مدارس في منطقتين من مقاطعة غواتينغ

مبيبو زيپوره سيديو<sup>(1)</sup>

### الملخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في دور القيادات الوسطى في تعزيز ممارسات ضمان الجودة داخل البيئات التعليمية. وعلى وجه التحديد، يبحث البحث في كيفية تطوير القادة المتوسطين واستخدام أدوات ضمان الجودة لتقييم أنشطة الفصل الدراسي وتعزيز التعاون بين المعلمين في ممارسات التقييم. واعتمدت الدراسة منهج البحث الكمي مع المسح كأداة لجمع البيانات التي طورها الباحث. تم الانتهاء من الأداة ونقديتها للخبراء في ضمان الجودة للتأكد من صحة المحتوى. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن القادة المتوسطين يمتلكون القدرة على إنشاء أدوات فعالة لضمان الجودة لأنشطة التعليم والتعلم. أظهر القادة المتوسطون أنهم نجحوا في تشجيع المعلمين على استخدام الأدوات اللازمة لأنشطة ضمان الجودة. يمكن أن تستكشف الأبحاث المستقبلية استراتيجيات محددة تزيد من تأثير القادة المتوسطين في عمليات ضمان الجودة. ويمكن تعزيز التحسينات المستقبلية المستمرة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** القادة الوسطى، استراتيجيات ضمان الجودة، أدوات ضمان الجودة، أنشطة التقييم

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## Introduction

The study investigated the role of middle leaders in enhancing quality assurance practices within educational settings. The nature and setup of schools is that they are inherently hierarchical, where middle leaders form part of the hierarchy. As middle leaders, we expect them to have clear plans for carrying out their assigned duties. A middle leader is the one who offers potential benefits of leadership to teachers through support of teaching work and forming better collaborations between the teachers (Barth et al. 2024). Their operational duties include teaching, where they plan to integrate quality into various teaching responsibilities. The focus is on the way middle managers assess quality assurance instruments for teachers' classroom activities.

According to Van 2024, planning for such classroom activities can prevent errors during educational activities and create products that are characterized by quality assurance. In South African schools, Umalusi is a regulatory body that develops and provides a policy framework for quality assurance in schools under the Quality Assurance Act No. 58 of 2001 as amended in 2008. Such a policy framework provides a policy direction for schools' effective administration of quality assurance processes (Akporehe et al. 2024). Hence the importance of understanding the concept of quality assurance.

The concept of quality assurance is a process of monitoring, assessing, as well as communicating the outcomes for consistent improvement (Ajero 2024). This paper assumes that the success of outcome assessment depends on the presence of quality assurance instruments used to evaluate classroom activities. Middle leaders may find quality assurance instruments effective in enhancing assessment outcomes and implementing changes in the learning processes for various classroom activities (Harapan et al., 2024). Quality assurance instruments measure reliability for consistency and accuracy of learning processes and allow middle leaders to make more objective, rather than subjective, decisions and minimise bias (Brownlie et al. 2024). For a quality assurance instrument to function, it requires assessment activities that play a significant role as tools to measure quality assurance. Assessment activities serve the purpose of observing student performances, enabling changes and improvements to existing teaching methods (Zuraida & Mohamed 2024). The primary goals of assessment activities are to gauge and assess students' knowledge and propel them toward a strategic role of determining the quality of learning and teaching (Rasyid et al. 2024). We assume that we can only achieve the stated assessment goals if middle leaders aid teachers in creating these instruments. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine the quality assurance instruments that middle leaders use to assess classroom activities in South African schools. Such instruments aim to test and evaluate students' cognitive aspects during classroom assessment (Muspawi & Sofwan 2024).

A specific topic was developed to understand the extent of middle leaders' abilities to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities. This was accentuated in previous literature, as was indicated in the study of Levatino et al. (2024), which found that the quality assurance instruments exposed teachers to a situation in which they felt permanently scrutinised and judged, whereby the

assessment activities were less meaningful as a formative instrument for quality assurance. Shakir and Saeed's (2024) study report indicated middle leaders experienced challenges that were evident from the standardised quality assurance tools for implementing effective evaluation systems, which did not meet the criterion as supportive measures for enhancing teacher performance activities during the use of the tools in classroom activities. Holovok's (2024) results revealed that some teacher respondents viewed the constant motivation to use quality assurance instruments as a manifestation of the bureaucratic system, adding more paperwork to their educational activities in the classroom. According to Haugset and Finne's (2024) study findings, in early childhood education centres, teachers felt the national guidelines on quality assurance insisted the centres conform rather than motivate towards the usage of the quality assurance instruments. While Boland et al. (2024) report indicated that teachers raised concerns that the quality assurance instrument required the teachers to change much of their assessment methods and it was something that they did not wish to take. On a positive note, some results were obtained from those that were discussed in the preceding paragraph. Ansari et al. (2024) report indicated that there was an effective motivation for teachers to use quality assurance instruments, which improved teacher motivation, teaching practices, and ultimately the quality of learning. Ultimately, the motivation strengthened the weaker links in teachers' use of quality assurance instruments. The study by Isa et al. (2024) revealed that during semester meetings and workshops, they devised strategies to encourage teachers to enhance their professionalism through quality assurance. The purpose of quality assurance was to ensure compliance.

We assume that developing quality assurance instruments for assessment in classrooms will significantly enhance learning activities. Such a process can replace the ad hoc arrangements for assessment, instead introducing a systematic framework for assessment (Bissember et al., 2024). A systematic framework necessitates certain steps to establish structure. The initial stage in the construction of a quality assurance instrument is the design phase, which aligns with the precise articulation of the learning objectives and outcomes of quality assurance (Hadibarata et al. 2024).

The developed quality assurance instruments need middle leaders to employ for assessment activities. Middle leaders are the custodians of quality assurance instruments in schools. Middle leaders play a crucial role in supervising teachers, who serve as the human resources responsible for utilizing quality assurance instruments in schools (Dacholfany et al., 2024). Middle leaders should be aware that not all teachers have the same level of competence and skills to use quality assurance instruments (Suryarti et al. 2024). This implies that certain middle leaders might require encouragement to create these quality assurance tools. Some literature provided insights for the specific topic that needed clarity about the abilities of the middle managers to develop quality assurance instruments for assessment in classrooms. In a study finding by Dormal et al. (2024), it was reported that the instrument that was developed demonstrated that it was possible to improve the instrument's measurement efficiency while at the same time retaining adequate

internal consistency. Wafudu and Bin Kamin (2024) study findings mentioned that during the development of the instrument, middle leaders pursued accountability through the adequate functioning of the quality component to ensure that teachers were able to deliver their instructional duties. Merchant et al. (2024) reported that the overall process of the instrument development registered a success. The instrument development advanced trust among middle leaders for the tool. Overall, 146 students who were examined based on the instrument indicated an overall 97% of students passed the exams on the first attempt. Maillard's (2024) study results added to the abilities about the development of quality assurance instruments for assessment in classrooms. The middle leaders instrument development abilities were based on a human-centred design approach, which was found to be very useful to foster engagement during teaching and learning activities. The conducted studies suggest that some teachers possess the necessary skills to use quality assurance instruments. The abilities of middle managers to develop quality assurance instruments for classroom assessment yielded mixed results. The study by McKenna et al. (2024) revealed that despite receiving quality assurance guidelines on instrument development, middle leaders believed they lacked the ability to create quality assurance instruments. Middle leaders commented that they attempted to develop instruments based on what their district officials believed would be the most effective. Also, Masruri et al. (2024) report that the internal quality assurance instruments that were in development have not been completed optimally during the process of development.

Errors may occur during the use of quality assurance instruments. To prevent occurrences of errors, strategies might be a consideration towards minimising the errors from the classrooms' engagements. Teamwork strategy is one of the standards that is recommended to provide some form of direction toward quality assurance. The teamwork strategies of middle leaders play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of teachers, thereby enabling them to meet the standards of quality assurance (Muspawi & Sofwan, 2024). Teamwork strategy in schools is an important component of quality assurance as it enhances cooperation, and it also develops communication (Hidayat et al. 2024). There were some literature searches for results based on the topic that was developed. The paper used teamwork as one of its constructs to ground its objective. In response, a study by Irvine et al. (2024) reported that middle leaders spoke about there being a sense of belonging by the teachers in stable teams who trusted each other and worked well together during the performances of quality assurance activities. In a study also by Antonsen et al. (2024), a driver strategy was initiated as a teamwork quality assurance strategy approach for the professional development of colleagues. Reports indicated that middle leaders assumed formal roles as drivers and subsequently ascended to influence their colleagues' work using the quality assurance tools they implemented. Warta et al. (2024) study findings indicated that teamwork through mentoring, which was introduced to teachers after the identification of the teacher needs, was able to carry specific increased quality assurance responsibilities during teaching and learning activities. Chaula's (2024) study findings reported that a

face-to-face discussion model strategy had teachers engaged with the model, which was seen from their commitment to working to the extent of enjoying the quality assurance demands from the strategy. An add-on study report was by Altrichter et al. (2024). They reported that none of the school leaders rejected the school quality assurance instrument since it was considered reasonable and a useful collective strategy for pushing forward with school quality assurance improvements.

The literature engines also provided contrasting literature results that mapped against middle leaders' abilities to encourage subject teamwork assessment as a quality assurance approach. Ostinelli and Crescentini (2024) employed mentoring as a teamwork strategy for the quality assurance approach. The findings indicated that the presence of mentoring, which involved non-teaching professional roles, was not linked to any particular improvement programs for quality assurance. Khadka et al. (2024) study findings were reported from the leadership team's strategy that aimed to strengthen the partnership with parents and the community for improving students' quality assurance learning performances. The study revealed that the leadership team's strategy did not significantly predict quality assurance educational activities and achievement as expected. The system team was another form of teamwork quality assurance strategy that was established by Santana et al. (2024), whose aim was to establish a quality assurance organisational structure. Their results indicated that the strategy was hampered by, for example, a nonlinear teacher who, by implication, contributed to students adjusting slowly to the new demands for quality assurance activities during teaching and learning. Some more results were found in the literature based on the evaluation of the internal academic quality assurance system's teamwork strategy. Arifin et al. (2024) reported that the teamwork assessment strategy for educational staff relied on formal evaluations like daily assessments, semester exams, and final exams. Educational staff neglected some aspects of results and evaluation analysis, compromising the aims of quality assurance. The literature discussions highlighted the significant need for a research objective and a specific research question. The following research question was addressed:

What are the middle leaders' quality assurance instruments used in assessing classroom activities in South African schools? The research objective of this paper is to examine the middle leaders' quality assurance instruments used in assessing classroom activities in South African schools.

## Method

The study adopted a quantitative research approach that aimed to gain insights about how middle leaders employ quality assurance instruments in assessing classroom activities.

The survey instrument employed was part of the main instrument which was developed for the research. It was aimed at middle managers currently actively employed in the selected schools in Gauteng Province of South Africa. The internet was employed to distribute survey questions and became a streamlined and user-friendly method of accessibility. Measures were taken to ensure that participation in



the online survey was voluntary and confidential. Informed consent was obtained before the survey was initialized. The technique exemplified a significant degree of data reliability. The four distinct areas of the instrument were demographics, quality assurance innovative culture, teachers' quality assurance organizational identity, and affective commitment. The research was conducted between periods of 2023 and 2024.

The sample size consisted of 24 middle leaders from the selected schools in the district. Their selection was based on their responsibilities as middle managers in the employment schools. We distributed the questionnaire to 20 of the 24, deeming them suitable for the data analysis process.

We collected data using an instrument known as middle leaders' quality assurance skills. Section one contained introductory demographic information on teachers' characteristics, like gender, age, population group, qualification levels, and schools' quantile levels. Section two delimited five subsections, (SECTION A) quality assurance (How middle leaders perceive their leadership roles in quality assurance with 12 items); (SECTION B) Agency (Important responsibilities middle managers consider for their quality assurance functions with 10 items); (SECTION C) Wellbeing (working conditions, sources of work-related stress with 8 items and (SECTION D) with 10 items with an indication around classroom challenges which impact on quality assurance for middle managers during teaching and learning and (SECTION E) constituted of 8 items whose narrative expanded on the teaching methods and strategies employed by middle managers for quality assurance. This paper employed three of the 12 constructs from Section A.

Researchers worked together to develop the instrument. We first piloted the instrument with five middle leaders from the same district in different schools for reliability testing. Based on the obtained results, we finalised the instrument and entrusted it to quality assurance experts for content validity. The final process involved the implementation of the instrument. The instrument asked middle leaders to report on their scores from the introductory demographic information to the five delimited sections.

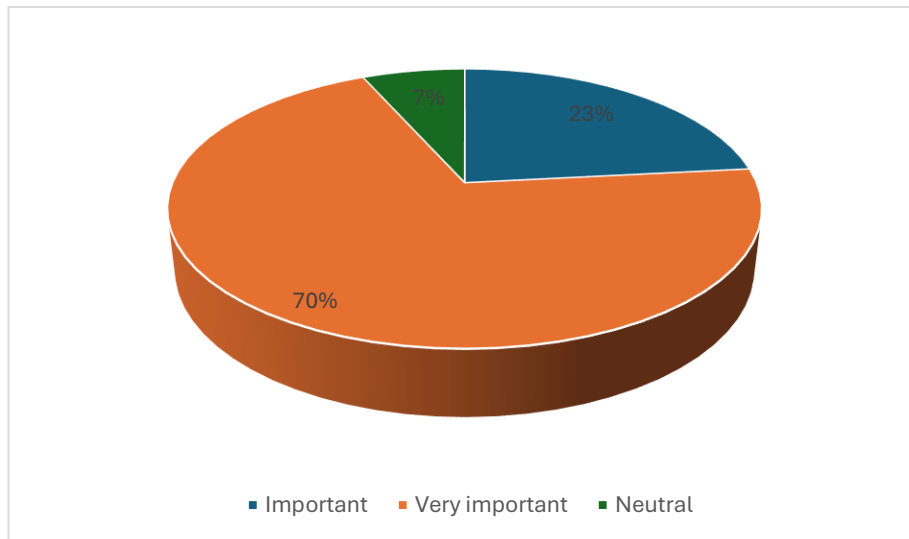
The instrument contained items using a 4-point Likert scale with Important (I), Less Important (LI), Very Important (VI), and Neutral (N). The data analysis methods were independent and involved the interpretation of diagrams derived from the coding of the responses (I = 1; LI = 2; VI = 3; and N = 4). This paper focuses on three items (SECTION A): quality assurance and how middle leaders perceive their leadership roles in quality assurance. In cases of criticism, the researcher wanted to present specifics about the three constructs and was mindful of the length prescribed in papers.

## Results

This section focuses on three of the eight constructs from Section A, which included 12 items on quality assurance: "How middle leaders perceive their leadership roles in

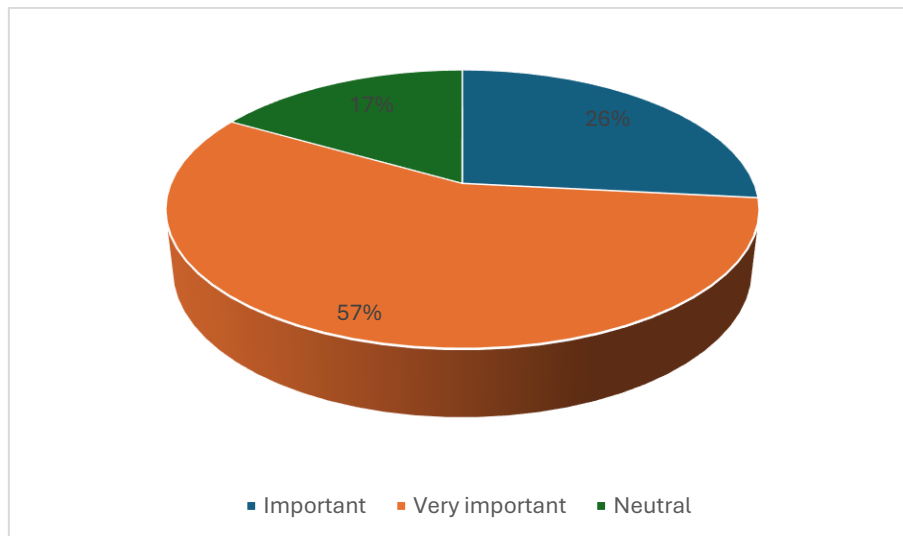


quality assurance". We independently developed the constructs to establish a solid understanding of the paper. Three constructs: 1) I assist teachers in developing quality assurance instruments for assessment in classrooms; 2) I motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities; 3) I encourage subject teamwork assessment as a quality assurance approach. The first topic of discussion was Figure 1, which provides a framework for assisting teachers in creating quality assurance tools for classroom assessments.



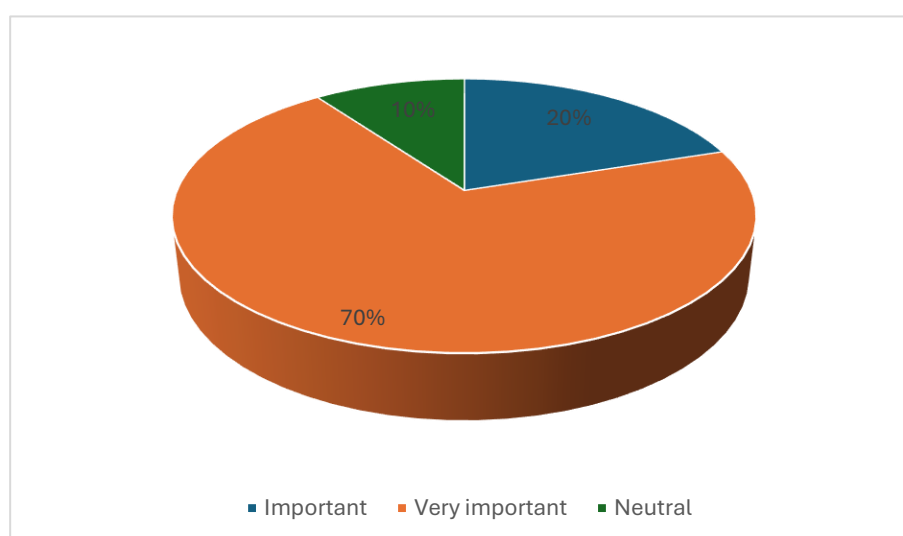
**Figure 1:** Abilities to develop quality assurance instruments for assessment in classrooms.

Figure 1 reports on the construct which was developed to ascertain the middle managers' levels for the development of quality assurance instruments. From figure 1, it was evidenced that 93% of the respondents believed that they were able to develop quality assurance instruments for classroom assessment activities. Those who were neutral registered a 7% score which did not influence those who already indicated their stance at a 93% score. There were no indications about those who might have registered a less important score in the construct. Based on what was obtained from the evidence at 93% scorecard, it may be inferred that the middle managers were able to develop quality assurance instruments for the teaching and learning processes. The next Figure 2 is a response to assess abilities of middle leaders to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities.



**Figure 2:** Abilities to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities.

Figure 2 was to report on abilities to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities by middle leaders. It may be seen from the table that there were middle managers who were neutral about their views around their abilities to motivate for the use of the quality assurance instrument at a 17% score count. And those at majority were those who felt very important or important about the construct. Their response results may be inferred to mean that the middle managers were able to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for their teaching and learning activities. The next Figure 3 presented the results obtained for the theme around how middle leaders encourage subject teamwork assessment as a quality assurance approach.



**Figure 3:** Abilities to encourage subject teamwork assessment as quality assurance approach.

The data obtained in Figure 3 was based on an item that provided evidence about how middle managers encourage subject teamwork assessment as an approach towards teamwork. To, about 90% of the respondents agreed how very important and important subject teamwork approach was important for quality assurance purposes. Based on the results, it may be considered that middle managers can encourage subject teamwork assessment as a quality assurance approach. At the same time, the value score of 10% was noted from the middle managers whose indications did not impact what was already noted from the results of those who felt very important and important about the construct. Little contribution would have been affected by the results in consideration of zero registration about those managers who would feel the construct's less importance.

## Discussion

The literature presents the findings in this section. We assigned a research objective to the paper, which is to examine the quality assurance instruments used by middle leaders in assessing classroom activities. We established three specific focal points to exercise authority and further develop the paper's aim. The first construct focused on middle managers' abilities to assist educators in developing quality assurance instruments for assessments in classrooms. The surveyed middle leaders' results demonstrated their ability to create quality assurance tools for the teaching and learning processes. These findings bear similarities with those from the literature. Study findings mapped those which were obtained for this section. These study's findings corresponded with those gathered for this particular section. The study was conducted by Dormal et al., 2024; Maillard, 2024; Merchant et al., 2024; Wafudu et al., 2024. loped an internal quality assurance instrument that demonstrated both measurement efficiency and adequate internal consistency. From Maillard (2024), it was established that the internal quality assurance instrument was credited as a human-centred design approach, and it was also found to be very useful in fostering engagement during teaching and learning activities in schools. Merchant et. al. (2024) also captured some findings that produced some more positive results regarding the development of internal quality assurance instruments. The study claimed that the overall results of 146 students who were examined based on the instrument revealed that 97% of students passed the exam on the first attempt, with only 5 students who had to retake the exam. The study conducted by Wafudu et al. (2024) revealed that the instrument effectively fostered trust among teachers who used internal quality assurance tools. In addition, the same internal quality assurance tool served to pursue accountability where teachers delivered their instructional duties, operating as a unit for their quality assurance responsibilities.

The construct yielded a second set of results, focusing on middle leaders' abilities to motivate teachers to use quality assurance instruments for assessment activities. The middle leaders responded positively to the construct, demonstrating their ability to

motivate teachers to use internal quality assurance instruments. The middle leaders employed effective motivation as a strategy for quality assurance. It was found to strengthen the weaker links in teachers to improve teacher Ansari et al. (2024) found that it strengthens the weaker links in teachers, enhancing their motivation, teaching practices, and ultimately improving the quality of early learning. There were means of motivating teachers to develop their professionalism around quality assurance. Authors (Ansari et al., 2024; Isa et al., 2024) corroborate with the results attained for the section of the paper.

The final construct needed to establish whether middle leaders possessed abilities to encourage subject teamwork assessment as a quality assurance approach. Positive were the results from the survey engagements with the educators. The literature included comparable studies. The Altrichter et al. (2024) study served as the initial focus for similar study conclusions. They reported that none of the school leaders rejected the school quality assurance instrument since it was considered a reasonable and useful strategy for pushing forward with school quality assurance improvements. Further studies on teamwork results were found in the literature. From Antonsen et al. (2024), a driver strategy was initiated for the quality assurance strategy approach for the professional development of teachers who were assigned to evaluate their assessment activities. It was further noted by Irvine et. al. (2024) in a study report from middle leaders who spoke about a sense of belonging among the teachers and stable teams who trusted each other and worked well together during the performances of quality assurance activities. From then, the teachers who were known as drivers gained some influence on how team teachers might work with the quality assurance tools that they adopted. A further teamwork approach strategy was used in another study with similar results of positive advantage. Warta et. al. (2024) identified that teamwork through mentoring was used to identify teacher needs and specific quality assurance responsibilities, which increased competencies for teachers in teams for their assessment responsibilities. In another study, Chaula (2024) obtained similar positive results about teamwork strategy for quality assurance. It was mentioned that the internal school quality assurance team in a face-to-face discussion model strategy was used by the internal quality assurance team to review the teachers' preparation of documents. The feedback from teachers engaged with the model was seen from their commitment to working to the extent of enjoying the quality assurance demands from the strategy.

## Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate the important role middle leaders play in improving quality assurance procedures in learning environments. The study aimed to investigate how middle leaders utilize quality assurance tools to evaluate classroom activities. Specifically, the research focused on middle leaders' capacity to create these

tools to inspire teachers to utilize them and to promote collaboration in assessment practice procedures.

The results showed that middle leaders are capable of creating tools for quality assurance teaching and learning activities, this is consistent with the body of research that highlights the value of these instruments in guaranteeing the accuracy and consistency of measurements. Additionally, it was discovered that middle leaders were successful in encouraging teachers to use tools for quality assurance, workshops and semester meetings among other motivational techniques were crucial in improving quality assurance initiatives in schools. Future research could further explore specific strategies that maximize the impact of middle leaders in quality assurance processes, thereby fostering continuous improvement in educational settings.

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