

# **A Comparative Analysis of the Perceptions of Primary and Secondary School Teachers of Lesson Observation by Education Standards Officers in Zambia**

by

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## **Abstract**

*This study was a comparative analysis of the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers of lesson observation by education standards officers in Zambia. In Zambia, like elsewhere in the world, teachers are monitored and evaluated in teaching by Education Standards Officers or Quality Assurance Officers. Although the understanding of quality education is varied and sometimes obscure in its definition, indicators have been outlined in some cases, one of them being effective teaching which stem from the teachers understanding of pedagogy. A survey design was employed and eighty one (81) primary and secondary school teachers recruited from Central Province of Zambia to provide information on the study. There were thirty two (32) primary school teachers and forty nine (49) secondary school teachers of which 39, (48.1%) were male and 42, (51.9%) female. Data were analysed with the help the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 to obtain frequencies, percentages and differences between the two groups of respondents in their responses. Results indicated that there were no significant differences between primary and secondary school teachers in their*

*perceptions of lesson observations by education standards officers. Most importantly, both groups of teachers were positive in their perceptions, although a few of them were not comfortable being observed by education standards officers. Since standard officers are ideally the experts in teaching and possess a wealth of experience in pedagogy, we recommend that they provide demonstration lessons targeting teachers in schools through various platforms such as workshops, seminars and other professional forums.*

**Keywords:** *Quality Education, Perceptions, Education Standards Officers, Teaching*

### **Background to the Study**

The role of the Department of Education Standards, (formerly called the Inspectorate) in ensuring quality education provision and curriculum design, development and implementation in Zambia cannot be overemphasised. In Zambia, like in many other countries the standards office is a hub for quality assurance since it monitors, supervise and guide education provision. In Zambia, the standards office has been in existence since the British education system. Before and after political independence in 1964, quality assurance was undertaken by the inspectorate, now the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum. It was highly centralised at the time; and the highly structured education system in which the inspectorate was placed had vital responsibilities of providing professional assistance and leadership to schools and teachers as well as evaluating the achievements of schools and providing policy makers with reliable information and advice (Pritchard, 1975).

In the 1970s, the inspectorate at the national level was headed by a Chief Inspector of Schools assisted by a Deputy and senior inspectors and inspectors. At regional level, a Chief Education Officer was deputised by the Deputy Chief Education Officer. Under the ranks of the Chief Education Officer were

Senior Primary School Inspectors for the regional level and Senior Primary School Inspectors for subjects. There also existed district education officers who were in charge of primary school inspectors. The total establishment of the inspectorate in 1972 was One Hundred and Seventy (170), against sixty eight (68) in 1968 (Pritchard, 1975). This shows the value that was attached to the inspectorate.

In 2000, the Ministry of Education was decentralised, in line with the policies of education as articulated in *Educating our Future: National Policy on Education* so as to improve efficiency in the Ministry (MoE, 1996). During this process the inspectorate was renamed as the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum. Consequently, the Ministry created several positions in the department of Standards at national, provincial and district levels. At national level, the Director of Standards and Curriculum is at the helm of Directorate deputised by the Chief Education Standards Officer. Under the Chief Education Standards Officer are principal education standard officers for primary, secondary, tertiary, special education and examinations. The Principal Education Standards Officers are assisted by five senior education standard officers for social sciences, maths and science, languages, practical subjects and examinations. Each of the ten provinces has a Principal Education Standards Officer responsible for education standards at the provincial level. Each principal education standards officer at provincial level works with senior education standards officers (SESO) responsible for Mathematics, Science, social sciences, practical subjects, special education, business studies, languages, expressive arts, distance and open learning, and examinations. Each district also has three education standards officers headed by the District Education Standards Officer (DESO). These are Education Standards Officer- general, education standards officer- special education and education standards officer- distance and open learning. Thus it can be seen from these ranks of standards officers right from the national to the district level that the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) has attached a lot of importance to quality

assurance in education to the extent that each subject area has a standards officer responsible for it. However it is vital at this stage to appreciate the specific roles that these education officers play.

### ***Roles of Education Standards Officers***

Education standard officers have many roles. Firstly, according to the Ministry of Education (1996:156); standard officers;

*Are called upon to advise on the material needs of the schools especially in relation to the curriculum materials and educational equipment. Because of their comprehensive knowledge of what promotes effective classroom teaching and good school performance, they are in strong demand as resource persons for curriculum development activities, in-service training programmes and donor funded activities directed towards school improvement*

In addition, the Education Standards and Evaluation Guidelines (Ministry of Education, Vocation Training and Early Education, 2015) outlines twenty roles of education standards officers. They include recommending and approving teaching and learning materials, formulating education rules and regulations which schools should adhere to, recommending applications for registration of institutions to the ministry, recommending application of schools to be examination centres and employment, confirmation and promotion of staff. Other roles include monitoring and advising teachers on teaching and learning, conducting general inspections of schools as regards quality management of human resource, material and financial resources. As explained, education standards officers have all these roles. In the Ministry of General Education standards and evaluation guidelines it is actually explained that the core business in ensuring standards is to ensure that quality learning and teaching come first in all schools (MESVTEE, 2015). In fact, Kalabula (2007:9), emphasized that

*Standards evaluation should be conceived as that specific occasion when a given school is examined thoroughly and evaluated as a place of learning*

*in such a way that advice may be given for its improvement and that advice is embodied in a report.*

Of interest to this study is the function of standards which is monitoring of teaching and learning commonly known as lesson observation. Kalabula (2007) equated standard officers to advisors of teachers. He further stated that “A standard officer is a person who by his or her attitude and approach can win the respect and confidence of teachers so that they are encouraged and stimulated to improve in their work” (Kalabula 2007: 10). Thus the guidance and advice the Standards Officer gives should be highly professional. In referring to the critical role of standards officers as disseminators of good practice in teaching the Ministry of Education (1996:155), stated that:

*As disseminators of good practice, they stimulate teachers to examine their lesson preparation and follow through their teaching strategies, the way they are developing or using curriculum materials, how they evaluate pupils and how they organise the teaching session.*

This duty is mainly a professional one which is linked to the classroom while other duties involve assessing the school effectiveness as a whole. Education Standards Officers’ work is backed by the Education Act of 2011 which gives them the mandate and responsibility to inspect schools and ensure that quality education is provided to learners (Education Act, 2011). While we acknowledge a distinction between inspection and lesson observation, it must be noted that lesson observation is part of the activities falling under inspection. Inspection has been defined as a process of assessing the quality and/or performance of schools by external agents, and is a near world-wide educational practice (Wilcox, 2000). It is broader than lesson observation conducted on teachers. School inspection includes so many aspects such as the school environment, management of finances and other school related issues that contribute to school effectiveness. External education agencies look at the various activities in the school including how lessons are conducted.

Although this study focused on lesson observation only, some mention is also made in reference to the concept of inspection since some studies have used the broader concept of inspection in which lesson observation is embedded.

### ***Studying lesson observation using perception***

According to Pickens (2013) cited in Vatuva gwaa-Uugwanga (2015) perceptions refer to the way an individual interprets stimuli to arrive at something meaningful to himself or herself based on their experiences. The implications of this is that perceptions may be determined by a variety of contextual circumstances which include but is not limited to age, sex, education level, and so on (Vatuva gwaa-Uugwanga, 2015). Thus with regard to this study, the researchers conceived that perceptions of teachers' lesson observation by education standards officers in Zambia would not be the same between primary and secondary school teachers considering the differences between schools, differences in subjects taught, age and experience of respondents, and so on.

Bekeena (2009) posited that humans see things in different ways because of who they are, the things they believe in and value as well as their different environments. In other words, all humans have their own unique picture, image, understanding or interpretation of the world. Pickens (2013) further explained that human perceptions may influence their responses and behaviour either positively or negatively. Perceptions are thus crucial for understanding people's actions and for identifying issues of concern to them even if they impact positively in another context or for a different group of individuals.

Following this explanation therefore, respondents' perceptions about observation of their lessons by Education standards officers in this study was informed by any or a combination of the different meanings individual teachers attached to the concept of lesson observation in the school system. It was noted therefore that there is no single perception of lesson observation as it was subject to the individuals' circumstances. The researchers' views were that participants through their perceptions would explain how the participants view lesson observation in

relation to its efficacy as a professional capacity building system for teachers. It was for this reason that this study focused on the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers in investigating lesson observation by Education standards officers. This is important because the failure of some programmes in education in Zambia have been because stakeholders and end users have not had their perceptions of a particular new programme taken on board during the policy formulation stage (Kalimaposo, 2010). These realisations helped the researchers to identify the need to gain an understanding of both primary and secondary school teachers of how they viewed the observation of their lessons by Education standards officers. It is important to listen to the voices of teachers and observe their experiences'; hence the choice of the research to address the problem using the perceptions and insight of respondents. The need to listen to the end users can therefore not be overemphasised.

Lesson observation carried out by education standards officers is basically a quality assurance issue and in this case it becomes an inspection issue because it is summative in nature. In improving instructional proficiency and teaching practice, observation is a well-structured component as explained in the Gold Hammer five steps process in undertaking clinical supervision.

### ***Teachers' perceptions of lesson observation***

Different countries have embraced different models of ensuring quality assurance. In some countries, head teachers are key in ensuring that teachers are monitored and supervised in their teaching. In Kenya for instance, a study done by Wairimu (2016) showed that instructional supervision was done by head teachers during which teachers' lessons and learners' exercise books were checked. In the study it was noted that head teacher's supervision was viewed positively by teachers. Teachers further agreed that instructional supervision by head teachers helped to improve teaching and learning (Wairimu, 2016). Thus it was concluded from Wairimu's study that positive attitude to supervision can lead to positive performance by teachers.

In Nigeria, inspectors of schools conduct inspections on how the curriculum is implemented by teachers. According to Muhammed (2012) inspectors provided professional guidance to teachers, identifying problems in the school and suggesting solutions to school problems. Professional guidance to teachers was provided through lesson observations. However, school inspectors were reported to harass teachers and thus Muhammed recommended training of school inspectors in effective communication (Muhammed 2012). Teacher harassment during inspection is likely to create negative perceptions of inspection among teachers.

School inspection in Tanzania was noted to have yielded positive academic achievement especially when inspectors' feedback and guidance were implemented by schools. Schools that were not frequently visited and given feedback performed poorly. Findings showed that a positive correlation between feedback provided by inspectors and school performance was established although there were other factors that affected performance of the schools that the study did not bring out such as teacher motivation, school administration, school environment, nature of pupils in the schools among others.

Lupimo, (2014) did a study on the role of inspection in improving academic performance in community schools in Tanzania. The study revealed that, school inspection was not effective in improving academic performance. Learners' academic performance remained poor even when school inspection was regularly done in most schools. Further, according to Lupimo (2014), even though a few schools were observed, the observations from inspectors were not acted upon effectively. It was further found that most teachers had a negative view of inspection. Attributing the overall achievement of the schools to inspection negates other factors such as teacher motivation, school administration, school environment, nature of pupils in the schools among others.

In Zambia, some studies on inspection of teachers and schools in general have yielded similar results to the studies



discussed above. For instance, Nongola, (2011) found that the instruments used to monitor teachers for special education were too general and did not help special education teachers to benefit from observations by inspectors (standards officers). Although this study did not focus on the observation tool used by education standards officers, this finding provides a reflection on whether inspection is beneficial to teachers or not, especially that the tools used did not apply or help the teacher develop professionally. Chizya, (2018) conducted a study on the Role of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in Enhancing Quality Education and Standard Performance in Selected Public Secondary Schools of Isoka District. The results of Chizya's study indicated that there was little done by the district education standards officers to monitor secondary schools and to improve the status of teaching and learning materials in schools. Similar findings were reported in a study of district education standards officers monitoring of high schools in Southern province of Zambia by Kambungu and Cheyeka (2014). However, more details emerged from Kambungu and Cheyeka (2014) about inspection by district education standards officers in Southern province. According to their study, teachers were unwilling to be observed or monitored by District Education Standards Officers for the following reasons:

1. According to the teachers, the Inspectors that observed them had the same qualifications as the teachers they observed.
2. Inspectors had little knowledge of the subjects they observed teachers in.

Thus, Kambungu and Cheyeka (2014) reported that many teachers were not monitored by district education standards officers (24; 63%) of the total 38 sample against (4; 10.5% and (10; 26.3%) who were monitored once and more than once, respectively. While teachers appreciated the role played by district education standards officers in improving their professional practice, inspections were reported to be generally rare though quite common in social science subjects and that district education standards officers did not provide feedback after inspection.

To investigate this issue, the study sought to answer the

following question; how do teachers perceive lesson observations undertaken by education standards officers?

### ***Statement of the problem***

In Zambia, standards and evaluation is an ongoing exercise carried out by education standards officers to assess, evaluate and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Chizya (2018) reported that district education standards officers did not do a lot of monitoring of secondary schools. However, this monitoring exercise by standard officers was appreciated by head teachers and classroom teachers because it helped them to perform their duties more effectively. What is not clear from the literature is specifically how classroom teachers perceive lesson observation by education standards officers as an aspect to promote professional capacity of the classroom teachers.

### ***Assumptions***

There were two major assumptions in the study;

1. There are significant differences between primary school teachers and secondary school teachers in the way they perceive lesson observation by education standards officers.
2. Teachers have negative perceptions of lesson observations conducted on them by education standards officers.

### ***Methodology***

This study was quantitative. A survey design was used in the study. Structured questionnaires were prepared for respondents to answer on their perceptions of being observed in classroom teaching. Respondents were required to respond to ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions on how they perceived being observed by education standards officers. Other questions required answers on whether respondents agreed or disagreed with specific issues. Eighty-one (81) respondents who were all practicing teachers from across the country were recruited by simple random sampling in Central province where they went for their residential study sessions at

a named university (name withheld for ethical reasons). Only respondents that agreed to participate in the study were given a questionnaire to answer.

The study recruited a total of 81 respondents divided into 39, (48.1%) male and 42, (51.9%) female teachers distributed in age ranges of (20-29 = 34; 42%), (30-39=33; 40.7%), (40 and above =14; 17.3%). Qualifications of the teachers that took part in the study ranged from certificate to degree all of whom were studying to upgrade their qualifications to either a bachelors or masters degrees. All the teacher respondents had reasonable experience in teaching ranging from 1 year to above 20 years distributed as indicated in table 1.

Range	Frequency	Percent
1-5	43	53.1
6-10	16	19.8
11-20	16	19.8
over 20	4	4.9
Total	79	97.5
System	2	2.5
Total	81	100.0

Data analysis was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16) to obtain frequencies, percentages, cross tabulations and significant differences. Thus, a Chi-square test of independence was adopted as an appropriate measure to determine the differences in data.

However, the study may be limited in generalisability in that data was obtained from teachers only without the input of standards officers and school administrators. Further, even though the sample was acceptable for quantitative analysis, it does not represent the whole population of teachers in the country. In 2018, Masaiti reported that Zambia had 96,228 primary and secondary school teachers employed and spread across the ten provinces

(Masaiti, 2018). However, lessons can still be drawn from the study about the perceptions teachers have of lesson observation by education standards officers.

## Results and Discussion

### *Lesson Observation of Teachers by Education Standards Officers*

The first question asked was to establish whether the teachers that were involved in the study had ever been observed in teaching or not. Table 2 below provides the results:

**Table 2: Whether teachers were observed while teaching or not in the last five years**

Charact eristic	Categor y	Frequen cy	Percent	Frequen cy	Percent	Total frequen cy	Total %
Have you been observed by an education standards officer in the last five years?		Yes	%	No	%	Total	Total %
	Primary schools	27	33	5	6	32	40
	Secondary schools	42	52	7	9	49	60
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

From the results, we observe that 69 (85 %) of the teachers have been observed while teaching by education standards officers and 12 (15%) have not been observed in the last five years. There were no significant differences between primary and secondary school teachers in views on whether they were observed by standards officers or not, with a p- value of .802 and a difference of 2. The Pearson chi square value was .440 for 81 valid cases. The lack of difference provides confidence in the results that standards officers do observe teachers at all levels of education, ( $\chi^2 (5, N = 81) = 0.440, p > .05$ ).

A follow up question to the first one was asked to establish how many times respondents were observed in the last five years. Table 3 below shows the results of a cross tabulation:

**Table 3: Frequency of lesson observations**

		<i>Frequency of observation by education standards officers</i>					
		Once	Twice	Three	Four	More than 5	Never been observed
Type of School	Primary school	4	6	7	1	9	1
	Secondary school	13	7	8	4	12	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		17	13	15	5	21	2

Only 73 respondents answered this question. The frequency of observation showed that most teachers were observed more than five times in the last five years (21; 28.8%). Seventeen 17 (23.3%) were observed once, 13 (17.8%) were observed twice, 15 (20.5%) were observed three times and 5 (6.8%) were observed four times. Only two teachers (2; 2.7%) were not observed in the last five years. The frequency of observation further demonstrates that not only did education standards officers undertake their duties, it accorded teachers a chance to be observed while teaching thereby helping them to improve their teaching skills. However, effort still needs to be made to accord teachers more observations. This is because, if in the last five years, a teacher has been observed only five times or less, it means a teacher is given one observation per year which is unlikely to be enough to enhance professional development.

**Teachers’ perceptions of their observation by Education Standards Officers**

Respondents were asked about how they felt being observed teaching by education standards officers. They were required to describe their feelings as either good or intimidating. Table 4 shows the results.

**Table 4: Teachers’ feelings about being observed by education standards officers in the last five years**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency		Percentage		Total	Total percentage
		Good	Intimidated	Good	Intimidated		
How did you feel being observed by an education standard officer?	Primary school teachers	23	5	32	7	28	38
	Secondary school teachers	29	16	40	22	45	62
	<b>Total</b>	52	21	72	29	73	100

P - value = .335 > .05.

From the results, the majority of the teachers had a positive outlook about being observed teaching by education standards officers. There were no significant differences between primary and secondary school teachers in the manner they responded to the question. The value was .335, greater than the alpha measure of .05. The chi-square computation was  $\chi^2(4, N = 73) = 4.56, p > .05$ . This is a positive sign of the trust teachers have in the practice of lesson observation. These results are different from the negative attitude towards being observed by education standard officers that Kambungu and Cheyeka (2014) found. Lupimo (2014) also found similar results in a study of the role of inspection in improving academic performance in community schools in Tanzania. However, in this study the number (21; 28,

8%) who had negative attitudes towards observation shows a lack of trust in being observed in teaching. Teachers need to be sensitised on the role of inspection in improving the quality of teaching. Although teacher observation has been considered as an evaluation for annual appraisal performance, its main purpose is to help teachers progress and be updated with latest trends in teaching and teaching methodology (Shukri, 2014). The study by Shukri, (2014) found that teachers perceived observation as an evaluative tool for teaching although half perceived it as a fundamental tool for improving teaching as teachers received feedback and learned about updated practices in teaching. When teachers perceive observation positively, the focus would be on improving themselves than regarding themselves as targets of faulty finding. Standard officers also required to be collegial when carrying out their duties lest they are misunderstood to be fault finders. Bülbül, Tunc, Özdem, Ozedem, & Inandi, (2013) observed in their qualitative study on teachers perceptions of inspection that teachers perceived inspection to a greater extent as a process of examining educational activities by professionals in education to ascertain achievement of goals and correct mistakes observed. While this study looked at lesson observation by education standards only as a component of inspection, the activity maybe frustrated if it is perceived as an evaluative activity, making teachers and or all those involved to be observed as answerable to some authority, yet teaching is a professional responsibility which teachers should enjoy. When the activity is taken as evaluative, it is likely to cause stress and distrust among those observed or being evaluated (Bülbül, Tunc, Özdem, Ozedem, & Inandi, 2013). Work related stress is detrimental to productivity and work motivation. However, if inspection and particularly lesson observation is taken as a developmental process, teachers are likely to support and appreciate it.

Further analysis was done to check whether teachers' experiences in teaching was related to how they felt about being observed. Table 5 shows the results:

**Table 5: Teachers feelings about observation according to years of teaching experience**

		<i>Feeling of being observed</i>					
		Good	percent	Intimidated	Percent	Total frequen	Total %
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	1-5 years	27	38	10	14	37	52
	6-10 years	10	14	5	7	15	21
	11-20 years	9	13	6	8	15	21
	over 20	4	6	0	0	4	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

The results were further cross checked to establish whether there were significant differences in perceptions by teachers towards being observed teaching by education standards officers. We wanted to know whether years of experience in teaching mattered in making up positive perceptions of lesson observation. We established that, the more one is observed, the more confident he or she is and the more positive the perception towards being observed. The results however showed that there were no significant differences with a p-value of .444, greater than the alpha .05. A chi-square computation of  $(X^2(3, N = 71) = 2.68, p > .05)$  was recorded.

To further establish teachers’ perceptions of lesson observation by education standards officers, respondents were asked on their opinions as to whether they supported the practice of being observed by an education standards officer or not. A follow up question was also asked to establish whether when observed, they received valuable guidance that helped improve their professional disposition. Table 6 shows the results:



**Table 6: Whether teachers support observation and whether they received valuable guidance from Education Standards Officers' observations**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency		Frequency		Total frequency	
		Yes	%	No	%	No	%
<i>Do you support the practice of been observed by an educational standards officers?</i> p-value .416 >.05	Primary school teachers	28	35	3	4	31	39
	Secondary school teachers	39	49	10	13	49	61
	<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Have you received valuable guidance after being observed in a lesson by education standards officer?</i> p-value = .366 >.05	Primary school teachers	24	32	6	8	30	40
	Secondary school teachers	30	40	15	20	45	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

When respondents were further asked on whether they supported the practice of observation by standard standards officers, the results are positively consistent with their attitude towards being observed by the same. The p-value is .416 greater than the alpha .05. Thus, from the chi-square computation of  $(X^2 (2, N = 80) = 1.75, p >.05)$ .

On teachers' perceptions of whether they received valuable support from education standards officers, the chi square test showed  $X^2 (2, N = 75) = 2.01, p >.05)$ . The p-value was greater than .05, thus showing no significant differences in the responses from the two different categories of respondents. The results of this study are quite encouraging in that teachers had built positive confidence in the lesson observations done by education standards officers. However, although the majority of the teachers supported the practice (see figures in table 6), there were still

teachers that felt that they did not support the practice and that they did not receive adequate guidance from education standards officers. We acknowledge a limitation of not having gotten the exact views in verbatim from the teachers so as to establish the reasons behind this negative attitude towards lesson observation by some teachers. For instance 13 (16%) of the teachers said that they did not support the practice of lesson observation and 21 (28%) said that they did not receive valuable guidance from education standards officers during and after lesson observation.

**Table 7: Whether lesson observation by education standards officers has contributed to improving teachers’ quality of teaching?**

		<i>Do you think lesson observation by education standards officers have improved your quality of teaching?</i>					
		Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
<i>Type of School</i>	Primary school	23	31	7	9	30	41
	Secondary school	19	26	25	34	44	59
<b>Total</b>		42	57	32	43	74	100

Significant differences were noted in response to the question on whether inspection has improved the quality of the individual teachers. The p- value was .013, less than .05. (X<sup>2</sup> (2, N = 74) = 8.62, p <.05). Thus, while more primary school teachers said ‘yes’ more secondary school teachers disagreed. These results seem to suggest that most needs for the improvement of the quality of education at secondary level were not met compared to primary schools. Perhaps, efforts were being channelled to

primary schools, an association that needs further investigation. Although this study did not specifically find out whether there was a relationship between teacher performance and observation, some studies have revealed that inspection does not necessarily bring about good teacher performance. For instance, Lupimo (2014) in a study of the role of inspection in improving academic performance in community schools in Tanzania revealed that, school inspection was not effective in improving academic performance because academic performance remained poor since teacher performance was influenced by so many factors. According to Lupimo, (2014), most teachers had a negative view of inspection. This view is somewhat similar to Bülbül, Tunc, Özdem, Ozdem, & Inandi, (2013) who reported that teachers viewed inspection as a mechanism which contributed little to quality of education. This perception may be resulting from the way inspection and specifically lesson observation has been conducted over the years. Lesson observation should be seen as an opportunity for teachers to learn and understand new concepts in education, learn new skills and develop new attitudes of dealing with classroom pedagogy. Education standards officers should be the carriers of new innovations in education and specifically in teaching when they go to observe lessons. This makes the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum more meaningful and progressive. In any case, lesson observations by standards officers provided an opportunity for data collection, turning the practice into an opportunity for research to assess and reflect on pedagogies that work best for learner performance. It is therefore expected that education standards officers make publications on what they observe and recommend best measures to improve teaching and learning in schools. The Directorate of Standards and Curriculum in which education standards officers are found should be construed as a hub for knowledge, skills and policy transformation in education and teachers' professional development.

## **Conclusion**

The study established that teachers both at primary and secondary sectors have acknowledged being observed while teaching by the education standards officers. However, the efficacy of the lesson observation exercise was highly questioned. In this regard, it appears that there was a huge mismatch between the vision of education standards officers and the teachers in the classroom. To ensure effectiveness in this exercise, policy makers and implementers need to collaborate if the exercise was to have a meaningful imprint on the performance of teachers and ultimately the learners and the education system as a whole.

From the findings of this study, it is clear that if teachers are not satisfied with observations that standard officers conducted, the outcomes of observations may not be realised. This is because teachers may not be doing what is expected of them except when education standards officers were scheduled to observe them. By and large, the outcomes of the observations are dependent on the actual or perceived experiences teachers have in this encounter. Whether the observation is rated positive or negative is based on teachers' perceptions. Thus a change in attitudes by teachers is required. If the focus of education standards officers in observing teachers is to help teachers improve their teaching, teachers' perceptions of them are likely to be positive.

## ***Recommendations***

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Standards officers should provide encouraging feedback to observed teachers so that observation is positively construed as professional development activity rather than a fault finding exercise.
2. Since standard officers are the experts in teaching and possess a wealthy of experience in pedagogy, it is important that they provide demonstration lessons targeting teachers in schools through various platforms such as workshops,

seminars and other professional forums. With all the advanced technological in the world today, several other platforms can be used to provide demonstration lessons to teachers before and after they are observed.

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