

School Quality Coordinators in Kosovo: Roles, Responsibilities, and Challenges

Kosovo case study

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges faced by quality coordinators in carrying out their roles in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The research aims to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of quality coordination mechanisms within schools. A mixed-method approach was used, combining document analysis and quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires. The survey involved 41 school principals, 56 quality coordinators, and 10 representatives from Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) across 14 municipalities. Data were analyzed using SPSS. The findings reveal inconsistencies in the application of criteria for appointing quality coordinators according to administrative instructions. In several schools, coordinators are appointed through temporary arrangements and many lack formal certification or relevant training. The study also identifies unclear job descriptions and overlapping responsibilities between coordinators and school directors, which reduce efficiency. Additional challenges include limited professional development opportunities, insufficient resources, weak collaboration among school staff, and teachers' reluctance to take on additional responsibilities. The study highlights the need for clearer policies, systematic training, and stronger institutional support to improve the effectiveness of the quality coordinator role in schools.

Keywords: List four to seven keywords separated with commas

INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance represents one of the most significant weaknesses in pre-university education in Kosovo. The existing mechanisms, such as the Pedagogical Institute of Kosovo, municipal pedagogical institutions, and school pedagogues, were dismantled in 2000 by a UNMIK decision without being replaced by new and effective systems. Although institutions like the Pedagogical Institute of Kosovo and the Education Inspectorate were established, their functions did not encompass quality assurance. In recent years, there has been a trend toward re-employing pedagogues and psychologists in schools; however, their efforts remain uncoordinated and lack oversight from external bodies (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MEST], 2017; Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo [PSAK], 2017–2021).

The Twinning Project, *Support for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Education Sector in Kosovo 2011–2016*, funded by the European Union, assisted the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in formulating a comprehensive strategy for quality assurance. This strategy aims to establish a complete quality assurance system within the pre-university education sector in Kosovo, thereby enhancing educational services and improving learning outcomes (MEST, 2016).

The strategy encompasses four key components, articulated through strategic objectives and corresponding measures: the establishment of effective quality assurance mechanisms, the advancement of developmental planning at both school and municipal levels, the enhancement of quality assurance capacities across all levels, and the raising of awareness among stakeholders about quality assurance (MEST, 2016).

Within MEST, a quality coordinator has been designated to support and coordinate the activities of quality coordinators at both the municipal education directorate (MED) level and the school level. Each MED is mandated to appoint a staff member responsible for quality assurance at the municipal level, whose duties include coordinating the work of quality coordinators in schools. In some municipalities, these coordinators have been appointed, while in others this has not yet occurred due to limited staff and ambiguity regarding the quality coordinator's job responsibilities (MEST, 2016).

To assist school directors in ensuring quality at the school level, a quality coordinator is appointed; however, the school director retains ultimate responsibility for all processes within the school. The director is accountable for implementing legal and sub-legal acts as well as ensuring the quality of the teaching and learning process, among other duties. Given the ongoing developments in education and policies aimed at quality enhancement, the school director is required, based on Administrative Instruction No. 24/2016, to appoint a quality coordinator at the school level in accordance with established criteria (MEST, 2016). The primary responsibility of the quality coordinator is to oversee the implementation of quality assurance procedures at the school level and to provide guidance to teachers in this area.

In 2016, training commenced for the first groups of quality coordinators at the national level, supported by KulturKontakt Austria and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. While most participants began their roles as quality coordinators, in some municipalities their work has not been effectively operationalized at the school level (MEST, 2017).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Before commencing field research, an examination of existing literature, both national and international research reports, and current legislation regarding quality assurance in schools was conducted. Almadani (2011) explores the meaning of quality assurance, challenges several existing procedures, and proposes improved pathways for the 21st century. He argues that quality assurance must focus on the primary educational goals at every stage, remaining central to all procedures aimed at evaluating quality. His study illustrates this approach by considering the perspectives of 793 students reflecting on their experiences as they completed their educational journeys in secondary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The aim of Almadani's research was to demonstrate how focusing on current students can identify key issues needing attention to enhance educational delivery.

Another pertinent study examines quality assurance and its characteristics within secondary education, specifically concerning performance assessment. This perspective assumes that examination performance at the school, district, or national level serves as an indicator of quality within schools, although this assumption lacks supportive evidence. Bradley and Taylor (2003) indicate that at the school level, the most significant determinant of examination performance is, in fact, school quality.

Quality remains a central focus on numerous agendas and has likely seen improvements as a critical task for any institution. However, many individuals find the concept of quality enigmatic, struggling to define and often measure it effectively. Personal interpretations of quality can conflict with one another, and as Sallis (2002) notes, it is common for experts to arrive at different conclusions regarding what constitutes a quality school, college, or university (p. 26).

Quality assurance is crucial for accountability and for supporting the continuous development of schools, teaching, and learning. According to Cedefop (2014), quality management aims to achieve quality goals through planning, monitoring, assurance, and improvement of outcomes. Involving all members of the school community enables comprehensive quality control, a process intended to be conducted by management, particularly by the quality coordinator at the school level in Kosovo.

Governments are increasingly concerned about ensuring the quality of public services, including education. In educational systems, schools are responsible for assisting all students in meeting standards and effectively utilizing resources. Within the context of the European and National Quality Frameworks, systems emphasize learning outcomes, defined as "statements of what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do at the end of a learning process" (Cedefop, 2014).

The quality of education significantly impacts school development. A comparative study examining quality assurance systems across seven Southeastern European countries concludes that "the quality of education in the region cannot be threatened by a lack of resources," but rather by "certain other governance arrangements, such as missing or dysfunctional accountability links" (Murafa, 2013). The authors argue that schools' function as implementing agencies for policies mandated by the central government, which bears full responsibility for ensuring quality in education. Based on findings from seven state reports, they offer common policy recommendations, three of which warrant special attention: (1) closing the quality assurance system cycle to establish real accountability based on performance; (2) enhancing municipal capacities to address educational issues rather than merely acting as financial dispensers; and (3) developing mechanisms to expose actors to objective external evaluations (Murafa, 2013).

According to the Strategy for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, providing quality education at the pre-university level is the only viable method to enhance students' opportunities for further education and better employment. Quality in education is a complex issue intertwined with governance, leadership, infrastructure, teacher preparation and training, curriculum quality, and the quality of textbooks. Thus, quality assurance represents a complex endeavor that necessitates multiple parallel measures to address various aspects related to quality (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MEST], 2016).

Based on the Administrative Instruction for School Performance Assessment, school management forms a self-assessment team (SAT) consisting of three to five members and appoints a team coordinator. Members of this team may include the quality coordinator, a representative from the teaching staff, and a representative from the professional service of the educational institution (MEST, 2017). Evidence from national monitoring reports indicates that this structure is intended to strengthen internal evaluation mechanisms in schools (Kosovo Pedagogical Institute [KPI], 2018, p. 110).

Perceptions of education inspectors and quality coordinators regarding institutional interest and commitment to implementing the school performance assessment system vary and are influenced by past experiences in implementing reforms in other areas, such as the new curriculum and teacher evaluation system.

Overall, participants express dissatisfaction with the current practices, interest, and commitment of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) regarding the implementation of educational policies for quality assurance in pre-university education in Kosovo. They are particularly critical of municipal education directorates (MEDs) for their handling of quality coordinators' roles, as well as for their support in conducting internal assessments of school performance and executing the quality assurance cycle in schools. Many participants cite a lack of human resources in most MEDs, compounded by limited interest and commitment from some MEDs to fulfill their regulatory roles concerning quality coordinators and to support schools in their internal assessment processes (KPI, 2018).

MEDs are insufficiently interested or committed to the effective appointment of school quality coordinators and have not resolved this issue (KPI, 2018). The appointment process for quality coordinators has often occurred in a manner similar to that for elective subjects. Even in this context, appointments are frequently made merely to fill positions, though this is not the case in every instance (KPI, 2018).

Municipal policies show a lack of interest in implementing the Administrative Instruction concerning quality coordinators while more than ten teachers remain off the payroll. No officials from MEST appear to be engaged in the practical enforcement of this Administrative Instruction, as the appointment of some coordinators remains purely nominal (KPI, 2018, p. 108).

The absence of support from MEDs is particularly emphasized, especially regarding official backing for the roles of quality coordinators in schools and financial resources necessary for implementing measures aimed at improving performance in quality criteria. This lack of clarity regarding quality coordinators in schools has incited debates that prolong the process, resulting in some teachers losing their seriousness regarding these efforts, as noted by numerous school directors.

In particular, there is a noted need to functionalize quality coordinators at the central level, within MEDs, and in each school, as most MEDs have not succeeded in effectively regulating the roles of quality coordinators in schools (KPI, 2018, p. 144).

The concept of quality in education is multidimensional and extends beyond compliance with formal standards. Contemporary approaches conceptualize quality through three interconnected dimensions: input (resources, teacher qualifications), process (teaching practices, leadership, and collaboration), and output (student achievement and competencies).

In this context, quality assurance should be understood as a continuous cycle that includes planning, implementation, monitoring, and improvement. The role of the quality coordinator is essential in linking these dimensions and ensuring that policy expectations are translated into effective school-level practices. When properly functionalized, quality coordinators contribute to building a culture of continuous improvement rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

Recent international research emphasizes distributed leadership, collaborative school cultures, and data-informed decision-making as key drivers of school quality (OECD, 2020; European Commission, 2021). Quality assurance systems are increasingly oriented toward internal evaluation processes and the use of evidence for improvement.

In this regard, the role of school-based quality coordinators has evolved from administrative support to a more strategic and instructional function. This shift highlights the need to strengthen their professional capacity, clarify their responsibilities, and ensure continuous institutional support within the Kosovo education system.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Model

This study employs a mixed-method research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The use of a mixed-method approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by integrating numerical data with participants' experiences and perspectives. The quantitative component focuses on collecting measurable data through structured questionnaires, which enables the analysis of patterns and trends related to the role and challenges of quality coordinators in schools. The qualitative component complements these findings by gathering descriptive data through open-ended questions, allowing participants to express their views, experiences, and concerns in greater detail. In addition, the study adopts a descriptive and evaluative approach, aiming not only to describe the current situation regarding the work of quality coordinators but also to assess the effectiveness and challenges associated with their role within the school system.

3.2 Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the challenges faced by quality coordinators in carrying out their responsibilities in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The study seeks to explore how quality coordinators perform their roles in practice, the extent to which their duties are clearly defined and supported by institutional structures, and the difficulties they encounter in

implementing quality assurance procedures at the school level. By examining these issues, the research aims to provide a clearer understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of quality coordinators and to contribute to improving policies and practices related to quality assurance in the pre-university education system in Kosovo.

3.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by several research questions that aim to explore the role, responsibilities, and challenges of quality coordinators in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. These questions focus on the procedures for appointing quality coordinators, their professional preparation, and the difficulties they encounter while performing their duties in the school context. Specifically, the research addresses the following questions:

1. Were quality coordinators selected in accordance with the criteria defined in the Administrative Instruction (AI)?
2. Do quality coordinators at the school level have formal appointments or official institutional decisions confirming their roles?
3. Are quality coordinators adequately trained and certified to perform their responsibilities?
4. What roles and responsibilities do quality coordinators perform within schools?
5. What challenges do quality coordinators face in fulfilling their duties and implementing quality assurance processes in schools?

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study includes quality coordinators operating at three levels of the education system in Kosovo: the school level, the Municipal Directorate of Education (MED) level, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) level. Considering that approximately 900 schools in Kosovo are expected to have quality coordinators, a representative sample was selected from primary and lower secondary schools across different municipalities.

Data from school directors were collected from 41 directors working in 14 municipalities of Kosovo. Among them, 25 directors represented schools located in rural areas, while 16 represented schools in urban areas. In terms of school type, 35 of these institutions were primary and lower secondary schools, whereas 6 were primary schools.

The sample of quality coordinators included 56 coordinators from schools. Of these, 37 were from rural schools and 19 from urban schools. Regarding the type of school, 50 coordinators worked in primary and lower secondary schools, while 6 worked in primary schools. In addition, the study also included quality coordinators from the Municipal Directorates of Education (MEDs) in 10 municipalities in Kosovo. Detailed information about the sample is presented in the corresponding table.

Table 1. Data for School Directors, Quality Coordinators in Schools, and in the Directorate of Education (MED)

Category	Gender (F)	Gender (M)	Age (< 50 years)	Age (> 50 years)	SHLP	Faculty	Master	Experience (< 1 year)	Experience (1 to 5 years)	Experience (> 5 years)
School Principals	39%	61%	83%	17%	/	87.8%	12.2%	19.5%	41.5%	39%
Quality Coordinators in Schools	52%	48%	80%	20%	/	59%	41%	71%	11%	18%
Coordinators in MED	40%	60%	90%	10%	/	40%	60%	40%	50%	10%

Research Methods

This study employed several research methods in order to obtain reliable and comprehensive data regarding the role and challenges of quality coordinators in schools. The resource analysis method was used to review and analyze relevant theoretical and empirical literature related to quality assurance in education. For this purpose, various national and international sources were examined, including scientific publications, research reports, and policy documents. Particular attention was given to studies and documents addressing the roles, responsibilities, and professional practices of quality coordinators in educational institutions.

The survey method was used as the primary approach for collecting empirical data. Through structured questionnaires, information was gathered from quality coordinators working at the school level and at the Municipal Directorate of Education (MED) level, as well as from school directors. This method enabled the collection of firsthand information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the implementation of quality assurance practices in schools.

The statistical method was applied to process and present the collected quantitative data. Standard statistical procedures were used to summarize the responses obtained from the questionnaires. The results were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages and displayed in tables to facilitate interpretation and comparison of the findings.

In addition, the comparative method was used to analyze similarities and differences between the responses of different participant groups. The data obtained from school directors, school quality coordinators, and MED representatives were compared in order to identify patterns, discrepancies, and common challenges related to the implementation of the quality coordinator role within the education system.

Research Instruments

The main research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire. Separate questionnaires were designed for school directors and for quality coordinators working at both the school and municipal levels. The questionnaires included a combination of closed-ended questions with multiple-choice answers and open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide additional explanations and perspectives. This combination of question types enabled the collection of both quantitative data and qualitative insights.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the data collection process, school directors and quality coordinators were informed about the purpose and objectives of the research. Participation in the study was voluntary, and confidentiality was ensured. The questionnaires were anonymous in order to encourage honest and unbiased responses. Dates and times for completing the questionnaires were arranged in advance, and participants were given sufficient time to complete them. During the process, researchers were present to provide clarifications when necessary and to ensure that the questionnaires were completed properly.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were processed and analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Quantitative data obtained from closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies and percentages. The results were then organized and presented in tables to facilitate interpretation.

For the qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions, an inductive analysis approach was used. Responses were carefully reviewed and grouped according to recurring themes and issues raised by participants. This process enabled the identification of key challenges and patterns related to the role and functioning of quality coordinators in schools. Based on these analyses, conclusions and recommendations were developed to contribute to improving quality assurance practices in the education system.

RESEARCH RESULTS

During the analysis of the collected data, the perceptions and responses of the participants were compared in order to identify both similarities and differences among the respondent groups. The analysis provided a clearer understanding of how quality coordinators are selected in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo, the roles they perform in the process of quality assurance, and the challenges they encounter while carrying out their responsibilities. The findings offer valuable insights into the current situation of quality coordination in schools and highlight areas that require improvement in order to strengthen the effectiveness of this role within the education system.

The results presented in this section are based on the responses of three groups of participants: school directors, quality coordinators at the school level, and coordinators at the Municipal Directorates of Education (MEDs). Their perspectives were examined in relation to several key aspects, including the process of selecting quality coordinators, the extent to which the criteria defined in the Administrative Instruction are implemented, the level of training and certification of coordinators, the roles and responsibilities they perform in schools, and the challenges they face in their daily work.

In particular, respondents were asked to provide their views on the procedures used for selecting quality coordinators in schools. The responses provided by school directors and quality coordinators revealed notable variations in perceptions regarding this process. These differences highlight inconsistencies in the implementation of the criteria established by the relevant administrative instruction. The following table presents the distribution of responses and illustrates the differences in percentages between the respondent groups.

Table 2. Selection of School Coordinators

Who selected the quality coordinators in schools?	School Principals	Coordinators in Schools
School Principal	56.4%	31.6%
Principal and Staff	25.6%	54.4%
Other	17.9%	12.3%

Only 69% of the school directors who participated in the research reported that the selection of quality coordinators was carried out in accordance with the criteria defined in Administrative Instruction (AI) No. 24/2016. In contrast, 95% of school quality coordinators stated that their selection had been based on the established criteria. However, when asked whether their professional status had been formally regulated, only 70% of coordinators confirmed that their status was officially defined.

The responses from coordinators at the Municipal Directorates of Education (MEDs) show a somewhat different perspective. Only 60% of MED coordinators indicated that the selection of quality coordinators was conducted according to the administrative instruction, while 40% reported that the established criteria were not respected and that the status of quality coordinators in schools remains insufficiently regulated.

These differences in responses suggest inconsistencies in the implementation of the criteria for selecting quality coordinators across schools and municipalities. While school coordinators tend to perceive the process as compliant, directors and MED representatives report lower levels of adherence, indicating a lack of uniform procedures and institutional clarity.

This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting weak accountability mechanisms and unclear governance structures as key challenges in education systems (Murafa, 2013). It also confirms the importance of standardized procedures and institutional oversight in ensuring effective quality assurance practices (OECD, 2020).

The detailed comparison of these responses is presented in the corresponding table.

Table 3. Implementation of criteria set by Administrative Instruction

Has the selection of quality coordinators been made based on the criteria set by Administrative Instruction UA 24/2016?	Responses	School Principals	School Coordinators	MED Coordinators
Yes		69%	94.6%	60%
No		31%	5.4%	40%
No response		/	/	/

Furthermore, 61% of school directors reported that quality coordinators were appointed through an official institutional act, while 39% stated that the appointment was made by a decision of the Municipal Directorate of Education (MED).

Regarding training and certification, the responses reveal notable differences among school directors, school quality coordinators, and coordinators at the Municipal Directorates of Education. Only 30% of school directors indicated that quality coordinators in their schools had completed the required training

and certification. About half of the directors stated that coordinators are currently in the process of training, while a smaller proportion reported that the coordinators have neither completed the training nor obtained certification.

In contrast, approximately 90% of quality coordinators in schools reported that they are currently participating in training programs, while only a small percentage indicated that they have fully completed the necessary training and certification.

Responses from MED coordinators show a similar variation. Only about half of them stated that school quality coordinators have been trained, whereas the remaining respondents indicated that coordinators are either still in the process of training or have not yet received training at all.

These findings highlight inconsistencies in the training and certification of quality coordinators across schools and municipalities. A detailed overview of the responses provided by school directors and coordinators is presented in the following table.

Have the quality coordinators in schools been trained and certified?

Responses	School Principals	School Coordinators	DKA Coordinators
Yes	30.8%	12.5%	50%
No	23%	/	40%
In Process	46.2%	87.5%	10%

Table 4. Training and Certification of School Coordinators

The findings indicate differences in perceptions regarding the clarity of roles and responsibilities of quality coordinators across institutional levels. While approximately 70% of school quality coordinators report having a satisfactory understanding of their duties, school directors express more moderate confidence, and MED representatives report even higher levels of perceived clarity.

Despite these positive perceptions, the data suggest that clarity of roles is not consistently ensured in practice. In several cases, coordinators rely primarily on administrative instructions and personal initiative to understand their responsibilities, particularly when formal training and institutional support are lacking.

This variation highlights a gap between perceived and actual clarity of roles, indicating that responsibilities are not always sufficiently operationalized across schools and municipalities.

How clear are the duties of quality coordinators in schools?	Responses	School Principals	School Coordinators	MED Coordinators
At a satisfactory level	56.4%	67.9%	90%	
Not sufficient	43.6%	32.1%	10%	
Not at all	/	/	/	

Table 5. Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities of Quality Coordinators

The lack of consistent role clarity contributes to overlaps between quality coordinators and school directors, reducing the efficiency of quality assurance processes. In addition, unclear expectations may lead to variations in how coordinators perform their duties across different schools.

This finding supports the argument that clearly defined roles and responsibilities are essential for effective institutional functioning and accountability (OECD, 2020). Without clear operational guidelines and structured support, the role of quality coordinators remains only partially implemented in practice.

4.1 The Role of Quality Coordinators in Schools

The role of quality coordinators in schools is defined in official policy documents, particularly in Administrative Instruction No. 24/2016, which outlines their responsibilities in supporting and implementing quality assurance processes within schools. According to this instruction, quality coordinators are responsible for planning, organizing, and monitoring quality assurance activities in cooperation with the school principal. They also assist the principal and teachers in implementing the curriculum, conduct internal school evaluations, and contribute to various activities related to improving the teaching and learning process.

In practice, quality coordinators play an important role in supporting the organization and monitoring of educational processes within the school. They ensure that teachers prepare annual, bi-monthly, and daily lesson plans in accordance with curriculum requirements, provide professional suggestions and feedback, and monitor the implementation of teaching activities. In addition, they contribute to project development and help address challenges that arise in the educational process.

Quality coordinators also support the governing and professional bodies of the school in drafting key strategic documents, such as the School Development Plan and the Action Plan. They collaborate with the principal and school staff in matters related to quality improvement, analyze and interpret the results of internal school evaluations, and help identify strengths and weaknesses that emerge from these assessments.

Another important aspect of their role is to act as a bridge between the school leadership and the teaching staff. Quality coordinators provide guidance and support to teachers and to the school self-evaluation team, helping them implement quality assurance procedures more effectively. They also collaborate with coordinators at the Municipal Directorate of Education (MED) level in the preparation of the School Development Plan, the organization of training activities, and other forms of professional development aimed at supporting successful curriculum implementation.

Furthermore, quality coordinators work closely with all stakeholders in the school community, including teachers, students, parents, and school management bodies. Through this collaboration, they analyze the current situation in the school, organize and initiate improvement activities, conduct research when necessary, and develop projects aimed at enhancing educational quality.

According to coordinators working in the Municipal Directorates of Education, the role of school quality coordinators is visible in several areas, including their involvement in drafting development plans, preparing quality assurance documents, and supporting internal school evaluation processes. Their responsibilities include supporting, monitoring, reporting, and evaluating the implementation of development plans, as well as coordinating the school quality assurance process to improve educational outcomes.

Quality assurance in schools therefore involves cooperation among several institutional levels. The activities of school quality coordinators are coordinated with those of MED coordinators and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST), as specified in Administrative Instruction No. 24/2016. This instruction defines the duties and responsibilities of quality coordinators at the school, municipal, and central levels.

At the municipal level, the MED quality coordinator is responsible for coordinating the activities of school quality coordinators and ensuring effective collaboration between schools, the MED, and the ministry. Their responsibilities include implementing the tasks defined in the administrative instruction, monitoring quality development in schools, participating in meetings of school bodies when necessary, and providing guidance on issues related to quality assurance and the development of school improvement plans.

4.2 Challenges Faced by Quality Coordinators at the School Level

The findings consistently identify several key challenges affecting the work of quality coordinators in schools. These include insufficient training, unclear role definitions, limited collaboration among school staff, and lack of institutional support.

Limited collaboration between teachers and coordinators emerges as a major issue, reducing the effectiveness of planning and quality assurance activities. In addition, many coordinators operate without formal contracts, clear job descriptions, or adequate resources, which further constrains their performance.

Another important challenge relates to resistance to change among some teachers, particularly in adopting new practices related to curriculum implementation and quality improvement. This reflects broader systemic difficulties in building a culture of continuous improvement within schools.

These findings are consistent with international research emphasizing that effective quality assurance requires strong collaboration, professional capacity, and supportive institutional environments (European Commission, 2021; OECD, 2020).

4.3 Collaboration of Quality Coordinators with School Directors

Collaboration between quality coordinators and school directors is an important factor for the effective implementation of quality assurance processes in schools. When asked about the planning, organization, and monitoring of tasks related to quality in schools, the responses of school directors showed differing perceptions. Approximately 41% of school directors reported that the quality coordinator collaborates with the school principal in ensuring and monitoring quality-related processes. In contrast, 51% stated that such collaboration does not occur regularly, while 8% indicated that coordinators contribute only to a limited extent in these activities.

A majority of 71% of school directors stated that quality coordinators assist the governing and professional bodies of the school in drafting key strategic documents such as the School Development Plan and the Action Plan. According to these directors, coordinators also inform school leadership and teachers about ongoing reforms in the school system, provide ideas for setting school priorities, offer professional suggestions for implementing the curriculum, and contribute to the development of projects

aimed at improving educational quality. However, 29% of directors indicated that quality coordinators do not play an active role in these processes or do not sufficiently inform and support the school staff.

Coordinators at the Municipal Directorates of Education (MEDs) expressed similar views to those of school directors. Around 70% of MED coordinators stated that school quality coordinators actively support professional bodies in drafting the School Development Plan. According to them, following internal school evaluations, coordinators help identify school priorities and needs, assist in the preparation of planning documents, and contribute to organizing working or informational meetings at the municipal level. These activities often include support for curriculum implementation and the organization of training sessions and professional development activities for teachers, involving representatives from MEDs, members of school evaluation teams, school directors, and school quality coordinators.

Regarding overall cooperation between institutions, most MED coordinators reported that collaboration with schools is generally very good, while a smaller number indicated that cooperation is limited. Among quality coordinators at the school level, only 37.5% stated that collaboration with other actors is very good, while 27% reported that such collaboration does not exist at all, and the remaining respondents indicated that cooperation is only moderate or occasional.

Interestingly, the views of school directors differ from those of school coordinators. About 90% of school directors stated that quality coordinators collaborate effectively with the principal and school staff in planning, organizing, and assessing progress in areas related to school quality.

However, differences are also evident regarding the analysis and interpretation of school self-evaluation results. Only 39% of school directors reported that quality coordinators, together with school staff, analyze and interpret the results of school self-evaluations at a satisfactory level, whereas 61% of directors believed that this process is not carried out sufficiently.

Similarly, when asked about reporting on the quality management process and its outcomes, only half of the school directors indicated that they were satisfied with the reporting provided by quality coordinators. The remaining respondents expressed dissatisfaction, stating that reporting on quality-related processes and results is not conducted at a satisfactory level.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The findings of this study reveal both similarities and differences in the perceptions of school directors, school quality coordinators, and coordinators at the Municipal Directorates of Education regarding the selection, training, and roles of quality coordinators in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The results indicate that although many schools' directors report that coordinators are selected according to the criteria established by official regulations, a significantly higher percentage of coordinators themselves believe that the selection process follows the required criteria. This difference in perception suggests inconsistencies in the implementation of the procedures defined in the relevant administrative instructions.

Training and certification also emerged as major challenges. Only a relatively small number of coordinators reported having completed the required training and certification, while many are still in the process or have not yet participated in training programs. This lack of systematic training contributes

to varying levels of clarity regarding the duties and responsibilities of quality coordinators within schools.

According to official regulations, the role of quality coordinators is to plan, organize, and monitor quality assurance processes in schools, support the implementation of the curriculum, and collaborate with school leadership and staff in drafting and implementing school development plans. However, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of this role is often limited by several factors, including unclear job descriptions, insufficient institutional support, limited cooperation from teachers, and inadequate working conditions and resources.

Overall, the results highlight the need for more consistent implementation of the selection criteria, comprehensive and continuous professional training for coordinators, and stronger institutional support from municipal and central education authorities. Strengthening these aspects would enable quality coordinators to perform their responsibilities more effectively and contribute more meaningfully to school improvement and the enhancement of educational quality.

The findings of this study align with international research, which suggests that the effectiveness of quality assurance roles depends not only on formal policy frameworks but also on their practical implementation. The gap identified between policy and practice in Kosovo reflects broader systemic challenges in education reform processes. Without clear role definitions, systematic training, and strong institutional support, quality coordinators cannot fully contribute to school improvement.

The findings of this study highlight several key messages that are essential for improving the effectiveness of quality coordinators in schools. First, the appointment of quality coordinators remains inconsistent across schools and municipalities, indicating a clear gap between policy provisions and their practical implementation. This suggests the need for more transparent, standardized, and merit-based procedures in the selection process.

Second, the study reveals that a significant number of coordinators have not completed the required training, or are still in the process of being trained. This situation limits their ability to effectively perform their duties and indicates the necessity for continuous and structured professional development programs that ensure all coordinators are adequately prepared for their role.

Third, the findings point to unclear job descriptions and overlapping responsibilities between quality coordinators and school leadership. This lack of clarity reduces efficiency and creates confusion in practice. Therefore, it is important to develop clear operational guidelines and define responsibilities more precisely.

Finally, the study highlights weak collaboration among key stakeholders, including teachers, school leadership, and municipal structures. Limited cooperation reduces the effectiveness of quality assurance processes. Strengthening collaboration and building a supportive institutional culture is therefore essential for improving school quality.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the roles, responsibilities, and challenges of quality coordinators in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The findings reveal that, although the role of quality coordinators

is formally defined in policy documents, its implementation in practice remains inconsistent across schools and municipalities.

The study identified several key issues, including inconsistencies in the appointment process, insufficient training and certification, unclear role definitions, and limited collaboration among stakeholders. These challenges indicate a gap between policy expectations and actual implementation in schools. Similar findings have been highlighted in previous research, which emphasizes the importance of clear governance structures, accountability, and professional capacity in ensuring effective quality assurance systems (Murafa, 2013; OECD, 2020).

In particular, the lack of systematic training and clearly defined responsibilities limits the ability of quality coordinators to effectively contribute to school improvement processes. In addition, limited institutional support and collaboration further constrain the operationalization of quality assurance mechanisms at the school level.

Despite these challenges, the findings also indicate that quality coordinators have the potential to play a significant role in strengthening internal evaluation processes and promoting a culture of continuous improvement, if adequately supported.

Based on these findings, the study highlights the need for coordinated actions across school, municipal, and central levels. The following section provides structured recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the quality coordinator role within the education system.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

To enhance the practical relevance of this study, the findings are translated into concrete and actionable measures across three levels of the education system. These actions address key issues identified in the study, including appointment procedures, training, role clarity, and collaboration.

School Level (Immediate Actions)- At the school level, actions can be implemented immediately with minimal structural changes:

- Formalize the appointment of quality coordinators through official school decisions, ensuring compliance with Administrative Instruction No. 24/2016
- Clearly define and communicate the roles and responsibilities of quality coordinators to all staff members
- Integrate quality assurance activities into daily school practices, including lesson planning, internal evaluation, and monitoring
- Establish regular meetings between coordinators, teachers, and school leadership to strengthen collaboration
- Allocate specific time within the school schedule for coordinators to perform their duties effectively

Municipal Level – MED (Short- to Medium-Term Actions)- At the municipal level, coordinated actions are required to ensure consistency and support:

- Standardize the appointment process across municipalities by applying uniform criteria and procedures
- Monitor the implementation of administrative instructions and ensure that all schools formally appoint quality coordinators
- Organize continuous training programs and practical workshops based on the needs of coordinators
- Provide mentoring and on-site professional support, especially for newly appointed coordinators
- Support schools in implementing internal evaluation processes and using data for school improvement
- Ensure that coordinators are provided with adequate working conditions, including reduced teaching load where applicable

Central Level – MESTI (Long-Term Actions)- At the central level, systemic and policy-level interventions are required:

- Review and update Administrative Instruction No. 24/2016 to clarify roles, responsibilities, and appointment procedures
- Develop a standardized national framework for training, certification, and continuous professional development of quality coordinators
- Establish a national database of quality coordinators to ensure transparency, monitoring, and accountability
- Align the role of quality coordinators with contemporary quality assurance approaches, including internal evaluation and data-driven decision-making
- Ensure sustainable financial and institutional support for the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms
- Strengthen coordination between central, municipal, and school levels to ensure consistent policy implementation

These recommendations distinguish between actions that can be implemented immediately at the school level and those requiring institutional coordination or long-term policy reform. Such a structured approach increases the practical value of the study and supports evidence-based decision-making in the education system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance the effectiveness of quality coordinators in Kosovo's education system, this study proposes a set of structured recommendations organized across three institutional levels: school, municipal (MED), and central (MESTI). These recommendations are grouped into four key areas: appointment, training, roles, and collaboration.

- **Policy Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, a set of policy-oriented recommendations is proposed to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of the quality coordinator role in Kosovo's education system. These recommendations focus on four key areas: appointment, training, role clarity, and institutional collaboration.

1. Appointment Procedures

- Ensure full implementation of transparent and merit-based selection procedures in all schools
- Eliminate informal or temporary appointments and require formal institutional decisions
- Establish monitoring mechanisms at municipal and central levels to ensure compliance

2. Training and Professional Development

- Introduce a standardized national training and certification system for quality coordinators
- Ensure continuous professional development through regular training and mentoring
- Provide dedicated time and institutional support for coordinators to apply training in practice

3. Role Clarity and Functionality

- Clearly define and standardize the roles and responsibilities of quality coordinators across all levels
- Avoid overlapping responsibilities between coordinators and school leadership
- Align the role with modern quality assurance approaches, including internal evaluation and data use

4. Collaboration and Institutional Support

- Strengthen collaboration among schools, municipalities, and central institutions
- Provide adequate resources and working conditions for coordinators
- Promote a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement within schools

Implementing these recommendations requires coordinated action across all levels of the education system. While some measures can be introduced immediately, others require long-term policy commitment and institutional reform.

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