

**School-Oriented Issues Affecting the Quality of Education:
A Qualitative Study for Academic Improvement**

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ABSTRACT There are numerous factors that affect the quality of education. Central to these are school-based factors spanning largely from the quality of educators and school management teams (SMTs) whose ultimate actions determine the quality of schools. The study sought to establish learners' views regarding the manner in which current school-based activities are affecting the quality of education. A qualitative research approach with a case study design was followed. The population of the study was 550 learners from two purposively sampled schools out of which 175 were conveniently sampled from Grade 8 to Grade 12 to participate in the study. Open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews were utilised to gather qualitative data. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the District office and relevant participating school authorities. The qualitative data was analysed using content analysis and presented through direct and verbatim quotations of the respondents. It emerged from the study that learners strongly held educators and SMTs accountable for compromising their potential performance. Effectiveness of institutional policies on educator and learner recruitment and retention, and provision of professional development opportunities were viewed as strong determinants of educator and learner quality and predictors of school management efficacy. Recommendations were made based on the findings.