Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions on Factors Affecting Quality Education at the Selected Basic Education High Schools in Sagaing

Myint Oo[1]

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the key factors of the quality of education at the high schools in Sagaing. A self-administered survey was conducted using the questionnaire, which was comprised of a demographic profile and information regarding all the variables. The study started by assessing various education input factors including, School factors, Teacher factors, Student factors and Curriculum factors. The study involved a sample of 141 respondents who were the principals and teachers of three High schools, and all respondents returned back their questionnaires. Data were analyzed by using descript statistics by the aid of SPSS and Microsoft excel. The findings indicated that all three high schools were at high level in all four factors. According to their responses to interview questions, "Teacher Factors" and "Student Factors" at urban high schools in Sagaing were found at the moderate satisfactory levels, but only one school had at the high level.

Keywords: quality of education, education input factors, School factors, Teacher factors, Student factors and Curriculum factors satisfactory levels

Introduction

Everything in this world has its own quality and value. However, education is considered as a process, not a product and therefore, the quality of education is difficult to define and measure. Since education has many purposes and components, questions regarding quality may primarily concern with its important aspects such as infrastructure, school buildings, administration, teachers' efficacy, teaching, or student achievement.

Grisay and Mahlck (1991) argued that education being a service and not a product, its quality cannot lie exclusively in the final output. Its quality should also be manifested in the delivery process. Quality of education should also take into account determinants such as provision of teachers, building, curriculum, equipment, textbooks, and teaching processes. For them, quality of education has a three-dimensional approach comprising quality of human and material resources available for teaching (inputs), teaching practices (process), and results (outcomes).

Education is one of the basic needs for human development and to escape from poverty (Sivakumar & Sarvalingam, 2010, as cited in Akareem and Hossain, 2016), it is necessary for national development and a prosperous society. According to Rahman and Uddin (2009) (as cited in Akareem and Hossain, 2016) education is the responsibility of the government and should be managed through national resources.

In Myanmar, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is the main provider of education. In recent years Myanmar's national education system has come under increased public scrutiny and debate due to growing expectations from students, parents, employers and citizens for education reforms **that will improve access, quality and equity** in the main education sub-sectors — preschool, kindergarten, primary, secondary and alternative education, and technical and vocational education and training and higher education (MOE,NESP,2016).

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1. Lecturer, Department of Educational Theory, Sagaing University of Education

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the key factors affecting quality education according to the perceptions of the principals and teachers. In order to support the general purpose, the specific objectives were set as follows;

1. To explore school factors which affect to the quality of education according to the perceptions of the principals and teachers at the High Schools in Sagaing,
2. To examine teacher factors which affect to the quality of education according to the perceptions of the principals and teachers at the High Schools in Sagaing,
3. To highlight student factors which affect the quality of education according to the perceptions of the principals and teachers at the High Schools in Sagaing, and
4. To review the curriculum factors which affect the quality of education according to the perceptions of the principals and teachers at the High Schools in Sagaing.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What are the levels of principals' and teachers' perceptions of school factors at selected high schools in Sagaing?
2. To what extent do principals and teachers perceive the student factors which at selected high schools in Sagaing?
3. What are the levels of principals' and teachers' perceptions of teacher factors at selected high schools in Sagaing?
4. To what extent do principals and teachers perceive the curriculum factors at selected high schools in Sagaing?

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the thinking and the conduct of the study as well as data analysis and interpretation is as follows:

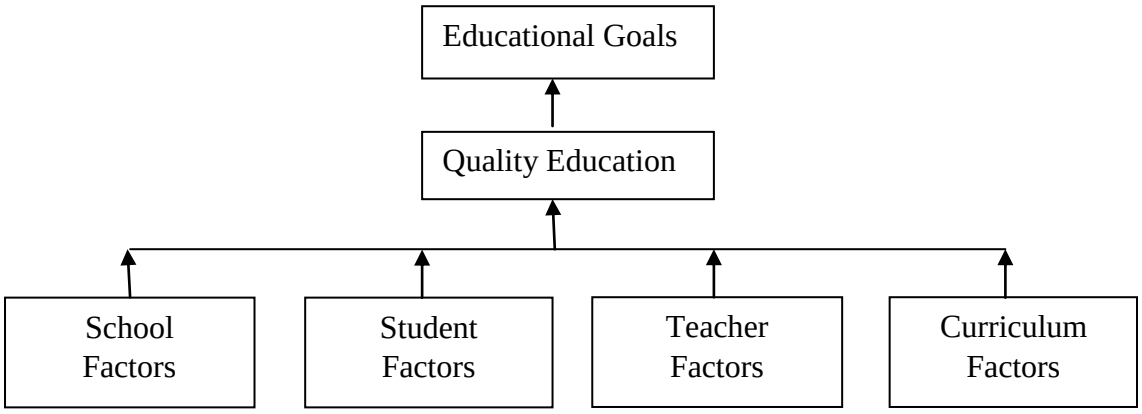

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Four Factors Affecting Quality Education

(Source: Elly, M., 2015, Determinants of Quality Education Provided at Secondary School Level)

This conceptual framework model was used to indicate the existing relationship between the dependent variable (Quality Education and Educational Goals) and a number of several other independent variables (Four Factors). Also, the model shows the influence of background factors/variables to the independent variable Under this study the independent variables are School Factors, Student Factors, Teacher Factors and Curriculum Factors.

Defining Quality of Education

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993).

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien, Thailand, identified that to achieve the fundamental goal of equity, quality of education was instrumental in assuring children's cognitive development. UNESCO's education quality definition emphasized more on 'lifelong learning' and 'relevance' as most important factors (Delors, 1996).

In addition to this, UNICEF also strongly emphasized the desirable dimensions of quality, as identified in the Dakar Framework. Its paper 'Defining Quality in Education' recognizes five dimensions of quality: learners, environment, content, processes, and outcomes, founded on 'the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation' (UNICEF 2000).

Perspectives on education quality can be clarified on the basis of a conceptual framework that describes education. The most frequently used method is to depict education as a productive system, in which inputs are transferred into outcomes. Steps in elaborating this basic scheme consist in:

(a) including a context dimension that functions as a source of inputs and constraints but also as a generator of the required outputs that should be produced;
(b) differentiating outcomes into direct outputs, longer-term outcomes and ultimate societal impact;
(c) recognising the hierarchical nature of conditions and processes, which comes down to considering the functioning of public education as just another example of ''multilevel governance'' (Hanushek & Raymond,2002).

UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report UNESCO 2005 highlights the importance of quality of education provided in schools in terms of the teaching–learning processes. It relates quality schooling with higher life-time incomes. According to the report, higher quality of schools enhances students' cognitive skills which directly influence their performance in the labour market in terms of individual earnings, greater productivity, and economic growth. Schools are also instrumental in developing desirable non-cognitive outcomes among students such as honesty, reliability, determination, etc.

Factors Affecting the Quality in Education

(a) Quality in School or Learning Environment

The most important factor for quality in education is the school or learning environment. It includes both Physical Learning Environment and Psychophysical Learning Environment. Physical learning environments consist of overall infrastructure, where the whole process is executed. The other facilities include lab, libraries, common rooms, resource rooms, game and sports facilities etc. A good infrastructure helps in better teaching learning process and hence develops better understanding. Psychophysical learning environment is related to the peaceful, safe, non-discriminative, fellow feeling, encouraging environment, which leads the active participation of each and every individual in education process (Ghumaan, 2013).

(b) Quality in Students or Learners

School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood

experiences and home support. Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999, as cited in UNICEF,2000).

(c) Quality in Teachers

The highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep The highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy.

Teaching methods that facilitate active student learning rather than promote passivity and rote memorization represent a new and difficult paradigm for many teachers, but one that needs to be understood and put into practice if learner outcomes are to improve (UNICEF,2000).

(d) Quality in Curriculum

This aspect is related to the theory provided through curriculum to what extent it is worthy for life and learner (human) development. Curriculum is that, what has all enclosed in it for a specific period of one unit of a class, to achieve certain developmental aspects. So a curriculum in terms of quality is that what enables a learner to lead his present and future life successfully and satisfactorily. It also includes its framing the curriculum according to the various psychological aspects as mental ability, age, interest, motivation, etc (Ghumaan, 2013).

Empirical Literature Review

Godfrey (2013) studied how quality of education should be re-defined for education achievements in Tanzania. What are stakeholders‟ opinions? This study aimed at finding out the perspectives of key education stakeholders on how they view and define quality of education in Tanzania. The study found out that definition of quality of education is broad and inclusive.

Furthermore, Abby (2008, as cited in Elly, 2015) studied Factors Influencing Educational Quality and Effectiveness in Developing Countries. This study reviewed educational quality and effectiveness in developing countries. The researcher came up with the following conclusions, a more inclusive model of education quality that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and that is more tailored to the differentiating factors present in the particular country, and be the basis for developing implementation plans for raising educational quality (Elly, 2015).

Burns (1978) views transformational and transactional leadership as being opposite ends of the leadership continuum. Unlike transformational leadership, he affirms that transactional leadership is task-oriented. He states that the transactional leader can only be successful when both the leaders and followers are in agreement with the tasks that are to be performed. It is a bargaining process and is limited to the extent that the purposes in the process are shared by all participants.

As Bass (1999) states, “Whereas transformational leaders uplift the morale, motivation, and morals of their followers, transactional leaders cater to their followers’ immediate self-interests. The transformational leader emphasized what you can do for your country – the transactional leader, what your country can do for you” (p. 9).

Methodology

The research design and measures used in the research are presented. Research variables, questionnaire design and the data analysis procedures are also discussed.

Method

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, the mix method, qualitative and quantitative approaches, was adopted. A descriptive statistical design and questionnaire survey and interview were utilized for this study.

Population and Sample

This study focuses on all Basic Education High Schools in Sagaing. There are four high schools in Sagaing. Among them, one high school was randomly selected for pilot study. All teachers (Primary, Junior, and Senior) in the selected school were assigned as subject (N=33). The questionnaires were distributed to the teachers on 7th January, 2019, and collect them three days later. As a result of pilot testing, some items were found weak and were removed. After that a refined version of the questionnaire was reconstructed.
Among four high schools in Sagaing, one high school was used for pilot testing. The rest three high schools were assigned as sample. The schools were labeled as School 1, School 2, and School. All three principals and all teachers (Primary, Junior, and Senior) in the schools were assigned as subject (N=141).

Table 1. Number of Principals and Teachers Participated in the Study

Schools	Principal	Senior Teacher	Junior Teacher	Primary Teacher	Total
School 1	1	20	42	-	**63**
School 2	1	15	20	-	**36**
School 3	1	7	21	13	**42**
Total	**3**	**42**	**83**	**13**	**141**

Table 1. shows the number of principals and teachers participated in the study. Three principals, 42 senior teachers, 83 junior teachers and 13 primary teachers participated in the study.

Research Instrument

In this study, questionnaire survey method was used to collect necessary data as well as interview method was utilized either. As instrument, a survey questionnaire was developed based on related literature. It consists of 30 items. There are nine items for school factors (Item No. 1 to 9), seven items for student factors (Item No. 10 to 16), eight items for teacher factors (Item No.17 to 24), and six items for curriculum factors (Item No. 25 to 30) in the questionnaire. Five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree) was used. An open-ended question was also supplemented to the questionnaire. Moreover, if the mean score fall in the range of 1 to 2.49, it will be interpreted as low level, 2.50 to 3.49 as moderate level, and 3.50 to 5.00 as high level (Wierma,2000).

Reliability

In order to find out the internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to calculate the reliability of the research instrument. The reliability coefficient were found to be .90 for pilot testing, and .94 for main study, which are acceptable.

Analysis of the Data for Quantitative Study

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20 was used for the data obtained from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to tabulate means and standard deviations for each item and group of items. Independent Sample *t* Test and One- way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean values of the two or more groups.

Findings

According to the principals, the mean scores and standard deviation for four factors affecting quality education are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores for Four Factors Affecting Quality Education Perceived by Principals

High School	School Factor	Student Factor	Teacher Factor	Curriculum Factor	Total	Level
1	4.89	5.00	4.88	3.83	4.65	High
2	3.78	3.71	3.75	4.00	3.81	High
3	3.89	4.43	4.75	4.00	4.27	High

1 – 2.49 = Low Level 2.50 - 3.49 = Moderate Level 3.5 – 5.00 = High Level

Table 2. indicates that all three principals perceived the four factors of their schools as high level. However, when One-Way ANOVA was calculated, there was statistically significant difference among three schools in School Factors and Student Factors.

Table 3. Mean Scores for Four Factors Affecting Quality Education Perceived by Teachers

High School	School Factor	Student Factor	Teacher Factor	Curriculum Factor	Total	Level
1	4. 22	3.95	4.10	3.86	4.04	High
2	3.92	3.94	4.09	4.10	4.01	High
3	4.04	3.90	4.17	4.12	4.06	High

1 – 2.49 = Low Level 2.50 - 3.49 = Moderate Level 3.5 – 5.00 = High Level

The above table shows that all the teachers in each school perceived the four factors of their schools as high level. Among three schools, the mean scores of school 1 in School Factors and Student Factors were higher than the other two, but school 2 had the highest mean score in Curriculum Factors, and School 3 was the highest in Teacher Factors.

Comparisons among Four Factors Affecting Quality Education Perceived by Teachers among Selected High Schools

In order to see whether there was significant difference in four factors affecting quality education perceived by teachers among selected high schools, One-Way ANOVA was conducted.

Table 4. The Results of One-Way ANOVA for Four Factors Affecting Quality Education Perceived by Teachers among Selected High Schools

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School Factors	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.150 29.099 31.249	2 135 137	1.075 .216	4.986**	**.008**
Student Factors	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.086 35.269 35.355	2 135 137	.043 .261	.165	.848
Teacher Factors	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.146 24.597 24.743	2 135 137	.073 .182	.401	.670
Curriculum Factors	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.085 31.498 33.583	2 135 137	1.042 .233	4.468*	**.013**
Total	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.033 22.267 22.300	2 135 137	.016 .165	.099	.906

* The difference is significant at .05 level.
** The difference is significant at .01 level.

The Table 4. shows that there were statistically significant differences in "School Factors" and "Curriculum Factors" among three selected high schools according to the perceptions of teachers. Out of four factors of quality education, it was found that School Factors ($df = 2$, $F = 4.986$, $P < .01$) and Curriculum Factors ($df = 2$, $F = 4.468$, $P < .05$) were statistically significant differences among selected high schools but there was no significant difference in other factors.

Table 5. The Results of One-Way ANOVA for Factors Affecting Quality Education Perceived by Teachers according to their Positions

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School Factors	Between Groups	1.663	2	.831	3.793	.025*
	Within Groups	29.586	135	.219		
	Total	31.249	137			
Student Factors	Between Groups	2.138	2	1.069	4.345	.015*
	Within Groups	33.217	135	.246		
	Total	35.355	137			
Teacher Factors	Between Groups	1.161	2	.581	3.324	.039*
	Within Groups	23.582	135	.175		
	Total	24.743	137			
Curriculum Factors	Between Groups	3.132	2	1.566	6.943	.001**
	Within Groups	30.451	135	.226		
	Total	33.583	137			
Total	Between Groups	1.886	2	.943	6.235	.003**
	Within Groups	20.414	135	.151		
	Total	22.300	137			

* The difference is significant at .05 level.
** The difference is significant at .01 level.

Statistically significant differences were found in all factors except School Factors in terms of positions by the perceptions of teachers in three high schools.

Responses for Open-ended Questions

The teachers were asked one open-ended question in questionnaire. The question was "What do you think should be carried out in your school in order for each and every student to attain quality education? Describe your idea in brief."

To sum up, 47.83% of teachers did not respond to the open-ended question. 17.40% of teachers believed that extracurricular activities should be combined to the prescribed one. And a good school discipline programme is also needed. 11.59% of teachers suggested that quality education requires concerted effort of teachers, parents and students. 4.35% of teachers assumed that quality teaching and quality learning are needed to improve the quality of education. Furthermore, 10.86% of teachers thought that education should be practical and fulfill the social and intellectual needs of students. Students must possess good moral character and higher order thinking skills.6.51% of teachers asserted that students must have enough nutrients and they must be nurtured to become good citizens. The last, 1.45% of students said that teachers should try to cover the content in time and there must have adequate apparatus in laboratory rooms at schools.

Responses for Interview Questions

Qualitative research method, interviewing, was used for this study. The Principals were interviewed. It was a structured interview. The study concentrated on Basic Education High Schools in Sagaing. The principals of three high schools were interviewed in January, 2019. The principals were asked 10 interview questions. They willingly participated in the study.

The first question was "What do you think is 'Quality Education'?" And their responses were that "Quality Education" is education which:

- Promotes students' innate potentialities,
- provides students with vocational knowledge and skills to earn for their living,
- is usable for the students in their daily life, and
- contributes to all-round development of the students.

The second and the third question were "Do you agree to and what do you want to add to the statement that **Quality Education is defined as improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills?** All the principals agreed to it, and two of them want to add 'aesthetics and vocational' for the all-round development of students.

The fourth question also asked the principals to indicate their agreement or disagreement on the statement. The statement was that the keys factors affecting the quality education are 1) school factors, 2) teacher factors, 3) student factors and curriculum factors. And then, the fifth question asked them what they want to add to the statement. They all also agree to it, and two of them want to add the principal's leadership, management and administration as key factors.

As the sixth question, the principals were asked to describe their level of satisfaction on their schools in terms of three alternatives: (a) more than 80%, (b) from 50% to 80%, and (c) less than 50%. To this question, all principal chose (b) from 50% to 80%.

The seventh question asked the principals to show their levels of satisfaction concerning their schools' immediate conditions of infrastructure, library, class size, toilets and playground. Among them, only one principal chose the answer (b) from 50% to 80%. The rest two picked out (a) more than 80%.

Surprisingly, among the three urban high school principals, one principal indicated the answer (b) from 50% to 80% to the eighth question which asked them to describe their satisfaction levels on the teachers' commitment, competency, beliefs that students can learn, and willing to make their professional development. The other two gave the answer (a) more than 80%.

Concerning students, the ninth question asked the principals to describe the condition of health, their regular attendance to school, interest in learning, and respect for their teachers. Two principals accepted that their students are at (a) more than 80% level. The last one chose the answer (b) from 50% to 80%.

The last or the tenth question was concerning curriculum. The principals were asked for to give their opinion on school curriculum's relevancy, being interesting for students, contributing to enhance students' thinking skills, and containing essential life-skills. The answer (a) more than 80% was chosen by the two principals, and (b) from 50% to 80% by one principal.

In short, the principals said that in order to attain quality of education, students should be taught and trained the vocational and the subjects which promote their all-round development. Currently, their schools were at high level (i.e. more than 80%) in most of the factors.

Conclusion and Discussion

Summary of the Findings

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the key factors affecting quality education. There are four high schools in Sagaing. Among them, three high schools were assigned as subject. All principals and teachers in the three high schools participated in the study.

According to the perceptions of three high school principals, there was statistically significant difference in School Factors and Curriculum Factors among three high schools. However, the principals of the three high schools perceived all four factors as high level. In the same way, principals and teachers viewed the four factors that affecting the quality education of their schools as high level.

The mean scores were compared based on teachers' demographic information, but no statistically significant difference was found by their age, total years of service, and academic qualification. Statistically significant differences were found in all factors except School Factors in terms of positions by the perceptions of principals and teachers in three high schools.

According to the responses to open-ended question, principals and teachers believed that extracurricular activities should be combined to the prescribed one. And a good school discipline programme is also needed. It was also suggested that quality education requires concerted effort of teachers, parents and students. And it was assumed that quality teaching and quality learning are needed to improve the quality of education.

When an interview was conducted with the principals of three high schools, the principals said that in order to attain quality of education, students should be taught and trained the vocational and the subjects which promote their all-round development. Currently, their schools were at high level (i.e. more than 80%) in most of the factors. Some were only at moderate level.

Discussion

The purpose of education is not just imparting information. Quality education is the better class of education. Quality education means bringing education to a high level. Education results in better learned individuals but quality education makes better educated individuals. Quality in literal sense means the measurement of something as compared to other thing of the same kind. Quality reflects completeness in all aspects. Actually, quality education prevails in theory but not in practice.

There are various factors that affect the quality of education. They are school factors, teacher factors, student factors, and government factors. The main of this study is to examine the key factors affecting quality education. Literature survey method was mainly used for this study but, the interviews were also conducted to listen to the professional stories of the high school principals in Sagaing.

According to the responses of the Principals, it was found that they had little awareness of 'quality education' but they all accept the definition of quality education formulated by UNESCO, and wanted to adapt the definition with the needs of Myanmar society by adding practical, vocational skills, and attaining knowledge and skills for all round development of the students.

Conclusion

Myanmar initiated Education for All (EFA) activities by conducting conferences, workshops, and consultations. One of the projects which were launched in Myanmar to ready for the full-fledged implementation of EFA programs is improving access to

primary education and quality education. Now, educational reforms are also being launched to improve quality of education especially at the primary and secondary levels. The results inferred from the findings of the research showed that all four factors in all three high schools were at high level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the principals and teachers perceived their schools as high level in all factors that affect the quality of education.

Moreover, the evidences provided by the principals indicate that they considered the current general conditions of their schools as satisfactory level although one principal did not. Besides, the state of infrastructure, library, laboratory, toilet, playground and class size were at the moderate satisfactory levels, not excellent, except one school.

However, Teacher Factors and Student Factors at urban high schools in Sagaing were found at the high satisfactory level, but only one school had at the moderate level.

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