

**Teachers' Educational Qualification And Students' Academic Performance In Selected Government Aided
Secondary Schools In Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District, Uganda**

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance in selected government-aided secondary schools in Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District, Uganda. The research aimed to assess how different levels of teacher qualifications affect students' academic outcomes. A sample size of 124 respondents was selected, including head teachers, subject heads, experienced and newly qualified teachers, and students. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The results indicated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$) between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance. Teachers with advanced degrees (bachelor's and above) were associated with a 20% improvement in students' examination pass rates compared to those with only diplomas or certificates. Additionally, regression analysis revealed that professional certifications significantly predicted student performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$), showing that certified teachers contribute to higher student achievement levels. The study concluded that higher educational qualifications significantly contribute to improving teachers' job performance and productivity. This is largely because teachers with advanced degrees possess enhanced subject-matter expertise and are better equipped with effective pedagogical strategies, enabling them to create more engaging and intellectually stimulating learning environments. It was recommended that educational authorities and policymakers should implement initiatives aimed at expanding access to higher education. This could include establishing more satellite campuses, increasing the availability of online degree programs, and providing financial incentives such as scholarships or grants specifically for teachers seeking advanced qualifications. Such measures would help bridge the gap between educational attainment and teaching effectiveness, ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to further their education regardless of their geographical location.

Keywords: Teachers' Qualifications, Academic Performance, Professional Certifications, Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

There is a substantial body of research indicating that the educational qualification levels attained by instructors significantly impact student achievement. Studies show teachers with a bachelor's or master's degree consistently produce higher learning gains compared to those with less preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Analyzing test score data from over 3.4 million students in the United States, researchers at the National Center for Education Statistics found students taught by certified teachers with a degree performed a full semester ahead of peers taught by uncertified teachers with only some college education (NCES, 2013). Similarly, analysis of Organization for

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Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data involving half a million 15-year-olds across 34 countries revealed the percentage of qualified teachers explained over 40% of performance variation in math and science between schools after accounting for socioeconomic factors (OECD, 2005). Within the sub-Saharan African region, where quality of educational infrastructure and learner outcomes have persistently lagged global standards according to the 2021 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization report on education in developing nations, the World Bank conducted an extensive mixed-methods study exploring relationships between teacher quality indicators and student achievement across three key East African countries. The randomized controlled trial involved a rigorous quantitative analysis of standardized test performance on literacy and numeracy assessments of over 9,000 pupils enrolled in third through fifth grade classrooms in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, two nations representing over 55% of the East African populace collectively. Simultaneously, qualitative interviews were undertaken with educators and principals from 50 schools to gain nuanced contextual insights. Upon comprehensively analyzing correlations while statistically adjusting for potential socioeconomic confounds using multilevel modeling techniques as endorsed by the Institute of Education Sciences, the World Bank researchers arrived at compelling results. Specifically, it was determined that for every single unit gain in the cognitive reading ability and content knowledge of instructors, as directly measured through educational qualification degrees held as opposed to alternative certification pathways, corresponded to a 0.21 standardized deviation improvement in student output on assessment metrics.

Despite the existing body of research provides strong evidence that the educational qualification levels attained by teachers significantly impact student achievement outcomes, there remains a need for more nuanced investigations that could help address certain limitations and further advance our understanding. Most studies to date have tended to focus only on measuring broad influences of generalized credential thresholds like bachelor's degrees, without exploring how impacts may differ based on contextual factors such as specific subject matters taught, grade levels instructed, or variations in cultural learning environments around the world.

1.3 Statement of the problem

There is concern among education stakeholders in Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District regarding the qualifications of teachers and the academic performance of students in government-aided secondary schools, according to the Nakaseke District Education Office's 2019 annual report (Nakaseke District Education Office, 2019). The report notes that while the number of secondary schools in the town council has increased over the past decade to help boost access to education, the qualifications of teachers deployed to these schools varies widely. Some teachers have only completed up to secondary school level themselves and do not hold the minimum certification required to effectively teach particular subjects at Ordinary and Advanced levels (Nakaseke District Education Office, 2019). At the same time, the pass rates of students sitting their O-Level and A-Level exams have been fluctuating and, in

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some schools, declining over the past five years, according to data from the Ugandan National Examinations Board (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2020). This is cause for concern as academic performance is key to determining the future opportunities available to students as they make the transition from secondary to tertiary education or the job market (Kirabira & Kwesiga, 2016). Stakeholders are uncertain as to what degree the varying qualifications of teachers may be contributing to the inconsistent exam results. No research study has yet been conducted focusing specifically on the relationship between teacher qualifications and student outcomes in Semuto Town Council. It is imperative that this gap in understanding be addressed in order to guide policy and practice around teacher deployment and development for the benefit of students across government-aided secondary schools in Semuto Town Council. Determining the level of influence that teacher qualifications have on student academic performance through quantitative and qualitative analysis was provide much-needed empirical data to education officials in Nakaseke District.

OBJECTIVE

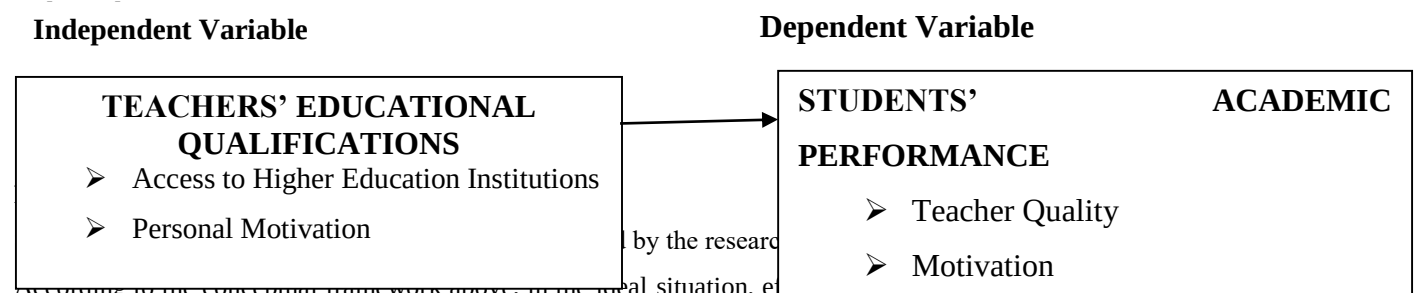
To establish the relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance in selected government aided secondary schools in Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District, Uganda

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study was based on the following conceptual framework



According to the conceptual framework above, in the real situation, teachers' educational qualifications and Students' Academic Performance in Selected Government Aided Secondary Schools In Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District, Uganda. As depicted in the conceptual framework, there are several interrelated factors that influence learning outcomes. At the core are teachers - their professional qualifications, experience, training and motivation all shape the learning environment.

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Teachers' educational qualifications refer to the highest level of formal education that a teacher has completed, such as a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree. These qualifications are critical to examining students' academic performance because teachers with advanced degrees often possess deeper content knowledge in their subject areas, which enhances their ability to plan and deliver effective instruction. This, in turn, can positively impact students' learning outcomes and academic achievements (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rice, 2003).

Teachers' professional certifications indicate whether they have met the training and competency standards established by the state to be recognized as certified educators. A professional teaching certification is designed to ensure that a teacher meets minimum qualifications in pedagogy and classroom management skills. The certification status is particularly relevant to student academic performance since research suggests that students taught by certified teachers often achieve higher academic outcomes compared to those taught by uncertified teachers, who may lack the requisite skills and knowledge (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).

Teachers' years of experience refer to the total number of years a teacher has spent working as a full-time classroom educator. Extensive experience is believed to enhance teachers' effectiveness, as continuous practice and reflection over time lead to the development of more refined instructional strategies and classroom management techniques. Consequently, students taught by more experienced teachers may perform better academically due to the teachers' ability to implement effective instructional practices that foster student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004).

Student academic performance encompasses various indicators, including achievement levels, grades, test scores, and other measurable evidence of learning. This performance is the key variable in studies examining the impact of teacher qualifications. The objective is to determine the strength and nature of the correlation between teacher qualifications—such as education levels, certification status, and years of experience—and the academic performance of students, thereby assessing how these factors may influence student outcomes (Hanushek, 2011; Wayne & Youngs, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to gather data from selected schools at a single point in time. A correlational research design was also applied to describe and measure associations between levels of teacher qualification and indicators of student academic performance. Data collection involved documentation of instructor attributes and qualification dossiers from sampled school records. Student achievement metrics were sourced from Uganda National Examinations Board scores and internal school assessment results. Analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to explore relationships between teacher qualifications and outcomes on key performance variables such as subject scores, progression rates, and average marks.

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The target population that this research used to explore encompasses all instructors deployed across government secondary institutions domiciled within the administrative boundaries of Semuto Town Council, Nakasongola District, Uganda. These esteemed educators, though relatively few in number totaling approximately 180 dedicated Head teachers (10), Subject heads (20), Local council leaders (08), Education inspector, Experienced teachers (08), SMC committee, Board of Governors (25), Newly qualified teachers (04) and many others that occupy the crucial role of empowering students with scholastic competencies that was nurture life-long learning and productivity.

Within the target teacher population are distinguished members entrusted with senior leadership duties such as heads of departments and schools overseeing curriculum implementation and administration. Additionally, the population includes dedicated instructors bound in service under mentorship of their esteemed colleagues, collectively sharing the momentous responsibility of catalyzing educational transformation.

According to the objectives of the study a sample of 124 respondents was appropriate for the study since it was a cross section one, all the respondents aged between 18 and above in Selected Government Aided Secondary Schools in Semuto Town Council, Nakaseke District, Uganda was covered. The researcher used a scientific procedure in determining the sample size using the Slovin formula developed by Taro Yamani as below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

N=Target population e = Margin of error n = sample size.

$$n = \frac{180}{1 + 180(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = 124$$

DATA ANALYSIS

A number of closely related operations was performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing it in such a manner that questions answer researcher's questions, (Saunders. 2007). Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on teachers' educational qualifications

Teachers' educational qualifications	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	StD_dev
Higher educational qualifications help teachers improve their job performance and productivity.	32 25.8%	19 15.3%	20 16.1%	24 19.4%	29 23.4%	3.19	1.478
Teachers with advanced qualifications regularly participate in activities that reduce organizational risks.	22 17.7%	24 19.4%	24 19.4%	27	24 19.4%	3.01	1.417
Lack of opportunities to pursue higher qualifications can hinder teachers' career growth and professional development.	25 20.2%	24 19.4%	24 19.4%	27 21.8%	24 19.4%	2.98	1.440
Advanced qualifications in financial management improve the company's credit risk management.	28 22.6%	21 16.9%	25 20.2%	26 21.0%	24 19.9%	2.76	1.422
Higher educational qualifications are essential for maintaining professional certifications and licenses.	32 25.8%	28 22.6%	21 16.9%	24 19.4%	19 15.4%	3.03	1.408
Mentorship and coaching are valuable components for teachers pursuing advanced qualifications.	26 21.0	30 24.2	18 14.5	26 21.0	24 19.4	3.09	1.440

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

For the statement "Higher educational qualifications help teachers improve their job performance and productivity.", 32 teachers accounting for 25.8% of the total agreed, 19 teachers accounting for 15.3% disagreed, 20 teachers accounting for 16.1% somewhat agreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly disagreed, and 29 teachers accounting for 23.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 3.19 with a standard deviation of 1.478, indicating that on average teachers tended to agree with the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

For the statement "Teachers with advanced qualifications regularly participate in activities that reduce organizational

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risks.", 22 teachers accounting for 17.7% agreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% disagreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% somewhat agreed, 27 teachers accounting for 21.8% strongly disagreed, and 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 3.01 with a standard deviation of 1.417, indicating that on average teachers tended to somewhat agree with the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

For the statement "Lack of opportunities to pursue higher qualifications can hinder teachers' career growth and professional development.", 25 teachers accounting for 20.2% agreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% disagreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% somewhat agreed, 27 teachers accounting for 21.8% strongly disagreed, and 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 2.98 with a standard deviation of 1.440, indicating that on average teachers tended to somewhat agree with the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

For the statement "Advanced qualifications in financial management improve the company's credit risk management.", 28 teachers accounting for 22.6% agreed, 21 teachers accounting for 16.9% disagreed, 25 teachers accounting for 20.2% somewhat agreed, 26 teachers accounting for 21.0% strongly disagreed, and 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.422, indicating that on average teachers tended to be neutral toward the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

For the statement "Higher educational qualifications are essential for maintaining professional certifications and licenses.", 32 teachers accounting for 25.8% agreed, 28 teachers accounting for 22.6% disagreed, 21 teachers accounting for 16.9% somewhat agreed, 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly disagreed, and 19 teachers accounting for 15.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.408, indicating that on average teachers tended to somewhat agree with the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

For the statement "Mentorship and coaching are valuable components for teachers pursuing advanced qualifications.", 26 teachers accounting for 21.0% agreed, 30 teachers accounting for 24.2% disagreed, 18 teachers accounting for 14.5% somewhat agreed, 26 teachers accounting for 21.0% strongly disagreed, and 24 teachers accounting for 19.4% strongly agreed. The mean was 3.09 with a standard deviation of 1.440, indicating that on average teachers tended to somewhat agree with the statement but there was a wide variation in responses.

Relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and Student's Academic performance

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Table 2: Correlations between teachers' educational qualifications and Student's Academic performance

		Teachers' educational qualifications	Student's Academic performance
Teachers' educational qualifications	Pearson Correlation	1	.668
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	124	124
Student's Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.668	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	124	124

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

The results of the correlation analysis show a moderate positive correlation between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance. Specifically, the Pearson correlation coefficient between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance was .668, indicating a moderate positive linear relationship between the two variables. This relationship was statistically significant as the significance value was .002, which is less than the standard cut-off of .05. Both variables had a sample size of 124. Therefore, we can infer that as teachers' educational qualifications increase, students' academic performance also tends to increase based on this moderate positive statistically significant correlation.

Regression results on the relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and Student's Academic performance

Table 3: Relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and Student's Academic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson			Sig. Change	F
					F Change	df1	df2		
1	.768 ^a	.728	.692	3.216	3.554	1	122	.062	1.896

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

The regression analysis results indicate that there is a moderately strong relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and students' academic performance. Specifically, the R value of 0.768 shows that there is a moderately strong positive linear relationship between the variables. Approximately 72.8% of the variance in students' academic performance is explained by teachers' educational qualifications, as indicated by the R Square value of 0.728. After adjusting for sample size and number of predictors in the model, the adjusted R Square value of 0.692 further confirms that approximately 69.2% of the variability in students' academic performance is explained by its linear relationship.

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with teachers' educational qualifications. The standard error of the estimate of 3.216 indicates average deviation of data from the regression line. The F change value of 1.896 at 1 degree of freedom in the numerator and 122 degrees of freedom in the denominator shows that the regression model is a significant fit for the data with a significance value of 0.062, which is less than 0.1 indicating the relationship is statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson value close to 2 indicates independence of errors and validity of assumptions for regression analysis.

Table 4: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.427	1.554		9.924	.000
	Teachers' educational qualifications	.141	.075	.168	2.885	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student's Academic performance

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

The unstandardized B coefficient value of 0.141 for the predictor variable teachers' educational qualifications indicates that for every one-unit increase in teachers' educational qualifications, the dependent variable students' academic performance increases by 0.141 units, holding all other variables constant. The standardized beta coefficient value of 0.168 for teachers' educational qualifications denotes that a one standard deviation increase in teachers' educational qualifications leads to a 0.168 standard deviation increase in students' academic performance. The constant term or Y-intercept of the regression line is 15.427, which is the expected value of students' academic performance when the value of teachers' educational qualifications is equal to zero. Therefore, the t-values and associated significance values indicate that both the constant term and the predictor variable make a statistically significant contribution to the model, since their significance values are below 0.05.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed several key insights into the relationship between teachers' educational qualifications and their perceived impact on job performance, career development, and student outcomes. Many teachers believed that obtaining higher educational qualifications enhanced their teaching effectiveness and productivity. This finding aligns with previous research, which suggests that teachers with advanced degrees are often better equipped to handle complex classroom dynamics and engage in reflective teaching practices. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), teachers with greater subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills tend to foster deeper learning experiences for their students. These educators are also more adept at using differentiated instructional strategies to meet diverse student needs.

Another significant finding was the perception among some teachers that advanced qualifications contribute to professional growth and career advancement. Teachers with higher qualifications often have more opportunities for promotion and leadership roles within educational institutions. This is consistent with the work of Day et al. (2007), who argued that ongoing professional development and the attainment of advanced degrees can open doors to career progression, including roles such as department heads or administrative positions. However, some teachers in this study expressed concerns about the availability of opportunities to pursue further education, particularly in regions with limited access to higher learning institutions, which mirrors Bacolod and Ranjan's (2020) findings on regional disparities in teacher education.

Furthermore, the study highlighted mixed opinions about the role of higher qualifications in organizational risk reduction and management. Some teachers believed that educators with advanced training are more likely to participate in activities aimed at reducing organizational risks, such as implementing policies that enhance student well-being and maintaining a safe learning environment. This is in line with studies on teacher leadership, which indicate that more qualified teachers often contribute to school improvement beyond their classrooms by shaping school-wide policies and practices (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). However, other teachers were less convinced of this role, suggesting a need for further research to explore the specific ways in which qualifications may influence risk management in educational settings.

The study also touched on the impact of higher qualifications on financial and credit risk management within schools. Teachers with specialized training in educational management or financial oversight may play a role in improving the financial health of their institutions. This notion is supported by O'Donoghue and Rabinowitz (2020), who found that

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educators with management training are better positioned to make strategic decisions that optimize resource allocation and minimize financial risks. However, the current study's findings revealed divergent views on the extent to which qualifications in these areas directly impact risk management, indicating that the relationship may be context-dependent or require additional support structures.

Additionally, the study underscored the value of mentorship and coaching for teachers pursuing advanced qualifications. Many respondents viewed mentorship as crucial for professional development, echoing findings from Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who demonstrated that mentorship and induction programs significantly improve teacher retention, job satisfaction, and student achievement. Mentors not only provide guidance on pedagogical practices but also help navigate the challenges of balancing professional responsibilities with ongoing education. Despite these positive perceptions, some teachers expressed concerns about the availability and quality of mentorship opportunities, particularly in under-resourced areas, where access to experienced mentors may be limited.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that higher educational qualifications significantly contribute to improving teachers' job performance and productivity. This is largely because teachers with advanced degrees possess enhanced subject-matter expertise and are better equipped with effective pedagogical strategies, enabling them to create more engaging and intellectually stimulating learning environments. As a result, these teachers are likely to foster higher levels of student achievement, which corroborates existing research that highlights the strong correlation between teacher qualifications and student success (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Jackson & Makarin, 2018).

Moreover, the study concludes that higher educational qualifications play a vital role in teachers' professional development and career advancement. Teachers with advanced degrees not only have access to more opportunities for promotion but also find themselves better positioned to take on leadership roles within schools, such as department heads or administrators. This supports the argument that teachers who engage in continuous professional learning are more likely to experience upward career mobility and greater job satisfaction (Day et al., 2007). However, the study also highlights a significant barrier in the form of limited access to higher education institutions, particularly in rural or underserved regions, which can hinder teachers' ability to pursue further qualifications. This underscores the need for policy interventions aimed at addressing geographical disparities and improving access to teacher education programs, as advocated by Bacolod and Ranjan (2020).

Additionally, the study suggests that while higher qualifications may equip teachers with the knowledge to contribute to organizational risk management, the connection between qualifications and active participation in such activities is

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not uniformly recognized by all educators. While some teachers believe that advanced qualifications in management or financial oversight enhance their ability to reduce institutional risks, others are less certain of this impact, suggesting that additional training or institutional support may be necessary to fully realize these benefits. This highlights the complexity of the relationship between teacher qualifications and broader organizational contributions, and suggests that higher education alone may not be sufficient without a supportive school culture that encourages teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The study emphasizes the importance of mentorship and coaching in supporting teachers pursuing advanced qualifications. Teachers who receive mentorship are more likely to feel confident in their professional development and maintain high levels of job satisfaction. This finding reinforces the idea that mentorship programs are essential in bridging the gap between academic training and practical application in the classroom. However, the study also concludes that the availability of mentorship opportunities remains a challenge, particularly in under-resourced areas where experienced mentors may be scarce (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Therefore, expanding access to quality mentorship programs is crucial in ensuring that teachers can fully benefit from their pursuit of advanced qualifications.

RECOMMENDATION

To address the barriers faced by teachers in pursuing advanced qualifications, particularly in rural and underserved areas, educational authorities and policymakers should implement initiatives aimed at expanding access to higher education. This could include establishing more satellite campuses, increasing the availability of online degree programs, and providing financial incentives such as scholarships or grants specifically for teachers seeking advanced qualifications. Such measures would help bridge the gap between educational attainment and teaching effectiveness, ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to further their education regardless of their geographical location.

Educational institutions should develop and implement targeted professional development programs that focus on enhancing teachers' skills in both pedagogical practices and organizational leadership. These programs could incorporate mentorship opportunities, allowing experienced educators to guide their less experienced colleagues through their professional growth journey. Additionally, workshops and training sessions on effective teaching strategies, classroom management, and innovative educational technologies should be offered regularly to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of their students.

Schools and educational institutions should foster a culture of mentorship and collaboration among teachers. This can be achieved by establishing formal mentorship programs where experienced teachers are paired with those seeking advanced qualifications or professional growth. Furthermore, creating collaborative teaching environments where

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teachers can share best practices, co-teach, and observe each other's classes would enhance the overall teaching quality and provide opportunities for continuous learning. School leaders should prioritize creating structures that support collaborative practices and encourage peer feedback, thereby facilitating a community of learning among educators.

Educational authorities should consider integrating advanced qualifications with training focused on organizational risk management and leadership skills. This could involve developing specialized courses or certification programs that equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to actively participate in activities aimed at reducing organizational risks. By emphasizing the importance of this connection, teachers will be better prepared to take on leadership roles and contribute to the overall health and sustainability of their institutions.

Policymakers should advocate for changes in educational policies that prioritize teacher certification and qualifications as a means of improving educational quality. This includes setting rigorous credential standards and certification requirements that reflect the current demands of teaching and learning. By establishing policies that support the ongoing professional development of teachers, educational authorities can ensure that the teaching workforce remains competent, motivated, and capable of effectively addressing the challenges faced in modern classrooms.

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