

Assessing the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools adopting British Council Standards in Light of Academic Achievement.

¹Istiklal Abbas Wishah, ²Dr. Nidaa Muhammad Baqir Al-Yasiri

¹Ministry of Education / General Directorate of Education of Basra Governorate

²Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research/University of Basra/Department of Educational and Psychological Sciences.

¹astklalabass@gmail.com, ²nmbhmaly@gmail.com

Article History: Received: 11 January 2021; Revised: 12 February 2021; Accepted: 27 March 2021; Published online: 4 June 2021

Abstract: Assessing the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools that adopted the standards of the British Council in the light of academic achievement is the key objective of this research. The researchers employed the descriptive analytical approach, and the research sample consisted of two middle schools, namely - Al-Hashmiyat Intermediate School for Girls and Al-Zubayr Intermediate School for Girls and Al-Ramah Al-Awali Preparatory School for Boys in Basra Governorate for the final classes. The researchers collected the results of the ministerial exams for the first and second attempts for all school students for three academic years, one year before applying the standards and two years after applying them. The researchers used the one-way analysis of variance to discover the differences between the arithmetic averages, and the L.S.D test to extract the dimensional comparisons between school years. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the students' average scores in the general average according to the variable of the academic year 2016/2017 before the applying to the third intermediate class. The differences were not significant for the preparatory stage of the literary branch. In light of the results of the research, the researchers presented a number of recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: quality of teaching and learning, secondary schools, British Council standards, academic achievement.

1. Introduction

Research problem

Due to the radical changes that the world has witnessed, the educational system has recently faced a lot of pressures and challenges. The impact of the rapid change threatens human to a large extent, so the person does not stay away from turmoil and anxiety, unless correcting work. After identifying the defects, where one of the clear forms of defect in the Arab educational reality is the decrease in the levels of academic achievement among students, and the failure of the educational systems to overcome this problem and raise the level of academic achievement despite efforts and funds to improve it. (Salman, 2008: 191). This is what prompted the researcher to delve into this topic, especially since through the low success rates in public exams and the high rates of failure in studies reveal the deterioration of the quality of education, which calls on those interested to conduct research on this and take possible solutions (Common Country Assessment Iraq: United Nations, 2009: 51). The problem of the current research can be summed up in answering the following main question: Has the quality of teaching and learning improved in secondary schools that applied BRITISH COUNCIL standards in the light of academic achievement?

Research significance:

1. It provides vital information that assists educational officials in evaluating educational outcomes in secondary schools, in light of the application of quality standards for teaching and learning (British Council).
2. By maintaining or ending up using these standards in secondary schools, the culture of standards and their quality in teaching and learning, and the importance of implementing them in educational institutions were instilled.
3. The research contributes to the process of evaluating academic achievement and the effectiveness of raising the level of the educational process, development and renewal through the implementation of the British Council quality standards system in education, and represents feedback and enhances the quality of teaching and learning.
4. The importance of secondary schools and the urgent need they dictate in qualifying the younger generations to be able to give and contribute to society and achieve social and educational goals.

5. The research indicators indicate the effectiveness of the school from the perspective of the quality of teaching and learning, as estimates of academic achievement are one of the indicators used in determining the efficiency and productivity of schools in general.

6. The importance of standards in improving and developing educational institutions which whereby the quality of institutions and their educational and educational outputs can be judged. This type of research reveals the extent of the success of the British Council standards project.

Research objectives: To evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools that applied the British Council standards in the light of academic achievement.

Research limits: The search is limited to the following limits:

- 1- Spatial boundaries: secondary schools in Basra governorate
- 2- Temporal limits: the academic years (2016/2017), (2017/2018) and (2018/2019).
- 3- Objective limits: British Council standards issued for the year 2017/2018 by the Ministry of Education.
- 4- Human limits: third intermediate students and sixth intermediate students.

Defining terminology: Assessing is determining the value, weight, or description of something, giving a value to the thing, or issuing a judgment on the value of things." (Kawafaha, 2010:35).

Quality of education: "It represents everything that leads to the development and growth of students' intellectual abilities and skills, improving the level of understanding and comprehension, increasing the ability to solve issues and problems that confront them, and being able to communicate information efficiently and effectively, and invest it in the situations facing them, from which they learn and study." (Al-Attayah, 2009:104).

Quality of learning: "It is high-quality learning, and it is a recognized learning style because its outcomes last longer than the outcomes of learning of lower quality, which quickly fades and goes into oblivion. It is a learning style that leads to a reliable understanding and its use in other new contexts, other than the context in which the learning process took place." (Prosser & Trigwell, 2009: 201).

Secondary schools: "It is the stage that follows the primary stage in the educational system in Iraq. It consists of two successive levels (intermediate and secondary school) and the duration of study in each of them is three years. The preparatory stage accepts graduates of the first level of secondary education (intermediate level)." (Mazal, 1990).

Standards: "It is a statement of the expected level set by a responsible or recognized body regarding a specific degree or goal to be achieved, to achieve what is desired to be reached, and to achieve a desired ability of quality and excellence (Al-Khatib, 2015:38).

The British Council: "The British Council and the UK's main agency for cultural relations with other countries, its objective is to enhance the Kingdom's reputation in the world as an important partner and to reflect the cultural, ethnic and political diversity of the UK" <http://iraq.britishcouncil.org>

Academic achievement: "It is the outcome of what the student learns after a period of time. It can be measured by the degree that the student obtains in an achievement test, in order to know the extent of the success of the strategy that the teacher sets and plans to achieve his goals and the knowledge obtained by the student to be transferred into grades." (Abu Jadu 2009: 425).

The procedural definition of academic achievement: It is the average of the grades obtained by the third intermediate student, and the sixth preparatory in his literary and scientific branches in school subjects. These scores are measured by the ministerial achievement tests (baccalaureate) for the first and second grades, and knowing the level of students' comprehension of knowledge and skills by teachers in schools that have applied the standards of the British Council.

The Path of Total Quality in Assessing Learning Quality: Education is about learning. If total quality management is to be relevant to education, it needs to address the quality of the learners' experience, and an educational institution that follows the Total Quality path must take the quality of learning seriously.

- 1- The issue of learning styles and needs strategies for uniqueness and differentiation in learning. The learner is the primary customer, and unless the learning methods meet his or her individual needs it will not be possible for that institution to claim that it has achieved the sum total.
- 2- Educational institutions are committed to making learners aware of the variety of learning methods available to them. They need to give learners opportunities to experience learning in a variety of different styles.
- 3- Organizations need to understand that many learners also like to switch and “do not match” patterns and should try to be flexible enough to provide choice in learning. Much work remains to be done on how best to use Total Quality principles.
- 4- It can start with the learners and their teachers to establish their "mission". This could be 'all will work'. Hence, negotiations may take place about how the parties will achieve the task - the methods of learning and teaching and the resources they use are requested.
- 5- Individual learners must negotiate their own action plans to provide them with motivation and direction. The negotiation process may require establishing a steering committee or a quality forum to provide feedback and give learners an opportunity to manage their own learning.
- 6- The assessment should be an ongoing process and not just leave until the end of the study programme. The results of the assessments should be discussed with the students, possibly by completing a record of achievements. The very act of participating in the assessment will help build students' analytical skills. It is important that the institution uses the results of the official monitoring to validate the validity of its programs. (Edward Sallis, 2012:30).

The process of implementing the educational quality system in secondary schools has been identified in five stages:

- 1- **Conviction stage:** adopting the philosophy of quality, where the school decides its desire to implement the quality system, where school principals begin to receive specialized training programs on the concept of the system, its importance, requirements and the principles on which it is based.
- 2- **Planning stage:** in which detailed plans are developed for the implementation and identification of the permanent structure and resources needed to implement the system, and at this stage the leadership team of the quality program, rapporteurs and supervisors are selected.
- 3- **Evaluation stage:** It begins with identifying some important questions that can be answered in light of preparing the appropriate ground for starting the implementation of the quality system.
- 4- **Implementation stage:** In this stage, the individuals who will be entrusted with the implementation process are selected. They are taught how to implement activities that achieve quality performance in the educational process.
- 5- **Exchanging and disseminating experiences stage:** in which experiences are invested from some other systems that have succeeded in implementing the quality system. (Abu Al-Wafa & Hussein, 2000:173)

Standards in the educational context are divided into three main areas, namely:

- 1- **Input standards:** They are used to define the input sources for each school, such as class size and the ratio of the teacher to the number of students. These standards can be used as requirements or determinants (criteria), and they are usually used for licensing private schools, such as the number of classrooms, their area and the size of the school, as well as to determine the quality of equipment schools and their relevance.
- 2- **Operational Standards:** This type of standards is concerned with issues of quality and the nature of educational operations, such as the quality of teaching operations, the school's organizational structure and the quality of care provided to students in the school.
- 3- **Outcome standards:** they refer to learning outcomes or academic achievement standards. There is no doubt that all educational systems and all educators seek to raise the level of standards of learning outcomes that everyone agrees on their importance, and this type of standards has usually been associated with standards movements around which educational thought revolves. Focusing on measuring learning outcomes based on criteria that are essential mechanisms for improving the quality of education. (Bergmann & Mulkeen, 2011:1995b)

Research Methodology: The researcher relied on the analytical descriptive research methodology to explain the organized scientific in the study of the phenomenon as it exists in reality, and is interested in describing the

phenomenon, whether in a qualitative or quantitative way, by collecting information and data about the phenomenon and comparing and treating it to reach the real and realistic expression of the phenomenon.

Research community: The current research community includes secondary school students in Basra Governorate that have applied the British Council standards, through the capacity building program in primary and secondary education: improving the quality of education and equal opportunities in learning, which are (3) schools and shown in Table (1).

*Table (1) Research community (schools to which the standards of the British Council in Basra were applied)

Total No.	Academic year	School
83	2016-2017	Al-Hashmiyat Intermediate School for Girls
97	2017-2018	
141	2018-2019	
83	2016-2017	Al-Zubair intermediate school for girls
104	2017-2018	
85	2018-2019	
1	2016-2017	Al-Ramah Al-Awali Preparatory School for Boys
26	2017-2018	
31	2018-2019	
651		Total

*(Basra Education / Specialized Educational Supervision Department).

Research sample: The current study sample consisted of high school students in Basra Governorate, to which the British Council standards were applied, as experimental schools for the program, who passed the ministerial exams for the first and second attempts successfully for three academic years, one year before applying the standards and two years after applying them, as shown in Table (2).

Table (2) The research sample of students whose schools were included in the standards of the British Council.

Total	flanked	Passed	Academic year	school stage	Location	school category	School name
83	5	78	2016-2017	third class	Downtown	Girls	Medium Hashemites
97	9	88	2017-2018				
141	13	128	2018-2019				
83	14	69	2016-2017	third class	Province	Girls	Zubair medium
104	25	79	2017-2018				

85	10	75	2018-2019				
1	0	1	2016-2017	sixth literary	Province	Boys	Al-Ramah Al-Awali Preparatory School
26	16	10	2017-2018				
31	17	14	2018-2019				
651	109	542	Total				

Research tool:

First: Student scores (research sample) in the academic subjects for the academic years (2016/2017), (2017/2018), (2018/2019).

The researcher relied on the results of ministerial achievement tests for the completed classes of the two stages, intermediate (third intermediate), and secondary school (literary branch), to measure the extent of the project success in applying the standards of the British Council to secondary schools in Basra Governorate in the light of academic achievement. The researcher collected the statistical data for the results of the ministerial exams for the grades (third intermediate - sixth preparatory, literary branch) by referring to the CDs kept on the websites of the Ministry of Education. This included extracting the grades of the successful students in the two attempts (first and second) for all subjects with the total general average for three consecutive years starting from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

Second: The capacity building program in primary and secondary education for the British Council. Project name: Improving the quality of education and equal opportunities in learning.

About the project: It is a project funded by the European Union with a budget of 14 million euros, implemented by the British Council. 2017 to May 2020* (exclude the year 2020 Corona pandemic). Program objectives: - Sub-component 1: Increasing school enrollment rates, by analyzing the main reasons behind low school enrollment rates and developing strategies to address the disparity.

Sub-component 2: Raising the level of education at the primary and secondary levels through capacity-building to strengthen school curricula, especially in the fields of humanities, physical education, peace, and support for children with special educational needs, the disabled, the displaced, and children with psychological and social support requirements.

Sub-component 3: Increasing access to education for children with special educational needs and disabilities through collecting reference data, updating legislation and curricula, and building qualitative capacities.

- Sub-component 4: Raising the standard of education by enhancing the quality of schools according to school standards and aims to achieve the following results:

- 1- Reviewing the criteria for self-evaluation and external evaluation of schools.
- 2- Training educators to conduct evaluation.
- 3- Self-assessment and external assessments are circulated along with the school development plan in the targeted schools.
- 4- Standards are expressions that describe the level of performance expected of individuals (teachers, managers, and supervisors) and institutions (the school) reflecting international good practice and the Iraqi context.

The British Council School Standards focus on the following:

- 1- The main inputs (leadership and management).
- 2- Basic processes (teaching and learning; care and support for students; participation with the community).

3- School results and outputs. The standards consist of (5) areas, (25) standards, and each standard contains specifications or indicators for four levels. These indicators provide an explanation of the standard and provide guidance to the assessors, as shown in Table (3).

*Table No. (3) Areas of school standards in the British Council project.

Standard No.	Area	No
9	School leadership and administration	1
6	Improving the quality of teaching and learning	2
4	Care and support provided to students	3
2	Community school participation.	4
4	School results and outcomes	5
25	Total	

Standards descriptors: Descriptors have been developed for the four levels to reveal their quality and effectiveness. The descriptors are expressive sentences that indicate the extent to which the standard has been met, and the degree of judgment on it, as shown in the following table:

Table No. (4) British Council Standards Evaluation Criteria.

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Exceeding the standard with an excellent score	Meets the standard properly	Needs improvement to meet the standard	It needs a big change to meet the standard

(School External Evaluation Guide, 2018)

Statistical methods:

- 1- One way anova analysis to discover the differences between the arithmetic averages and verify the research hypotheses.
- 2- L.S.D test to extract dimensional comparisons between school years.
- 3- The t-test for two independent samples to extract the differences between the arithmetic averages in the sixth literary grade study subjects

2. Results Presentation

The third intermediate class: identifying the differences in the academic achievement degrees (general average) of the third intermediate grade students according to the results of the final exams for the years from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

The researcher assumed the following null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences between the members of the study sample of the third intermediate grade students in their grades for the general average according to the variable of the school year, compared to its alternative hypothesis. To verify this hypothesis, the researcher extracted the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the general average scores for the third intermediate class for the academic years from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

Table (5) The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the general average scores for the third intermediate class for the academic years from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Sample No.	Academic year
8,51500	72,3579	147	2016/2017
9,07622	70,4274	167	2017/2018
8,70554	68,1429	203	2018/2019
8,92627	70,0793	517	Total

The researcher used the one way Anova test to identify the significance of the differences between the arithmetic averages of the general average according to the school year before and after applying the standards, and the results were as they are built in Table (6).

Table (6) One-way ANOVA test results

To find the differences between the grades of the third grade students, an average of the year average according to the three academic years.

Significance	Computed F value	Average of squares	Freedom	Total of square	Position
0,000	10,032	772,327	2	1544,655	Between groups
		76,983	514	39569,311	In-groups
			516	41113,966	Total

It is clear from the above table that the calculated maximum (10.032) was greater than the tabular maxima of (3.8), and thus there are significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (2/514). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which indicates that there are differences between students in their grades in the general average during the years covered by the study. To identify the significance of the three-year differences, the LSD test was used for post hoc comparisons, as shown in Table (7).

Table (7). The results of the dimensional comparison test (L.S.D) to find out less

Type of difference	Statistical Sig	Difference	Arithmetic averages	السنوات الدراسية
Morale in favor of the 2016/2017 year	0,052	1,93048	70,42 vs ,72	2016/2017 2018/2017 vs
Morale in favor of the 2016/2017 year	0,000	4,21501	68,14 vs,72	2016/2017 2019/2018 vs
Morale in favor of the year 2017/2018	0,013	2,28454	68,14 vs,70	2017/2018 2019/ 2018 vs

* The difference between the two averages is significant at the level (0.05), a significant difference between the grades between the three-year grades in the average year for the third grade. We note from the above table that when comparing the arithmetic averages for the academic years (2016/2017) and (2017/2018), there were significant differences in favor of the academic year (2016/2017). We also note that the difference between the two academic years (2016/2017) and (2018) / 2019) was the difference between the average of the two in the general average (4,21501) which is less than the value of (LSD) at the level of significance (0.05). This indicates that the difference is significant in favor of the academic year (2016/2017), as for the two academic years (2017/2018) and (2018/2019). The difference between the average of the third students' grades in the general

average (2,28454), is greater than the value of (L.S.D) at the level of significance (0.05). This indicates that the difference is significant in the academic year (2017/2018).

Literary sixth class

Identifying the differences in the grades (general average) for students of the sixth literary grade according to the ministerial results for the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. The researcher excluded the academic year 2016/2017 because there was only one student in the literary sixth. To achieve this goal, the T-test was applied for two independent samples, to find the difference between the mean scores of students according to the variable of the school year if the arithmetic mean value for the year (2017/2018) was 69.8000 with a standard deviation of 10.25020 and the sample size was 10. As for the arithmetic mean for the year (2018/2019), it was 67.00 with a standard deviation of 8.32974 and the eye size was 14. The results were as follows:

Table (8) T-test for two independent samples

Significance	Constant value		Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	No	Academic year
Non-significant	Tabular	Computed	10,25020	69,8000	10	2017/ 2018
	2,07	0,738	8,32974	67,00	14	2018 /2019

To find the difference between the average of the sixth literary students' grades in the general average.

The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the averages of the literary branch students' grades for the mentioned general average during the two years, as the calculated T-value amounted to 0.738, which is less than the tabular values. This means that the standards did not increase the effectiveness of the quality of teaching and learning in the academic year (2018/2019) after its application in the academic year (2017/2018), but the same educational level in the general average.

3. Conclusions:

- 1) The British Council standards did not have a positive impact in improving the level of academic achievement of third intermediate students in the general average of their scores in the ministerial exams.
- 2) The British Council standards did not show their role in raising the level of academic achievement of sixth-grade students in the literary branch in the ministerial exams for the general average for two consecutive years.
- 3) The possibility of the impact of British standards on other aspects of the third intermediate and sixth-grade students of the literary branch, such as personal and social aspects outside the scope of academic achievement, in addition to the possibility of their impact on other areas of the educational process whose role appears after a longer period of application of these standards.

4. Recommendations

- Building quality standards with international specifications that fit with the capabilities of schools, and benefiting from the experiences of Arab countries such as Qatar or foreign countries in raising educational quality.
- Consider planning the educational process, including those who provide support and improvement (criteria or indicators), to ensure the quality of teaching and learning achieved in all components of the educational process that suffers from weakness and shortcomings, and to develop treatments for them.

The Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq shall introduce a course on quality, its philosophy and ideas in all faculties and departments in general and faculties of education in particular, according to the type of quality in the specialization, to produce graduates equipped with culture, quality and creativity to build the country.

- Develop quality units that have control, accountability, continuous monitoring and evaluation, that are flexible to address emerging problems, and that are made up of experts, capabilities and high educational capabilities that are connected between the Ministry of Education and the directorates of education. Furthermore, overcome problems and obstacles that impede the progress of the quality of the educational process.

Implementing new educational and educational projects in schools for their development and improvement by providing the appropriate environment for the success of these projects from highly qualified educational cadres who have a culture of quality in general and educational quality in particular.

- Working to enhance the efficiency of educational supervisors, educational leaders and teachers through advanced and modern training courses in the science of educational comprehensive quality management.
- The necessity of providing assessment requirements that fit the density of student numbers, by providing electronic devices and computers, and training teachers on the diversity of assessment tools.

5. Suggestions:

- 1- Conducting a similar study that includes other samples from Iraqi schools in which where the British Council standards were applied.
- 2- Conducting a study similar to the current study, but from the point of view of supervisors, managers, or teachers and students.
- 3- Measuring the quality of teaching and learning in public and secondary schools in Basra Governorate.

References

1. Al-Khatib, Ahmed Hamed, (2010). University management, recent studies. Hamada Foundation for Printing, Amman, Jordan.
2. Abu Jadu, Saleh Muhammad Ali, (2009). Educational Psychology, 2nd Edition, Dar Al Masirah Publishing, Printing Distribution, Amman, Jordan.
3. The Common Country Assessment, Iraq: United Nations, 2009
4. Jamal M. Abu Al-Wafa & Salama A. Hussain, (2000). New Directions School Administration, Alexandria, University Knowledge House.
5. The external evaluation guide for the school / all directorates of education except for the Kurdistan region, 2018.
6. Salman, Zaid Munir, (2008). Modern trends in effective teaching and learning, Dar Al-Raya for Publishing and Distribution, I 1, Amman, Jordan.
7. Al-Attiyah, Mohsen Ali, (2009). Comprehensive quality and newness in teaching, Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, 1st floor, Amman, Jordan.
8. Kawafha, Tayseer Mufleh, (2010). Measurement, evaluation, methods of measurement and diagnosis in special education.
9. Michael Prosser Kate and Trigoll, (2009). Understanding Learning and Teaching Translated into Arabic by Hani Saleh, Al-Akiban.
10. Bergmann, H., & Mulkeen, A. (2011). Standards for Quality in Education: Experiences from Different Countries and Lessons Learnt: GIZ Global Network on Education and Youth Working Group on Education Quality.
11. Edward Sallis, (2012). Total Quality Management in Education. Third edition, Kogan Page Ltd, © Edward Sallis, 1993, 1996, 2002. , London N1 9JN UK.
12. <http://iraq.britishcouncil.org>