

Full Length Research Paper

Effectiveness of teacher advisory centre tutors in curriculum implementation in public secondary schools: Case of Chepalungu District, Kenya

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Teacher Advisory Center (TAC) tutors in curriculum implementation of secondary schools in Chepalungu District. The study aimed at determining ways in which TAC tutors, participate in implementation of secondary school curriculum and to establish whether teachers in secondary schools make use of TAC centers. The study adopted a descriptive design. The study targeted all the 24 public secondary schools in the district. A sample size of 7 schools was randomly selected for the study. All the seven TAC tutors in the district were purposely selected and each one of them represents a zone. This study found out that TAC tutors were not quite effective in implementation of secondary school curriculum. The recommendation in this study include the need to recruit highly qualified TAC tutors to handle secondary school curriculum and the need to equip the centers with enough resources and facilities to handle secondary school curriculum.

Key words: Teacher's effectiveness, curriculum implementation, teacher advisory centers.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Curriculum implementation is an essential aspect of curriculum development process and a very important stage in educational process. This is because it will involve the actualization of the new curriculum. In Kenya Teacher Advisory Centers (TAC) were set up by the government in 1971 MoEST (2000). They were only two by then, Kagumo and Siriba, but now they are as many as the number of zones in the country. According to the Sessional Paper No 6 MoEST (1988), teacher advisory centres were mandated to provide primary school teachers with in service training on curriculum changes, teaching methodology and the generation of professional ideas to improve the quality of teaching. The centre is manned by a tutor who is well trained to handle teachers and make use of the materials and resources at the centre. According to the Ministry of Education (2000) TAC centers were mandated to perform the following functions:

- (1) Providing in-service courses to teachers as per the identified needs.
- (2) Advising teachers individually or in groups pertaining to their professional problems.

- (3) Organizing local discussion, visits lectures and demonstrations for the teachers.
- (4) Advising teachers on curriculum changes and on methodology and right materials to be used for improvement of teacher's quality in classroom instruction.

Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (1988) recommended that TAC be structured and developed as district education resource centre to cater for all teachers in the district. The report further recommended that in each district education resource centre be provided with appropriate facilities, equipment, qualified professionals, support personnel and a budget to enable them give essential professional advice to all teachers in the district. The Government of Kenya has stated the need for the TAC centers to serve all teachers regardless of whether they teach in primary or secondary. Secondary school teachers too need to benefit from services provided by the TAC tutors and materials and resources at the TAC centers. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) point out that there is a tendency among the educators to relate teacher's centers to primary schools

only; this he continued is a misconception which had to be corrected.

According to studies carried out by Onyango (2007) TAC centers are facing major challenges and hence their effectiveness greatly hampered. The findings revealed that TAC's were poorly equipped lacked adequate means of transport to access schools, tutors not well trained and qualified to meet the needs of the teachers and that teachers rarely visited the centers. To improve effectiveness of TAC's there is need to develop the transport and communications and the information infrastructure for improved access to information at the right time and in an appropriate form. TAC tutors require extensive training in communication and interpersonal skills, collection development organization of resources and information dissemination. (<http://www.fastoline.org/CD3D-40/EDUCRES/DEP26E/EN/CH11.htm>).

According to Karanja (2008), TAC's were poorly equipped and lacked modern educational institution materials and equipment to respond to the teachers needs. This was partly responsible for the reluctance of the teachers visiting the centers. Rukunga (2003) also found out that the activities at the centers were irregular and poorly planned thus not maximally made use of. It was also noted that TAC tutors faced several challenges including lack of adequate means of transport, poor communication with the Ministry of Education, inadequate training and demonstrational materials and lack of retraining of the TAC tutors to cope with current changes in the field of education. Karanja (2008) recommended that TAC's be properly equipped to meet the needs of teachers. He further emphasized the need to retrain TAC tutors and for them to be provided with proper means of transport. This will increase effectiveness and efficiency of TAC's and TAC tutors. According to a report by Department for International Development (DFID) on research carried out on the effectiveness of teacher resource center strategy (1999) in Mombassa and Kisumu in Kenya, there seemed to be evidence of impact of TAC. Chepalungu District has seven zones and two divisions. There are a total of 109 primary schools and 24 secondary schools. There are seven TAC centers in the district each with one TAC tutor in charge. The TAC centers in district seem to be active only during prize giving days and during examinations.

In most of the divisions in Chepalungu District TAC tutor shares a small office with the Area Education Officer. There is no extra room for a Resource Center neither is there a workshop. The TAC tutor does not have a vehicle or motorbike for use when visiting schools. This warrant an investigation into the effectiveness of TAC centers and TAC tutors in curriculum implementation.

Statement of the problem

Teacher advisory centers play an important role in the

in-service training. The professional development of teacher does depend largely on local in-service training and facilities provided by the TAC. According to a report by Presidential Working party of 1988, TAC's roles were to provide information for teachers conduct, demonstration lessons; develop teaching Aids from local materials and to conduct studies on local education needs and disseminate information on curriculum innovations. In Chepalungu, TAC tutors seem to have issues in effective participation in implementation of secondary school curriculum; there participation seems to be minimal. Therefore this study tried to find out factors that hinder TAC tutors from effectively participating in implementation of secondary school curriculum in Chepalungu District.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of TAC tutors in curriculum implementation of secondary schools in Chepalungu District. The study was guided by the following research questions;

- (i) In which ways do TAC tutors participate in implementation of secondary school curriculum?
- (ii) To what extent do teachers in secondary schools make use of TAC centers?
- (iii) In which ways do TAC tutors participate in professional growth of secondary school teachers?
- (iv) How do TAC tutors educational qualifications affect their participation in implementation of secondary school curriculum?
- (v) What are the activities carried out by TAC tutors to enhance implementation of secondary school curriculum?
- (vi) How equipped are the TAC to meet the needs and demands of implementation of the secondary school curriculum?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was used in the study. The design was appropriate for the study because the targeted population is relatively large to observe directly. Chepalungu District has 24 public secondary schools, geographically; the schools are far apart and thus make direct observation difficult. The target population for this research was all public secondary school teachers and all TAC tutors in Chepalungu District, in Rift Valley Province. There are 24 public secondary schools with approximately three hundred teachers (300) and seven TAC tutors, one in every zone (District Education Office-Chepalungu).

A large sample, the researcher is confident that if another sample of findings from the two samples would be similar to a high degree (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Simple random sampling was used to get the desired number of schools to be involved in the study. This method of sampling involves giving a number to every subject or member of the accessible population, placing the numbers in a container and the picking only number at random. There are 24 public secondary schools in the District, to obtain 7 schools, which is 27% of the population, all the schools was assigned a number and the numbers was folded up and put in a container. Seven cases were picked at random. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the TAC tutors, teachers in the sampled schools, DEO to be involved in the study. For this study

all the seven TAC tutors representing all the seven zones, were purposively selected, because they were informative and possess the required characteristics.

The researcher used questionnaire to get information from teachers and TAC tutors, observation checklist to be used in the TAC tutors office and an interview schedule to get information from the District Education Officer.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 53 respondents took part in the study. There were 48 teachers and 5 TAC tutors. Of the 48 teachers, 35 were males and 13 were females. For TAC tutors, 4 were males and 1 female. Most of the teachers have been in the service for more than five years but less than 10 years. The study also revealed that the majority of the teachers (77%) hold a bachelors degree as the highest professional qualification. This poses a challenge to TAC tutors who are mostly PI or diploma graduates and cannot be able to supervise or help the secondary school teachers.

The feelings of the secondary school teachers about TAC tutors were reflected in their rating of their perception about TAC tutors performance. Majority felt (70.8%) that they were not effective. It was also reflected by their frequency of visit to secondary schools. A huge proportion of teachers (91.5%) responded that the tutors do not visit their schools.

The researchers found out that majority of teachers (97.9%) have never visited TAC centers. This means there was serious under utilization of TAC centers by secondary school teachers. The teachers gave various reasons why they could not utilize the centers. Majority of teachers cited the following reasons; lack of information on TAC centers (66%), low academic qualification of TAC tutors (75%) and lack of resources and facilities at the centers to cater for secondary schools needs (79%). This finding concurs with Shiundu and Omulando's view that TAC centers are only meant for primary school teachers. The study found out that all TAC tutors were trained before deployment. All of the TAC tutors had served for less than 5 years in their current station and all were P1 teachers and had ATS1 professional qualification. The researcher found out that majority of TAC tutors gave the following as their major challenges hindering them from effectively participating in implementation of secondary school curriculum; feeling inferior to secondary school teachers because of their low qualification (58%), no expertise or knowledge of the secondary school curriculum (92%) and lack of enough resources and facilities (79%). It was also found out that TAC centers lacked training, transport facilities and workshop or seminar rooms. None of the six centers had any motor vehicle or motor cycle. There was a clear indication that TAC centers and tutors are ill equipped to provide effective support to secondary school teachers. Mwamba (2003) in her study had also found out that TAC centers lacked enough resources to offer the necessary services required

by teachers. Recent study by Karanja (2008) have also yielded similar findings and it seems no effort has been put in equipping TAC centers to meet the needs of the teachers.

It was also found out that the teachers thought that lack of expertise on secondary school curriculum by the TAC tutors (92%) and the attitude that they are suppose to deal with primary school teachers as major challenges (88%). They also cited low qualification of TAC tutors and lack of information on the services provided by the TAC centers and TAC tutors as some of the challenges hindering TAC tutors from being effective from implementation of secondary school curriculum.

Conclusions

It was found out that TAC tutors' participation in implementation of secondary school curriculum is minimal. Secondary school teachers also rarely made use of TAC centers although they thought the centers were of importance in curriculum implementation.

TAC tutors qualifications affected their participation in implementation of secondary school curriculum. It was found out that most TAC tutors had lower qualifications than the secondary school teachers. It was also found that TAC centers were ill equipped to meet the needs of the secondary school teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Ministry of Education should educate teachers on the use of TAC's. This is because majority of the teachers lack information on the uses of TAC centers. The information should be disseminated through the District Education Officers and the head teachers.
- (2) Teachers Service Commission should recruit TAC tutors with a Bachelor of Education degree as a minimum qualification so that they could assist both primary and secondary school teachers in curriculum implementation. The findings revealed that the TAC tutors educational qualification were lower than secondary school teachers educational qualification.
- (3) The government through the Ministry of Education should provide enough and adequate resources and facilities to the TAC's.

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