

## CHALLENGES IN TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND DISTRIBUTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUTULA SUB-COUNTY

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### ABSTRACT

*In Kenya, weaknesses in human resource planning has affected training and deployment of teachers and thus distorted their distribution and utilization. In Butula Sub-County, there is uneven distribution of the teacher resource across the various categories of public secondary schools yet availability of teachers to implement any curriculum in any institution of learning is very vital. The purpose of this study therefore was to find out the challenges in teacher recruitment and distribution in public secondary schools in Butula Sub-county, Kenya. The study was grounded in Self-Discrepancy Theory as developed by E. Tory Higgins (1987) and adapted by Malusu (1990). The objectives of this study were, to determine the procedure of teacher recruitment and selection used in public secondary schools in Butula sub-county and to establish the challenges in teacher recruitment and distribution in public secondary schools in Butula sub-county. The Descriptive survey research design was used to collect information from a study population of 164 teachers, 23 principals and 2 staffing officers. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the entire study population as the sample size. Questionnaires were used to collect data from secondary school teachers and principals while interviews were administered to the Sub-County Staffing Officer and seven selected principals. Reliability of the instruments was established through a pilot study in two schools and a coefficient of  $r=0.748$  was reported. On the other hand validity of the instruments was determined by the expert judgment of the lecturers in the School of Education, JOOUST University. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The test of significance was computed at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze the data. For the qualitative data a thematic analysis approach was used. The study found out that the procedure of recruitment and selection of teachers was based on the TSC policy in most schools. The study further established that the teacher recruitment and selection in public secondary schools is faced by a number of challenges which makes the staffing policy ineffective. As a result there was lopsided distribution of teachers across the schools, departments and even subjects in the sub-county. The study therefore recommends that Teachers Service Commission steps up supervision and monitoring of the entire process of staffing schools and address the challenges so as to ensure effectiveness of implementation of the policy.*

**Keywords:** Training , deployment Of Teachers, teacher recruitment

### INTRODUCTION

Hiring qualified teachers has been cited as a serious problem affecting both developed and developing countries (Myers, Breja, & Dyer, 2004). Head teachers claim that the quantity and quality of teachers applying for teaching jobs is lower than in the past and some candidates applying for the teaching positions are not worthy of interview and schools end up using non-teaching staff (Central Teaching Council of Wales, 2001). Line and Johnson (2006) argue

that a close match or fit between teachers skills, interests and disposition and the position for which they are being hired is very important for not only effective recruitment of teachers but also teacher retention, distribution and quality teaching. This is in turn partially influenced by teacher qualifications and hiring or recruitment policies and practices.

Imazeki (2008) observes that the distribution of educational resources has been the subject of academic, legal and political discussions for years. Much of the focus has been on the equity of resources across districts but there is a growing awareness of the inequities that also exist across schools, within districts, particularly in the distribution of teachers.

In the United States of America, Ingersoll (2004) observed that there was a huge disparity in staffing of schools with qualified teachers between the more affluent schools and the high-poverty district schools with the latter being disadvantaged. That access to qualified teachers was one of the most important but least equitably distributed of the educational resources. Teacher shortages disproportionately impact on students in disadvantaged schools and are a major factor in the stratification of educational opportunity.

Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) observes that, although Africa is arguably the least developed continent in the world there is increasing awareness that Africa will not be able to develop unless adequate investment in human capital is prioritized. They further observed that while resources for human capital investment are inadequate in the region, inequality in the distribution of these resources poses an additional challenge. More often these are inequalities along gender lines and between urban and rural divides with many governments focusing more on urban areas and less on rural areas.. While some urban schools are also not exempted from this unpleasant phenomenon, the situation is however more acute in rural areas than in the urban district.

Research reports conducted between 1997 and May 2005 on South African teacher supply and demand indicated that there were quantitative shortages of teachers (Department of Education, 2005). However, the same reports indicate that the distribution of educators is not even. Rural areas experience both qualitative and quantitative shortages. The education department has a difficult in recruiting new teachers to rural schools as more rural teachers who train in those institutes never go back to their rural areas but instead seek employment in urban environments..

In Kenya, The Constitution of Kenya, chapter fifteen Article 248, established the TSC as a constitutional commission to undertake teaching management. Under its mandate, the Commission ensures the establishment and maintenance of a sufficient professional teaching force that is equitably distributed and optimally utilized in public educational facilities. Despite this very clear mandate several studies confirm that the issue of teacher distribution continues to be a thorn in the flesh.

In Butula sub-county, the distribution of teachers across the various categories of schools is uneven (Butula sub-county TSC office, 2014). The distribution is in favor of the county and national schools. Among the seven county schools in the sub-county, none has less than 10 teachers while out of 15 schools in the sub-county category only 2 schools have more than 10 teachers with 11 schools have less than 5 teachers. This uneven distribution of teachers in secondary schools in Butula sub-county makes this study vital and urgent as it looks into the challenges in teacher recruitment and distribution.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

In the current study, a descriptive survey research design was used. It involves the use of standardized questionnaires or interviews to collect data about people and their preferences, thoughts and behaviors in a systematic manner (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The chosen design assisted the researcher to sample two schools from the target study population then a pilot study done to test the reliability of the research instruments. The study employed the use of semi-structured questionnaires and the interview schedule to get information from both the teachers and principals of secondary schools in Butula sub-county who were the key respondents of the study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample size and Sampling technique

Mugenda and Mugenda (2004), advises that the sample size must be large enough to represent the salient characteristics of the target population. They further suggest that choosing on the sample size depends on factors such as the number of variables in the study, the type of research design, the method of data analysis and the size of the target population. Considering all these factors, then the most appropriate sampling technique for this study was the saturated sampling technique which gave the study an entire target population of 164 teachers, 23 principals and 2 staffing officers.

### Instruments for data collection

The study employed the use of questionnaires and interviews to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from secondary school teachers and the principals. Interviews were administered to the principals and the Sub-County Staffing Officer.

### Data analysis

#### *Quantitative data analysis*

The numeric data collected from the field was analyzed quantitatively using statistical tools. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of Pearson's chi-square test or chi-square SPSS to compute the data and Phi, a nonparametric correlation coefficient to show the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables.

#### *Qualitative data analysis*

This involved thematically analyzing the interview data derived from the key informants, who were secondary schools principals and the SCSO. The analysis process involved transcribing and organizing all the data, coding, sorting and sifting through the field notes to identify relationships between the variables, patterns, themes and then finally elaborating and examining the generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database in light of formalized bodies of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Procedure of teacher recruitment and selection used in public secondary schools in Butula sub-county

The quantitative findings of this objective was obtained by exploring the responses of the principals on Likert scaled statements in the questionnaire that was pre-designed to investigate the TSC procedure on teacher recruitment in secondary schools while the qualitative data was obtained from the interview schedule.

**Table 1. TSC procedure on teacher recruitment in secondary schools**

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Somehow</i>	<i>At times</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Std Dev.</i>
Capturing of data by schools	9 (52.5%)	5 (29.4%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.9%)	3.48	.75
Advertisement by TSC	13 (76.5%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.61	1.14
Correctly constituted recruitment panel	5 (29.4%)	4 (23.5%)	6 (32.3%)	2 (11.8%)	3.31	0.87
Advertisement by schools	5 (29.4%)	5 (29.4%)	6 (32.3%)	1 (5.9%)	3.42	.94
Adherence to the TSC merit guideline in awarding marks	4 (23.5%)	5 (29.4%)	6 (32.3%)	2 (11.8%)	2.74	0.83
Allotment of most needy subject combination by TSC	5 (29.4%)	4 (23.5%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.6%)	3.28	0.83
Candidate with the highest marks is selected	5 (29.4%)	4 (23.5%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.6%)	3.28	0.83
Selected candidate by school is formally appointed by TSC	10 (58.8%)	3 (17.6%)	4 (23.5%)	0 (0.0%)	3.58	1.07

Source: Survey data (2015)

From the information presented in Table 4.10, it was established from the findings of the study that, majority 52.5% (9), of the principals who took part in this study held the perception that TSC usually capture the appropriate data on staffing needs by schools. However, slightly more than a quarter, 29.4% (5), of the principals agreed but said it was not done always but the other 5.9% (1) of the respondents who took part in the study said it was not done at all. This finding concurs with Aloo, et al (2011) study which discovered the problem of double recruitment of some subject teachers in some schools due to poor manual record keeping.

On advertisement by TSC, the findings of the study reveal that although 17.6% (3) of the principal respondents did not fully agree that TSC usually advertise teaching vacancies, an overwhelming majority, 76.5% (13), of the principals agreed that TSC always advertise such vacancies when they arise. Only a mere 5.9% (1) of the respondents insisted that although TSC advertise teaching vacancies, not always. They argue that it just does at times. This is in agreement with Wamukuru (2011), who indicated that advertisement of vacant secondary school teaching positions by school and subject is normally done by TSC.

On the same note, it emerged that significant proportion of the secondary schools in Butula Sub-county hardly advertise vacant positions in their schools. This fact was reflected by nearly a third, 32.3% (6), of the principal respondents who confirmed that they only advertise at times but not all the times vacancies arise. Although 29.4% (5) of the principals who took part in this study alluded that they always advertise the teaching positions when they occur, 5.9% (1) others reiterated that they do not at all advertise vacant positions. This concurs with the study by Hutchings, et al (2006) in which it was observed that only a tenth of the schools in England had advertised for supply teachers.

When the views of the principals were sought on whether recruitment panels were correctly constituted, it was found out that only about a quarter, 29.4 (5), of them held the opinion that it was correctly constituted. Nearly a third, 32.3% (6), of the principals who took part in the

study said it was only constituted correctly in a few of the times but not always. In fact, more than one out of ten, 11.8% (2), of the principal respondents insisted that the recruitment panels were never at all constituted correctly. This is in agreement with Aloo, Simatwa, Nyang'ori, (2011) who held the view that the panels did not consist of professionals.

It was established from the findings of the study that adherence to the TSC merit guideline in awarding marks to the teacher interviews was still elusive in most of the recruiting panels. For example, a respectable number, 32.3% (6), of principals who took part in the study held the view that if TSC merit guideline in awarding marks to the interviews was upheld then in very few occasions only but always. This fact was supported by 11.8% (2) others who insisted that TSC merit guidelines were never followed at all when awarding marks during the interview. In addition, the results of the study reveal that sometimes even merit was never followed in selecting the suitable candidates. Whereas, 29.4 % ( 5), of the principals who took part in the study agreed that candidates with the highest marks is always selected, 17.6% (3) of them vehemently refuted the claim that merit is always followed to select a teacher after an interview process. During the interviews however, principal respondents were very categorical that the merit guideline is what they strictly use to select the winning candidate.

It also came out that sometimes the subject needs for the schools were never addressed. This was established when the principals' opinions were sought on whether allotment of most needy subject combination by TSC was done, where 29.4% (5) of the respondents said it was only done at times but another 17.6% (3) of them denied that it was done at all. Only slightly over a quarter, 29.4% (5), of the principals who took part in the study agreed that allotment of most needy subjects' combination was addressed by the TSC. This finding agrees with Wadesango, et al (2012) study which established that there are times when schools get a wrong teacher all together or a teacher without the required subject combination.

During interviews with the principals and the sub- county staffing officer (SCSO), the study established that the procedure of recruitment and selection of teachers in public secondary schools is based on the TSC policy and therefore uniform in all schools. All the seven principals interviewed and the SCSO confirmed that they use the procedure laid done by the TSC.

### **Challenges in teacher recruitment and selection in public secondary schools in Butula sub-county**

To establish the challenges in teacher recruitment and selection in public secondary schools in Butula sub-county the researcher developed a questionnaire of twelve itemed-Likert-scaled statements that sought the principal respondents' views on the challenges. The responses of the principals were computed in percentage frequencies and tabulated as shown in Table 2.

The findings of the study in Table 2 show that several challenges face teacher recruitment and selection in public secondary schools. For example, 41.2% (7) of the principals who took part in the study observed that there are a lot of vested interests by the panelists and other stakeholders during the exercise. The exercise is rife with irregularities; B.O.Gs and field officers usually have interest and always wish to force their interest. Coupled with the vested interest, was the incompetence of school boards as was established by the findings of the study. Consistent to the generally held belief, the study findings cast doubt on the ability of the B.O.G to judiciously carry out the exercise given that the process of interviewing people for employment requires thorough understanding of professional as well as topical, socio-economic and political issues, which most board members lack. Majority, 47% (8) of the principals who took part in the study observed that some schools lack an expert in the area of interview. They argued that most B.O.G. members lack ability to interpret the guideline and

implement it. Only 17.6% (3) of the principals alluded that their board members were selected on merit and had proven track record making the process of teacher recruitment efficient and effective in their schools. This is in agreement with the findings of Kipsoi and Sang (2008) which pointed out interference from various stakeholders in the recruitment exercise and questioned the competence of most of the B.O.G members regarding the correct interpretation and implementation of the recruitment guidelines.

**Table 2. Percentage frequency of responses on challenges**

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
Carrying out the exercise where the school BOM has expired.	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	4 (23.5%)
Vested interests by the panelists and other stakeholders.	7 (41.2%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	4 (23.5%)	2 (11.8%)
Quality of teacher selected is compromised by the merit guideline.	6 (35.3%)	2 (11.8%)	2 (11.8%)	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)
Schools are allotted subject combinations that may not be very needy.	3 (17.6%)	4 (23.5%)	2 (11.8%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.6%)
Some schools are given more slots at the expense of more deserving schools.	6 (35.3%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)
Some subject combinations lack trained teachers.	7 (41.2%)	2 (11.8%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)
Location of the school.	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)	4 (23.5%)	2 (11.8%)	4 (23.5%)
Some schools lack an expert in the area of interview.	5 (29.4%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)
It's an expensive exercise.	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	7 (41.2%)
Two leading candidates tying in all areas.	2 (11.8%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	4 (23.5%)	6 (35.3%)
Selected candidates decline the offer for employment.	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	5 (21.4%)	4 (23.5%)
Candidates apply but do not turn up for interviews.	6 (35.3%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)

Key: SA- strongly agree; A- agree; N- neutral; D- disagree; SD- strongly disagree

Source: Survey data (2015)

In addition, the findings of the study revealed that there some instances when the exercise could not be conducted because of lack of BOM in place. Nearly a quarter, 23.5% (4), of the principals said that it was a challenge to carry out the exercise where the school BOM had expired. This was occasioned by the enactment of the new Basic Education Act 2013 which introduced changes in the procedure of constituting BOMs.

It was also established, from the study findings, that quality of teacher selected was sometimes compromised by the merit guidelines. This fact was supported by the significant majority, 47% (8), of the principals who participated in the study. However, 17.6% (3) of the principals held divergent opinion, while (11.8%) 4 others remained non-committal on this matter. On the same note, 41.1% (7) of the principals noted that schools are sometimes allotted subject combinations that may not be very needy. The same sentiments were echoed by other principals who further indicated that TSC has also failed to address the needs of all schools equally as it emerged that some schools are given more slots at the expense of more

deserving schools. A perception that was held by more than half, of respondents who insisted that some schools get favors than others.

Lack of trained teachers or applicants in some subject combinations was also discovered as a challenge towards teacher recruitment and selection, as was observed by most principals. This is a challenge since once you fail to get the right applicant, it means you have to initiate the process of changing to a more available combination which again takes time thereby delaying to address the biting teachers' shortage. Most respondents cited this as a challenge indicating that Agriculture/Biology has specifically been problematic. This finding concurs with Derbyshire (2013), who reported a serious growing concern in relation to recruitment of secondary school teachers in the isle of Man.

The findings of the study also reveal that the school's characteristic was also a challenge to the recruitment and selection itself. For example, it was established that location of the school, as noted by the majority of the respondents played a key factor in teacher recruitment and retention. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Mulkeen (2005) which revealed that many teachers in many countries express a strong preference for urban postings. In Ghana, for example, over 80% of teachers said they preferred to teach in urban schools, Akyeampong and Lewin, (2002). This is further corroborated by Gottelmann-Duret et al (1998) whose study indicated that female teachers may be even less willing to accept a rural posting than their male counterparts, and rural areas may have fewer female teachers than urban areas.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study found out that the procedure of recruitment and selection of teachers in all public secondary schools in Butula sub-county begins with capture and forwarding of data by the school to TSC. TSC then does the allotment of slots to schools and advertises the available vacancies in the local daily newspaper. Schools then advertise and invite applications from qualified candidates who apply directly to the school. The school then constitutes a recruitment panel which carries out the interviews, selects the successful candidate and forwards his/her details to TSC for formal appointment. The study further established that the process is faced by a number of challenges; vested interests by the panelists and other stakeholders which leads to irregularities, incompetence of the recruitment panel, lack of a teacher expert in the area of interview, failure by TSC to allocate deserving schools appropriate slots and subject combination, lack of trained teachers in some advertised subject combinations among other challenges.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. TSC should step up supervision and monitoring of the entire process of staffing schools so that each step is properly and clearly implemented.
2. TSC should constantly liaise with teacher training institutions so that teacher trainees are trained in the required subject combinations. This will minimize cases of lack of applicants for advertised vacancies.
3. The BOM should budget and prioritize capacity building for the selected members to sit on the recruitment and selection panel so as to enable them be competent enough to carry out the recruitment and selection exercise professionally. This will eliminate unhealthy practices in the exercise and hence lead to selection of quality teachers based on merit.

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