

Teacher Delocalization as a Means of Improving School Performance and Integration in Kenyan Basic Education Institutions

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1. Introduction

The teacher delocalization program is a policy arrangement that entails moving/ transferring teachers holding administrative positions, mostly head teachers, principals, Special needs education teachers, and senior teachers by Teachers Service Commission (TSC) from their home areas/counties to strengthen school management, improve their effectiveness, addressing cases of conflict of interest, enhancing national cohesion among other national interests.

The program comes as a result of the administration of the recently developed guidelines on the deployment of teachers by TSC. This policy seeks to identify and deploy more than 30,000, and particularly more than 500 principals and head teachers of secondary schools from the 8,592 principals in secondary schools and primary school heads teachers from the 23,000 public primary school heads in the country, though the program began with the delocalization of principals and head teachers, eventually TSC will caste the program to deputy heads and other senior teachers (TSC, 2018).

The delocalization of primary and special school programs was executed through a memo titled 'Delocalisation of Primary School Heads and Special Schools'. TSC introduced the delocalization program in the year 2017; more than 1,065 head teachers have been transferred; furthermore, some 557 secondary school principals and deputies were moved effective 1st January 2018 (See Appendix 1), in line with the TSC policy (TSC, 2018). To achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Vision 2030, especially in Kenya, education leaders have an important role to play to make teaching and learning more effective and to give quality education to students.

Globally, it has been found that effective leaders develop school climates and cultures that help motivate both the students and teachers leading to the creation of better teaching and learning environments that are more conducive to higher levels of student achievements (Ross & Gray, 2006; Mulford, 2003). Cotton (2003), posits that Governments the world over have established behaviors' by a school principals have a substantial influence on student's performance.

Harris (2005) observes that the quality of the school in any given nation is affected by how the internal processes work to constantly improve its performance. One of the processes involves leadership where the principal is the central school figure to continuously articulate the school's mission and vision to the school's staff and community. The principal's decisions depend on leadership styles which are (Yulk, 2005) School principals and aspiring administrators need to become familiar with leadership as a discipline to practice, learn their strengths and weaknesses infuse themselves with best practices so they can provide leadership that best fits their circumstances, and work diligently to perfect and implement the behaviours that will enable deep sustained improvement in schools.

Kenya is not left behind in the journey of attaining the goals and objectives of Vision 2030 and Education for All (EFA) (World's Competitiveness Report, 2009). The ability of learning institutions to meet the objectives of education in Kenya depends to a large extent on the type of leadership prevalent in the institutions. Mulusa, (1988) observed that many schools still perform poorly due to ineffective leadership albeit inadequate funds and wanting facilities. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) reports indicated that principals' leadership styles have a direct relationship with the overall effectiveness of the school since both the teacher and student performance under the leadership of the school principal (UNESCO, 2012).

Globally, principals are being called upon to exercise strong instructional leadership in their schools; since they are faced with the responsibility of enhancing student performance while keeping order through acceptable student mannerisms often requiring changing school performance (Tableman, 2004). Whereas

teachers are eventually responsible for enhancing student learning in schools, varying the organizational conditions for improvement across schools is the fundamental task of school leaders (Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett & Thomas, 2005). In Tableman's best practice brief (2004), principals are accountable for improving student performance.

In Kenya, Mohammed (2012) studied the influence of head teachers' management styles on KCSE performance. The outcomes indicated the most used styles include democratic and autocratic or dictatorial. Another study by Obama (2009) on how leadership styles affect performance in KCSE in public Secondary Schools in Homabay District, Kenya indicated that there was a significant relationship between leadership styles and performance at KCSE. The studies done by both Okoth, (2000) and Kimacia, (2007) indicated that principals' democratic leadership style had high mean performance index than those who practiced autocratic leadership styles. Authors Huka, (2003), Muli, (2005), and Wangui, (2007) posit autocratic leadership styles firmly influenced students' performance in KCSE since they yielded higher mean score in KCSE compared to the democratic leadership style. From the foregoing, it's clear that head teachers and principals have a stake in enabling the Kenyan government to achieve the objectives of education and various development agenda including the big four.

2. Identification and Justification of the Problem

The government agency responsible for teachers in public basic education in Kenya is known as the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) a body corporate that keeps a register of teachers, and recruiting, and deploy/posts, to promote, discipline in public schools in Kenya. TSC recruits teachers for primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions other than public/private universities. Teachers in the colonial period were hired by missionaries and different branches of the government. TSC was established in 1967 by an Act of Parliament (Cap 212) of the Laws of Kenya (TSC, 2009).

TSC serves a large labor force of teachers who by the year 2009 was totaling 243,000 on the then wage bill of Kshs. 44.4 billion (TSC, 2009) and currently stands at 201,622 teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in primary schools, and 40,449 employed by school boards of management, bringing the total to 242,071. Records indicate a personnel contingent of 118,608 teachers in secondary schools, with the majority (90.8 percent) deployed in public schools, and the rest in private schools.

Other than recruiting teachers, the Teachers Service Commission is charged with the responsibility of posting teachers who are distributed all over the country serving in over 23,000 primary schools and 8,592 secondary schools and related tertiary institutions. To serve this big labour force, the Commission has established units in the County and sub-county.

To realize its vision of '*Effective Service for Quality Teaching*' TSC relies on a solid legal regulatory and policy framework consisting of the Basic Education Act, code of conduct and ethics for teachers, code of regulation for teachers, and several guidelines and policies.

There has been an increase in demand for school teachers in Kenya as a result of the free primary education introduced in 2003 and free secondary education in 2008. School enrolment in primary section education improved from 5.9 million in the year 2002 to 9.95 million in the year 2014, courtesy of the free primary education program; while secondary school enrolment rose from 851.800 in the year 2002 to 2.33 million in 2014.

Due to the high number of new students enrolling in schools recruiting more teachers is important so is utilizing and optimizing the existing teaching force; hence the need for delocalization.

With several stakeholders accused TSC of inadequate utilization of teachers, with some education stakeholders calling for better distribution of teachers across schools. TSC is utilizing delocalization to ensure stricter reallocation and movement of the existing staff to ensure equitable distribution across the regions and also to avail teachers to those currently disadvantaged.

The Teachers Code of Regulations (TCOR) provides for and supports teacher delocalization through teachers' transfers in addition to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) entered between TSC and teachers' unions. Specifically, regulation 70(8) of the TCORs states: "In undertaking deployment, the commission (TSC) shall endeavour to delocalize the administration of public institutions." (COR, 2015). Therefore, in Kenya, the Code of Regulations and Code of Conduct and Ethics for Teachers form an integral part of the CBA agreement; specifically Clause 4 of the CBAs.

The education sector plays a big role in Kenya's national development and particularly it will be the driving force critically needed for actualizing and realizing the promises of the 'Big Four' development agenda. It is imperative therefore that strong commitments are made and implemented to ensure that every Kenyan child receives high-quality and holistic education. This can be achieved through the delocalization program achieving its objectives.

TSC has every right to put in place a policy to ensure that heads do not overstay in a particular institution for unnecessarily too long; this, therefore, necessitates changes in the headship of schools.

Delocalization is just part of education reforms by TSC aimed at the provision of quality education for Kenyan school-going children. From whichever perspective we look at education reforms, the role of the school principal matters more than that of anybody else in the learning matrix. Principals are the primary drivers of students' achievement and teachers' effectiveness. Kenya cannot achieve quality education without effective principals and head teachers; this justifies why TSC began this policy on this vantage group.

There is a need for head teachers and principals to enhance the commitment of teachers to service. In a study by Choti (2009) in Kenya, it was found that high school students performed poorly in national exams because the teachers were not committed to their work, probably overstaying in one station diminishes the boss-subordinate relationship between the heads of schools and their teaching staff; delocalizing them may help to minimize if not eradicate this menace.

The teaching profession suffers an acute shortage of 40,972 teachers in primary schools and 63,849 in secondary schools, this implies that TSC has to employ every available mechanism to ensure that the sector remains afloat by managing the available labour effectively to mitigate the shortage currently faced, delocalization may just be of such tact and strategies necessary to facilitate optimization of the thin labour force.

3. Situation analysis, challenges, and proposed mitigation strategies

Good governance is an issue that cuts across teacher and principal recruitment, retention, and training in Kenya. In Kenya, the head teachers (HT) and principals are regarded as the agent of supervision at the school level, on behalf of the government. They are involved in the translation of educational policies and objectives into programs within the school. Borrowing from the agency theory alongside literature, the head teacher/Principal has the overall responsibility for the administration of the school. The headteacher is accountable to the employer, in this case, the TSC. The head teacher's responsibility involves the interpretation of educational policies and objectives and the implementation of the curriculum. The headteacher is answerable to the profession and is expected to demonstrate superior intellectual, moral, and mature characteristics in his or her role as a head of the institution. The headteacher is supposed to be a role model for other teachers under him to emulate.

The head teachers are accountable to the community they serve, including the parents. In this role, the head is regarded as a public relations officer. The head teacher is also answerable to the staff in the school. The headteacher is involved in the orientation, recommendation for promotion, and transfer of staff. They are also accountable for school finances and facilities. This entails budgeting and accounting for the school finances as well as being responsible for discipline in the school for both the staff and the students (Olembo *et al*, 1992). This, therefore, justifies TSC's decision to begin delocalization with head teachers and Principals, albeit a justifiable move!

One challenge that this policy will bring will be an interruption of the seamless flow strategies put in place by different heads of such institutions to ensure the attainment of their plans including their students/pupils passing their national examinations; it will be imperative for TSC to reconsider Moving such personnel in Third terms to allow for smooth preparation of candidates for national examinations that are usually slated for October and November every year.

There have been concerns that more than 100 teachers have quit the profession following a government policy, implemented in 2017, teachers who were transferred and opted to resign or seek employment in county governments took personal decisions and exercised their right to resign from employment. Any employment contract provides rules for disengagement including resignations and TSC has no right to stop any teachers who wish to resign, it should be noted that the resigning teachers were fully aware that they can be transferred to any station in Kenya; it simply means they had options! However, literature on teacher recruitment and retention suggests that recruiting and retaining teachers in the profession is influenced by their conditions of service; in the World Bank report (2007) teachers and principals noted that work conditions were the main reason for leaving the profession.

This report further noted that due to poor working conditions and low salaries teachers leave the profession before they reach retirement age (increased from 55-60 years in 2010); particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa attrition rates are believed to range between 5 and 30 % (World Bank, 2007). Resistance to delocalization may also be emanating from previous scary happenings in the country and particularly the 2007/2008 post-election violence, which resulted in the deaths of over 1,300 people and left many civil servants and teachers scared to work in areas occupied by different ethnic groups (GOK, 2009).

The other issue that warrants delocalization in the Teaching profession is corruption. Among the greatest concerns in the development of education in Kenya and more so across Sub-Saharan Africa is corruption vice. Corruption is doubted as widespread in other institutions too. It is hoped with the new constitution 2010,

corruption is going to be tackled (TI, 2005), and already the Government is putting in place stringent measures to curb this menace. According to Chapman (2003). The corruption vice has detrimental consequences since it leads to resources wasted as young people are denied the education they should receive; further, those unable to afford bribes are denied access to schooling. Such a practice could lead to a generation of students who believe individual effort and merit do not count but achievement comes through bribery, favoritism, and manipulation. School heads are even more vulnerable due to their influence on school operations including procurement of supplies, by virtue of their positional power, they are likely to even be approached by those seeking favours for various interests, and delocalization would therefore be a strategy to cut such ties.

There is evidence of ethnicity in the school structure as shown by the staffing of schools. The government policy is to post teachers, to their home districts. Therefore, the majority of the teachers in primary, secondary, and tertiary colleges are local people. This practice if left unchecked is likely to encourage ethnic intolerance in the county, delocalization therefore comes as a good check on this pandemonium. The teaching profession in Kenya is portrayed negatively by some teachers engaging in unprofessional behavior with their students, especially sexual relationships between male teachers and school girls. As a matter of concern, Appalling details have emerged on the magnitude of school girls falling prey to sexual predators by their own teachers. According to TSC, a huge statistic of 12,660 girls were sexually abused by teachers over a five-year period, the report by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) posits that;

'... in some cases, teachers abused as many as 20 girls in a single school before they were reported. The survey, which captured data between 2003 and 2007, said the 12,660 girls estimated to have been abused in schools over the period were enough to fill 79 single-streamed primary schools that have an average of 40 girls a class. According to the report, done jointly with the non-profit Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, some teachers were serial sexual offenders and molested girls from one school to another because when caught they were simply transferred and no action was taken against them. The report found that only 633 teachers were charged with sexual abuse in the five years covered by the study, but that was only the tip of the iceberg—most cases went unreported.'

The teaching service has also suffered a lot from teachers owning and running private businesses. Kenya National Association of Parents as early as 2009 noted that:

'... the engagement of teachers in private service has totally compromised the quality of education in public schools, yet no one is talking about it. We have a situation where thousands of teachers employed by the Government either own or teach in private schools. Ironically, these teachers send their children to private schools because they know public ones spell academic doom. Teachers in public schools know the state of education in the schools where they teach. The quality of education in public schools is low compared to the private schools, judging by the number of students who perform well in KCPE examinations and join national high schools, whose students qualify for admission to public universities in greater numbers compared to students from provincial or district schools.'

As delocalization continues head teachers and principals need to brace for major leadership and performance enhancement tasks as enrollment in all the 8,592 secondary schools hits three million in 2019. The ministry indicates that 246,133 students will join secondary schools with the implementation of the free secondary education as it pursues a 100 percent transition; insinuating schools will experience a huge surge in student numbers. TSC through a correspondence to the National Treasury proposes teachers' necessity for the implementation of 100% transition of learners from primary to secondary over the 2018-2022. Undoubtedly, the ballooning admissions in public schools will stretch the current teaching workforce. According to TSC, paper in 2017, 12,626 teachers will be required in 2018.

During the 2012/2013 financial year, the government recruited 10,000 additional teachers under the economic stimulus program, cutting the shortage from 16.15 percent to 6.86 percent in the subsequent year under Medium Term Plan II (2013 – 2017), Overall, the teachers' employer explains that over the last five years, the government under the Medium Term Plan II (MTP II) has provided for recruitment of only 5,000 teachers annually. And the recruitment drive has always been spread for both primary and post-primary institutions. According to data from the Ministry of Education, the number of secondary school institutions rose from 6,310 to 8,592 between 2012 and 2017. Students' enrollment, also, rose from 1,765,531 in 2012 to 2,704,030 in 2017. It is imperative to note that despite the government initiative of recruiting additional 5,000 teachers annually for the last five years, this provision has not matched the increase in enrollment and rapid expansion of learning institutions; implying that head teachers and principals will have to institute stringent mechanisms to cope with the challenge.

4. Implications of the Reforms

Going forward it will be necessary for TSC to uphold merit in appointment by recruiting school heads, their deputies, and senior teachers on a competitive basis, to public office. This will ensure the commission obtains labour force kin on delivering the objectives of the sector, it will ensure that staff committed to the call of duty are available, and staff that will embrace commissions moves including delocalization.

Every change comes with challenges that are however surmountable, in the process of implementing this policy, the family fabric will face unprecedented effects. Indeed already President Kenyatta said he had received concerns that some families have been affected by the transfer of school administrators to other counties; hence the president's call for a review of the policy guidelines on delocalization of teachers to ensure that it is not implemented to the detriment of families. However this is just a review and not a reconsideration, therefore delocalization will continue albeit with a different tact and approach.

Transfers are likely to agitate learners, especially if they are impromptu, there is a need therefore for TSC to initiate student counseling to prepare them for the transfer of their principals. Delocalization reform may help to balance teachers between rural and urban setups. Deployment or posting by TSC under normal circumstances has seen teachers preferring urban centers to rural areas. This is common among women who would like to join their husbands working in urban centers. The rural areas are not favored because of the poor living conditions, especially by the young. To encourage teachers to stay in harsh rural areas, the government of Kenya introduced hardship allowance to act as an incentive for teachers to work in these areas. Despite this incentive, there is an imbalance between the rural and urban schools, with the latter being overstaffed and the former understaffed. This situation is however common in other countries; the World Bank report (2007) indicates that:

'...Qualified teachers are often reluctant to stay in rural settings. In Ghana, over 80 percent of teachers said they preferred to teach in urban schools. Rural postings are unpopular for a variety of reasons. In Ghana, student teachers considered working in deprived areas unattractive because of the danger of disease, problems with local languages, and unsuitable teacher accommodation. In Tanzania, student teachers expressed concern about poor classroom and home accommodations, school resources, leisure opportunities, and medical facilities (p.18).

Delocalization, therefore, has the potential to eventually bring a reprieve to this situation. Delocalization may motivate attrition of teachers from service, literature notes that attrition is high among newly recruited teachers; young teachers may have less stable family lives and have less commitment to teaching. Further, if they stay in the areas for long they often invest in the area, for instance, they might buy houses, start families and settle down (Macdonald, 1999), this may make them quite service when such reforms are implemented.

Another implication related to attrition should it arise will lead to the loss of experienced teachers from the system; in case those who are leaving the profession are the more successful or more qualified teachers. Towse *et al.* (2002) point out that this may have the effect of leaving fewer teachers in the classroom or assuming leadership positions. It can also lead to demoralization among remaining teachers.

Another implication of the reform agenda related to the separation of family ties is the issue of its relationship with the impact of HIV/AIDS on teacher attrition. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has been recognized as having major impacts in all sectors of Kenya and has specific implications for the education system in the country and Africa generally (GOK, 2004). Should this happen, the sector may face deeper challenges considering the high number of teachers targeted. Already, in the course of HIV infection, there may be 10–14 bouts of prolonged illness, leading to long absences from school; on this basis, each death is preceded by 18 months of disability (Akunga *et al.*, 2000; Kelly 2000). According to Goliber (2000), a teacher misses six months of work as a result of illness before developing full-blown AIDS. The problem of caring may fall heavily on female teachers; hence, in several countries, head teachers have reported lower productivity of female teachers than their male counterparts (Akunga *et al.*, 2000; Kelly, 2000).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the ongoing teacher delocalization albeit challenges being experienced will lead to more desirable outcomes. TSC needs to continue the teachers' delocalization of teachers and they find better ways of how to deal with the challenges that emerge. It is recommended that TSC engages the concerned teachers through their regional offices to establish preferred stations that would enable the affected teachers to delocalize but within reasonable proximity to their families. Secondly, it is recommended that TSC seek for further funding to bridge the current shortage of teachers to effectively deliver on the promises of education. Thirdly it is recommended that TSC institutes a program to counsel and sensitize both teachers and students on teacher delocalization. Finally, it is important that TSC engages the teachers union for buy-in whenever decisions affecting teachers are taken.

6. References

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