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Teachers Service Commission's Role in Quality Assurance for Effective Teaching and Learning: A Case of West Pokot County, Kenya

By

Dr. Aggrey Asitiba Okutu

Kisii University, Kapenguria Campus

E-mail: okutuasitiba@gmail.com

Abstract

Teachers Service Commission is an Independent Constitutional Body, established by Article 237 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Article 237 (3) (a) and (c) of the constitution states that, "The Teachers Service Commission shall review the standards of education and training of persons entering the teaching service; and advice the national government on matters relating to teaching profession. This can be interpreted to imply that, TSC has a mandate of ensuring high quality of curriculum implementation. TSC's plans to recruit field Quality Assurance and Standard Officers for this purpose were thwarted by Attorney General's Advisory against these plans in 2014 and also in 2018. Meanwhile, TSC's task of quality assurance remains with Curriculum Support Officers whose role is mainly supervisory. TSC's Handbook on Decentralized Teacher Management Functions (2015) has listed the duties of CSOs. A close scrutiny of the stipulated duties shows that CSOs have an enormous task, yet each zone with many schools is entitled to one CSO. This paper aimed at assessing the effectiveness of CSOs in performing their tasks, by conducting a study in West Pokot County as a case example. The study employed a survey design and was grounded on Clinical Supervision Approach. Its target population included all CSOs in West Pokot County, the TSC County Director, the TSC Sub-County Directors, the head teachers and teachers of primary schools in West Pokot County. The study used questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide to collect data. It used mixed methods in data analysis and presented findings in frequency tables and percentages. The study found out that CSOs were evidently carrying out supervision of Curriculum Implementation exercise in West Pokot County, by mainly checking teachers' professional records, advising them on how well they can make and update professional records and organizing workshops and seminars for teachers. However, CSOs could not visit schools regularly to undertake supervision exercise as expected of them because they were overwhelmed a fact that made them ineffective. The study recommended that: TSC should be allowed to deploy field QASOs to complement CSOs role; More CSOs should be deployed by TSC and those retired should be replaced promptly; The Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council under the Ministry of Education should deploy more QASOs in the field to supplement the supervisory work being undertaken by CSOs. The Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should work collaboratively on matters pertaining supervision of curriculum implementation to ensure quality teaching and learning in primary schools.

Key Terms: Kenya, Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Curriculum Support, Supervision, Clinical Supervision, Quality Assurance, West Pokot County

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Introduction

Background to the Study

Teachers Service Commission is an Independent Constitutional Body, established by Article 237 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Article 237 (3) (a) and (c) of the constitution states that, "The Teachers Service Commission shall review the standards of education and training of persons entering the teaching service; and advice the national government on matters relating to teaching profession. This implies that, TSC has a role of ensuring high quality of curriculum implementation. Article 67 of Basic Education Act (2013) further states that, "The Cabinet Secretary, Teachers Service Commission, Standards and Quality Assurance Council, National Education Board, National Quality Bodies, and the County Education Boards shall ensure the maintenance of standards, quality and relevance of education and training as provided for under this Act or any other written law." Thus, the Teachers Service Commission is among key institutions charged with responsibility of ensuring the provision of quality education. TSC therefore, has to ensure that there is quality implementation of the curriculum. Article 35 (1) of Teachers Service Commission Act (2012) states that: "The Commission shall take all necessary steps to ensure that persons in the teaching service comply with the teaching standards prescribed by the Commission under this Act." TSC, in its wisdom, has seen it wise to create a Quality Assurance and Standard division in its ranks for it to ensure quality curriculum delivery in schools by its employees - the teachers. This, according to TSC is one of the necessary steps it has to take to ensure quality teaching standards as contemplated in article 35 (1) of TSC Act (2012).

The Teachers Service Commission has put structures in place to have a fully-fledged quality assurance division under it. According to Standard Digital of 14th July 2014, TSC has restructured its operations and has created a Quality Assurance Division which is being headed by the Director of Quality Assurance and Standards. The first Director of Quality Assurance was appointed in May 2018. TSC's Circular Number 16/2018, dated 27th July 2018 on 'Revised Teachers Service Commission Structure' indicates that a Division called, "Quality Assurance and Standards & Teacher Registration" has been created as one of the Divisions under the Directorate of Teacher Management. Other Divisions under the Directorate of Teacher Management are Staffing and Field Services.

Further, TSC has come up with clear duties of the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer as indicated in section 2.1.3 of Teachers Service Commission's Hand Book on Decentralized Teacher Management Functions (2015) and TSC's Code of Regulations for Teachers (2015), section 45 (k) to (k).

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TSC's plans to recruit field Quality Assurance and Standard Officers for this purpose, in accordance with section 44 of TCS Code of Regulations for teachers (2015), were thwarted by Attorney General's Advisory against these plans in 2014 and also in 2018. Therefore, TSC's plans, seems to have been slowed. The recruitment is yet to be done.

Meanwhile, the Curriculum Support Officers have remained the only field Officers to undertake this task, despite the fact that these officers (CSOs) have clear mandate stipulated. Ideally, Curriculum Support Officers are meant to play a complimentary role to Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in the field. Section 47 (a) to (q) of TSC Code of Regulation for Teachers (2015) and section 2.1.6 of TCS' Handbook on Decentralized Teacher Management Functions (2015), indicates duties of Curriculum Support Officers. Their duties include, but not limited to: identifying the training needs of teachers and heads of institutions and advising the Commission accordingly; providing support services to teachers and continuously advising on teaching techniques; helping in selection of appropriate text books; noting any challenges during assessments; organizing and conducting seminars, workshops and retreats for teachers on curriculum implementation; updating teachers on curriculum changes, pedagogy, content coverage and any other emerging issues in the teaching service; developing work programmes for the Curriculum Support Centre; visiting schools to observe teaching techniques and providing professional guidance and counseling to teachers; giving demonstrative lessons and advising teachers on the appropriate methods, techniques and resources needed for effective teaching and learning; assisting in the setting up of subject panels and examinations and assessments procedures in schools; collecting and submitting data on school enrollment, staff establishment, staff changes and other related information; participating in organizing and managing co-curricular activities and preparing regular progress reports for transmission to TSC through County Director.

The list of stipulated duties of Curriculum Support Officers thus indicate that, their roles are mainly supervisory. They are supposed to make a follow up of the teaching process and advice the relevant offices appropriately. Supervision is a major instrument to ensure quality and to develop the standard of education (Kalita, 2017). Supervision of teachers by CSOs can therefore be seen as TSC's effort to ensure quality implementation of the curriculum and consequently assurance of high standard of education delivery.

Historically speaking, the Curriculum Support Officers were formally the Teacher Advisory Center (TAC) Tutors. The concept of Teacher Advisory Center originated in Britain in 1950s to respond to the need of developing learning and teaching materials and distributing them to schools. This concept was later adopted in Kenya in late 1960s and early 1970s (Lodiaga, 2000). These Teacher Advisory Centers focused on enabling teachers in primary schools to access educational materials such as books and audio-visual equipment, in order to improve their instructional quality (Lodiaga, 2001). They were started at zonal level and were staffed by a tutor to assist teachers in this respect. The TAC Tutors were employees of TSC and worked alongside Zonal School Inspectors, popularly known as APSI (Assistant Primary Schools Inspector). Currently they are called Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs). They also worked alongside the District Inspector of Schools (DSI), currently called District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (DQASOs), who were employees of Ministry

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of Education. Teacher Advisory Centres were vibrant in 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. According to a Task Force Report of 2012 on the Realignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Standards and Quality Assurance delivery services were poor in Counties and Sub-Counties because, the once effective TAC system had collapsed. To this effect, some of the recommendations of this Task Force were:

- 1) Develop and strengthen school based and Sub-County level standards and quality assurance capacities;
- 2) Establish a programme for teacher development through regular retraining and in-servicing to improve teacher competency in curriculum delivery.

It is from this background that seemingly, the Teachers Service Commission decided to revitalize the TAC system after the promulgation of the new Constitution of Kenya in 2010. It decided to rebrand the former TACs by renaming them as Curriculum Support Centers (CSC). It also renamed TAC tutors as Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs). TSC also reaffirmed the mandate of CSOs as indicated above. It was the wish of TSC that the CSOs work alongside the QASOs who were to be its employees to complement the work of the Quality Assurance and Standards Council under the Ministry of Education.

Statement of the Problem

Developing and maintaining standards in education and promoting quality education remains a major challenge across education system throughout the world (Republic of Kenya, 2012). According to Sessional paper number 14 of 2012, while enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels have increased, learning outcomes have not done so. One reason among others is that the application of measures for quality assurance and standards are not functioning adequately. Minimum quality standards are not being achieved, nor are schools being regularly inspected or supervised and teachers, schools and institutions managing them being held to account (Republic of Kenya 2012). According to TSC Strategic Plan (2019-2023), the Commission faces shortage in terms of managerial and technical staff. Of particular concern is shortage of staff at County, Sub-County and Zonal levels. This adversely affects supervision of curriculum implementation and provision of support services to teachers.

Given this background, the task placed on Curriculum Support Officers appears enormous especially in West Pokot County which is vast and with harsh terrain. With limited number of Curriculum Support Officers whose tasks have been doubled due to unavailability of TCS QASOs and few Ministry of Education QASOs, there is a serious problem pertaining how TSC is to realize its Quality Assurance role by relying only on few and seemingly not up to the task Curriculum Support Officers to undertake both supervisory and quality assurance and standard roles.

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Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this study were:

1. To find out how Curriculum Support Officers were undertaking their supervisory and Quality Assurance duties in West Pokot County;
2. To find out challenges that Curriculum Support Officers were facing in undertaking their duties in West Pokot County;
3. To suggest remedial measures to challenges facing Curriculum Support Officers in their work in West Pokot County.

Theoretical Background

This study was grounded on Clinical Supervision Approach. According to Kalita (2017), Clinical Supervision is the latest among the different phases of Evolution of Educational Supervision. The term "Clinical" implies "the salient operational and empirical aspects of supervision in the classroom" (May & Zimpher, 1986). The use of a medical term "Clinical" connotes something in need of careful diagnosis and a prescribed course of action towards improved "health" (or more effective teaching) (May & Zimpher, 1986)

Morris Cogan is considered as the originator of the term 'Clinical Supervision' (Tracy, 1995 as cited by Kalita, 2017). According to Cogan, Clinical Supervision is an approach to supervision which blends 'Objectives' and "scientific" classroom observation with aspects of collegial coaching, rational planning, and a flexible, inquiry-based concern with student learning. Clinical Supervision started as the practice of observing, assisting, and receiving feedback (Smith, 2009). Thus, clinical supervision places emphasis on sustained teacher and supervisor interaction in order to solve classroom problems (Lovell & Wiles, 1983 as cited in Thakral, 2015).

Robert Goldhammer (1959) is one of the proponents of Clinical Supervision, who proposed the five stages of supervision. They are as follows:

1. A pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed;
2. Classroom observation;
3. A supervisor's analysis of the notes from the observation, and planning for the post-observation conference;
4. A post-observation conference between supervisor and teacher; and
5. A supervisor's analysis of the post-supervision conference.

Cogan insisted on a collegial relationship focused on the teacher's interest in improving student learning, and on nonjudgmental observation and inquiry process.

Since clinical supervision employs various techniques such as observation, demonstration, visitation, workshops, seminars, retreats, in-services, among others, the

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researcher found it prudent to ground this study on this (clinical) approach which is an approach that accommodates most of these aspects of supervision. More so, clinical supervision provides structure for interpreting the data derived from scientific and artistic methods (Schwartz, 1987), an aspect which prompted the researcher to see it as an appropriate approach to guide the current study which views interpretation of data as the main tool that can be used to determine appropriate supervision process.

Clinical Supervision was most appropriate for this study since it advocates for sustained interaction in different forms between a teacher and a supervisor. It advocates for close monitoring of teacher's work by a supervisor. For quality delivery of the curriculum and realization of high standards in curriculum delivery, a lot has to be put in, in terms of time, physical resources, human resources among others. With just few CSOs, strained physical resources and acute teacher shortages, it is unlikely that TSC is bound to realize its role of Quality Assurance and Standards in Teaching and Learning, especially in West Pokot County.

Brief Literature Review

Some Policy Guidelines

According to TSC Draft Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023), TSC's Vision is: "To be a transformative teaching service for quality education." Its Mission is: "To professionalize the teaching service for quality education and development." More so, one of the TSC's core values is that its employees are expected to observe requirements of professional conduct and apply skills, knowledge and competencies that meet the standards needed for the work that is assigned to them. This implies that from the onset, TSC's endeavour is to see high quality of service delivery by its employees and is committed to see that this is realized. Constant close monitoring of teachers' work in school to ensure quality and high standards of teaching and learning is therefore necessary, if TSC's Vision, Mission and its Core Values are to be realized. This is what Clinical Supervision Approach advocates for.

The TSC's Code of regulations for teachers (2015) places responsibility of quality assurance to various officers. This includes the TSC County Directors, The TSC Sub-County Directors, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, the head teachers, among others. In section 12 of TSC's Code of regulation for teachers, one of the duties of the TSC County Director are: ensure that teachers comply with the teaching standards prescribed by the Commission; monitor the conduct and performance of teachers at the county level; and supervise teachers within the county. These standards are quite in order, according to the principles of Clinical Supervision. Clinical supervision places emphasis on sustained teacher and supervisor interaction in order to solve classroom problems (Lovell & Wiles, 1983 as cited in Thakral, 2015). However, the County Director cannot perform all these tasks all alone. He needs enough personnel to perform them on his behalf.

Section 13 of the TSC Code of regulations for teachers stipulates the duties of the TSC Sub-County Director. Among them is to co-ordinate teacher performance management activities within the Sub-County. Coordination of Teacher performance management activities implies ensuring that teachers undertake quality curriculum implementation. This is in line with Clinical

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Supervision Objectives and scientific classroom observation with aspects of collegial coaching, rational planning, and a flexible, inquiry-based concern with student learning. However, there are no TSC Quality Assurance and Standards Officers at Sub-County level at the moment who can assist the Sub-County Director of Education to undertake this enormous quality assurance tasks. There are only few Curriculum Support Officers available to assist Sub-County Director in these tasks. It is not clear if the CSOs are equal to these tasks.

On TSC Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, Section 44 of TSC Code of Regulations for Teachers states that: The Commission may for the purpose of maintaining the performance standards, designate a Quality Assurance and Standards Officer at the County and Sub-County level. At the moment, the Commission is yet to recruit QASOs at County and Sub-County level. So far, only the Directorate of Quality Assurance at the TSC headquarters under a Director has been established.

According to section 52 (1) of TSC's Code of regulation for teachers (2015), the Commission commits itself to strengthening supervision and to continuously monitor the performance of teachers in curriculum implementation at institutional level. Consequently, at school level, the task of quality assurance is vested in the head teacher. Section 42 (2) of the same TSC Code states that, every head of institution shall in performing the role of quality assurance within the institution: teach; supervise and ensure quality implementation of curriculum; verify teachers' professional documents; supervise the actual coverage of syllabus; ensure that teachers attend classes; among others. This echoes the principle of Clinical Supervision which insists on a 'collegial relationship focused on the teacher's interest in improving student learning, and on nonjudgmental observation and inquiry process.' In order to undertake these tasks well, the head teacher also needs to be constantly supervised regularly by external Officers like the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers or Curriculum Support Officers. According to Jonyo and Jonyo (2017), teachers will be at their best productivity if they have supervisors who will help them improve on their areas of weakness if constructive feedback is given. Field TSC QASOs are not available at the moment. It is not clear whether the few CSOs available can competently manage these tasks alone.

TSC Act (2012), section 23 (1) requires the Commission to register all qualified teachers. This is aimed at establishing and maintaining the standards on professional qualification and competencies within the teaching service by ensuring that all teachers comply with the teaching standards (TSC Annual Report, 2014-2015).

Legal notice number 11 of 2014 established Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council. Some of the functions of this are:

- a) Ensure standards and maintain quality in institutions of Basic Education;
- b) Administer policies and guidelines set for Basic Education;
- c) Supervise and oversee curriculum implementation and delivery;
- d) Monitor the conduct of assessment and examinations in institutions of Basic Education, in collaboration with the County Education Board;
- e) Monitor and evaluate the standards and quality of Basic Education; among others.

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What is not clear is whether the Quality Assurance Council can single handedly handle competently Quality Assurance and Standards matters in the entire Education Sector as contemplated by Attorney General's Advisory against TSC's plans to recruit TSC QASOs.

TSC's Strategic Plan Draft (2019-2023) endeavours to ensure quality implementation of curriculum. Strategic Focus Area 1 on: Teacher Competence, Conduct and Performance Management, seeks to ensure quality of the teacher at the entry, effective support system for teachers for teacher-professional conduct and development during a teacher's career path. The strategy also intends to ensure enforcement of standards in the teaching service. Strategic Focus Area 2 on: Reforms and Innovation in Provision of the Teaching Services, aims at improving efficiency and quality of the teaching service, among others. This reaffirms the fact that quality assurance and standards is at the core of TSC's mandate and it is putting strategies in place to ensure that this mandate is properly undertaken. This suits well with Clinical Supervision Approach that advocates for strict and clear strategies of supervision.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Recent research – based recommendations point towards a need for greater coherence and synergy in quality assurance approaches. According to a report of European Commission's ET2020 Working group on schools (2018), Quality assurance approaches can include mechanisms that are external and internal to schools. These mechanisms have different but complementary purposes. Ideally, they are part of coherent, integrated system, with the different mechanisms supporting and reinforcing each other. This kind of productive synergy can ensure a clear focus on school development, providing data on aspects such as school climate and well-being of all members of school community, effective teaching and learning, and the impacts of innovations (European Commission, 2018).

The European Commission's ET2020 Working group on schools (2018) set out eight principles to guide policy-making related to quality assurance. They are as follows:

1. **COHERENCE:** Systems should strive over time to achieve balance and coherence across different mechanisms that have been developed to meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders working within schools and in the wider school education system;
2. **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Quality assurance policies should support professional learning communities to make best use of quality assurance data for school and system development with the ultimate goal of ensuring the best learning opportunities for all learners;
3. **TRUST AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY:** Trust and respect between and among internal and external actors are fundamental for effective evaluation and school development;
4. **SUPPORT INNOVATION:** School leaders and teachers need opportunities to take considered risks in order to innovate and develop. Careful attention to data on the impact of innovation, including potential unintended outcomes is essential;
5. **SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND DIALOGUE:** Quality assurance approaches should support the development of a common language and shared understanding among

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internal and external actors, that the fundamental purpose of evaluation is to support school development;

6. **NETWORKS:** Networks between the school and with the local and wider communities can support collective engagement, build social and intellectual capital and spark new synergies across school systems;
7. **BUILD CAPACITY FOR DATA:** Investments of building capacity of key actors to generate, interpret and use data are crucial;
8. **DIFFERENT DATA FOR BALANCED VIEW:** Different types of data – both qualitative and quantitative, and gathered over time – are necessary for a balanced understanding of school development and learner progress. These data should communicate authentic narratives to schools and provide the information necessary to support decision-making both with school and across school systems.

Chepkuto (2012), conducted a study on, “Contributions of Quality Assurance and Standards to Curriculum Implementation in Primary Schools of Baringo District, Baringo County, Kenya.” This study found out that QASOs contribute to effective curriculum implementation. They assisted in organizing workshops on teaching methods, giving advice and ideas on ways of implementing the curriculum, updating teachers on changes in the curriculum and in preparing the schemes of work and checked children's work. The study recommended that there was need to address the issue of insufficient materials and rare visits of QASOs by employing more Officers, that the government should employ other Officers to oversee the work of QASOs, the officers should regularly monitor schools to find out whether curriculum activities were being implemented as planned and whether they were producing the desired results, that the Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards should establish a vetting system for those being in-serviced to ascertain their correctiveness and that there was need for sensitization of community members for increased participation in matters affecting curriculum implementation , through organized workshops.

M'Birichi (2017) did a study on, “Effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in Enhancing the Quality of Education in Public Day Primary Schools in Meru South Sub-County, Kenya.” The study established that QASSOs were effective in supervision of quality teaching and learning process in schools; in ensuring provision and utilization of teaching and learning resources; in conducting teacher professional development courses, pedagogical skills and curriculum changes. On the other hand, the QASOs were not effective in assisting in the preparation of teaching aids and advising in e-learning, in-service training on stress management, financial management and new educational policies. The study recommended that the government through QASOs should conduct in-service training for teachers in e-learning, stress management, financial management and education policies. The government should recruit more QASOs to alleviate current understaffing.

Ochieng (2013) carried out investigations on, “Teachers' Perceptions on Quality Assurance and Standards Officers Instructional Supervision in Public Primary Schools in Lambwe Division, Mbita District, Kenya.” The study found out that supervision took place once or twice per year; teachers usually prepare professional records; that supervisors were organized

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and had well written guidelines for supervision, however, they didn't have a well prepared timeframe; that QASOs were competent for the assessment duty; that supervision helped teachers to grow professionally. The study recommended that: supervision should be done by qualified personnel; supervision should target all teachers; irregular visits by supervisors should be reduced; supervisors' reports should be implemented by teachers.

Korir (2018), carried out research on, "Influence of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' Instructional Supervision on Curriculum Implementation in Public Primary Schools in Wareng Sub-County Uasin Gishu County, Kenya." The study found out that: QASOs visited schools once per year; they advised teachers on importance of and use of syllabus in scheming; in-service trainings were rarely organized; QASOs do research on challenges facing teaching and learning; QASOs rarely organized or coordinated co-curricular activities. The study recommended that: QASO's supervisory visits should be done twice in a term; In-service training programmes should be organized every term on curriculum changes, new policies, latest innovations and challenges facing teaching and learning; and QASOs should accord co-curricular activities equal measure of attention during assessment for promotion of goals of education and development of an all-round individual in a learner.

The findings and recommendations of these sample studies points to the need to have more staff to ensure proper supervision of curriculum implementation in schools and assure high quality standards in teaching and learning. Findings also advocate for complementary approach to quality assurance and Standards processes. It is therefore prudent for all key players in provision of quality Education, including TSC and the Quality Assurance Council under the Ministry of Education to adopt a collaborative approach in dealing with Quality Assurance and Standards in Education Sector.

Methods and Materials

Research Design and Research Sample

The study used descriptive survey design to collect data from respondents, analyze and present data. Some respondents were purposively sampled, while others were obtained through simple random sampling. Respondents included TSC County Director, TSC Sub-County Directors, Curriculum Support Officers, Primary Schools' Head Teachers and Primary Schools' Teachers. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guides were the main research instruments that were used to collect the necessary data for this study. Teachers and Head Teachers filled the questionnaires, while the other respondents were interviewed. Those interviewed included: the CSOs, TSC Sub – County Directors and the TSC County Director. The study used 10% of the respondents as a sample (head teachers and, Teachers), apart from the TSC County Director, TSC Sub-County Directors and the CSOs who were purposively sampled.

The Study Area

The study was conducted in West Pokot County, whose surface area is 9,169 square Kilometers. It has a population of 512,690 (KNBS, 2009). The county shares a border with the Republic of Uganda to the west, Trans-Nzoia and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties to the south, Baringo County to the east and Turkana, County to the north. It has five Sub-Counties: West Pokot Sub- County

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(Kapenguria Constituency); North Pokot Sub-County (Kacheliba Constituency), Central Pokot Sub- County (Sigor Constituency), South Pokot and Kipkomo Sub Counties (Pokot South Constituency).

The Study Target Population

The target population comprised all Teachers in Primary Schools; all Primary School Head Teachers; all CSO’s all TSC Sub-County Directors and TSC County Director of West Pokot County.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Sub-county	Head Schools	Teachers	CSOs	TSC Sub-County Directors	TSC County Director
West Pokot	175	1110	7	1	1
North Pokot	135	462	3	1	
Central Pokot	127	542	6	1	
Kipkomo	107	611	2	1	
Pokot South	87	522	3	1	
Total	631	3247	21	05	1

Source: Targeted Population from the Study Area (Wes Pokot County)

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The Study Sample

The total sample of this study was 418 respondents. Teachers formed the bulk of respondents constituting 340 (81%) of respondents. Respondents were selected as indicated in table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2: Study Sample

Sub County	Head		Teachers		CSOs		Sub County		TSC County		Total Sample
	Teachers		on Duty				Directors		Director		
	Pop	Sample	Pop	Sample	Pop	Sample	Pop	Sample	Pop	Sample	
		10%		10%		30%					
West Pokot	175	18	1110	111	7	2	1	1			
North Pokot	135	14	642	62	3	1	1	1			
Central Pokot	127	13	542	54	6	2	1	1	1	1	
Kipkomo	107	11	611	61	2	1	1	1			
South Pokot	87	9	522	52	3	1	1	1			
Total	631		3247		21		5		1	1	
Total Sample		65		340		7		5		1	418

Source: Targeted Population from the Study Area (Wes Pokot County)

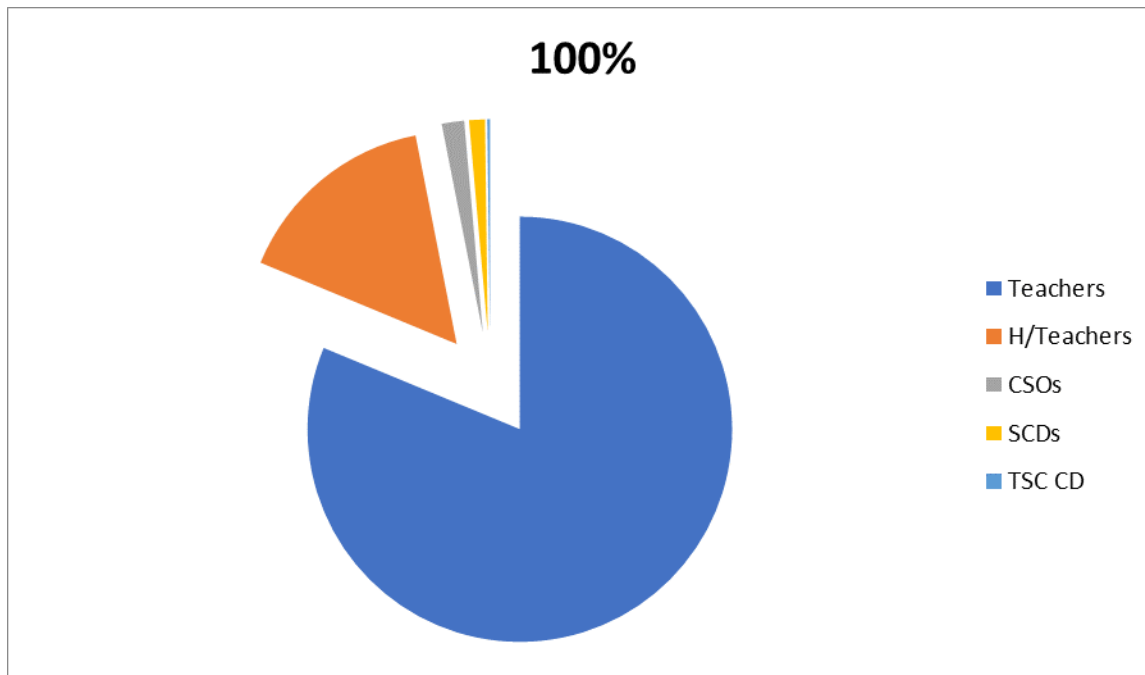
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Table 3.3: Respondents Percentages

Categories of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentages of Respondents (%)
TSC County Director	1	0.2%
Sub County Directors	5	1.2%
CSOs	7	1.7%
Head Teachers	65	15.6%
Teachers	340	81%
Total	418	100%

Source: Field Data by author

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Figure

3.1: Pie Chart showing percentages of Respondents

Source: Respondents of the Study

Results and Discussions

Table 4.1: Teachers Staffing Situations as at 31st May 2019

S/ No	SUB COUNTY	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	EXPECTED TEACCHERS	TEACHERS ON DUTY	TEACHER SHORTAGES
1	CENTRAL POKOT	127	1159	542	617
2	KIPKOMO	107	1007	611	396
3	NORTH POKOT	135	1009	462	547
4	SOUTH POKOT	87	823	522	301
5	WEST POKOT	175	1480	1110	370
	TOTALS	631	5478	3278	2231

Source: TSC County Director’s Office

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Table 4.5 above indicates that there is acute shortage of teachers in West Pokot County, especially in Pokot Central and North Pokot Sub Counties. The number of teachers that was on duty (1,004) in both Sub Counties (Pokot Central and North) constituted only 46% of the number of teachers required (2,168), while teacher shortage (1,164) constituted 54%. This had a negative effect on provision of quality education in West Pokot County in general and in the two Sub Counties (North Pokot and Central Pokot) in particular.

How Curriculum Support Officers were undertaking their supervisory and Quality Assurance duties

One of the objectives of this study was to find out how the CSOs were carrying out their duties. When asked how this was being done, teachers and their head Teachers gave varying responses as indicated in table 4.2 below.

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Table 4.2 How CSOs Conducted Their Activities

	<i>Head Teachers</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n=65</i>	<i>n=340</i>	<i>n=405</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Checked professional Records	45	260	305	73.3
Assessed Teachers in Class	3	20	23	5.7
Demonstrated how teach well in class	8	60	68	16.0
Talked to all teachers on their findings	46	200	246	60.7
Advised individual teachers	8	55	63	15.6
Set Sample questions	0	0	00	00
Organized Seminars	65	300	365	90.1

Source: Field data: Responses from Head Teachers and Teachers

Key

n - Total number of respondents

f - Frequencies

% - Percentage

Table 4.2 above indicates that CSOs are mainly concerned with checking professional records of teachers (73.3%) and addressing teachers on the need of updating their professional records (60.7%). They also organize seminars to brief teachers on new curriculum and the available teaching materials (90.1%) like text books. Other important aspects like assessing teachers’ actual teaching in class (5.7%) and demonstrating (teaching lessons) in class on quality teaching (16%) are rarely undertaken by the CSOs.

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The worst is participation in setting assessment tests. Both categories of respondents (teachers and head Teachers) said that CSOs never participated in this key aspect of supervision. They indicated a zero percent on this item. This can imply that the CSOs were not conversant with the curriculum that was being implemented by the teachers in class or they were very busy to sit down and participate in setting exam items.

Failure to undertake other key aspects of supervision indicates that quality supervision was not being undertaken, hence quality teaching was not being realized. This scenario goes against the principles of Clinical Supervision Theory, on which this study was grounded. According to Cogan, Clinical Supervision is an approach to supervision which blends 'Objectives' and "scientific" classroom observation with aspects of collegial coaching, rational planning, and a flexible, inquiry-based concern with student learning. Without assessing actual teaching in class and discussing the lesson with individual teacher as colleagues, supervision agenda cannot be said to have been achieved in the light of Clinical Supervision principle.

Clinical Supervision also entails observing, assisting, and receiving feedback (Smith, 2009). Thus, clinical supervision places emphasis on sustained teacher and supervisor interaction in order to solve classroom problems (Lovell & Wiles, 1983 as cited in Thakral, 2015). CSOs are supposed to place more emphasis on teacher assessment in class during actual teaching and sitting together with the teacher to discuss the lesson with an aim of sharpening the instructional skills of the teacher. They (CSOs) are also supposed to assist a teacher to set clear assessment test items to enable him or her to get a correct feedback of content delivery to the learners. That way, supervision shall have achieved its objectives of ensuring quality teaching. Mere checking of professional records such as schemes of work, lesson plans and record of work covered, among others, does not constitute thorough supervision. Such records do not indicate that a learner was actually taught and clearly understood the topic or content. Such records can be well written and well updated without stepping in class to teach.

Organizing seminars to induct teachers is one among many duties of CSOs. According to TSC's Handbook on Decentralized Teacher Management Functions (2015), a Curriculum Support Officer is responsible for organizing and conducting courses on curriculum delivery and implementation through seminars, workshops, retreats and in-service programmes. However, this is not the only duty or prime responsibility of CSOs to the extent that it should be given prominence as indicated in table 4.3 above (90.1%), over other duties like participating in setting sample exam items which scored zero percent (0%)!

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Visits of SCOs to Schools

Respondents were asked how often the CSOs visited their schools per term for supervisory purpose. Their responses were as indicated in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: How often CSOs visited schools on termly basis

	Head Teachers		Teachers		Total	
	n = 65		n = 340		n = 405	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Very often	9	13.8	55	16.2	64	15.8
Often	17	26.2	89	26.2	106	26.2
Less often	35	53.8	184	54.1	219	54.1
Not sure	4	6.2	12	3.5	16	3.9

Source: Field data: Responses from Head Teachers and Teachers

Key

n - Total number of respondents

f - Frequencies

% - Percentage

Table 4.3 above indicates that CSOs rarely visited schools for supervision purpose. Majority of respondents (54.1%) indicated that CSOs were less often visitors in their schools for supervision purposes. When asked during interview sessions, whether it was true that they were rare visitors in schools for supervision purpose, majority of the CSOs affirmed this position. They cited various reasons as to why they were not regular visitors to primary schools in West Pokot County for supervision purpose.

Lack of means of transport was a major hindrance. They didn’t have vehicles designated for this purpose. Some schools were also inaccessible. Another hindrance that was cited was that the county was vast and most areas had a harsh terrain. West Pokot County is hilly and rocky. It also has steep valleys, a fact that makes most schools not to be accessed easily. They also cited understaffing as one of the causes. Each education zone was supposed to have one CSO despite its vastness. There were cases of some zones having no CSO designated to it. It was realized that some CSOs had retired almost a year ago after attaining their retirement age and had not been replaced. CSOs also said that a lot of Office work made them not to have enough time to go to the field. For instance, holding series of meetings to prepare for teachers’ workshops and

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seminars, mounting of these workshops and seminars, preparing reports among others really made them busy with Office work. This made them to have little time to visit schools for inspection purposes.

The TSC Sub-County Directors and TSC county Director concurred with this position. The TSC County Director said that plans were underway to fill vacancies left by the retired CSOs and increase the total number of CSOs in the County. He said that CSOs were currently handling work that was designed for Quality Assurance and Standard Officers who were yet to be deployed by TSC due to some challenges that were yet to be handled. One of the TSC Sub-County Directors said, "When issues surrounding the deployment of QASOs will be resolved, the enormous tasks currently being handled by CSOs will be eased".

Conclusion

The study found out that Curriculum Support Officers who had been deployed by the Teachers Service Commission were evidently carrying out supervision of Curriculum Implementation exercise in West Pokot County, which was a right step in ensuring effective teaching and learning, or quality implementation of Curriculum. They mainly checked the professional records such as Schemes of Work, Lesson Plans and Record of Work Covered, which were prepared by teachers. They talked to teachers and advised them on how well they can make and update professional records. They also organized and conducted workshops and seminars for teachers on various topics such as the new curriculum (Competence Based Curriculum CBC), instructional skills, reference materials, among other issues.

Due to a lot of office work that they were undertaking, the CSOs could not visit schools regularly to undertake supervision exercise as expected of them. They were unable to get time to assess actual teaching of teachers in classes. They were unable to spare time to deal with teachers individually to understand their strengths and weaknesses so that they could address adequately their individual needs. They were also not able to participate in setting assessment tests to evaluate the level of understanding of the learners. Generally, the tasks were overwhelming.

The study found out that the Curriculum Support Officers were overwhelmed and appeared ineffective because of understaffing. They were few yet they served a versed area with many schools under their jurisdiction. Retired CSOs had not been replaced. Curriculum Support Officers were also doubling as Quality Assurance and Standards Officers since the planned recruitment of QASOs by TSC had not been implemented and the QASOs deployed by the Ministry of Education were also very few.

From the above findings, it is safe to conclude that the role of Teachers Service Commission in ensuring quality implementation of curriculum is not in doubt. Teachers Service Commission has endeavored to ensure that there was proper supervision of curriculum implementation by deploying Curriculum Support Officers in the field. However, the CSOs were not effective due to enormous tasks they were supposed to undertake. The CSOs were overwhelmed because they doubled as QASOs who had not yet been deployed by TSC as earlier planned. CSOs were also overwhelmed because QASOs deployed by the Ministry of Education were very few to undertake effectively the enormous task of quality assurance. It is also safe to conclude that for the enormous task of curriculum supervision in schools to be handled

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effectively, it requires a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Education led by the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council and the Teachers Service Commission.

Recommendations

From the above findings, this study made the following recommendations:

Teachers Service Commission should be allowed to deploy field Quality Assurance and Standards Officers to help enhance Supervision of Curriculum implementation process in Primary schools.

More Curriculum Support Officers should be deployed by TSC and those retired should be replaced promptly to ensure effective supervision of curriculum implementation and guarantee quality teaching and learning.

The Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council under the Ministry of Education should deploy more QASOs in the field to supplement the supervisory work being undertaken by CSOs. The Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should work collaboratively on matters pertaining supervision of curriculum implementation to ensure quality teaching and learning in primary schools.

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