

An Investigation of the Efficacy of Teachers' Advisory Centre Tutors, in Enhancing Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Performance in Nairobi North Area, Nairobi County

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Abstract

Teachers Advisory Centres Tutors is an establishment whose optimal role is to enhance quality teaching and learning through sustainable teacher support system. This study was an investigation into the efficacy of Teachers Advisory Centre Tutors, in their role of equipping teachers with pedagogical skills in Nairobi North Region in Kenya. In this region, poor performance in national examinations for public primary schools have continued being witnessed despite the fact that there were six (6) TAC Tutors to cater for the seventy five (75) public primary schools with a total of one thousand six hundred and seventy nine teachers. The study used mixed methodology with exploratory research design. The method was the most appropriate for collecting information on people's attitudes, habits and opinions, Orodho (2004). Exploratory design was used since people's meanings are best derived through exploration, and Descombe (2005). Nairobi North region was randomly sampled out of the three regions in Nairobi County. All the six TAC Tutors in the region were included in the sample size. 1/3 of target population was selected i.e. 1/3 of 34 head teachers and 750 teachers to get 11 head teachers and 250 teachers for the purpose of the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Reliability of the research instruments was assessed using split-half method whereby the test was divided into two equivalent halves and scores of one half correlated with those of other half. A reliability of coefficient of 0.95 was considered acceptable and reliable since it lies within the acceptable range of 0.8-1.0, Gray (1992). Validity of the instrument was based on the content which was appropriate, content was logical in getting intended variables and questions were representative to research objectives. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies for qualitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Key Terms: Teachers' Advisory Centre Tutors, KCPE Performance, Directorate of Quality Assurance, TAC Tutors

1.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Quality Assurance attaches great importance to continuing education programmes for teachers Kenya Education Sector Support Programme KESSP (2005) states that the success of the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative and the achievement of Education for All (EFA) by 2015 will largely depend on having a well trained, well educated and highly motivated teaching force. It continues to say that it is necessary that teachers are committed to continuous professional development and lifelong learning to face challenges of new technologies and emerging issues. All these factors call for a dynamic, responsive and well coordinated system of in-service and teaching/learning resource utilization so as to equip the teachers with skills and capacities to deliver the curriculum, KESSP (2005).

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, 'A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research' has a comprehensive focus on teacher development and utilization under which the in-service training of teachers is a priority area. The policy articulates the need for continuous skills upgrading for teachers. The rationale for this is to address past weaknesses of practicing teachers by giving them skills beyond those acquired during their pre-service training. Kahn (1991), reports that Teachers' Advisory Centre have been established worldwide and despite their varying names (Learning Resource Centres, Pedagogical Centres, Teachers Development Centres, Teachers Advisory Centres), they have the common characteristic of providing professional support to teachers. Teacher's Advisory Centres are places where teachers' professional skills, knowledge and attitudes are rejuvenated, Mevarch (2002) They have been established to facilitate provision of quality improvements in teaching and learning, KESSP, (2005). The centres are also used for in-service training, demonstration lessons and develop low cost teaching and learning materials,

In Service Education and Training (INSET) for teachers is conceived as a career – long process where teachers are expected to be regularly updated on new curriculum materials, pedagogy and new policies in

education teachers should then be given the right kind of support since their potential for development is limitless and their competence is constantly being tested in the class. Recognizing the teachers' arduous task and supporting them in their work is the aim of Teachers' Resource or Advisory Centres, Adams (1975). The idea of TAC was borrowed from Britain where it had been implemented to improve development of the curriculum for primary schools. According to Harry Kahn (1984) TACs were viewed as a medium through which human development was fostered. According to Maranga (1979), the idea was extended to East Africa through Curriculum Renewal and Education Development (CRED) initiated in Kenya during the United Nations Education Day in 1974. To address the problem of use of teaching learning materials in school, the Ministry of Education incorporated Teachers Advisory Centres in the inspectorate section in 1970 as stated by Lodiaga (2001). The centres catered for teachers in Teacher Training Colleges where they were situated and also served primary schools in their respective districts.

In the late 1970s TACs were established in most districts in Kenya. By 1981, there were 43 TACs in Kenya, Ministry of Education (1984). In Kenya TACs were established with the aim of enabling teachers in Primary schools to access inservice courses and educational materials such as books and non-book materials e.g. audio visual equipment etc. It was hoped that the use of the centres by teachers would improve their pedagogical skills and that pupils would gain directly through teachers improved skills or through the loan of classroom teaching/learning aids.

Lodiaga (2001) states that there was need to open TACs where teachers would receive guidance on teaching methods, preparation of teaching/learning aid and be inserviced on effective ways of curriculum implementation and evaluation. The need to carry out this research by the researcher was necessitated by the fact that various researches on TACs have been done but no research has been done on their effectiveness in equipping teachers with pedagogical skills.

2.0. Statement of the Problem

This study was aimed at investigating the effectiveness of teacher's advisory centres tutors in enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills. In Nairobi North Region, poor performance in national examinations for public primary schools have continued being witnessed despite the fact that there are six (6) TAC Tutors to cater for the seventy five (75) schools. However apart from the training one received as a student teacher in college, there is no additional training to equip the newly appointed TAC tutor with skills to enable them manage the TACs effectively. This makes teachers lack confidence feel like TAC tutors are not any better in performance than them and that they are not performing their duties effectively citing lack of necessary training for the job. This lack of induction courses makes the TAC tutors incompetent in organizing in service courses, conducting demonstration lessons and preparation of materials. It is against this background that the current study seeks to establish the factors that hinder the effectiveness of Teachers Advisory Centres in Nairobi North Region.

3.0. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Teachers Advisory centre tutors in Nairobi North Region. The study sought to establish the role of the TAC Tutor in the organization of in-service course, production of teaching learning materials and conducting demonstration lessons.

4.0. Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1. To establish whether TAC organize in service courses for teachers and how often.
2. To determine the extent to which TAC tutors assist teachers in preparation of teaching/ learning material
3. To find out whether TAC tutors conduct demonstration lessons in schools and how often.

5.0. Research Questions

1. How frequently have teachers in Nairobi North been in serviced on pedagogical skills
2. How has the TAC tutor assisted teachers in Nairobi North in preparation of teaching /learning materials?
3. Do TAC tutor conduct demonstration lessons in schools and how often?

6.0. Significance of the Study

The study is hoped to be very useful to TAC tutors who will be able to understand their role in enhancing teacher's pedagogical skills. Teachers Service Commission as the employer of teachers will find the study useful

by realizing the need to promote those appointed as TAC tutors to motivate and boost their morale. This will also give teachers confidence as they deal with the TAC tutors. Kenya Institute of Education as the National Curriculum Development Centre will also find the study useful in that those appointed as TAC tutors need to be inducted into their new role and be inserviced regularly on new materials to schools. This will give them confidence and make them competent in their work. It is also hoped that headteachers and teachers will find the study useful as they will realize the importance of TAC in relation to the performance among pupil and teachers.

7.0. Literature Review

7.1. Historical Overview of TAC Development

Lodiaga (2001) puts it that the TAC Tutors role is to organize educational resources for learning and teachers in-service courses. Thornbury (1973), states that a TAC is a meeting place for at least two or more with the aim of receiving professional advice. The concept of Teachers' Advisory Centres popularly known as Teacher's Resource centres originated in Britain. There, the resource centres were established in the late 1950s and early 1960s in response to particular need of developing school curriculum and training of teachers. There was need to improve performance in Science and Mathematics subjects and the centres were thus used to disseminate project materials for the two subjects. The centres would also prepare teaching learning materials as per researched needs. The Local Education Authority (LEA) also had the responsibility of producing teaching materials and distributing them to schools. Other responsibilities of the centres were to disseminate knowledge and skills to teachers through inservice courses and to research on difficult topics giving necessary advice.

In Britain, the teachers centre was manned by centre wardens or leader. The warden was a qualified teacher with considerable experience in a senior teaching position to be able to manage the centres effectively, organize inservice courses, participate in curriculum development, and work with the centre committee and advisory team. In Kenya TACs are manned by teachers appointed straight from the classroom through an interview. These are in most cases, former head teachers. TACs in Kenya started as Resource Centres which were situated in Teachers Training Colleges. The first three colleges to host TACs were: Kagumo Teacher Training College (1971), Siriba Teacher Training College 1971 and Machakos Teacher Training College in 1972.

Shiundu and Omulando, (1992) observed that the idea of TAC in Kenya sprung from a complex but identifiable origins in the British Education scene in 1960s. The idea later spread to other countries. At independence in 1963 the Kenya Government in her National Development Plan proposed that there should be a TAC in every District. Lodiaga (2001) states that the first centre was started in 1966 in the former Central Teachers College now the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). In 1974 the Government began a programme to improve Teacher Training Colleges as learning resource centres for teachers. Ayot, (1982) noted that from 1969 the strategies to establish District TACs was in full gear and in 1970 a total of 20 TACs were established. By 1981 there were 43 TACs in Kenya. The number increased and by 2001 Lodiaga, (2001) puts it that there were 1,300 TACs at zonal and district levels in Kenya to offer both academic and professional support to teachers. They act as resource centres and as a focal points for the inservice of teachers.

TAC Tutor's role is mainly to update teacher's pedagogical skills, teaching materials production, demonstration lessons among others. Ayot (1986) also stated that the centres also serve as a link between the Primary Schools and the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). Many users of the centres are expected to be new entrants to the teaching profession from Teacher Training Colleges throughout the country. It is also expected TAC tutors will develop close contacts with the students in colleges during Teaching Practice. Student teachers should be made aware of the existence of the TACs to help them in the future and induct them into the job. This is the reason why TACs were started in Teachers Training Colleges. In conclusion it is noted that the intended functions of TACs and roles of TAC tutors were good and were meant to help schools improve their performance. However, studies have shown that TAC tutors are not effective in their role of inservicing teachers, guiding them in preparing teaching learning materials in order to improve their pedagogical skills.

7.2. Role of TACs

The Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training in the next decade and beyond, (The Kamunge Report, 1988) recommended that TACs be structured and developed as Education Resource Centres in each of the Districts. It further recommended that each TAC be provided with appropriate facilities, equipments, qualified professionals, support personnel and a budget to enable them give essential professional services to all teachers. Most of the District TACs were equipped with some basic facilities e.g. furniture, books, office accommodation.

7.3. Advisory Centre Tutors Role in Enhancing KCPE Performance

TAC tutors have a crucial role to play in enhancing performance of learners in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination (KCPE). Lodiaga (2001) puts it that TAC tutors are charged with the responsibility of

identifying teachers training needs especially through analyzing their performance in the classroom and also through analyzing strengths and weaknesses in pupils performance in KCPE. Once the needs are identified, it is the responsibility of the TAC tutor to organize and conduct in-service causes as per the needs identified. The he or she may identify experts in the subject area to assist in the training. The TAC tutor also updates teachers on curriculum matters and use of various resources with close liaison with Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) Lodiaga (2001) states that the TAC tutor also serves as a curriculum evaluator. Conducting demonstration lessons is another major role for the TAC Tutors. This enhances teachers' pedagogical skills which then results in improved performance by learners.

Table 1: Performance of Schools in KCPE 2005 – 2009.

Year	Central	Ruaraka	Eastleigh
2005	238.47	227.40	255.33
2006	233.12	228.31	245.17
2007	232.65	221.29	244.53
2008	224.53	229.37	227.63
2009	220.82	229.56	235.02

The table above illustrates average performance of schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) from 2005 to 2009. The figure shows that there was significant drop in performance since 2005 for schools in Central zone and Eastleigh zone but an improvement in performance in Ruaraka zone. This implies that performance of children in national examination in the area was below average

8.0. Research Methodology

The study used mixed methodology with exploratory research design. This was the most appropriate method of collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits and any other educational issues. Orodho (2004). Exploratory design was used since according to Descombe (2005), people's meanings are best derived through exploration. It was therefore considered suitable in seeking participants' views on TAC Tutors' roles. Nairobi North region was randomly sampled out of the three zones in Nairobi County. All the six TAC Tutors in every zone within the region were included in the sample size. 1/3 of the target population was selected which included a 1/3 of 34 Head teachers, 750 Teachers within the region to give 11 Head teachers and 250 Teachers for the purpose of the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview schedules.

8.1. Reliability and validity

The reliability of research instruments was assessed using the split-half method whereby the test was divided into two equivalent halves and scores of one half correlated with those of the other half. As observed by Koul (1984), this method has the advantage of controlling fatigue and practice effects that arise in other reliability methods. From the test scores, a reliability coefficient of 0.95 was considered acceptable and reliable since it lies within the acceptable range of 0.8-1.0, Gray (1992).

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data, actually represents the phenomenon under study, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The instrument provided useful information about the topic or variable being measured. Evidence of the validity of instruments was based on; the content which was appropriate, content was logical in getting intended variables and the questions were representative to research objectives.

8.2. Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data

9.0. Result findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on research objectives. It consists of statistics generated through data analysis. The analysed data is presented in form of frequency tables. By administering interviews to tutors, six interview schedules were fully accomplished for the TAC tutor in each of the six zones. By using questionnaires, 11 were distributed to head teachers and 250 to teachers in Eastleigh, Central and Ruaraka zones. From 250 questionnaires distributed to teachers, 196 were fully filled and returned representing 78.4% which was considered acceptable for data analysis. In addition, all 11 questionnaires distributed to head teachers were fully filled and returned. Therefore, responses from 6 tutors, 11 head teachers and 196 teachers were adopted for data analysis.

9.1. Descriptive analysis

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by experience

Length of service	TAC tutors		Head teachers		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than one year	0	0	0	0	5	2
1-5 years	1	17	2	18	23	13
6-10 years	2	33	6	55	52	27
11-15 years	3	50	1	9	78	39
16-20 years	0	0	2	18	29	14
Above 20 years	0	0	0	0	9	5
Total	6	100	11	100	196	100

According to the findings above, majority of TAC tutors (50%) have served as tutors for a period of between 11-15 years as compared to majority of head teachers who have served as head teachers for a period of between 6 and 10 years represented by 55%. Only 39% of teachers have served for a period of 11-15 years. This implies that majority of tutors; head teachers and teachers have experience of more than 6 years but less than 15 years.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by academic qualification

Academic qualification	TAC tutors		Head teachers		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
'O' level	1	17	1	9	28	14
'A' level	2	33	4	36.5	45	23
Diploma	0	0	1	9	96	49
Bachelors degree	3	50	4	36.5	9	9
Masters Degree	0	0	1	9	5	5
Total	6	100	11	100	196	100

According to the table above, it was observed that half of TACs tutors have a bachelor's degree with only 17% having 'O' level education. In addition, majority of head teachers had 'A' level and bachelors degree as represented by 37.5% each while those with 'O' level and masters degree were equal as represented by 9%. Majority of teachers were observed to have diploma equivalent education as represented by 49%. These findings imply that most of the tutors, head teachers and teachers have relevant education pertaining to their profession.

Table 4: Responses on whether tutors attended orientation / induction courses

Responses	Tutors	Percentage
Yes	1	17
No	5	83
Total	6	100

According to the information in the table above, it was observed that 83% of tutors attended orientation and induction courses. This implies that they are aware of their roles.

Table5: Performance of schools in K.C.P.E exams

	Central	Ruaraka	Eastleigh
2005	238.47	227.40	255.33
2006	233.12	228.31	245.17
2007	232.65	221.29	244.53
2008	224.53	229.37	227.63
2009	220.82	229.56	235.02

This table illustrates average performance of schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) from 2005 to 2009. The figure shows that there is significant drop in performance since 2005 for schools in central zone and Eastleigh zone but an improvement in performance in Ruaraka zone. This implies that performance of children in national examination in the area was below average.

Table 6: Attendance of head teachers and teachers to in-service courses.

Attendance	Head teachers		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	Percentage
Once a month	1	11	78	40
Once a term	7	67	112	57
One year	2	22	6	3
Total	11	100	196	100

From the table above, majority of head teachers and teachers attended in-service courses organised by TACs once a term as represented by 67% and 57% respectively. Only 11% of head teachers and 3% of teachers attended courses once a month and once annually respectively. These findings imply that head teachers and teachers could only be updated once a term. This implied that schools did not make good use of their zonal TAC due to reasons cited above.

Table 7: Impact of in-service course on pedagogical skills of heads and teachers.

Impact	Head teachers		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Greatly improved	0	0	32	17
Moderately improved	5	46	60	31
Slightly improved	4	36	88	44
No improvement	2	18	16	8
Total	11	100	196	100

The table above indicates that head teachers and teachers moderately improved in their pedagogical skills and slightly improved as represented by 46 and 44% respectively. Only 18% of head teachers had no improvement and 2% indicated no improvement at all. This implies that there was an average improvement on pedagogical skills among head teachers and teachers.

Table 8: In-service courses attended by teachers in the year 2009

Courses attended	Teachers	Percentage
One	105	54
Two	61	31
Three	14	7
Four	10	5
More than four times	6	3
Total	196	100

From the figure overleaf, majority of teachers (54%) had attended only one in-service course organised by TACs tutors. Only 31% of the teachers had attended two courses while the least number of teachers (3%) had attended more than four courses.

9.2. Efficacy of TAC tutors in their role of enhancing teacher's pedagogical skills

This objective was achieved from the question on whether TAC Tutors are effective in their advisory role. The question sought to assess the effectiveness of TAC tutors in their role of enhancing teacher's pedagogical skills. Concerning their skills, it was observed that half of TACs tutors had a bachelor's degree with only 17% having 'O' level education. It was also observed that 83% of tutors had attended orientation and induction courses. Their experience was noted that (50%) had served for a period of between 11-15 years. On reasons as to why TAC tutors visited schools, it was observed that all the TAC tutors in the 6 Zones in Nairobi North Region visited schools to observe teaching, advice, and to hold school based in-service courses. Four of the tutors visited schools to meet subject panel members while only one helped teachers to prepare teaching aids. Concerning the purpose of visit to schools, majority of teachers (56%) were visited by TAC tutors to monitor curriculum implementation as only 2% of teachers were visited purposefully by TAC tutor to conducting demonstration lessons.

9.3. Teachers' pedagogical skills

Assessment on teachers' pedagogical skills was facilitated by the research question on how in-service courses and material production provided by the TACs help teachers improve teachers' pedagogical skills in Nairobi North Region. The question sought to find out impact of TAC tutors on development of pedagogical skills of

head teachers and teachers, the frequency and type of courses attended by head teachers and teachers. From the findings, it was observed that head teachers and teachers moderately improved in their pedagogical skills as represented by 46 and 44% respectively. Only 18% of head teachers had no improvement while 2% indicated no improvement at all. This implies that there was an average improvement on pedagogical skills among head teachers and teachers.

The findings also implied that most of the teachers had attended one or two courses. It also implied that TAC tutors failed to organize regular courses for head teachers and teachers. Those who attended three or more courses in the year were very few. This was a clear indication that TAC tutors did very little to improve performance in schools. Concerning the head teachers' improvement on pedagogical skills, the findings indicate that TAC tutors underperformed and as such they did not add value to head teachers' pedagogical skills. This might have been caused by lack of competence and training for the tutors to improve their competence. Only a few head teachers improved their pedagogical skills. This might have been a personal initiative on the side of the head teachers to follow up or invite the TAC tutor to their schools to assist.

The findings also implied that the TAC tutors failed to organize regular courses, advisory visits, demonstration lessons and rarely helped teachers prepare teaching / learning aids. On subjects which teaching/learning aids were prepared, it was observed that teaching aids were not prepared for majority of subjects. This indicates serious weakness in the area of preparation of teaching / learning aids. It implied that TAC tutors did very little on that and other materials. The result of this was poor performance by teachers.

10.0. Recommendations

1. TAC Tutors should be inducted and fully trained on their role as soon as they are appointed to equip them with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes.
2. The Teachers' Service Commission should revise the criteria of appointment of personnel to TACs. The appointment should be promotional based on experience and competence to enhance motivation and hard work among teachers who are eager to become TAC tutors.
3. The study recommends that further research should be conducted to ascertain the role of TAC tutors in reference to their influence on academic performance of schools within their respective zones.
4. The study also recommends that further research should be conducted to establish motivational factors that limit effectiveness of tutors in their centres.
5. Research should be done to ascertain effectiveness of TAC tutors in relation to utilisation of fund in respect to their budgets and activities

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