

Effectiveness of the board of Governors in the Recruitment of Secondary School Teachers in Gucha District

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Abstract

The teaching force in schools in Kenya is one of the engines behind development in the last 50 years. Through the expansion of education and the consequent recruitment of teachers, the Board of Governors (BOG), the boards have played a crucial role in steering the country towards development of crucial manpower required in the different sectors of the economy. As in any market economy, the recruitment of teachers in Secondary is now demand driven. Prospective teachers apply to fill individually advertised vacancies directly to the schools affected. The recruiting panel is chaired by the Board of Governors who take the centre stage. The role the BOG helps to identify the right candidates of the skill and knowledge required for the teaching profession. However this cannot be carried out with utmost effectiveness without capacity building of the BOG members. Accordingly, this paper is based on the findings of a study which examined the effectiveness of the board members in the recruiting of the secondary school teachers in Gucha district, Kisii County, Kenya. The study was guided by two objectives which were further broken down into research questions. The study used descriptive research survey design. The target population was all the 70 secondary schools in Gucha District as at the time of the study. The target of the study therefore is 70 head teachers, 70 teachers already recruited in the schools by BOGs and 280 boards of governors' members. The sample size in this study was 21 schools hence 21 head teachers, 21 teachers recruited by the Board of Governors' and 21 Board of Governors' chairmen. The results revealed that the majority the BOG members were form of form four level of Education and did not have any other training on preparation in the recruitment teachers. Since the teachers to be recruited are of university degree holders, the BOGs effectiveness was found to want hence ineffectiveness. It is the argument of this paper that enhancing effectiveness of BOG members' recruitment skills is likely to enhance the quality of the teachers recruited and therefore their effective contribution to development through educating.

KEY WORDS: Effectiveness, board of governors, recruitment, quality education.

Introduction

Education is one of the major instruments for a country's economic and social development (Maliyamkono, 1999). According to UNESCO (2008), quality of education is the heart of an educational enterprise that is given by appropriate teaching-learning resources. The quality, quantity and distribution of the teaching workforce are therefore critical factors in the attainment of the Kenyan vision 2030 and Education For All (EFA) goals in 2015. In a bid to realize these two, the Kenyan government has shifted its education management systems (in varying degrees) from central government to intermediate authorities, local authorities and at the individual educational institutions level through the school management boards. The effectiveness with which these school management boards carry out their responsibility of identifying the right candidate (qualified personnel) for their school vary from one school to another or from place to place.

The school boards are charged with the responsibility of governance and monitoring school policies as given in the education act cap 211 of 1968 and revised in 1980. According to Okumbe (2001), the overall management of secondary schools and colleges is vested in the Boards of Governors. It is therefore imperative that the members of these boards are not only persons with good education but must also be people with sufficient practical knowledge in educational management. The BoGs are charged with the responsibilities of policy making and policy implementation, discipline, upholding high academic standards for the schools, promoting public image of the school, recruiting members of teaching and non teaching staff, controlling financial management and initiation of development projects for their schools (MoEST, 2002). Board of Governors members should have sufficient academic qualifications which allow them to interpret parliamentary Acts and other policies that relate to education both directly and indirectly. These include: the Education Act, Teacher's Service Commission Act (TSC Act), the BoG management code, the Children's' Act, Public Health Act, Anticorruption Act, Land Registration, and Land Adjudication Act.

Okumbe (2001) further argues that it is not possible to appoint all members of the school board who are well educated and knowledgeable in educational management. The schools' management should therefore put in place machinery which will upgrade management skills of the board members. This could be done through in service training, seminars and workshops. Therefore, to efficiently perform their roles, the board members are expected to undergo training on their roles and responsibilities after they have been appointed. Other areas of training to be covered would include legal issues in education, communication, budgeting, student achievement, employee selection and placement, community engagements or partnership, board and superintendent relations. School board members in other parts of the world for example in all the states of America are generally more educated than the broader American public (UNESCO, 2005).

To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) gave recruitment guidelines to the Boards of Governors (BoGs) to ensure that, as their agents, they adequately recruit teachers while at the same time uphold the TSCs professional integrity. Despite these guidelines there has been massive public outcry that the process is full of malpractices (Siringi, 2006). Chelal (2007) studied the challenges faced by the BoGs in teacher recruitment in Baringo District and established that a number of the BoG members were not aware of the guidelines set by the TSC and most of the BoG members had vested interests in the recruitment process in that they had their own favorite candidates. This study therefore intended to establish the effectiveness of BoGs in the recruitment of teachers in public secondary schools in Gucha District.

The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were;

- i. To examine the abilities of the BoGs in the recruitment of secondary school teachers in Gucha district.
- ii. To determine the extent to which the BoGs follow the TSC recruitment guidelines in the process of recruiting teachers in Gucha district.
- iii. To identify the extent to which the BoG members are prepared on teacher recruitment in public secondary schools in Gucha district.

Research questions were formulated to help in the realization of the research objectives.

The research questions of the study

The research questions that guided the study were;

- a. To what extent are the BoGs abilities in the recruitment of secondary school teachers in Gucha district enhanced?
- b. To what extent do BoGs follow the TSC recruitment guidelines in the process of recruiting teachers in public secondary school in Gucha district?
- c. To what extent are the BoG members prepared in the recruitment of teachers in public secondary schools in Gucha district?

Significance of the study

The study was found to be significant as it could be of importance to Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) in that the training needs identified for the BoG members can be addressed through capacity building in the design of their programmes. The Ministry of Education (MOE) could also benefit from this study to come up with the best criteria on the qualifications of those to be appointed as secondary school BoG members that can efficiently and effectively recruit qualified teachers on behalf of the TSC.

Theoretical frame work

The study was based on Max Weber's (1864-1920) bureaucratic theory (Cole, 2002). Max Weber perceived bureaucracy as a form of procedure in organizations which exists practically in all public enterprises. Organizations are expected to follow rigid application of policies which give guidance to all the organizations' activities including the use of BoGs in the recruitment of teachers in secondary schools even when its membership may not be competent.

Research methodology

The study used the descriptive survey design to establish the effectiveness of the BoGs in the recruitment of secondary school teachers. This was found to be appropriate since the study aimed at looking at the relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes held, processes that go on and the effect being felt or trends

that are developing during the recruitment exercise. The study targeted all the 70 schools that recruited teachers through BoG in 2008 in Gucha district (according to the TSC advertisement for vacancies for teaching positions in post primary institutions, 2008). The target population for this study was therefore all the 70 Head teachers from the 70 schools, all the 70 teachers who were recruited in 2008 by BoG and the 280 BoG members who participated in the recruitment exercise. The other respondent was the DEO of Gucha District. The study however sampled 21 of the 70 public secondary schools through simple random sampling procedures to participate in the study. The respondents therefore were 21 head teachers, 21 teachers recruited through BoG one from every school, 21 BoG chairmen of those schools and the DEO.

The study used questionnaires and document analysis as research instruments to collect data. There were four sets of questionnaires for; Head teachers, teachers, BoG chair persons and the DEO. Apart from back ground information from the respondents, the questionnaires' sought information relating to the effectiveness of BoGs in the recruitment of teachers. The document analysis was mainly on analysis of the curriculum vitae, application letters, academic and professional testimonials of the applicants at the DEO's office. The other information was on the analysis of teacher recruitment panels' minutes of 2008 and the filed complaints regarding the recruitment exercise which were found to be of paramount importance. To ensure content validity the researcher ensured that the questionnaire items captured all objectives for the study. The researcher also subjected the questionnaires to criticism from other experts in educational planning and administration and other researchers. To determine the reliability of the research instruments, the instruments were piloted in one secondary school in the district that was not used in the actual study by the test re-test method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of the scores in the two tests gave a coefficient of 0.89. The quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics while the qualitative data was analyzed thematically where data was organized into topics guided by research questions. The computer program, Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to generate the descriptive statistics.

The study findings

There was need to know as a first step whether the BoG members are involved in the short listing of the applicants for the advertised vacancies. From the findings, an overwhelming majority (95%) of the head teachers said BoGs do not participate in short listing of candidates to be interviewed for the teaching jobs; instead school head teachers do it on behalf of the BoG. Short listing is done in line with the TSC recruitment guidelines. The first objective of the study was to examine the capacity of the BoGs in the recruitment exercise of the teachers. The first capacity will be in the initial academic qualification of this people. The study therefore sought to know the academic qualifications of the BoGs members. According to the data collected, 5 (five), 10 (ten), 4 (four) and 1 (one) BoG members had Kenya Junior Secondary Education or equivalent, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education or its equivalent, Diploma education and University degree education respectively. The findings reveal that majority 15 (fifteen) of the BoG members had attained academic qualification of up to secondary level. This according to the education act is the minimal qualification of those to be members of the secondary school board of governors. This however was a challenge as those to be recruited were mainly holders of a university degree hence the BoGs' low academic levels cannot measure in this context their expectations as judges of professionals to be recruited. This finding is in line with chelal's (2007) study findings who found out that the low academic levels of BoG members in Baringo district contributed to their ineffectiveness in teacher recruitment exercise.

4.4.2 Occupation of the BoG members

The study sought to know the BoG members occupation. The findings are shown in table 1

Table 1 Occupation of BoGs members

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmer	10	25
Businessmen	8	20
Administrator	2	5
Clergy	8	20
Teacher	2	5
Retired soldier	6	15
Retired health officer	4	10
Total	40	100

The findings in table 1 indicate that farmers and clergy are the most professionals serving on the BoGs in Gucha district with 10(25%) and 8(20 %) respectively. The clergy involvement may signal the strong influence of the sponsors in the school management in the district.

At times knowledge can also be gained by ones experience in handling given situations. The researchers therefore sought to determine the experience of the BoGs members in management and recruitment of teachers. This was done by looking or examining their length of stay as BOG members in their respective schools. The findings revealed that 42.5% had served for a period of four years and above or more than one term. According to the education act, BoG members are supposed to serve for a period of three years maximum subject to being re-appointed.

The second objective was on the internal schools mechanisms to capacity build those recruited as BoG members in their roles. The study requested the head teachers to indicate if their BoG members underwent any training on teacher recruitment. The findings indicated that 95% of the schools did not have any training for its BoG members. According to Okumbe (2001) it is by training that BoG members could be equipped with the necessary skills on carrying out teacher recruitment. Having low levels of academic education and failure for schools to organize their trainings, the existing BoGs would be rendered unfit for carrying out the exercise of recruiting teachers whose qualifications are higher than theirs; this would easily render them ineffective in the exercise.

It was however prudent to know if the BoGs were conversant with the recruitment exercise in spite of their low qualifications. Objective three sought to establish the extent to which the BoGs followed the guidelines set out by the TSC in the recruitment of the teachers. Asked to show their perception of BoG members on their knowledge of teacher recruitment guidelines, the head teachers reported that 8 (eight) of the BoG members had knowledge of the guidelines while 12 (twelve) had little or no knowledge on TSC recruitment guidelines.

The findings indicate that majority (60%) of the head teachers felt that BOG members had inadequate knowledge on TSC recruitment guidelines. This statistics raise concern on the BoGs ability to perform their role of recruiting teachers effectively. The opinions of the head teachers and teachers contradict those of the BoG chairmen. In total 40 chairmen were interviewed on their conversance with the recruitment guidelines and their responses are in Table 2.

Table 2 BoGs' opinion on their adherence to TSC recruitment guidelines

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	36	90
No	4	10
Total	40	100

The findings in Table 2 indicate that BoG members highly felt that they followed TSC recruitment guidelines. They expressed their satisfaction that they carried out their role of recruiting teachers effectively. The study also sought to know how the BoG members performed their duties in identifying the right candidates. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Basis upon which BoGs identified candidates in the recruitment

Basis of recruitment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ethnicity	8	40
Religion	4	20
Nepotism	3	15
Tribalism	3	15
Gender	1	5
Marital status	1	5
Total	20	100

From table 3 it can be observed that most of the BoGs were guided by ethnicity in identifying teachers for their schools. This basis is against the spirit of nationalism and team work in the efforts towards realization of Kenyan

vision 2030. The experience of the teachers who were recruited in 2008 went beyond ethnicity to personal relationship of a given candidate and the BoGs members as in table 3.

Table 4 BoGs Basis for recruiting teachers

Basis of recruitment	Frequency	Percentage
Nepotism	12	60
Ethnicity	2	10
Religion	4	20
Tribalism	2	10
Total	20	100

The majority (60%) of the teachers indicated that BoG members favored candidates who were related to them as in table 4. This observation too was widely denied by the BoG chairmen. The findings (BOG members questionnaire) generally indicated that BoG members rarely got influenced on the candidate's other attributes other than the qualifications required.

This observation led the researchers to inquire if politics played a role in influencing the guidelines by the BoGs. The study sought to know whether there are political influences on teacher recruitment process. The findings show that the majority 16 (80%) of the head teachers felt that politics do interfere with the process of recruiting teachers. This finding is in line with what Oirere (2005) found in his study. He found out that politicians view each candidate employed in their favour as a won vote (s) inclusive of the candidates' family. Since most of the BoGs members are appointed through political influence, by basing the recruitment on ethnicity, they will just be serving the interests of their masters. At the same time given that the majority of BoG members are drawn from the schools locality as per the education act they may not have had an exposure to the benefits of a national outlook in the recruitment exercise. This poses a challenge into the effectiveness of BoG's in recruiting teachers from other communities and ethnicity even when they are more qualified.

To collaborate the information from the head teachers on the criteria some of the BoGs used to select candidates for recruitment, the teachers who had been recruited were asked for their opinion on what they found as the criteria used. The experience from the recruited teachers was that the majority of teachers 16 (80%) argued that BoG members played a role in deciding the candidate to be employed. While others cited cases of bribery (candidates bribing BoG members) as being rampant. The others revealed that even being known to the BoG members was an important factor to determine ones chances of getting the job. This finding is in line with Okindas (2004) study that attributed failure of the decentralized system of recruitment of teachers in Kisumu district to the habit of BoG members seeking bribes from those seeking teaching jobs in schools.

According to the District Education Officer, the BoGs moderately adhered to teacher recruitment guidelines to help them identify the most suitable candidate for the advertised vacancy. However when under political pressure to act otherwise, most BoGs hardly resisted the politicians' directives. The respondent had received complaints from the candidates and their relatives regarding the recruitment process where the common allegations from the complainants were nepotism, ethnicity, bribery and religion. According to the officer's opinion, the BoGs are not competent in the recruitment exercise.

Conclusions

Teacher recruitment in Gucha district was found to be a challenging exercise to the BoG members. This was owed to the member's low academic qualifications, lack of training on the application of TSC recruitment guidelines, political pressure, discrimination of candidates based on nepotism, ethnicity, religion, gender and marital status; all which make the recruiting panels recruit against TSC recruitment guidelines. Respondents recommended for training and raising of BoGs' academic qualifications in order to make the exercise effective.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that: The government should amend the education act so that the minimum academic qualifications for BoG members are raised from a minimum of KCSE holders to degree holders. The ministry of education in collaboration with TSC should train BoG members on teacher recruitment. This will improve their adherence to TSC recruitment guidelines hence effective recruitment.

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