

*Full Length Research paper*

# Impact of the School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on the Distribution and Retention of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya: A case study of Nyando District

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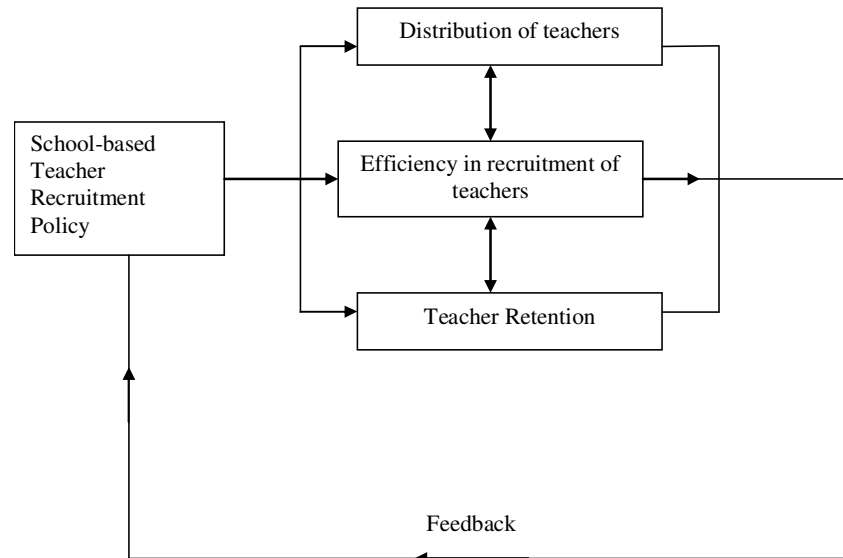
The government of Kenya introduced school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in the year 2001. This was a departure from the former supply-driven teacher recruitment program, which had been in force since the inception of Teachers Service Commission in 1967. The school based teacher recruitment system was intended to enhance teacher retention, equity in teacher distribution and efficiency in teacher recruitment practices in public secondary schools. However, the school based teacher recruitment policy has faced incessant challenges in public secondary schools in Nyando District since its inception ten years ago. Some of the challenges include poor distribution and retention of teachers in schools with allegations that the exercise is marred by irregularities and local intrigues, thus affecting efficiency of the recruitment exercise. The purpose of the study was to investigate into the implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District. Discrepancy model was adapted to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The study population consisted of 49 head teachers of public secondary schools and the Provincial Director of Education (Nyanza province). Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 26 head teachers from 39 gazetted hardship schools and 5 head teachers from 10 non-hardship schools and thus a sample size of 31 head teachers was used in this study. Saturated sampling technique was used to select one Provincial Director of Education. Questionnaires and document analysis schedules were used to collect data from both Provincial Director of Education and head teachers; in addition in-depth interview was used to collect more information from the Provincial Director of Education. Validity and reliability of the instruments was determined before use. Quantitative data was analysed by use descriptive statistics in form of counts, frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analysed for content as themes and sub-themes emerged. The study established that there was disparity in distribution of subject teachers with some being evenly distributed and others being unevenly distributed contrary to the aim of the policy. However, distribution of teachers across schools was found to have improved. The study revealed that the recruitment practice was fairly efficient. The study revealed that teacher retention had slightly improved. The study concluded that the policy had not fully achieved its intended objectives and recommended that the policy be reviewed from time to time to enable it to address the emerging issues. The findings of this study will help the policy makers at Ministry of Education to develop recruitment framework that is effective and efficient.

**Keywords:** Impact, School-based, Teacher Recruitment Policy, distribution, retention, Public Secondary schools, Nyando, District.

## INTRODUCTION

Education and public sector reform strategies have seen decentralization of education services taking lead in

many nations. Gaynor (1998) as cited in Sang' (2005) argues that the strategy assist policy makers to improve



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework showing the Impact of School-Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on teacher distribution, efficiency in recruitment of teachers and teacher retention (Adapted from Malusu, 1990).

on service delivery. In addition, Sang' (2005) argues that decentralization in organizations has found much favour, especially with corporations growing in size. It is against this background that there has been keen interest in the decentralization of human resource management function to school level by the Teachers Service Commission. The Education Act, (1980) mandates boards of governors of public secondary schools to run schools in delegated authority. Republic of Kenya (1967) empowered Teachers Service Commission to recruit and employ teachers to public secondary schools in Kenya, on the contrary Teachers Service Commission (2007) directs that all vacancies for secondary schools will be advertised and interested candidates will apply to the respective schools' Board of Governors and all eligible candidates must be given a chance for interview. In this respect the Teachers Service Commission delegates its authority to Board of Governors to do recruitment on its behalf. Successful candidates are provided with application forms for employment upon being declared on the same date. The merit list ratified by the selecting Board of Governors and sent to the Teachers Service Commission headquarter with the employment forms. Teachers Service Commission (2002) indicated that the shift from supply driven to demand system of teacher recruitment would; ensure staff retention in schools, enhance equitable teacher distribution in the schools and improve efficiency of Teachers Service Commission in service delivery to schools. Nevertheless, teacher recruitment has remained an issue in most rural public secondary schools in Kenya (Daily Nation 2005, July 31<sup>st</sup> and Otieno, 2007). The Teachers Service Commission (2007) for instance observed that certain schools in

Nyando district had their selection exercise cancelled because of complaints of biasness from the selecting Board of Governors and failure to adhere to the guidelines. The district has also recorded poor distribution of teachers in most public secondary schools with schools within Nyakach constituency attracting higher recruitment (Ministry Of Education, 2007). Eight percent of the schools in the district were gazetted as hardship schools with the teachers in these locales earning thirty percent in excess of their basic salaries to allow for distribution and retention. Aduda (2005) alleges that the recruitment process is frequently manipulated to suit interest of certain sectors of the society, by not providing equal opportunity to all applicants. He raised concern that some schools refuse to shortlist qualified applicants who pose threat to their "identified" candidates, while other schools keep their interview dates sealed so as to achieve their sinister motives. Fears that the exercise is marred by irregularities justified the study. This is because of the allegations that local intrigues and biasness could be affecting the outcome of the exercise in the District.

### Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework postulates that School-based Teacher Recruitment Policy can be used to ensure equitable distribution of teachers, efficiency in recruitment of teachers and their retention in public secondary schools (Figure 1).

This conceptual framework was adapted from the Discrepancy Model (Malusu, 1990). The model noted that

the goal of discrepancy investigation is to look for differences or gaps between what was intended and what has actually happened and or other aspects of the program which should be in agreement. According to this model, the main areas to look for in discrepancy in this school-based teacher recruitment policy are:

- i) Policy plans on one hand and actual policy implementation on the other hand
- ii) Planned objectives versus actual outcomes.
- iii) Differences between assumptions and the reality.
- iv) Discrepancy between different aspects of the policy.

If school-based teacher recruitment exercise was effectively implemented then it should lead to even distribution of teachers, good retention of teachers and efficiency in recruitment of teachers. On the contrary, if it was not effectively implemented it would lead to poor distribution of teachers, poor retention of teachers and thus an indication of efficiency in teacher recruitment practices.

The independent variable is school-based teacher recruitment policy and if implemented it can produce the desired results namely; equitable teacher distribution, good teacher retention and efficient teacher recruitment practices. The dependent variables are distribution of teachers, efficiency in recruitment of teachers and teacher retention because they depend on the effect of the school-based teacher recruitment policy.

The conceptual framework helped to focus on the variables of the study and in addition there was a provision for feedback on the impact of school-based teacher recruitment policy on teacher distribution, efficiency in recruitment and teacher retention in public secondary schools.

## Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of school based teacher recruitment policy on the distribution of teachers in public secondary schools in Nyando District?
2. To what extent has the school based teacher recruitment policy contributed to retention of teachers in public secondary schools in Nyando District?
3. To what extent has the school-based teacher recruitment policy influenced efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise in public secondary schools in Nyando District?

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to assess the implement-

ation of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District. The objectives of the study were to: establish the impact of the School-based Teacher Recruitment Policy on the distribution of teachers in public secondary schools; find out the extent to which the School-based Teacher Recruitment Policy had contributed to the retention of teachers in public secondary schools and ascertain the extent to which School-based Teacher Recruitment Policy had influenced efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise in public secondary schools. Discrepancy model was adapted to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The study population consisted of 49 head teachers of public secondary schools and the Provincial Director of Education (Nyanza province). Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 26 head teachers from 39 gazetted hardship schools and 5 head teachers from 10 non- hardship schools and thus a sample size of 31 head teachers was used in this study. Saturated sampling technique was used to select Provincial Director of Education. Questionnaires were used to collect data from both Provincial Director of Education and head teachers. In addition in-depth interview was used to collect more information from the Provincial Director of Education. Document analysis schedules were used in collecting data on teacher retention and distribution. Validity of instruments was determined by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Foundations, Maseno University. Reliability of the instruments was determined by piloting in two schools whereby the ambiguities, inconsistencies and weaknesses were corrected before use. Quantitative data obtained was analyzed by using descriptive statistics inform of frequency counts and percentages. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes for content

## RESULTS

The rate of return of questionnaire was 100%.

### **Research question 1: What is the Impact of School-Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on the distribution of teachers in public secondary schools in Nyando District?**

In response to this research question, the study sought data from head teachers and Provincial Director of Education, Nyanza Province on the impact of School-Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on distribution of teachers across schools and across subjects. Furthermore, the records were scrutinized to determine the actual trend of teacher distribution across subjects by analyzing staff returns of the sampled schools for the

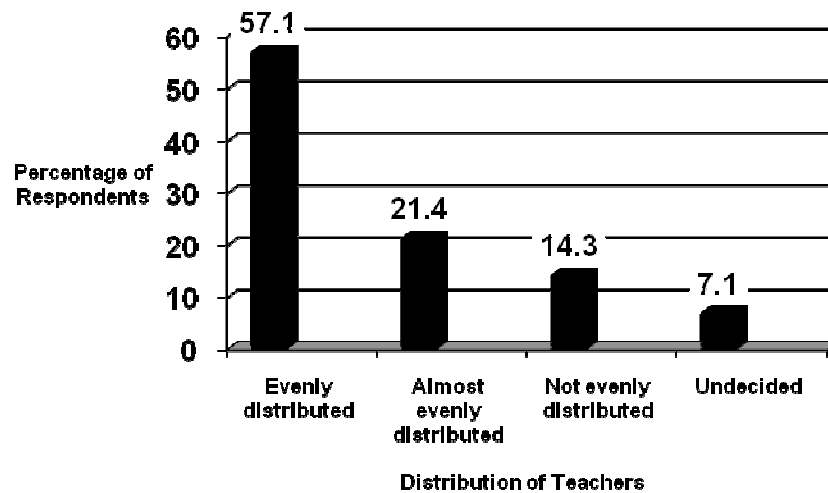


Figure 2: Teacher Distribution across Schools

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers across Subjects as indicated by Headteachers (n=31)

SUBJECT	<u>Poorly distributed</u>		<u>Average distributed</u>		<u>Well distributed</u>	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
Mathematics	6	19	20	65	5	16
English	7	23	18	58	6	19
Kiswahili	22	71	2	6	7	23
Chemistry	4	13	19	61	8	26
Biology	7	23	17	54	7	23
Computer studies	25	80	5	18	1	2
Physics	19	62	6	19	6	19
Geography	5	16	16	52	10	32
CRE	22	72	6	17	3	11
History	14	46	10	31	7	23
Home science	7	23	14	46	10	31
Business studies	9	30	17	54	5	16
Agriculture	8	26	11	35	12	39
Music	15	53	12	34	4	13

Key: CRE – Christian Religious Education

period of 1999 to 2007, in order to establish the trend prior to and after implementation of the policy. The data obtained from head teachers was as shown in Figure 2.

From Figure 2, 57.4% of the head teachers indicated that teachers were evenly distributed across the schools, 21.4% mentioned that they were almost evenly distributed while 14.3% of the head teachers concurred that the teachers were not evenly distributed and 7.1% were undecided.

The head teachers were further asked to indicate the trend of the distribution of teachers according to subjects from the years 2001 to 2007 and their responses were as shown in Table 1.

From Table 1, head teachers indicated that the following subjects were average distributed:

mathematics (65%), English (58%), Chemistry (61%), Biology (54%), Geography (52%) and Business studies (54%). On the contrary, they indicated that Kiswahili, Computer studies, Physics, Christian Religious Education and Music were poorly distributed. From the responses no subject was well distributed. The Provincial Director of Education confirmed that there was improved distribution on Mathematics, English, chemistry, Biology and Geography. However, he observed that humanities teacher distribution was worsening. The data indicating teacher distribution prior to and after implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District between the years 1999 to 2007 were gathered from monthly staff returns available at the Provincial Director of Education's office.

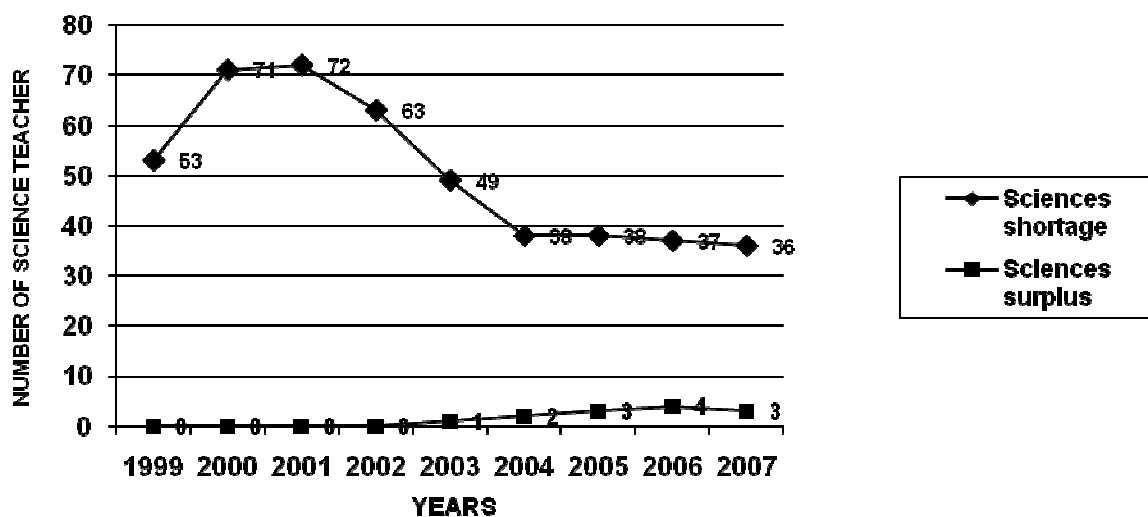


Figure 3: Trend in Distribution of Science Teachers in Nyando District

Source: Monthly Staff Returns Analysis (Provincial Director of Education’s Office, Nyanza Province, 2009).

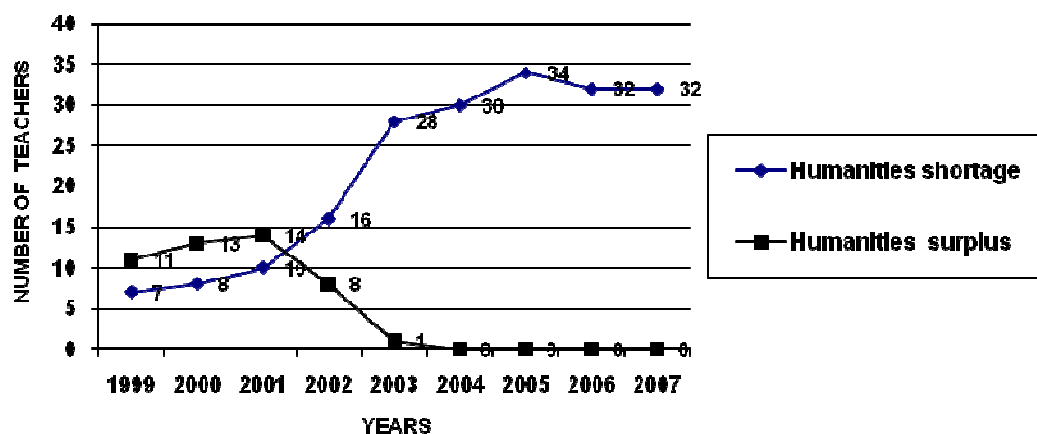


Figure 4: Trend in Distribution of Humanities Teachers in Nyando District

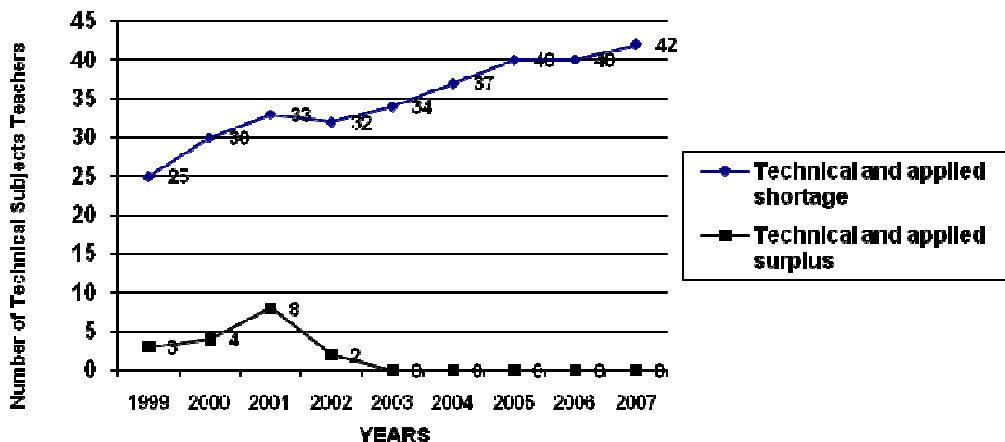
Source: Monthly Staff Returns Analysis (Provincial Director of Education’s Office, Nyanza Province, 2009).

The actual trend of distribution from the available data is graphically presented in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 for Sciences, Humanities, Technical and applied subjects as well as Languages respectively. It was necessary to have this data to assist the researchers in comparative analysis of the trend of teacher distribution prior to and after the policy’s implementation.

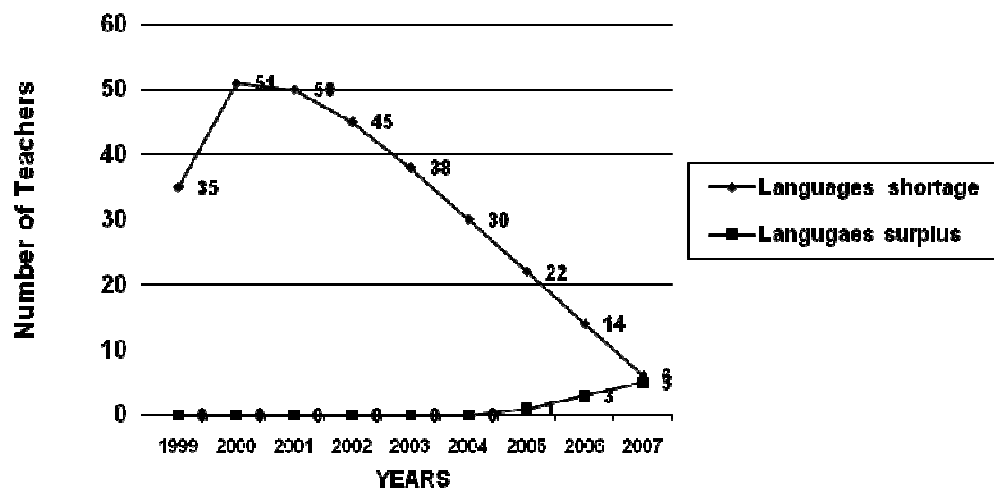
Figure 3, depicts that there was an acute shortage of science teachers in public secondary schools in the district with no surplus, indicating evenness in the distribution of science teachers in Nyando district prior to the introduction of school based teacher recruitment.

However, after implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy, the trend changed from 2002 to 2007 when there arose a decrease in shortage coupled with an increase in surplus. This outcome suggests that the distribution of science teachers was uneven after the implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy.

From Figure 4, it is clear that prior to the implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy there was an increase in the shortage of humanities teachers coupled with an increase in surplus portraying uneven distribution of humanities teachers.



**Figure 5:** Trend in Distribution of Teachers of Technical and Applied Subjects in Nyando District  
 Source: Monthly Staff Returns Analysis (Provincial Director of Education’s Office, Nyanza Province, 2009).



**Figure 6:** Trend in Distribution of Teachers of Languages in Nyando District  
 Source: Monthly Staff Returns Analysis (Provincial Director of Education’s Office, Nyanza Province, 2009).

After implementation of the policy there was a steep increase in shortage coupled with a decline in surplus indicating even distribution.

In Figure 5, it is evident that there was an increase in shortage of technical subject teachers coupled with an increase in surpluses an indication of uneven distribution of the teachers, however, after implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District there was gradual increase in teacher shortage coupled with a decline in surplus an indication of even distribution.

From Figure 6, it is evident that there was an increase in shortage of language teachers coupled with zero

surplus prior to implementation of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District an indication of even distribution. However, upon implementation the policy the trend changed portraying gradual reduction of shortage and gradual emergence of surplus, an indication of uneven distribution.

**Research question 2: To what extent has the School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy contributed to retention of teachers in public secondary schools in Nyando District?**

To address this research question head teachers were

**Table 2:** Opinion of Head Teachers towards Policy's Contribution to Teacher Retention (n=31)

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency (F)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	9	28.5
Neutral	6	20.8
Agree	8	25.4
Strongly agree	8	25.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.1*</b>

\*Different from 100.0 because of rounding off

**Table 3:** Factors that Influence Retention as reported by Head teachers (n=31)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency (F)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Location of the school	9	31.3
Provision of housing	8	25
School Leadership	8	25
Performance of the school	2	6.3
Motivation	2	6.3
Working environment	2	6.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>

asked their opinion towards policy's contribution to teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. The Provincial Director of Education was also asked to gauge the extent of the contribution of school based teacher recruitment policy on teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. Furthermore an in depth interview was administered to the Provincial Director of Education indicate how school Based Teacher Recruitment Policy had influenced teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. Staff monthly returns were also used to depict the actual trend of teacher retention in public secondary schools from 1999 to 2007.

The head teachers were asked to indicate their opinion on the extent to which school based teacher recruitment has influenced teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District and their responses were as indicated in Table 2

From Table 2, the head teachers' totaling to 50.8% indicated positive opinion on contribution of school based teacher recruitment policy to teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. On the contrary, 28.5% of the head teachers indicated that the policy had not improved teacher retention whereas 20.8% were undecided.

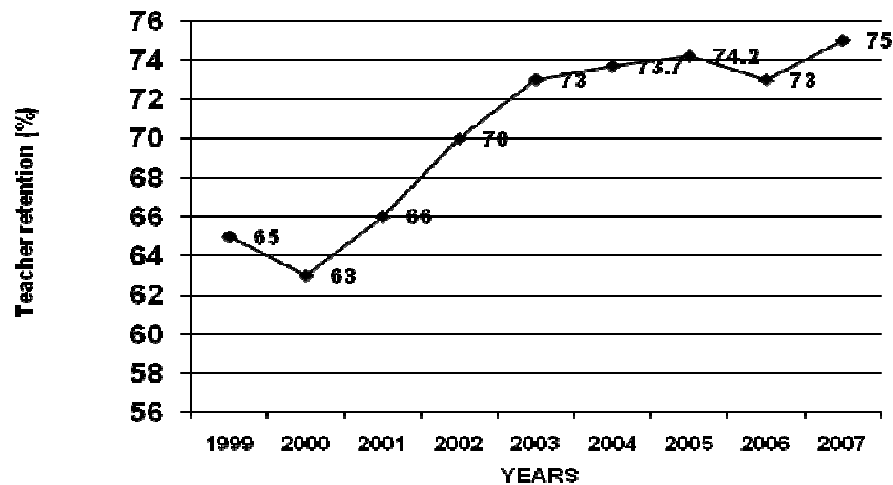
The head teachers were further asked to document the factors that led to teacher retention and their responses were as shown in Table 3.

From the Table 3 the head teachers indicated that location of school pertaining to proximity to urban settings (31.3%), provision of housing (25%) and school leadership (25%) were factor influencing teacher retention. Performance of the school in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations (6.3%) good working environment (6.3%), and provision of incentives for extra work done (6.3%) also emerged as factors that influenced teacher retention.

The data on the number of teachers retained in public secondary schools in the period prior to and after the implementation of the school based teacher recruitment policy in Nyando District was collected by the researcher by scrutinizing monthly staff returns records. From these data the percentage teacher retention was computed from 1999 to 2007 and plotted in Figure 7.

From Figure 7, it is apparent that teacher retention prior to the inception of school based teacher recruitment policy in public schools in Nyando District was low ranging from sixty three percent to sixty six percent. The advent of the school based teacher recruitment policy in public schools in Nyando District led to a rise in the retention rate from seventy percent in 2002 to seventy five percent in 2007 with a fluctuation in 2006.

Through the in-depth interview, the study sought information on the impact of school based Teacher Recruitment Policy on teacher retention in Nyando District. The Provincial Director of Education observed



**Figure 7:** Line Graph Showing Trend of Teacher Retention between 1999 to 2007

Source: Monthly Staff Returns Analysis (Provincial Director of Education's Office Nyanza Province, 2009).

that teacher selection at school level had greatly contributed to teacher retention among public schools in the district. This is because teachers selected at school level are prepared in advance for posting to such schools and subsequently ready to work in their stations for up to 5 years. Furthermore, even after being in a station for 5 years, transfers can only be effected after a suitable replacement has been found. This is contrary to the supply driven recruitment policy where teachers were haphazardly posted to schools without due regard to their areas of interest. The supply driven teacher recruitment policy had led to disparity in teacher retention with certain areas that were closer to urban settings retaining more teachers than the rural locales. In addition, many female teachers sought transfers to join their spouses even after hardly teaching in one station for a year. Such issues have become rare because the teachers are briefed about the conditions in the policy guidelines before taking up the jobs. Again, the selected teachers write a letter of commitment to the Boards Of Governors of the school of selection that they are committed to work in the station for a minimum of 5 years.

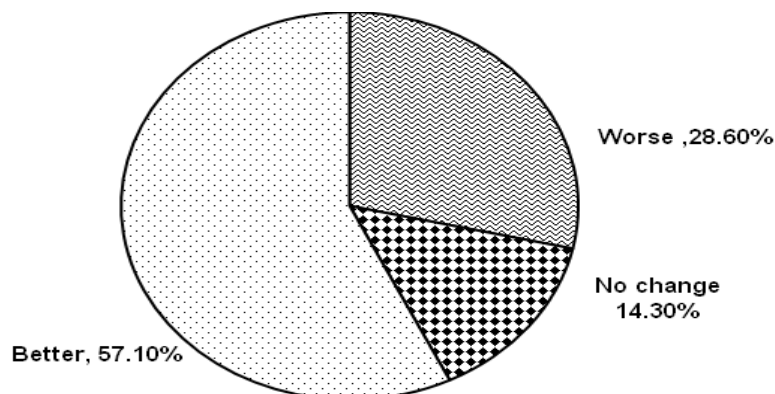
According to the Provincial Director of Education, cases of teacher absenteeism and desertion have drastically reduced among teachers. The Provincial Director of Education indicated that prior to the implementation of School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy, several teachers would absent themselves from school with reasons that they were following up their transfer requests. The Provincial Director of Education noted that the policy had further supplemented efforts of the government to retain teachers in Nyando District. This is because prior to 1998 teacher turnover in most schools in the district was high, this compelled the government to

gazette most of the zones within the district as hardship and hence awarded teachers additional earnings. Coupled with this, resisting posting in schools within the district particularly, in localities like Upper Nyakach, Lower Nyakach and Muhoroni Divisions have been checked. The Provincial Director of Education revealed that district schools were previously understaffed at the favour of provincial schools were now fairly staffed. School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy had particularly attracted more teachers in hardship schools than non-hardship schools like Nyando Division. The fact that head teachers and stakeholders through the Board of Governor had a say in selecting a teacher of their teacher had made the policy to have overwhelming support, and subsequently improved teacher retention in schools. He however noted that the School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy merely replaced teachers who had left the profession through natural attrition, furthermore, the replacement took a whole year to be done hence could still be affecting teacher retention. Furthermore, he noted that hidden health issues seemed to emerge after recruitment and the Teachers Service Commission is ethically obliged to offer transfers to the teachers affected unconditionally.

**Research question 3: To what extent has the School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy influenced efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise in public secondary schools in Nyando District?**

To address this research question, regarding how school based teacher recruitment policy had influenced efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise in public





**Figure 8:** Opinions of Head Teachers on Efficiency of the Selection Process

**Table 4:** Teacher Service Commission's Efficiency in Recruitment Exercise as indicated by Headteachers (n=31)

Task	Less efficient		Fairly efficient		Efficient	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
Advertisement of teacher vacancies	20	66	6	20	51	4
Quick response on recruited teachers and posting	20	65	8	25	3	10
Support during the exercise of teacher recruitment	3	10	9	30	19	60
Declaring the correct vacancies	5	15	23	75	3	10

**Table 5:** Efficiency of Selection Process as indicated by Headteachers (n=31)

Level of efficiency	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Less efficient	3	12.5
Neutral	8	25.0
Efficient	12	37.5
Very efficient	8	25.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>

secondary schools in Nyando District the head teachers were asked to indicate whether the policy had improved, worsened or created no change on the level of efficiency of the teacher recruitment exercise.

The head teachers' responses were as presented in Figure 8.

The head teachers totaling to 57.1% indicated that the school based systems of teacher selection had led to an improved efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise. However, 14.3% said that there was no change and 28.6% pointed out that the situation had gotten worse.

In order to further find out the opinions of the head teachers regarding the role of the Teachers Service Commission a promoting efficiency in the implementation of school based teacher recruitment exercise, the head teachers were asked to state whether the Teachers Service Commission was efficient, fairly efficient or not efficient in supporting school based teacher recruitment

exercise and their responses were as presented in Table 4.

The head teachers totaling to 66% indicated that the Teachers Service Commission was less efficient while declaring vacancies to schools 65% of the head teachers stated that the Teachers Service Commission was less efficient in posting teachers already selected by Board of Governors. However, head teachers of up to 60% considered the Teachers Service Commission supportive during the implementation of the selection exercise and head teachers totaling to 75% considered Teachers Service Commission fairly efficient in declaring subject of need for school.

To ascertaining the efficiency of the selection process during the recruitment practice the headteachers were asked to state the level of efficiency based on the experience. Their responses were as shown in Table 5.

From Table 5 the head teachers considered school

**Table 6:** A comparison of Teachers' Retention as indicated in Provincial Director of Education's Office, 2009.

Year	Percentage of teachers retained in hardship areas	Percentage of teachers retained in non-hardship areas
1999	70	55
2000	76	54.5
2001	74.5	54.3
2002	76	57
2003	77.8	60.1
2004	82.3	62.3
2005	83.7	64.1
2006	86.1	64.92
2007	90.8	65.3

based teacher recruitment practice to be efficient. This is because 37.5% considered the exercise to be efficient and 25.0% considered it very efficient. On the contrary, 12.5% of the head teachers considered it less efficient with 25.0% remaining neutral.

In the in-depth interview, the study set out to gauge how the Provincial Director of Education Nyanza was assisting the Teachers Service Commission to ensure that school based teacher selection was free from irregularities. The interview was to further gauge the perception of the Provincial Director of Education concerning the degree of efficiency of the exercise in the district. It was observed during the interview that the Provincial Director of Education's office had improved in providing information regarding teacher issues in public secondary schools on quarterly basis, this was important because the information would be used by Teachers Service Commission during declaration of vacancies to alleviate the problem of persistent complaints from schools that fail to secure vacancies for recruitment. He pointed out that the policy had faced many challenges at the early years of implementation but had since improved in its efficiency and the number of complaints on irregularities had consistently reduced over the years. Furthermore, it was noted that the Provincial Director of Education's office ensured that the selection exercise at school level was monitored through the District Education Office and complaints arising reported to the Teachers Service Commission immediately. The Provincial Director of Education admitted that the practice had led to improvement of efficiency in teacher recruitment in the district, a factor that hitherto was an issue especially with regard to humanity teachers. In addition, the Provincial Director of Education indicated that some schools that used to have massive transfers of teachers could now retain teachers in subjects such as sciences and languages at least for some years. This subsequently had led to fair performance of most district day secondary schools in the district which earlier on were performing poorly due to poor staffing since most of the teachers posted directly never used to report. The Provincial Director of Education indicated that due to

school based teacher recruitment policy, teacher selection exercise had been efficiently implemented.

The study further sought to establish a comparison of School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on teacher distribution and retention in hardship and non-hardship areas of Nyando District. The information concerning comparison of teacher retention was as presented in Table 6.

Table 6, reveals that teacher retention realized reasonable improvement after the inception of the School based teacher Recruitment Policy in 2001. However, the pace of teacher retention in non-hardship schools tended to be slow compared to that of teachers in the hardship areas. This perhaps was because of the hardship allowance paid to teachers in schools in the gazetted hardship areas, which served as an incentive to them. In general, teacher retention in Nyando District witnessed a remarkable improvement after the implementation of the School based Teacher Recruitment Policy.

The information gathered from head teachers regarding teacher distribution in hardship and non-hardship secondary schools were as presented in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7 reveals that the School Based teacher Recruitment Policy had contributed greatly to distribution of teachers in schools. This is because in terms of subjects' distribution 84% were of the opinion that Languages were well distributed, 69% believed that Science were well distributed, 76.9% indicated that technical and Applied teachers were fairly distributed while 92.3% observed that Humanities teachers were poorly distributed. The poor distribution in teachers of Humanities could be because the policy was biased towards recruitment of Science and Languages teachers at its inception.

Table 8 reveals that in non-hardship schools teachers of Languages were averagely distributed contrary to the situation in hardship schools where they were well distributed. Science teachers were fairly distributed contrary to the hardship schools where they were well distributed. Technical and Applied teachers were well distributed contrary to hardship zones where they were fairly distributed and finally, Humanities teachers were

**Table 7:** Impact of School Based Teacher recruitment Policy on Teacher Distribution in Hardship Schools as indicated by Headteachers (n=26)

Subject Areas	Impact	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Languages	Well distributed	22	84
Sciences	Well distributed	18	69
Tech and Applied	Fairly distributed	20	76.9
Humanities	Poorly distributed	34	92.3

**Table 8:** Impact of School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy on teacher Distribution in Non-hardship Schools as indicated by Head teachers (n=5)

Subject	Impact	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Languages	Averagely distributed	4	80
Sciences	Fairly distributed	3	60
Tech and Applied	Well distributed	4	80
Humanities	Well distributed	3	60

well distributed contrary to hardship zones where they were poorly distributed. In this juxtaposition, the disparities observed could be due to hardship allowance for teachers which had created inconsistencies in teacher earnings and thus a variation in motivation. The fact that the schools in non-hardship zones were fewer compared to hardship schools could as well be affecting distribution of particular subjects such as humanities. Generally, the School Based teacher Recruitment Policy was noted to have improved teacher distribution in both regions.

## DISCUSSION

Head teachers indicated that school based recruitment policy had to some extent led to an even distribution of teachers in public secondary schools in Nyando District. This was attributed to the five year bonding policy where a newly recruited teacher does not qualify for transfer before the lapse of five years. In addition, even after five years such transfers are never automatic until a suitable replacement is found. Recruitment of teachers is based on the Curriculum Based Establishment of every school. This is important in ensuring that a given number of teachers were provided to the school based on priority of needs. This is contrary to the former supply recruitment policy that allowed room for overstaffing certain schools at the expense of others. Again subject areas of need are considered unlike formerly when the arts based subject teachers saturated the job market at the expense of other subject areas. However, 35.7% of the head teachers were of the opinion that teacher distribution is still an issue in public secondary schools in Nyando District. This is due to the fact that the Teachers Service Commission simply replaces those who have left the profession without considering new schools that have

been established since the freezing of employment of teachers in 1998. Such schools therefore exist without adequate staffing of teachers hence a factor in teacher distribution. The fact that replacement for teachers is only done annually is also affecting the teacher distribution because schools are compelled to wait for a whole year upon the exit of a teacher. Oirere (2005) indicates that some schools take a longer time than others before being considered for teacher recruitment after they lose teachers due to natural attrition and hence a factor hindering equitable teacher distribution.

There were variations in distribution of teachers across subjects. Mathematics, English, chemistry, Biology, Geography, Home science and Business studies had their teachers well distributed; this is because at the inception of the policy teachers of sciences and mathematics were given priority in the recruitment exercise. It was further observed that Geography tended to be the second teaching subject of most of the Mathematics and Biology teachers. The teacher balancing after the freeze in teacher employment in 1998 was found to be a factor leading to redistribution of teachers in the schools. On the contrary, the study found out that distribution of teachers in subjects such as Kiswahili, Computer studies, Physics and Christian Religious Education was poor. For instance 71% of the head teachers indicated that Kiswahili teachers were poorly distributed, this was as a result of the fact that the district seemed to attract very few teachers of Kiswahili from the locality, again hardship gazetted zones such as Upper Nyakach, Lower Nyakach and Muhoroni tended to attract more teachers than the non hardship schools in Nyando and parts of Miwani Division due to variation in earnings. This has made some of the vacancies to remain unfilled for up to one year. Even though a few schools in the district offer Computer studies, for some

time until 2007, the Teachers Service Commission had not been recruiting teachers in the subject area hence justifying the poor distribution.

The uneven distribution of science teachers was due to hardship gazetted schools which attracted more teachers than non hardship gazetted schools due to additional hardship earnings. Ministry of Education (2007) for instance, indicated that most schools within Nyakach administrative Divisions tended to attract more teachers than those in Nyando division that are not gazetted. Balancing teachers from gazetted to non gazetted schools in Nyando Districts has always elicited opposition because such teachers are never keen to lose the additional earnings. The uneven distribution in humanities teachers was due to regional imbalances and oversupply of teachers prior to the school based teacher recruitment policy. Some schools attracted more teachers of humanities than they needed at the expense of school from urban setting and provision of staff housing. However, after the implementation of the policy there was a positive trend of the humanities teacher distribution with the shortage increasing and the surpluses completely diminishing. This is because the Teachers Service Commission postponed recruiting teachers of humanities but was biased in recruiting teachers of sciences and languages. It therefore follows that those leaving the profession due to natural attrition were not replaced at all. Furthermore, the few surpluses were subsequently shared among schools.

The uneven trend in distribution of technical and applied teachers was due to location of the school from urban setting. It was observed by both the Provincial Director of Education and head teachers that schools closer to urban environments tended to attract teachers contrary to rural schools and thus affecting teacher distribution. This is because more teachers were distributed around town schools than rural schools. The subsequent years after the commencement of school based teacher recruitment in public schools in Nyando District were characterized by a decline in the surpluses and a steady rise in the shortages of technical and applied subject teachers. This led to an even distribution of teachers, this is because school based teacher recruitment policy had not prioritized on recruiting teachers in subjects such as Business studies, Music and Computer Studies apart from Agriculture. The surpluses were therefore shared out to schools of need. Furthermore, as indicated by (Kenya Institute of Education, 2003) the fact that Curriculum Based Establishment was specific about the maximum number of technical subjects a school could offer to students depending on school size limited the number of teachers of technical and applied subjects in schools hence affecting teacher distribution after the implementation of the policy. The change in trend of distribution of languages teachers was because Provincial Director of Education indicated that some

schools are given recruitment vacancies that they do not require due to poor records. They therefore end up with more teachers than they need. In addition, head teachers indicated that some schools are more attractive to teachers than the others because of proper infrastructure, availability of houses, proximity to social amenities and provision of incentives to teachers. Again some teachers do not only specialize in teaching language per se but are also involved in other subjects. It is clear that Kiswahili is affecting trend of teacher distribution because 71% of head teachers indicated that it was poorly distributed. The research team in the in-depth interview with the Provincial Director of Education wanted to get verbal response regarding the officer's opinion on how Teachers Service Commission was achieving its objectives of teacher distribution in the district with regard to the school based teacher recruitment policy. The officer underscored the sentiments of Teachers Service Commission (2002) and Kenya Institute Education (2003) that declarations of vacancies according to needs of schools and schools Curriculum Based Establishment were key to normalizing teacher distribution in Nyando District. Furthermore the Teachers Service Commission had consistently carried out staff balancing by transferring teachers from over supplied schools to under supplied schools. Such an exercise was done with disregard to the five-year policy in cases where all the affected teachers had not stayed in their stations for the mandatory five years. During the interview it was discovered that there were schools that occasionally had over supply of teachers due to double recruitment. The Provincial Director of Education attributed this to poor record keeping; such cases were bound to lead to uneven distribution of teachers in the district. In addition, it was observed that study leave and maternity leave had also affected teacher distribution in the district. Teacher discipline and transfer to better paying jobs were also factors affecting teacher distribution, for example in the years 2005 to 2007, several teachers had transferred to either Ministry Of Education or joined Ministry of Youth Affairs hence leaving a gap that took long to be filled.

The majority of head teachers admitted that the policy had improved teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. This is in agreement with data on teacher retention depicted on Figure 8, whereby upon introduction of school based teacher recruitment policy the teacher retention improved. This is because of five year bonding policy for the new teacher recruits, hardship allowances, strict cases of transfers by Teachers Service Commission based on suitable replacement and finally formulation of study leave policy by Teachers Service Commission that made it difficult for teachers of humanities and technical and applied subjects to get paid study leave (Teachers Service Commission, 2005; Teachers Service Commission 2002). Again, withdrawal of study leave for diploma teachers has encouraged school based studies and thus improving on

teacher retention (Teachers Service Commission, 2002; Teachers Service Commission, 1998 and Teachers Service Commission, 1996).

The location of school with regard to proximity to urban setting influenced the tendency of a number of teachers who wished to transfer to urban schools to enable them pursue studies, this is because the Teachers Service Commission has come up with a policy of extra earnings for teachers on additional certificates attained Teachers Service Commission (2002). This contradicts Carrol et al. (2000) as cited in Pearlman (2002) who argued that teachers would prefer to work in rural locales than urban locales because urban locales have high minority schools than rural. The Provincial Director of Education for instance indicated that provision of housing and motivating school leadership are considerable factors in staff retention; this affects comfort of teachers with large families. The fact that a school can put up proper housing for teachers at affordable rates as is clear for schools like Nyakach Girls, Nyabondo High School and Onjiko High School makes one feel like not leaving for another work station. It will always be tempting not to apply for promotions when a teacher knows that such would take him or her to remote schools.

Other head teachers indicated that teachers would wish to associate with performing schools rather than non-performing ones because the performing schools encourage staff development due to regular teacher promotions thus confirming sediments of Belmonte (2002). Communities that are cooperative with teachers also influence their length of stay in particular schools as also indicated by Pearlman (2002). On the contrary, hostile and insecure environments would lead to mass transfer of teachers hence affecting staff retention, these therefore confirm arguments put across by National Commission on teaching and Americas future (2003) which indicated that poor working conditions and lack of support for teachers would lead to their exit. Head teachers indicated that teachers would enjoy staying longer in schools that offer rewards for diligent teaching especially with regard to Kenya Certificate Secondary Education results thus confirming the argument of Greenwald et al (1996). Head teachers were of the opinion that teachers would stay longer in schools that offered supportive leadership thus further confirming Weaver (2002) argument that the most significant factor in retaining teachers particularly in hard-to-stay schools is having strong and energetic leadership in which teachers feel like valued members of a learning community. The Provincial Director of Education officers' indication that zoning of schools into hardship and non-hardship was a factor in teacher retention with schools in hardship zones retaining more teachers than the others underscores explanations of Bough and Stone (1982). The duo noted that there was substantial evidence to show that wages were important in determining teachers' retention on jobs.

The school based teacher recruitment policy has played a role in improving efficiency in teacher selection practice in schools, this is because teachers are now supplied to schools on demand and need of schools contrary to the former supply driven system where posting was haphazardly done leading to imbalances in other subject areas. However, some head teachers disputed this, saying that there was still lack of efficiency during school based teacher recruitment practice. This is because the Teachers Service Commission tended to consider school student population before declaring vacancies for teacher recruitment and hence under enrolled schools remained without teachers until the enrolment improves. In addition, the fact that the Teachers Service Commission still holds the veto power to employ teachers after teachers have been selected by Boards of Governors have led to cases of delays in posting teachers already recruited and thus questioning the extent of efficiency in the exercise. Persistent complaints from teachers who fail to secure jobs during the selection process have also been causing the delays in teacher posting hence leading to question regarding efficiency of the exercise as already mentioned by Teachers Service Commission (2007). Inefficiency in advertisement of teacher vacancies is because every year certain schools get chances to recruit while others with similar needs are not taken care of. In addition, it was observed that some schools have influential stakeholders particularly politicians who were keen in following up recruitment issues with the Teachers Service Commission for their schools unlike in other schools hence leading to biasness during teacher vacancy declarations (Oirere, 2005). The head teachers' comments that Teachers Service Commission was less efficient in posting teachers recruited by Boards of Governors are because of the failure by some recruiting Boards of Governors to adhere to the set guidelines. It is a common fact as already mentioned by (Teachers Service Commission, 2007) that every year anomalies are detected in the recruitment exercise necessitating such delays. This is because of sacrificing merit at the expense of favour. In addition, Teachers Service Commission is slow in replacing teachers who have left through natural attrition and on promotion to deputy principalship hence indicative of inefficiency. Presumably, updating records also remains a challenge due to the manual way of handling teacher issues. The head teachers had confidence that Teachers Service Commission was supporting school based teacher recruitment exercise. This is because sufficient guidelines are sent in time to the recruiting schools. In addition, briefing is done to teachers prior to the exercise. Furthermore, schools where vacancies are declared are transparently printed in the print media. Head teachers considered Teachers Service Commission fairly efficient in declaring subjects of need to schools, and this is because the Teachers Service Commission's declaration

is based on monthly staff returns of schools. The head teachers observed that the Teachers Service Commission still had a lot to do to improve the efficiency of the recruitment exercise. They indicated that there was need to deploy head teachers who had served successfully to work at the Teachers Service Commission secretariat because they tend to understand teacher staffing issues better. They are therefore able to understand issues to do with updating of teacher records and thorough scrutiny of school staff returns based on Curriculum Based Establishment. At the moment the Teachers Service Commission secretariat has to bureaucratically wait for approved Curriculum Based Establishment on all public secondary schools from the Director Quality Assurance and Standards and thus causing delays in declaring vacancies for certain schools. The head teachers also proposed that all teacher recruitments be done centrally at district level with an accredited professional body to help check on local intrigues and manipulations. It was noted that despite the improvement some manipulations of the exercise by the stakeholders particularly the politicians was still common.

## CONCLUSIONS

There was disparity in teacher distribution across subjects, for instance while prior to the policy teachers of sciences and languages were evenly distributed despite the acute shortage, they are currently unevenly distributed with some schools having surpluses despite the shortage. On the contrary, while prior to the implementation of the policy teachers of humanities and technical subjects were unevenly distributed they are currently evenly distributed. However, the policy according to head teachers and Provincial Director of Education had shown improvement in teacher distribution across schools. The study concluded out that teacher retention had improved. The head teachers noted that five-year bonding spelt out in the policy guideline was a major contributor to teacher retention in schools. However, they further enumerated good housing, proximity of school to urban settings, performance of schools, rewards for extra work and competent leadership as factors significant in determining the length of stay of a teacher in any given school. In addition to school based recruitment practice, hardship allowance, communication network and family stability were found to influence teacher retention in public secondary schools in the district. The study concluded out that the advertisements of teacher vacancies were marred by lack of transparency since the advent of school based teacher recruitment policy in public secondary schools in Nyando District. It was further found out that speed of posting teachers recruited by Board Of Governor took unnecessarily long hence questioning efficiency of the practice in the district. In addition, the process of

declaring vacancies for schools was still wanting in the district. The study found out that there was double recruitment in certain schools at the expense of others leading to surplus. However, the study revealed that the Teachers Service Commission was efficient in supporting the recruitment exercise. Concerning the opinion of the head teachers on efficiency of the recruitment exercise, the study found out that the practice had not achieved admirable level of efficiency during teacher recruitment exercise. Policy had led to disparity in teacher distribution across subjects. For instance, while teachers of Kiswahili, English and Sciences were evenly distributed coupled with acute shortage prior to the implementation of the policy, they were now unevenly distributed with certain schools having surpluses. Generally, the policy had improved teacher distribution across schools, which hitherto the implementation of the policy was an issue in most public secondary schools in the district. Other than the five-year bonding of newly recruited teachers as a factor influencing teacher retention, the study further concluded that other factors such as provision of housing, proximity of school to urban settings, performance of schools, rewards for extra work and competent school leadership were crucial in influencing a teacher's length of stay in a particular school. In addition, hardship allowance, communication network and family stability were found out to be equally important in influencing teacher retention in public secondary schools in Nyando District. This study therefore concludes that the School Based Teacher Recruitment Policy had led to improved teacher retention in public secondary schools. Advertisement of teacher vacancies for public secondary schools was marred by lack of transparency. For example, there were cases of double recruitment of same subject teachers in certain schools at the expense of other needy ones. Furthermore, the speed of posting teachers after being selected by Boards of Governors was found to be unnecessarily slow hence hindering efficiency. However, the study discovered that the Teachers Service Commission was efficient in supporting the recruitment exercise. This study therefore concludes that school based teacher recruitment policy has not achieved acceptable level of efficiency in teacher recruitment exercise.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for Teachers Service Commission to intensify staff balancing of teachers from hardship-gazetted schools to non-hardship schools in order to enhance equity in teacher distribution.

The Teachers Service Commission should computerize staffing records to alleviate the problem of double recruitment of double recruitment of some subject teachers in some schools at the expense of others due to poor manual record keeping.

Public secondary schools management should address factors such as housing, teacher motivation and competent leadership to ensure further retention of teachers.

There is need to involve teachers in formulating staffing norms in order to enable them contribute to teacher retention in schools.

The Teachers Service Commission should address challenges affecting teacher retention in non-hardship schools by involving professionals who may not necessarily be from the school locality to carry out the entire recruitment exercise and thus check on inefficiency by ensuring that the policy guidelines are adhered to.

The Teachers Service Commission should involve the District Education Office and head teachers to ensure that the exercise of declaring teacher vacancies in schools is transparent.

The Teachers Service Commission should post newly recruited teachers immediately after selection; this is because delays have been there due to bureaucracies.

The Teachers Service Commission should decentralize appeals tribunals to immediately address complaints emerging from recruitment exercise.

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