

Accountability for Curriculum Implementation in Ethiopian Primary Schools: Compact Relationship in Focus

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Abstract.

The study aims to investigate the compact or bureaucratic accountability relationship for curriculum implementation in primary schools. To achieve this objective, an exploratory case study type and a multiple case study (holistic) research design were employed. A purposeful sampling technique was used to select sites and respondents. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources using face-to-face structured interviews and document analysis. Primary sources of data were three district or Woreda Education Offices (WEOs) and three primary schools, from which three school principals, six teachers, and three WEOs' curriculum and instructional experts were selected. The data were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic approach. The study reveals that the compact accountability relationship between the WEOs' curriculum and instructional experts and the curriculum implementers was collapsed by key determinants such as weak capacity, poor monitoring progress, and politicization of the WEOs' curriculum and instructional experts' roles and responsibilities. This study also affirms that the accountability relationship was purposefully operational for easily achievable actions and politically attractive roles such as the improvement of students' test scores by 10%, enhancing students' enrollment, reducing students' dropout rates, etc. that resulted in little implementation of curriculum components into classroom practices in a decentralized education system of primary schools.

Keywords: Accountability, compact, curriculum implementation, and primary education.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, the primary education (grades 1-8) curriculum is aimed at effectively addressing the needs of both society and the individual, bearing in mind the crucial issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies (MoE, 2009). Yet it is important to note that the primary education sector has been faced with a myriad of problems in implementing the curriculum as intended in the world in general and in Ethiopia in particular. Poor students' performance on international tests and the failure of curriculum implementation during the 1970s and 1980s led to the emergence of education accountability to improve these failures in the schools (Leveille, 2006; McLaughlin, 1987; Sarason, 1971). Likewise, poor quality of school products, flawed administrative procedures, a lack of accountability in the school system, politicized employment and appointment of school heads, improper supervision, and defective quality assurance and controlling mechanisms are also considered as the main problems for effective implementation of the curriculum (Pillay & Molapo, 2018; Teferra, Asgedom, Oumer, Dalelo, & Assefa, 2018; Usman, 2016). However, these failures have forced educators to pay attention to accountability in education (Rothman, 1995), so that school districts and states attempt to ensure that schools and school systems meet their goals. These major goals of the school system are to promote academic excellence and equity for a diverse population of students within the public education system and provide a choice of educational opportunities within the public school system for parents and students. Similarly, increasing interest in accountability as a result of decentralization policies and global managerial education reforms is driving the growth of interest in primary education to improve teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2017).

Ethiopian educational history indicates that the issue of school management and decision-making at the school level is a recent development. The modern school system was introduced into the country by missionaries during the nineteenth century. The first modern government school was built by Emperor Menilik in 1908; further schools were built by Emperor Haile Selassie and the subsequent regimes

(Nekatibeb, 2012). The rise of different governments to power in Ethiopia was accompanied by educational reforms and policy changes. From 1941–74, the imperial education system functioned based on the emperor's conviction that education held a key position in the country's development. However, each of the two post-imperial governments had well-defined reform policies of their own. For instance, the socialist regime issued a five-volume publication entitled *General Directions of Ethiopian Education* in 1980. It was aimed at cultivating a Marxist ideology, developing knowledge in science and technology, and integrating education with production (Nekatibeb, 2012). Since the introduction of modern education at the end of the Derg regime (in 1991), several years have passed through a centralized education system. This is a sharp departure from the Derg's central control of primary schooling, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued educational reforms based on policy documents entitled *Education and Training Policy* in 1994 that called for accountability with greater community engagement as the final, most localized level of the decentralized system (MoE, 1994). After eight years, *Educational Organization, Community Participation, and Financial Guideline* in 2002 brought a change in educational structures, management, and accountability in the primary school education system.

These documents are anchored on the decentralization of key decision-making at the school level in the Ethiopian education system. The government realized the significance of education and curriculum reforms for management and decision-making at the Woreda (district) and school levels (MoE, 2002). This was further strengthened with *Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs) III*, when the government decided to decentralize critical decision-making from regions through zones to the Woredas and further to the school level, intending to have education become more responsive to school situations (MOE, 2005). The devolution of decision-making authority to the Woreda level was expected to strengthen the implementation of the curriculum by enabling teachers to discharge their duties effectively (MoE, 2002). In the centralized schooling system of pre-2002, the curriculum is selected and implemented by the teacher; however, the decentralized and democratic schooling of post-2002 allows students, parents, and the community in general to have the right to participate in the curriculum implantation process (MoE, 2002). The transmission from a centralized to a decentralized education system provides WEOs' curriculum and instructional (C and I) experts with appropriate powers and responsibilities to address curriculum implementation problems at school levels (p.2). Hence, the decentralized educational reforms provide increased accountability for educational activities in general and for adequate implementation of the curriculum in particular by creating numerous shifts in accountability to engage the WEOs' C and I experts through compact accountability relationships (MoE, 2002, 2005, 2015). The compact accountability relationship is broadly defined as one of the long route relationships of accountability that connects WEOs' C and I experts to school curriculum implementers (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004).

This relationship is a top-down accountability relationship that leads to curriculum implementers seeking meaningful and quality implementation of curriculum to satisfy the needs of curriculum users (Di Gropello, 2004; MoE, 2002; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). As an essential element of curriculum implementation, accountability is conceptualized as the professional work determined by a commitment to do what is best for students in the classroom (Sagor, 1996). In the context of this study, Curriculum Implementation (CI) is a process of translating the effective components of official government curriculum documents (textbooks, syllabi and teachers' guides) into classroom practices as intended (Fullan, 1999). According to Hoover (2005), educator teams must be aware of the components such as content and skills, evidence-based interventions, instructional arrangements, management procedures, and progress evaluation applied to all learners to provide the proper time of instruction and duration of interventions. Thus, stakeholders are involved according to their duties and responsibilities for the actual use of curriculum components in to the classrooms practices (MoE, 2002). In the Ethiopian decentralized education system of primary schools, stakeholders in a compact accountability relationship are categorized as WEOs' C and I experts, school principals and teachers (MoE, 2002). Since the power and responsibilities accumulated at the regional and zonal; education office to the woredas, WEOs' C and I experts have the role of strengthening educational supervision to make sure that school curriculum implementation process is practiced as planned.

They also provide educational resources, capacity building, and other services in order to establish meaningful compact accountability relationships for curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). They have the authority to oversee, monitor, and use enforceability approaches for the implementation of the school curriculum. Enforceability comes into play when the compact also specifies the rewards (and possibly the penalties) that depend on the curriculum implementers' actions (WDR, 2004). As an element of the top-down long route framework of accountability, a compact accountability relationship can be linked to rewarding good behavior and punishing unacceptable behavior (Beckmann, 2000; WDR, 2004). It expresses the continuing concern for checks, oversight, surveillance, and institutional constraints on the exercise of power for the implementation of curriculum (Beckmann, 2000; Maile, 2002). This will lead WEOs' C and I experts make sure that curriculum is effectively implemented by using compact relations to monitor and use accountability measures over the curriculum implementers (teachers and school principals) to hold them accountable by evaluating their performances (MoE, 2002). Indeed, if teachers and school principals are failing to discharge their responsibilities, WEOs' C and I experts are expected to hold them for improving the implementation of the curriculum from simple disciplinary penalties (oral warning, written warning, and fines up to one month's salary) to rigorous disciplinary penalties (fines up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal) to satisfy the needs of curriculum users (Proclamation, 2002). The assumption is that strengthening compact accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary schools, for example, leads to close relationships between WEOs' C and I experts and implementers to ensure significant curriculum implementation.

This is because, an accountability system helps everyone do their job more responsibly by providing information about schools' or curriculum implementers' practices along with occasions for curriculum implementation (Darling-Hammond, 1991). Even though the accountability movement has helped to make school performance more transparent (Fullan, 2000), public opinion generally considers public education to still be in crisis (Fowler, 2009) and failing to meet today's challenges in the implementation of curriculum (Bushaw & Lopez, 2010). Primary schools are no longer making the desired noticeable impact in achieving the set objectives of the curriculum. At the classroom level, effective CI is highly influenced by the weak commitment of teachers, school principals and a poor accountability system (Dantow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002; Desimone, 2002). Due to this fact, the global learning crisis is widely acknowledged (Hale et al., 2021; Le Nestour, 2021; WDR, 2018). A large-scale study in Ethiopia, in particular, indicates that primary schools continue to face crises in curriculum or learning implementation (Hoddinott, Iyer, Sabates, & Woldehanna, 2019). These crisis narratives about the lack of student engagement in the curriculum in primary schools have gained traction recently. The achievement results of children who completed primary school and took the regional exam for boarding secondary schools administered by the Oromia Devolvement Association (ODA), which invites pupils to compute following primary school graduation in the east Wollega Zone, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of students who completed grade 8, sat for the regional exam and who promoted to boarding secondary school in East Wollega Zone

Academic Years	No. of students who sat for exam	No. of students who prompted
2020	98	4
2018	11	3
2017	630	15
2016	167	6
Total	906	28

Source: East Wollega Zone ODA filed documents.

As can be seen from Table 1, out of a total of 906 students who sat for the national exam for four years, only 28 (3.01%) students were promoted to boarding secondary school in the Oromia regional state. This directly shows that curriculum implementation in primary schools of East Wollega zone had serious gap in exercising compact accountability relationships, most probably between WEOs' C and I experts and school curriculum implementers. In this case, the question of who is accountable for the failed implementation of the curriculum resulting in poor student results or promotion? Who shares the blame? When seen through the lenses of the WDR's (2004) compact accountability relationship, how and for what

do WEOs' C and I experts hold curriculum implementers accountable? is the central notion of this study to be empirically verified.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the above statement of the problems, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do WEOs' C and I experts hold curriculum implementers accountable through a compact accountability relationship?
2. For what do WEOs' C and I experts primarily hold curriculum implementers accountable through a compact accountability relationship?

1.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is informed by the 2004 World Development Report's accountability framework, which explains the compact accountability relationships between policymakers or curriculum and instructional experts and service providers (curriculum implementers) (WDR, 2004). Arguably, this accountability framework is the most influential and advanced, and it emphasizes the importance of public school curriculum implementation responding to the demands of local curriculum users (students and parents) and advocating for greater decentralization, control, and accountability (Di Gropello, 2004; WDR, 2003). Although the framework has four accountability relationships: voice, compact, power, and management, this study primarily focused on compact, which includes WEOs' curriculum and instructional experts who have oversight authority over curriculum implementers through decentralized compact accountability relationships.

In Ethiopia, stakeholders were empowered to address educational problems in their localities through decentralization by devolution, and WEOs' C and I experts were empowered to carry out the majority of educational activities, including curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). Due to this reason, we used compact accountability relationships between WEOs' C and I experts and curriculum implementers. This accountability relationship can be verified through information (formal reporting, monitoring, assessment, and evaluation). Those experts anticipated that a substantial and strong monitoring function would be used to generate information about the performance of curriculum implementers (MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004). The assumption is that, for example, strengthening compact accountability relationships for curriculum implementation in primary schools leads to close relationships between WEOs' C and I experts and those of implementers so as to hold them accountable for better implementation of curriculum (Komba, 2017; MoE, 2002; WDR, 2004). As a result, this conceptual framework has significant ramifications for its potential to be an efficient remedy for better primary school classroom curriculum execution through a close and compact accountability relationship.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design and approaches

We used a multiple case (holistic) study design to provide in-depth insight into how the compact accountability relationship has been exercised for better curriculum implementation and for what this relationship is primarily operational to hold curriculum implementers accountable (Yin, 2003). This design helps us collect data from multiple primary schools to get a holistic view of the findings. We used an exploratory case study as a qualitative research method to better understand the compact accountability relationships due to the subjective aspect of accountability (Hall, Bowen, Ferris, Royle, & Fitzgibbons, 2007).

2.2 Samples and Sampling Technique

According to Creswell (2002), the research locations and subjects who could provide essential data for understanding the primary phenomenon were chosen. Purposive sampling, according to Martella, Nelson, Morgan, and Marchand-Martella (2013, p. 305) is the deliberate selection of particular people, events, or settings for the significant information they provide. It guarantees that volunteers with "the necessary experience or knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation" would be sought out by the researchers (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 430). Daniel (2011) adds that this target population is chosen based on how well they fit the study's objectives and any specific inclusion or exclusion criteria.

Given that the study focused conceptually on accountability for curriculum implementation, which was seen as challenging, the East Wollega zone was purposefully selected because it is one of the Oromia Regional State that consistently underperforms in promoting students to Oromia Development Association (ODA) boarding secondary schools. Based on the area's stability, three primary schools from three districts in the zone were chosen as research sites. Three curriculum and instructional experts were selected from WEOs due to their expertise, structural position, and compact accountability relationship to monitor and oversee the implementation of school curriculum as professionals. Three school principals, one from each respective school, were selected based on their positions. Six teachers, two from each school, were chosen based on their 20-year teaching experience. This is because they have a thorough understanding of the school's guidelines and education policy, as well as the current curriculum implementation practices.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

The research uses triangulation in the data collection to increase the reliability as well as the internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1998). The instruments used to collect data in this study were interviews and documents. These data sources allowed for triangulation through substantive and in-depth data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) and helped to enhance data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). We collected the data from November 2020- to May 2021.

2.4 Method of Data Analysis

Upon completing the data presentation, we proceeded with the data analysis thematically. This is because Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Some scholars have also maintained that thematic analysis is a process used by many qualitative methods; it is not a separate method but rather something to be used to assist researchers in analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Holloway & Todres, 2003). Hence, we argued that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions in this study.

The qualitative method is a way to find, examine, group, describe, and present themes that are present in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using a priori (descriptive) codes based on keywords from the interview questions and the conceptual frameworks of the study, we coded each transcript after receiving it. Teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 for the purpose of data analysis, school principals as SP1, SP2, and SP3, and curriculum and instructional experts as CIE1, CIE2, and CIE3.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Under this sub-section of the conceptual framework, the assumption is that WEOs' C and I experts are expected to address the voice of the curriculum users and their professional responsibilities for better implementation of the curriculum through compact accountability relationships. In a decentralized primary school education system, this relationship is broadly viewed as a long-route accountability relationship that connects the nearest WEOs' C and I experts and schools' curriculum implementers (MoE, 2005). In accordance with the obligations and responsibilities outlined in the primary education management guidelines, they must also assess how well the curriculum is being implemented and take corrective action. As explained by WEOs' C and I experts, their roles and ways of using enforcement mechanisms to hold curriculum implementers accountable for well-rounded curriculum implementation are essentially devoted to the distribution of students' books. In this regard, all the experts (CIE1, CIE2, and CIE3) explained a similar argument:

To provide for the school, experts obtain textbooks for the pupils, teacher's manuals, and other instructional resources from the Zone education offices. Experts also force them to provide such books on schedule. Experts also advise individuals to use those books responsibly until the new curriculum is adopted. Experts are also eager to gather information on textbook requirements for schools, which we must then submit to the appropriate authorities. This is the initial mechanism to hold schools accountable.

Concerning the compact accountability relationship, in developed countries like the USA, individual schools are held accountable through the mechanisms of establishing standards and evaluating the

performance of students, and subgroups of students on annual standardized tests. So, failing schools (i.e., schools that fail to demonstrate adequate yearly progress, as evidenced by students' scores on these standardized tests), are subject to sanctions. These sanctions range from relatively minor actions, such as providing tutoring, to major actions, such as reforming the school staff and administration or having students transfer to other schools (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007). In most cases, government efforts to measure the outcomes of students and schools, especially based on student test scores (an international large-scale assessment system, usually administered by an external body), and to provide explicit rewards and punishments based on these measures (Harris & Herrington, 2006).

However, in this study area, the concern of school accountability is highly focused to collect school test scores for grades one up to grade seven, which are prepared by subject matter teachers. The regional ministry examination for grade eight is prepared by the Regional Education Bureau. These tests and exams are not standardized and are traditional. In these cases, schools are forced to be ranked by promotion rate and the improved school-wide students' average scores. Hence, WEOs' C and I experts highlighted that:

Experts collect the data from schools on students' results, and individual schools are held accountable through the mechanism of observable data: students' test scores, which are prepared by classroom teachers. Students did not attend international assessment practices. Based on the direction given from zone education office and regional education bureau, Experts put pressure on schools to improve students' test results by at least 10% from the previous year. (CIE1, CIE2 and CIE3)

It is important to note that the compact accountability relationship is focused on students' enrollment and dropped-out rate. The compact accountability relationship is easy because the targets are numerical.

The Zone education office has given an enrollment plan through formal or official letters, which show the number of students to be enrolled. Experts enforce schools to reach the given plan. Experts divide the target number of students in the school to teach the maximum level. Schools should give priority to reaching the expected number of students to reach the plan... WEOs' C and I experts generally see enrollment as an expert task, and they are not concerned with which schools effectively implement the curriculum. Experts often set several enrollment limits for schools, so schools should be appreciated for their overcrowded number of students. Students' dropout rate is also another mechanism to hold schools accountable as one of the school ranking criteria. (CIE1, CIE2 and CIE3)

Another expert emphasized that:

Failing schools are relatively not ranked schools that failed to demonstrate yearly progress enrollment rate data by grade levels and by gender loosely subjected to sanctions. These accountability sanctions are rare and most probably changing school principals from their position to the teaching profession. (CIE2)

In addition, teachers' relationships with the C and I experts from the WEOs for curriculum implementation are weak and inadequate. Therefore, one participant understood that:

Although it is not good to make hasty generalizations about the WEOs' C and I experts, they are afraid to enter the classroom to evaluate teachers and give feedback about teachers' performance. They have no interest in playing formal evaluation roles as experts for the implementation of the curriculum. So there is no way to make teachers accountable for CI. Even their language does not smell educational expertise, and they come to school for the sake of their presence. They are reluctant agents. Teachers are not lucky enough to expect professional support from such experts. (T5)

Another teacher also explained that:

I report individual test scores to students and parents. However, for the general public, the WEOs' C and I report scores and rankings on a school-by-school basis using school-wide averages. No one reports that they can tell which teachers are effective and which are ineffective at implementing the curriculum. No accountability measures differentiate individual teachers' performances for the implementation of curriculum. (T1)

When C and I experts from WEOs visit schools, they are considerably more worried about ranking issues based on student results than they are about how students will be engaged in the curriculum with regard to this compact accountability relationship. Participants explained that as a result of:

Teachers do not have a meeting with WEOs' C and I experts on issues related to the implementation of curriculum and on how to put it effectively. Rather, they enforce schools and teachers by saying that all students should be promoted. It helps schools to be ranked, that is, also WEOs to be ranked; ZEO will be ranked among other zones. So, schools are motivated to adjust students' results to fulfill the needs of the WEOs. Those experts enforce schools to regulate the students' marks to be appreciated by their political bosses. They do not like to hear about students being detained. They are confusing us by not implementing the curriculum effectively. (T3 and T4)

WEOs' C and I experts commonly use their compact relationship with schools' facilities as ranking criteria rather than the translation of written curriculum in classroom practices. Several participants asserted that:

Schools are extensively evaluated and held accountable for school facilities such as sports fields, clean water, latrines for boys and girls, a sufficient classroom, and students' tables and desks. WEOs' C and I experts do not have concerns or put any pressure on school principals and teachers for what is going on in the classrooms among students, teachers, and instructional materials. (T2, T4 and T6)

Although WEOs' C and I experts are positioned as curriculum and instructional experts, teachers explicitly suspect their expertise because they come to the school with an opinion that focuses on varying degrees of political friction. The political nomination has the most power because it directs a compact accountability relationship between the WEOs' C and I experts and the curriculum implementers to focus on politicizing the implementation of the curriculum. One participant emphasized that:

WEOs' C and I experts are not capable of giving professional development support for teachers and school principals or evaluating the implementation of the school curriculum, and even they have no practice observing how students learn and how teachers teach. Experts were teachers who did not teach their students properly, so they were pulled to the office. I know that they are positioned as experts based on important criteria: political membership in the ruling party, and they do have relatives who are top politicians and can be nominated politically. Indeed, there is no transparent and merit-based competition to select those experts. I see that they usually come to school with a political agenda. (T1)

In this regard, other respondents reported that:

WEOs' C and I experts come to school to collect information about the political views of the school community in general and teachers' and students' views in particular... who do not support the ruling party and who show resistance to this party... And they focused on collecting the hidden political agendas, and they do have many structural connections to the community beyond the school. They are often called collectors of data related to Male, Female. They are far from curriculum knowledge and its implementation. So, CI is commonly left to the teacher alone. (T1 and T2)

Another compact relationship is just to trust the top-down commands that cannot be escaped to do so. These commands are specified as emerging informal activities of school functions with various types of checklists from ZEO via WEOs and to the schools. All school principals and one teacher shared similar insights about informal school activities embedded in classroom practices by saying:

Teachers have plans, and school principals have also planned to implement the curriculum. WEOs' C and I experts forced us to participate in many informal activities from central politicians or curriculum developers through the telephone, such as discussions about student textbook ratios, student-to-chair ratios, student-to-classroom ratios, and others that disrupt our duties and responsibilities. They use compact relationship accountability to enforce additional informal activities beyond the implementation of the curriculum. Of course, politicians have goals other than implementing the curriculum effectively. (SP1, SP2, SP3 and T3)

All school principals (SP1, SP2, and SP3) worried about the future generation that WEOs' C and I experts have always used strong compact accountability relationships for political concerns and they highlighted that:

School principals see that CI is politicized and students are not effectively engaged in the school curriculum. School principals and teachers are running with unnecessary routine activities. School principals hope this notion has to be changed in how to implement the curriculum effectively. Because in this 21st century, CI has got priority agenda in the schools... and the practice is technology integrated, yet Ethiopian curriculum is simply implemented from government's student books. Schools were failing to transmit societal core values to the next generation. WEOs' C and I experts enforce us to lead schools out of principals leadership roles for implementing curriculum and also misleading teachers to implement curriculum.

The implication is that because of the compact accountability relationship between WEOs' C and I experts and the frontline curriculum implementers, teachers are professionally overlooked. Experts used a compact accountability relationship to enforce school principals and teachers' responsibilities for paperwork (e.g., reports related to numbers), but not for teachers' roles in the implementation of the curriculum. Conversely, according to the school management guideline, school principals are accountable to WEOs' C and I experts for the performance related to activities of curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). Yet, this accountability chain does not necessarily translate to effective action for translating curriculum into classroom action. Further, the compact accountability relationship with the school is to address the hidden political agenda of the ruling party.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Accountability for curriculum implementation has been seen as a way of keeping schools under control by creating pressure on schools through rewards and penalties (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001; Mazzeo, 2001; Reeves, 2006). However, although WEOs' C and I experts are empowered to make curriculum implementation effective through compact accountability relationships as given by Ethiopian's decentralized education system (MoE, 2002), generally, the findings of the present study indicate compact failures were observed, in which WEOs' C and I experts failed to communicate their clear responsibilities for curriculum implementation to hold implementers accountable as stated in the proclamation. This study suggests that WEOs' C and I experts are highly interested in putting an enforcement or political compact in place through oral and telephone means for the improvement of school-wide average students' test scores, enrollments, school construction (classrooms, sports fields, toilets for girls and boys, etc.) that are easily reported, textbooks, student-related ratios, etc., as fundamental variables, and finally, these scores are hopefully trusted to be used for school rankings and then for ranking Woredas.

It can be concluded that some of these reports through this accountability relationship are aimed at forcing teachers towards too much administrative work and political reports that divert them from their responsibility in classroom practices. This study indicates that this relationship is highly focused on reports that are used as necessary and conducive school environments but do not provide essential conditions for the meaningful translation of the curriculum into classroom practices. Arguably, a scholar emphasized that an accountability system that contains test scores alone without the context of additional accountability information about teaching-learning practices and curriculum is incomplete (Reeves, 2004). Never the less, the study affirms that WEOs' C and I experts eagerly used compact accountability approaches to school principals and teachers to improve students' test scores that diverted them from their main duties and responsibilities for implementing curriculum process. As disclosed through the findings, it can be concluded that the compact accountability relationship of politically nominated WEOs' C and I experts divert their expertise roles to observe and collect the political views of teachers and students rather than the implementation of the school curriculum.

Consequently, WEOs' C and I experts use superior commandments for school principals and teachers to accomplish routine activities related to enrollment, dropout, and textbook distribution; level of school stability; the political backgrounds of both teachers and students; test scores, etc., which gears school

principals and teachers to give little emphasis to what is going on in the classroom. One can also conclude that the compact accountability relationship between WEOs' C and I experts and curriculum implementers was loosely coupled and embedded with inadequate professional capacity that leads to meager implementation of the curriculum in decentralized primary schools.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Declarations competing for interests

The author declares that he has no competing interests concerning the research.

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