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**Influence of Determinants of Pupils' Performance in English Language at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Examinations: Analysis of Nandi County, Kenya**

By

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**Abstract**

The study investigated the Determinants of performance in English in primary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. The following research question was formulated to guide the study: How is the performance in English language at KCPE in primary schools in Nandi county Kenya? The Open Systems Theory informed the generation and discussion of study findings. Mixed methods Convergent parallel design was used in the study. The quantitative strand of the study used ex post facto causal-comparative and the qualitative strand used Grounded Theory. The target population was all primary schools, head teachers, teachers of English and pupils in Nandi County, Kenya. Multi-stage and simple random procedures were used to identify and select respondents. Expert and extreme case purposive sampling was also used to select cases. The validity of the instruments results was established as well as trustworthiness for qualitative strand. Four schools were piloted, and the reliability of instruments results was established using Cronbach's alpha. Quantitative data collected from closed-ended questionnaires for quantitative strand and data from observation schedule were analysed with the aid of SPSS (version 22) computer program. Frequencies, percentages and means were used to analyse data. At the same time, the qualitative data was analysed using themes and narratives. From the findings, it was concluded that learners' performance in English language was below average. As indicated by observation findings, schools performed below average in English language in a number of years. Large classes tended to perform more poorly than smaller ones. The study recommended that there is need to hire more teachers to curb issues of excessively large class sizes, reduce teaching load, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning hence improve learners' performance in English language in primary schools.

**Key words:** Influence, Determinants, Performance, English Language, KCPE, Kenya, Nandi County

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**Background to the Study**

The Glossary of Education Reform (2015) refers to class size as the number of pupils in a given course or classroom. Class size could also refer to the number of pupils taught by one teacher in a course or classroom. Sometimes, class size could mean the average number of learners being prepared by teachers in classrooms. It may also extend to mean the number of learners under one learning experience. Further, it may denote the total number of pupils in a particular grade level or class in school. According to the New Zealand's Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) (2016), class size is the actual number of pupils in front of a teacher at any given time. In this paper, class size refers to the number of pupils in a class taught by one teacher of English Language at one time. Class size was measured using three levels: a class size was categorized as large if it had 31 or more pupils in one class, medium level was a class size of 30-21 pupils, and small level referred to a class of 20 or less pupils.

The second variable that was investigated was teachers' workload. Weldon and Ingvason (2016) define teachers' workload as the amount of time spent by a teacher in teaching and learning activities in a week and a school year. In this paper, teachers' workload referred to the number of lessons taught by one teacher per week. The influence of the independent variable in this study were measured against performance in English language. Performance was used using pupils' scores in English language in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) national examinations. Secondary data on performance was, therefore, obtained from schools using document analysis schedule.

The resolution arrived at Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) (1990), and the follow-up at the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum, placed high stress on the need to increase access to education. Africa hosts the largest classes so that pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is as high as 70:1 in countries like Congo, Ethiopia and Malawi. East and South Asian countries, such as Colombia and Afghanistan, follow with a ratio of 55:1 or slightly higher (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations [UNESCO], 2006). In Africa, the average per class is much higher than the average class size of European Union (EU) member states and the United States of America among the developed countries, which have 20 per class and below 30 per class in all countries. Hayley and Ingrid (2019) observe that an ideal excellent size would be pegged at 15 to 20 pupils. However, many classrooms exceed 30 students and it is uncommon to find 40 students in one class.

Therefore, the EFA goal number two, on increasing student enrolment in primary years, is yet to be achieved in Africa. This is despite EFA calls on world governments to help every child to realize inalienable rights to quality education (UNESCO, 2011). Besides, it was clear that some margins by the year 2015 had missed laudable targets, considering 52 million children were still not attending school (UNESCO, 2014a). Moreover, poor quality education held back learning since one-third of primary school-age children do not have the basics knowledge whether they had been to school or not (UNESCO, 2014c).

Goal four of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) strives to improve the quality of education, measured by realized learning outcomes, especially in essential skills, literacy

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and numeracy. The quality of education is not only dependent on teachers, as reflected in duty performance, but also on other correlates such as the number of learners taught by one teacher in a class and the amount of work as measured in lessons taught by one teacher per week, both of which promote school effectiveness and improvements of learning outcomes. UNESCO (2014b) notes that teachers are a critical factor in the quality of education and are key in enhancing student learning and improving performance. However, the expansion of primary enrolment in many countries, including Kenya, has led to many chronic shortages.

Globally, about 1.6 million additional teachers were needed by 2015 to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) and to ensure that all children are in school with not more than 40 pupils for every teacher. The shortage of teachers is a fundamental issue in the sub-Saharan Africa, which had the highest pupil-teacher ratio of about 43:1 than other developing regions in 2011 (UNESCO, 2015). These findings concur with the earlier conclusions of UNESCO (2006). Globally, the UNESCO (2015) estimated that 69 million teachers are required to achieve Universal primary and secondary education by 2030. Teachers being the leading implementers of curriculum interact with pupils in the real classrooms and are in charge of transmission of knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes in the learning process. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) (2015), teachers play a significant role in improving learning outcomes. However, most African countries face a critical shortage of trained teachers and countries struggle with overcrowded classrooms and the increased demand for education from the school-age populations.

According to UNESCO (2014c), one of the strategies to ensure teachers provide children with good quality education include providing teachers with incentives that encourage teachers to remain in the teaching profession and to ensure all children are learning regardless of their circumstances. Kassel and Heinesen (2014) conducted a study on the effects of class size in Danish secondary schools. They found that reducing class size offered a statistically significant but small impact on student achievement.

In Kenya, one of the Basic Education Policy (2015) targets is improving efficiency in the utilization of education sector financial and capital resources. This is aimed at realizing primary education teacher-pupil ratio (TPR) of 1:45 for high potential areas and 1:25 for low potential areas as well as a maximum class size of 50:1. Teachers' employment and deployments by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) was established under the TSC Act CAP No. 20 of 2012 of the Laws of Kenya (Laws of Kenya, 2010). Since its inauguration in 1967, TSC has been employing teachers through supply-driven policies. It was until 1998 that the government of Kenya froze deployment of teachers' recruitment as a cost-cutting measure. Consequently, there was under-staffing in schools. This led to the adoption of a demand-driven policy on teachers' recruitment in (Teachers' Service Commission [TSC], 2002).

Under the policy, the government employs a limited number of teachers in primary schools annually. Currently, the staffing norm entails allocation of one teacher per class plus several teachers' equivalent to 2.5% number of the courses in a County. However, the policy implementation can hardly be met due to budgetary and operational constraints (RoK, 2015). Nevertheless, the TSC puts the total figure of teacher shortage at 40,972 for primary schools and 63,849 for secondary schools. Whereas in a statement given by TSC (2018), public schools experienced severe staffing, the crisis is estimated to be 155,000 teachers in primary and secondary schools countrywide.

While the shortage of teachers continues to be felt in the education sector in Kenyan schools, statistics from TSC (2018) indicate that 295,000 trained teachers are yet to be

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absorbed by the government and private sector. The supply-driven policy has not only created a gap in the teaching service but also impacted heavily on the learning outcomes in the long-run. This has resulted in heavy teachers' workload since the supply-driven policy informs the teacher deployment. Could this be a solution to plug the shortage and improve the quality of teaching and learning? On the other hand, despite calls by TSC and trade unions to the government to provide more funds to plug the shortage and to ensure achievement of 100% transition rate from primary to secondary school, it remains unrealized. The Republic of Kenya (2015) observes that there are hitches of overcrowding in counties where enrolment rates are high. Moreover, teacher-pupil ratio and pupil-classroom ratio in public schools has been stretched beyond national standards. In some counties, expansion in primary enrolment has not been matched by an increase in infrastructure and staff to plug the shortage.

Available data from Education Management Information System (EMIS) in the Basic Educational Statistical Booklet of Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) (2014) on national examinations shows a consistent gap of underperformance in English subject (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2014). The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) Reports of 2010-2017 show that at the performance of pupils in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and KCSE in English has been relatively low in the whole country (MoEST, 2014). Therefore, it was important to try and uncover the circumstances that have contributed to the low performance of the English language in primary schools.

The National Education Sector Plan of Republic of Kenya (RoK, 2015) projected enrolment in primary schools to increase from 14.5 million in 2013 to 17.1 million learners in 2018. The Kenya Education Policy for Primary Schools (2015), on class size, indicates that teacher-learner ratios are pegged at 1:50 for primary schools and 1:35 for secondary schools. This was because of shortage of classrooms and the number of teachers. Available data from the MoEST (2014) indicate that the number of learners enrolled surpassed the available human and physical facilities. In 18,000 public primary schools in Kenya, the teacher-pupil ratio rose from recommended 1:40 to 1:60. Otienoh (2011) found that an increase in class size exacerbated the difficulty of delivering lessons in the classroom, thereby impairing the ability of teachers to provide close individual attention.

In a bid to improve quality learning output, the RoK (2012), in its Sessional paper No.14, on *Framework for Reforming Education and Training*, advocated for an education system that bridges the gap between the rich and the poor by addressing inequalities in-service delivery and forecasting learning outcomes. However, the provision of quality education remains a significant spectrum in the education sector. Some significant challenges faced in the sector include the deployment of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and high teacher-pupil ratio, which affects the quality of education in public schools (RoK, 2015). When the enrolment of learners surpasses human resources, then the teacher-pupil ratio goes up, and this rise in the ratio impacts negatively on learning outcomes.

The Constitution of Kenya (RoK, 2010) charges the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) with responsibility of reviewing the standards of education, training persons entering teaching service and advising the government on matters relating to the teaching profession. However, in its review of Kenya's education sector, TSC reported that increasing teacher shortage and large classes compromise the quality of education (TSC Strategic Plan, 2015-2019). TSC further noted that the high teacher wage bill would be a risk preventing the government from realising of one of the Medium Time Plan (MTP) priority projects of recruiting additional teachers thus worsening the teacher shortage and subsequently leading

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to high staff turnover and loss of qualified and experienced workforce (TSC Strategic Plan 2015-2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

English is the only language used to relay teaching and learning in all subjects in upper primary schools except for Kiswahili subject. However, pupils' performance in English language has not been good in Nandi County. Several scholars have documented varied findings on the influence of class sizes on performance. In Ireland, smaller classes were associated with increased student achievement, usually measured by standardized tests in multiple subjects such as mathematics and reading (Jespen, 2015). The study concluded that the positive relationship between smaller class sizes and student achievement holds for students in different grades as well as in different countries and across continents. In Nigeria, a study by Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) showed a significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) of class size and pupils' learning behaviour and attitudes. Similarly, in Uganda, Kewaza and Welch (2013) found that big numbers of pupils in a class made the teachers' teaching a burdensome task. They concluded that the teaching-learning processes was substantially affected negatively by the large classes.

In Kenya, Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013) found that the number of students in a class has the potential to affect how much is learned in a number of ways. They reported that class sizes affected the duration the teacher was able to give to each student and the specific needs rather than on the group as a whole. The study further concluded that class size was the determinant undermining learning outcomes. Another study by Kiume, Kibe and Ng'ang'a (2013) found that high PTR impacted negatively on pupils' progression through primary school curriculum leading to poor performance in KCPE examinations. The consistent gap of underperformance in the English language to date thus remains a mystery.

The national examination results indicate that trend of underperformance in Nandi County in English subject at KCPE over the years. The subject performed below the average mean score of 50% (MoE, 2013-2018). Poor performance in the English language undermines student academic performance across the curriculum. This is critical since, despite the various interventions and massive investment in the education sector, underperformances in the subject have persistently been experienced. Considering that teachers play a role in the teaching and learning process, class sizes cannot be underestimated.

What then does the future hold for these learners if the trend continues? It is worth knowing that the English language is one of the core subjects in high school considered for career paths. Students should excel in the English Language to pre-qualify to study professional courses like Law, Medicine, Engineering, and Teaching, among others. The implication is that it could also limit pupils from joining National schools, Extra County, and County schools. Research has found a positive relationship between performance at the primary and secondary level. Hence, it would negatively affect pupils' overall mean grade thus would miss out such careers. This would also lead to feature shortage of professional personnel in these fields resulting in a hindrance in achieving the country's development agendas. Therefore, the study sought to explain the performance in the English language at KCPE in primary schools in Nandi County, Kenya.

### **Research Question**

One research question guided the study:

- i) How is the pupils' performance in English Language in Nandi County, Kenya?

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## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Performance in the English Language**

Galton and Pell (2012), in a longitudinal study in Hong Kong primary classrooms, found that having manageable class sizes was a critical factor in teaching effectiveness. In Nigeria, Oden (2015) found that factors associated with mass failure of students in secondary schools in Orumba South were students' ineffective study techniques, methods of teaching and quality of teachers. In Uganda, research findings on the relationships between teachers' principles teaching methods and their impact on performance in English language in selected secondary schools underlined that performance in English language was influenced by teaching methods resulting in enhanced student learning (Tendo, 2016). These findings differed from those in Kenya, on teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning of English (Kotut, 2016). The study found that teachers' attitudes did not seem to have a significant influence on students' performance. However, students' attitudes on learning English had a significant effect on performance.

In Kenya, the overall KCPE mean, according to KNEC Reports (2013-2017), for the year 2013 was 54.13%. English language recorded 47.48% and was the only subject below the national mean subject score. In 2014, the national mean score was 54.30% and English language registered 44.45% and had a below national mean performance. In 2015, the national mean score was 52.78%, and the English language had 45.4% a show of underperformance when compared to the other subjects. In 2016, the national mean score stood at 52.98%, yet the English language mean remained at 45.4% and, in 2017, the national mean was 52.16% while English posted a drop in mean at 43.6%.

KNEC reports (2013-2017) indicated that the national performance of pupils in KCPE English language was relatively low in the whole country and that English subject had a significant decline in performance. The overall KNEC Report (2016) notes that English composition declined in percentage mean from 41.38% in 2015 to 40.25% in 2016. This translated to a mean reduction of 1.13%. Further analysis of candidates' performance in individual subjects in the KNEC Report (2014) indicated that, although some subjects improved, the subject that recorded a decline in performance was the English language, which recorded the highest drop in the year 2013.

Nandi County has not been registering good results in the English language for the past five years (2017-2013). Across these years, the County performed below the average national mean score and English language was the least performing compared to other subjects. Several scholars have proposed various factors responsible for the poor performance of pupils. Substantial literature has pointed to such issues as teacher experience, gender, socioeconomic background, and school leadership style. However, none of the studies has examined the influence of class sizes on performance of English in Nandi County, Kenya.

## **Research Design**

The study was conducted by use of mixed methods design. The procedure followed the implementation of convergent parallel design. The intention of using convergent parallel was to bring together and non-overlapping weakness of quantitative methods of large sample size, trends, and generalization. The researchers triangulated quantitative statistical findings with qualitative for corroboration purpose hence brought out complementarity. The collection of data was done in one visit, depending on the selected sample for qualitative strand.

The quantitative plan of the study was ex post facto causal-comparative. An ex post facto investigation seeks to identify cause-effect relationships by forming groups of in whom the

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independent variable is present at several levels and then determining whether these groups differ on the dependent variable (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2007, p. 264). The critical feature of causal-comparative is that the independent variable is measured in nominal scale or ordinal scale (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 306). However, the disadvantage of the adopted design was that the researchers lacked control for the independent variable(s) and randomizing the subjects. To counter these, the researchers compared homogenous groups in equating groups by looking at independent variables that could have influenced the dependent variable. Since class size was measured in categorical nominal scale, the extremes of a small class and large class was used, and the dependent variable was performed in an interval scale of measurement then the appropriate ex post facto was causal comparative.

Group	Independent variable	Dependent variable
A and B	X <sub>1</sub> X <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>

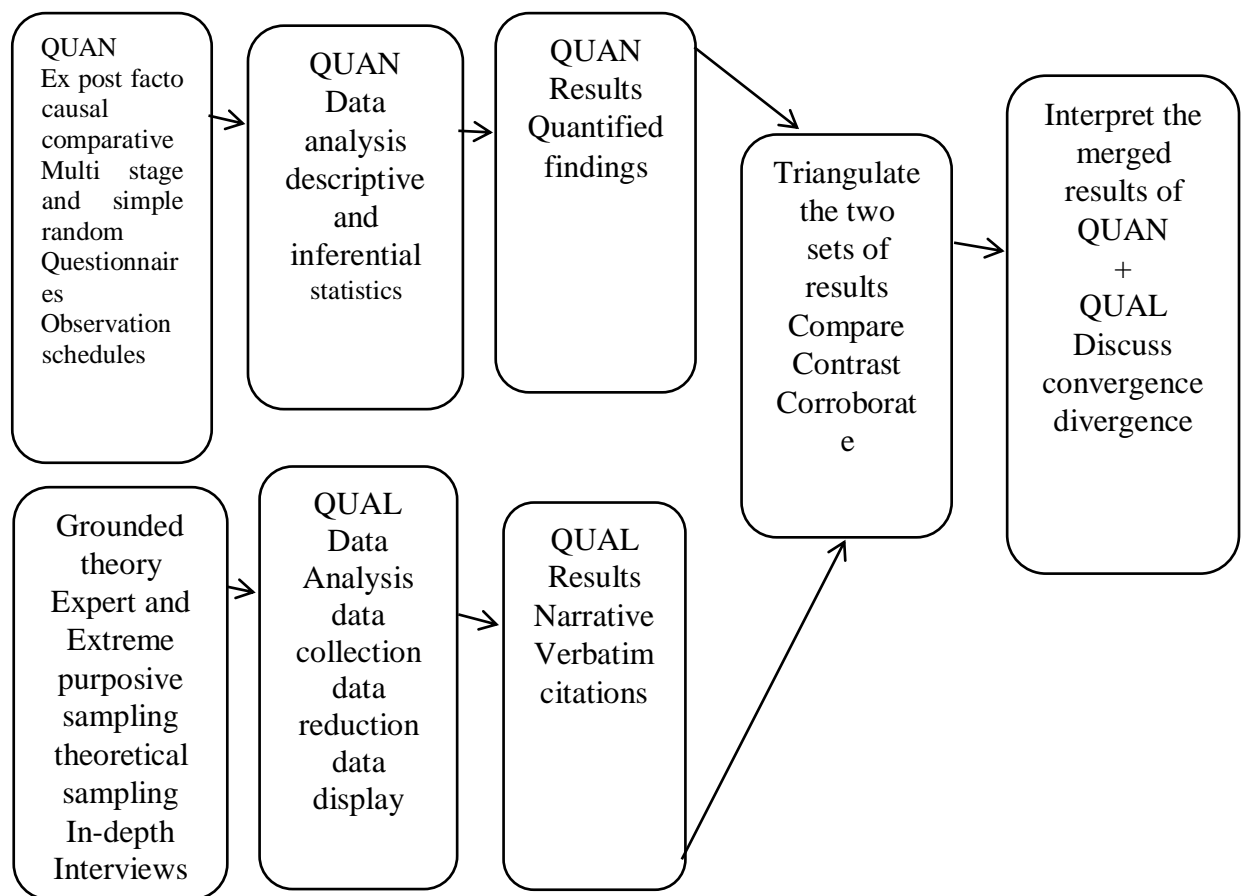
**Figure 1: Representation of ex post facto causal-comparative model**

Source: Adapted from Gall, Gall and Borg (2007, p. 306)

The above model shows that the comparisons groups are not equated by random assignment. The groups in ex post facto have already been formed as it is after the facts and any treatment if there was, had already been applied (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 134). The primary independent variable of the study was class size. The qualitative strand used Grounded theory design to systematically use data to build an approach (Dey, 2007, p. 178). The arguments were specific to the context they had been developed and grounded in data from which they have emerged. Therefore, the design allowed the development of new contextualized theories. The qualitative strand utilized an interrelated iterative process with analysis beginning as soon as the first data is collected (Brayabt and Charmaz, 2007, p. 9). The two strands were implemented concurrently without interdependence.

The two methods had equivalent importance in answering the research questions. At the point of interface, and the researcher merged the results of the two and transformed results to facilitate relating data (Creswell, Vicki & Clark, 2011). The last step encompassed interpreting the merged findings. The researchers explained the extent to which the two sets of results converged, diverged or related from each other. The combination created an understanding of the research problem.

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**Figure 2: Convergence parallel model**

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2018, p. 352)

The convergence model explains adaption and application of mixed research approach into the study. In the model, data collection, analysis and the results of the quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL) were done separately. The results from both the QUAN and QUAL were compared, contrasted and corroborated. QUAN and QUAN were used to denote that the two strands are of equal importance. Finally, the results were triangulated at the interpretation phase. The last phase encompassed drawing conclusions or inferences that reflected what was learned from the combination of results. The findings from the two strands were compared, contrasted using triangulation for complementarily strategies and synthesized results in a discussion (Creswell, Vicki, & Clark, 2011).



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**Pupils' performance in English language**

**Table 1: Distribution of head teachers and teachers' responses on pupils' performance**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mean</b>
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
Head teachers	0 (0.0)	4 (13.3)	3(10.0)	20 (66.7)	3 (10.0)	2.27
Teachers	0 (0.0)	3 (10.0)	3 (10.0)	19 (63.3)	5 (16.6)	2.18
<b>Asses the overall performance of your school</b>						
Head teachers	0 (0.0)	3 (10.0)	6 (20.0)	21 (70.0)	0 (0.0)	2.40
Teachers	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	5 (16.6)	23 (76.7)	0 (0.0)	2.30

N=30

*Key: Poor=1, below average =2, Average=3, Good=4, and Excellent=5*

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The study sought to establish pupils' performance in English language. The statements measuring performance were rated on a five-point scale from 1=poor to 5= Excellent. The findings in Table 1, majority of respondents 20(66.7%) of the head teachers and 19(63.3%) of the teachers reported that performance in English language in the last four years was below average. Another 5(16.7%) of the teachers and 3(10%) of head teachers rated the performance of the last four years as poor. While 4(13.3%) of the head teachers and 3(10%) of the teachers revealed that performance for the last four-year was good performance. The mean rating on the item rate of average performance for last five years was 2.27 for head teachers and 2.18 for teachers. This implies that performance in most of the schools had not been good in the last five years.

Findings from Table 1 also show that the majority of respondents 23(76.7%) of the teachers and 21(70%) of the head teachers assessed the overall performance below average. Few 6(20%) of the head teachers and 5(16.7%) of the teachers assessed the overall performance of English language at average. Only 3(10%) head teachers and 2 (6.7%) teachers indicated that pupil's English language overall performance was good. The mean rating of the item, Asses the overall performance of your school was 2.40 for head teachers and 2.30 for teachers. This is below the average mean of respondents and implies that the performance in schools was low. This also meant that overall performance in English language in Nandi County was below average. Nevertheless, the study finding disagreed with Konstantopoulos and Sun (2014) finding that teacher effects (teaching skills and practices) had a more significant impact on student achievement in smaller classrooms than regular size classrooms.

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**Table 2: KCPE Schools Mean Scores by Gender for 2017**

An observation on official documents, 2017 KCPE results were done in selected schools to collect secondary data already there and were unique for each school. The findings are displayed in Table 2 were used for corroboration with findings from other instruments.

School	F %	Girls mean score	F (%)	Boys Mean score	F (%)	No. of candidates	No. of streams	No. of lessons per week
<b>50.23</b>	1(11.1)	25.24	1(11.1)	24.99	1(11.1)	21	1	27
<b>52.36</b>	1(11.1)	26.48	1(11.1)	26.18	1(11.1)	20	1	23
<b>41.41</b>	1(11.1)	22.49	1(11.1)	18.92	1(11.1)	67	1	32
<b>44.28</b>	1(11.1)	22.42	1(11.1)	21.86	1(11.1)	53	1	40
<b>43.72</b>	1(11.1)	21.03	1(11.1)	22.69	1(11.1)	79	1	44
<b>48.94</b>	1(11.1)	24.53	1(11.1)	24.41	1(11.1)	27	1	40
<b>37.03</b>	1(11.1)	19.86	1(11.1)	17.17	1(11.1)	118	2	44
<b>42.65</b>	1(11.1)	21.29	1(11.1)	21.36	1(11.1)	82	1	36
<b>46.16</b>	1(11.1)	23.45	1(11.1)	22.71	1(11.1)	30	1	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>9(100)</b>		<b>9(100)</b>		<b>9(100)</b>			

N= 9

Source: Survey Data (2019)

As shown in Table 2, English language scores obtained from observation of KCPE for nine schools shows varied mean scores. The schools with low class size had higher mean scores as compared to both medium and high-class sizes. Observation of the records showed that school 1 had 21 candidates in one stream, the average teachers' workload was 27 score a mean score of 50.23% in English language this is above average performance. School 2 had a slightly better performance in the subject and the difference could be attributed by the difference of 4 lessons in the teachers' workload.

This implies that the class sizes resulted to balanced teaching load hence better performance. However, the slightly better performance was observed in few schools. Finding from SCQASO interview on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019 with the researcher reported, "Schools are flooded with students and we are worried that the quality of education would be affected if timely interventions are not initiated." The finding is in line with Altinok and Kingdon (2012) that out of 41 countries, reducing class size had a statistically significant effect and one standard deviation reduction in class size would raise student achievement by only 0.03 standard deviations.

The finding also concurred with Gottfreson and DiPietro (2011) finding that classroom dynamics improves in small classrooms, which in turn led to effective teaching environment. Further analysis for the performance of candidates by gender is shown in Table 2. Contrary, in school 7, the number of candidates were 118; in 2 streams but the teaching load were 44 lessons per week. The school means scores in English language were 37.03%. This meant that one teacher taught both streams due to inadequate teaching staff which also meant that quality was compromised due to heavy workload, inadequate composition writing was given, teachers' ability to mark and give feedback was unsatisfactory, teachers' ability to assist slow learners was, and teachers' ability to enrich talented and gifted pupils in class was below average. This explains the poor performance in the school.

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The finding is supported by the SCQASO report during an interview with the researcher on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 had his to say “I think class size and teachers’ workload influence performance since the two complements each other, class size result in teaching load.” The findings agree with UNESCO (2006b) that African countries host the largest classes where pupil teacher- ratio is as high as 70:1. Whereas the Kenya Education policy (2015) a pupil’s teacher ratio of 50:1 for primary schools. Kassel and Heinesen (2014) cautioned that reducing class size offered statistically significant impacts on student achievement. The finding agreed with Bruhwiler and Blatchford (2011) finding that, on average, one student reduction in class size resulted in a half-point increase in student tests scores. The result was based in Swiss schools, which on average already had small class sizes, with the average class size being 19 or fewer pupils, and implied that even with small classes, the class reduction could still be useful in increasing academic achievement.

The current study finding also agreed with Celia and Koc (2015), finding that a Spearman’s rho correlation of  $-.366$  was significant and indicated a relatively moderate inverse correlation between class size and student achievement hence agreeing with the current findings.

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**Table 3: KCPE English language Mean Scores by Gender for 2017 N=30**

Boys Mean	Girls Mean	F	%	Valid%	Cumulative %
16.12	16.17	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
17.17	18.27	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
18.27	18.35	1	3.3	3.3	10
18.39	18.91	1	3.3	3.3	13.3
18.92	19.3	1	3.3	3.3	16.7
18.95	19.61	1	3.3	3.3	20
19.46	19.85	1	3.3	3.3	23.3
19.48	19.86	1	3.3	3.3	26.7
19.79	20.08	1	3.3	3.3	30
19.81	20.74	1	3.3	3.3	33.3
20.04	20.97	1	3.3	3.3	36.7
20.95	21.03	1	3.3	3.3	40
21	21.29	1	3.3	3.3	46.7
21.22	21.41	1	3.3	3.3	50
21.27	21.81	1	3.3	3.3	53.3
21.36	21.82	1	3.3	3.3	56.7
21.64	22.42	1	3.3	3.3	60
21.65	22.49	1	3.3	3.3	63.3
21.86	22.54	1	3.3	3.3	66.7
22.71	22.57	1	3.3	3.3	70
22.88	22.73	1	3.3	3.3	73.3
22.93	22.93	1	3.3	3.3	76.7
23.11	23	1	3.3	3.3	80
23.94	23.45	1	3.3	3.3	83.3
24.41	23.98	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
24.99	24.53	1	3.3	3.3	90
25.1	25.24	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
26.18	25.7	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
26.69	26.48	1	3.3	3.3	
Total	Total	30	100	100	100

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The study further sought to establish the mean performance of 2017. The findings displayed in Table 3 show that the performance of boys and girls in English language for 2017 was low. Three schools only of out of 30 schools scored the mean of 25 or higher. This meant that the performance in the subject was not good. This also implies that the majority of schools did not perform well in English language and that girls and boys performed equally in English language. However, the finding disagreed with the finding by Musa, Dauda, and Omar (2016) revelation that males performed significantly than females in English language and overall

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performance. The same finding that boys performed much better than girls was established (Wangu, 2014)

**Table 4: Observation schedule Distribution of Schools by population**

Size of school	Frequency	Percent
less than 299	2	6.7
300-499	12	40.0
500 and above	16	53.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Study findings illustrated in Table 4 revealed that 2 schools representing 6.7% had population of pupils equal or less than 299. Another 12 schools representing 40.0 % had pupils ranging between 300 and 499 while 16(53.3%) schools had pupils equal or above 500. This implied that the sample was a representative of the population as far as clusters formed on school size was concerned.

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**Table 5: Ratings on teaching and learning of English N=30**

Items	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
Teachers' ability to identify learning needs of all the students	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	6(20.0)	15(50.0)	8(26.7)	2
Teachers' ability to interact effectively with all learners in class	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	6(20.0)	18(60.0)	5(16.7)	2.1
Teachers ability to assist slow learners in class	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	4(13.3)	20(66.7)	4(13.3)	2.1
Teachers ability to enrich talented and gifted learners in class	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	18(60.0)	10(33.3)	1.7
Teachers ability to manage classroom	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	12(40.0)	14(46.7)	4(13.3)	2.3
Teacher's ability to create conducive and motivating classroom environment	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	21(70.0)	6(20.0)	1.9
Teacher's ability to create assessment modes that lead to meaningful learning	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	19(63.3)	9(30.0)	1.8
Teacher's ability to mark and provide quick feedback	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(26.7)	17(56.7)	5(16.7)	2.1
The class size is manageable	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	14(46.7)	11(36.7)	5(16.7)	2.3
Teacher's ability to move in class with ease	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	19(63.3)	9(30.0)	1(3.3)	2.7
Ability to manage amount of workload	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(26.7)	20(66.7)	2(6.7)	2.2
Adequacy of compositions given	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	16(53.3)	12(40.0)	1.7
Adequacy of teaching and learning resources for English	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	15(50.0)	11(36.7)	3(10.0)	2.5
Average number of lessons per teacher per week	0(0.0)	4(13.3)	13(43.3)	10(33.3)	3(10.3)	2.6
General teaching and learning of English in class	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	4(13.3)	23(76.7)	2(6.7)	2.1
<b>Mean</b>						<b>2.1</b>

Source: Survey Data, (2019)

Findings shown in Table 5 the as observed in the actual classroom on teachers' ability to identify learning needs of all the students revealed that the mean rating was 2.0. The mean was low implying that it was below average. The mean rating on teachers' ability to interact effectively with all learners in class was 2.1 thus below average. The study finding on teachers' ability to assist slow learners in class was 2.1. This indicated that teachers hardly

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assisted slow learners in their teaching process. The finding of the study supports Nizamettin and Bekir (2015) result of the analysis that showed a significant correlation of  $-.561$  between the student teacher ratio and achievement. It was concluded that greater number of students per teacher had a low achievement. The finding on teachers' ability to enrich talented and gifted learners in class, the mean rating was 1.7 which implied that it was below average.

Teachers' ability to manage classroom was rated at 2.3 thus it was below average. Study finding on teacher's ability to create conducive and motivating classroom environment was 1.9. The mean was below average which meant that teachers did not create conducive learning environment in classes. The teachers input in the learning process is what Vygostky described as constant interplay between the learner and "other regulated" providing cues and scaffolding in the zone of proximal development, thus enhancing teaching and learners (Vygostky 1978). Teacher's ability to create assessment modes that lead to meaningful learning was rated at a mean of 1.8 and teacher's ability to mark and provide quick feedback had a mean rating of 2.1. Teacher's ability to move in class with ease was rated at 2.7 hence it was average. Teachers were challenged by large class sizes due to noise levels and distractive behaviors that made classroom management hard and hence posed a negative impact to the learning process (Iyakaremnye 2019).

Study findings on teachers' ability to manage workload was rated 2.2. This indicated that teachers were overwhelmed with workload in most schools. This finding supports Gwambombo (2013) finding that teachers' workload was enormous and negatively influenced pupils' academic performance in community secondary schools. On adequacy of compositions given, the mean rating was 1.7. This implied that compositions were rarely given to students. Study finding on the adequacy of teaching and learning resources for English was rated at 2.5. This meant that teaching learning resources were available in schools but not adequate. The average number of lessons per teacher per week was rated at 2.6 which meant they were at average. General teaching and learning of English in class was rated at 2.1 meaning that it was unsatisfactory. This supports Adika and Saka (2019) finding that teacher's workload effect on academic performance was significant ( $r = .523$ ,  $N = 154$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and also found that for every one-unit increase teacher workload, there was a decrease in pupils' academic achievement as signified by the coefficient ( $-.558$ ).

In overall, the mean rating on the teaching and learning of English was 2.1. The mean was low implying that the teaching and learning of English was unsatisfactory. The study findings support. The study finding is in agreement with Poole, (2014,) opined that a system is an organized, focused structure that interrelated and interdependent elements (components, entities, parts, factors, members). These elements continually influence one another directly or indirectly to withstand their activity and the existence of the system, in order to attain the goal of the system. The school as an open system has all the elements observed above which have to balance to result to desirable output or satisfactory teaching and learning of English language.

**Table 6: Mean comparisons between Schools' size and effective teaching and learning**

School size	N	Mean
less than 299	2	3.13
300-499	12	2.25
500 and above	16	1.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2.44</b>

Source: Survey Data (2019)

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Study findings illustrated in Table 6 revealed that the number of students affected the teaching and learning of English. As shown, Schools with lower populations of students had higher ratings of teaching and learning of English Language as compared to their counterparts in large sized classes. Gakure, et al (2013), conclusions that the number of students in a class has the potential to affect how much is learned in a number of different ways. It affected the how much time the teacher was able to focus an individual students' and specific needs rather than on the group as a whole. The study concluded that workload variables are among the determinants undermining learning outcomes.

## **Summary of the Findings**

### **Pupils Performance in English Language**

Students' performance in English language at KCPE was found to be below average. As indicated by observation findings, schools performed below average in English language in a number of years. Finding from the interviews with the sub-county quality assurance and standard officers revealed that dismal performance in the subject has been a concern for a number of years and effort to improve it has not been futile because of the challenges currently faced in schools such as large class sizes and inadequate teachers. However, the hypothesis test showed no significant mean difference in pupils' gender performance in English language.

### **Conclusion**

The research also concluded that performance in KCPE in English language was performed below average. This was attributed influence of class size and teachers' workload which was a hindrance to effective teaching, and learning. The dismal performance was spread across the schools an indication that the challenges were very significant and needed to be addressed. It was concluded that pupils' performance in English language was not to satisfactory and needed improvements.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following were the recommendations made. The researcher to various stakeholders in order to improve class size and teachers' workload hence improvement of quality of education to the children of Kenya.

### **Teachers Service Commission**

The Teachers Service Commissions is mandated to employ teachers. The body is also charged with policy review and development. The commission has a register of all the employed and unemployed teachers including the statistics of teachers 'shortage in the country. It is also mandated to review the quality of education in the country. Therefore, the Teachers Service Commissions ought to endeavor to advise the government through the Ministry of Education on the budgetary allocations that will go into hiring of teachers to alleviate class size and shortage of teachers.

The commission ought to consider a review of the policies governing the deployment of teachers in the country to meet the biting needs in education sector by ensuring that all schools are well staffed to ease the teaching loads. TSC should identify primary schools whose teachers' workload is heavy and employ more teachers to curb the teaching load. This



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will ease the burden of teachers' workload being faced in education sector hence an improvement of quality teaching and learning in primary schools. Where the government is not able to meet its mandate, schools should be allowed to hire BOM teachers. Reche et al (2012) recommended that to dod way with poor performance in public primary school more teachers should be employed to reduce heavy workload the serving teachers are facing.

### **Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development**

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development ought to design Kenya primary school curriculum that meets the varied needs of the learners. The development should be anchored on what interests the pupils in the learning process. The study further recommends increasing the number of English lessons per week.

### **County Quality Assurance and Standards' Officers**

The County Quality and Standards Officers need organize more frequent workshops and capacity building to keep teachers at abreast of trends in education and retraining on effective strategies of teaching large classes which will go into enhancing of quality of teaching and learning in school resulting to better performance in English language.

### **The Head teachers**

The head teachers need to accept to share lessons equally with the rest of teachers to ease the burden on teacher teaching lessons beyond maximum. They should also advise teachers on the best practices for effective teaching in large classes. This will go hand in hand to improving the teaching and learning of English language hence improvement of the outcome.

### **Teachers of English Language**

Since research findings shows that class size is the most effective when classes are between 15-19 pupils, teachers need to modify the instructional strategies to include learner-centered approaches to enhance teaching and learning in large classes.

### **The Kenya National Union of Teachers**

The Kenya National Union of Teachers is not only a trade union that fights for improved terms and conditions of service for teachers and protecting teachers interests but should work together with Teachers Service Commission in promoting matters leading to improvement of education. Some of these concerns include matters teacher employment and concerns on quality of education. Therefore, the union should not engage in tussling with the teachers' employer. But should engage in dialogue supported by empirical findings and use comparative analysis of findings from the best education systems of the world aimed at improving teaching and learning in primary schools for the best interest of the child.

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