

DISMAL PERFORMANCE BY CANDIDATES IN NATIONAL EXAMINATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TAITATAVETA COUNTY - KENYA

Odhiambo John Okoth

County Director of Education Office – Taita Taveta, jokodhis@yahoo.com

Abstract

Performance of students in both National Examination and Continuous Assessment Tests in school has been dismal for the last five years. This is evidenced by the low number of candidates that attain quality grades of C+ and above and many who score very low grades of D (plain) and below. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discern the root cause of the dismal performance by students in secondary schools in order to strategize on redirecting Secondary Education in the County. The Specific objective was to determine the current factors that inhibit good performance in Secondary Schools in TaitaTaveta County. The study was based on Evidence-based theory advanced by Bach, (2003). The preferred research design was Action Research because it allows for researcher to conduct in-depth study at work place with a view of finding solution to identified challenges. The location of the study was in the four sub-counties of TaitaTaveta County namely Taita, Voi, Mwatate and Taveta. Stratified sampling was used to select sampled schools based on characteristics of the school including 5 Mixed Day, 5 Mixed Day and Boarding, 5 Boys Boarding and 5 Girls Boarding. Data was collected using questionnaire to collect data from the principals and Focus Group Discussion Schedule from Heads of Departments and Class Prefects. Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data was then presented in tables. The study found out that poor time management; gaps in school management, ineptitude of teachers, students' laxity and shortage of teachers were main reasons for perennial dismal performance by students in examination. It was therefore recommended that all stakeholders should be brought on board for the sake of uplifting performance in the county. Capacity building should be prioritized for School management team (Board of Management), Principals of Schools, Deputy Principals, Heads of Various Departments and Student Leaders. Sensitization should be enhanced for students and their parents in order to refocus their attention to education.



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INTRODUCTION

TaitaTaveta County is among the six counties of Coast Region in Kenya. It comprises four Sub-counties, namely; Mwatate, Voi, Taita and Taveta with a population of 334,042 and the County poverty index at 54%. The county had 88 public and private secondary schools, with which 83 presented candidates for National Examination in the year 2017. There were a total number of 731 teachers teaching in these secondary schools

Education is a vital tool in the development of any county in Kenya. It plays a significant role in economic, social and political development of a country. Education provides rapid economic growth, wealth creation and high opportunity to get a job, availability of skilled manpower for a county, improved hygiene and high life expectancy, low crime rate, national cohesion and cultural diversification, (Amutabi, 2003).

Kenya National Examination Council conducts summative examination to students who have gone through secondary education for four years. Performance in this examination is critical to all candidates as it determines progression of candidates to the next level of education and the career they pursue in life. The outcome of the examination also places the candidate at an advantage or otherwise when recruitment to various occupations arise.

Performance of candidates in Taita Taveta County since 2013 to 2017 is analysed and presented on tables 1, 2 and 3 below.

KCSE PERFORMANCE FROM THE YEAR 2013 TO 2017

Table 1: Students Performance in KCSE Examination in Taita Taveta in Five Year

		Period												
		POINTS AND GRADES												
Year	Roll	Mean Score	12		10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
			A	B	A	B	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	
2013	3918	3.785	4	3	69	6	228	281	366	518	594	844	750	87
2014	4421	3.97	7	4	76	3	236	369	486	678	800	879	596	60
2015	4498	4.54	0	1	84	2	255	345	473	663	763	943	690	45
2016	5192	2.92	0	9	45	1	151	243	328	458	675	8	2	434
2017	4942	3.41	0	1	48	90	130	203	274	396	605	106	169	389
TOTAL	22971		11	9	2	2	0	1	7	3	7	8	1	5

Source: Taita Taveta County Director of Education Office

In the five years under review, 3,485 out of 22,971 candidates attained grades C+ and above equivalent 15.2%. These are the university qualifying grades. 8,077 candidates attained C to D+, equivalent of 35.2%. These are the middle level colleges qualifying grades. A clear

majority of 11,194 (48.7%) candidates managed low grades of D plain to E. They rarely qualify for any meaningful course at tertiary level

PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AND KISWAHILI

Table 2: Students Performance in English and Kiswahili– KCSE 2017

SUBJECT	ROL	POINTS AND GRADES											
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	L	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
ENGLISH	4920	0	1	20	65	8	9	3	6	8	1913	1026	83
KISWAHI					18	27	25	33	36	45			
LI	4920	1	8	64	2	4	4	1	8	4	1888	956	114

Source: TaitaTavetaCounty Director of Education Office

Students’ performance in English was generally dismal. Out of 4920 candidates who sat for the examination in the year 2017, 553 an equivalence of 11.23% attained quality grades of C+ and above while 3022 (61.42%) got weak grades of D plain and below.

Performance in Kiswahili was no better. Majority of candidates 2,958 (60.12%) still got poor grades. Only 783 (15.9%) got quality grades of between A plain and C+.

PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

Table 3: Students Performance in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics– KCSE 2017

SUBJECT	ROL	POINTS AND GRADES											
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	L	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
MATHEMATICS		13	6		9	12	10	10					
CS	4920	5	8	87	0	3	6	2	111	77	585	1013	2393
BIOLOGY	4341	0	0	0	3	12	38	64	123	0	729	1486	1724
CHEM	4895	25	5	35	9	77	82	94	101	8	696	1691	1848
PHYSICS	2076	14	2	31	3	54	76	77	85	70	382	664	571

Source: TaitaTaveta County Director of Education Office

Students’ performance in mathematics was generally wanting. Out of 4920 candidates who sat for the examination in the year 2017, 609 an equivalence of 12.38% attained quality grades of C+ and above while 3991 (81.12%) got weak grades of D plain and below. It is worth noting that a whopping 2393 managed the weakest grade E.

Biology equally registered low performance. No student scored grades A, A- and B+. Only 53(1.22%) managed desirable grades of C+ and above. The bulk of the students failed with 3939 (90.74) getting low grades of D plain and below. 1724 scored the lowest grade of E. Performance in Chemistry was no better than the others in this department. Majority of candidates 4235 (86.52%) still got poor grades. Fewer students took physics and many still performed poorly. 1617 out of 2076 candidates had weak grades of between E and D.

PERFORMANCE IN HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND CRE

Table 1.4: Students Performance in History, Geography and CRE – KCSE 2017

SUBJECT	ROL	POINTS AND GRADES												
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	L	A	-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	
HISTORY	3351	14	4	9	124	182	247	6	4	3	3	908	630	218
GEO	1616	20	4	4	87	101	102	7	5	8	7	420	300	79
CRE	3790	0	0	0	16	84	219	3	9	0	6	1230	680	268

Source: TaitaTavetaCounty Director of Education Office

Students’ achievement in History was equally wanting. Out of 3,351 candidates who sat for the examination in the year 2017, 842 attained quality grades of C+ and above while 1756 got weak grades of D plain and below.

Performance in Geography was no better than the others in this department. Majority of candidates 799 out of 1616 still got poor grades of D plain and below. It was also noted that Geography was unpopular as relatively fewer students opted to take it for examination.

CRE also registered low performance. No student scored grades A and A-. Only 622 (16.41%) managed desirable grades of C+ and above. The bulk of the students failed with 2,178 (57.47%) getting low grades of D plain and below.

PERFORMANCE IN AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS STUDIES AND COMPUTER STUDIES

**Table 1.2 Students Performance in Agriculture, Business and Computer Studies –
KCSE 2017**

SUBJECT	EN TR Y	POINTS AND GRADES											
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
		A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
AGRICULTURE	2338	0	0	4	11	18	39	42	84	69	559	100	521
BUSINESS COMPUTE R	2149	3	23	40	78	91	98	92	3	90	589	617	306
	134	15	14	15	18	9	11	7	12	10	18	5	0

Source: TaitaTavetaCounty Director of Education Office

No candidate achieved grade A plain nor A- in Agriculture. Very few candidates; 72 of the 2,338 managed grade B+ to C+. A big majority, 2,081 (89%) failed the examination by scoring grades D plain and below.

Business Studies registered low performance where only 333 out of 2149 candidates got quality grades of C+ and above. 1,512 (70.36%) fell between grade D plain and E.

Computer Studies attracted the least number of candidates; 134 out of 4920. It registered fair performance where 82 (61.43%) got quality grades of between A plain and C+.

Justification of the Study

The government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education invest a lot of resources in Education in terms of teaching and learning materials, operation costs and deployment of teachers. Parents equally invest in education by providing uniform, personal effects to the students, revision books and boarding fees for students in boarding schools. The ministry deploy Education officers and Quality Assurance and Standards officers play a great role in monitoring and giving support to teachers and school administrators. The ministry does all this in order to realize its vision of providing quality education to its citizen.

To the contrary, candidates' performance in National Examination had remained below average for a long period of time as indicated in table 1.1 above; in the year 2013, mean performance for TaitaTaveta County was 3.785, in 2014 it was 3.97, 2015 it was 4.54, 2016 it was 2.92, and 2017 it was 3.41. These performances were far below the possible mean of 12 and it has been a worrying trend. Performance in subjects remained below average in all subjects except Computer Studies. This study aimed at revealing the root cause of the sustained candidates' dismal performance in National Examination over the years.

Objective of the study

This study was aimed to discern the root cause of the dismal performance by students in secondary schools in order to strategize on redirecting Secondary Education in TaitaTaveta County. Specifically it determined the current factors that inhibit good performance in Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

What are the prevailing factors that inhibit good performance in Secondary Schools in TaitaTaveta County?

LITERATURE REVIEW

With evidence from research it is possible to make well-informed decisions about policies, programs and projects and in this way evidence is put at the heart of policy development and implementation (Bach, 2003).. This approach differs from opinion-based policy making that relies on the selective use of evidence or untested views often inspired by ideological prejudices or speculative conjecture (Wanyama and Chang'ach, 2013). Finding from various studies listed factors that could lead to dismal performance in school examination and attributed it to; the role of teachers, heads of departments, head teachers and individual learners. The study looked at the factors that caused dismal performance in national examination with respect to the roles of Teachers, head teachers, heads of academic departments and learners themselves.

Teachers Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination

A teacher does a lot that goes into preparing the learner for national examination. Krishnaveni Hemalatha and Reddy Dayakara (2016) capture characteristics of a good teacher in the most subtle manner; that a teacher has the power to build up or tear down students' self-esteem. Self-efficacy is very important for a student who aims to perform well not only in examination but also in life. This kind of a teacher is said to possess passion for students with whom they teach – inspire them to play with ideas, think deeply about the subject matter, take on more challenging work and above all achieve much during learning process (Pamela Tucker and James Stronge, 2005).

They further point out qualities of effective teacher; have formal teacher preparation training, endowed with some teaching experience, is caring, fair and respectful, one who dedicate extra time to instructional preparation, maximize instructional time, vary instructional

strategy, Monitor students learning by enhancing pre and post-assessment, caters for Individualized attention of students

In this study the researcher was interested in finding out the role of the teacher in performance of candidates in National examination by testing him or her against the parameters advanced in this section.

The role of Heads of Department in Candidates Performance in National Examination

Head of department (HOD) is a teacher who is appointed by the management of the school or by the employer in this case Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to be in charge of a department in an institution of learning. In this study HOD is a teacher appointed to manage an academic department namely, language, humanities mathematics and science, technical and applied subjects. Head of department is therefore first and foremost a teacher. In case of academic department he or she is lead teacher whose performance should be emulated by others.

Among other roles expected of a HOD are; assisting head of school in ensuring good professional practice by all teachers in the department, Co-coordinating the teaching and learning of the subjects for which one is responsible (Creswell John, 2005), Setting examination papers, coordinating marking schemes and moderating exams and assessment processes, Ensuring timely and adequate provision of text books, materials, and equipment required for effective teaching and learning, Ensuring that the maintenance of equipment related to the subject is regularly carried out, Preparation for specifications and budgets for requirements of the subject specific teaching tools and equipment , Holding and leading regular departmental meetings and ensuring the keeping of minutes (Kristen Clarke, 2009).

The Role of Principals' in Candidates Performance in National Examination

Just like the head of department, in Kenya the principal is first and foremost a teacher. Before appointment to headship of a school, the principal in most cases excels as a teacher then is appointed as a head of department, then a deputy principal. He is the vision career and runs administrative function of the school in a day today basis. Some of his or her key roles are; Ensure respect of law, policies and regulations developed at the Ministry or Teachers Service Commission level, Prepare internal rules and policies in the school, Ensure professional leadership, Supervise preparation of school action plan, Delegate tasks and responsibilities without absconding duty, Coordinating school activities, Keeping administrative documents,

Prepare and chair teacher and student meetings, Authorize absence of staff, Evaluate performance of staff, Motivate staff and students

The Role of the Candidates in Performance in National Examination

Student's performance in secondary school is influenced by his or her previous performance when in primary school. According to Ray Flemings(2011), Students who previously performed well in examination would likely continue to perform well and those have performed poorly in the past are also most likely to continue to perform poorly.

Social economic status of the family from where the students are brought up may influence performance at school (Kathuri and Juma, 2007). Poverty circle is sustained by the fact that economically low families lack capacity to educate their children hence they do not realize their dreams.

Education level of parents may also determine performance of the student in secondary school. Students whose parents are educated get support and emulate parents to post good results in education. Keya Seline, (2013) argues that Bright students whose parents' education is low may get little material and moral support in the long run may negatively affect their performance in examination.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of the study

The study was located in TaitaTaveta County which was purposively selected out of the 47 counties in Kenya because it was the County of interest for the researcher who was carrying out Action Research with a view of redirecting secondary school education at his place of work.

Research Design

The preferred research design was Action Research because it allows for researcher to conduct in-depth study at work place with a view of finding solution to identified challenges, (Stringer Ernest, 2013).

Target population

The study targeted a total population of 747, which comprised of 83 principals of secondary schools, 332 heads of four academic departments and 332 student leaders.

Sampling techniques and Sample size

Purposive sampling was used to select the sample from the 747 targeted populations. This was because the researcher had predetermined qualifying characteristics of the population he

preferred. From each school the researcher targeted the principal because he or she was the overall supervisor of curriculum implementation in the school, the heads of departments of (languages, humanities, sciences and technical-applied) because they supervised teaching and learning activities at departmental levels and students' leaders from each form because they were beneficiaries of the teaching and learning processes and could effectively represent other students.

Out of the 83 schools that presented candidates for National examination in the year 2017, 20 schools participated in this research as follows; 5 mixed day, 5 mixed day and boarding, 5 girls boarding and 5 boys boarding. They were spread across the four sub-counties comprising TaitaTaveta County. From each school, 1 principal, 4 heads of department and 4 class prefects were interviewed. Therefore, the sample size was 180 of the (747 entire target population) where 20 were Principals, 80 were Heads of Departments and 80 were Class Prefects.

Instrumentation

The researcher used questionnaire to collect data from the principals and Focus Group Discussion Schedule from Heads of Departments and Class Prefects.

Questionnaire for Principals: this tool collected information touching on syllabus coverage, monitoring of the curriculum implementation, teacher responsiveness to duty and reasons for dismal performance in examination by students.

Focus Group Discussion Schedule for Heads of Departments and Class Prefects: the instrument was used during group discussion with heads of departments and collected data on syllabus coverage, monitoring of the curriculum implementation, teacher responsiveness to duty and reasons for dismal performance in examination by students.

Data collection procedures

The researcher deployed a Quality Assurance and Standards Officer during data collection exercise. The officer engaged the principal, while the researcher held discussions with heads of departments and class prefects.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative was done by tallying the raw scores then computing into frequencies and percentages. According to Best and Kahn (1989) the most widely used and understood standard proportion is the percentage. The data was then presented in tables, pie charts and histograms.

Qualitative description was used to qualify each presentation. Information collected through focus group discussion was presented by description and explanation.

RESEARCH FINDING

INTRODUCTION

The researcher administered questionnaires to 20 principals of secondary schools on the roles of teachers, heads of departments, principals and candidates in students' dismal performance in National Examinations. Descriptive statistics enabled the researcher to explain a distribution of measurements and summarize data as recommended in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003)

The researcher had a discussion with heads of departments and class prefects. Their views are presented qualitatively under each major theme below. Four heads of departments and four class prefects were engaged in each of the 20 secondary schools visited.

Table 4: The Role of Teachers in Candidates Performance in National Examination

S/N	Reasons for students' dismal performance in National Examinations	Principals N = 20	
o		Yes	No
There were a total of 83 principals in TaitaTaveta County whose schools presented candidates for national examination			
1	Teachers Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Syllabus coverage is on schedule	8(40%)	12(60%)
b	The school have adequate teachers for all subjects	4(20%)	16(80%)
c	Teachers prepare and use professional tools	7 (35%)	13 (65%)
d	Most lessons are attended to by teachers	10 (50%)	10 (50%)

Teacher shortage was sighted as the major reason for candidates' dismal performance in National Examination. Eighty percent of the principals indicated that schools had inadequate teachers for all subjects. During focus group discussion with heads of departments, many of them held that shortage of teachers for various subjects had undermined performance by candidates. Class prefects also held that many lessons go unattended due to acute shortage of teachers. Indeed 50% of the principals indicated that most lessons were missed by teachers.

Syllabus coverage was behind schedule as shown by 60% of the principals contacted. During the focus group discussion, most heads of department regretted that they were unable to complete the syllabus on time. This they attributed to high workload of lessons per teacher in a week. They explained that in some cases, teachers had a workload of more than 30 lessons per week. This meant that they moved from one class to the next without time for preparation. Most prefects corroborated this when they said that they were physically in their

respective classes while in real sense they were still covering syllabus meant for the previous class.

It also emerged that teachers preferred to teach without prior preparation. This was supported by 65% of principals who indicated that teachers did not prepare and use professional tools. Teaching without regard to professionalism highly compromised the quality of the lesson delivered in class. Heads of department concurred that teachers were not keen in preparing schemes of work, lesson plans and even lesson notes. They stated that, most teachers downloaded or borrowed schemes of work which were put in a file for external assessors to see should they demand to see during their visits. They attributed this to lack of time for planning because of high workload. Class prefects said that most teachers often taught direct from text books and most of the occasion directed the students to do notes from text books.

Table 5: The Role of Heads of Department in Candidates Performance in National Examination

S/No	Reasons for students' dismal performance in National Examinations	Principals N = 20	
		Yes	No
There were a total of 83 principals in TaitaTaveta County whose schools presented candidates for national examination			
2	Head of Departments' Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Heads of departments are appointed by Teachers Service Commission	5 (25%)	15 (75%)
b	Heads of departments prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
c	Heads of departments hold regular review meetings with teachers in their department	2 (10%)	18 (90%)

Most principals (90%) held that Heads of departments neither prepared and used tools for monitoring curriculum implementation nor held regular review meetings with teachers in their department. Heads of departments attributed their failure to prepare and use tools for monitoring teachers to shortage of resource materials, lack of office space, and ignorance of their roles. They said that they were not inducted after appointment and in some cases appointment was informal without any official letter to show.

This meant that teachers were left to perform their duties as they wished hence a gap was left for those who lacked commitment to duty to just lazy around. Planning and review meetings were hallmarks of successful curriculum implementation and quality delivery of the syllabus. Lack of such meetings meant that there were minimal chances for setting departmental targets, laying down strategies on achievement of those targets, execution of the strategies, monitoring and evaluation of their execution and continued improvement for better performance

Table 6: The Role of the Principal in Candidates Performance in National Examination

S/No	Reasons for students' dismal performance in National Examinations	Principals N = 20	
		Yes	No
	There were a total of 83 principals in TaitaTaveta County whose schools presented candidates for national examination		
3	Principals' Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Principal's subject leads in performance in National Examination	3 (15%)	17 (85%)
b	Principal regularly observes teachers as they teach in class	7 (35%)	13 (65%)
c	Principals prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation	7 (35%)	13 (65%)
d	Principals hold regular review meetings with heads of departments	6 (30%)	14 (70%)

Principals were weak role models in performance in National Examination as 85% indicated that principals' subjects did not lead in performance in National Examination. Like their heads of departments, they neither prepared and used tools for monitoring curriculum nor held regular review meetings with heads of departments. Heads of departments averred that such meetings were rare because most times principals preferred to pass information during staff briefs or staff meetings. In worse scenario, teachers received important information either through students or support staff. They said that some principals were bossy and in a high class hence playing in different league with teachers.

Good management practices require leaders and managers to influence reforms by persuading their juniors to help them achieve their visions by making them appreciate strategies they have. This is done better through regular meetings.

Table 7: The Role of the Candidates in Performance in National Examination

S/No	Reasons for students' dismal performance in National Examinations	Principals N = 20	
		Yes	No
	There were a total of 83 principals in TaitaTaveta County whose schools presented candidates for national examination		
4	The Role of the Candidates in Performance in National Examination		
a	Students report to school on first day of opening	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
b	Students take down notes which they revise after the lesson	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
c	Students consult teachers regularly on academic matters	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
d	Students join secondary schools with above average marks from Primary school Examination	9 (45%)	11 (55%)

Many students did not report back to school on first day of opening as shown by 90% of principal respondents. Class prefects expressed displeasure with the practice where teaching and learning time was lost because classes could not raise quorum of students in the first week of opening. Heads of departments reported that schools have tried to address this open day absenteeism by introducing opener examination in the first week of opening, but the

situation had not changed much. Lateness to settle for lessons unfairly affects timely coverage of the syllabus.

Ninety percent (90%) of respondents revealed that students rarely consult teachers on academic matters; sixty percent indicated that students did not take down notes to revise after the lesson and fifty five percent held that students joined secondary schools with marks that were below average from primary schools examination. Heads of departments lamented that some students joined secondary school without reading and writing skills. These slowed down their understanding of the concepts taught in secondary school. Class prefects agreed that many students could not fluently express themselves in English.

English being the medium of instruction and Examination in all subjects except Kiswahili, was a very important tool for learning. Those who got it wrong reduced their chances to learn any concept expressed in English.

CONCLUSION

The root cause of candidates' dismal performance in National Examination included: acute teacher shortage in most secondary schools in the County, inadequate teacher preparation for lesson delivery, weak supervision of curriculum implementation by the Heads of Departments, failed leadership by secondary Principals for showing inability to supervise teachers, and lack of seriousness in school matters among students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Achievement of expected outcome in the provision of Secondary school Education is critical in the mission of re-directing secondary Education in TaitaTaveta County. This can only be possible if all stakeholders in the secondary school sector are mobilized and supported to enhance the quality of education that student's access. These stakeholders include and not limited to; the Policy Makers at the Ministry of Education, Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards at the Ministry of Education, local political leadership, Boards of Management and Parents.

Recommendations to Teachers Service Commission

Teachers' service commission plays a critical role in recruitment, posting and deployment of teachers in the county. The commission should move with speed to immediately provide adequate teachers for needy subjects in secondary schools across the county. Appointment of teachers to various positions of responsibility most particularly Heads of Department, deputy principal and principal-ship should strictly follow merit. Appointments should be followed by

induction and continued capacity building. Teachers who fail to perform duties assigned to them should be dropped and others appointed to take over.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education: State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Giving teachers support is critical strategy in improving performance in secondary schools in TaitaTaveta County and therefore the Ministry of Education should allocate funds for this purpose and as a matter of urgency deploy adequate Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in the county. The ministry should provide adequate facilities to enable the officers perform their work effectively. These should include; office space and equipment, support personnel and means of transport. Other key stakeholders and partners in Education (County Government, Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association, County Education Board, and None Governmental Organizations) should give required support to enable Quality and Standards Assessment of secondary schools to be more regular so that teachers are adequately supported in their work of timely delivering the curriculum.

Regular Assessment of schools will ensure timely identification of gaps and hence prompt interventions.

Recommendations to Boards of Management in Secondary Schools

Constitution of the Boards of Management in secondary schools should strictly consider members' professional background, interest and ability to deliver as a member of the board. It should be a group of professionals from diverse backgrounds whose interest is to promote quality education. Up on appointment, members should be properly inducted into their roles, responsibilities and mandate for better achievements. The role of the board in curriculum implementation and teacher management should be prioritized in this county for teachers and their immediate supervisors to post better outcome. A lean board that has clear roadmap (strategic plan) to the school vision is highly recommended.

Recommendations to principals and heads of departments

Principals should be role models to their teachers by being the first to prepare, use and maintain professional records. Their subjects should lead in terms of syllabus coverage and performance. They should be team players not bosses. Their management style should be consultative where senior staff meetings are regularly held to plan and strategize and to monitor and evaluate achievements and failures. Every teacher should be made accountable for subject performance and curriculum delivery.

Heads of departments should work very closely with the principal and teachers in their departments through regular consultation and team work. They should develop supervision tools and use them in their administrative work.

Schools should establish internal quality assurance and standards teacher who would report to the principal and also ensure timely coverage of the syllabus and effective teaching and learning process.

Recommendations to Parents

parents should support secondary school education by ensuring that their children attend school regularly, meeting students personal effects, paying school fees promptly, monitoring education progress of the child, guiding and counseling the child on matters of character and behaviour, supporting teachers in shaping the vision and aspiration of the child.

Recommendation for further research

Further research should be carried out to establish whether the quality of Education offered at primary school level has influence in quality of secondary education in TaitaTaveta County.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I am Odhiambo John Okoth, the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer Taita Taveta County. This is an Action Research that is meant to find out factors that affect performance of candidates in secondary schools in the county with a view of re-directing secondary education for improved performance.

The information that you provide will only be used for this study and kept confidential. Your kind cooperation in responding to the questions asked will be appreciated. Please go through the Questionnaire and give your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Particulars of the school

Please write information about Particulars of your school in the space provided.

- a) Name of the school
- b) Name of the sub-county
- c) Type of the school (mixed day, mixed day & boarding, girls boarding, boys boarding)
- d) In which category is your school? (Sub-County, County, Extra-County, National).....

2. The following are factors that may affect performance of candidates in national examination in your school. Please tick appropriately under the yes or no column against the listed factors.

S/No	Reasons for students' dismal performance in National Examinations	Please tick	
		Yes	No
1	Teachers Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Syllabus coverage is on schedule		
b	The school have adequate teachers for all subjects		
c	Teachers prepare and use professional tools		
d	Most lessons are attended to by teachers		
2	Head of Departments' Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Heads of departments are appointed by Teachers Service Commission		
b	Heads of departments prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation		
c	Heads of departments hold regular review meetings with teachers in their department		
3	Principals' Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination		
a	Principal's subject leads in performance in National Examination		
b	Principal regularly observes teachers as they teach in class		

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- c Principals prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation
 - d Principals hold regular review meetings with heads of departments
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- 4 **The Role of the Candidates in Performance in National Examination**
- a Students report to school on first day of opening
 - b Students take down notes which they revise after the lesson
 - c Students consult teachers regularly on academic matters
 - d Students join secondary schools with above average marks from Primary school Examination
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APPENDIX 2:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND CLASS PREFECTS

The information that you provide will only be used for this study and kept confidential. Your kind cooperation in responding to the questions asked will be appreciated.

1. Particulars of the school

Please write information about Particulars of your school in the space provided.

- e) Name of the school
- f) Name of the sub-county
- g) Type of the school (mixed day, mixed day & boarding, girls boarding, boys boarding)
.....
- h) In which category is your school? (Sub-County, County, Extra-County, National).....

2. I would like us to hold a discussion over the following factors that may influence performance in secondary schools.

A. Teachers Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination

- i. What is the state of syllabus coverage in the school?
- ii. Does the school have adequate teachers for all subjects?
- iii. Do teachers prepare and use professional records?
- iv. How is lesson attendance by teachers?

B. Head of Departments' Role in Candidates' Performance in National Examination

- i. Are Heads of Departments substantively appointed by Teachers Service Commission?
- ii. Do Heads of departments prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation?

- iii. Do Heads of departments hold regular review meetings with teachers in their department?

C. Principals' Role in Candidates Performance in National Examination

- i. Does the Principal's subject lead in performance in National Examination?
- ii. Does the Principal regularly observe teachers as they teach in class?
- iii. Does the Principal regularly observe teachers as they teach in class?
- iv. Does the Principals prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation?
- v. Principals prepare and use tools for monitoring curriculum implementation?
- vi. Principals hold regular review meetings with heads of departments?

D. The Role of the Candidates in Performance in National Examination

- i. Do Students report to school on first day of opening?
- ii. Do Students take down notes which they revise after the lesson?
- iii. Do Students consult teachers regularly on academic matters?
- iv. Do Students join secondary schools with above average marks from Primary school Examination?

APPENDIX 3: LOCATION OF TAITA TAVETA COUNTY IN KENYA

