

Influence Of Disbursement Process Of Free Day Secondary Education Funding On Students' Completion Rates In Public Day Secondary Schools In Mwala Sub-County

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the influence of disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. The study was guided by Systems Theory of Management originally proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928. A descriptive survey design was employed to enhance simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The target population of this study comprised of 52 principals, 208 class teachers and 52 chairpersons and 52 vice chairpersons of students' councils of public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. Using simple random sampling and Slovin's formula, which was represented as $n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$, a total of 28 principals, 28 chairpersons and 28 vice-chairpersons of the students' councils and 107 teachers were selected. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data was analyzed using inferential statistics with the help of SPSS Computer Programme version 24. Qualitative data analysis was done thematically in narration form. The study recommends that the FDSE funds are budgeted and released on time especially at the beginning of the term. This will ensure that the learning process in all schools goes on uninterrupted as funds will be available to cater for most of the school's academic activities and ongoing projects.

Keywords: *Funds, disbursement, students, education, completion rate*

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I. Background To The Study

In Kenya education is considered a fundamental right that enables individuals, families, and communities to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for enhancing their overall quality of life. Education plays a pivotal role in enhancing productivity, thus serving as an essential tool in the realization of Kenya's vision for the year 2030. Kenya introduced FDSE in 2008 with government sending tuition fees of Ksh 10,265 per student to schools at inception (Ministry of Education, 2018). Later, it increased to 12,870 in 2014 before scaling it to 22,244 in the year 2018 with an aim of making secondary education affordable and achieve 100 percent transition and completion rates (Matara, 2020). However, Kamau and Wambugu (2017) report that 48% of the secondary school students who enrolled in form one did not sit for the KCSE examination in 2015 in the country.

In a study conducted by Ayako (2015) regarding the financing of post-primary education in Kenya, it was highlighted that the capitation grant serves as a mechanism to distribute resources fairly and equitably among schools. However, Ayako noticed that unlike certain other nations, Kenya's capitation grant formula doesn't specifically designate funds to support vulnerable groups, like students with special needs. This has led to the conclusion that post-primary education in Kenya faces several obstacles, including inadequate and unsustainable funding in both the public and private/community sectors. The new study tries to close the theoretical gap that Ayako's research revealed. Despite the difficulties mentioned in Ayako's work, Mueni, Kimiti, and Mulwa's study from 2019 on the effects of timely distribution of free secondary education tuition funds showed that such prompt distribution enhanced the quality of curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

Mueni et al. (2019) conducted a study to investigate the potential correlation between the punctual disbursements of funds for free secondary education and the effective implementation of the curriculum. The research employed a mixed method approach and included 31 principals, 307 form 4 students, and 164 form 4 class teachers as the sample. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules. Various methods of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, were utilized in this study. The results indicated a

noteworthy correlation between the prompt delivery of curriculum support materials to public secondary schools and the overall effectiveness of curriculum implementation in Makueni County. The research proposed that the Ministry of Education should adopt efficient approaches to guarantee the timely provision of curriculum support materials to all secondary schools, consequently improving the overall quality of curriculum implementation. The study aimed at addressing geographical and theoretical gaps left by Mueni et al.'s research conducted in 2019.

In line with Mueni et al. (2019), Koskei (2017) also suggested a comparable recommendation, emphasizing that the government should ensure prompt disbursement of capitation grants to public primary schools, ideally before the start of each term. This timely allocation of funds would facilitate effective school budgeting and the timely procurement of teaching and learning materials, ultimately enabling the prompt commencement of teaching and learning activities. The study's scope was limited to Uasin Gishu County, and a cross-sectional survey design was utilized. The study focused on 400 head teachers from public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County as the target population. To gather data, a sample of 200 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The current research aims to address geographical, theoretical, and methodological gaps left by Koskei's (2017) study.

Statement of the problem

The enactment of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy in Kenya aimed to enhance accessibility to primary and secondary education through the allocation of additional resources, ultimately aiming to offer a comprehensive 12-year basic education. (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The abandonment of education among the youth in Mwala Sub-County results in the lack of training and educational prospects that necessitate the possession of a secondary school certificate. Therefore, due to lack of higher education, they are likely to earn less in their life time and have low living standards. The government of Kenya has been funding secondary education since 2008 by provision of FDSE but it has not attained 100% completion rate. Nevertheless, there is an absence of empirical research conducted in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County that specifically investigated the influence of disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County.

II. Literature Review

In a study conducted by Ayako (2015) regarding the financing of post-primary education in Kenya, it was highlighted that the capitation grant serves as a mechanism to distribute resources fairly and equitably among schools. However, Ayako noticed that unlike certain other nations, Kenya's capitation grant formula doesn't specifically designate funds to support vulnerable groups, like students with special needs. This has led to the conclusion that post-primary education in Kenya faces several obstacles, including inadequate and unsustainable funding in both the public and private/community sectors.

Mueni, Kimiti and Mulwa (2019) conducted a study to investigate the potential correlation between the punctual disbursement of funds for free secondary education and the effective implementation of the curriculum. The research employed a mixed method approach and included 31 principals, 307 form 4 students, and 164 form 4 class teachers as the sample. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules. Various methods of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, were utilized in this study. The results indicated a noteworthy correlation between the prompt delivery of curriculum support materials to public secondary schools and the overall effectiveness of curriculum implementation in Makueni County. The research proposed that the Ministry of Education should adopt efficient approaches to guarantee the timely provision of curriculum support materials to all secondary schools, consequently improving the overall quality of curriculum implementation.

Ndambuki (2016) conducted a study in Makindu sub-county, Makueni County, focusing on the implementation of free secondary school education. The study's recommendations aligned with those of the previously mentioned researches. Ndambuki (2016) found that the disbursement of funds and the availability of resources significantly impacted the successful implementation of free secondary education in public secondary schools. His recommendations included urging the government to allocate sufficient funds to enable principals to effectively implement the curriculum. Additionally, he suggested that timely disbursement of funds by the government would enable principals to plan and execute school programs promptly. The study's foundation was based on the capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement.

III. Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Systems Theory of Management. The theory was originally proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928 and has undergone further development by other scholars like Gibson (1997), Mullin (2005), Weihrich (2008), and Scott (2008). This theory perceives an organization as a social system comprising individuals who collaborate within a structured framework. The organization interacts with its environment, acquiring resources, people, and finances while also contributing back to that environment. According to the systems theory, an organization, such as a school, is not solely influenced by its surroundings but is also an integral part of a larger system, such as society or the economic system it is associated with. The implementation of the Free Day Secondary Education funding by the government of Kenya is an example of a change from the outer environment.

IV. Methodology Of Research

In order to be able to answer the research questions, a descriptive survey design was employed to enhance simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The target population of this study comprised of 52 principals, 208 class teachers and 52 chairpersons and 52 vice chairpersons of students' councils of public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. Using simple random sampling and Slovin's formula, which was represented as $n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$, a total of 28 principals, 28 chairpersons and 28 vice-chairpersons of the students' councils and 107 teachers were selected. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data was analyzed using inferential statistics with the help of SPSS Computer Programme version 24. Qualitative data analysis was done thematically in narration form.

V. Results And Discussion

FDSE Fund Disbursement

In order to determine the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates, class teachers were presented with 4 items that measured their levels of agreement or disagreement with statements related to FDSE fund disbursement. The class teachers were required to respond to Likert scale questions which were set-up in a five point scale format, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree. Results are presented in Table 1

Table 1: FDSE Fund Disbursement (N=93)

| Statement | 1 (%) | 2 (%) | 3 (%) | 4 (%) | 5 (%) | Mean | SD |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus completion among others | 6 (6.5) | 19 (20.4) | 4 (4.3) | 26 (28.0) | 38 (40.9) | 3.76 | 1.346 |
| 2. Multiple funds disbursement in phases results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project cost | 4 (4.3) | 11 (11.8) | 7 (7.5) | 29 (31.2) | 42 (45.2) | 4.01 | 1.184 |
| 3. Bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing | 5 (5.4) | 9 (9.7) | 3 (3.2) | 49 (52.7) | 27 (29.0) | 3.90 | 1.094 |
| 4. Late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities | 8 (8.6) | 6 (6.5) | 2 (2.2) | 34 (36.6) | 43 (46.2) | 4.05 | 1.237 |
| Average score | | | | | | 3.93 | 1.215 |

Source: Research data (2023)

As shown in Table 1 majority of the class teachers strongly agreed on the following areas; delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project cost (M=4.01, SD=1.184) and late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities (M=4.05, SD=1.237). Majority of the class teachers also agreed to the statement that bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing (M=3.90, SD=1.094).

The study participants were also interviewed so that they could explain their views regarding the FDSE fund disbursement.

A principal reported that:

Funds provided for implementation of FDSE program are inadequate and delays in remission often results into sending students from poor background for fees in order to support essential programs within the school.

Another principals had this to say:

The disbursement process is not efficient and timely as we receive the FDSE funds in the middle of the term.

The convergence between quantitative and qualitative results validate that the FDSE fund disbursement is not timely which hindered effective teaching and learning. In concurrence with the study findings, Momanyi and Muchimuti (2020) posit that the implementation of FDSE is hindered by delay in disbursing the FDSE funds, inadequate funds from the Government for expansion, over enrolment of learners leading to strained physical facilities, inadequate learning and teaching facilities, acute shortage of teachers and poor cost-sharing approaches. The findings support Olang'o, Malechwanz, Murage and Amuka (2021) who revealed that FDSE policy had a negative influence on rural public day secondary schools' as the student capitation was inadequate. The study recommended prompt disbursement of funds in full immediately as schools open in the first term to minimize shortages.

These findings are in agreement with a study by Muhindi (2012) which established that government FDSE subsidies are inadequate and are not disbursed on time. The findings are also supported by Achieng', Nduku and Njui (2021) who posits that Ministry of Education should release FDSE funds at the beginning of the term to enable the schools acquire learning resources in good time as delay of funds affected the learning process and encouraged student absenteeism. Similarly, studies by Mueni, Kimiti and Mulwa (2019) and Koskei (2017) recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that the FDSE capitation grants are disbursed to the public schools in time at least before the start of every term to ensure timely preparation of the schools budgets and to promote quality in the curriculum implementation process and timely commencement of teaching and learning.

The study also sought to establish views of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council from various schools on the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: FDSE Fund Disbursement and Students' Completion Rates (N=46)

| Statement | 1 (%) | 2 (%) | 3 (%) | 4 (%) | 5 (%) | Mean | SD |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Delay of FDSE funds lead to students being send home for extra levies hence dropping out of school | 2 (4.3) | 3 (6.5) | 1 (2.2) | 11 (23.9) | 29 (63.0) | 4.35 | 1.100 |
| 2. Delayed funding leads to low quality education resulting to students dropping out | 1 (2.2) | 4 (8.7) | 2 (4.3) | 13 (28.3) | 26 (56.5) | 4.28 | 1.047 |
| 3. Delayed funding leads to lack of learning /teaching materials | 3 (6.5) | 1 (2.2) | 1 (2.2) | 8 (17.4) | 33 (71.7) | 4.46 | 1.110 |
| 4. Many students drop out of school due to delayed funding | 2 (4.3) | 5 (10.9) | 3 (6.5) | 28 (60.9) | 8 (17.4) | 3.76 | 1.015 |
| Average score | | | | | | 4.212 | 1.068 |

Source: Research data (2023)

From the results in Table 2, majority of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council strongly agreed that; delay of FDSE funds lead to students being send home for extra levies hence dropping out of school (M=4.35, SD=1.100), delayed funding leads to low quality education resulting to students dropping out (M=4.28, SD=1.047) and delayed funding leads to lack of learning /teaching materials (M=4.46, SD=1.110).

They also agree to the statement that many students drop out of school due to delayed funding ($M=3.76$, $SD=1.015$).

This agrees with findings of Mwangi (2018) who found that despite the fact that provision of FDSE in public day secondary schools had increased students' transition rate, there are other factors that contribute to low completion rates like inadequate FDSE funds which are not disbursement on timely basis. In support of the findings, Bomett (2019) asserts that the government should on timely basis allocate enough capitation funds to public schools to ensure that subsidized secondary school education runs smoothly without compromising quality of education and ensure there is substantial increase in learners' enrolments and completion of basic education. Similarly, Musee, Mungai and Mwanza (2017) study findings established that delays in government disbursement of FDSE funds has led the school to incur large debts that limit effectiveness of the schools in teaching and learning process.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendation

Conclusion

The study findings established that there was delayed disbursement of FDSE funds which was done in multiple phases and this has significantly contributed to inadequate learning materials and other essential services in schools. The study concludes that delayed funding leads to low quality education as students from poor socio-economic backgrounds are being send home for fees hence dropping out of school.

Recommendation

The study recommends that the FDSE funds are budgeted and released on time especially at the beginning of the term. This will ensure that the learning process in all schools goes on uninterrupted as funds will be available to cater for most of the school's academic activities and ongoing projects. To a great extend will solve the problem of student absenteeism and dropout rates as students from poor socio-economic backgrounds will not be send home for fees.

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