

Influence Of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) Capitation Grants On Participation Rates In Public Secondary Schools In Makueni County, Kenya.

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-----ABSTRACT-----

Adequate funding of the education sector is crucial to the provision of quality education for all (OECD, 2016). Financing of education is the greatest enabler of learners to participate in education and flow through education system from entry to exit. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) on participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The targeted respondents included School Principals and their Deputies from 196 secondary schools in Makueni County as well as 9 Sub County Directors of Education from Makueni County. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for Principals, Deputy Principals and interview schedule for Sub-county Directors of Education. The instruments were ascertained through piloting and by research experts to ascertain content validity while reliability was achieved through piloting and testing reliability. Data collection registered a response rate of 91.8%. The data was analyzed by use of SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically through content analysis and the responses were presented in narratives. Tables and figures were used to present the analyzed data. The results revealed that there was statistically significant relationship between FDSE capitation grants and participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County. This was at R values of 0.67 which was positive and significant with values of 0.014. From this result the study concludes that Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants influence students' participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The qualitative results also confirmed that education subsidies influence students' participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study recommends that government should sustain and increase capitation grants to schools and also partner with other stakeholders in financing education to enhance students' participation rates in education.

Key words: Educational Subsidy, Free Day Secondary Education, Participation Rate

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I. Introduction

Education is a dependable mechanism to improve people's lives through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes. According to Sahlberg (2007), secondary education is important in the 21st century education systems for it serves as an extended platform for all young people to equip them with abilities to further develop their knowledge and skills that are needed in civic society and the knowledge economy. It further provides many young people with requisite qualifications for the labour market and further learning (Kamal & Joel, 2014). This means that, once denied secondary educational opportunities, children have little chance of enhancing their livelihoods.

Governments around the world are in agreement that, the ability to provide quality education for all and to respond to new priorities depends on the availability of adequate funding for education (OECD, 2016). Research in the United States shows that finance reforms on provision of resources in low-income schools reduced achievement gaps between highly and lowly resource endowed school districts (Lafortune, Rothstein & Schanzenbach, 2018). This makes it necessary to subsidize education so as to ensure that all citizens participate in education irrespective of the economic and socio-cultural barriers they may be facing.

A subsidy is aid often granted by a government to support critical parts of the economy that are thought to be vulnerable to external forces (Tarver, 2022). Education subsidies can either be from the demand side or from the supply side. Subsidies from the supply side are implemented to the supplier to enable the production of more

goods and services. Tarver further notes that, this increases the overall supply of that good or service, which increases the quantity demanded by lowering the price. In education, the government does this by paying teachers, construction of classrooms and other infrastructure that support the provision of education services as well as incentivizing private sector to invest in the education sector. The demand side includes support to learners by government through payment of fees via education bursaries, funds for free learning, CDF bursary schemes, and other aspects of facilitation by government for learners to increase their quest for education. These facilitative acts by government increase enrolment and participation rates in education. Non-state actors also subsidize education to complement government's effort.

Participation is the act of being engaged in something. Participation rate in education is a percentage of number of students of a specific age enrolled in educational institutions at all levels of education to the population of the same age (UNESCO, 2021). Participation rates is indicated by attendance ratios and enrollment ratios as they both indicate the number of pupils participating in the school system as a proportion of the size of the overall population (World Bank, 2006). School attendance by students has to be regular if learners are to achieve the desired learning outcomes. According to Glasure (2002), there is a positive correlation between days absent and academic performance. Financial constraints is key among factors that contribute to absenteeism therefore educational subsidies have been rooted as a way of alleviating the problem of poor or non-participation in education.

Globally, poverty has been touted as a barrier to education access, and thus reducing education-related costs for households is an essential component of policies aiming to improve education participation (UNICEF, 2015). Generally, across Sub Saharan Africa, completion rates for lower and upper secondary school students stand at 42% and 30%, respectively (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2019). In Botswana, South Africa and Cape Verde 80% of students attend secondary school the remainder 20% don't fully participate in secondary education. In Central African Republic, Chad and Niger completion rates in secondary education stand at 20%. Generally, across Sub Saharan Africa, completion rates for lower and upper secondary school students stand at 42% and 30%, respectively (United Nations Children's Fund, 2019).

The gap in completion rates shows non participation rates in secondary education. It is estimated that the financing gap for delivering good quality universal education from pre-school to secondary education by 2030 in developing countries will be \$ 10.6 billion which is four times what is provided by governments and official donors (UNESCO, 2015b). According to Steer, Julia, Emily and Michael (2015), in an effort to close this financing and delivery gap that seems to prevent participation in education, non -state actors, mainly religious and charitable organizations and private foundations are stepping in to subsidize education.

Kenya is signatory to international conventions and regional commitments related to education, such as the Education for All (EFA) goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others. To show commitment to these treaties, the government has anchored the right to education in the constitution in articles 43(1) (f) 53(1) (b) and 55 (a) and in the Basic Education Act (2013) that guarantees the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education. As a means to achieving these goals the Government of Kenya continues to invest heavily in the education sector, committing about 5.4% of GDP to the sector (National Education Sector Plan, 2018-2022).

The government shows commitment to these goals by subsidizing secondary education through capitation grants per student of Ksh 22,244 per annum in all public secondary schools, giving bursaries through the National Government Constituency Development Fund Bursary Scheme and provision of textbooks. However, despite provision of these subsidies, non-participation is still prevalent in public secondary schools. For instance, a study conducted by Mwangi (2018) on the influence of educational subsidies on completion rates in public day secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya established that, that 27.4 % of the students who had enrolled in Form one 2009 did not complete secondary school education in 2010 as stipulated. A Similar study conducted by Miako (2012), in Nyandarua County on school levies and their effects on access and retention since the introduction of the free day secondary education programme, found out that many parents were unable to bear education costs, leading to low retention rates. The above studies did not address participation rates instead they addressed completion rate and retention rate respectively.

II. Literature Review

Secondary school is a very important bridge between education and the world of work. Poor participation at this level is detrimental for both the individual future earnings and the macro-economic growth for individual countries (Tilak, 2020). When young people fail to fully participate or drop out of school, they get to the labour market without having developed strong cognitive and socioemotional skills and as such they are not well equipped to get well-paying jobs. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carribean (2008) holds the view that, the successful completion of secondary school education constitutes a minimum education threshold that almost guarantees a person's future outside poverty.

Recent data in United Kingdom by Dearden, Emmerson, Fragne and Meghir (2014) sought to establish the effect of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), a subsidy paid by the government to secondary students in post-compulsory school ie. Year 12 and year 13 on their participation in education. The study under review was not randomized like the current study, instead it used treatment and control experiment in which case the students under study received different treatment. In order to balance distribution of observable characteristics, propensity score matching was used while in the current study, this will be achieved through stratified random sampling. In order to establish the effect of subsidies on different age groups, sensitivity analysis was done while in the current study linear regression model will be used on quantitative data to indicate the influence of educational subsidies on participation rates. From the study it was established that, the subsidy has had both a significant and positive impact on post-compulsory secondary education with participation among eligible young people estimated as 4.5 percentage points higher than those without subsidies. Education subsidies therefore have an impact on participation in education.

In Sub Saharan Africa region, governments' spending in education has increased from 3.8 percent to 4.3 percent between the periods 2000-05 to 2012-18 (Education Commission, 2016). This spending on subsidized education has seen Sub Saharan Africa region witness a sustained growth in secondary school enrollment and participation. However, despite this spending and growth in secondary school enrollment, 65 million young people of secondary school age are still out of school (Zubari & Rose, 2019). These improvements notwithstanding, nearly 60 percent of young children of senior secondary school age remain out of school in the Sub-Saharan Africa due dropping out orchestrated by sporadic school attendance. A study by UNICEF (2018) in Rwanda for instance revealed that, the government has the highest expenditure in education in East Africa at 38% of GDP per capita on secondary education leading to a significant increase of 22 percent in lower and upper secondary enrollment between 2011 and 2018. However, despite all this, there has been poor participation in education with drop-outs increasing in public secondary schools from 11.6 per cent to 14.7 per cent during the same period (UNESCO-UIS, 2019). The study under review is a national programme reviewed by UNESCO unlike the current study which has a county as the study locale.

A study by Mwangi (2018) on the influence of free day secondary education on completion rates in public secondary schools in Kitui county, Kenya included document reviews as one of its data collection procedures unlike the current study that will use questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. The study targeted day public secondary schools in Kitui County, the current study will however target all public secondary schools in Makueni County. Further, the current study will set out to establish the influence of educational subsidies on participation rates in secondary school education unlike the study under review that was concerned with the influence of education subsidies on completion rates in secondary education. From the findings, it was established that, although, 98.11 per cent of the principals agreed that the FDSE subsidy has increased students' completion rates in public day secondary schools, 30 per cent of the students enrolled in form one in 2008 did not complete the secondary school cycle in 2011. Though the study did not lay emphasis on participation rates, 60 percent of the principals who were involved in the study cited lack of school fees resulting to poor participation as the main reason for non-completion of secondary school education in four years.

From the literature reviewed, there seems to be a correlation between participation in education and completion rates. This study therefore seeks to establish the influence of free day secondary education capitation grants on participation rates in secondary school education. From the reviewed literature it has emerged that, concerning free day secondary education capitation grants which was the first subsidy under review, a study in the United Kingdom by Dearden et al (2014) concurred with that of Mwangi (2018) on the assertion that government subsidies boost completion rates. Both studies are inconsistent with the current study to the extent that they did not address participation rates in education as influenced by government subsidies.

III. Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive survey design which provides information on characteristics of a population or phenomenon (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Descriptive survey design was suitable for the current study since it enabled the use of existing data to get representative and reliable information. Makueni County has two national schools, 22 extra county secondary schools, 59 county secondary schools and 302 sub county secondary schools; a total of 385 public secondary schools (MoE,2021). Only one national school was targeted. The target population was thus all the 384 Principals and all the 384 Deputy Principals in public secondary schools in Makueni County, bringing the total to 768.

All public secondary schools in Makueni County were stratified as National, Extra County, County and Sub-County Schools. Since Makueni County has only two national schools, one school was selected through random sampling technique. Stratified proportionate sampling technique was used so as to give proportionate representation from the rest of the school categories using Yamane's Formula (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where;

n is the Sample Size

N is the Target Population

e is the Level of Precision

This study used 95 per cent confidence level with ±5 per cent precision level

therefore N=384 and e=0.05

$$n = \frac{384}{1.96} = 196$$

Ratio proportionate sampling was employed to get the sample size of the Principals and Deputy Principals in each school category. The sample size for the Principals and Deputy Principals was calculated as a proportion of the target population (N=384) of Principals and (N=384) for Deputy Principals. The proportion of schools in each category (x) was calculated as a ratio of the target population (N), proportionate to the sample size (n=196) of the Principals and Deputy Principals as derived from Yamane formula. The summary of the target population and sample size of Principals and Deputy Principals according to their category is shown in Table 1.

In total 196 schools from all categories were selected to participate in the current study. To select schools from each category to participate in the study, simple random sampling was used in a manner that each school in each school category had an equal chance of being selected for the study. In the selected schools, the Principal and the Deputy Principal were requested to fill in the questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to include all Sub County Directors of Education since they had requisite information that was important for the current study.

Table 1: Target Population and the Sample population.

School Category	Principals/schools	Sample size(Principals) (x/384)×196=(n)	Sample size for D/Principals x/384)×196=(n)
National	1	1(one random sample excluded from calculation)	1(one random sample excluded from calculation)
Extra County	22	11	11
County	59	30	30
Sub County	302	154	154
Total	∑(N)=384	∑ (n)=196	∑(n)=196

The study utilized a questionnaire and an interview guide as research instruments, consisting of both closed and open ended questionnaires. One per cent (1%) of the population is adequate for pilot testing (Jagger & Vaithianathan, 2009). Thus, the research instruments were piloted in four schools within the county which were similar to the sampled schools and that were not included in the sampled schools. To determine the reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher used test-re-test method during piloting. The questionnaires were administered in a sample of one school selected from different sub counties and the responses recorded. These schools were not included in the final sample.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Quantitative data obtained from the research instruments was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in frequency tables, graphs and cross tabulation tables. Qualitative data obtained from responses to open ended questions and interview schedules were transcribed and reported in narratives. Linear regression model was used on quantitative data to indicate the influence of educational subsidies on participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County as follows;

$$P_r = f(FDSE, NGCDF, SCNSA, TXB)$$

Where P_r is Students Participation Rates

FDSE is Free Day Secondary Education

NGCDF is National Government Constituency Development Fund

SCNSA is Scholarships from Non State Actors

TXB is Textbooks

The model to be estimated thus becomes a linear function as below;

$$P_r = \alpha + \beta_1 FDSE + \beta_2 NGCDF + \beta_3 SCNSA + \beta_4 TXB + \varepsilon$$

Where α is a Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are the coefficients

ϵ is the error term

Responses in the questionnaires were analysed in the five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. Bell (2005) advocated the use of a weighted means score where a mean score ranging from 4 to 5 will mean that the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. A mean score ranging from 3 to 3.9 will mean that the respondents agreed with the statement. A mean score ranging from 2.5 to 2.9 will mean that the respondents were undecided on the statement. A mean score ranging from 2 to 2.4 will mean that the respondents disagreed with the statement. A mean score ranging from 1 to 2.3 will mean that the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

A total of 196 questionnaires were administered to both Principals and Deputy Principals in the sampled public secondary schools in Makueni County making a total of 392 respondents. The questionnaire return rate is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: The Distribution of the Response Return Rate

Participants	Number Administered	Response Return Rate	Percentage
Principals	196	180	91.8
Deputy Principals	196	180	91.8
Total	392	360	Av. 91.8

Table 2 shows the distribution of the response rate from the various study respondents. According to the information presented in Table 2, 180 Principals and 180 Deputy Principals responded satisfactorily to the questionnaire giving a total of 320 responses. This represented 91.8 percent for both Principals and Deputy Principal respectively. The return rates were high because the researcher took the questionnaires to the sampled public secondary schools and a time limit of two weeks was given to the respondents. After two weeks, the researcher personally went round the schools collecting the questionnaires. The researcher found the return rates satisfactory according to Kothari (2004) who suggests that questionnaire return rate above 60 percentage points is adequate for analysis and reporting. This return rate provided the required information for analysis.

IV. Results & Discussion

To establish the influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants on participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, correlational analysis was used to determine the influence and the relationship. The acceptable level of significance for the Pearson correlational coefficient was used. The value of the coefficient of the correlation (r) had the range of $-1 \leq r \leq 1$. This value was squared to obtain correlation of determination (r^2) that indicated degree of association between of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants and participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County. A p value ($p < 0.05$) showed that the results were statistically significant. Significance level (p), forms the boundary between rejecting or upholding the Null hypothesis was used to determine significant levels. A p value ($p < 0.05$) indicated that the results were statistically significant. (P) value greater than 0.05 led to upholding of the Null hypothesis while (P) value less than or equal to 0.05, led to rejecting of the Null hypothesis. In order to confirm the status of this statement a regression analysis was conducted at 0.05 level of significance.

Regression analysis was carried between the results of FSDE capitation and the Means of the indicators of participation (Dependent variable). The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3: Influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants on participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni county Kenya analysis

Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.822 ^a	.674	.670	.36161

a. Predictors: (Constant), FSDE Capitation grants.

Regression results in Table 3 reveal that the relationship between FSDE Capitation grants and participation rates was positive but moderate ($R = .674$) because R^2 was not equal to 0 ($R^2 \neq 0$) but within 0 and 1. An adjusted R^2 gave a clear prediction. The adjusted R square of 0.67 indicated that 67% of the variation in the participation of students in schooling in public secondary schools in Makueni County could be explained by provision of FSDE Capitation grants in financing education. To test if this analysis had significant prediction, the model significance was determined and analyzed in the ANOVA table presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of influence of FSDE capitation grants on Students’ participation in education.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Hypothesis Testing	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	.743	.290		2.551	.014
1 FSDE capitation grants	.798	.067	.821	11.964	

a. Dependent Variable: Students participation rates in school

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients of the independent variable (FSDE grants) guided by standardized and unstandardized coefficients (beta). It can be shown from the analysis that FSDE capitation grant had a significant and predictive influence on the students’ participation in schooling at p value of 0.014. Results in Table 4 indicated that there was statistical relationship (0.014<0.05) between FSDE capitation grants and students’ participation rates. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants and participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya was rejected at 0.05 level of significance and the alternative hypothesis which implies that there is statistically significant relationship between Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants and participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County taken was upheld. Based on the findings, a conclusion was made that Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants and participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County are statistically dependent and that Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants influences students’ participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants on students’ participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The Principals and Deputy Principals were asked to indicate their opinion on the influence of Free Day Secondary Education grants on Students’ participation rates. They were requested to indicate their responses as; SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree. The results were as contained in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) Capitation Grants on Participation Rates.

Response	Principals								Deputy Principals							
	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
FDSE capitation increases students’ participation in education in your school	150	83.3	30	16.7	0	0	0	0	160	88.9	20	11.1	0	0	0	0
Government subsidies are adequate to guarantee retention of students in school	0	0	0	0	180	100	0	0	0	0	0	180	100	0	0	0
FDSE capitation increases students’ completion rates in your school	110	61.1	60	33.3	10	5.6	0	0	110	61.1	70	38.9	0	0	0	0
FDSE capitation reduces students’ dropout rates in your school	160	88.9	20	11.1	0	0	0	0	110	61.1	60	33.3	10	5.6	0	0

From Table 5 above, all principals (represented by 83.3% strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed). This was in concurrence with majority of deputy principals in the same Table represented by 88.9% strongly agreed and 11.1 % agreed that FSDE capitation increases students’ participation rates in education. On whether Government subsidies are adequate to guarantee retention of students in school, both principals and their deputies negated the statement and said government subsidies were not adequate to guarantee retention of students in the school.

On whether FSDE capitation increases students completion rates in schools majority of principals in represented by 33.3% agreed and 61.1% strongly agreed concurring with majority of deputies’ views in the same table represented by 38.9% agreed and 61.1% strongly agreed that FSDE capitation increases students completion rates in schools .

The results also revealed that majority of principals represented by 11.1% agreed and 88.9% strongly agreed in Table 5 that FSDE capitation reduces student’s dropout rates. This concurs with deputies’ views as represented by 33.3% agreed and 61.1 % strongly agreed in Table 4.6 that FSDE capitation reduces student’s dropout rates. With this concurrence of evidence, it can therefore be concluded that FSDE influences students’ participation rates in in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The results shown in Table 5 indicate that majority of the principals and deputies represented by 88.9% and 94.4% strongly claimed that FSDE was very

influential in determining students' participation rates in education in Makueni County.

Data from interview schedule confirmed that indeed FDSE capitation financing increased participation rates of students in school in terms of access, retention and completion rates. On the same note interview schedules revealed that Education subsidies largely increased students. With this concurrence of evidence, it can therefore be concluded that FSDE influence students participation in education

Inferential statistics results in Table 4 indicate that there was positive but moderate ($R = .674$). Additionally, t test results revealed that there was statistical relationship ($0.014 < 0.05$) between FSDE grant financing and students' participation in education. Based on the results, there was overwhelming evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. It was therefore concluded that there was positive but moderate relationship between FSDE financing and students' participation rates in education in Makueni County Kenya.

FSDE grant financing is one of the ways of financing education in Kenya. Financing of education has been recognized all over the world as on way of enhancing students' participation rates in education. Studies done in United Kingdom by Dearden, Emmerson, Fragne and Meghir (2014) established that, the subsidy has had both a significant and positive impact on post-compulsory secondary education with participation among eligible young people estimated as 4.5 percentage points higher than those without subsidies. Education subsidies therefore have an impact on participation in education. This finding concurs with the finding of this study that subsidizing increases the level of participation of students in schooling.

The findings of this study further concur with a study done by Mwangi (2018) on the influence of free day secondary education on completion rates in public secondary schools in Kitui County which was established that FDSE subsidy has increased students' completion rates in public day secondary schools. This study demonstrated that FSDE was a key pillar of enhancing access retention and completion rates of students in schools. The findings of the present study support the idea that Government of Kenya should continue funding education to enhance participation rates of the students in schooling.

V. Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants on students' participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study findings established that the relationship between funding education through FSDE capitation grants was positive but moderate. The study also established that financing education through FSDE capitation grants was influential in determining students' participation rates in education in public secondary schools in Makueni County Kenya. Further, the study results provided evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Based on the findings, the study concludes that Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants influence students participation rates in public secondary schools in Makueni county Kenya.

VI. Recommendations

From the study findings, the study makes the following recommendations in line with the research objective of assessing the influence of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) capitation grants on students' participation rates:

- i. That the Kenyan government should continue with the FSDE grant capitation as this was found to increase participation rates of students in education. The capitation should also be increased.
- ii. That the Ministry of Education should provide prompt disbursement of FSDE grant capitation to ensure smooth participation of learners in education.

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