



GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS AND LEARNER COMPLETION RATE IN PUBLIC MIXED DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CHESUMEI SUB-COUNTY

By

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Abstract

Students' completion rate varies in various states worldwide. High students' drop-out still exists in public schools in Kenya which negatively impacts students' completion rate. Empirically, in chesumei, little is known about the influence of government funding on learner completion rate in mixed day secondary schools. This is despite government funding to day public secondary schools. The objective of this study included to determine the extent to which government funding in form of government scholarships influences completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesumei sub county. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Target population was 343 respondents who comprised of 24 principals, 270 heads of department, 48 members of board of management and 1 sub county director of education. The sample size was 270 respondents who comprised of 22 principals, 161 heads of department 42 members of the board of management assistant and 1 sub county director of education. The study adopted stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents. Primary data was collected using close-ended questionnaires and interview guide. The study adopted content validity where experts' opinion was sought to validate the contents of the questionnaire. The study adopted internal consistency reliability which was tested using Cronbach's alpha co-efficient. Data that was collected in the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and content analysis. Findings revealed that government scholarships/bursaries had a positive and significant effect on completion rate ($\beta=0.778$, $p<0.05$). The study concluded that government scholarships enhance learner completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesumei sub county. The study recommends that government scholarships/bursaries should continue being provided to students to enhance students' completion rate in public secondary schools. The study will be of great significance to the government through the ministry of education in addition to management of mixed public secondary schools. The study will also benefit the scholars as it provides the basis for further research. The study will contribute to theoretical development on government funding and learner completion rate

Keywords:

Government scholarships and learner Completion rate, Chesumei sub-county.

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1.0 Introduction

Student completion in public day secondary schools is an issue that has received priority across various countries worldwide (Michubi, 2022). For example, in America variations in students' completion rate in is witnessed in various states. In Canada, between 2017 and 2020, high school completion rate has increased by approximately 11 percent (%) and this is attributed to the fact that the government has prioritized students' completion rate (Macgowen, 2021). In Africa and more specifically in Sub-Saharan African countries, students' completion of secondary education is high among male students than female students (Plank, DeLuca, & Estacion, 2018). A report by UNICEF (2022) posits that in the sub-Saharan region which includes Kenya, 21 percent (%) female students as well as 28 percent (%) male students complete secondary school. In Kenya, despite an increase in students' completion rate in post-primary schools, a high number of students still fail to complete their secondary school.

Indicators of completion rate adopted in this study included low dropout and high cohort sitting KCSE. According to Martin and Halperin (2021), "when there is low student drop-out, students' completion rate is high." When more students sit for KCSE, it implies that students' completion rate is high (Plank et al., 2018). In a bid to increase students completion rate in public secondary schools, governments across the world adopted government funding (Mwangi & Cheloti, 2017). Government funding refers to funds provided by the government to learners in schools as a policy in support of their studies (Masimbwa, 2020). Government funding in educational institutions is done as a matter of public interest to make more students not only access by proceed with their education as a result of reduction of tuition fees which in-turn enhances students' completion rate (Njau, 2021).

Indicators of government funding which were adopted in this study include; government scholarships/bursaries, government funding in tuition provision and government funding in providing infrastructure. All governments worldwide provide government funding in form of scholarships/bursaries, tuition provision and provision of infrastructure which helps to enhance students' completion rate (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 2020). Governments also funds tuition fees for students in day public secondary schools and part of the governments' funds are used to fund infrastructural developments which include school libraries, laboratories and classrooms among others (Mitha, 2017). Governments of various countries around the world, for example, India, Ukraine and Egypt among others allocate funds for students' education in post-primary schools (Onuko, 2022). In developing countries such as Ghana, funds provided by the government for this course enhances the rate at which students' complete education (Cameron, 2017). In United States of America and Britain, students' completion rate is high due to government funding (Lewin & Calloids, 2021). In South Africa, the government funds education in public secondary schools which contributes to enhancement of the rate at which students complete their studies (Michubi, 2022).

In Kenya, the Government provision of subsidies for education is meant to enhance students' completion rate (Onuko, 2022). In Kenya, Educational subsidies adopted include; Free Day Secondary School Education (FDSE), Constituency Development Fund (CDF) bursary,

scholarships, teaching and learning materials as well as grants (RoK, 2022). In January 2008, the government of Kenya introduced FDSE subsidy whose main objective was to enhance access rate to secondary school education regardless of the students' socio-economic status and hence enhance students' completion rate (Njau, 2021).

In Kenya, the government provides funds to enhance students' completion rate at various levels of education. This is done through Free Day Secondary Education. As per the Free Day Secondary School Education (FDSE) policy, the government meets tuition fees. According to GoK(2022), for the year 2023, governments' funding for day public secondary education is KES. 22,244.00 annually per student. Despite government funding, not all students complete their education in public day secondary schools in Kenya. In Chesumei Sub County, students who do not complete secondary education is a major problem. As from 2020 to 2023, Chesumei Sub County registered 72 secondary students who did not complete their secondary education which is equivalent to 18 percent (%) of all the students who did not complete secondary education in Nandi County (Chesumei subcounty education office, 2023).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Government funding in the education sector is meant to enhance high students' retention rate in schools, lower drop-out rate and enhance completion rate. But besides its adoption in public secondary schools, students' completion rate is not yet 100%. According to Mwaluko (2017), students' completion rate in public secondary schools in Kenya was still low as public secondary schools still suffer higher students' drop-out which negatively impacts students' completion rate. Completion rates at secondary levels in Kenya was 87.5% in 2022 (Action Aid Kenya, 2022). This shows that students' completion rate in secondary schools is not yet 100 percent (%) despite government funding. In Chesumei sub county, the statistics provided by the Chesumei Sub County Education Office (2023) shows that in 2020-2023 a total of 72 students in day public secondary schools did not complete secondary education. This shows that even in Chesumei sub-county, students' completion rate was low. This was besides existence of government funding to day public secondary schools in Kenya. Empirically, in Chesumei Sub County, little is known about the influence of government funding on completion rate in Mixed Day Public Secondary Schools and yet there existed students who do not complete secondary school in mixed day public secondary schools. The current study therefore sought to determine the influence of government scholarship on learner completion rate in public mixed day secondary schools in Chesumei Sub-County. The remaining section of the article are; section two covers literature review, section methodology, section four results and discussion, section five conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 Literature Review

This section presents literature reviewed on study of variables, learner completion rate and government funding in form of scholarship;

2.1 Government Funding in Form of Government Scholarships and Learner Completion Rate

According to a report by UNICEF (2017), various initiatives have been adopted by different governments to finance education. The initiatives include the Presidential Secondary School Bursary (PSSB) which was founded in 2013/2014 financial year. Besides government appropriation to education through its budget estimate, in countries such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Slovakia and Iceland the governments further finance secondary education through government Scholarships/Bursaries. This has helped to enhance students access rate to education as well as it enhanced students' completion rate at various levels of education. (Câmpeanu & Catarama, 2022). In Tanzania, the government provides scholarships to Secondary School Pupils who come from low-income Households. Government Scholarships is a Government Scheme that helps students to further their studies in secondary schools. The scholarships are meant for households who are not able to pay for their secondary school education (Kingori, 2021). Besides scholarships, the Ministry of Education and Culture usually sends bursaries to every account of a school. In Tanzania, there is the (Global Partnership for Education) GPE which has partnered with the government and it provides a grant of US\$112.5 million all which has made more students to access secondary school education (Boniphace & Ngusa, 2022).

In Tanzania, there is the Circular No. 5 which is concerned with the implementation of Tanzania's fee-free secondary education and it is usually complemented by governments scholarships and/or bursaries that are usually offered so as to make more students to access to secondary education (Shukia, 2020). In Kenya and Nandi County where Chesumei Sub County is found, students benefit from KCB Foundation is able to provide secondary education scholarships for students who performance is high than that of others (Ngasura et al., 2023). There is also private public partnership which include the wings to fly scholarship among others which also offer scholarships to children all which helps to enhance secondary education (Mbogo et al., 2023). Other scholarships include Co-operative Bank Scholarships, palm house foundation scholarships and Elimu among others (Mwangi & Cheloti, 2017). Other forms of bursaries include the Constituency development fund among others. Governments provide funding in form of scholarships/bursaries so as not only to improve educational quality standards as well as enhance students' completion rate. For the past decade more emphasis has been placed on government funding through bursaries (Itigi, 2016). This has led to an upsurge in enrollment in day public secondary schools amidst the provision of bursaries to needy students (Aoko, 2016).

A study was done by Nyakoe (2020) on government funding and academic achievement of Public Secondary Schools in Nyamaiya Division, Kenya. Data was analyzed descriptively as well as inferentially. Government funding in form of provision of bursaries was among the indicators adopted in the study and findings on this construct revealed that government funding in form of bursaries affected students' completion rate. A conceptual gap existed as government scholarships had not been considered which the current study sought to add. Tanui (2022) researched on bursary scheme in the retention and completion rates of

Public Secondary School Students in Kamariny Division in ElgeyoMarakwet County, Kenya. Bursary scheme influenced students' completion rates. The study had been done in Kamariny Division in ElgeyoMarakwet County, Kenya. Literature reviewed led to the development of the following hypothesis statement;

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between government scholarships and learner completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesumei sub county.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it allows for blending of quantitative and qualitative data so as to provide the researcher with information that is relevant as well as accurate. This research design was also appropriate as it does not allow for the manipulation of variables present. Target population was 343 respondents who comprised of 24 principals, 270 headsof department, 48 board of management and drawn from 24 mixed public secondary schools in Chesumei sub county. It also involved 1 Sub County education officer. The sample size was 270 respondents arrived at based on the formula by Yamane's (1967). The study adopted three sampling techniques, that is, stratified random sampling technique, simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique. The current study adopted primary data which was collected using both questionnaires and interview guide. This study adopted content validity where experts' opinion was sought to validate the contents of the questionnaire. Cronbach alpha co-efficient was adopted in the study and it was supposed to be ≥ 0.7 . Data that was collected in the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and content analysis. The regression model adopted was as follows; $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$, where y represents dependent variable (completion rate), α represents the regression constant which is the value of Y when x_1 is equal to zero, β_1 is the change in y for each increment change in x_1 , X_1 connotes government scholarships and ϵ is the error term.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section covers the form of research designed used, the results obtained from the study and discussion.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

This section presents descriptive statistics results on government scholarships, government funding in tuition provision, government funding in providing infrastructure and completion rates. Agree and strongly agree in the likert scale was grouped together as agree and strongly disagree and disagree as disagree while neutral still remained to be neutral while presenting the results. The results presented in the study also include both the mean and standard deviation for each and every statement. The results were presented below;

4.1.1 Government scholarships

The study sought to determine the influence of government scholarships on learner completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesumei Sub-County. The study had developed a number of statements which the respondents were requested to respond to and

the results were presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Government scholarships

| Statements | | S. A | A | N | D | S. D | Mean | Std. deviation |
|--|---|------|------|-----|------|------|--------|----------------|
| Elimu program contributes to more students completing secondary education. | F | 18 | 79 | 9 | 33 | 29 | 3.0876 | 1.35839 |
| | % | 10.7 | 46.9 | 5.1 | 19.9 | 17.3 | | |
| More students have access to Jomo Kenyatta foundation scholarship in the school. | F | 10 | 44 | 8 | 49 | 59 | 3.5182 | 1.34548 |
| | % | 6.1 | 26.3 | 4.8 | 29.1 | 33.7 | | |
| Students who are beneficiaries of Jomo Kenyatta foundation scholarship complete their studies in the school. | F | 46 | 44 | 8 | 43 | 29 | 2.9562 | 1.58053 |
| | % | 27.0 | 26.0 | 4.8 | 25.0 | 17.1 | | |
| Funds provided through Jomo Kenyatta Foundation enhance student completion rate in the school. | F | 44 | 50 | 16 | 24 | 36 | 3.1533 | 1.39795 |
| | % | 26.3 | 29.3 | 9.2 | 13.8 | 21.4 | | |
| All students benefit from Jomo Kenyatta Foundation in Chesumei Sub-County. | F | 36 | 9 | 10 | 47 | 68 | 3.5547 | 1.26561 |
| | % | 21.1 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 27.6 | 40.1 | | |

The study had sought to determine whether Elimu program contributes to more students completing secondary education, majority of the respondents 57.6% (10.7%+46.9%) agreed with the statement while 37.2% (19.9%+17.3%) disagreed and 5.1% were undecided. This signifies that majority of the respondents agreed that elimu program contributes to more students completing secondary education as the statement recorded a mean score of 3.0876 and a standard deviation of 1.35839. Findings resemble that of Nyakoe (2020) that elimu program contributes to more students completing secondary education. On whether, more students have access to Jommo Kenyatta foundation(JKF) scholarship in the school, 32.4% agreed while 62.8% disagreed and 4.8% were undecided. This meant that majority of the respondents stated that more students had no access to (JKF) scholarship in the schools as supported by a mean of 3.5182 and a standard deviation of 1.34548. The study by Tanui (2022) also established that more students had no access to (JKF) scholarship in the schools.

The study sought to determine whether students who are beneficiaries of jomo Kenyatta foundation scholarship complete their studies in the school, majority of the respondents 53%

agreed while 42.1% disagreed and 4.8% were undecided. This meant that majority of the respondents revealed that students who are beneficiaries of (JKF) scholarship complete their studies in the school as the statement recorded a mean of 2.9562 and a standard deviation of 1.58053. The study is in agreement with that of Ndiku and Muhavi (2023) that students who are beneficiaries of (JKF) scholarship complete their studies in the schools.

On whether funds provided through Jomo Kenyatta Foundation enhance student completion rate in the school, majority of the respondents 55.6% agreed with the statement while 35.2% disagreed and 9.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. The statement recorded a mean of 3.1533 and a standard deviation of 1.39795 which implies that majority of the respondents agrees that funds provided through Constituency development fund enhance student completion rate in the school. The findings resemble that of Mukudi (2019) that funds provided through Constituency development fund enhance student completion rate in the schools. Lastly, on whether all students benefit from Jomo Kenyatta Foundation in Chesumei Sub-County, majority of the respondents 67.7% disagreed with the statement while 26.3% agreed with the statement and 6.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. This meant that majority of the respondents disagreed that all students benefit from Jomo Kenyatta Foundation in Chesumei Sub-County, this was supported by a mean score of 3.5547 and a standard deviation of 1.26561. The study is in agreement with that of Wachira (2018) that not all students benefit from Jomo Kenyatta Foundation. The respondent interviewed revealed that;

“Government scholarships have had a significant influence on students’ completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesumeisub county. More students are now able to complete their studies and drop-out rates due to lack of school fees has reduced to a significant extent in all public secondary schools in Chesumeisub county.”

4.2 Regression analysis

Regression analysis was adopted to determine the effect one or many independent variables have on the outcome variable. The results presented in this section include model summary, model fitness and regression co-efficient.

4.2.1 Model summary

Model summary results were presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Model summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | .718 ^a | .568 | .552 | 2.07077 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Government scholarships

b. Dependent Variable: completionrate

The R value which indicates the correlation between the dependent variable and independent variable was 0.718. In practice, a value of 0.4 is taken for further analysis and therefore in this study a value of 0.718 was good for further analysis. R square which is used to show the total variation for the outcome variable that is explained by the predictor variables. In practice a value that exceeds 0.5 shows that the model is effective to determine the association between study variables. In this study, the value was .568 which was good. Adjusted R square indicate the variation in the sample results from the population of the study. Normally, there should be a difference between R square and Adjusted R square that is minimum. In this study, value of adjusted R square was 0.552 which was not far off from 0.568 and therefore it was good. This further implied that 55.2% change in completion rate could be explained by predictor variable (Government scholarships/bursaries).

4.2.2 ANOVA

ANOVA was adopted to test model fitness and the results presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 208.825 | 1 | 69.608 | 16.233 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 570.314 | 390 | 4.288 | | |
| | Total | 779.139 | 391 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: completionrate

b. Predictors: (Constant), Government scholarships

The value of F test was $F(1, 390) = 16.233$, $p < 0.05$. This implies that the model was fit for the study and could be adopted to predict completion rate of students in Public Secondary Schools.

4.2.3 Regression co-efficient

Regression co-efficient was adopted in the study to show the strength of the association, that is, the variables significance in the model and also the magnitude or the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable. The results were presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Regression co-efficient

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficient | | Standardized Coefficient | t | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7.594 | 1.889 | | 4.019 | .000 |
| | Government scholarships | .778 | .069 | .086 | 1.142 | .002 |

a. Dependent Variable: learner completion rate

The results presented in Table 4.4 show that government scholarships/bursaries had a positive and significant effect on completion rate ($\beta=0.778$, $p=0.002$). This implies that an increase in government scholarships/bursaries by one unit increases completion rate by 0.778 units when other factors are held constant. The study had adopted the null hypothesis, H_0 : There is no statistically significant relationship between government scholarships/bursaries and completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesiumei sub county. This null hypothesis was rejected and the study concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between government scholarships/bursaries and completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesiumei sub county. The findings resemble that of Nyakoe (2020) that significant relationship between government scholarships/bursaries and completion rate in public secondary schools.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that government scholarships/bursaries enhance students' completion rate in public secondary schools in Chesiumei sub county. The study also concluded that elimu program contributes to more students completing secondary education. More students have no access to Wings to fly scholarship in the school. Students who are beneficiaries of Wings to fly scholarship complete their studies in the school. The funds provided through Constituency development fund enhance student completion rate in the school. Not all students benefit from funds provided by Constituency development fund in Chesiumei Sub-County. The study recommends that government scholarships/bursaries should continue being provided to students to enhance students' completion rate in public secondary schools, elimu program should benefit more students as it contributes to more students completing secondary education. More students should benefit from the wings to fly scholarship in the schools. Students who are beneficiaries of Wings to fly scholarship complete their studies in the school. All needy students should benefit from funds provided by Constituency development fund in Chesiumei Sub-County. The study recommends a further study to be conducted on the same topic but should consider the adoption of other indicators of government scholarships/bursaries. Future studies should be done on the influence of government funding on completion rate in mixed day public secondary schools in sub counties in other 46 counties in Kenya. A future study should be conducted on other determinants of students' completion rate in mixed day public secondary schools in Chesiumei Sub County, Nandi County, Kenya besides government scholarships/bursaries.

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