

# Influence of Government Funding on Academic Achievement of Public Secondary Schools in Nyamaiya Division, Nyamira County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

*Despite the critical objective of government funding in education, and guaranteeing that all school going children access quality education, recent literature indicates that a good number of them stay away from school. The purpose of this research was to examine the role of economic investments on academic achievement of public secondary schools in Nyamaiya Division, Nyamira County, Kenya. This research study was directed by the listed objective: to establish the influence of government funding on academic achievement of public secondary schools in Nyamaiya division, Nyamira County. The study employed the Human capital theory. The research employed a survey research design which adopted a mixed methodology since it had both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The research employed concurrent triangulation approach. The study targeted 18 principals, 153 class teachers, 3470 students and 1 education support officer. The sample size constituted of 4 principals, 30 class teachers, 347 students and one curriculum support officer a total of 382 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to sample principals and curriculum support officer while random sampling was used to sample class teachers and student. Questionnaires were used to obtain information from students and class teachers while interview guide were used on principals and curriculum support officer. Piloting was conducted in the neighboring Nyamira division on 10% of the sample size. Test-retest technique was used to test reliability. Qualitative data was analysed thematically along the objectives and quantitative data using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 21). The quantitative findings of the study were presented using frequency tables, percentages and inferential statistics using correlation whereas qualitative findings were presented thematically and in narration forms. From the analysis, it was noted that; government and donor funds have enabled school infrastructures to be put in place together with some teaching and learning equipment. Agricultural and entrepreneurial activities have enabled parents to raise school fees and supplement on other learning equipments. Improved infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials impacts positively on learners' academic achievement. The study recommends the government to support public secondary schools fully.*

**Key Words:** influence, government funding, academic achievement, public secondary schools.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Formal schooling is a medium through which poverty will be done away with. Students from economically

challenged backgrounds cannot be able to escape from poverty in the future unless they are empowered with skills and knowledge that will give them a chance for training and entry to the job market. It is the duty of the administration to intervene by establishing stable channels to eliminate this problem.

At the world education forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, leaders from 180 countries agreed that by 2015 all children of school going age must be enrolled in schools. The international commitment to provide every child in developing countries with good, free and compulsory education was set. UNESCO was entrusted with the overall responsibility of coordinating; they provided professional and technical support, while countries concerned worked to develop efficient and effective education plans for levels of education. To achieve these goals of education, donors have partnered with the countries that are most in need to assist in developing better education plans.

The need to promote secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries is growing in an upward trend (Alvarez, 2003; Mulkeen, 2005; World Bank, 2005). The Kenyan government has taken milestone steps to build its human capital, specifically targeting education. Kenya's efforts towards education lead to the development of the FPE Program, which has necessitated the provision of free tuition in secondary education. At secondary level there has been an upward trend for the GER and NER have recorded 16.4 and 14.3 percentage point between 2009 and 2014 (MOE Basic Education Statistical Booklet, 2004). Despite these increments, regional and gender disparities still exist at secondary level of education. The main contribution of these disparities being the cost of education and the value parents from disadvantaged backgrounds attach to education. In collaboration with the private sector, Kenya has to outsource for more funds to assist public secondary schools enhance enrolment and retain learners in school (Vision 2030).

According to Sarah Cameron (UNICEF), only a few countries have succeeded to develop into middle level economies without the many of its people of their having access to secondary education. Karega (2008) noted that, after the start of FSE the MOE recognized the fact that fee payment was responsible for the low transition rate to secondary schools. Although there has been a steady increase in reported transition rate from primary to secondary education, the actual progression is low (MOE Task Force, 2014).

Kilonzo (2007) noted that, 92.5% of the parents advocated for free of charge primary education. These are the same parents whose children transit to secondary schools after completing their primary education. Thus, the chance of such parents investing in their children's secondary education is minimal. It is the wish of every parent that government meets the cost of secondary education fully, but this expectation is not realistic. The government subsidizes education by meeting the cost of tuition, repairs, travel and transport, administrative, electricity and water bills, activity fees and non-teaching staff salaries.

Free Secondary Education (FSE) funds are entrusted to the hands of the BOMs as spelled out in the Basic Education Act (2013), The BOMs are given authority to allocate and spend funds received from the MOE according to the stipulated guidelines in order to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, it is presumed that BOMs and head teachers are knowledgeable on matters related to law, human resource management, supplies and procurement, contracting, accounting and project management.

Knight (1993) noted that, the main elements for efficient and effective financial management in schools were the economy and prudent use of resources. A random survey on the quality and level of BOMs in secondary schools reveals that, head teachers and board members face a serious task in school management (Kilonzo, 2007). This often leads to misappropriation and misuse of resources. In some instances, funds

received by schools from the government are treated as “their money” and therefore subject to misuse. Recent development by the MOE to take school managers through a financial management training by KEMI, is geared towards achieving efficient financial and resource management practices in order to assist realize the objectives of FSE. Because of the social, political and economic benefits associated with secondary education (World Bank2005), subsidized secondary education is seen as a potential approach to enable the poor access meaningful and quality education that results to improved academic achievement in schools.

Many studies have been done on investment in education in America, Europe, South Africa and Nigeria. For example, Paco Martorell (2015) carried out a study on investing in school; capital spending, facility conditions and students’ achievement in US. Agabi (2012) carried out a study on Education as an investment; he noted that school facility spending represented one of the largest education investments. Despite the investment, he noted that facility improvements did not appear to translate into measurable improvements on student achievements.

A few studies have considered investment in education by families and economic investment of the stakeholders towards the improvement of education standards. Parents’ and government contributions have a direct impact towards education achievements. In the local scene, there are few studies on investments in education. Various studies reviewed have looked into various aspects of investment in education. Getange (2013) studied financing of public day secondary school education and its implication on the quality of learning. Otiengo (2016) studied the influence of parental socio-economic status on students’ academic performance in public schools. There is therefore inadequate documentation on the contribution of economic investments on academic achievement of learners in public secondary schools. This gap is what the current study wanted to fill.

## **2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The research was guided by the following objective: to determine the influence of government funding on academic achievement of public secondary schools in Nyamaiya Division, Nyamira County, Kenya.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

A research methodology is a theoretical and systematic examination of the techniques applied in the study. It generally outlines the methods to be used in the research and how a research task shall be undertaken. The study adopted a mixed methodology, since it had both qualitative and quantitative aspects. This methodology was appropriate because it allowed the investigator to gather information using quantitative standardized items or qualitative themes or both methods (Creswell, 2003).

The research employed a descriptive research design. This design allowed both Qualitative and quantitative data to be obtained roughly at the same time of research (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative data was analysed thematically along the objectives and quantitative data using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 21). The design assisted the investigator to gather different but supportive data on the same topic (Morse, 1991).

#### 4. ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The study sought to establish the influence of government funding on academic achievement of public secondary schools. The students’ responses were tabulated as shown below;

**Table 1: Benefit of Government tuition, bursary and/or Sponsorship**

Category	A		U		D	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Received benefit from government tuition for secondary education, bursary and/or sponsorship	111	38.7	17	5.9	159	55.4
My academic performance has improved since the government started subsidizing secondary education	220	76.7	21	7.3	46	16.0

Table 6 gives summary of whether students have benefited from government in terms of tuition, bursary and/or sponsorship. The study established that one hundred and eleven representing 38.7% have benefited, seven of them were undecided while one hundred and fifty-one out of two hundred and eighty-seven representing 55.4% have not benefited. In relation to improvement on academic performance due to government subsidy of secondary education, 220 out of 287 students representing 76.7% agreed, 21 of them were undecided while 46 students representing 16% disagreed. The findings of the study indicate that due to government funding of secondary education, academic performance has improved and this is attributed to increased transition, reduced absenteeism and improved access (MOE, 2014). These findings contradict the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Basic Education Act 2013 that recognize education as a fundamental human right and decree that it be free and compulsory. Basic education stretches from age 4 to 17 and covers 14 years of schooling in Kenya.

The study sought to know about the influence on government funding from teachers and their responses were summarized as shown

**Table 2: Influence of government funding on academic achievement**

Category	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Have improved enrolment of students in your school	0	0	3	12	0	0	7	28	15	60
Government funds have enabled most school most schools Infrastructure to be established	3	12	4	6	0	0	13	52	5	20
The government should cater for school fees in order to enable all students to attend school programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	68	8	32

Findings from table 7 indicate that out of the twenty-five class teachers who participated in the study 60% (15) strongly agreed, 28% (7) agreed that government funding and sponsorship has improved enrolment and achievement in secondary schools while 12% (3) disagreed. This is in support to Kenya’s efforts

towards FPE and FSE Program, which has necessitated the provision of free tuition in secondary education. About whether government funds have enabled most infrastructural facilities to be established, the study noted that 12% (3) strongly disagreed, 16% (4) disagreed, 52% (13) agreed, 20% (5) strongly agreed and none were undecided. The study also investigated whether the government should cater for school fees in order to enable all students to attend school programs. It was established that 68% (17) agreed, 32% (8) strongly agreed while none disagreed or remained undecided. The state of school facility and attendance directly impact on academic performance of learners and school in general.

The study interviewed principals on government funding and it sought to know whether the funds disbursed to secondary school have assisted improve students' enrolment, the four principal gave positive responses. Principal p1 noted that;

*“Through government funding, students from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds have been able to access to secondary education. This is evident as the enrolment rate has improved especially in our day schools”.*

The interview schedules indicated that the funds have enable most schools to establish some infrastructural facilities necessary for teaching and learning, others have used the funds to acquire teaching facilities and equipment. P3 and p4 indicated that improved in infrastructure has assisted in improving academic performance. P4 noted that;

*“Government funding has increased retention, learners from economically challenged backgrounds have been given opportunity to regularly attend class and this has improved their academic performance”.*

Despite the positive responses by the principals, they also noted that the government should address the issues of insufficient allocation, late disbursement and improper utilization of the funds by some BOMs. P4 indicated that;

*“The allocation is not sufficient, disbursement is irregularly done causing inconveniences to the school management in planning and procurement of necessary resources and principals are not trained on financial management before appointment to the position”.*

The principals' responses on government funding in secondary school education concur with the provisions of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Basic Education Act 2013 recognize education as a fundamental human right and decree that it be free and compulsory and the Declaration of United Nations (1948) on Human Rights states that, “everyone has a right to education”. This education should be ideally without charge, especially at primary school level. Quality education should be available while higher education should be accessible to all those who merit. Basic education is a fundamental right that all children of school going age are entitled.

The Curriculum Support Officer was also interviewed on the same and he noted that government funds have enabled most students from poor backgrounds to attend school. The same funds have enabled most schools to put up some teaching classrooms and laboratories for science subjects, at the same time the funds

have enabled schools to purchase teaching and learning equipment. Availability of adequate teaching and learning resources improve academic performance and achievement of learners and school in general.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study established that three fifth of the students who were interviewed have benefited from government bursary and sponsorship while two fifth have not benefited. The study established that attendance of the students has improved since four fifth of the students indicated that they are able to attend school regularly while only a fifth said they have not been able to attend school regularly. On whether government funds have improved enrolment of students in school, the findings of the study indicate that more than half of the students agreed, a quarter were undecided and another quarter disagreed. These results are in support to Kenya's efforts towards FPE and FSE Program, which has necessitated the provision of free tuition in secondary education. Since the government started offering free tuition secondary education, there has been an upward trend for the GER and NER have recorded 16.4 and 14.3 percentage point between 2009 and 2014 (MOE Basic Education Statistical Booklet, 2004). Out of the twenty-five class teachers who were interviewed, slightly more than half agreed that government funds have enabled most infrastructural facilities to be established while only a quarter disagreed.

The study interviewed principals on government funding and it found out that the funds have improved students' enrolment. The principals further indicated that the funds have enable most schools to establish some infrastructural facilities necessary for teaching and learning, others have used the funds to acquire teaching facilities and equipment. On the same principals noted that the allocation of the funds was not sufficient and the time of disbursement inconveniences the teaching programs and activities. Curriculum Support Officer was also interviewed on the same and he noted that government funds have enabled most students from poor backgrounds to attend school. The same funds have enabled most schools to put up some teaching classrooms and laboratories for science. The findings of this research on government funding in secondary school education concur with the provisions of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Basic Education Act 2013 that recognize education as a fundamental human right and decree that it be free and compulsory. The findings of the study indicate that government funding of secondary education improves school attendance, access and facilitate acquisition of teaching and learning facilities. These aspects are key in determining the academic performance of learners in schools, thus the state of school facility and attendance directly impact on academic performance of learners and school in general.

The following specific conclusion was made based on the findings of this research: the study noted that government funds have enabled attendance of students in schools to improve. The same funds have enabled schools to put up basic infrastructural facilities as well as purchase teaching and learning facilities and equipment. These aspects are key contributors of improved academic achievement of learners and schools in general.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendation was arrived at; the government to support secondary education in public school fully.

With the current trend in the world of work and in relations to this current study, the following researches are recommended for further study: a research to find out alternative sources of financing secondary school education.

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