Influence of parents’ contributions in fee payment on student academic performance

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to establish how parents’ contributions in fee payment influence student academic performance in secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. Its importance is seen in the fact that it will be of great significance to all head teachers when developing school budgets and plans like fee structures. This may help them consider several factors before issuing new fees structures, as the needs of parents will be highlighted. The county government and constituency bursary fund may use the study findings in determining the criteria in bursary allocation. The target population of this study comprised of secondary schools where the head teachers, teachers and the students were the targeted respondents. Descriptive study design was used while the participants consisted of 20 head teachers, 111 PTA members, 270 teachers and 826 Form Four students. The sample size the study was calculated 30% of the 290 respondents to arrive at 6 head teachers’ and 81 teachers, 33 PTA members and 248 students Questionnaire and interview schedule were used as data collection instruments. Descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were used in analyzing data with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Presentation of data was done using frequency tables, pie charts and graphs. The study findings showed that majority of parents were unable to complete their fee payment on time. The study recommended that, schools should devise methods through which fee payment can be made convenient rather than adopting a single fee payment policy that is discriminatory to students whose parents belong to low cadre level of society.

Keywords: Parents’ contributions, fee, academic performance

I. Introduction

School fees are an integral part of the education system. Parents are asked to contribute to their children education through payment of fees. The department of education in Canada works with school boards, parents, teachers, and other partners to ensure that policies governing school fees are implemented consistently in all the provinces (Nyaga, 2005). In most Ugandan schools, occasions when school administrators may interact with parents on official days include the Board of Management (BOM) and the PTA meeting days. Other schools also have what they call academic days, visiting days, parents conferences and other days as may be arranged by school administrators (Rosenzweig, 2000). In Kenya the Government white paper (1992) makes it clear that PTAs should continue functioning as voluntary organizations that are mainly concerned with students’ and teachers’ welfare and the overall development of the school. This may be done through paying school fees in time, fundraising for schools, donating, and participating in the planning for the allocation of these resources (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

The study was based on capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement. Hargreaves (2001) developed a theory of school effectiveness and improvement based on: outcomes, both cognitive and moral; leverage, which is the relation between teacher input and education output; intellectual capital, which is the sum of the school’s knowledge and experience; and social capital, that is, networks of trust and collaboration. Hargreaves (2001) argues that the conventional model of measuring school effectiveness (and improvement) is an inadequate tool for the analysis of school success and failure. The concept of ‘school ethos’ helped to make sense of the correlation between a number of school processes, but it did not allow one to test the model in detail, or to predict the performance of a school from any close analysis of identifiable factors. He proposes a new theoretical model of schools, which provides a working model both of effectiveness and improvement. The theory has four master concepts:

Hargreaves (2001) uses this model to present definitions of effective and improving schools, stating that an effective school mobilizes its intellectual capital (especially its capacity to create and transfer knowledge) and its social capital (especially its capacity to generate trust and sustained networks) to achieve the desired educational
outcomes of intellectual and moral excellences, through the successful use of high leverage strategies grounded in evidence-informed and innovative professional practice. An improving school increases its intellectual capital (especially its capacity to create and transfer knowledge) to achieve the educational outcomes of intellectual and moral excellences, by learning...to use higher leverage strategies based on evidence of ‘what works’ and/or innovative professional practice.

B. Parents’ contribution in fees payment
Ahmad and Khan (2012) and Ahmar and Anwar (2013) found a significant relationship between parental socioeconomic conditions and academic achievements of the children in secondary examination and it was concluded that the majority of children whose parents have better socioeconomic conditions performed better in secondary examination as compared to those children whose parents had low socioeconomic conditions. Students from high income families have enough time to stay at school as their parents are able to pay school fees and other contributions (Best & Kahn, 2006). Therefore, it seems that children whose families have income below the poverty line are far less successful educationally than children who live in families with income above the poverty line.

There is substantial evidence in literature that consumers are sensitive to the cost of education (Holla & Kremer, 2008) and that fees remain a major problem to many families. Boarding fees in addition to ancillary expenditures such as uniforms, mattresses and bedding can impede many households from sending their children to secondary school. Reducing cost of education by distributing vouchers for school uniforms is an effective and reasonably cost effective way to increase access. Distribution of school uniforms has been shown to reduce dropout rates (Evans et al., 2008). However, given that uniforms vary from school to school, it may be prohibitively expensive for the government to distribute uniforms. A potential solution is to provide vouchers for school uniforms.

Kenya has attempted towards achievement of universal education. The most notable (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003) was the cost sharing framework, by which the government was to meet salaries of teachers and education administration costs while parents provided tuition fees and textbooks; communities on the other hand were to be responsible for putting up physical facilities and ensuring their maintenance. However, given the differential economic endowment of regions and even social groups, disparities in access to education emerged. The disparities were cost related since not all groups could marshal resources on equal footing. Under the cost sharing arrangement, parents felt exploited by school committees that were considered unsympathetic to parents due of the burdens they imposed on them. Abagi and Olweya (1999) seemed to lend credence to this view when he observed that school fees typically contributed 91% to 100% of all financial resources that were available in schools; government subsidies on the other hand hardly ever exceeded 8% of the schools’ total budget.

C. Conceptual Framework
The framework conceptualizes parental financial contribution as independent variable while dependent variable as students academic performance. The researcher identified independent variable as parental involvement in fee payment, purchase of instructional materials and support in construction and improvement of infrastructural facilities. While the dependent variable was academic performance i.e. operation analyzed to include performance in taste, performance in examination, performance in assignments and then student discipline. The intervening variables included government policies, student teacher ratio, nurture and environmental factors. It was assumed that if the intervening variables are kept constant and the independent variables are strictly adhered to, then there might be high academic performance.

III. METHODOLOGY
The study used case study design as a research design. This study attempted to determine the cause or reason for pre-existing differences in groups of individuals (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is treated as a type of descriptive research since it describes conditions that already exist. The study design was used to finalize the outcome from the selected subjects used in the study. The study intended to find out the effect of parental financial contribution in enhancing secondary schools students’ academic performance in Nandi East Sub-County.

The target population of this study comprised of principals, teachers, Parents Teacher Association (PTA) representatives and Form Four students from public secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. The study targeted twenty schools that were accessible with the study. A population refers to a group of people or study subject who are similar in one or similar ways and which form the subject of study in a particular study. The target population of this study comprised of respondents from secondary schools in Nandi East Sub-County. Respondents from these schools formed the target population and consisted of head teachers and teachers in the schools. The study will target, 826 Form Four students, 273 teachers, 111 PTA members and 21 principals.

A sample in research study refers to any group on which information will be obtained. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a minimum of 30% of the target population should be included in the sample when dealing with heterogeneous sample. The study used stratified sampling to categorize the population into head teachers, teachers and parents that are homogenous groups. The study therefore also used purposive sampling to select the
9 head teachers. This method was used in order to ensure equal representation of schools in the area. They were purposely selected because they are the key decision makers and implementers of school programmes. The parents were randomly selected according to the convenience method with which the researcher selected 33 PTAs members out of 111. The study used simple random sampling method to select 30% of the 270 teachers and 20 head teachers to arrive at 81 teachers and 6 head teachers. This was done randomly by use of lottery method to arrive at 81 teachers from the 270 teachers and 6 head teachers from 20 head teachers. The same procedure was repeated for Form Four students. The study used stratified sampling technique, in this entails the population into categories based on their job designation. These categories included the head teachers and teachers. Categorization was done to separate the population into homogenous subjects that share similar characteristic to ensure equitable representation of the population in the sample. It also used purposive and sampling method in selecting the respondents. The simple random sampling was used to select head teachers and teachers using lottery method. This was done after 30% of the target population is obtained. The PTA were selected using a convenient method where those parents who were present during the study were sampled. This ensured that each member of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. This sampling technique was used to collect focused information. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules as the main tools for collecting data. The selection of these tools has been guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available as well the objectives of the study. The study was mainly concerned with views, opinions, perception feeling and attitudes. Such information could be best collected by questionnaire an interview technique (Kombo & Tromp, 2007).

The data obtained from the field was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis techniques. The descriptive statistics used were; mean standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. The inferential statistics which were used were the chi square test. This was used to determine whether there existed significant relationship between parental contributions in fee payment, acquisition of instructional materials and support in school infrastructure on student academic performance. All data was be analyzed at a level of significance of 0.05. Data coding, entry and analysis was done using Statistical package for Social Science a computerized statistical package by encoding responses from questionnaires and interview schedules. Presentation of this information was done using tables and charts. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questions was analyzed using thematic content analysis. This was through arranging them into themes and sub-themes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of parents’ contributions in fees payment on student academic performance

The study investigated the influence of parents’ contribution in fee payment on student academic performance in secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. At first, the study sought the opinion of students on the degree to which they parents paid fees in schools. Their responses are illustrated in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t go to school in order to help my parents acquire my fees</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.8938</td>
<td>1.09433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians pay my fees in instalments</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.1283</td>
<td>1.42248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians pay fees late</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.6681</td>
<td>1.32012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians pay my school fees per term</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.6504</td>
<td>1.34559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians pay my school fees once a year</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.1903</td>
<td>1.21987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am usually sent away to collect fees at home</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.9602</td>
<td>1.29725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians look for bursaries to fund my education</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.5487</td>
<td>1.43908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student respondents were asked if they did not go to school in order to help, their parents acquire their fees, the mean value was 1.89 and the standard deviation was 1.09, this shows that almost all students disagreed with the statement. This therefore shows that most students do not skip school to go to look for jobs to pay their fees. Asked if their parents/guardians paid their fees in instalments, the students were undecided (M=3.12 and SD=1.42). This shows that some parents paid fees in impalement while others paid in full depending on the mode of payment recommended by the school. This finding is consistent with Nyaga (2005) who established that there were delays in fee payment by parents in majority of schools in Mbeere Sub County. The delay in the payment of fees could affect teaching and learning despite the introduction of tuition free secondary education. The respondents were also asked if their parents/guardians paid their fees late and the study findings showed a significant number of them were undecided with the statement (M=2.67 and SD=1.32). This showed that sometimes most of the students their parents paid school fees late and this affected their teaching and learning in schools. Asked if their parents paid their school fees per term, they tended to agree with the statement (M=3.65 and SD=1.35). It was observed that most of the students indicated that it happened occasionally. Moreover, when
asked as to whether their parents/guardians paid school fees once per year, students tended to disagree (M=2.19 and SD=1.21). This indicated that majority of parents were not able to pay fees in one academic year leading to fee balances. One head teacher interviewed who said that:

“We are owed a lot of money by our suppliers because majority of parents do not pay their students fees frequently.”

In addition, one parent-teacher association member clarified that:

“Majority of parents cannot be able to complete paying their students fees in one year due to poverty and other pressing issues encountered at the household level.”

This shows that fee payment is a problem faced by majority of secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. The results are consistent with Rosenzweig (2000) who established that majority of parents in sub Saharan African countries are unable to pay their school fees on time. The study also asked the students if they were sent away to collect fees at home by their schools, they tended to agree while others disagree (M=2.96 and SD=1.30). This shows that some students are sent home to collect fees on regular basis in the study area. The PTA member said that sometimes as a board, they are forced to send students home to collect fees but some of them are unable to return with fees due to parents’ inability to raise the required fees while some are abandoned. This according to one head teacher has resulted to dropout cases in schools. This information is further explained by Elimu Yetu (2003) who established that cases of dropping of learners in schools has been necessitated by parents inability to raise required fees for secondary education. Lastly, when students were asked if their parents/guardians looked for bursaries to fund their education, they showed mixed response (M= 2.55 and SD= 1.44). This showed that some parents made efforts to look for bursaries while some did not. One parent teacher association member interviewed opined that:

“There exist discrimination in award of bursaries to needy students in this area and this makes majority of parents not to look for support from Constituency Bursary Fund offices.”

From these, the criteria of award of bursaries were found to be a major impediment hindering parental effort in seeking support.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The data from the field revealed that, most of the parents/guardians paid their fees per term and some paid in irregular installments. Many of the parents could not pay their children’s fees once a year. This led to schools accumulating fees balances for even more than 5 years. Schools heads sent students home occasionally sent home due to non-payment of their school fees. This study concluded that, parents were occasionally unable to pay their school fees in time and students whose parents paid fees occasionally tended to perform better than those whose parents rarely paid fees.

References


