The Amounts of Bursary Allocation: Focus on Kenyan Secondary Schools Internal Efficiency

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Abstract: - Secondary school education is very critical in any education system because of the crucial role it plays in catalyzing national development. Consequently, maintaining a high student enrolment at this level should be a priority for all countries. The Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) was established by the government of Kenya through an Act of Parliament in 2003. The study was guided by classical liberal theory of equality of opportunities. The study was designed to determine equity implications in bursary awards on the internal efficiency of secondary schools. The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between the amounts of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency in secondary schools. The study was guided by classical liberal theory of equality of opportunities. The study was designed to determine equity implications in bursary awards on the internal efficiency of secondary schools. The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between the amounts of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency in secondary schools; to investigate the relationship between bursary allocation and the internal efficiency in secondary schools. This study employed a mixed methods design. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview schedule. Qualitative data were analyzed through themes, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The study established that there was a positive and significant relationship between amount of bursary allocated and school fees balance of the recipients in bursary allocation to students which indicates that with a unit increase in bursary contribution there is an increase in school fees charged in secondary schools. The findings of the study will provide useful information to educational stakeholders in the management of secondary schools that will be useful in improving the management of secondary schools.

Key Terms: Bursary, Allocation, Secondary Schools, Focus, Internal Efficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring education assists in improving the welfare of people as a society, community or individuals (Lawson, 2005). Kenyan Primary education lays the foundation for both secondary education, while secondary education provides a vital link between primary education and the world of work on one hand, and a springboard to tertiary and/or higher education and training on the other (De Bruyn, 2017). As a result, excellent outcomes in secondary education immeasurably contribute to the country’s economic development by producing appropriate human resource at the higher education level that are integral in supporting greater productivity. Therefore meaningful access to secondary school education requires more than a simple enrolment, but also includes participation in the education system.

Due to the increased focus on basic and secondary education and educational attainment, several educational policy documents ranging from The Jomtien declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 and the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 have been developed. More recently, the sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 4 was formulated to focus on 10 targets encompassing many different aspects of education, key of which was the attainment of universal primary and secondary education for all girls and boys to complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes by the year 2030 (UNESCO, 2018). After the formulation of the SDGs, preliminary data suggest a slow progress in many countries despite reports of increased school enrollment (Bhutta, 2010). The slow progress is country-specific but one explanation stands out in virtually all countries: educational costs rank as one of the most significant factor in educational access and attainment (Kwiek, 2009).

The cost of financing secondary education varies widely from one country to another and from one region to another (Murray et al., 2010; Chambers, 2008), but requirement for the cost of education remains almost similar across the board (Johnstone, 2009). Most of the requirements for financing secondary education depend on the numbers of children in secondary school, running programmes within the curriculum, contribution of financial and other resources from various stakeholders and the costs per child. The main costs basically include tuition fees, examination fees, costs of uniforms, cost of hiring extra teachers, and purchase of teaching materials, school uniforms, feeding, transportation and extra curriculum activities (Levin, 2018). Achieving most of these requirements, guarantees quality education, yet over the past few years the cost of meeting these requirements in education have been rising at a rate that out paces consumer price indices (Johnstone & Marcucci, 2010). Despite the high cost, the issue of affordability of secondary education should play an important role to help in the achievement of secondary education.

Experience across both the developed and developing countries suggests that providing extra resources to schools is an ineffective way to improve affordability, access and sometimes quality of the educational attainment (Levin & Calllods, 2001). This has been shown to encourage students
enrollment in several developed and developing countries of the world where planning for education has been in place over the last hundreds of years. Many of these countries realized that charging costly levies and other costs incurred during the learning process effectively blocked many students from accessing secondary education and therefore a large portion of the population would have been left outside the formal educational system (Woodhall & Psacharopoulos 1985).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the issue of costs of education has been grappled with for almost five decades (Mingat & Psacharopoulos, 1985; Lewin, 2009). This was so because, school attendance in the region has been the lowest compared to the rest of the world and the region is also regarded as the poorest in the world. Thus the relatively high cost of education in the region is linked with widespread poverty causing low enrollment and educational attainment. Moreover, in some countries where the cost of secondary education is relatively lower, increased students’ attendance of secondary schools has been reported (Oketch, 2003). Many countries within the SSA regions have gradually realized that high cost of education effectively locks out many deserving students from access education and therefore issues of financing education has been considered.

In Kenya, education the high cost of secondary education was realized more than five decades ago and as a result the government has attempted to shoulder the burden of a school levies through introduction of several funding strategies of the years ().In most cases, the government provide on average 20-30 percent allocation of state financial resources and caters for the tuition expenses ( Malenya, 2008; Kinuthia, 2009; UNESCO, 2010) and the parent of the student pay for such items as books and school running expenses while the government. However, it is during the implementation of the free primary education in the year 2002 that the government realized that the need to start early planning to ensure continuity, accessibility and affordability of post primary education. The government through their policy indicated that up to 50% of the cost of secondary school should be eased from the parents. This was to be achieved through several external sources of funding including through secondary school bursary scheme at the county and constituency level.

The secondary schools bursary scheme was introduced by the government in the 1993/1994 financial year to enhance access, ensure retention and reduce disparities and inequalities in the provision of secondary school education (Njeru & Orodo, 2003; Orodo, 2003; IPAR Policy Brief, 2008). In particular the bursaries targeted students from underprivileged families, those living in slum areas, those facing difficult circumstances, those from pockets of poverty in high potential areas, districts in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), orphans and girl-child (GOK, 2003; 2005). At inception of the fund, funds were disbursed directly to secondary schools from the ministry of education headquarters. Due to lack of clear guidelines to schools on how to identify needy students for bursary awards, beneficiaries were identified through different ways. However, in most cases the head teachers ultimately decided on who was to be awarded the bursary and the amounts to be allocated. After the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government took over power in 2003, it changed the disbursement of the secondary Education Bursary Fund from the Ministry of Education to be allocated through the constituencies. Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty was then introduced to give more power to the local communities to identify and support secondary education for the needy children from poor families and vulnerable groups. In 2013, bursary was included in County Development Package. Moreover, the government also encouraged other sectorial players to be involved in provision of funding to the secondary schools, which witnessed several banks, Non–Governmental organization, county government arms, churches among other sources (Kariuki, 2016).

Each of the bursary donors has their guidelines for allocation of the bursaries. Claims have been advanced that although bursaries are available; it rarely benefits the needy students. This persists despite evidence that students from poor families are still unable to access secondary school education despite its availability in relevant organizations (IPAR, 2010. Mwende, 2009) posits that the process of sending money from central government to constituencies then to schools takes a long time. No study has yet determined the complexity of money transfer from other sources of funding to students. By the time recipients get the money, many would have been sent away from school, which may affect many aspects of the students’ educational quality and efficiency. Major concerns with bursary allocation revolve around weak administrative systems and questionable allocation criteria (Martens, 2003). As a result of this, most secondary school going children are unable to participate fully in this intermediate education as reflected by increasing (7.1%) dropout rates (Onyango, 2001). Moreover, when students cannot regularly meet the need to pay their fees, they are frequently send home thus exacerbating absenteeism while the school find it difficult to manage their internal efficiency for the students leading to problems such as low retention, dropouts, repetitions, absenteeism and poor academic performance in secondary school (Oketch, 2003). Given the foregoing argument, relating equity in distribution of bursary funds and internal efficiency in schools, there is an urgent need to establish equity in distribution of bursary and relate this to efficiency in schools for many areas in Kenya.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, the government has a policy to assist needy student’s access secondary education. The policy has seen many players into the field to assist needy student access
secondary schools. At present there are myriad sources of bursaries such as CDF, county government, Equity bank, Co-op Bank Foundation, Ngo’s, church, Foundations, politicians and even individuals. Every year these sources declare huge amounts of bursaries allocated to needy students to assist them in accessing and participating in Secondary Education. At the same time, many secondary school students are unable to access even their leaving certificate and results slips owing to huge balances they owe schools. The government has directed secondary school heads to release results slips, leaving certificates and KCSE certificates unconditionally regardless of whether the students have fee balances or not. The secondary schools heads have insisted that such balances must be cleared before the certificates are released. This conflict has exposed the inconsistencies in bursary allocation to the needy students which needs to be empirically investigated. Thus the purpose of this study is to establish equity in bursary allocations to the needy students in relation to secondary schools internal efficiency.

1.2: Objective of the Study

To establish the relationship between the amounts of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency in secondary schools in Bungoma County

1.3 Research Question

To what extent does the amount of bursary allocated affect the internal efficiency in secondary schools in Bungoma County?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study employed a mixed methods approach. Mixed method research approach is defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or a program of inquiry to understand a research problem (Creswell, 2009). The philosophical foundations underpinning a mixed method research design are embedded in pragmatism. Teddlie (2003) remarked that pragmatism is the best paradigm for mixed methods research. Most basically pragmatic perspective stems from the fact that inquiry can make a practical difference in the world. Pragmatism in research comes down to expectations about methodology and epistemology. A pragmatic conception of research defines the epistemic values of research results practically. A theory or set of measurements should be able to address the needs of the problem, rather than aspiring to an abstract notion of perfect precision. As Creswell (2009) observes, a pragmatic perspective draws on employing what works, using diverse approaches, giving primacy to the importance of the research problem and question, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge.

According to Creswell (2011), mixed method design is appropriate when both quantitative and qualitative data together provide a better understanding of a research problem than either type by itself. Mertens (2003) further contend that, mixed methods investigations may be used to enhance a better understanding of a research problem by converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data, identify variables/constructs that may be measured subsequently through the use of existing instruments or the development of new ones and obtain statistical, quantitative data and results from a sample of a population and use them to identify individuals who may expand on the results through Qualitative data. Thus the study on equity in bursary funds distribution and internal efficiency of secondary schools utilized a mixed method design as it sought to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data.

2.1 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations addressed the following aspects: participants’ consent, willingness to participate, confidentiality and anonymity, and integrity as regards plagiarism (Creswell, 2012). Since the study embraced mixed methods, ethical considerations attended to typical issues that surface in both forms of inquiry. Quantitative issues relate to obtaining permissions, protecting anonymity respondents, not disrupting sites, and communicating the purpose of the study. The study acquired a research permit from the National Council of Science and Technology to collect data from the participating universities. Voluntary participation of all categories of respondents was solicited through the signing of Informed Consent Forms.

In qualitative research these issues related to carrying the purpose of the study, avoiding deceptive practices, respecting institutional cultures, not disclosing sensitive information and masking identities of participants. Information obtained from respondents was kept in uttermost confidence by the study. In a convergent design, the quantitative and qualitative sample size may be different. Care needs to be taken to not minimize the importance of a sample because of its size. This was accomplished by in-depth interviews with the participants. The interview guide captured elaborate data as per all the research questions and hypothesis.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Amounts of Bursary Allocated and the Internal Efficiency in Secondary Schools

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between the amounts of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency in secondary schools; the study results were analyzed and presented as follows;
The study results revealed that 82.8% (mean=4.14) of the respondents were of the opinion that Bursary is insufficient to cater for the increasing number of the needy students. 85.2% (mean=4.26) of the respondents were of the view that there is need for more allocation of bursary in order to meet the demand and allow contribution to boost the kitty, 84.4% (mean=4.22) were of the opinion that timely disbursement of bursary to schools is necessary to enable the beneficiaries limit loss of time due to absenteeism, 84.2% (mean=4.21) of the responses were of the opinion that they The amount of bursaries allocated should be increased relative to the nature of schools students have been admitted to.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that there is need for more allocation of bursary in order to meet the demand and allow contribution to boost the kitty. Allocation of bursaries to schools has not remained constant, it has been varying with time and funds have been noted to reach the beneficiaries at time expected. The constituency bursary fund committee comprises individuals or member appointed by existing members of parliament as the fund is closely tied to constituency development fund that is greatly monitored by the members of parliament. Thus, allocation to the constituency is based on the poverty index of the constituency without due regard of the incidence of changing household income ability and emerging issues that renders the house hold without tangible breadwinner. This was supported by Njeru, (2003) who observed that found no guidelines to individual schools on how to identify needy students for bursary awards. Guidelines simply instructed the schools to allocate bursary to the poor on bases of excellent academic record and discipline. The guidelines failed to give specific guidelines regarding the amount of bursary to be allocated per student for it to have any tangible impact. Therefore, due to absence of clear guidelines, various criteria and methods to allocate the bursary fund were used by schools.

Wachiye and Nasongo (2010) observed that orphans and good performers were the majority of bursary recipients, leading to confirming that bursary fund Committee determined the recipients based on their parentage and academic performance. The Gini Coefficient Value 0.01 for the bursary allocations to the recipients implied that the allocations were done equitably in constituency. As a matter of fact 80% of the recipients noted that the criteria used by the committee to identify the beneficiaries were fair enough. The equity in the allocation can be attributed to fairness demonstrated in the criteria for identifying the bursary recipients and uniformly in the bursary amounts. However, the findings of the study revealed that there were problems encountered by the bursary fund committee. These included; inadequate bursary by the government, political interferences and delays in bursary disbursements.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Either they were not considered for the award or what was awarded being inadequate to retain them. Many of the Principles had shared the view that least needy students also benefited from the bursary kitty as the strategies used by the constituency committee is not exhaustive to identify the needy groups due to nepotism and political influence that prevail among the constituency bursary committee members as a result of their appointment manner. Further, the Principles noted that poverty index should be the basis of identifying the needy followed by orphanage in order to cater for the needy and vulnerable in society. It was pointed out by the Principles that disruption of learning among the needy is a common feature as they are frequently sent home for fees as bursary is sometimes inconsistent and disbursed late. The united nation rationale and provision of free primary education in aims at achieving universal education to all school going children.

### V. POLICY IMPLICATION

For effective internal efficiency in secondary schools, timely disbursement of bursary to schools is necessary to enable the beneficiaries limit loss of time due to absenteeism when out to fill gaps unmet by bursary in terms of school fees and other user charges. Hence, necessary arrangement should be made with schools to create understanding on ways to treat possible beneficiaries.
REFERENCES