

**EFFECTS OF FREE DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL FUNDS ON STUDENTS'
COMPLETION RATES IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MWALA SUB-COUNTY,
MACHAKOS COUNTY,
KENYA**

SALOME NDUNGWA KISYANGA

**A Research Project Submitted to the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Award of Degree of Master of Education in
Educational Administration of Machakos University**

JULY, 2025

DECLARATION

Declaration by the student

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of degree in any other university.

Signature.....

Date: 

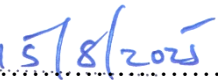
Salome Ndungwa Kisyanga

E55/1276/2017

Approval by the supervisors

This research project has been presented for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

Signature.....

Date: 

Prof. Kimiti Richard Peter

Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies

Machakos University

Signature.....

Date: 

Prof. David Mulwa

Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies

Machakos University

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my children Norah Nduku and Eric Muuo for their great support, encouragement and for their invaluable assistance in providing ICT support during the development of this research project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EACC	Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission
EFA	Education for All
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
FDSE	Free Day Secondary Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAEEA	International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

ABSTRACT

Education plays a crucial role in the progress of any nation. Since independence in 1963, Kenya has witnessed significant growth in its secondary school education sector. Numerous new schools have been built to accommodate the rising number of students seeking secondary education. This has effectively reduced the distance students have to travel to reach their schools, making day schooling more feasible. However, despite the government's efforts to make education more accessible through initiatives like Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), there is a concerning trend of high drop-out rates among students before completing the entire four-years of secondary school learning. The government's objective of ensuring education affordability for all school-going children has not fully addressed the persistent issue of students dropping out of school prematurely. This research aimed at examining the effects of FDSE funds on the completion rates of students in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. The four objectives of the study were: to establish the influence of disbursement process of FDSE funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya; to determine the effect of FDSE funding adequacy on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya; to establish the influence of FDSE funds utilization on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya; and to examine the effect of extra levies on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. The study was grounded in the Systems Theory of Management and used a descriptive survey research design. The study focused on the 52 public day secondary schools located in the specified sub-county. The research involved a study population of 52 principals, 208 class teachers, 52 chairpersons, and 52 vice-chairpersons of students' leaders' councils in day secondary schools. To ensure representation, the Stratified Sampling Technique was used to divide the schools into seven educational zones. A random sample of 28 principals, 107 class teachers, 28 chairpersons, and 28 vice-chairpersons was selected from each zone using simple random sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires, and the instrument's reliability was assessed using the test-retest technique with the guidance of supervisors. The reliability index was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient method, with an $r > 0.7$ indicating high internal reliability. Experts assessed the appropriateness of the research items and evaluated their suitability to determine validity. While descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, and means were used to examine the quantitative data, the qualitative data was analyzed thematically using story forms. The Statistical Packages for the Social Scientists computer programme Version 24 was used for statistical data analysis, and the results were discussed in narrative form and percentages and presented graphically as frequency tables, and figures. The study established that FDSE funding is inadequate for the required learning/teaching resources. The delay in disbursement of the funds affects the quality of learning due to inadequate resources. This compels schools to charge extra levies. As a result, students are sent home for extra levies and those who cannot afford drop out of school. The Ministry of Education should develop clear policy and guidelines to ensure adequacy of funds, disbursement of funds on time and prudent utilization of funds and to curb charging of extra levies in schools. The study found out that the students completion rates were below 70% of the learners who enroll in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. The high enrolment rates are not in tandem with the completion rates.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives background information of the study highlighting the need for education, Government's initiatives to support high completion rates, role of communities and statistical trend on completion rates in Mwala Sub-County. The chapter presents statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance, limitations, delimitations and assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Investment in education is a crucial component of the developmental process of any country. Therefore, many nations allocate resources to their education sector to facilitate appropriate learning and guarantee equitable access to education for all individuals. Governments throughout the globe have made education and training their top priority in order to improve their citizens' quality of life. Since gaining independence, the government of Kenya has implemented several initiatives to tackle challenges in the education sector and ensure all enrolled secondary school students successfully complete their studies. Some of these initiatives being used include the construction of more secondary schools, employment of more teachers, enforcement of children's rights, provision of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), provision of sanitary pads to girls, and provision of bursaries, among others. However, despite these efforts, the government has not achieved 100% retention of learners in secondary school education.

Goal No.4 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda (SDG) is for all countries to provide children and young people with access to basic and secondary

education that is both free and equitable and of high quality. SDG No. 4 calls on all countries to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities in learning to ensure gender equality in education. Communities and households play a significant role in ensuring learners enroll in secondary schools and be retained until completion. They play this role through provision of physical infrastructure, instructional materials and equipment and provision of personal effects to the learners. However due to high poverty levels in Kenya and in particular in Mwala Sub-County, parents have been unable to play that role in schools.

In Kenya education is considered a fundamental right that enables individuals, families, and communities to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for enhancing their overall quality of life. Education plays a pivotal role in enhancing productivity, thus serving as an essential tool in the realization of Kenya's vision for the year 2030. Kenya introduced FDSE in 2008 with government sending tuition fees of Ksh 10,265 per student to schools at inception. Later, it increased to 12,870 in 2014 before scaling it to 22,244 in the year 2018 with an aim of making secondary education affordable and achieve 100 percent transition and completion rates (Matara, 2020). However, Kamau and Wambugu (2017) report that 48% of the secondary school students who enrolled in Form One in 2012 did not sit for the KCSE examination in 2015 in the country.

Statistical trend on completion rate of day secondary school students from the Sub-County Directorate of Education office in Mwala Sub-County demonstrates a worrying trend despite FDSE funds being provided in day secondary schools. For instance, records at the Sub-County office reveal that out of 2,113 day secondary school students admitted in Form One at the start of 2009 in public day secondary schools in the sub-county, a diminished 1,911 representing 70.4% were privileged to complete secondary

education in 2012. Similarly, figures on students' completion rate show that out of a total of 2,226 students who secured admission to Form One at the commencement of the 2013 academic year in public day secondary schools, only 1,998 students (70.6%) were pronounced lucky to have completed secondary education through sitting KCSE in 2016. Further, statistical evidence posts 2,225 students representing 71.2% as the number of students who successfully completed secondary education after sitting for the KCSE at the close of 2020 out of the initial 2,522 students who joined Form One at the start of 2017 in public day secondary schools in the sub-county. This clearly shows that the drop-out rate in Mwala Sub-County is high at approximately 29.5%.

The cost of living has been increasing over the years making education unaffordable to many students due to high poverty levels in Mwala Sub-County. Coupled with the many challenges: almost a solid year of absence from school owing to COVID-19, inadequate funding, slow disbursement of FDSE funds, misplaced FDSE prioritization and failure in curbing illegal extra charges are likely to push early school leaving as well as completion rates further down in the Sub-County, Kenya at large and among low resourced countries. Going by the statistics, trends and facts, the present study strongly posits that the Mwala Sub-County (Kenya and the world in entirety) is not on track to meet the SDG4 ambition of universal secondary school completion. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a study to establish the effects of FDSE funding on students' completion rates in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. As such, the study investigated whether inadequate funding, inefficient utilization of FDSE funds, illegal extra levies and disbursement process had a bearing on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The enactment of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy in Kenya aimed to enhance accessibility to primary and secondary education through the allocation of additional resources, ultimately aiming to offer a comprehensive 12-year basic education. (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Many students in Mwala Sub-County drop out of secondary school before completion of the four years hence they don't sit for KCSE examination. This results in the lack of training and educational prospects that necessitate the possession of a secondary school certificate. Therefore, due to lack of higher education, they are likely to earn less in their lifetime and have low living standards. The study aimed at finding out the reason why Kenya has not attained 100% completion rate despite the government funding secondary school education since 2008 by provision of FDSE.

The study's background highlights the apparent issue of low completion rates within Kenya's education sector. Nevertheless, no research has been conducted in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, to specifically investigate the effects of FDSE funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools. The study focused on analyzing the disbursement, sufficiency, and utilization of FDSE funding, as well as the role of any additional charges, on students' completion rates.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To establish the influence of disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the effect of Free Day Secondary Education funding adequacy on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iii. To establish the influence of Free Day Secondary Education funds utilization on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iv. To examine the effect of extra levies on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) How does the disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funds influence students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya?
- (ii) How does the availability of adequate funding for Free Day Secondary Education affect the students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya?
- (iii) What is the influence of proper utilization of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya?

- (iv) What is the effect of extra levies on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The Republic of Kenya is facing challenges with the affordability of secondary education, making it difficult for many parents to invest in their children's education. Therefore, it was crucial to examine the effects of the free day secondary education on students' completion rates in secondary schools. The findings of this study could offer valuable insights to policymakers, educational economists, and planners, helping them understand the effects of FDSE and the importance of ongoing support for it. The Ministry of Education can use the findings as a significance reference point when formulating policies and guidelines, as well as implementing effective checks and balances to uphold the impartiality of free day secondary education. The results can also help reinforce monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, ensuring transparency and accountability in the utilization of the government-provided financial resources for education. The Ministry of Education can also utilize the results during budgetary allocations to avail adequate capitation to schools to acquire learning resources in day secondary schools. Lastly, in addition to informing policy and administrative efforts, the research could also enrich the existing literature on secondary education financing, not only within Kenya but also in other developing regions. This could be beneficial for scholars, educators, and researchers interested in exploring this subject further.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Several challenges were experienced during the study. One of these challenges was lack of willingness by teachers to participate in filling the questionnaires. To address this challenge, the researcher coordinated with the respondents in advance to ensure their

availability. Another challenge was fear to disclose school's information and data. To mitigate this challenge, the researcher assured the respondents that their identities will remain confidential and that the information provided will be solely used for research purposes only. Also, the area studied had poor roads hence it was difficult to access some schools within the area of study with motorcars. This made it necessary for the researcher to use other available means of transport, for example motorbikes. In addition, some respondents declined to respond to all questions and/or failed to return filled questionnaires to the designated place. The researcher overcame this by booking appointments with the respondents, assured them of confidentiality and that data gathered was not to be used to victimize anyone but exclusively for academic purpose.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya with exclusion of private secondary schools. The study investigated effects of Free Day Secondary School funds on students' completion rates. It focused on the influence of disbursement process, funding adequacy, funds utilization and extra levies to determine how they affected students' completion rates. On students' completion rates the focus was only on completing the four-year course and sitting for KCSE examination.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

The study was carried out on assumptions that the respondents conformed to all conditions set for the study. The study also assumed that all participants freely gave honest responses to all the research questions. It was also assumed that students' low completion rate was associated with inadequate, delayed disbursement, wrong utilization of FDSE funding and illegal extra levies in public day secondary schools.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Systems Theory of Management. The theory was originally proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928 and has undergone further development by other scholars like Gibson (1997), Mullin (2005), Weihrich (2008), and Scott (2008). This theory perceives an organization as a system comprising individuals who collaborate within a framework. The organization interacts with its environment, acquiring resources such as people and finances while also contributing back to that environment. According to the Systems Theory, an organization, such as a school, is not solely influenced by its immediate surroundings but is also by the wider environment, such as communities or the economic policies it is associated with. The implementation of the Free Day Secondary Education funding by the government of Kenya is an example of a change from the outer environment.

The theory further proposes the idea that a system comprises of various components interacting together to achieve a common objective. In the context of a school system, it can be viewed as having inputs which are the resources where human resource makes use of other resources such as finances, infrastructure and teaching materials such as text books and chalk to achieve an output {common objective}. These resources undergo a series of actions, including planning, organization, motivation, and control, ultimately directed towards fulfilling the objectives of the educational institution. This is shown through timely disbursement, adequacy and proper utilization of FDSE funds and curbing of extra levies. Outputs are results obtained after inputs are processed, for example, high students' completion rate. Outcomes are results of a process, for example, enhanced quality of life or productivity. Feedback loops are a critical component of the systems theory of management as they are a necessary feature in open systems. Feedback loops provide the organization and its leaders with the information

they need by connecting what they may be doing right or wrong related to the inputs or outputs. Feedback in an educational context can originate from KCSE enrolment and performance data or external factors such as governmental, societal, economic, and technological influences on the organization. When there is disconnect between educational inputs, processes, and results, the system is inefficient. Attaining optimal student completion rates is one of the key goals in analyzing a system that includes inputs, educational procedures, and outcomes. Consequently, high rates of student completion are one of the most important indicators of the government's impact in making inputs like FDSE funds available in the secondary education system.

A significant issue in secondary schools in developing countries is educational wastage. This mismanagement leads to students dropping out before completing their education and attaining the intended academic goals. Education is the driving force of any nation and therefore students need to complete their basic education successfully.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

In the study, conceptual framework was based on the objectives of the study: Effective disbursement process of FDSE funds to ensure the allocated total amount per term is availed to public day secondary schools at the beginning of the term and funds being utilized appropriately on various vote heads to ensure school programmes and projects are carried out within the time lines, adequate FDSE funds to avail the required learning materials and infrastructure in order to ensure proper curriculum implementation and completion of syllabi and curbing of extra levies by the government to ensure students are not sent home to collect fees leading to dropping out of school. This will lead to high students' completion rates. The disbursement, adequacy and utilization of FDSE funds and curbing of extra levies constituted the independent variables. The dependent

variable was high students' completion rates while the intervening variables were government's policy and teaching/learning process and resources.

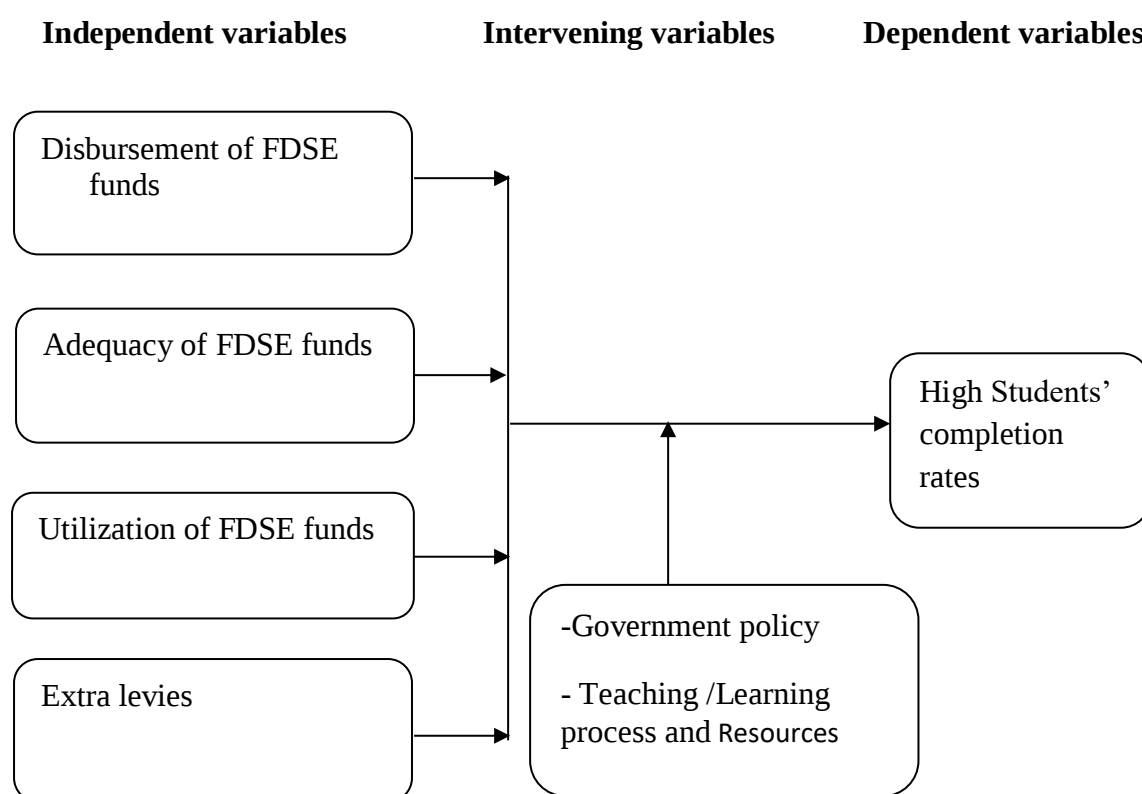


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework showing relationship between FDSE funds and Students' completion rates.

1.13 Operational Definition of Terms

Disbursement process: All the activities carried out to transfer money from one entity (Ministry of Education) to another (schools).

Adequacy of FDSE funds: Satisfactory amount of funds that can appropriately cater for the needs of various vote heads in schools.

Utilization of FDSE funds: The action of making practical and effective use of FDSE funds disbursed to schools to achieve the intended objective.

Extra levies: Fees charged to students by the school without authorization by Ministry of Education.

Free and compulsory education: Entails a publicly funded and obligatory schooling system for all children within the school age range.

Completion Rate: The percentage of students who successfully pass all the necessary academic cycles within a specified timeframe, such as enrolling in form 1 and completing Form 4 within four years.

Drop-Out: Refers to the premature withdrawal of students from secondary school before completing the full education cycle.

Free Day Secondary Education Funds: Refers to the financial allocation provided by the Kenyan government to public day secondary schools. These funds are intended to cover various expenses required for the proper functioning of the schools.

Public Secondary Schools: Refers to post-primary educational institutions that provide basic education and receive financial support from the government.

Wastage: A measurement of internal effectiveness that is shown by student repetition and drop-out rates.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter examined existing literature on the effects of FDSE (Funds for Development of Social Equity) on completion rates in both developed and developing countries worldwide. The literature review encompassed various reputable sources, such as books, academic journals, discussion papers, government publications, reports, newspaper articles, and insights from fellow researchers.

2.2 Empirical Review

It was the assumption of the study that improper management of the government's FDSE policy of free secondary school was impeding free education especially completion rate. To understand this, an empirical audit of this issue from the global, regional and country as well as local perspectives was explored in this section. This review was based on the four variables examined in the study namely; disbursement process of FDSE funds, adequacy of FDSE funds, utilization of FDSE funds and failure to curb charging of extra fee.

2.2.1 FDSE Disbursement and Students' Completion Rates

In a study conducted by Ayako (2017) regarding the financing of post-primary education in Kenya, it was highlighted that the capitation grant serves as a mechanism to distribute resources fairly and equitably among schools. However, Ayako noticed that unlike certain other nations, Kenya's capitation grant formula did not specifically designate funds to support vulnerable groups, like students with special needs. This has led to the conclusion that post-primary education in Kenya faces several obstacles, including inadequate and unsustainable funding in both the public and

private/community sectors. The new study tries to close the theoretical gap that Ayako's research revealed. Despite the difficulties mentioned in Ayako's work, Mueni, Kimiti, and Mulwa's study from 2019 on the effects of timely distribution of free secondary education tuition funds showed that such prompt distribution enhanced the quality of curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

In their study, Mueni et al. (2019) investigated the potential correlation between the punctual disbursement of funds for Free Secondary Education and the effective implementation of the curriculum. The research employed a mixed method approach and included 31 principals, 307 Form 4 students, and 164 form 4 class teachers as the sample. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules. Various methods of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, were utilized in this study. The results indicated a noteworthy correlation between the prompt delivery of curriculum support materials to public secondary schools and the overall effectiveness of curriculum implementation in Makueni County. The research proposed that the Ministry of Education should adopt efficient approaches to guarantee the timely provision of curriculum support materials to all secondary schools, consequently improving the overall quality of curriculum implementation. The study aimed at addressing geographical and theoretical gaps left by Mueni's et al. research conducted in 2019.

In line with Mueni et al. (2019), Koskei (2017) also suggested a comparable recommendation, emphasizing that the government should ensure prompt disbursement of capitation grants to public primary schools, ideally before the start of each term. This timely allocation of funds would facilitate effective school budgeting and the timely procurement of teaching and learning materials, ultimately enabling the prompt commencement of teaching and learning activities. The study's scope was limited to

Uasin Gishu County, and a cross-sectional survey design was utilized. The study focused on 400 head teachers from public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County as the target population. To gather data, a sample of 200 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The current research aims to address geographical, theoretical, and methodological gaps left by Koskei's (2017) study.

Ndambuki (2016) conducted a study in Makindu sub-county, Makueni County, focusing on the implementation of free secondary school education. The study's recommendations aligned with those of the previously mentioned researches. Ndambuki (2016) found that the disbursement of funds and the availability of resources significantly impacted the successful implementation of free secondary education in public secondary schools. His recommendations included urging the government to allocate sufficient funds to enable principals to effectively implement the curriculum. Additionally, he suggested that timely disbursement of funds by the government would enable principals to plan and execute school programs promptly. The study's foundation was based on the capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement.

Achieng', Nduku and Njui (2021) investigated the disbursement process of FDSE funds on retention of secondary school students in Migori County in Kenya. The research employed a convergent parallel mixed-method approach, incorporating a cross-sectional survey for the quantitative phase and a case study design for the qualitative phase. The participants in the study included 19 school principals, 76 class teachers, 228 students, 31 parents from 19 secondary schools, and one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer.

The results indicated that there are delays in the transfer of FDSE funds from the Treasury to the MoES&T, and subsequently to schools. Additionally, late registration and inaccuracies in student details on the NEMIS portal were found to impact the amount of money allocated to schools. The study's recommendation is for the MoES&T to promptly release funds at the start of each term to avoid disruption of school programs and budgets. Furthermore, the MoES&T should ensure consistent evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the FDSE disbursement process.

2.2.2 Adequacy of FDSE Funds and Students' Completion Rates

Wanjala and Koriyow (2017) conducted research to investigate how subsidized tuition affects the availability of excellent educational opportunities for students attending public secondary schools in Wajir County. The researchers found that despite the introduction of subsidized fees, the enrollment rates did not increase significantly due to insufficient and delayed finances to support the Free Tuition Secondary Education program. As a result, the government's implementation of subsidized fees has not had a significant impact on improving access to quality education in public secondary schools in Wajir County.

In 2018, Chepkoech conducted a study in Kasarani, Nairobi County, examining the impact of tuition-free secondary education subsidy on completion rates in public secondary schools. The research employed a descriptive survey approach and examined data using percentages as descriptive statistics. According to the findings, 71.4 percent of principals believed that the tuition-free secondary education subsidy had a positive impact on completion rates. However, it is worth noting that the study did not provide specific figures for the completion rates, which could have enhanced the significance of the results. The main objective of the research was to investigate the influence of the tuition-free secondary education subsidy on students' completion rates in public

secondary schools, focusing on the impact of the Free Secondary Education (FSE) policy.

Mwangi (2018) carried a research with the purpose of determining how the Free Secondary Education Policy affected the students who graduated from public day secondary schools in Kitui County. Employing a descriptive research design, the study found that the Free Secondary Education policy had a significant positive influence on completion rates, indicating that it contributed to higher rates of students successfully finishing their studies. However, the study also revealed that the available funds were insufficient to support students throughout the entire academic year. While Mwangi's research focused on determining completion rates for the entire county, this current study utilized an Ex-post facto, descriptive, and co-relational research design, and it suggests that assessing completion rates for individual schools could provide additional valuable insights.

Similar suggestions were given in the research listed above in Ndambuki's (2016) study in Makindu Sub-County, Makueni County. Ndambuki discovered that the availability of resources had a big influence on how well free secondary education in public secondary schools was implemented. As a result, the researcher suggested that the government should allocate sufficient funds to empower principals in effectively executing the curriculum. The study was based on the Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement.

However, in a research conducted by Muhindi (2012) in Nyeri County, Kenya, investigating the obstacles encountered in implementing free day secondary education (FDSE), it was found that the government's subsidies for FDSE were insufficient and not delivered promptly. The study also revealed that the expenses related to compulsory

items and other direct payments by parents were burdensome. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the study encompassed all public secondary schools within Nyeri South District. The study involved 33 public secondary schools, with a total of 11,094 students and 403 teachers. Out of these schools, 18 were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaires for principals and observation guides. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the study's recommendations included a review of budgetary allocation, addressing the costs of compulsory items, and ensuring timely disbursement of funds.

According to Praxis's research in 2018, approximately 60% of early school leavers in Estonia never started upper secondary education, while 40% started but did not complete it. Moreover, approximately 20% of young people do not complete their secondary education within seven years after finishing basic education. Also, the overall rate of early school leavers among 18 to 24-year-olds in the country was 10.8% in 2017, with boys experiencing a significantly higher rate (14.2%) compared to girls (7.3%). Praxis identifies these challenges as stemming from a reduction in government expenditure on education, which declined to 14.6% of total government spending in 2016, down from the previous figure of 15.1%.

Radó (2018) Germany spending as a share of GDP in 2016 stood at 4.2 %, lower than EU's recommended 4.7 % with 9.5% of the overall government expenditure allocated to education, below the EU average of 10.5%. Consequently, the proportion of young adults (aged 18-24) who completed at most secondary education by 2017 was 10.1%. Completion rates were higher in urban areas, with 10.3% in cities and 10.7% in towns and suburbs, compared to 8.5% in rural regions. This difference is likely due to a greater presence of schools facing socio-economic difficulties in urban environments.

Furthermore, foreign-born students exhibited a higher completion rate compared to native-born students, remaining at 23.1% versus 8.1%.

As per Fondazione's report in 2018, Italy faces a significant challenge concerning the considerable proportion of young individuals who are not engaged in education or training. In 2017, approximately 20.1% of Italians aged 15 to 24 were neither employed nor enrolled in education or training, marking the highest percentage among EU countries. Italy's investment in education, especially in higher education, falls notably below the EU average. Education receives a relatively small portion of the public budget. In comparison to other EU countries, the amount of money spent by the general government on education is relatively low, both in terms of its percentage of GDP (3.9% in 2016, as opposed to the EU average of 4.7%) and its share of total general government spending (7.9% compared to the EU average of 10.2%). This results in lower educational attainment rates, partly due to high drop-out rates and longer durations of studies.

2.2.3 FDSE Funds Utilization and Students' Completion Rates

Findings from a quasi-experimental impact evaluation found that secondary students in schools with less but prudently managed government funding in Honduras had test scores that were 45% higher as well as having higher completion rates than children in neighboring village schools with more but mismanaged funding. This same study estimated the cost of learning in well-managed schools to be 10% lower than the poorly managed funding rural secondary school model. In short, the study found higher completion rates and better quality at a lower cost in rural secondary schools with proper utilization of allocated funding (McEwan, et al., 2015). Hauschildt, Vögtle and Gwosc (2018) note that with a rate of 3.1% leavers in the 18-24 age range compared to the EU the average of 10.6%, Croatia continues to lead the EU in preventing early

leaving from school or college. The report attributed this to the careful management of allocated funds via a series of changes that began in 2010 and gave priority to housing, food subsidies, tuition fees, and student financial assistance (OECD, 2020).

However, Tommaso, Ralph and Giuseppe (2017) established that allocating funds without basing on unique needs of each school and student compromises completion rates. The study documents this resulted into over 28 % of the students fail continuing to upper secondary education particularly in Germany especially in towns, suburbs and rural areas than in cities with the number rising to 52 % (OECD, 2018). Equally, Leanna, Reyes and Trines (2020) blamed same misplaced prioritization to the less than half of all upper-secondary students completing grade 11 and high repetition rates increased from 38 percent to 43 percent between 2009 and 2015 resulting in large numbers of over-age school children in Colombia.

According to Checchi, Peragine and Serlenga (2016), early school leaving is particularly high in rural areas (27.9 %) and among Roma students (67%) in Bulgaria. The research findings indicate that, students from Roma background face a greater likelihood of leaving school prematurely, with approximately 60% of Roma students attending schools where the majority of their peers are also Roma. The study links this situation to insufficient oversight of educational support programmes and the presence of educational segregation.

The study conducted by Adan and Orodho (2015) investigated the limitations associated with the implementation of free secondary education in Mandera West Sub-County, located in Mandera County, Kenya. The research revealed that school principals, who also act as accounting officers of FDSE, have limited expertise in financial management, including budgeting, journal entries, accounting, human

resource management, and information technology (I.T). Although the percentages of lacking proficiency are not high, they underscore the necessity for proper training. A previous study by Muganda, Simiyu, and Riechi (2016) demonstrated that 85% of respondents had participated in a brief two-day seminar on financial management, which was insufficient preparation.

Notably, based on Chepkonga's findings, approximately 80.9% of the participants expressed a need for accounting training, while 93% required training in budget preparation. These results align with Ayako's (2015) claim that head teachers should undergo training in various aspects of management, including cost accounting, financial accounting, and budgeting. This indicates a clear necessity for school principals to enhance their management skills, especially in financial matters. The current lack of capacity significantly hinders their ability to attain higher success rates in the objectives set for free secondary education. Moreover, the assessment of schools by the ministry of education is significantly delayed, taking two years or even more. This prolonged wait could potentially undermine the effective management of schools, regardless of the qualifications and capabilities of the principals. Additionally, the study also uncovered a prevalent issue of schools receiving funding very late, sometimes as delayed as the third month of the term. Consequently, this delay negatively impacts the learning process, leading to a lack of essential learning materials in the schools.

In a study conducted by Kazuya and Masuda (2018), they examined the impact of Uganda's universal free secondary schooling program on student access, completion rates, and academic achievement. The research revealed that the implementation of the fee-free secondary schooling policy led to a notable 16% increase in the number of students who took the secondary school exit exam. However, it was established that completion rate of 100% is still an uphill task due to wrong prioritization of funds and

mismanagement as well as lack of capacity among people in authority managing school funds disbursed by the government.

Also, according to Muhindi (2012) and supported by a UNESCO document from 2014, the funding formula for Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) lacks equity focus, as it does not consider the specific characteristics of schools and students. Consequently, it has not effectively reduced disparities between schools and tends to put smaller and less-established schools at a disadvantage. Moreover, UNESCO (2014) highlighted that County Education Officers lack autonomy in managing these resources. They have no authority over school budgets, and they cannot influence the allocation or spending of funds by schools. The funds are transferred directly from the central government to schools' accounts, and their usage is governed by various Ministry of Education guidelines.

According to both UNESCO (2014) and the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2017), the government provides subsidies to public schools under specific conditions. These conditions include the school being properly registered and led by a principal appointed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Additionally, the school must regularly submit accurate enrollment data and relevant bank account information to the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, UNESCO (2014) reported on a quantitative research study conducted by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP, 2014) concerning the Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) program in Kenya. The study found instances of under-spending on certain budget allocations and over-spending on others. As a result, some school stakeholders have expressed frustration with the complex process of seeking approval to transfer unused funds to other budget lines.

Lin (2016) found out that, schools in Taiwan utilized government funding prudently on intended purposes. The degree of autonomy granted to schools in resource allocation varies across municipalities, with each municipality customizing resource allocation based on its unique requirements. At the system level, policies are in place to ensure fairness for all students. As per OECD (2020) guidelines, basic education is provided free of charge, including textbooks and daily meals, and schools are prohibited from imposing any fees on students. Additionally, schools offer various incentives, such as free lunches, to students. This approach has proven effective in enhancing student completion rates and can be considered by Kenya to achieve the desired objective of improving student retention in free day secondary education.

2.2.4 Charging of Extra Levies and Students' Completion Rates

According to Onderwijs (2018), extra levies refer to financial contributions demanded from parents by schools, apart from the government-authorized fees. These additional charges are used to fund various programs not covered by the authorized fees, such as annual testing, co-curricular activities, book shows, meals, uniforms, and transport. Unfortunately, the imposition of these extra levies results in inconsistent school attendance among underprivileged learners eventually leading some of them to drop out due to the financial burden becoming unmanageable for their families. This circumstance poses a financial barrier to education for underprivileged families, even in nations where education is intended to be both free and mandatory. Consequently, it hinders the adequate execution of policies promoting free and compulsory education.

According to the findings of a research that was conducted by Koya (2015) on educational levies and their influence on school enrollment in Fiji, revealed that children from disadvantaged backgrounds who were unable to pay these additional fees

were either refused admission or sent home from school. Consequently, these students faced truancy issues and were more likely to drop out, leading to lower rates of transition, enrolment, and completion. Although the Fiji government offers financial grants to basic education institutions for tuition fees, teachers' salaries, and various forms of support, these schools still implement additional fees to cover expenses related to sports, school magazines, textbooks, extra tuition, building maintenance, uniforms, coaching, and book hire fees.

Chen, Fu, and Pan conducted a study in 2019 and found that despite the considerable advancements and ambitious objectives, disparities in access to education persist at the upper secondary school level in China. They discovered that only 77 percent of Chinese youth manage to complete high school by the age of 20, and this ratio drops significantly to 47 percent for rural youth. The additional expenses encompass uniforms, transportation, and the opportunity costs associated with sending a child to school. These supplementary costs, combined with school fees, create barriers that prevent children from impoverished households from attending school or lead to their drop-out after enrollment. Weiping (2018) confirms the results of the previous research, showing that children from lower-income homes were three times more likely than those from more affluent families to drop out of elementary school.

Esteves (2018) observed that although Bangladesh has formally eliminated tuition fees for public primary schools, eradicating additional charges that previously hindered access to education. These supplementary expenses encompassed various fees like annual testing, activity charges, uniform expenses, and fees for additional teaching outside regular hours. The involvement of teachers in providing additional education serves as a valuable supplement to the limited instructional time children receive from

teachers during official school hours (Esteves, 2018). In 2017, a total of 65 percent of children completed lower secondary education and only 29 percent completed higher secondary education. This was attributed to additional fees imposed by the school, which some parents were unable to afford, resulting in certain students dropping out.

Capron (2015) conducted research to examine how the imposition of additional fees affected academic performance and school attendance among learners in the UK. The study revealed that 20 percent of children from the most economically disadvantaged families were unable to participate in sports classes due to their inability to afford the required sports kit. Additionally, 20 percent of these children missed out on school meals, and 30 percent were unable to pay for tuition. Furthermore, the research indicated that one-third of the least privileged children lagged behind in their studies because they lacked access to computer and internet facilities at home. As a consequence, some students chose to discontinue their education. According to Capron, the concept of free education in the United Kingdom (UK) is hardly achievable, as parents spend an average of £800 per child annually on additional fees. These fees encompass various expenses like meals, uniforms, trips, transportation, materials, and activities. The imposition of such extra levies leads to disadvantaged children facing challenges in keeping up with school attendance, experiencing embarrassment, and ultimately dropping out, resulting in lower completion rates.

According to Ngwenya (2016), primary education in rural areas of Zimbabwe is provided without tuition fees, but this is not the case in urban areas. Despite the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe guaranteeing the right to free basic education for all citizens, tuition fees are still imposed in urban primary schools. Ngwenya conducted a study to explore methods of collecting fees without compromising the

rights of learners in Zimbabwean primary schools. The research revealed that although rural primary schools did not charge tuition fees, they required additional levies for purposes such as examinations, boarding, staff remuneration (both teaching and non-teaching), equipment provision, and repair and maintenance. Unfortunately, the inability to pay these extra levies resulted in some learners dropping out, leading to lower completion rates.

In South Africa, additional charges in education refer to monetary or non-monetary contributions beyond the officially prescribed school fees, which parents or sponsors are required to pay (Tapia and Rafique, 2020). These extra fees are imposed by schools to cover expenses such as purchasing stationery and textbooks, financing infrastructure projects, and acquiring capital equipment. In cases where transport costs are not included in the school fees, it becomes the responsibility of parents to arrange transportation. Unfortunately, economically disadvantaged families who cannot afford these extra levies often face the difficult decision of withdrawing their children from school.

According to a study conducted by Koramoah in 2016, senior secondary education in Ghana received minimal funding from the government, leading schools to heavily rely on financial contributions from households. These additional fees charged to households were found to be 6 to 10 times higher than the officially approved fees set by the government for parents. Surprisingly, the study also revealed that both rural and urban school learners were subjected to similar extra fees. As a consequence, some rural school learners who couldn't afford these extra costs ended up dropping out, resulting in a decline in overall completion rates. Furthermore, the research highlighted that the additional levies imposed on parents for their children's education in senior secondary

schools often surpassed the government's designated fees. These additional levies covered the cost of textbooks, instructional materials, lunches, accommodation, water, fuel, extra classes, and pamphlets.

While formal school fees are no longer charged, Kizito (2016) discovered that many of Tanzania's poorest pupils are still unable to finish their education due to additional school-related expenses. The inability of parents or guardians to cover transportation expenses, uniforms, and essential school materials like books creates a challenging situation. In cases where secondary schools are distant, some students opt for private hostels or boarding facilities nearby, which is unaffordable for many underprivileged families. This becomes a major obstacle for children coming from poor backgrounds. Moreover, schools can no longer afford to finance essential requirements, which were previously covered by parental contributions (additional fees collected by schools for operational expenses), such as school infrastructure, learning materials, and hiring additional teachers.

In 2015, a study was conducted by Omandi to examine the effects of free day secondary education on the rates of completion among students attending public secondary schools in Mvita Sub-County, located in Mombasa County. The research employed a survey methodology and incorporated a participant pool of 265 individuals, consisting of 12 individuals in head teacher positions, 64 teachers, and 189 students. The findings revealed that since the implementation of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in Kenya in 2008, there had been an increase in the transition rate from primary to secondary schools. However, it was observed that some students faced challenges completing their education as they dropped out due to the inability to afford the additional educational expenses.

Mutemi conducted research in Matinyani Sub-County, Kitui County in 2015, focusing on the impact of additional expenses on learner retention in secondary schools. The research utilized a mixed methods strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The participants in this study consisted of 7 principals, 7 deputy principals, 28 class teachers, 7 parents' association chairpersons and 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. The results showed that additional educational expenses like uniforms and lunch fees imposed a significant financial strain on parents, leading to students frequently missing classes (truancy) and, in certain instances, leaving school altogether.

Ngwacho, Ayodo, and Chemwei conducted a research study in 2016 to investigate the impact of additional fees on the rates of student transition and completion in public boarding secondary schools located in Kisii County. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and selected a representative sample of 10% of the head teachers and 10% of the parents from the overall population. To collect data, the researchers utilized questionnaires and interview schedules. The findings revealed that despite the implementation of free primary education (FPE) in 2003, parents still had to spend an average of Ksh 1674 per child on additional expenses. Unfortunately, many parents were unable to afford these extra costs, leading to their children dropping out of school, which subsequently resulted in lower completion rates.

Similarly, in Kwanza sub-county, Shavanga conducted a study in 2015 to examine the impact of educational extra levies on students' involvement in public day secondary schools. Utilizing a descriptive survey methodology, the research encompassed a participant pool of 1827 individuals, comprising 50 teachers, 811 parents, and 966 students. The study unveiled that additional charges were being levied for the provision

of remedial education, co-curricular engagements, and developmental initiatives. Non-payment of these levies resulted in some students being sent home, leading to truancy and, in certain instances, dropping out of school, consequently causing a decline in both enrollment and completion rates.

Moreover, in 2014, Kiage, Simatwa, and Ayondo conducted a study in Trans Mara Sub-County, Kenya, focusing on the impact of school fees and additional levies on the enrollment of girls in public boarding secondary schools. The study utilised descriptive survey and correlational methodologies, with data being gathered through questionnaires and interview schedules. The study comprised a total of six principals, one sub-county education officer, and 153 female students as participants. The results indicated that the additional fees, which were meant for teacher motivation, uniforms, lunch, and school development, had a considerable impact on the total expenses of secondary education for Maasai girls. Consequently, this high cost led to a situation where girls from families unable to afford these extra levies were compelled to drop out of school, resulting in a decline in both enrollment and completion rates among female students.

Lwanga and Atieno (2019) highlighted that Magarini Sub-County in Kilifi County faced various difficulties, including inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of teachers in schools. These challenges impeded the successful implementation of the free and compulsory education policy. To tackle these issues, the Board of Management (BOM) decided to impose extra charges on parents. The purpose was to use these funds to construct school facilities and employ additional teachers under the BOM, aiming to enhance the overall education quality in the region. On average, schools charged Ksh 200 per learner per month to support the BOM teachers, and parents who couldn't

afford the fees had their children sent home. Consequently, those who dropped out often resorted to menial jobs, such as fishing in pools left after salt extraction. In Ngomeni fishing village, located in Kilifi County, it was estimated that 60 percent of professional fishermen had dropped out of school, leading to a decline in the transition rate from primary to secondary education. By January 27th, 2020, around 20 percent of the 2019 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) candidates had not yet enrolled in secondary schools, despite the subsidized nature of education in Kenya and the supposed provision of free public day secondary schools. The reason behind the less than 100 percent transition rate was attributed to various additional charges imposed by school management to sustain operations. These levies encompassed expenses for uniforms, lunch, writing materials, and various other activities.

A research was conducted in public day secondary schools located in Kitui County to investigate the correlation between the imposition of additional fees and the execution of free and mandatory education. A significant number of day scholars belonged to underprivileged families, making the added schooling expenses a financial burden beyond their means. Consequently, some families resorted to sending their children to take up menial jobs. As a result, there was a decline in both transition and completion rates, as learners faced difficulties enrolling in Form One or dropped out of school.

2.2.5 Students' Completion Rates

Chepkoech conducted a research in 2018 to examine the impact of the Tuition Free Secondary Education subsidy on the completion rates of students in public secondary schools located in Kasarani, Nairobi County. The study utilized a descriptive survey design, and the data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, which were represented in the form of percentages. The findings revealed that 71.4 percent of

principals reported a positive effect of the subsidy on completion rates. However, it's worth noting that the study did not calculate the actual completion rates, which could have provided further valuable insights. Overall, the research focused on assessing how the Tuition Free Secondary Education subsidy influenced completion rates in Public Secondary Schools.

Omandi (2015) examined the effect of free day secondary education in public secondary schools in Mvita Sub-County, Kenya, on student retention and graduation rates. The study found that despite a high rate of secondary school enrolment, this was not always reflected in high rates of graduation for a number of reasons. Among these factors were inadequate physical facilities in schools, hindering smooth learning processes. The schools were not adequately developed to cope with the growing demand for secondary education. Furthermore, the lack of sufficient instructional materials had a negative effect on educational outcomes. Despite the government's subsidy through Free Day Secondary Education, the research discovered that parents still faced challenges with school funds, as they were expected to cover certain educational costs. These findings align with Osodo's observations, which also highlighted that school levies, such as lunch programs and extra tuition fees, could contribute to drop-outs and ultimately lead to lower completion rates.

In 2016, Makokha conducted a study examining the impact of the Free Tuition Secondary Education Policy on completion rates in public secondary schools in Emuhaya Sub County. The research employed Ex-post facto and descriptive research designs. The findings revealed that the implementation of Free Secondary Tuition Education led to noticeable improvements in completion rates. Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics presented in percentages. While the study assessed completion rates for the entire Sub County, investigating completion rates for individual schools

could have provided additional valuable insights. It's important to note that the study only focused on one cohort, which might not be sufficient to fully capture the policy's overall impact.

A research conducted in 2017 by Obae, Cheloti, and Mwangi examined the impact of the Free Day Secondary Education subsidy on graduation rates at public day secondary schools in Kitui, Kenya. The research revealed that among the 105 principals surveyed, a significant majority of 103 principals (98.11%) acknowledged that the Free Day Secondary Education subsidy had contributed to increased student completion rates. Similarly, 100 principals (95.3%) agreed that the subsidy effectively ensured students in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions could access education in Kitui County. Additionally, 97 principals (92.4%) acknowledged that the Free Day Secondary Education subsidy had led to a reduction in student drop-out rates in public day secondary schools within Kitui County. Furthermore, 93 principals (88.6%) concurred that the subsidy had positively influenced the rate of transition between public day secondary schools and postsecondary institutions.

Moreover, 76 principals (72.4%) expressed disagreement with the notion that there is no correlation between the subsidy provided by universal free secondary education and graduation rates. Free secondary education has a significant favorable effect on graduation rates, according to an interview with the County Director of Education. According to the County Director, out of the total 4413 students who enrolled in form one in public day secondary schools in 2007, 3211 (70.4%) successfully completed their secondary education by 2010. Similarly, in 2008, 4426 students enrolled in form one in public day secondary schools, and 3123 (70.6%) of them completed their secondary education by 2011.

According to the County Director of Education, in 2009, a total of 4522 students were enrolled in public day secondary schools, and of these, 3225 students successfully completed their secondary education by 2012, accounting for a completion rate of 71.3%. In the following year, 2010, the formal enrollment increased to 4615 students, and out of them, 3348 students completed their secondary education by 2013, resulting in a completion rate of 72.6%. The null hypothesis (H_0) was tested using a chi-square test of independence to see whether or not there was a statistically significant correlation between free day secondary education and graduation rates. According to the results of a chi-square test, offering free public secondary education throughout the school day has a significant impact on students' decision to stay in school and reduces their likelihood of dropping out, both of which contribute to greater graduation rates. These results suggest that Free Day Secondary Education played a crucial role in enhancing educational retention and success among students in the given county.

In a study conducted by Ngwacho, Theodore, and Chemwai in 2017, the impact of hidden costs associated with Free Secondary Education on student completion rates in Kisii County was investigated. The research covered the period from 2011 to 2014 and involved 52 selected schools. The findings revealed that, on average, 56 students per school class failed to complete the four-year education cycle. The study also identified a significant correlation between hidden costs and student completion rates, with a strong positive interrelationship indicated by a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.902. As a result, more students are dropping out of school before completing their required four years because of the rising expense of education.

Moreover, 20 out of 148 tested parents (13.5%) said their children had not graduated from high school because of these hidden expenditures. These results provide valuable insights for policymakers and education authorities in Kisii County to address the

challenges posed by hidden costs and improve student retention and completion rates. Of the 243 instructors surveyed, all but one admitted that kids were sent home due to hidden charges, causing some to drop out before finishing high school. These findings are consistent with those of Osodo's study, which found that school charges, such as those for meal programs and additional tuition, may have a negative impact on retention and completion rates. Similarly, Omandi's findings support these conclusions, showing that parents are still burdened with educational expenses despite the government's subsidization of Free Day Secondary Education.

2.3 Summary and Identification of Research Gaps

The Literature reviewed showed the importance of educational inputs and how their proper management will lead to the desired outputs and outcomes. Educational resources include textbooks, finances, teachers, students and physical resources while one of the desired goal in education is enhanced completion rates. Many of the studies demonstrated how secondary school subsidies, bursaries, grants and various forms of financial student support affect student enrolment, retention and completion. However, studies indicate the subsidy was insufficient, there was delay disbursing and were mismanaged through utilization on unintended purposes. Additionally, studies showed that despite subsidies, schools still charged illegal fee. Some studies posted divergent findings that were in disagreement hence implying inconsistency and therefore lack of conclusiveness on this issue. Further, none of the studies was carried out in Mwala Sub-County in Machakos County despite the high dropout rates from school hence low completion rates. These were therefore the research gaps that the researcher sought to address.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research methods that were employed to evaluate the impact of FDSE funds on the completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, situated in Machakos County. The chapter presents the research design, study location, target population, sampling technique and sample size, research instruments, pilot study, data collecting procedures, validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis, and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

The research design refers to the overall strategy and analytical approach that the researcher has chosen in order to integrate, in a coherent and logical way, the different components of the study, thus ensuring that the research problem will be thoroughly investigated (De Vaus, 2006).

For this study, a descriptive survey design was employed to assess the effects of FDSE funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala sub-county. It was used to conduct quantitative research and gather data that was statistically easy to analyze. A descriptive survey design enables a researcher to analyze the changes in data over time. It goes beyond just gathering data and can lead to the development of knowledge and solutions for subject being investigated. The descriptive survey design was used in this study to accurately and comprehensively portray how individuals, objects, settings, or events are related to the research topic. By opting for this approach, the researcher expected to obtain precise information and describe the current situation as it truly exists.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Mwala Sub-County, in Machakos County, Kenya. Mwala Sub-County is 37.4525° East and 1.3487° South. The climate is semi-arid with relatively a flat topography. The altitude is approximately 834m above sea level. The mean annual rainfall for Mwala Sub-County is 569mm with mean monthly temperatures of 18°C to 25°C. Mwala Sub-County borders Yatta Sub-County to the east, Kangundo Sub-County to North, Machakos Sub-County to west and Makueni County to the south.

The majority of the land is allocated for agricultural purposes due to the heavy reliance of the population on agriculture as a source of food. Drought periods during the midseason are a frequent occurrence in both seasons and pose a significant threat to crop productivity within this particular sub-county. Farmers frequently suffer crop failure and as a result poverty levels are very high because subsistence farming is the common economic activity in this region with farmers growing cereals like maize, millet and sorghum and pulses like beans and peas. Fruit farming is also very successful in terms of quality and quantity due to the warm climate experienced in the area. However the fruits are seasonal and cannot sustain the farmers economically round the year. Vegetables are also scarcely grown near water bodies because they are mostly sustained through irrigation. Livestock keeping does fairly well with farmers rearing indigenous cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and poultry. Other economic activities include sand harvesting, ballast production, basket weaving and wood carving. Generally the area has low economic potential. The choice of Mwala Sub-County as the focus of study was occasioned by the education report by UNESCO (2022) that ranked Mwala Sub-County among the sub-counties with the lowest students' completion rates in the country as well as in Machakos County.

3.4 Target Population

Mwala Sub-County comprises of 15 locations which are further sub-divided into 67 sub-locations with a population of 55000 people. There are 52 public day secondary schools in this Sub-County with a total population of 9,280 students, 52 principals, 208 class teachers and 52 chairpersons of students' council and 52 vice chairpersons of students' council.

Target Population refers to all observations of interest in a total collection like people or events. (Fusch and Ness, 2015). A target population refers to all people under consideration in any field of inquiry (Zohrabi, 2013). The target population of this study comprised of 52 principals, 208 class teachers and 52 chairpersons and 52 vice chairpersons of students' councils of public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. The total target population was therefore 364 persons as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category	Category Sub-Total
Chairpersons of students' council	52
Vice-chairpersons of students' council	52
Class Teachers	208
Principals	52
Total	364

Source: (Mwala Sub- County Director of Education Office, 2022)

Those in authority, such as principals and class teachers, were chosen as they were responsible for the students' well-being during their time at school. Additionally, students' council leaders were chosen due to their direct interaction with all the students.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Kothari (2004) describes a sample as a representative portion of a population. Analyzing this sample allows researchers to gather information that reflects the characteristics of the entire population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggest that a sample size representing 10% of the population is sufficient. For this study, three groups of subjects were involved: principals, class teachers, and chairpersons and vice chairpersons of students' council. The main goal of sampling is to create a sampling frame, which Fletcher, Massis, and Nordqvist (2016) define as a comprehensive list of all elements or objects from the population that the researcher intends to study. The purpose of utilizing a sample in research is to draw conclusions about the broader population based on the issues under investigation (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). To select participants for the study, the researcher employed Slovin's formula, which was represented as $n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$. Here, n denoted the sample size, N represented the total population, and e was the margin of error. By applying this formula, a sample of 191 participants was chosen from a total population of 364, with a margin of error set at 5% (Stephanie, 2013). Slovin's formula is a valuable tool as it allows the researcher to achieve a high level of accuracy when sampling the research population.

The sample was selected from seven educational zones of the sub-county. From each educational zone, participants were selected using simple random sampling. From each zone, four principals, 15 class teachers, four chairpersons, and four vice chairpersons of Students Council were selected. This sampling procedure made the researcher to select a total of 28 principals, 28 chairpersons and 28 vice-chairpersons of the students' councils and 107 teachers as shown in Table 3.2. This sample was deemed representative of the whole population under study.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Category Level	Target Population	Sampling Technique	Sample size
Chairpersons of students' council	52	Stratified, Simple Random	28
Vice-Chairpersons of students' council	52	Stratified, Simple Random	28
Class Teachers	208	Stratified, Simple Random	107
Principals	52	Stratified, Simple Random	28
Total	364		191

3.6 Research Instruments

Data collection involves the utilization of research instruments to gather empirical evidence, aiming to gain insights and address research questions. Various tools, such as observation, interview schedules, questionnaires, and focus group discussions, are employed for data collection (Kothari, 2004). The data was sourced from both primary and secondary sources. In this study, primary data was acquired through a self-designed structured questionnaire that comprised a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. This is because a questionnaire is easy to answer especially to the respondents who do not have enough time for interview sessions. Questionnaires ensure confidentiality of the respondents who therefore give correct information freely without fear of exposure (Galvan, 2015). Without offering or recommending a certain format for the answer, open-ended questions allowed respondents to express themselves freely.

The use of closed-ended questions in the questionnaire limited respondents' answers to the provided options. These options were formulated in a clear and easily

understandable manner to ensure clarity for the participants. The language used in the questionnaire was straightforward and uncomplicated. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the target respondents, including students, teachers, and principals, to gather their opinions and factual information on the investigated issues. Two different sets of questionnaires were prepared for class teachers and students' council leaders. Interview schedules were used for principals as they are busy due to the nature of their duties. Additionally, secondary data was collected through document analysis. The selection of these research instruments was based on factors such as time constraints, study objectives, and the nature of the data to be gathered.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in two zones, that is, Mbiuni and Kathama to test the appropriateness of the research items. These zones were identified for pilot study because they had similar climatic and environmental conditions with the area of study. The economic activities were similar too. The researcher was able to examine from the respondents, whether the instruments to be used in data collection were able to generate information that was required and measured what was expected. The comments made by the respondents were discussed with the supervisors and corrections made. Pilot study enabled the researcher to be aware of the problems and difficulties that were experienced during the actual process of data collection hence prepared on how to deal with them once they occurred. To this end, questionnaires were administered to 20 respondents representing 10% of the sample as recommended by Fusch and Ness (2015). These respondents did not participate in the actual study.

3.8 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity refers to how accurately an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. In this study, experts who included my supervisors and education managers such as

directors and principals assessed the appropriateness of each item and evaluated its suitability in order to determine the truthfulness of the research findings (Zohrabi, 2013). The expert guidance from the supervisors helped in revising and developing the research instruments. The feedback given by the supervisors were used to make necessary changes to improve on the questionnaires. The researcher used ICT experts to establish the validity of the instruments.

3.9 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the extent to which a research tool consistently produces dependable data across multiple trials (Galvan, 2015). A reliability test of the instruments was done using test-retest reliability by administering same questionnaires to the randomly selected group of respondents twice at two weeks' interval. The correlation between the two sets of scores obtained from piloting was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Method. A correlation coefficient (r) of 0.75 and above is considered to indicate a moderate to high level of reliability for the instrument, according to Orodho (2009). For this study a correlation coefficient of 0.81 was realized. To ensure reliability, the researcher sought input from supervisors to evaluate the consistency of the responses. They carefully reviewed the data for any coding errors, unclear instructions given to participants, as well as the clarity, appropriateness, and coherence of the questions. Where necessary, the research items were rephrased and reformulated in order to enhance reliability.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from Machakos University's Graduate School to secure a research permit. Additionally, an authorization letter from NACOSTI was obtained. The researcher afterwards visited the County Director of

Education in Machakos to seek authorization letter to carry out the research. Moreover, a visit to the Sub-County Director of Education in Mwala Sub-county was done to obtain another introduction letter to visit schools.

A preliminary visit was made to the Research schools to provide them with information regarding the planned research visit. The scheduling of the research instrument administration was coordinated during these visits. This aided the researcher in formulating the research plan. The researcher availed the questionnaires to the students, teachers and principals on the agreed date and picked them later after establishing that the concerned respondents had filled them.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves arranging the gathered data in a systematic manner, allowing the researcher to effectively categorize and synthesize information obtained from data collection methods (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The responses were tabulated to calculate frequencies and percentages, providing descriptive insights into the respondents and highlighting the overall patterns of the variables being studied. Scoring of quantitative data was done through 5 Likert scale. The researcher checked to ensure that all questions had been filled correctly. The quantitative data was coded for analysis and entered using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 computer software. Generated statistics were expressed in frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation and presented in tables, and graphs according to variables. Each table and figure was accompanied with requisite interpretation and inferences to answer the research questions to make meaningful conclusions. Qualitative data analysis was done thematically in narration forms.

3.12 Ethical and Logistical Considerations

Ethical considerations pertain to delineating the research's scope and the expectations from participants, the methods employed to gain informed consent, and ensuring the safeguarding of participants' privacy and confidentiality (Mary, 2019). Ethical considerations for this study revolved around issues such as protection of participants, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.12.1 Confidentiality and Privacy

To ensure ethical responsibility in dealing with the respondents, the researcher assured the participants confidentiality of the private information that they gave in the research. The participants were informed that the information will only be used for the purpose of research and that it will not be shared to other people outside the research. The privacy of the respondent was upheld by the researcher.

3.12.2 Protection of Participants

The researcher ensured that the respondents were not physically and psychologically harmed. To prevent psychological harm, the researcher refrained from asking questions that could be embarrassing, showing shock or disgust during data collection. Additionally, it was crucial not to make threatening statements or coerce respondents into actions they disagreed with, as well as to avoid causing fear and anxiety among them.

Engaging in actions or making statements that diminished the self-esteem or self-worth of the individual was deemed unethical and was strictly avoided. Likewise, the researcher refrained from any other psychological methods that could impose distress and resentment by forcing respondents to recall unpleasant experiences against their will.

3.12.3 Informed Consent

The researcher adhered to the principles of voluntary consent, ensuring that respondents willingly engaged in the research. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of study and the methods used for data collection, empowering them to make an informed decision regarding their participation.

3.12.4 Anonymity

A range of measures was taken to ensure the right of the participant with regard to anonymity was observed. The participants were assured of anonymity by not disclosing information and identity of the respondent.

3.12.5 Logistical Considerations

The research process started with the researcher obtaining an introduction letter from Graduate School of Machakos University. This letter enabled the researcher to apply and receive a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). To get permission to collect data from Mwala Sub-County, permission was sought from the Machakos County Commissioner, County Director of Education (CDE), Machakos County and also from the Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE), Mwala Sub-County. To collect data from the school heads, appointments were made with individual principals on time of convenience and interviews conducted in their offices. The questionnaires to teachers were distributed and the duly-filled questionnaires collected after a period of two weeks. The questionnaires to students were administered and filled in the presence of the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter entailed the presentation, the interpretation, and the discussion of the findings on effects of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. The results of the findings were presented in line with the study objectives, which included:

- i. To establish the influence of disbursement process of Free Day Secondary Education funding on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the effect of Free Day Secondary Education funding adequacy on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos, Kenya.
- iii. To establish the influence of Free Day Secondary Education funds utilization on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machokos, Kenya.
- iv. To examine the effect of extra levies on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos, Kenya.

4.2 Response Rate

In this study, 169 questionnaires were distributed among class teachers, Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of students' council, but 139 were successfully filled and returned. At the same time, 28 principals were interviewed. These gave response rates as illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Respondents	Sample	Response	Percentage
Chairperson of students' Council	28	25	89.28%
Vice-Chairperson of students' council	28	21	75%
Class Teachers	107	93	86.91%
Principals	28	28	100%
Total	191	167	87.43%

From Table 4.1, the researcher distributed 169 questionnaires to class teachers, Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of students' council. They completed and returned 139 questionnaires, being a response rate of 87%, 89% and 75% respectively. Interviews were also conducted on all the 28 principals. This yielded an average response rate of 87% which conforms to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who postulate that a response rate of 50% is adequate, a rate of 60% is good while 70% and over is excellent for analysis and reporting.

4.3 Demographic Information

This section presents respondents' characteristics in terms of gender, experience and class level. Information on these parameters is presented in sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 respectively.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to get information on the gender of the respondents. The findings are presented in Figure 4.1.

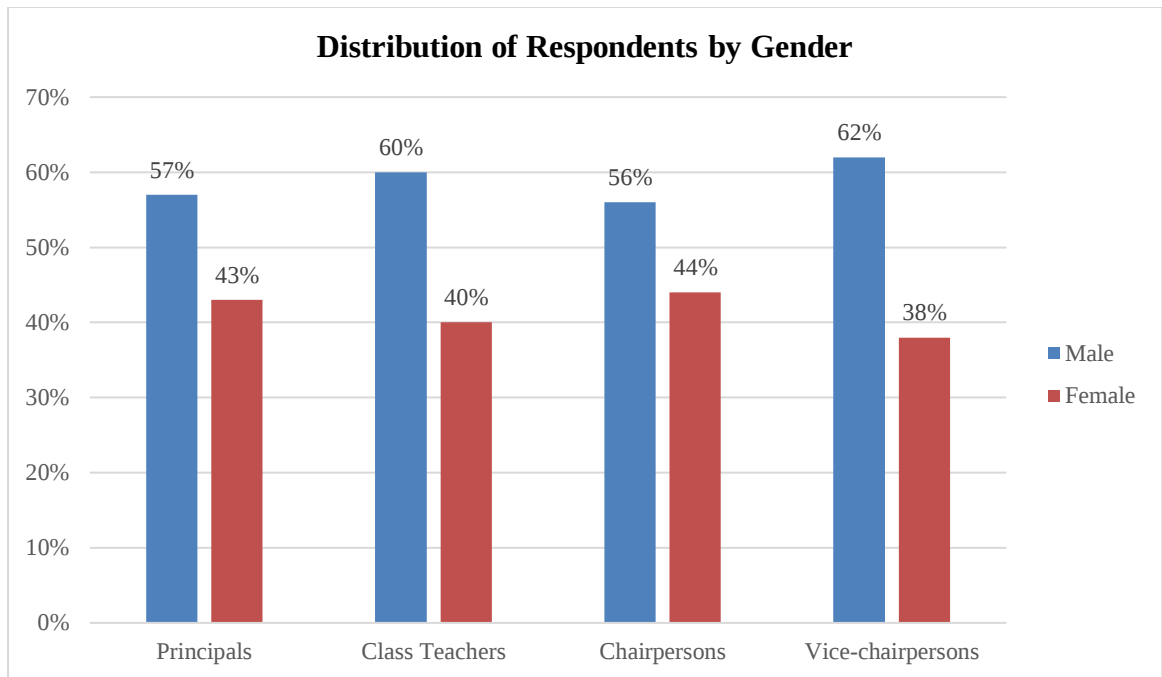


Figure 4.1 Gender of Respondents

Figure 4.1 captures the distribution of 28 principals, 93 class teachers, 25 chairpersons and 21 vice-chairpersons of students' council by their gender. Out of the total number of principals, 57% (16/28) were male while 43% (12/28) were female. The distribution of class teachers shows that 60% (56/93) were male, while 40% (37/93) were female. The data reveals that majority 56% (14/25) of the Chairpersons of students' council were male, while 44% (11/25) were female. The findings further revealed that 62% (13/21) vice-chairpersons of students' council were male, while 38% (8/21) were female. The study findings concurred with Mwanthi (2022), who established that there was gender disparity among teachers in Machakos County.

4.3.2 Distribution of Class teachers' Experience

This sought to find out the details of the years that the class teachers had been serving in schools, and the findings are as shown on Figure 4.2.

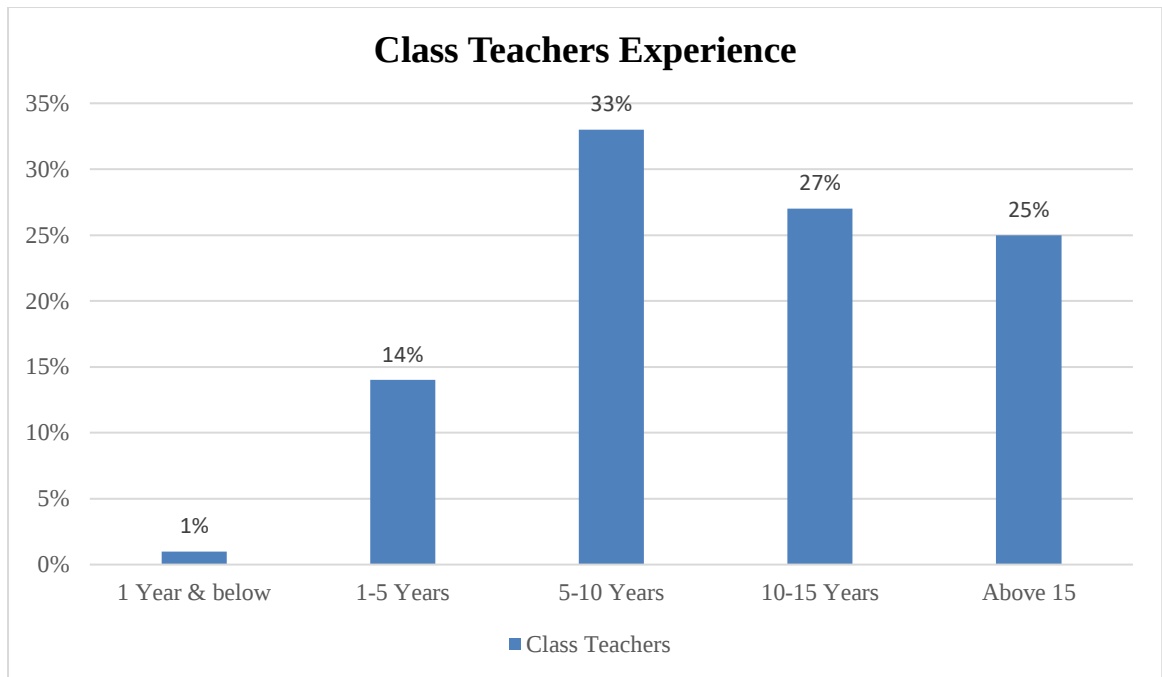


Figure 4.2 Respondents' Experience

Class teachers experience in Figure 4.2 reveals that the highest proportion of class teachers 31(33%) had between 5-10 years. Another sizeable proportion 25(27%) had between 10-15 years of experience followed by those with above 15 years at 23(25%) and those with between 1-5 years at 13(14%). On the other hand, only one (1%) of the class teachers had an experience of one Year and below. This implied that all the class teachers had worked long enough to understand the issue of impact of free day secondary school funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools and as such were suitable respondents for the study.

4.3.3 Distribution of Respondents by Class Level

The Information on chairperson and vice-chairperson of students' council distribution by their class level is presented in Figure 4.3.

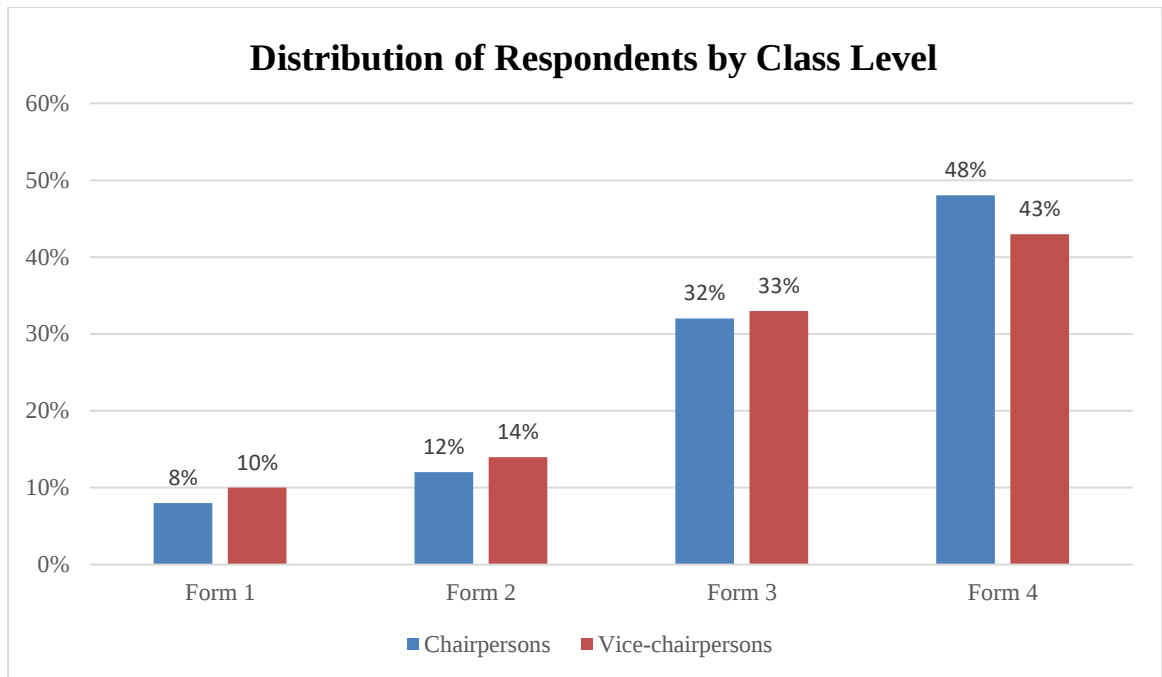


Figure 4.3. Distribution of Respondents by Class Level

Information in Figure 4.3 demonstrates that a majority of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council (48% and 43%) came from form four. They were followed by their counterparts from form three (32% and 33%). Form two was represented by 12% and 14% of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council while form one was represented by 8% and 10% of the respondents.

4.4 FDSE Funding Adequacy

The study sought to explore the effect of FDSE funding adequacy on public day secondary school students' completion rates. This element was significant for this study as it is one of the pointers to students' completion rates. The class teachers' views on the effect of FDSE funding adequacy on public day secondary school students' completion rates were sought using a Likert scaled questionnaire of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree. The views of the class teachers' on FDSE funding adequacy are displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: FDSE Funding Adequacy (N=93)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
1. FDSE Funds less than the total students' full schooling cost leading to charging of extra levies by schools.	7 (7.5)	10 (10.8)	8 (8.6)	25 (26.9)	43 (46.2)	3.94	1.292
2. Inadequate FDSE Funds allocated tempts school to send students home to collect extra levies to meet schooling cost.	4 (4.3)	5 (5.4)	1 (1.1)	33 (35.5)	50 (53.8)	4.29	1.038
3. FDS does not cover poor students' compulsory personal needs resulting to students dropping out of school	8 (8.6)	6 (6.5)	9 (9.7)	46 (49.5)	24 (25.8)	3.77	1.162
4. The FDSE funding that is never adjusted periodically to the increasing cost of learning results into reduction of teaching and learning materials.	3 (3.2)	1 (1.1)	7 (7.5)	34 (36.6)	48 (51.6)	4.32	0.911
Average score						1.08	1.101

Information in Table 4.2 illustrates that class teachers strongly agree with the statement that FDSE funds less than the total students full schooling costs leading to charging of extra levies by schools (M=3.94, SD=1.292). They strongly agree that inadequate

FDSE funds allocated tempts schools to send students home to collect extra levies to meet schooling costs (M=4.29, SD=1.038). They also strongly agree that FDSE funding that is never adjusted periodically to the increasing cost of learning, results into reduction of teaching and learning materials (M=4.32, SD=.911). In addition, the study found that class teachers agree with the statement that FDSE does not cover poor students' compulsory personal needs resulting to students dropping out of school (M=3.77, SD=1.162).

This was supported by the response of one principal who said this during the interview;

Availability of teaching learning resources enhances the effectiveness of schools for good academic performance in students. However, for FDSE to be effective, the government should allocate more funds to improve student teacher ratio, cater for physical facilities, teaching and learning materials.

These views were supported by another principal who stated that;

Although I recommend the government for the introduction of FDSE, tough economic conditions and the inadequate capitation funds have necessitated the introduction of extra levies to cater for infrastructure development, academic trips, lunch and uniform among others and this has led to some of the students dropping out from school due to their inability to afford to pay for the extra fees.

These findings are in line with a study by Ndambuki (2016) that found out that free secondary school education had resulted to high enrolment rates into secondary schools, which was not consistent with completion rates due to a number of challenges that included school funds, physical facilities and availability of teaching learning resources, among others. The findings concurs with a study by Wanjala and Hussein (2017) who established that even after the introduction of FDSE, the enrolment rates remained low because finances to support Free Tuition Secondary Education were inadequate and delayed before disbursement. The study also established that learning time is wasted at home for those who are sent to collect fees and this also leads to high dropout rate, since they cannot meet their education expenses. On the other hand, those who are in school do not have sufficient learning and teaching materials and physical

facilities to encourage learning. Asena, Simiyu and Riechi (2016) concurs with the findings and asserts that not all the students who joined their schools completed the four year secondary school level cycle due to lack of fees by the parents/guardians. The study recommended that the Government should increase the allocation of FDSE funds from what it is now so that the financial burden of paying fees can be removed from the parents and remove all the other schools levies.

The findings concur with Bett (2022) who found out that learning resources are inadequate, the human capacity is inadequate and the funds used in implementation of FDSE is unreliable and insufficient to cater for all demands required. The study by Bett recommends that since learners are continuously increasing in day secondary the capitation fund should be increased to cater for expansions of physical resources in the schools. These findings are consistent with Getange, Onkeo and Orodho (2014) who established that despite the introduction of FDSE, the financial sources in public day secondary schools are unable to meet the required facilities. The study recommended the government to increase the amount disbursed to schools due to inflation and the high cost of living. In support of the findings, (Getange, 2019) posit that FDSE introduced by the government is inadequate to finance education due to inflation and escalating prices of commodities and has remained constant since it was introduced.

Additionally, the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council from various schools were questioned about the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students' completion rates; Table 4.3 lists the answers they provided.

Table 4.3: Extra Levies and Completion Rates (N=46)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
1. Free Day Secondary Funding is enough to meeting learning cost for the learners.	23 (50.0)	10 (21.7)	2 (4.3)	7 (15.2)	4 (8.7)	2.11	1.402
2. There is provision of enough learning materials in the school.	21 (45.7)	16 (34.8)	1 (2.2)	5 (10.9)	3 (6.5)	1.98	1.238
3. Lack of enough FDSE funding leads students working to get money to pay for extra levies instead of attending school.	3 (6.5)	2 (4.3)	6 (13.0)	20 (43.5)	15 (32.6)	3.91	1.112
4. Students from poor families drop out of school due to inadequate funding.	1 (2.2)	4 (8.7)	1 (2.2)	17 (37.0)	23 (50.0)	4.24	1.015
Average score						3.06	1.192

Table 4.4 reveals that, majority of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement that Free Day Secondary Education Funding is enough to meeting learning costs for the learners (M=2.11, SD=1.402). The respondents also strongly disagree to the statement that there is provision of enough learning materials in the school (M=1.98, SD=1.238). This study's findings also revealed that the respondents agree to the statement that lack of enough FDSE funding leads students working to get money to pay for extra levies instead of attending school (M=3.91, SD=1.112). The investigation also found that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that students from poor families drop out of school due to inadequate funding (M=4.24, SD=1.015).

The present investigation' results are compatible with earlier work by Ngwacho (2015) who found that the inability to pay a number of school levies had detriment effect to learning outcomes as it increased the probability of a student repeating a class or withdrawing from school. The current study's results align with those of Mbogo, Ibrahim and Jumba (2022) who found out that FDSE capitation was inadequate and students were expected to pay for meals, fare to school, stationeries and uniform which have significantly contributed to parents/guardians having difficulties in meeting educational expenses for their children leading to the students being frequently sent home and some dropping out of school.

These findings corroborate the findings of Alio and Chui (2023) who established that the number of students in public secondary schools has increased since 2018 to 2022 due FDSE. However, after four years upon enrolment, the number of students who complete their secondary education is low due to hidden costs charged in secondary schools without clear guidelines from the Ministry of Education. The findings also corroborates Ardt (2012) who revealed that children who cannot afford cost of items not offered in free basic education fail to go to school until they can afford and they engage in child labour so that they can get enough money to afford such.

In contrast to the findings, a study by Njenga (2019) revealed that schools had adequate teaching and learning resources to manage the increased enrolment as a result of a hundred percent transition. Reviewed literature has clearly shown that inadequate teaching and learning resources contribute to high truancy rates and low completion rates. The current study findings also negates the findings of Mugiraneza (2018) who revealed that extra levies like school feeding cost, examination fees and co-curricular activities costs had less impact on students' completion rates. The findings of Mugiraneza (2018) further reveal that extra levies meant for supporting school activities

such as building new classrooms and library maintenance were not considered as a threat to students completion rate, rather they are considered as strategies for promoting students intake and completion rate. This is in line with the findings by Wilder (2014) who established that parental contribution to school activities would have positive impact on students' completion rate.

4.5 FDSE Fund Disbursement

In order to determine the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates, class teachers were presented with 4 items that measured their levels of agreement or disagreement with statements related to FDSE fund disbursement. The class teachers were required to respond to Likert scale questions which were set-up in a five point scale format, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree. Results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: FDSE Fund Disbursement (N=93)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
1. Delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus completion among others	6 (6.5)	19 (20.4)	4 (4.3)	26 (28.0)	38 (40.9)	3.76	1.346
2. Multiple funds disbursement in phases results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project Cost.	4 (4.3)	11 (11.8)	7 (7.5)	29 (31.2)	42 (45.2)	4.01	1.184
3. Bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing.	5 (5.4)	9 (9.7)	3 (3.2)	49 (52.7)	27 (29.0)	3.90	1.094
4. Late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities.	8 (8.6)	6 (6.5)	2 (2.2)	34 (36.6)	43 (46.2)	4.05	1.237
Average score						3.93	1.215

As shown in Table 4.4 majority of the class teachers strongly agreed on the following areas; delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus completion among others ($M=3.76$, $SD=1.346$), multiple funds disbursement in phases results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project cost ($M=4.01$, $SD=1.184$) and late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities ($M=4.05$, $SD=1.237$). Majority of the class teachers also agreed to the statement that bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing ($M=3.90$, $SD=1.094$).

The study participants were also interviewed so that they could explain their views regarding the FDSE fund disbursement.

A principal reported that:

Funds provided for implementation of FDSE program are inadequate and delays in remission often results into sending students from poor background for fees in order to support essential programs within the school.

Another principal had this to say:

The disbursement process is not efficient and timely as we receive the FDSE funds in the middle of the term.

The convergence between quantitative and qualitative results validate that the FDSE fund disbursement is not timely which hindered effective teaching and learning. In concurrence with the study findings, Momanyi and Muchimuti (2020) posit that the implementation of FDSE is hindered by delay in disbursing the FDSE funds, inadequate funds from the Government for expansion, over enrolment of learners leading to strained physical facilities, inadequate learning and teaching facilities, acute shortage

of teachers and poor cost-sharing approaches. The findings support Olang'o, Malechwanzi, Murage and Amuka (2021) who revealed that FDSE policy had a negative influence on rural public day secondary schools' as the student capitation was inadequate. The study recommended prompt disbursement of funds in full immediately as schools open in the first term to minimize shortages.

These findings are in agreement with a study by Muhindi (2012) which established that government FDSE subsidies are inadequate and are not disbursed on time. The findings are also supported by Achieng', Nduku and Njui (2021) who posits that Ministry of Education should release FDSE funds at the beginning of the term to enable the schools acquire learning resources in good time as delay of funds affected the learning process and encouraged student absenteeism. Similarly, studies by Mueni, Kimiti and Mulwa (2019) and Koskei (2017) recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that the FDSE capitation grants are disbursed to the public schools in time at least before the start of every term to ensure timely preparation of the schools' budgets and to promote quality in the curriculum implementation process and timely commencement of teaching and learning.

The study also sought to establish views of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council from various schools on the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates as illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: FDSE Fund Disbursement and Students' Completion Rates (N=46)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. Delay of FDSE funds lead to students being send home for extra levies hence dropping out of school.	2 (4.3)	3 (6.5)	1 (2.2)	11 (23.9)	29 (63.0)	4.35	1.100
2. Delayed funding leads to low quality education resulting to students dropping out	1 (2.2)	4 (8.7)	2 (4.3)	13 (28.3)	26 (56.5)	4.28	1.047
3. delayed funding leads to lack of learning/teaching materials	3 (6.5)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	8 (17.4)	33 (71.7)	4.46	1.110
4. Many students drop out of school due to delayed funding	2 (4.3)	5 (10.9)	3 (6.5)	28 (60.9)	8 (17.4)	3.76	1.015
Average score						4.212	1.068

From the results in Table 4.5, majority of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council strongly agreed that; delay of FDSE funds lead to students being sent home for extra levies hence dropping out of school (M=4.35, SD=1.100), delayed funding leads to low quality education resulting to students dropping out (M=4.28, SD=1.047) and delayed funding leads to lack of learning /teaching materials (M=4.46, SD=1.110). They also agree to the statement that many students drop out of school due to delayed funding (M=3.76, SD=1.015).

This agrees with findings of Mwangi (2018) who found that despite the fact that provision of FDSE in public day secondary schools had increased students' transition rate, there are other factors that contribute to low completion rates like inadequate FDSE funds which are not disbursement on timely basis. In support of the findings, Bomett (2019) asserts that the government should on timely basis allocate enough

capitation funds to public schools to ensure that subsidized secondary school education runs smoothly without compromising quality of education and ensure there is substantial increase in learners' enrolments and completion of basic education. Similarly, Musee, Mungai and Mwanza (2017) study findings established that delays in government disbursement of FDSE funds has led the school to incur large debts that limit effectiveness of the schools in teaching and learning process.

4.6 FDSE Funding Utilization

The study also sought to establish class teachers' view on the influence of FDSE funding utilization on public day secondary school students' completion rates. Class teachers were asked to indicate their responses for various areas in relation to FDSE funding utilization in a 5-point Likert scale with (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Not sure, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly agree) as indicated in the table 4.6.

Table 4.6: FDSE Funding Utilization (N=93)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. Inadequate financial management and information technology skills causing FDSE funds waste on unbudgeted and non-essential expenses, denies students quality learning due to inadequate facilities and material	24 (25.8)	40 (43.0)	7 (7.5)	19 (20.4)	3 (3.2)	2.32	1.162
2. FDSE spent on substandard purchases, denies students proper learning	21 (22.6)	44 (47.3)	12 (12.9)	11 (11.8)	5 (5.4)	2.30	1.111
3. Misappropriation of funding by school management negates FDSE's goals of enhanced education access, retention and completion rates	49 (52.7)	25 (26.9)	4 (94.3)	9 (9.7)	6 (6.5)	1.90	1.243
4. Non-compliant to financial control mechanisms creates loopholes for fraud which compromises quality learning and students' completion rates	1 (1.1)	10 (10.8)	0 (0.0)	28 (30.1)	54 (58.1)	4.33	1.004
Average score						2.71	1.13

It is evident from Table 4.6 that majority of the class teachers disagree that inadequate financial management and information technology skills causing FDSE funds waste on unbudgeted and non-essential expenses, denies students quality learning due to inadequate facilities and material (M=2.32, SD=1.162). They also disagree to the statement that FDSE spent on substandard purchases, denies students proper learning

($M=2.30$, $SD=1.111$). On the other hand, the class teachers strongly disagree to the statement that misappropriation of funding by school management negates FDSE's goals of enhanced education access, retention and completion rates ($M=1.90$, $SD=1.243$). The findings further reveal that the respondents strongly agree that non-compliance to financial control mechanisms creates loopholes for fraud which compromises quality learning and students' completion rates ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.004$). The findings reveal that, principals and the school Board of management have embraced their responsibility of budgeting of FDSE funds and approving what is to be spent in order to sustain improvement in learner academic achievement and retention.

To gain further insight, interview (Qualitative data) was conducted from principals' view on the influence of FDSE funding utilization on public day secondary school students' completion rates. One of the principals had this to say:

I had to undergo digital literacy training as the disbursement process of FDSE funds to school accounts is through the EFT system. After receiving the funds, I spend them based on the set budget as I am aware that the government through the EACC is monitoring all the activities.

Another principal reported that:

To ensure that FDSE funds are properly utilized, I work closely with BOM and PA members for proper and effective planning of school programmes and project.

Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed although the FDSE capitation funds are not adequate and are rarely released on time, the principals utilize the funds prudently to improve teaching and learning in their respective schools. According to MoE (2017), All principals are "expected to ensure prudence in the use of school funds and adhere to the laid down financial regulations as stipulated in the financial management instructions' handbook and the Public Finance Management Act, 2012". The OECD (2017) opines that for a school to effectively deliver on their mandate of teaching and learning, the management must develop effective strategies for distributing funds that

are received from the government, donors and parents as well as for monitoring and reporting the use of funds.

In support, Simiyu (2021) established that the allocation of funds is influenced by departmental budgets, staffing needs, school priorities, Ministry of Education goals and priorities, the school's strategic plan, laws and regulations with all having high association level on a number of teaching/learning resources and provision of physical facilities. In support of the study findings, Achieng' Nduku and Njui (2021) opines that failure to release FDSE capitation funds in good time compromise teaching and learning and raises issues of corruption among the personnel involved in the disbursement process. According to Kamau and Wambugu (2017) corruption in the Ministry of Education is among the many impediments that have hindered the government effort to provide free day secondary schooling.

The chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council were also asked to give their opinion concerning the influence of FDSE fund utilization on public day secondary school students' completion rates. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Influence of FDSE Fund Utilization on Students' Completion Rates
(N=46)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
1. FDSE funds are effectively utilized to meet the indented purpose	3 (6.5)	5 (10.9)	2 (4.3)	14 (30.4)	22 (47.8)	4.02	1.256
2. Priority is given to availability of learning/teaching resources	2 (4.3)	7 (15.2)	4 (8.7)	13 (43.5)	20 (43.5)	3.91	1.244
3. FDSE funding has improved the quality of learning	1 (2.2)	4 (8.7)	2 (4.3)	11 (23.9)	28 (60.9)	4.33	1.055
4. There is improved infrastructure for conducive learning	5 (10.9)	25 (54.3)	1 (2.2)	8 (17.4)	7 (15.2)	2.72	1.311
Average score						3.75	1.217

From Table 4.7, majority of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council strongly agreed to three statements; FDSE funds are effectively utilized to meet the indented purpose (M=4.02, SD=1.256), Priority is given to availability of learning/teaching resources (M=3.91, SD=3.91) and FDSE funding has improved the quality of learning (M=4.33, SD=1.055). However, the respondents disagreed to the statement that there is improved infrastructure for conducive learning (M=2.72, SD=1.311). An average score (M=3.75, SD=1.217) reveal that FDSE is a worthy initiative as it enhances access to education despite the many challenges. This finding is supported by Ndiku and Muhavi (2013) who asserts that the gains made due to government introduction of FDSE need to be applauded and appropriate efforts made to ensure that those who enroll do not drop out by cushioning parents from the low income bracket.

In contrast to the study findings, Olang'o, Malechwanzi, Murage and Amuka (2021) established that the shortfall of teaching learning resources strained existing resources making management of FDSE policy ineffective and inefficient. Similarly, studies done in Kenya by Kipeen, Khamadi and Mutea (2015); Atieno, (2014) have also shown that the FDSE policy resulted in increased enrolment, which overstretched the available teaching and learning resources this puts a lot of pressure on the teachers who lack the facilities to provide quality education under the FDSE. A study by Masara (2015) revealed that the timeliness of disbursement of FDSE funds affected quality of physical resources to a great extent as it made it hard for the school management to improve the quality of physical resources available in schools.

4.7 Extra Levies

To establish class teachers' views on the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students' completion rates, the class teachers were presented with 4 items that measured their levels of agreement or disagreement with statements related to extra levies. The 4 items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (a score of 5) to strongly disagree (a score of 1). Table 4.8 shows the frequencies, means and standard deviations obtained by class teachers on the scale.

Table 4.8: Extra Levies (N=93)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. Extra exorbitant levies lead to students being send home for money hence loss of learning hours leading to truancy.	7 (7.5)	11 (11.8)	6 (6.5)	24 (25.8)	45 (48.4)	3.96	1.310
2. Engaging in income generating activities to raise extra fee, exposes students to premature money handling which push them into delinquency such as substance abuse, illicit sex hence dropping out of school	5 (5.4)	8 (8.6)	3 (3.2)	27 (29.0)	50 (53.8)	4.17	1.176
3. Working to earn money for abolished charges divert students' focus from learning to attractive distractions	2 (2.2)	5 (5.4)	9 (9.7)	21 (22.6)	56 (60.2)	4.33	1.004
4. Government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban encourage introduction of more new levies that is exploited by students looking for flimsy reason to drop out of school.	7 (7.5)	4 (4.3)	3 (3.2)	26 (28.0)	53 (57.0)	4.23	1.190
Average score						4.17	1.17

An average score (M=4.17, SD=1.17) in Table 4.8 show that majority of the class teachers strongly agree to all the four statements; extra exorbitant levies lead to students being send home for money hence loss of learning hours leading to truancy (M=3.96, SD=1.310), engaging in income generating activities to raise extra fee, exposes students to premature money handling which push them into delinquency such as substance abuse, illicit sex hence dropping out of school (M=4.17, SD=1.176), working to earn

money for abolished charges divert students' focus from learning to attractive distractions ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.004$) and government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban encourage introduction of more new levies that is exploited by students looking for flimsy reason to drop out of school ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.190$).

The findings were similar to qualitative data gathered through an interview with a principal from one of the public day secondary school which revealed the following:

Through the parents' annual general meeting, we have agreed to charge extra fees to cater for development project funds, teacher motivation fees, remedial teaching up keep, and school tours among other levies.

The same view was advanced by another principal that:

The parents/guardians remain pressed financially to afford the extra levies that are not covered by FDSE as they are supposed to meet other expenses such as uniform, development levy, personal effects, and lunch.

These findings concurred with that of Koya (2015) who found that children who did not pay the extra charges are sent home and end up becoming truant and eventually drop out, which lower completion rates. Similarly, Capron (2015) posit that the idea of free education in United Kingdom (UK) is barely realizable, for parents spend on average £800 per child yearly on extra levies which results in poor children falling behind at school due to truancy, suffering embarrassment and or dropping out, with consequent reduction in completion rates. A research done by Ngwenya (2016) revealed that although tuition in rural primary schools was free, the charging of extra levies was a requirement and inability to pay the extra levies led to dropping out of some learners, hence lowered completion rates. The findings also agree with William and Abbot (2014) who found out that the fee-free schooling in Rwanda attracts high enrolment rates in Rwanda, but charging of extra levies negatively impacted on the learners' attendance, performance in academics and completion.

The findings support a study by Omandi (2015) that found out that since introduction of FDSE in Kenya, transition from primary to secondary schools had been increasing, but completion rate had been low for some students dropped out due to inability to pay the extra levies in education. The findings also concurred with study findings of Getange, Onkeo and Orodho (2014) who found out that parents are supposed to pay levies like lunch, development fee and even extra fees. Similarly, studies by Mutemi (2015); Shavanga (2015); Ngwacho, Ayodo and Chemwei (2016) agree with the finding that failure to pay the extra levies inclusive of uniform and lunch costs led to learners unable to pay being sent home, leading to truancy of students with some eventually dropping out of school, hence reduced completion rates.

According to a study by Mbalaka, Cheloti and Maithya (2021), there is a statistically significant relationship between charging of extra levies and implementation FDSE as the higher and the more the levies are charged, the lower the transition and completion rates. The study recommends The Ministry of Education (MOE) to enforce the ban on charging of extra levies and publish all approved levies that a school can charge learners if need arises.

In order to get further insight on the aspect of extra levies and completion rates, the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council were also asked to give their opinion concerning on the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students' completion rates. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Extra Levies and Students' Completion Rates (N=46)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. I'm always required to pay extra levies by the school same way I did before FDSE introduction	3 (6.5)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	16 (34.8)	25 (54.3)	4.28	1.089
2. Levies are too expensive for poor parents resulting to students being send home for long hence dropping out of school	2 (4.3)	4 (8.7)	3 (6.5)	10 (21.7)	27 (58.7)	4.22	1.172
3. Extra charges is prioritized as a key conditionally for enrolling and continuous learning hence poor students miss, repeat or eventually drop out	1 (2.2)	2 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	12 (26.1)	31 (67.4)	4.52	.888
4. Despite free day secondary education, students unable to purchase requisite personal items are never allowed in school	1 (2.2)	3 (6.5)	2 (4.3)	11 (23.9)	29 (63.0)	4.39	1.000
5. Government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban cause inconsistent attendance and drop out	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	1 (2.2)	13 (28.3)	30 (65.2)	4.54	.751
Average score						4.39	0.98

From Table 4.9 it can be clearly observed that the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council strongly agree to all the five statements; I'm always required to pay extra levies by the school same way I did before FDSE introduction (M=4.28, SD=1.089), levies are too expensive for poor parents resulting to students being send home for long hence dropping out of school (M=4.22, SD=1.172), extra charges is prioritized as a key conditionality for enrolling and continuous learning hence poor

students miss, repeat or eventually drop out ($M=4.52$, $SD=.888$), despite free day secondary education, students unable to purchase requisite personal items are never allowed in school ($M=4.39$, $SD=1.000$) and government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban cause inconsistent attendance and drop out ($M=4.54$, $SD=.751$). The respondents specified that extra levies on public day secondary school students' had a negative influence on completion rates with all items with a mean above 4 scores giving an average mean of 4.39 and standard deviation of 0.98.

These results are in conformity with those of Orodho (2014) who found that parents teachers associations (PTAs) have been authorized to suggest extra levies to be imposed with their consent, a tendency that has made the fees being charged in most secondary schools to sky- rock beyond the financial means of most poor household hence locking out children from such vulnerable backgrounds. These findings further conform to findings by Genevieve (2017) which revealed that, FDSE grant is not adequate to sustain a child in secondary school thus schools compel parents to pay additional fee in form of motivation, development, KCSE registration (upload of details), photocopying papers, trips among other payment which is unregulated and hence varies in amount from one school to the other.

Othoo, Olendo and Gogo, (2023) posit that there is a mismatch of the methods of pricing secondary education and expenditure realities in schools which calls for calls for the examination of the current pricing methods. According to Orodho (2014), the parents should cater for strictly regulated and monitored expenses related to national examinations, internal assessments, transport and affordable school uniforms while the role of the government should be to allocate more funds for developing adequate and appropriate school infrastructure.

4.8 Students' Completion Rates

In this part, class teachers were interrogated on the extent at which they agree with each of the percentage ratios between the number of students who sat KCSE last year and the number of students who enrolled in Form one and completed secondary study program. The results are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Percentage Ratios of Students' Completion Rates (N=93)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. Below 10%	25 (26.9)	42 (45.2)	10 (10.8)	12 (12.9)	4 (4.3)	2.23	1.114
2. Between 10% -30%	17 (18.3)	46 (49.5)	8 (8.6)	15 (16.1)	7 (7.5)	2.45	1.184
3. Between 30% - 50%	18 (19.4)	39 (41.9)	4 (4.3)	20 (21.5)	12 (12.9)	2.67	1.307
4. Between 50% - 70%	9 (9.7)	19 (20.4)	2 (2.2)	42 (45.2)	21 (22.6)	3.51	1.307
5. Between 70% - 90%	6 (6.5)	14 (15.1)	7 (7.5)	40 (43.0)	26 (28.0)	3.71	1.212
6. Over 90%	23 (24.7)	35 (37.6)	1 (1.1)	21 (22.6)	13 (14.0)	2.63	1.428
Average						2.87	1.267

The results in Table 4.11 show that class teachers disagree to four items in relation to the percentage ratios between the number of students who sat KCSE last year and the number of students who enrolled in Form one and completed secondary study program; Below 10% (M=2.23, SD=1.114), Between 10% -30% (M=2.45, SD=1.184), Between 30% - 50% (M=2.67, SD=1.354) and Over 90% (M=2.63, SD=1.428). While majority of the class teachers agree that the number of students who enrolled in Form one and completed secondary study program range between 50% -70% (M=3.51, SD=1.307)

and 70% -90% ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.212$). The findings imply majority of the respondents are of the view that since the introduction of FDSE grants by the government, there has been increased enrolment rates which is not in tandem with the completion rates in public day secondary schools which is between 70% and 90%. This supports a study by Mwangi (2018) which revealed that completion rates in public day secondary schools in Kitui County stands at 72.8% which is way below the government expectation.

These findings were similar to findings by Ndambuki (2016) which found out that FDSE has led to high enrolment rates into secondary schools which is not consistent with completion rates which is attributed to overstretched physical facilities, inadequate instructional materials and school funds. On the same note, these findings conformed to the findings by Achieng' Nduku and Njui (2021) who had observed that one year after the introduction of FDSE by the government, there has been an increase in the enrolments rates every year from the year 2009 to 2014 from 524.3191 in the year 2009 to 1052.5789 in the year 2014. However, the study by Achieng' Nduku and Njui further revealed that not all the students who joined the schools completed the four year cycle due to lack of fees by the parents/guardians.

Additionally, these findings were in line with the findings by Miako (2012) which revealed that the cost of secondary education remained high despite the government capitation grant due to several levies charged and the notable adverse effects of school levies included absenteeism and dropouts which mainly affected students from poor households. These findings further support the findings by Amwayi (2021) which established that the problem of high non-completion still persists in public day schools,

partially caused by school levies and lack of user items which caused absence from school and non-completion.

The chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of students' council views on the effect of FDSE funds on public day secondary school students' completion rates also sought, and the results are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: FDSE Funds and Students' Completion Rates (N=46)

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1. Most students are never absent because of unpaid tuition fee	18 (39.1)	14 (30.4)	1 (2.2)	9 (19.6)	4 (8.7)	2.28	1.393
2. Cases of repeating students have reduced	12 (26.1)	19 (41.3)	2 (4.3)	8 (17.4)	5 (10.9)	2.46	1.345
3. Very few students drop out of school	7 (15.2)	18 (39.1)	4 (8.7)	11 (23.9)	6 (13.0)	2.80	1.327
4. Number of students who sit for KCSE has increased	3 (6.5)	25 (54.3)	1 (2.2)	10 (21.7)	7 (15.2)	2.85	1.282
Average score						2.60	1.337

Table 4.11 illustrates that, majority of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement that most students are never absent because of unpaid tuition fee (M=2.28, SD=1.393). The respondents further disagree to three statements; that cases of repeating students have reduced (M=2.46, SD=1.345), very few students drop out of school (M=2.80, SD=1.327) and number of students who sit for KCSE has increased (M=2.85, SD=1.282).

The findings are supported by Aduda, Kodero and Sichari (2019) who established that although overall school enrolment increased over the years with the introduction and implementation of FDSE in 2008, school completion rates were still worryingly low. In 2007 the school completion rate was 81.0%, whereas in 2008 the rate declined to 79.5% and further dropped to 75.8% in 2010. Atambo, Mwebi and Onderi (2016) concurs with the finding by stating that there are hidden charges that are supposed to be met by the income of the family and when it is insufficient the learners misses classes and eventually drops out of secondary school leading to low retention. This finding is in line with that of Mwaka and Njogu (2014) who asserts that the delivery of secondary education in Kenya has been marked by numerous challenges, from declining retention and completion rates, grade repetition and dropout in schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, the main conclusions and the recommendations that are made from the findings in line with the research objectives.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. Data for the study was gathered from 25 chairpersons of students' council, 21 vice-Chairpersons of students' council, 93 class Teachers and 28 principals. The data was collected using questionnaires for teachers, chairpersons and vice-Chairpersons of students' council and interview schedules for the principals. The study was based on the Systems Theory of Management.

5.2.1 FDSE Funding Adequacy

The study findings indicated that FDSE funds is usually less than the total students full schooling costs leading to charging of extra levies by schools. The majority of the respondents revealed that inadequate FDSE funds allocated tempts schools to send students home to collect extra levies to meet schooling costs. It is also evident that FDSE funding is never adjusted periodically to the increasing cost of learning, resulting into reduction of teaching and learning materials. The study further established that FDSE does not cover poor students' compulsory personal needs resulting to students dropping out of school.

5.2.2 FDSE Fund Disbursement

The research findings revealed that majority of the respondents are of the view that delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus completion among others, multiple funds disbursement in phases results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project cost, late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities, bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing.

5.2.3 FDSE Funding Utilization

The study revealed that majority of the respondents were of the view that principals are adequately equipped with financial management and information technology skills and this was not the root cause of FDSE funds being wasted on unbudgeted and non-essential expenses or on substandard purchases, denying students quality learning due to inadequate facilities and material. There was also prudent use of allocated funds as misappropriation of funding by school management would negate FDSE's goals of enhanced education access, retention and completion rates. The findings further reveal that non-compliant to financial control mechanisms creates loopholes for fraud which compromises quality learning and students' completion rates.

5.2.4 Extra Levies

From the findings majority of the respondents are of the view that; extra exorbitant levies lead to students being send home for money hence loss of learning hours leading to truancy, engaging in income generating activities to raise extra fee, exposes students

to premature money handling which push them into delinquency such as substance abuse, illicit sex hence dropping out of school, working to earn money for abolished charges divert students' focus from learning to attractive distractions and government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban encourage introduction of more new levies that is exploited by students looking for flimsy reason to drop out of school.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that FDSE funds are inadequate resulting into reduction of teaching and learning materials. Further, the findings reveal that, despite the government efforts to provide free education to all its citizens, the FDSE capitation over the years has not been adjusted to cater for increasing cost of learning. This scenario has necessitated schools to send students home to collect extra levies to meet schooling costs and this has resulted to students from poor economic backgrounds dropping out of school. Inadequate FDSE funds has left schools with no other options but to charge extra levies to cater for development project funds, teacher motivation fees, remedial teaching up keep, school tours, lunch, school uniforms among others. This has led to truancy of students with some eventually dropping out of school hence reduced completion rates.

The study findings established that there was delayed disbursement of FDSE funds which was done in multiple phases and this has significantly contributed to inadequate learning materials and other essential services in schools. The study concludes that delayed funding leads to low quality education as students from poor socio-economic backgrounds are being send home for fees hence dropping out of school. The study also established that majority of the principals prudently utilized the allocated FDSE funds on budgeted items. Therefore, the study concludes that although the FDSE capitation

funds are not adequate and are rarely released on time, the principals utilize the funds prudently to improve teaching and learning in their respective schools.

5.4 Recommendations

1. On FDSE funding adequacy, the study recommends that in line with the changing economic environment, the government should allocate more funds for FDSE. This will ease the burden of parents who have to source for more funds to bridge the gap that is left by the inadequate funds. This will also ensure that there is improved learning as the schools will have adequate learning facilities and truancy will be a thing of the past.
2. On FDSE fund disbursement, the study recommends that full term funding be done at the beginning of every term. This will ensure that the learning process in all schools goes on uninterrupted as funds will be available to cater for most of the school's academic activities and ongoing projects. To a great extent will solve the problem of student absenteeism and dropout rates as students from poor socio-economic backgrounds will not be send home for fees.
3. On FDSE funding utilization, the government should ensure that set policies and guidelines on prudent use of FDSE funds are adhered to. In cases where there is mismanagement of the funds, the appropriate government agencies like directorate of criminal investigations (DCI) and Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) should take prompt action against the concerned officer in order to discourage such vices in future.
4. On extra levies, the government should put measures in place to curb charging of extra levies by schools to ensure there is fair and equitable fees payment in all public day secondary schools and achieve the goal of FDSE which is provision of

affordable education to all its citizens irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Further research should be conducted to the following;

1. Since this study covered the effects of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya, similar studies should be carried out in other sub-counties for purposes of generalizing these research findings.
2. In addition, a comparative study can be done between two counties to check the impact of Free Day Secondary Education funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools.
3. A research study using different larger sample of respondents would eliminate bias and give a more accurate situation on the utilization of FDSE funds in public day secondary schools.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

**Salome Kisyanga
Machakos University
P.O BOX 136 – 90100
Machakos
0712814255**

Dear Respondent

RE: REQUEST TO FILL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE

I am a post graduate student of Machakos University pursuing a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. I am carrying out a research on effects of FDSE funds on students completion rate in public day secondary school in Mwala Sub –county. Your school has been sampled for the study and you have been selected to participate in the study as a respondent.

All information shared will be purely used for the purpose of the study and no information touching your identity will be disclosed.

Thank you in advance

Yours Faithfully,
Salome N. Kisyanga.
E55/12676/2017.

APPENDIX B: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS

A. INTRODUCTION

1. General Information

Time interview started:

Time interview ended:

Interviewer: Hello, this is (name of interviewer). I am a post graduate student from Machakos University pursuing a master's degree in education administration. I am carrying out research on impact of FDSE funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary school in Mwala Sub –County. Your school has been sampled for the study and you have been selected to participate in the study as a respondent. Thank you for joining me for this interview session today.

Ask the respondent introduce self and use his/her responses to fill against each introductory variable in the table.

Interviewer: Could you kindly state you age, gender and station of duty.

Variable	Response
Age	
Gender.....	
School	

Explain Subject

Interviewer: As mentioned in the introduction letter, I am from Machakos University conducting research to collect data on subject mentioned above.

The objective of this one-on-one interview is to solicit for empirical data on “Impact of FDSE funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County”. The goal is to identify and prioritize research gaps to enrich policy, evolve prudent and superior strategies in enhancing students' completion rates. Further, this work should contribute new knowledge as a source of reference for future studies in the field.

As principal mandated with discharging strategic and tactical duties, it is expected you have first-hand knowledge hence deemed competent to share your experience in the subject of discussion. Kindly, respond as openly and honestly as possible to all items of this interview. Any information, opinion and views in this interview will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be linked to you in any way. As such, you are requested not to indicate your name or any information anywhere that might reveal your identity as all responses are intended to remain anonymous. Information collected will only be used for academic purposes of this study.

Do you have any questions?

Is it ok to begin the interview?

B. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer; To start us off, kindly share statistical information on the following;

- (i) Total number of chronically absent students -----
- (ii) Total number of repeating students -----
- (iii) Total number of students who dropped out of school-----
- (iv) Total Number of students who transitioned to the next class last year -----

Interviewer; Thanks for the figures. We can now embark on the main discussion about impact of Free Day Secondary Education on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools. We shall explore the impact of FDSE funds on public day secondary school students' completion rates in terms of funding adequacy, fund disbursement, utilization of FDSE funds as well as extra levies.

Interviewer; Based on your experience working with the FDSE since its introduction, outline and briefly explain the effect of the following aspects on students' completion rates in your school.

- i. FDSE Funding Adequacy
- ii. FDSE Fund Disbursement
- iii. FDSE utilization of funds
- iv. Extra levies

THE END

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences with me.

Do you have any additional comments or insight about FDSE and student completion rate in your school?

Do you have any questions for me?

If none, we come to the end of our interview.

Again, thank you very much for insightful information.

For clarification, inquiry, or further information on this issue, kindly contact me.

Have a good day.

APPENDIX C: CLASS TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This research instrument is designed to solicit for empirical data for the conduct of scientific survey on “Impact of FDSE funds on students’ completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County”. Kindly, respond as openly and honestly as possible to all items in the questionnaire. In rating the statements below, kindly indicate your preferred answer by using a tick (✓) to mark your answer in the box at end of each statement.

You are humbly requested not to indicate your name or any information anywhere that might reveal your identity as all responses are intended to remain anonymous. However, any information, opinion and views to be provided in this questionnaire will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be linked to you in any way. Information collected will only be used for academic purposes of this study.

Section A: Demographic Information

Variable	Definition	Tick as appropriate
Gender of respondent	1. Male	
	2. Female	
Class teacher’s experience	1. 1 Year & below	
	2. Between 1-5 Years	
	3. Between 5-10 Years	
	4. Between 10-15 Years	
	5. Above 15	

Section B: FDSE Funding Adequacy									
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below on the effect of FDSE funding adequacy on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>									
FDSE Funding adequacy					RATING				
					1	2	3	4	5
1.	FDSE funds less than the total students full schooling costs leading to charging of extra levies by schools								
2.	Inadequate FDSE funds allocated tempts schools to send students home to collect extra levies to meet schooling costs								
3.	FDSE does not cover poor students' compulsory personal needs resulting to students dropping out of school.								

4.	The FDSE funding that is never adjusted periodically to the increasing cost of learning, results into reduction of teaching and learning materials					
Section C: FDSE Fund Disbursement						
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below on the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>						
FDSE Fund Disbursement		Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Delayed disbursement of allocated funds delays procuring of goods and services that compromises school calendar operations particularly academic syllabus completion among others					
2.	Multiple funds disbursement in phases results in FDSE project stoppage leading to waste and increased project cost					
3.	Bureaucracy hinders fast release of FDSE that disorients school budget due to increased cost of goods as a result of change in pricing					
4.	Late FDSE disbursement compromises academic quality as certain lessons are never adequately attended as a result of inadequate, poorly maintained or lack of learning and instruction material and facilities					

Section D: FDSE Funding Utilization						
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the influence of FDSE funding utilization on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>						
FDSE Funding Utilization		Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Inadequate financial management and information technology skills causing FDSE funds waste on unbudgeted and non-essential expenses, denies students quality learning due to inadequate facilities and material					
2.	FDSE spent on substandard purchases, denies students proper learning					
3.	Misappropriation of funding by school management negates FDSE's goals of enhanced education access, retention and completion rates					
4.	Non-compliant to financial control mechanisms creates loopholes for fraud which compromises quality learning and students' completion rates.					

Section E: Extra Levies						
On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students' completion rates						
	Extra Levy Effects	Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Extra exorbitant levies lead to students being send home for money hence loss of learning hours leading to truancy.					
2	Engaging in income generating activities to raise extra fee, exposes students to premature money handling which push them into delinquency such as substance abuse, illicit sex hence dropping out of school.					
3	Working to earn money for abolished charges divert students' focus from learning to attractive distractions.					
4	Government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban encourage introduction of more new levies that is exploited by students looking for flimsy reason to drop out of school					

Section F: Students' Completion Rate						
On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the percentage ratios between the number of students who sat KCSE last year and the number of students who enrolled in Form one and completed secondary study program						
	Student Enrolment to Completion Rate Ratio	Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Below 10%					
	Between 10% -30%					
	Between 30% - 50%					
	Between 50% -70%					
	Between 70% -90%					
	Over 90%					

THE END

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX D: CHAIRPERSONS AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF STUDENTS' COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE

This research instrument is designed to solicit for empirical data for the conduct of scientific survey on “Impact of FDSE funds on students’ completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Machakos County”. Kindly, respond as openly and honestly as possible to all items in the questionnaire. In rating the statements below, kindly indicate your preferred answer by using a tick (✓) to mark your answer in the box at end of each statement.

You are humbly requested not to indicate your name or any information anywhere that might reveal your identity as all responses are intended to remain anonymous. However, any information, opinion and views to be provided in this questionnaire will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be linked to you in any way. Information collected will only be used for academic purposes of this study.

Section A: Demographic Information

Variable	Definition	Tick as appropriate
Gender of respondent	1. Male	
	2. Female	
Form/Class of respondent	1. Form 1	
	2. Form 2	
	3. Form 3	
	4. Form 3	

Section B: FDSE Funding Adequacy					
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students’ completion rates</i>					
					Rating
FDSE Funding					1 2 3 4 5
1.	Free Day Secondary Education Funding is enough to meeting learning costs for the learners				
2.	There is provision of enough learning materials in the school				
3.	Lack of enough FDSE funding leads students working to get money to pay for extra levies instead of attending school.				
4.	Students from poor families drop out of school due to inadequate funding				

Section C: Extra Levies					
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the effect of extra levies on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>					
	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
I'm always required to pay extra levies by the school same way I did before FDSE introduction					
Levies are too expensive for poor parents resulting to students being send home for long hence dropping out of school					
Extra charges is prioritized as a key conditionality for enrolling and continuous learning hence poor students miss, repeat or eventually drop out					
Despite free day secondary education, students unable to purchase requisite personal items are never allowed in school					
Government's failure in enforcing hidden levy ban cause inconsistent attendance and drop out					

Section D: FDSE Fund Disbursement					
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the influence of FDSE fund disbursement on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>					
	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Since the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education					
1	Delay of FDSE funds lead to students being send home for extra levies hence dropping out o school.				
2	Delayed funding leads to low quality education resulting to students dropping out.				
3	Delayed funding leads lack learning /teaching materials				
4	Many students drop out of school due to delayed funding				

Section E: FDSE Funds Utilization					
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the influence of FDSE fund utilization on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>					
	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Since the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education					
1	FDSE funds are effectively utilized to meet the indented purpose.				
2	Priority is given to availability of learning/teaching resources				

3	FDSE funding has improved the quality of learning					
4	There is improved infrastructure for conducive learning.					

Section F: Students' Completion Rates						
<i>On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree, kindly indicate the extent at which you agree with each of the statements below on the effect of FDSE fundss on public day secondary school students' completion rates</i>						
		Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
Since the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education						
1	Most students are never absent because of unpaid tuition fee					
2	Cases of repeating students have reduced					
3	Very few students drop out of school					
4	Number of students who sit for KCSE has increased					

THE END:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX E: MAP OF MWALA SUB-COUNTY



APPENDIX F: RESEARCH PERMIT

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION Ref No: 346421	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION Date of Issue: 31/July/2023
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Salome Nduywa Kiryanga of Machakos University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Machakos on the topic: impacts of free day secondary school funds on students' completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala subcounty, Machakos county, Kenya for the period ending : 31/July/2024.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/23/28078	
Applicant Identification Number 346421	
Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION	
Verification QR Code 	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions:	

APPENDIX G: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION

Telephone: 21009 and 21983 – 90100
Email Address: cc.machakos@interior.go.ke
Fax No. 044-21999
When replying please quote:

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER
P.O. Box 1 – 90100
MACHAKOS

REF NO:CC/ST/ADM 5/9 VOL V/10

DATE: 7TH September, 2023

Deputy County Commissioner
MWALA SUB-COUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION-MS. SALOME NDUNGWA KISYANGA

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation has authorized the above mentioned Student to carry out a research on **“Impact of free day secondary school funds on students’ completion rates in public day secondary schools in Mwala sub-county”** Machakos County-Kenya, for the period ending 31st July, 2024

Please be notified and accord her the necessary assistance.



Anthony Nyongesa
ANTHONY NYONGESA
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MACHAKOS COUNTY



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING" Machakos
Telephone: Machakos
Fax: Machakos
Email – cdemachakos@yahoo.com
When replying please quote

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF
EDUCATION
P. O. BOX 2666 – 90100
MACHAKOS

MKS/ED/CDE/R/4/VOL.4/ 318

Date: 7th September, 2023

Ms. Salome Ndungwa Kisyanga
Machakos University

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to the letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation Ref: NACOSTI/P/23/28078 dated **31st July, 2023**.

You are hereby authorized to carry out your research on **"Impact of FDSE funds on students' completion rates in public day Secondary schools in Mwala Sub – County, Machakos County, Kenya"**. For a period ending **31st July, 2024**.

FOR COUNTY DIRECTOR
OF EDUCATION – MACHAKOS

Date:
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
cdemachakos@yahoo.com


AGESA ONZERE

**FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MACHAKOS**



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

Telegrams: "ELIMU"

Telephone: Mwala

Fax: Mwala

Email – deomwaladistrict@gmail.com

When replying please quote



SUB COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE
MWALA SUB COUNTY

P.O. BOX 413-90101,
MASII

REF. MWAL/ ED/A/58/VOL1/ 96

Dates: 07/09/ 2023

Ms. Salome ndungwa kisyanga

Machakos University

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

References made to the letter dated 7th September, 2023 from Machakos County Education, Ref: MKS / ED/CDE/R/4/VOL.4/31 quoted a letter from National commission for science, technology and innovation Ref: Nacosti/p/23/28078 dated 31th July, 2023.

You are hereby authorized to carry out your research on "Impact Of FDSE Funds On Students, Completion In Public Day Secondary Schools In Mwala Sub – County, Machakos , Kenya". For A Period Ending 31st July 2024


SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MWALA
P.O. Box 413 - 90101, MASII
SIGN:
DATE: 7/9/23

ROSE D KATHIE

FOR: SUB- COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION.

MWALA