



Influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on Students' Academic Achievement in Kericho County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Globally as countries try to provide Education for All, Free Secondary Education (FSE) policy was adopted in 2008 to enhance access, improve quality, equity, relevance and gender parity in the provision of secondary school education in Kenya. The first cycle of students who benefitted from FSE policy graduated in 2011. The Students' mean scores in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education on average was 5.39. This means that students' academic achievements was one of the concerns that were to be addressed by FSE policy, however, its influence was unknown. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement in Kericho County. The study was based on the concept of investment choices and consequently a conceptual framework was formulated. The independent variable was FSE policy and dependent variable was students' academic achievement. Descriptive, ex-post facto and correlational research designs were adopted. The study population was 4,457 Principals, Sub County Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, Directors of Studies and form IV students of 2011. The sample size was 485. Snowball and saturated sampling techniques were used to select respondents. Questionnaire, interview schedules, Focus Group Discussion guide and document analysis guide were used to collect data. Quantitative data was analyzed using cohort analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes. The study established that there was a moderate negative relationship between FSE policy and GPI with a coefficient of -0.44 at a p-value of 0.05, meaning it accounted for 19% of the variation. The study established that there was a moderate positive relationship between FSE policy and students' academic achievement with a coefficient of 0.69 at a p-value of 0.05, meaning it accounted for 48% of the variation. The study concluded that FSE policy enhanced students' academic achievement. Though there were other factors like poverty, early employment, drugs and many others that influence academic performance in Kericho County.

INTRODUCTION

Education is important human right. It is a tool for eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease and developing a global partnership for development. This is supported by world summit declaration on Education for All which is a global movement led by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015 (World Bank, 2000a). United Nations Human Regional Commission (2012) points out that education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. World Bank (2011) states that some countries are now declaring free universal secondary education. In this

respect countries like Angola, Benin, Botswana, Uganda and several other sub-Saharan Africa have introduced Free Secondary Education (FSE) Policy to be in line with both Education for All (EFA) Goal and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is against this backdrop that the Kenya government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Secondary Education (FSE) policies in 2003 and 2008 respectively. FSE policy (MOE, 2007) was put in place to enhance transition from primary to secondary school by making secondary school education affordable. The objectives of FSE policy were to enhance access to secondary education, improve quality, equity, relevance and gender parity in the provision of secondary school education (MOE, 2007). To achieve these objectives the government provided a guideline (Table 1).

Table 1: Costs incurred by the Government for each Student per Year after the Introduction of FSE Policy in 2008

Vote head	Day Schools	Boarding Schools	
	(Kshs.)	GOK Subsidy (FSE)	Parent Fees
Tuition	3,600	3,600	0
Boarding, Equipment and Stores	0	0	13,034
Repair, Maintenance and Improvement	400	400	400
Local Travel and Transport	400	400	500
Administration Costs	500	500	350
Electricity, water and Conservancy	500	500	1500
Activity Fees	600	600	0
Personal Emolument	3,965	3,935	2,743
Medical	300	300	100
Total School Fees	10,265	10,265	18,635

Source: Ministry of Education (2009)

According to the Ministry of Education (2009) FSE is meant to cater for the following items in secondary education: Tuition Kshs. 3,600/=, to cater for the students learning materials for instance textbooks, reams of paper, exercise books and other learning materials, Kshs. 400/= for Repair, Maintenance and Improvement (RMI), Kshs. 500/= for Electricity, water supply and conservancy (EW&C). Kshs. 400/= for Local Transport and Travel (LTT), Kshs.500/= Administrative Costs (AC), Kshs.3, 965/=, Personal Emolument (PE). Kshs. 600/= and Kshs. 300/= Co-curricular activities and medical care respectively. The day schools parents were to cater for Lunch, Uniforms, personal effects and other projects for example expansion of infrastructure upon approval by the District Education Board (DEB) in consultation with the Boards of Governors (BOGs) and Parents Teachers Association (PTAs). Clear the fee balance for continuing students for the academic year

2008 (MOE, 2009). The boarding schools on the other hand parents should cater for boarding, Equipments and store Kshs. 13,034/=, RMI Kshs. 400/=, EW&C Kshs. 1,500/= LTT Kshs. 500/= personal Emolument Kshs. 2,743/= and medical care Kshs. 100/= respectively. Making a total of Kshs. 18,635/=. Parents were not required to pay for tuition and co-curricular activities but they were to cater for the following costs school uniforms, boarding and projects (MOE, 2009). The implementation of FSE first phase ended in 2011 with graduation of the first cohort that fully benefited from this policy. What was unknown was the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement in Kericho County. Students' performance in KCSE prior to FSE policy in Kericho County was of concern. Thus data on students' performance in Kericho County before FSE policy was as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Performance in KCSE in Kericho County Secondary Schools for the years 2004 to 2007

Years	Mean Scores	Deviation
2004	4.77	0.10
2005	5.83	1.06
2006	5.45	-0.38
2007	5.52	0.07

Source: Kericho County Director of Education Office, 2011

From Table 2 it can be noted that Performance in Kericho County was not impressive despite the fact that it had some of the top performing schools nationally. The performance from 2004 to 2007 was observed to be fluctuating as signified by the lowest mean scores of 4.76 in 2004 and 5.83 which is the highest in 2005. This is an indication that the County was not performing well in secondary education as the mean scores remained below average for the years. KCSE is the ultimate indicator of students' academic achievement.

Research Objective

Establish the influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on students' academic achievements in Kericho County.

SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Students' academic achievement is the ultimate measure of quality of secondary school. FSE fund is channeled to improve on inputs so as to improve in its outcome which is academic achievement (MOE, 2008). While trying to establish the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement it was necessary to establish the utilization of FSE fund on educational inputs which was part of the package of FSE policy to enhance students' academic achievement. The inputs include resources, time, and human effort, material among others and output in terms of academic achievement as signified by performance in national examinations. Financial resources are crucial inputs. This is why globally governments have made efforts to subsidize the cost of education.

A study by Macharia, (2013) on the Impact of Free Secondary Education Policy on Internal Efficiency of Day Schools in Gatanga District, Murang'a County found that in the period between 2008 and 2011, performance of day schools in KCSE improved where 37.5% of the schools retained their previous performance while 62.5% improved. Survey design was adopted in the study. The target population for this study was 23 day schools, 23 principals and 245 teachers. The sampled population consisted of 8 day schools, 8 principals and 48 teachers. Questionnaires and interview were used to collect data. Percentages and standard

deviation were used to analyse data. The study had a small population and should have been sampled. Correlation has been done to determine the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievements. The study focused on the impact of FSE policy on internal efficiency.

According to the Daily Nation (2014, March 6th) poor performance in Lamu East in KCSE was due to admission of students in form one with less than 250 marks in local secondary schools. This is what is termed as poor entry behavior. Gogo, (2012) indicated in his findings that the increase of expenditure on education by the Kenya government has least effect on performance. OECD (2000) showed that it is clear that in developing countries where resources are limited, the class sizes are below the optimum size and may be linked to inefficiency use of existing resources.

Kariuki et al, (2012) did a study on the performance and influence of poor performance in Mathematics Baringo County and revealed that factors contributing to poor performance include under staffing, inadequate teaching/ learning materials, lack of motivation and poor attitudes by both teachers and students, retrogressive practices. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population was 1876 respondents which comprised of Form Three secondary school students in Koibatek District, 132 Mathematics teachers and 9 head teachers. The data for the research was collected by use of three questionnaires; student, teachers and head teachers questionnaires. Percentages were used to analyse data. The sample population was not given in this study and the influence of FSE policy on Students' Academic Achievements was not determined. The study focused on performance and influence of poor performance in Baringo County.

A study done by Soi *et al*, (2013) on the influence of school type on girls' attitudes towards mathematics in Ainamoi Division, Kericho District, Kenya revealed that there was no significant difference between girls' attitude towards mathematics in girls' only schools and girls in co-educational schools. However it revealed that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.05 alpha levels in girls' perception of ability between girls in girls' only schools and those in co-educational schools in favor of those in girls' only schools. A total of 200 girls (80 from girls' only schools and 120 from co-educational schools) responded to a three-point rating scale instrument that measured attitudes towards mathematics. Descriptive survey was adopted. Correlation design should have been proper since the analysis determine the relationship. This study focused on girls schools only in Ainamoi Division but did not determine the influence of FSE policy on Students' Academic Achievements.

A study on an evaluation of the implementation of Free Primary Education in selected public secondary schools in Kakamega District carried out by Luvega (2007) found that majority (88.9%) rated their performance as poor while a few (3.7%) this was because the school that enrolled few students performed better than those which enrolled more. It revealed that there is a relationship between the number of students enrolled in class and their performance. This study revealed that enrollment has an influence on performance.

Ngeno *et al* (2012) study revealed that in Kericho District the performance indices in KCSE for day scholar girls and boarders were 3.38 and 3.59 respectively in mixed day and boarding secondary schools in 2010. This performance was equally below average. This outcome was attributed to school levies, indiscipline, family factors, entry behaviour of the child, lack of interest on the girls' to complete their work, the attitude some parents have towards the girl child compared to the boy

child, and lack of required books. The study established that it was more cost effective to educate a girl child in day school than a boarding school in Kericho District. The study population consisted of 150 form four students, 45 Heads of Department and 6 principals. The sample size was 124 form four students, 35 HODs and 5 principals. The instruments for data collection were questionnaire, document analysis guide and interviews. This study focused on girls in day and boarding schools and did not embrace the influence of FSE policy. Nevertheless, it provided data on factors that influenced performance of girl students and established the cost effectiveness of educating the girl child in day and boarding secondary schools. This findings were similar that of the study done in by Ngeno, *et al* (2013) on the determinants of girls achievement in mixed day and boarding secondary schools in Kericho District. This study did not determine the influence of FSE policy on performance in Kericho district since it was done before it was introduced.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

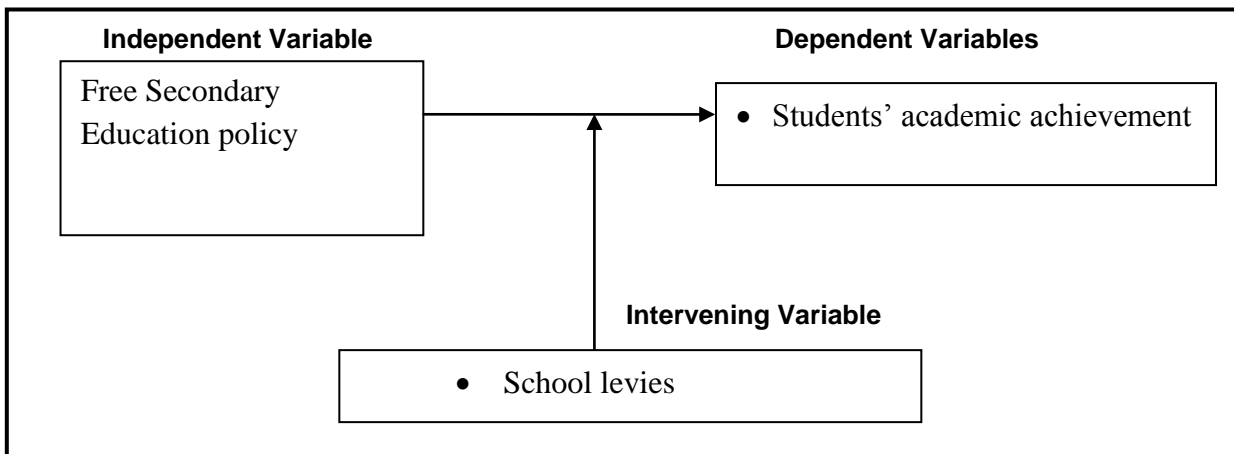


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Influence of the FSE Policy on Students' Academic Achievement in Kericho County

This conceptual framework was adapted to focus on independent and dependent variables. Independent variable was FSE policy while dependent variables was students' academic achievement. The school levies was an intervening variable. This variable was taken care of by including it in correlations to establish its influence. Students' academic achievement was determined by analyzing students' performance in KCSE before and after the introduction of FSE Policy. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients and coefficient of determination was used to establish the influence of FSE funds on students' academic achievement in Kericho County.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ex post facto, descriptive survey and correlational research designs were used in this study.

The study population consisted of 45 secondary school principals, 45 Director of Studies (DOS), 5 District Quality Assurance Standards Officer (DQASOs) and 4,362 form four 2011 students drawn from 45 secondary schools in Kericho County. The sample size for the students was determined using the formula by Israel (1992). Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision.

This formula was applied in this study to determine the students sample size. The students study population was 4,362 form IV students.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} \quad n = \frac{4362}{1 + 4362(0.05)^2} = 366$$

Saturated sampling technique was used to select the 5 DQASOs, 40 Director of Studies and the 40 School Principals. Saturated sampling is whereby the whole population is used because it is too small to be sampled (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This was adopted in this study to select the DQASOs, Director of Studies and school principals as their populations were too small to be sampled. Questionnaire, interview schedule, Observation Guide, Focus Group Discussion Guide and document analysis guide was used in this study. Reliability was determined by administering the instrument same respondent twice at an interval of two weeks in 5(10%) of the principals and Pearson product moment correlation coefficients was used to compute the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient was 0.8 at a set p-value of 0.05. This means the instrument was reliable as the calculated coefficient was greater than 0.7.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics Descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts, percentages, gender parity index, cohort analysis and Inferential Statistics in form of Pearson product moment Correlation coefficients. Students' academic achievement was measured in terms of KCSE mean scores Correlation coefficients (r) were therefore interpreted to determine the influence of FSE policy on the dependent variables in terms of direction and strength of relationship Elifson, Runyon and Haber, 1990; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005) interpretation guidelines was used as shown in Table 3. This was adopted in the interpretation of Pearson's (r) and coefficient of determination R² in this study.

Table 3: Interpretation of Pearson Correlation Coefficients (r)

Strength of the relationship	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
Weak/low/small	0.01 – 0.30	0.01 – 0.30
Moderate/ medium	0.31 – 0.70	0.31 – 0.70
Strong/high	0.71 – 0.99	0.71 – 0.99
Perfect relationship	1.00	1.00
No relationship	0.00	0.00

Source: Adapted from Elifson, Runyon and Haber (1990); Leedy and Ormrod (2005)

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents in this study included school Principals, Director of Studies, DQASO and students. Their demographic characteristics were as shown in Tables 4

Table 4: Principals' Gender and Headship Experience (n=40)

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	30	75.00
Female	10	25.00
Total	40	100.00
Headship Experience in years		
5	1	02.50
6-10	12	30.00
11-15	17	42.50
16-20	10	25.00
Total	40	100.00

Table 4 indicates that out of all the 40 (100%) school Principals involved in the study 30 (75%) were male while 10 (25%) were female. This shows that very few female teachers are as appointed school Principals in Kericho County. This is in agreement with the study carried out in a sampled number of schools in Kenya by Bosire *et al* (2009) where it was indicated that out of the 30 sampled school Principals 22(79%) were male while 6 (21%) were female. The school principals' leadership experience was also indicated and one (2.50%) had headship experience between 5 years, 12 (30.00%) had an experience of 6-10years, 17 (42.50%) has an experience of 11-15 years while 10 (25.00%) had an experience of 16-20 years.

From the findings in Table 4, most school principals had headship experience of 6 years and above. This shows that they had enough experience in school management and they were able to give the relevant information on students' academic achievement in Kericho County. Principals with experience can be relied on for the authenticity of data collected. They were also better placed given that the data required dated back to the year 2004 that required experience in school administration.

Table 5: Teaching experience before being Appointed as School Principals (n=40)

Years	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
5-10	2	5.00
11-15	5	12.50
16- 20	24	60.00
21-25	9	22.50

Table 5 indicates the school Principals teaching experience before they reached the level of school principal. Those principals with a teaching experience of between 5 -10 years were 2(5%) between 11-15 years were 5 (12.50%), while 24(60%) had a teaching experience between 16-20 and 9 (22.50%) had a teaching experience of between 21-25 years. This shows that these School Principals had gone through all the ranks in the teaching profession and had experience to be appointed as the school Principals. According to Education Portal (2014) in the US most Principals enter the profession after obtaining enough experience as teachers. This is in agreement with the findings of this study and it shows that the principals were able to answer questions on students' academic achievement in Kericho County. This is vital in determining the validity of data that was generated in this study.

Table 6: School Principals' Highest Professional Qualifications (n=40)

Highest Qualification	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
BED, BSC +PGDE, BA + PGDE, B.COMM + PGDE	15	37.50
M.ED	25	62.50
Total	40	100.00

Table 6 indicates the education level of the school principals. Fifteen (37.50%) had a Bachelor's degree while 25 (62.50%) had Master Degree. Basing on the findings in it is clear that all the Principals had the

Table 8: FSE Fund and School Levies incurred in four years on average for 2008 Cohort after introduction of FSE policy (n=40)

Type of School	FSE in 4 year (Kshs.)	Percentage (%)	Costs incurred by parents in 4 years (Kshs.)	Percentage (%)	Total in Kshs.
Days scholars in mixed schools	41,060	40.43	60,509.65	59.57	81,569.65
Boarders in mixed schools	41,060	27.40	108,803.85	72.60	112,863.85
Girls boarding	41,060	25.62	119,178.57	74.38	160,238.57
Boys boarding	41,060	24.88	123,964.43	75.12	165,024.43

Table 8 indicates the costs incurred by the government and the parents after FSE policy in Kericho County. The government spent Kshs.41, 060 for four years while the parents spent Kshs.60, 509.65 on average for four years in mixed day schools, and for boarders in mixed schools they spent Kshs.108, 803.85. In girls boarding and boys boarding they spent Kshs.119, 178.57 and Kshs.123, 964.43 respectively.

Day school students were not given any guideline on the amount of levies the parents were to pay while parents in boarding schools were to pay Kshs.18,627 per year which would add up to Kshs.74,508 in four years. This

required level of education. Education Portal (2014) shows that in the US the requirement to be a School Principals is a Bachelor of Education degree. This is also applicable in this study and in agreement with The Basic Education Act 2013 (Republic of Kenya, 2013). These principals were in a position to understand and give the relevant information about students' academic achievement in Kericho County, given their academic credentials.

Table 7: School Levies incurred by Parents on average in four years before introduction of FSE Policy for the 2004 cohort (n=40)

Type of School	Amount (Kshs)
Days scholars in mixed schools	63,617.11
Boarders in mixed schools	96,954.05
Girls boarding	105,299.00
Boys boarding	115,234.00

Table 7 indicates the costs incurred by parents in terms of school fees and levies before FSE policy in 2008. The day scholars in mixed schools paid on average Kshs.63, 617.11 in four years while boarders in mixed schools paid Kshs.96, 954.05 in their four years of study. The students in single sex schools paid higher than these other schools. The girls paid Kshs.105, 299 on average while the boys paid Kshs.115, 234 on average for the four years they were in school. This data was important as it assisted to understand the genesis of FSE policy on students' academic achievement. It also helped to justify its inclusion in the study as an intervening variable.

indicated how much the parents paid and it was more than the given figure and parents in day schools paid yet there was no guideline for them. This data was relevant in this study because it helped in establishing the influence of FSE policy on GPI, repetition rate, dropout rate, wastage rate and students' academic achievement.

Research Question

What is the influence of FSE policy on Students Academic Achievements in Kericho County?

To establish the influence of FSE policy on Students Academic Achievement in Kericho County, the following key inputs that determine students' academic achievement were examined before and after the introduction of FSE policy. KCSE mean scores were established to determine the influence of FSE funds on the students' academic achievement.

Influence of FSE Policy on Students Performance in KCSE

To establish the influence of FSE policy on students' performance in KCSE, first the 2004 and 2008 cohorts of students performance in KCSE was established for comparison and second the FSE funds spent on the 2008 cohort of students was established before undertaking the correlation between FSE funds and students performance in KCSE. The results were as shown in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9: KCSE Mean Scores before and after Introduction of FSE Policy for the cohorts 2004 and 2008 (n=40)

Mean scores	Before FSE Policy		After FSE Policy	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
2.00-3.99	10	25	2	5
4.00-5.99	16	40	20	50
6.00-7.99	10	25	8	20
8.00-9.99	4	10	10	25

Table 9 indicates the schools mean scores as given by the school Principals before and after FSE Policy. The mean scores of the cohort taken before the introduction of FSE Policy revealed that 10 (25%) of the schools in Kericho County had their mean scores ranging from 2.00 to 3.99, sixteen (40%) had their mean scores ranging between 4.00 to 5.99, ten (25%) had their mean scores ranging from 6.00 to 7.99 and four (10%) had mean scores ranging from 8.00 to 9.99. After the introduction of FSE Policy for 2008 cohort of students there was a slight improvement in performance even though majority of the schools had their mean scores below average. From the 40 schools 2(5%) had their mean score ranging from 2.00 to 3.99, twenty (50%) had their mean scores at 4.00 to 5.99, while 8(20%) and 10 (25%) had their mean scores ranging from 6.00 to 7.99 and 8.00 to 9.99 respectively. Shows that 8(20%) of the schools that had their mean scores ranging from 2.00 to 3.99 had improved as only 2(5%) had a mean score range of 2.00 to 3.99. There was also a noticeable improvement when 6(15%) of the school improved their mean scores to above 8.00. This indicates that FSE policy had led to

improvement in performance in Kericho County. Since in this study all factors influencing quality of education were held constant except FSE fund, FSE policy was conceived to have had an influence on students' performance in KCSE. This is because the subsidy catered for educational inputs over and above the parental inputs and therefore was bound to enhance students' performance. This is in agreement with the study done in Muranga County by Macharia, (2013) where it revealed that in the period between 2008 and 2011. Performance of day schools in KCSE improved after FSE policy. It was concluded that the FSE policy had contributed both positively to internal efficiency of day schools; through improved performance in national examinations. In order to establish the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement for 2008 cohort, data on students' academic achievements per school, FSE fund (Table 1), school levies (Table 7) and combination of school levies and FSE fund (Table 8) was used to correlate. Interpretation was done using Table 3.

Table 10: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) Matrix for FSE fund and Students' Academic Achievement in Kericho County

		KCSE mean scores
FSE fund	Pearson Correlation	0.69
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	40
School levies	Pearson Correlation	0.64
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	40
FSE Fund and school levies	Pearson Correlation	0.66
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	40

Table 10 indicates that the relationship between FSE policy and students' academic achievement was moderate and positive; and statistically significant with a coefficient of 0.69 at a set p-value of 0.05. According to Elfison, Runyon and Haber (1990); Leedy and Ormrod (2005) guideline Correlation coefficients (r) interpretation indicated that this is a positive moderate influence. This means that FSE funding accounted for an increase in KCSE mean scores. Coefficient of determination R^2 is the square of the Pearson's r which tells how much of the variance is accounted for by the correlation which is expressed in percentages (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). To account for the influence of FSE funding on students' academic achievement Pearson's r was squared. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.48$ which meant that FSE policy accounted for 48% of the variation in students' academic achievement. School levies which was an intervening variable had a positive influence of 0.64. Coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.41$ which meant that school levies accounted for 41% of the variation in students' academic achievement. When school levies were combined together with FSE fund it had a moderate positive influence of 0.66. Coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.44$ which meant that school levies and FSE fund accounted for 44% of the variation in students' academic achievement. This means that the mediating effect of school levies on the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement was 0.04%. This indicates that school levies had very little influence on the influence of FSE policy on students' academic achievement. This also meant that FSE policy can be relied upon in predicting the students' performance in KCSE. This means it is playing a moderate role in enhancing students' performance in KCSE. Thus, FSE funds are used to enhance student performance by providing the basic requirements for improvement in academic performance. These requirements include tuition equipment and materials, personal emolument funds, medical care, activity fee, repair maintenance improvement and electricity, water and conservancy. The other factors could be type of school, teacher qualification, and students' attitudes among others as revealed by interview findings which accounted for 52%.

DISCUSSIONS

From these findings study it shows that the higher the amount of money the school receives the better the performance. Saleemi (2012) describe Economies of Scale as the advantages that accrue to large firms, it applies in this study because the bigger the school in terms of population the higher the mean scores. Since Kshs10,265/= is given to each student per year in a school and the higher population the more the funds in such a school compared to a school with less students. Therefore in this study FSE Policy has influenced students' academic achievements positively in Kericho County.

The Director of Studies, DQASOs and students during interview and focus group discussion indicated that FSE policy had influenced performance in the county positively. This was attributed to the availability of learning and teaching materials in the schools which they agreed that it had made learning very effective for both the teachers and the student. This was explained further when one of the DQASO said :

During our routine quality assessment we have discovered that schools have reasonable number of text books, teaching learning materials and good facilities which have made learning for the students effective. The teachers also find it easy to do their work because the required teaching and learning materials in most schools are available. With this support from the government through the FSE Fund, performance in the County has been improving over the years though it has not been steady and it could be due to the influence of other factors a part from the learning materials.

This is an indication that FSE funds in the county have brought significant change in the quality of education through the inputs as evidenced in improved performance in KCSE mean scores. The individual subjects have also improved a lot since the introduction of FSE policy which has led to improved students' academic achievements. The other physical facilities have also improved from what it used to be before FSE policy. Another Director of Studies from one of the schools revealed that, "our school really improved in the national examination after FSE policy was put in place, students completed their assignment on time and they did further reading on their own". Similar to the students' in fact one student explained that, "We had enough exercise books and textbooks every year since form one, this made us really improve because we would revise very well for the exams and complete assignments". This has further improved the students reading culture and completion of assignments leading to improve students' academic achievements in terms of mean score.

These findings reveal that day schools benefitted a lot from FSE policy. Since the students in day schools are those that the parents cannot afford boarding school and they lack facilities and books. This makes these students very disadvantaged in terms of learning materials and facilities. It also lead to improvement in these schools facilities and the necessary learning materials, finally leading to improvement in student academic achievements. This is in agreement with the study by Macharia, (2013) in Gatanga District, Muranga County which revealed that in the period between 2008 and 2011. Performance of day schools in KCSE improved. It

was concluded that the FSE policy had contributed both positively to internal efficiency of day schools; through improved performance in national exams. This is in agreement because the cohort used for the study is similar to the cohort used in Kericho County.

However, despite the improvement in performance there were other factors that were revealed further that could have accounted for the 52% since FSE accounts for 48%. These factors included the following;

Boy/girl relationship was mentioned as one of the factors affecting performance in Kericho County. All the DQASOs emphasized that it influence performance in the county, majority of the Directors of Studies also believe that if the students can stop engaging in this kind of relationship they will concentrate in class. During the students' focus group discussion it came out clearly that students were affected by these relationships. In fact one of the students said, "Some students engaged themselves in relationships especially the girls, during class time instead of reading they would read and write letters distracting their attention since they always think of their boyfriends". This shows that boy/girl relationship has an influence on the student concentration and eventually on their performance.

Motor Bike business was indicated strongly as one of the factors influencing students' performance in Kericho County. The DQASOs felt that it had a big influence on the students' academic achievement. The Director of Studies also emphasized that, " it has a big influence in the students' academic achievement because when these students were required to be doing school work they were busy doing business, which is common in day schools. This lead to these students performing poorly despite FSE policy being in place, one revealed that;

This motor bike business has really disrupted learning in our school every other time we have disciplinary cases, students do not attend school regularly even to do their studies they have no interest. The girls have been influenced by these business men and they have ended up pregnant, getting married and eventually not coming to school for some time. It has really affected their performance in class something should be done about it.

This assertion shows that this business really influenced the students' academic achievement in terms of KCSE performance especially in day schools. Since the students concentration was affected by these relationships.

Family responsibilities was another factor that was mentioned clearly by the all the Directors of Studies and the DQASOs during the interview. The Director of Studies further explained that this factor always affects

the girl child making it hard for them to come to school regularly and perform well. He further said:

There was a girl in this school ever since her parents retired she was left with a neighbor who has turned her to a house help and even at times after serious counseling she revealed that the man of the house in the wife's absents molests her sexually. This affected the girl's performance in KCSE since most the time she was absent. There was also a boy who had almost a similar experience with this girl and other students.

The students further revealed that their female colleagues especially in day school were treated like house helps at home because they have to do all the house chores. In fact one of the girls in a day school said:

My mother sells in the market and she would come home very later. This made me do all the house work and take care of my sibling until she is back. Leaving me very little time to read and do my homework. These lead to my poor performance in KCSE.

This finding concurs with Ngeno *et al* (2013) in Kericho District on determinates of girls' academic achievements in mixed day and boarding secondary schools which revealed that family problem and responsibilities had influenced the girl performance. It also concurs with that of Ngesu *et al* (2012) in their study which revealed that preference of boys to girls especially in matters concerning education in ASAL areas.

Entry behavior was also indicated by the Directors of Studies as a big influence to performance, one in a day school explained that:

Some of the students admitted in form one had very low KCPE marks making them struggle very hard to get the concepts in secondary school. These especially affects students in day schools since some were admitted with marks as low as 100 marks this made them go through a difficult time trying to learn making them not do well when they did their final exam.

This is in agreement with the report by the Daily Nation (2014, March 6th) which indicated that poor performance in Lamu East in KCSE was due to admission of students in form one with less than 250 marks in local secondary schools.

Cultural Practices for instance Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was another factor emphasized by all the respondents. The DQASO said, "Girls who are taken for FGM are always affected in terms of performance because they lack concentration in class". This is because of the teachings the girls under go during these

practices, this always make the girls imagine that they are now women and not equally to the other girls. This finding concurs with that of Ngesu *et al* (2012) in their study on when they revealed that FGM influence girls performance in ASAL areas. It also concurs with the studies done in Baringo County by Kariuki *et al* (2012) when it indicated that retrogressive practices influence girls' performance in the county.

Drug abuse was also another factor that influenced students' performance this was stated by all the DQASOs and Directors of Studies as affecting the boys mainly. The Director of Studies said, "Drugs affects the concentration of these students in class. This is because drugs influence the state of the mind and it lead to lack of concentration on the students due to many side effects. This has really influenced the performance despite the government's efforts on free tuition". During the focus group discussion with the students it emerged that some boys engaged in the following drugs, bhang, spirits, alcohol, glue and cigarettes among others. A student said, "There were boys who take drugs and alcohol, whenever they are in class they are restless and rarely concentrate in their work". This study with regard to girls is not in agreement with the study done by Ngeno *et al* (2013) which revealed that drug abuse was not one of the determinates in girls academic achievements in Kericho District. The current study revealed that boys are affected mainly by drug abuse and only a few girls.

Students' attitude towards their studies and school in general had played a big role in compromising their performance as was mentioned by the Director of Studies when they were interviewed. In fact one Director of Studies said:

The parents are to blame for these attitudes because whenever they are bringing these children in form one the promise that they will to get a better school. These students will always have them in mind that the school is not good enough and because of this attitude towards the school that it is not good they find it hard to settle down and learn.

Attitude was mentioned by the students as one of the factors that had influenced performance in their schools. In fact a student's said, "Some of their friends felt that another school was better than their school. This made them not work hard in class making them fail their KCSE". The other attitude the students mentioned was towards certain subjects for instance mathematics, physics, chemistry among others. This students do not like them because they associate it with some teachers they feel they are very strict. The negative attitude always has an influence in students' academic achievement since the students do not do their best hence leading to poor performance in class and eventually in the national examination. This findings

concurs that of Kariuki *et al*, (2012) which revealed that attitude among the students and teachers influence performance in the Baringo County. It is also concurs with the studies done in Ainamoi Division by Soi *et al* (2013) on the attitude of girls towards mathematic in which this study revealed that both the girl child in day and boarding have a negative attitude towards the subject.

Indiscipline was another factor mentioned during interview with the DQASOs and Directors of Studies. They explained that this mainly affects the boy child and a few girls. The students tend to sneak out of school, come to school drunk, untidy, bullying and fighting among others are always sent home on disciplinary ground. This influences their performance in class because they are not in school the whole term. In this respect one of the Director of Studies said, "These students especially the boys who always sneak out to buy alcohol, cigarettes and drugs are always sent home making them miss out in class work and eventually did not do well in the national exam". This finding concurs with that done by Ngeno *et al*, (2013) which revealed that girls' performance was affected mainly by indiscipline in Kericho District. The current study shows that the boys were affected more.

Pregnancy was mentioned by all the DQASOs and the Directors of Studies especially in day schools that has really influenced the girls' performance. This is because when a girl is pregnant psychological these child is affected by the changes, making them loose concentration in class. Some of these students also deliver during exam time. In fact one of the Director of Studies in a mixed day and boarding school said, "One of our candidates went on labour during the KCSE time and she had to do the exams in the labour ward, unfortunately this girl could not concentrate because of the disruption of labour pains, leading to poor performance in KCSE". The students were also in agreement especially those in day school that there were girls who were pregnant in schools and were not in a position to concentrate in class. This factor had an influence on the girl child performance. These findings concur with that Ngesu *et al* (2012) in their study on Critical Determinants of poor performance in KCSE among Girls in Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) which revealed that pregnancy has led to poor performance in KCSE in Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) areas in Kenya.

School levies was mentioned by both the Directors of Studies and students as influencing the students' studies. They explained that FSE policy is not free the way it is perceived since the students still have to pay levies and also buy other tuition materials. One of them said that:

School levies have influenced performance in the county because students are sent home constantly making them not to cover the

syllabus like the rest who are in school. This makes these students not to do well during the exams since they have not been attending classes constantly.

Basing on the findings of this study despite FSE Policy there are other factors that led to the students not performing well the way they would wish to. FSE fund caters for 40.43% of the required fee by the day scholars while the parents cater for 59.57%. Parents with children who are boarders in mixed school cater for 72.60% while government pays 27.40%. For the single sex schools for the girls and the boys' schools the government caters for 25.62% and 24.88% respectively. While the parents cater for 74.38% and 75.12% for girls' and boys' schools respectively (Table 8). This shows that the amount the government pays is less and it cannot sustain learning in schools. This indicates that the parents incur more on their children in terms of school fees and also personal effects. This is in agreement with what the Directors of Studies, students and DQASOs mentioned as the factors affecting performance. This finding is in agreement with the study done by Ngeno *et al* (2013) which revealed that girls' performance was affected mainly by school levies in Kericho District.

CONCLUSION

FSE policy on students' academic achievement was moderate and positive with a coefficient of 0.69. This means that an increase in FSE funding accounted for an increase in students' academic achievement. The coefficient of determination R^2 was 0.48 which indicated that it accounted for 48% of the variation in students' academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

With regard to the finding that FSE policy accounted for 48% of variation in students' academic achievement, the study recommended that FSE funds should be increased to enhance further improvement in students' performance in KCSE. This would enable students to earn more quality grades thereby raising level of quality secondary education.

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