

# Understanding Bursary Allocation and the Internal Efficiency of Secondary Schools Students in Kenya

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**Abstract:**-Secondary school education is very critical in any education system because of the crucial role it plays in catalyzing national development. Consequently, maintaining a high student enrolment at this level should be a priority for all countries. The study was guided by classical liberal theory of equality of opportunities. The study was designed to determine equity implications in bursary awards on the internal efficiency of secondary schools. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between the types of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency of secondary schools students. This study employed a mixed methods design. The participants comprised of secondary schools, banks offering bursaries, Constituency bursary committees and County Government Bursary Committees. Both probability and non-probability sampling designs were employed to determine sample size. Data was collected through questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed for descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The study established that there is positive and significant relationship between the types of bursary allocated and participation rates. The output of the study will provide information to all stake holders in the management of secondary schools and help in formulation of relevant policies that will be useful in improving the management of secondary schools.

**Key words:** Dynamics, o Bursary, Internal Efficiency, Secondary Schools

## I. INTRODUCTION

Before 1988, secondary education was highly subsidized and parents were paying considerably less amounts thus many students had access and equity to secondary education. This was due to supplement by government effort. The annual fees of self-help secondary schools (Harambee schools) rarely exceed Ksh 2000 per student per year (Mark 1987) which was even far beyond the reach of ordinary peasants. Most schools were established through Harambee efforts and fundraising drives which resulted in the establishment of Harambee secondary schools (Ayado, 1989). This improved access of many poor students to secondary education. The introduction of cost sharing as a way of financing education and training as from 1988 onwards as advocated by World Bank, made education relatively expensive, beyond the reach of many students. Cost sharing as a policy is contained in the report of the commission chaired by Kamunge, (Republic of Kenya, 1988) which recommends that Parents Associations be established for primary and secondary schools. The effects of cost sharing over the years have led to a decrease in access and equity in secondary education.

According to Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988), time available for educational institutions is an important resource that should be managed effectively to achieve the best possible result in teaching. Learning is continuous, cumulative and increases by steps of some specified size and each increment would be in some pattern of relationship to every other. According to the National Development Plan (2002–2008), the following were cited as the challenges in education facing the government: (i) Cost of education and training. (ii) Inequality in access to education. (iii) High wastage rate. (iv) Under-enrolment in school, the high cost of education is given as one of the explanations for lower Gross Enrolment Rate and wastage in secondary than primary. Bursaries though diminishing in importance in relation to other financing methods still it play a role (Ayodo, 1989).

From 2002, the government has been channeling bursaries to Constituency Development Fund. The Constituency Bursary Committee is then required to consider the application from needy and vulnerable groups and distribute the bursary fund to the beneficiaries as per school applicants as identified by the committee. The share allocation to beneficiaries does not take into consideration the level of school and the outstanding fee balance of the needy and vulnerable students. In the current allocation, MoEST places special emphasis on gender and no guideline on how much should be allocated to individual students and on how to identify needy students for bursary award remains questionable.

Allocation of bursaries to schools has not remained constant, it has been varying with time and funds have been noted to reach the beneficiaries at the time expected. The constituency bursary fund committee comprises individuals or member appointed by existing members of parliament as the fund is closely tied to constituency development fund that is greatly monitored by the members of parliament. Thus, allocation to the constituency is based on the poverty index of the constituency without due regard of the incidence of changing household income ability and emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS that renders the house hold without tangible breadwinner.

In recent study on Ministry of Education Bursary, Njeru, (2003) found no guidelines to individual schools on how to identify needy students for bursary awards. Guidelines simply instructed the schools to allocate bursary to the poor on bases of excellent academic record and discipline. The guidelines

failed to give specific guidelines regarding the amount of bursary to be allocated per student for it to have any tangible impact. Therefore, due to absence of clear guidelines, various criteria and methods to allocate the bursary fund were used by schools: Class teacher to identify the needy; Head teachers unilaterally decide on who should be awarded bursary and amount to be allocated; Head teachers abused the bursary by allocating their kins and less deserving students; School bursary committee lacked transparency; Biased spread of MOEST bursary to as many as possible students has led to many poor students dropping out of schools.

OdeberoBosire, sang, Ngala, and Ngware, (2007) conducted a study on Equity in the distribution of bursary to secondary school students in Busia District. The study established that bursary allocation in Busia District was not equitably distributed among the recipients since Gini Coefficients revealed concentration levels of over 0.5 for all the years studied. The study noted that the criteria set by the Ministry of Education to be used by school administrator to allocate bursary in the district bore some encumbrances that made it difficult for bursary to accurately target support to the really needy students. The criteria according to school heads left room for a lot of discretion which could be subjective. The study established that some of the needy students ended up missing bursary support unfairly through the criteria of poor performance. The next was orphaned and level of need where a resonant proportion of head teachers felt that they were used to deny needy students access to bursary. The study therefore concluded that the criteria was cumbersome and could not be effectively be used by the head teachers to identify the levels of need for differentiated bursary allocation.

In addition to the decentralization of secondary education bursary fund to the constituency level, and gradual increase in allocation and setting of higher minimum allocation per beneficiary, Odebero et al., (2007) study opines that it is apparent that the current bursary provisions and cash transfers should be enhanced to sustain deserving students within the system. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) III of 1997, 30% of the population lived under the core poverty line while 56% of the population lived below the absolute poverty level. In 2005, about 46% of the population lived below the poverty line. The bursary allocation should be improved to target deserving students leaving standard 8 (or eighth grade). Under the current system, identification of deserving cases covers only those students already admitted within the secondary education level.

IPAR (2008) carried out a survey on public expenditure tracking of secondary Education Bursary Fund in Nairobi province. Their findings established that the bursary scheme has limitations on governance, effectiveness and consistency. They observed that as a result of inconsistency in funding, the scheme has not achieved its main objective of retention. And due to low level of funding compared to demand, the survey posits that many stakeholders have negative perceptions about the operation of the scheme. This is because whereas the

number of students applying for bursary funds has been on the increase, the amount being allocated to constituencies for bursary has remained static.

As a proportion of the tuition fee requirements, the bursary fund hardly meets a quarter of the fee requirements for instance; it was revealed that an estimated 84 % of the bursary beneficiaries got Kshs.5000 as bursary. This is way below the government approved fee for day schools, boarding provincial secondary schools and national schools which is Ksh.10500, Kshs 22,900 and 28,900 respectively. Further much of the allocated to Nairobi province benefited majority of students outside of Nairobi province. The survey estimated that only 29% of the funds allocated benefited students schooling in Nairobi province. From the number of applicants an estimated 57% of the demand is not met. School records indicate that 62% of bursary funds received by schools are from other bursary providers. Also, it was established that the allocation to and disbursement of funds from constituencies is not consistent with the school programmes. The allocation of funds from the Ministry of Education to constituencies and from constituency to beneficiaries is not in tandem with school programmed. This makes beneficiaries to receive money in the middle of terms after they have missed classes as they go about looking for financiers to supplement the allocations they receive from CBF.

Macharia (2011) opines that a multiplicity of social and economic factors has locked out girls from the constituency bursary fund that is meant to enable poor students finance secondary education. This has in turn led to a high dropout rate of girls from secondary schools and puts them at an economic disadvantage in both current and future lives, a new report has said. A report released recently in Nairobi, however, showed that the constituency-based committees use skewed criteria in the selection of beneficiaries, a factor that had seen girls miss out on the kitty, regardless of their social economic background.

A Study done by Onuko (2012) on Impact of Bursary Schemes on Retention of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Gem District, Kenya which was guided by four objectives. The study was guided by the theory of socialist economics of education. The study sample size was 322 students' beneficiaries, 24 senior teachers and 12 Principals. The respondents were drawn using a combination of random and purposive sampling procedures. The study adopted descriptive design. Data was analyzed using frequency distributions, cross tabulations with SPSS and MS-Excel software packages.

The study found that the total fees were too high as compared to the bursary that students get from the provider. This showed that bursary schemes were only supplementing students' fees and not generally paying school fees wholesomely. The study further revealed that significantly higher number of beneficiaries 63% got bursary from other bursary providers, well-wishers and parents to supplement

government bursary. Further findings revealed that students were not assured of continuous funding and that the disbursements were not in line with the school calendar year. The study recommended for allocation of more funds to constituencies and financing of the beneficiaries adequately to completion their secondary education. The study also recommended that disbursement of funds to constituencies should be in line with the schools' calendar year. The study recommended for good governance and efficient management of Constituency Bursary Committees in relation to allocation of bursaries to beneficiaries in schools.

Bursary funds for secondary schools are channeled through the Constituency Bursary Fund. This fund is meant to supplement the effort of FDSE to meet the financing gap of needy students. The fund was initially operated through the Ministry of Education and operationalized by the school Board of Management (BOM) at school level as Secondary Education Bursary Fund (SEBF) Ministry of Education (2008). Provision of bursary is one of several strategies used by government to ensure that disadvantaged children have equal opportunity in accessing education at all levels. This has led to high completion rates among the disadvantaged children (Republic of Kenya, 2008). There is also County Bursary Fund provided by the County Government through County Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs (Commission on Revenue Allocation, 2017). These bursaries are meant for those students from low socio-economic background to improve on their completion rates. A Study done by Njau (2013) sought to establish the Effect of Secondary Education Bursary Fund on Access and Retention of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Juja Constituency, Kiambu County Kenya. The study used the descriptive survey research design. The target population was twenty-two secondary schools in Juja constituency. Simple random sampling was used to get the sample size which constituted of 400 students and 10 head teachers and 3 Secondary Education Bursary Fund (SEBF) committee members. Data collection was done using questionnaires and interview schedules while data analysis was done using descriptive statistics.

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

In Kenya, the government has a policy to assist needy student's access secondary education. The policy has seen many players into the field to assist needy student access secondary schools. At present there are myriad sources of bursaries such as CDF, county government, Equity bank, Co-op Bank Foundation, Ngo's, church, Foundations, politicians and even individuals. Every year these sources declare huge amounts of bursaries allocated to needy students to assist them in accessing and participating in Secondary Education. At the same time, many secondary school students are unable to access even their leaving certificate and results slips owing to huge balances they owe schools. This conflict has exposed the inconsistencies in bursary allocation to the needy students which needs to be empirically investigated. Thus the purpose of this study is to establish equity in bursary allocations to the

needy students in relation to secondary schools internal efficiency.

### 1.2 Objective of the study

To examine the relationship between the types of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency of secondary schools students in Bungoma County

### 1.3 Research Question

What is the relationship between the types of bursary allocated and internal efficiency of secondary schools students in Bungoma County?

### 1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between the types of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency of secondary schools in Bungoma County.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Research methodology describes the overall approach to research design, Creswell (2009) is of the view that methodology is a strategy or a plan of action that links methods to outcomes and governs the choice and use of methods. A research methodology forms the overall paradigm/approach that shapes research approach to the study. In this study the researcher used a mixed approach. In this study, the researcher has the positivist assumption of a fixed, measurable reality external to people. Positivism is based on the assumption that there are universal laws that govern social events, and uncovering these laws enables researchers to describe, predict, and control social phenomena. Ontological questions in social science research are related to the nature of reality that holds that there is an independent reality

### 2.1 Ethical considerations

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

In qualitative research these issues related to carrying the purpose of the study, avoiding deceptive practices, respecting institutional cultures, not disclosing sensitive information and masking identities of participants. Information obtained from respondents was kept in uttermost confidence by the researcher. In a convergent design, the quantitative and qualitative sample size may be different. Care needs to be

taken to not minimize the importance of a sample because of its size. This was accomplished by in-depth interviews with the participants. The interview guide captured elaborate data as per all the research questions and hypothesis.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher determined the gender and analyzed the study objective

#### 3.1. Gender

The gender of all the categories of respondents is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Gender distributions of the respondents

		Gender of the respondents		
		Male	Female	Total
Principals	Frequency	19	16	35
	Percent	54.3	45.7	100.0
Students	Frequency	151	146	297
	Percent	50.8	49.2	100.0
Finance CDF committee	Frequency	21	9	30
	Percent	70.0	30.0	100.0
Bank Branch/Managers	Frequency	13	4	17
	Percent	76.5	23.5	100.0

Source: Field data

Based on Table 3.1, there were differences in gender distribution among the respondents. First, among the principals, 54.3% were males while the other 45.7% were females. The results indicated that proportion of male students sampled (50.8%) was higher than that of the females (49.2%) among the schools in Bungoma County. Members of the Finance CDF committee were two thirds (70%) skewed towards males and the remaining one third were females (30%). The bank/branch managers sampled were: 76.5% male compared to 23.5% females. These results indicate that most of the schools, financial institutions and financial managers at

the county level are headed by males while the bursary provided by the schools was equal between the male and female students.

#### 3.2 Types of Bursary Allocated and Internal Efficiency of Secondary Schools

The study sought to examine the relationship between the types of bursary allocated and the internal efficiency of secondary schools students in Bungoma County. The study responses were as in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Types of Bursary Allocated and Internal Efficiency of Secondary Schools

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	
There is an improvement in access, retention and completion for those who have benefited from bursary	F	0	0	2	204	132	336	4.52
	%	0	0	1.1	60.1	38.8	100	90.4
The number of needy increased against amount allocated to the kitty	F	0	0	1	184	141	336	4.51
	%	0	0	0.4	55.4	44.2	100	90.2
Bursary is a vital component to ensure equity and access which is meant to increase internal efficiency	F	0	0	1	162	163	336	4.48
	%	0	0	0.4	48.2	51.4	100	89.6
Narrowing the gap of inequality between the needy and less needy participation in education is attained through bursary allocation	F	0	0	1	336	166	336	4.28
	%	0	0	0.4	50.0	49.6	100	85.6
There is increase in the number of the needy hence the needy share the amount allocated hence too little to sustain them	F	0	0	2	155	89	336	4.28
	%	0	0	1.1	46.0	52.9	100	85.6
MoE guidelines used by the committee are widespread to take care of all those deemed needy and vulnerable	F	0	0	2	204	132	336	4.42
	%	0	0	1.1	60.1	38.8	100	88.4

The study results on the effect of types of bursary allocated on internal efficiency indicated that 90.4% (mean=4.52) were of the opinion that there is an improvement in access, retention and completion for those who have benefited from bursary, 90.2% (mean=4.51) were of the opinion that the number of needy increased against amount allocated to the kitty, 89.6% (mean=4.48) were of the opinion that Bursary is a vital component to ensure equity and access which is meant to increase internal efficiency, 85.6% (mean=4.28) were of the opinion that narrowing the gap of inequality between the needy and less needy participation in education is attained through bursary allocation, 85.6% (mean=4.28) were of the opinion that there is increase in the number of the needy hence the needy share the amount allocated hence too little to sustain them. and that 88.4% (mean=4.42) were of the opinion that MoE guidelines used by the committee are widespread to take care of all those deemed needy and vulnerable .

The study findings indicated that majority of the respondents reported that in there is an improvement in access, retention and completion for those who have benefited from bursary. Njeru and Orodho (2003) observe that the objective of the bursary scheme in secondary school had the objective of enhancing access to, and ensure high quality secondary education for all Kenyans particularly the poor and vulnerable groups as well as the girl child. MoEST was responsible for allocating bursaries through schools according to financial needs assessment. However, in the allocation, national schools were allocated 5% of the total bursary fund available in any given fiscal year, while the remaining was allocated to school proportionately depending on the schools size in terms of student enrolment regardless of the status of the school whether boarding, day or mixed status. Muthoki (2015) revealed that provision of government bursaries has led to high retention rates, consequently leading to high students' completion rates.

Njau (2013) established that Secondary Education Bursary has led to high retention rates in public day secondary schools; this led to high completion rates. The study also found that SEBF was a critical source of funds for financing education as majority of parents did not have a stable source of income. Lack of the school fees was a major hindrance on access and retention of students in secondary schools. The study found that the level of awareness on SEBF application and qualification criteria was very low in secondary schools and therefore the deserving students did not apply for the SEBF. Further the study established that SEBF allocated to deserving students was inadequate to cater for all the educational costs.

### 3.3 Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the study sought to test the hypothesis. Regression analysis was used to test the association between the study variables and testing the hypotheses of the study. The study findings were as tabulated.

The hypothesis was;

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between types of bursary allocated employed and internal efficiency of schools in Bungoma County. The study findings indicated that there was a statistical significant relationship between types of bursary allocated employed and internal efficiency of schools ( $p=0.000$ ). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis which showed that there was a relationship between types of bursary allocated employed and internal efficiency of schools in Bungoma County. It can therefore be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between types of bursary allocated and internal efficiency.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Secondary school education is critical in every country for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it is central to development because it provides insights, skills and competencies that are needed for economic growth and national development. The study results on the effect of types of bursary allocated on internal efficiency indicated that 90.4% were of the opinion that there is an improvement in access, retention and completion for those who have benefited from bursary, 90.2% were of the opinion that The number of needy increased against amount allocated to the kitty, 89.6% were of the opinion that Bursary is a vital component to ensure equity and access which is meant to increase internal efficiency, 85.6% were of the opinion that Narrowing the gap of inequality between the needy and less needy participation in education is attained through bursary allocation, 85.6% were of the opinion that There is increase in the number of the needy hence the needy share the amount allocated hence too little to sustain them.

## V. WAY FORWARD

Financing of education through bursary had positive impact on internal efficiency. There was improvement in access, retention and completion for those who benefited improved. The study found out that number of needy increased against amount allocated to the kitty. To overcome the challenge of low and inadequate funding in bursary disbursement, the Government of Kenya should increase through its treasury, the size of the budgetary allocation if the fund is to have a remarkable impact on Public secondary education.

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