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Kenya's Constituency Development Fund, Free Secondary Education Policy, and Access to Secondary Education

Charles Kyalo Nzuki
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Walden University

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Charles Nzuki

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2017

Abstract

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to Secondary Education

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B. Technology, Moi University, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

The effects of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Free Secondary Education Policy (FSEP) on access to secondary school education in Kenya's Yatta sub-county have not been adequately explored in available public policy literature. Hence, this qualitative multiple-case study was designed to understand the effects of the 2 policies on both enrollment and dropout among secondary school age children. The study was conducted in 1 mixed-boarding secondary school and 1 secondary day school in Yatta. The study was built on an adapted Huisman and Smits' theoretical model on dropout among students in developing countries. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 14 purposefully selected participants: 2 principals, 2 deputy principals, and 10 parents whose children had benefited from the CDF bursary scheme. Interview data were inductively coded and then subjected to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure, which aided in identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) in the data. Results showed that the CDF had contributed significantly to the improvement of enrollment with the establishment of new day schools that are more affordable, hence making secondary school education less costly and thus more available to low income families. The study's findings also showed that student dropout had declined with both the CDF and FSEP. The positive social change implications of this study are that it provides evidence for advocacy among policy makers for increased allocation of resources to the education sector through the CDF and FSEP. Increased allocations will contribute to Kenya's progress toward universal access to secondary education.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation work to my immediate and extended family, colleagues and friends who have been of much help during the six years of my doctorate program. To my dear wife, Naomi Wavinya, and my lovely children: Kenneth Mweu, Kevin Mumo, Joy Mwende and Jude Kyalo Jn., for their patience with me during this period. To my mum Sarah; for her inspiration though all my pursuit for scholarly knowledge; and to my dear brothers: David, Paul, Jeremiah and Joseph and my only sister Dorcas for their prayers and encouragement during this process. This dissertation is dedicated to all for your blessings and gifts of love throughout the years. To all my good friends, brethren and colleagues; God bless you immensely for your prayers and for being there every moment I needed support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Education remains a key indicator of human development and progress. Better education is associated with a nation's ability to deal with issues of development (World Bank, 2005). Immediately after independence in 1963, the Kenyan government was faced with the challenge of a lack of skilled workers for the country's development (ROK, 1965). Since then, there has been tremendous effort to eradicate illiteracy at all levels including basic education. However, Ngware et al. (2007) noted that, following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) by the Kenyan government in 2003, the massive increase in enrollment at the primary level was not matched with a similar increase in enrollment at the secondary level.

Some of the major challenges inhibiting access to secondary education have remained unaddressed; hence, the transition rates between primary and secondary school levels have remained low, despite the huge dividends of increased enrollment at the primary level following the implementation of FPE (Ministry of Education, 2010). Similarly, Njeru and Orodho (2003) observed that the high cost of education, especially among the poor and vulnerable groups, continued to prevent children from accessing quality education.

Following the Kenyan government's implementation of two major policies, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Free Secondary Education Policy (FSEP), in 2003 and 2008 respectively, there was need to conduct a study within the

Yatta constituency in order to examine the effects of the two policies on enrollment and dropout rates at the secondary school level.

Problem Statement

Many secondary school-aged children have remained out of school despite Kenya's new 2010 constitution which identified basic education as a right for all Kenyan children regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status. The introduction of FPE by the Kenyan government in 2003 resulted to an increase in enrollment at the primary level by over 1.3 million children (Ministry of Education, 2010). The lingering problem is that the tremendous improvement in access to primary school education was not matched with an increase in secondary school enrollment which remained quite low at 50 % (World Bank, 2008). This problem implied that access to secondary education has remained a far-off dream for many children in Kenya.

Although the Kenyan government has continued to allocate an average of 20% of the annual national budget to the education sector, transition rates from the primary to the secondary level have remained quite low, huge disparities exist between girls' and boys' completion rates, and a significant gap in access has persisted between urban and rural areas (Ndiku & Muhavi, 2013; Fentiman, 1999). Literature has shown that myriad challenges ranging from socioeconomic to cultural factors have generally influenced enrollment and dropout at most levels; however, these factors were highly contextualized (Webbink et al., 2013). In view of these gaps, I conducted this exploratory study to

understand the factors that influenced student enrollment and dropout, particularly in the rural areas, and the role of the CDF and the FSEP in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore whether and how the CDF and the FSEP have contributed to increasing enrollment and reducing student dropout among the students in public secondary schools in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County, Kenya. In order to understand the effects of the two policies, I also sought to identify the main contextual factors that had influenced students in the constituency. The total number of primary schools in Machakos County was 688 with an enrollment rate of 85% for both girls and boys, and a 5.5% dropout rate. The transition rate from primary to secondary school stood at 57%, with a 4.7% secondary school dropout rate (Machakos County Integrated Development Plan, 2015). Yatta, which is one of the constituencies in Machakos County, has 149 primary schools and 62 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2014).

With the relatively small number of secondary schools compared to primary schools in Yatta, many pupils who completed their primary education did not continue to the secondary level because of multiple unknown factors. In the extant literature, there had been no studies either on the factors that influenced enrolment and dropout or on the role of the two policies on secondary education. It is against this backdrop that I interviewed a purposely selected sample of 14 participants drawn from two secondary

school communities in Yatta. I analyzed the qualitative data from these interviews with the intent of gaining a deeper understanding of the subject for both policy and practice, and of filling the gap in knowledge about enrollment and dropout among students in Yatta.

Research Question(s)

In this qualitative methods study, I sought to answer the following main research question: whether and how the CDF and the FSEP had contributed to increasing the access to secondary education among students in public schools in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County? The study's specific research questions were:

1. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced the decision to enroll into secondary school among students in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?
2. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced student dropout from secondary school in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?
3. How have the direct effects of these factors been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?

Primary data were collected through interviews with key stakeholders including the principals, teachers, and parents of students (enrolled, drop out and never enrolled) to understand their experiences and perspectives on whether and how the CDF and FSEP had influenced the enrollment and dropout among secondary school students in Yatta

sub-county. I gathered secondary data from administrative records at the sub-county office and from the principals' offices at the school level.

In Yatta, part of the CDF had been used in the establishment of new schools including the construction of classrooms and laboratories, the procurement of equipment, student bursaries, learning materials, and the construction of boreholes for safe drinking water and hygiene.

FSEP entails the national government release of Ksh. 10,265.00 per child per year broken down into tuition, boarding and equipment, repairs and maintenance, transport, administrative costs, electricity and water, activity fees, personal emolument and medical overheads (Ministry of Education, 2008). In the study, I explored how the respective aspects of the two policies may have aided students, caregivers, and schools in enrolling and continuing secondary education. The study's dependent variable was the students being "enrolled" in or "dropped" out of school while the independent variables included the cost of schooling, bursary schemes, household's wealth status, availability of physical infrastructure and distance between individual students' households and school.

I collected qualitative data through interviews with parents of secondary school-age children who were attending school, particularly parents whose children had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme, head teachers and deputy head teachers of two purposely secondary schools: one mixed-boarding school established prior to the CDF and one recently established secondary day school in Yatta. All public secondary schools received funds from the FSEP based on their respective enrollments.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Social scientists have used numerous theories to examine the range of factors that influence student dropout at the primary, secondary, and college level. Studies have shown that school dropout has multiple origins, which have been modelled by researchers to point to the dynamic and cumulative processes and pathways which drive students to leave education early (Cabus & De Witte, 2016).

In this study, I explored how the CDF and the FSEP influenced students' enrollment and dropout from secondary schools in the Yatta constituency. I applied Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical model, which other researchers have used to explain the household and contextual factors that influenced student dropout rates among developing countries. The model categorizes the various factors into household, community, and national levels, and clusters the factors into resources, structure, and culture. Huisman and Smits (2015) showed that the most important factors influencing student dropout from school are household-level socioeconomic factors, including father's occupation, parents' education, and wealth. Earlier-born children and children living with one parent were also found to experience more dropouts. Other key factors included availability of schools, teachers, and regional development.

Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical framework was conceptualized on the premise that students' dropout is influenced by the contexts in which they live, and the factors are classifiable into child, household, community, and national levels. They also observed that decisions of whether to enroll or to drop out from school are made at the

household level by caretakers, parents, and other family members including the child. Different factors at the three levels influenced the decisions simultaneously, while their effects vary from context to context (Huisman & Smits, 2015).

In earlier work, Finn (1989) and Wehlage (1989) explored reasons why students withdrew from school and how effectively schools provided at-risk students with support by encouraging educational engagement and membership. In his study on how schools and communities reduced risks of students dropping out of school, Wehlage (1989) suggested state and local policy reviews to improve school enrollment and retention of students. In an attempt to gain more understanding about the individual student factors that influence dropout, Zabloski and Milacci (2012) conducted a study on reasons why gifted students dropped out school and concluded that, individual student factors were critical determinants of dropout among students.

Cabus and De Witte (2016) found that students dropped out early from school for multiple reasons, which were contextual and ranged from time preferences, opportunity costs, motivation, and policy measures. Based on findings from tests of a theoretical framework about enrollment decisions by youngsters in high school education and a review of prior work by Planc et al. (2005) and Lleras-Muney (2005), Cabus and De Witte concluded that student attrition was caused by (a) lack of interest; (b) influence of peers, teachers and the school; (c) level of the student's motivation; (d) 1 or more years of retention in a grade; and (e) student health crises.

Studies have shown that school dropout is significantly linked to economic and personal risks (Psacharopoulos, 2007; Rumberger, 1983). For instance, Rumberger and Lim (2008) and Levin (1987) argued that students—particularly boys—from disadvantaged backgrounds were at more risk of dropping out of school compared to those from economically stable backgrounds. Using the prior work of Coleman (1988), Newmann et al. (1992), and Ogbu (1992), Zabloski and Milacci (2012) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study of the factors related to gifted students dropping out. Their study presented two conceptual frameworks. One was based on an institutional perspective, and mainly explored the contextual factors related to the students' families, communities, schools and peers. The second was based on an individual perspective, and focused on the individual's factors associated with dropping out of school.

In his study conducted in Ethiopia, Nekatibeb (2002) developed a theoretical model and explored the factors that influenced Ethiopian girls to drop out of primary school. He proposed several mechanisms that, if put in place, would have helped to mitigate the problem of girls' dropout from school in the Amahara and Oromia regions of Ethiopia. Specifically, Nekatibeb considered how economic, school, cultural, and political factors affected girls' participation in education. In the two regions Nekatibeb studied, girls usually started school late, and the majority of those who dropped out were mainly from low-income families and female-headed households. Nekatibeb concluded that school costs and domestic chores were mainly responsible for girls dropping out

from school, while the other factors which contributed significantly to poor participation of girls in education were cultural practices and institutional factors.

In order to explore whether and how the CDF and FSEP may have modified the key determinants of enrollment and dropout causes among students, I adapted Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical model. This model was suitable for my study because researchers have used it previously to explain school dropout in developing countries which are similar to the context and setting for my study. Accordingly, I classified study factors into three groups—resources, structure and culture—and examined them at the individual child, household, constituency, and national levels (see Webbink et al., 2013). Using this model, I premised this study on the argument that enrolling in secondary school and continuing or dropping out were influenced by (a) the context in which the children lived, which I considered at multiple levels (individual, household, constituency, national); (b) the decisions of whether to enroll or not, and student's dropout were made by parents, caregivers and other family members, including the individual child; (c) simultaneous interactions of the different factors at the various levels which influenced the decisions of enrolling, staying, or dropping out of school.

In the theoretical framework, I conceptualized the various individual child, household, constituency, and national factors as part of three broader conditions in regard to resources, structure, and culture, which had to be met for children to enroll in secondary school and to continue schooling. The decisions to enroll and continue with school depended on the availability of resources including household wealth, education

of the parents, and availability of secondary schools as well as the structure including birth order, extended family setup, number of siblings, and single parenthood.

Furthermore, the culture context in which the child is embedded, including social norms and cultural values, is critical—especially for girls (Webbink et al., 2013).

Through this exploration, I aimed to contribute to the existing literature on improving access to secondary school education by answering the main research question of whether and how the CDF and FSEP contributed to increasing enrollment and continued schooling among secondary school students in the Yatta constituency. Furthermore, this study adds to scholarly knowledge about the factors influencing secondary school enrollment and dropout among the schools in the rural areas of Kenya in two ways. First, I investigated the role of the CDF and FSEP in influencing decisions of parents and caregivers about whether or not to enroll their children into secondary school. Second, I collected and used new data which shed more light on new developments and progress in secondary schooling in the context of rural Kenya, particularly regarding students' dropout.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative approach and methodology for this study. Creswell (2007) identified the five most common qualitative approaches as case studies, narrative research, grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography. The researcher chooses the most appropriate qualitative approach based on the research question(s) to be answered.

Creswell noted that the different methods are applied to accomplish divergent objectives and thus involve different methods of data collection and analysis.

For this exploratory study, I used a multiple-case study design. A case study design is most appropriate when the main research questions are “why” or “how” type of questions, and when a researcher had little or no control over the behavioral events (Yin, 2003). For this study, a case study design was most suitable in view of its focus on a contemporary phenomenon, education. I determined that a multiple-case design the best option given that numerous other researchers have used it successfully to facilitate deeper understandings of complex social phenomena (Yin, 2013). To answer the specific research questions regarding whether and how the CDF and FSEP had influenced enrollment and dropout among secondary school-aged children in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya, I explored the perspectives of the key stakeholders—teachers, parents, and community leaders—regarding their understandings about what the effects of the two policies on students in the two purposefully selected secondary schools in the constituency.

To understand the different experiences, ideas, and views on the phenomenon, I used a purposive sampling strategy and gathered primary data from the key stakeholders including parents, teachers, and community members. While gathering data, I also sought to identify the critical factors that could have impeded children from transiting to secondary school after completion of their Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE). A multiple-case study design presented a distinct advantage over the single-case

design since the evidence gathered was f more robust than it would have been in a single case (see Herriott & Firestone, 1983). Similarly, as suggested in Yin (1994), I treated each of the two purposefully selected secondary schools as complete entities worthy of investigation via multiple pieces of evidence.

In the study, I used both secondary and primary data to build a convergence of evidence. Secondary data were gathered from the Yatta sub-county education office and from the office of the school principal and included data on school enrollments since 2003, the levels of funding to the schools, and improvements that resulted from the benefits from the CDF and FSEP. Primary data collection included interviews with key informants and was aimed at gathering experiences and perspectives of the administrators, parents, and community leaders from two secondary schools supported through the CDF. It is worth noting that all secondary schools benefitted from the FSEP based on their enrollment.

Theoretically, school enrollment and dropout rates are influenced by household demand for education and the supply of education services (Connelly & Zheng, 2003). Guided by the theoretical framework, I used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data on student enrollment, transition from primary to secondary level of education, teacher-student ratios, and availability of learning materials were reviewed from the Yatta sub-county education office and from the school principals' offices.

I collected primary data at three levels: constituency (distance from home to school, school support from the CDF and FSEP, school availability), household

(preference of boys' education to the education of girls, household wealth, number of siblings, dropout, involvement of children in household chores), and child (girl, boy). My aim was to assess how the factors that influenced school enrollment and retention may have been modified with the introduction of the CDF and the FSEP.

Definition of Terms

Transition rate: The proportion of pupils who progress from the final grade of one level to the first grade of the next level. In this study, transition rate is the proportion of students who progress from the primary level of education having completed the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination to the first grade in secondary level of education (Form 1), expressed as a percentage of those who enrolled in the final grade (Standard 8 in primary education). This indicates the upward movement in the education hierarchy (Lewin, 2009).

Constituency Development Fund (CDF): The CDF provides additional resources for development at the local level by channeling money to constituencies under the management of members of parliament (Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013).

Decentralization: In this study, this refers to the systematic delegation of authority to CDF officials at the constituency level (Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013).

Assumptions

In this study, I examined the role of the CDF and the FSEP in student access to secondary education as measured by enrollment and retention. I assumed that changes in enrollment and reduction to dropout at the secondary level were attributed to either or

both of the two policies. This assumption was necessary since there may have been other factors that influenced the dependent variable.

Given that I used data from parents who provided their opinion and experiences about the cases of secondary school dropouts and from pupils who never transitioned from primary to secondary school, I assumed that it would have been feasible to identify dropout cases at the community level. Nekatibeb (2002) faced a challenge in locating school dropouts. I addressed this challenge by asking the participants whether they were aware of any cases of dropout in their communities. I also assumed that the participants were free to discuss some sensitive cultural practices including teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and discrimination against girls at the household and community levels.

Scope and Delimitations

One delimitation of this multiple-case study was the limited scope of the research. In this study, I did not examine the aspects of education quality which is equally an important dimension of the study phenomenon. Data collection however, captured some aspects of education quality including students' performance and minimum "cut" off marks for admission. In addition, using the adapted conceptual framework, I explored a limited set of institutional, cultural, socioeconomic and school factors, however in reality there exists other factors that influence enrollment and dropout. Another delimitation of this study was the non-inclusion of children (students) as participants although they were the main "subjects" of the study. Finally, the observed changes on the factors which

influenced enrollment and dropout could not be exclusively attributed to the CDF and the FSEP, nor were their collective and individual attribution explained.

Limitations

There were limitations in this study including the use of a small purposely selected sample of two schools in the constituency that had 62 public secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2014). Through this exploratory study, I aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the study phenomenon rather than generalization of the study findings. Furthermore, the inherent weakness and criticism of qualitative research pointed out by Firestone (1993) in regard to the inability to generalize the study findings to settings not included in the study. The study was an exploratory and the type of questions mainly guided the choice of the research design.

The study had limitations associated with the case study design as a strategy of inquiry and the narrow focus; a weakness which I addressed by the use of a multiple-case study design. This way the findings were more compelling than a single-case study inquiry (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). Furthermore, qualitative data were collected through interviews with only 14 purposely selected participants. To address weaknesses which are inherent to the case study design, I rigorously followed systematic procedures including an interview protocol approved by the IRB and since I was aware of the potential research biases, I endeavored to report all evidence fairly

Significance of the Study

This exploratory study has potential implications for both practice and theory. Education is an important aspect and measure of social development. There is general consensus among researchers that, regardless of the cause, student dropout decisions have negative effects beyond those of an individual or a community; rather, they extend into a national problem which has significant consequences for society at large (Christle & Nelson, 2007). In this context, it was important that I understood the key drivers of student dropout decisions and low enrollment at the secondary school level and explored how these issues were being addressed through the recent policies. The significance of this study could be far-reaching in that, to the best of my knowledge, no other studies have been conducted on the CDF and FSEP in the Yatta constituency, particularly in regard to access to secondary education.

This study may serve as a baseline for further research, and it fills in the gap in knowledge regarding whether and how the two policies influenced the study phenomenon, particularly in Yatta sub-county. My findings could provide impetus for deeper and new discussions on other key factors that may impede access to secondary education among rural communities in Kenya. Furthermore, in terms of social change, the findings serve as information for policy makers, including government officials, CDF committee, and other administrators about the aspects of the two policies that could be most effective in improving enrollment and reducing dropout rates among students in

secondary schools. Such knowledge is useful in decision making about allocation of scarce resources to the education sector.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the study by providing a background on the increased enrollment at the primary school level following the FPE policy that was unmatched at the secondary level. I identified the problem noting that, although there had been improved access to primary education, many secondary school-age children remained out of school. A brief description of the CDF and FSEP was provided, and I noted that there have been no other studies of whether and how the two policies had influenced the phenomenon at the subnational level, particularly in the Yatta constituency.

Having identified the gap in knowledge, I outlined the purpose of this exploratory multiple case study in which I aimed to assess whether and how the CDF and FSEP had influenced enrollment among secondary schools in the constituency. I further explained the choice of the qualitative research design that guided me in answering the research questions about the key determinants of enrollment and dropout. Next, I presented the research questions, which centered on enrollment and dropout decisions that are complementary factors for access to education. Further, I defined some of the key concepts and the terms used in the study, described the scope of the research, and identified some of the limitations and ways I worked to address them.

Throughout the study, I used Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical framework to explore how the institutional and political aspects of the CDF and FSEP, including the

provision of bursary schemes, increasing the fiscal space, construction of new schools, distance to nearby school, tuition and boarding fees, availability of equipment and learning materials, school income, may have influenced the decisions of the caregivers and parents about whether or not to enroll their children in a secondary school and whether a child continued with his or her education or dropped out school.

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature, pointing out some of the gaps in knowledge which I endeavored to fill in this study. In the literature review, I further emphasize the importance of secondary education at both individual and societal levels. Throughout the chapter, I examine the literature in view of the factors influencing access to education and particularly those influencing enrollment and dropout decisions. In so doing, I show how the CDF and the FSEP may have contributed to the removal of bottlenecks and barriers to accessing basic social services including education at different levels.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to examine and synthesize the literature on access to secondary education, particularly literature on enrollment and dropout decisions. This chapter includes a comprehensive review of the literature on conceptual and theoretical approaches to educational access. In it, I also provide an analysis of the general benefits of education and examine the efforts by the Kenyan government to achieve universal access to basic education, encompassing both primary and secondary school education. Furthermore, I offer a review of the theoretical framework and the methods while identifying some gaps in the literature for further research. Using Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical model, I sought to offer further analysis of some of the critical determinants that have influenced enrollment and dropout decisions among students at the secondary school level while examining how these may have been modified by the CDF and FSEP.

When conducting the literature review, I focused on literature relevant to secondary school educational access, mainly in regard to the dimensions of enrollment and dropout. My search strategy included searching for peer-reviewed articles mainly using several ProQuest databases, which I accessed via Walden University's library. I also used libraries of local universities, and the Google search engine to access relevant publications, particularly those related to education in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya. A subject-based approach was used for the search. Some of the search terms I

used included *access to education, enrollment, dropout, decentralization, and factors influencing access to education*. To keep track of the reviewed scholarly materials sourced and used in the discussions, I developed and maintained a personal database comprising the relevant articles.

The chapter is organized according to important aspects of secondary school educational access as follows: (a) an overview of the general benefits of education to the individual and the society, (b) a description of the study environment, (c) an examination and description of the CDF and the FSEP, (d) a discussion of enrollment in schools in the study environment and the county, and (e) a review of the theoretical framework and how prior researchers have used the models in past studies. In this chapter, I also examine the individual, household, socio-economic, and individual child factors that have influenced enrollment and dropout decisions among students.

Benefits of Education

Literature has consistently shown that education is an important ingredient for development. Lack of education has been associated with poverty, while access to meaningful learning has been found to contribute to improved productivity and the disruption of intergenerational cycles of poverty (World Bank, 2005). Through a comparative analysis of educational participation and household income, Oketch and Somerset (2010) concluded that poverty was far more important than gender as a predictor of educational exclusion.

The concept that investment in human capital promotes economic growth actually dates back to the time of Adam Smith and early classical economists who emphasized the importance of investing in human skills. The principal institutional mechanism for developing human skills is formal education, a central factor in cultural, social, political and economic development of any nation (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1993). Human capital, when compared to physical capital, brings about more returns on investment. From the studies by Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, and Schofer, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, 2005) observed that education has remained a root source of human, social, cultural, and economic capital and has been consistently viewed as legitimate in terms of both individual and collective good (World Bank, 2005).

Equally important, in its Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nations (1948) embraced education as a basic human right. Achoka (2007) argued that Kenya subscribes to and is a signatory to this declaration and to the international protocol that established the 1990 Education for All (EFA) agenda in Jomtien, Thailand and the 2000 World Education Forum (WEF) in Dakar, Senegal. It is against this background that the Kenyan government has endeavored to provide every citizen with education. The returns on investment in education are obvious. The literature has consistently shown that secondary education makes significant contributions to an individual's earning and economic growth (IBRD, 2005). An individual's level of education has also been associated with improved health outcomes, social conditions, and equity as well as improved civil engagement (World Bank, 2008). It is in recognition of this fact that many

countries have increasingly invested in their education sector and improvement of their communities.

Many African countries have seen development as most closely intertwined with education in that the more educated their citizens are, the higher their ability to deal with the problems of development (World Bank, 2005). Hence, countries all over sub-Saharan Africa have been making concerted efforts to increase investments and policies geared to increasing access to education and reducing the number of out-of-school children (Republic of Kenya, 1988). In Kenya, the education sector has continued to receive the highest public spending allocations (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Accordingly, Kenya's 2004–05 and 2005–06 budgets for the education sector amounted to 27% and 26% of the total budget respectively, which represented 6.6% of the GDP (Ngware et al., 2007).

In addition, increased access to education contributes to increased political participation and more equitable sharing of economic and political power (Birdsall, 1999). Education for girls has also been highlighted as particularly critical in its direct influence on improvements in the infant mortality rate, child nutrition, and school enrollment (Herz & Sperling, 2004; World Bank, 2008). Endogenous growth models have shown that human capital is a key determinant of economic growth and that sustainable development is only possible if there is a critical mass of skilled people (Rogers, 2003). Studies on poverty in Kenya have shown that education remains an important determinant in poverty levels and outcomes in most parts of the country (Geda,

Kimenyi & Mwabu, 2005). On the sub-national level, particularly at the county and constituency levels, enormous resources have been invested to improve basic education.

Using household-level data, Geda, Kimenyi, and Mwabu (2005) examined the determinants of poverty and found that poverty status was strongly associated with the level of education, household size, and engagement in agricultural activity, both in rural and urban areas. Education has been identified as a driver in the reduction of economic and social inequality (Ngware et al., 2007). In Kenya, large inequalities continue to exist with respect to income distribution, which has been a constraint of economic growth. Ngware et al., (2007) argued that investment in education remains an important strategy to address such inequalities and to foster faster economic growth.

Since independence, the Kenyan Ministry of Education has been making efforts to improve access, equity, quality, and relevance of education through better management of service delivery to all learners. The provision of both primary and secondary education and training to all Kenyans has been a fundamental factor in the success of the government's overall development strategy. The strategy is premised on the fact that quality human resources are central to the attainment of national goals for industrial development. The government's effort toward the realization of universal access to basic education and training has also aimed to ensure equitable access to education and training for all children, including those from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In Kenya's education system, the secondary level admits the primary school leavers who are mainly in the 15-18 years age group. According to IBRD (2005), secondary education is an important factor for economic growth and social development. Nations have built their comparative advantage in world markets through education and skills development. Bregman and Tallmeister (2002) argued that secondary education contributes to the socialization process of young people. They observed that secondary school provided the highest potential for changing behavior; hence, investing in secondary education would enhance positive social values among the youth. In addition, secondary education empowers youths and adolescents, thus equipping them with job-oriented skills which enable them to meaningfully participate in the development of society while also taking control of their own lives.

Furthermore, in response to the commitments of governments and institutions to the World Declaration on Education for All, there has been an increased demand for secondary education among most African countries, including Kenya (IBRD, 2005). In a study on secondary education financing in Kenya, Ngware et al. (2007) examined potential cost reductions in the context of the introduction of the FPE in 2003. The researchers observed the need to identify of sustainable alternative financing options if the increased enrollments in primary schooling were to be continued to secondary education.

Theoretical Framework

I used Huisman and Smits' (2015) theoretical model in this exploratory study on whether and how the CDF and the FSEP may have influenced enrollment and students' dropout decisions from secondary school in the Yatta constituency. Huisman and Smits examined the contextual factors that influence students' dropout decisions among developing countries. They developed their theoretical framework to analyze the interaction between household-level factors and socioeconomic factors such as father's occupation, parents' education, and wealth, as influences on students' continued education. Using this theoretical framework, a researcher could also analyze a student's individual characteristics and conclude that earlier-born children and children living with one parent were more likely to drop out of school than those living with both parents. The model also considers other factors including the availability of schools and teachers' influence on students' dropout or continued education decisions.

Tademy and Clark (2008) developed a conceptual model to examine the causes of school dropout using the work of Grant and Halman (2003), Hunt (2007), and Obeng (2006). With it, they explored the interactions of outside school factors that caused children to drop out of school (Hunt, 2008) and how the interplay between both in- and outside-school factors caused children to drop out of school. Tutt (2014) used Bandura's (2001) theory on social learning as a theoretical framework to look at alternative interventions for dropouts from high schools. The theory was based on the premise that the environment, the individual, and behavior are interrelated and that the three factors

have bidirectional influence on each other. Tademey and Clark (2008) recommended a multiple-perspective approach while conducting studies on the factors that influence high school enrollment and dropout decisions. In view of this observation, I considered socioeconomic, institutional, cultural, and school factors that may have potentially influenced student enrollment and dropout decisions. Henz et al. (1991) and Odaga and Heneveld (1995) used similar conceptual approaches, as did Nekatibeb (2002) in a study exploring the factors that influenced girls' dropout in Ethiopia's Amahara and Oromia regions. Nekatibeb concluded that school costs and domestic chores were mainly responsible for girls' dropout from school while cultural practices and institutional factors also contributed significantly to the problem of poor female participation in education.

To explain the disparities between boys and girls in regard to completion rates among the two sexes, Chimombo (1999) conducted a study and observed that, despite the almost equal gender parity in enrollment for both girls and boys, the latter had higher chances of continuing school. Holmes (2003) concluded that, generally, girls attained less education and tended to drop out from school earlier as compared to boys. In the case of Yatta, many school-age girls have remained out of school, hence the need to fill this gap in knowledge in understanding about the potential drivers of the disparities in school completion between boys and girls.

The effects of the depletion of safety nets systems on girls' education in Kibera slums in Kenya were documented by Abuya and Onsomuand Moore (2012). Although

their study was conducted in an urban slum setting and focused on girls, the findings revealed that economic factors remained a major constraint to girls' education among the poor. They proposed strengthening the safety net systems, including conditional cash transfers to alleviate the economic challenges among the most vulnerable households.

Despite the critical importance of secondary education, both at individual and national levels, accessibility to quality, relevant, and affordable secondary education still remains elusive to many Kenyans. Major hindrances include high cost, poverty, and the extra fees for private tuition and unconducive environment especially for children from poor and vulnerable households and children with special needs (Ohba, 2011). Ohba (2011) established that other factors which contributed to the poor access included the high number of students who were repeating classes, limited expansion of public schools and the requirement that parents would pay user charges while the government paid teachers.

Introduction of the CDF and FSEP

Across the country including Yatta constituency in rural Kenya, prior to the introduction of the CDF and the FSEP, expenditures for school non-salary costs were mainly financed through voluntary mechanisms of "*harambee*," a Swahili word meaning "pulling together" through which communities contributed to the construction and maintenance of the school infrastructure. The Kenyan government introduced the CDF and the FSEP in 2003 and 2008 respectively. The CDF is a decentralized fund allocated to all constituencies across the Kenya aimed at tackling poverty and addressing regional

disparities (Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013) while, under the FSEP, all public secondary schools receive tuition disbursements from the central government based on their enrollment (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The Constituency Development Fund

During the last two decades, Kenya has witnessed an increase in the number of funds targeted at the local level governance units such as districts and constituencies. The funds included the local authority transfer fund, Bursary Fund, Poverty Eradication Fund and Constituency Development Fund (CDF). According to Kimenyi (2005), while the common objective of these funds was to alleviate poverty, narrow regional imbalances and the disparities in resource distribution, and improve quality of life and the general level of economic development, the CDF generated the most public interest.

Kenya's CDF is a decentralization initiative by the Kenyan government established in 2003 and aimed at fighting poverty and shifting the development of the projects to the local communities. Kimenyi (2005) argued that decentralization and local governance has increasingly been recognized as a critical element of any democratic governance, providing a suitable mechanism through which services are brought closer to the people at the grass-root level, particularly the poor in the rural areas of Kenya.

The CDF comprises an annual budgetary allocation equivalent to 2.5% of the government's ordinary revenue. According to the Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 45 (Acts No. 30) of 2013, of the CDF allocation, 3% is allocated for CDF Board for administration; 97% is allocated to constituencies through a formula of 5% of the 97%

being allocated to Emergency Reserve; while 75% of the balance would be disbursed equally to the constituencies and the remaining 20% disbursed to the constituencies based on poverty index (Government of Kenya, 2003).

The 2003 act which established the CDF also created structures through which citizens could participate in project identification, management, monitoring, and evaluation (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2006). Okungu (2006) described the CDF as one of the most effective ways of equitably distributing national resources throughout the country without bias, noting that there was a lot of the expectation on what the CDF could achieve. The CDF Act was enacted at an opportune time for decision making at the grass-root level, although some assessments have pointed out that there has been a lack of clear, strategic plans for projects; therefore, in some instances, the CDF had failed to make a significant mark on the lives of the intended beneficiaries (Gikonyo, 2008). Unlike the other development funds which filtered through the central government and the layers of administrative bureaucracies, CDF funds went directly to the constituency level and hence provided leaders and the people the rare opportunity of making decisions about their development, hence maximizing their contributions to their own development.

Devolved Funds in Other Countries

Across other countries, there are efforts by governments towards decentralization of services delivery and development. In Rwanda, for example, the country articulates a strategy for development in the East African country. The country has a decentralized funding mechanism called the Common Development Fund which works similarly to

Kenya's CDF. The Common Development Fund (CDF), is a government-owned fund established to support the implementation of a decentralization policy, a policy which the government of Rwanda considers as the main strategy to achieve good governance and sustainable economic development, as well as to fight poverty (Niringiye & Ayebale, 2012).

Similarly, the Uganda Post Primary Education and Training Expansion and Improvement Project supports the government's Sector Wide Approach Program (SWAP) as outlined in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2004- 2015, later updated for 2007-2015. Namukasa, Kaahwa, Quinn and Ddungu (2012) explained that, through the project, Uganda's government supports the Universal Secondary Education (USE) and Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) policies and programs, aimed at improving learning conditions and expanding access to post-primary education and secondary school students across the country.

Great progress in the provision of quality education has been made in India which started decentralization in the 1990s. India's gross enrollment rates in the lower secondary schools increased from 54 percent to 61 percent and the gains were significant among girls with an increase from 45 to 56 percent (World Bank, 2004). In China, through devolution mechanisms, great strides were made in mobilizing and diversifying its resources for education through devolution approaches. Through devolved funds, Chile also achieved greater municipal financial autonomy for education and lowered inequity between schools (Gropello, 2004). In general, the main benefit associated with

devolved funds structures is economic efficiency and the assumptions that a group of individuals residing in a community or region possess tastes and preference patterns that are homogenous and their preferences and tastes differ from those of individuals who live in other regions or communities. Moreover, individuals within a region have a better knowledge of the costs and benefits of public services of their region. (Boadway & Wildasin, 1984).

Impact of CDF on Development

The establishment of the CDF was a systematic way of the Kenyan government to address the challenges at the grassroots level through the provision of funds for the implementation of community-based projects that would have otherwise been funded through “*Harambees*” (Government of Kenya, 2003). Like among the other constituencies, prior to the CDF, most secondary schools and other basic social services infrastructure in Yatta were constructed by the communities through pooled funds. The CDF shifted identification of development priorities from line ministries to communities, thereby encouraging local initiatives, ownership, participatory supervision, and accountability.

From its inception, the CDF had a tremendous impact on communities in rural Kenya, not only as a result of the availability of funds but also through community involvement and participation in decision making (Auya & Oino, 2013). They observed that, the CDF had contributed to creation of employment opportunities within the communities through the creation of new opportunities in agriculture or contracts for

sourcing local materials and labor. With community-driven development approaches, communities were also empowered through direct involvement in project selection, procurement, supervision, and implementation (Auya & Oino, 2013). The CDF has helped in providing services to communities which, for many years, did not have any substantial benefit from the centrally delivered government services and particularly the most vulnerable communities which had been marginalized over the years since independence.

Concerns had been raised about the allocative efficiency of the CDF which included low utilization of completed facilities especially educational and health institutions and cattle dips due to lack of collaboration with line ministries especially on staff requirements (Kimenyi, 2005). The implementation of the CDF was also characterized by poor community participation and contribution to projects; weak capacity to identify viable projects; low technical capacity to implement development projects; non-adherence to established government procedures, rules and regulations, especially as concerned public procurement; poor management of transition during elections; less involvement of technical officers in the implementation of projects; and too many small projects which were thinly spread and with little or low impact.

Role of CDF in Promoting Access to Education

The CDF has been used for a variety of projects depending on the priorities of the various constituencies. In some constituencies, schools have been put up and science laboratories established for both primary and secondary schools (Mwangi, 2013).

Education remains a priority among many constituencies in Kenya because of the critical role that it plays in any society through the imparting of skills to enable students to participate productively in the local and national economies. The CDF initiative provided an opportunity for the constituencies to affect the skills development of their youthful population to achieve human capital development. With Kenya being poised to be industrialized by 2030, the CDF affords the decentralized level of leadership to equip their youth with technological and scientific skills (Okungu, 2006).

Following the introduction of the CDF, there has been general improvement in the infrastructure of most constituencies, including education. More students have been benefiting from the award of bursaries and there has been reduction in the student dropout rate in secondary and tertiary institutions, especially among orphans (Kimenyi, 2005). The increasing government allocations to the CDF reveal that the Kenya government acknowledged the role of the CDF in development, particularly in rural areas. In general, CDF-initiated grassroots projects have contributed to the improved wellbeing of Kenyan citizens across constituencies (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2006).

In Laikipia district, the CDF has promoted access to secondary education through the school bursary scheme and improved school infrastructure (Mwangi, 2013). The implementation of the fund had attempted to address the two main challenges that faced secondary education in the district: fewer secondary schools than primary schools and the high cost of secondary education. He concluded that the two factors continued to hamper access to secondary education in the region despite the implementation of the FSEP. He

further analyzed the role of the CDF in promoting access to secondary education and established that the CDF had resulted to increased access to secondary education with expanded infrastructure including classrooms.

Brief Description of the Yatta Constituency

Yatta is one of the sub-counties of Machakos County. The sub-county has the same boundaries as the Yatta constituency. Yatta borders Mwala, Masinga, Kangundo and Matungulu districts (constituencies). Yatta covers an estimated area of 2497 square kilometers, with altitude range of from 500 to 1200 m above sea level and temperatures ranging from 10 to 28 degrees (Munyao et al., 2013). The constituency is composed of Ikombe, Katangi, Kinyaata, Kithimani, Kyua, Matuu, Mavoloni and Ndalani locations.

With a population of 424,500 consisting of 51.2% female and 48.8% male, like most of the other parts of Kenya, the majority of the Yatta population is young, aged between 20 and 35 years (KNBS, 2010). Despite the adverse climatic conditions, the main economic activity is peasant farming, and the region is characterized by food insecurity with more 87.3% of the population living below the poverty line (GOK, 2002). Yatta has a semiarid climatic condition with short and long rains being experienced in October and December and April and June respectively. The main subsistence crops grown include maize and beans which form the staple food. The road network in the constituency is poor and comprises of murram roads which become impassable during the rainy season.

Makueni County borders Machakos County and is very much similar in terms of being a semi-arid region in eastern part of Kenya. Ohba (2009) conducted a study in rural Makueni to examine whether the introduction of free secondary education enabled the poor to gain access. Likewise, Wanja (2014) showed that free education policies had resulted in a substantial reduction of school fees but not full abolition and that, while participation had increased to at least one student in secondary school in one to three households, many students remained excluded from accessing secondary education.

Although the context of Makueni is very similar to that of the Yatta constituency, the role of the CDF was not particularly explored in regard to the provision of adequate learning space for students among rural communities. Earlier studies focused on the free primary and secondary school policies with results continuing to show that exclusion of the students from the poorest families continued to take place before enrollment at secondary level and that, for those who succeeded in reaching the point of entrance to secondary school, financial constraints were a major barrier to successful and sustained enrollment (Ohba, 2009). The Yatta constituency has a total of 84,900 households, with most of the settlements being clustered around water sources and where the soils are fertile (GOK, 2010). With the poor yields, most of the land is under-utilized; hence, a huge population depends on relief food, so the region suffers from chronic food shortage, poverty, and poor infrastructure.

The Yatta's Constituency Development Fund

While FSEP is purely a national education policy, the CDF is a decentralization policy promoting development at the constituency level. Atieno (2009) examined the dichotomy between policy making and implementation of the CDF and noted that, despite the core aspects of what and who is involved, the effects of any policy was also shaped and greatly influenced by many factors, including the economic, cultural, and socio-political contexts. Mwangi (2013) analyzed the ways in which the CDF promoted secondary school education in Laikipia district in Kenya. His study findings showed that, in terms of the number of projects financed, education was the leading beneficiary with 43 percent of total projects. He also revealed that CDF contributed to student retention through expansion of schools as well as the provision of CDF bursaries for poor students.

In Yatta, CDF has been used to establish new day secondary schools and financing physical facilities including classrooms, libraries, and laboratories; buying learning materials; employing non-teaching staff and at times teachers; and purchasing fencing and, in some cases, land. The CDF has also been used to provide bursaries for students from poor families. The allocation of the CDF is mainly managed through a committee with oversight by the local Member of Parliament.

Free Primary School Policy of 2003

The literature showed that, when the Kenyan government introduced the free primary school policy in 2003, primary school enrollment increased by 1.3 million children across the country (Ministry of Education, 2010). With such an increase of the number of children participating in the primary level of education, the lack of a

compensating program at the secondary level has resulted in too many pupils completing their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), and not transitioning to secondary school.

After the Kenyan government abolished secondary school tuition fees in 2008, Yakaboski and Nolan (2011) observed that, access to primary education increased; however, the policies had not aided students' progression through the education system. They argued that, unlike Kenya's primary education, secondary education system was not a universally free system; as such, students did not have the opportunity to attend secondary school despite having passed their exams. Hence, compared to primary schools, secondary enrollments have remained relatively very low. Accordingly, they concluded that that the process of fee elimination at the primary school level had been characterized by increased enrollment, access issues, and increasing equity concerns.

Free Secondary School Education Policy

In his study on the effect of subsidized secondary education in Kitui County, Muasya (2013) conducted an exploratory research and assessed enrollment and retention among the secondary schools in Mwingi district. The study revealed an increase in school enrollment and noted that girls had recorded a higher increment than boys. Furthermore, the study established that retention was higher after 2008, thus concluding that school enrollment and retention had increased with the introduction of the FSEP in the district.

A major bottleneck also faced by students in accessing secondary education is absenteeism as a result of students being sent away from school as a measure by school

administration to enforce fee collection. Even upon completion of their form four, among most secondary schools, students with arrears of school fees are denied their final examination certificates until full payments are made (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2014). Thus, students are not able to continue to college and tertiary level of education in view of the lack of required documents.

With the introduction of the FSEP, financing of secondary education was hoped to be reduced drastically and hence parents from poor communities would be able to enroll their children in school. In July 2014, the government issued a directive to all secondary schools to release certifications for secondary school leavers who had not cleared their fees and committed the government to all costs of examination fees for all secondary school students effective January 2015 and that parents would not be charged such costs (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2014).

The responses by the poor to the abolition of secondary school fees policy on transition to secondary school was explored by Ohba (2011). The study was conducted by following a cohort of primary school leavers in rural Kenya after the fee abolition. The study findings revealed that the abolition of secondary school fees had limited effects on children from low-income families. The study concluded that, although there was generally a high demand for secondary school education, primary school leavers from low-income families in fee-free secondary education depended largely on other direct costs and opportunity costs including keeping the children at home to help the family.

Consistent with the challenges facing access to secondary education in Kenya identified by Ohba (2011), Nungu (2010) argued that child labor continued to be prevalent in Kenya, mostly affecting poor and rural families while also creating greater education access obstacles for girls. The socio-economic and cultural obstacles to accessing primary education were furthermore compounded at the secondary level, further reducing the number of students who progressed to higher education (Yakaboski & Nolan, 2011).

The Ministry of Education guidelines on FSEP addressed the main challenge faced by the secondary school education sub-sector in relation to the poor transition rates from primary to secondary school. The challenge was mainly attributed to financing since students had to pay fees to be in school (Ministry of Education, 2008). Through the policy, the government aimed at increasing the transition rates from the primary to the secondary level to 70 percent. A taskforce on affordable secondary education examined the various costs incurred by students entering secondary schools and proposed modalities of implementation of the free secondary school education (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The guidelines issued by the Kenya's Ministry of Education for the implementation of free secondary education determined that teacher utilization and allocation was to be made on the basis of the enrollment and curriculum being offered in a school and the subsidy by government to schools based on capitation, boarding school fees structure, finance management and parental obligations. Thus, free day secondary

education would cost the government Ksh. 10,265.00 per child per year broken down into tuition, boarding and equipment, repairs and maintenance, transport, administrative costs, electricity and water, activity fees, personal emolument, and medical overhead. In view of this government commitment, school fees in boarding schools would not include tuition and activity fees. The guidelines further defined parental obligations as including the provision of school uniforms, boarding-related costs, lunch for day scholars, and other projects as agreed in consultation with the school Board of Management (BOM).

In summary, despite the introduction of the free education policies at both the primary and secondary levels, Kenya's education system continues to lack the infrastructure to meet the increased demand as a result of the influx of students which the free policies encouraged (Ministry of Education, 2008). In the case of Yatta, the huge investment into the education sector, particularly the establishment of additional day secondary schools and the construction of classrooms, has contributed to the alleviation of some of these challenges. This study examines how the two policies on CDF and the FSEP may have contributed to increased enrollment and continued secondary education for boys and girls in Yatta constituency.

Reasons why Students Drop out of Secondary School

The extant research has shown that a student's socioeconomic status remains the most important determinant associated with secondary school dropout. The National Center for School Engagement (2005) presented factors influencing dropping out of school into three realms: school factors, community or home factors and personal factors.

Hunt (2008) attributed most reasons why pupils were unable to complete basic education among developing countries to structural factors at the household, school and societal levels. Similarly, Colclough, Al-Samarrai, Rose and Tembon (2003) contended that household wealth was strongly associated with children being or not being in school. Children from the richest 20% (quintile) among households in Ghana were four times more likely to be in school compared to children from the poorest quintile. Similarly, the probability of a child being out of school decreased steadily with increasing household wealth (GSS, 2008).

Household Income and Socioeconomic Factors

Studies show a gradual decline in school population as children progress through the education system. Evidence shows that the socioeconomic environment in which a student is born or lives greatly influences the outcome of his or her education (Kopp, 2008). Factors cited as contributing most to this include the cost of education and social-cultural issues among others. In many countries, mismatches in school calendar/timetable and household chores, including fetching water, gathering firewood, caring for young siblings and sick family members, also contributed to children not being in school (Hunt, 2008).

Evidence also suggests that children from households with more socioeconomic resources have more likelihood of staying school (Evangelista, 2008). Parents and caregivers need to have adequate resources to be able to send and keep their children to school. Wealthier families are able to pay for both direct and indirect costs for their

children. Studies have also shown that children born to more educated parents are more likely to complete their education (Huisman & Smits, 2009). Enrollment of girls in school has also been linked with the level of education of their mothers (Emerson & Portela, 2007) while parents in salaried employment have been found to be more willing to invest resources and time in the education of their children.

Child labor is closely linked to household income and socioeconomic status of the household, remaining prevalent mainly among the poor and rural communities in Kenya (Nungu, 2010). In Yatta, peasant farming is the main economic activity and so school-age children are engaged in goat and cattle keeping and in helping their parents in the farm. Such arguments were echoed by Yakaboski and Nolan (2011) who observed that the socio-economic and cultural obstacles experienced by primary pupils were compounded as children progressed into secondary school, further reducing the number of students who continued and completed their secondary education.

Schooling Costs

Closely related to socioeconomic factors' influence on enrollment and dropout decisions from school is schooling costs. Both indirect and direct schooling costs are key factors influencing decisions by parents on whether to or not to enroll their children in secondary school. The literature shows that schooling costs and especially school fees remain a key reason why many students do not continue with their education at all levels. In some instances, influenced by cultural practices, parents are unwilling to pay school fees for their daughters. Lloyd et al. (2000) observed that, in Kenya, higher school fees increased the

likelihood for girls dropping out of school. According to Shahidul and Karim (2015), school fees is a major contributing factor for students dropping out from secondary school in South Africa. Their study findings revealed that dropout rates were higher among girls than boys at 30 % and 27 % respectively.

Institutional and Political Factors

Prior to the introduction of the FSEP, parents of children attending public secondary schools had to pay fees negotiated between the school management and the parents and hence varying from school to school. When the FSEP was introduced, the Ministry issued fees guidelines and stipulated the fees that various schools would charge. Following the introduction of the policy, a study conducted in central Kenya established that the number of primary school leavers who enrolled in secondary schools increased although the increase was among a small segment of the primary schools (Oketch & Somerset, 2010).

There are both institutional and political factors which influence the enrollment and retention of children in school including the provision of bursaries, access to a school per distance from the home to school, boarding fees, equipment and learning material availability, and the fiscal space including the availability of funds from the CDF and other schemes (Shojo, 2015)). Political factors influence the level of decentralization, particularly relating to the accessibility and allocation of the CDF to various development projects within the constituency. Educational decentralization implies the level of devolution to subnational governments, and, in this case, the CDF essentially devolves

service delivery responsibilities from the national to the local or regional authorities. The delegation of some of these education services delivery decisions to the school is an aspect of decentralization.

A study on the role of the CDF in the provision of secondary education in Kilome constituency revealed that students faced challenges accessing bursaries from the CDF and mainly due to the process. Similarly, Ng'alu and Bomett (2014) established that challenges with the administration of the CDF were mainly due to the long delays during the processing of the bursaries and the unavailability of application forms. There were complains that the process of assessing eligible beneficiaries was also not clear; hence, bursaries were not benefiting those who deserved them most. Furthermore, Ohba (2009) revealed that the way bursaries were awarded may have contributed to children from the poorest families being excluded from obtaining financial support, since government bursaries for secondary education are awarded to children enrolled in boarding secondary school only. Hence, children from poor families who are unable to raise the required initial and ongoing costs required for even low-cost day secondary schools face substantial challenges in accessing secondary education.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The extant literature points out the variation between girls and boys in regard to their participation in school extra-curricular activities with boys being more participative than girls. In a study on the gender dynamics in extra-curricular activities, Jacqueline et al. (2012) observed the significant differences in participation between male and female

students. In most cases and especially among the rural areas, schools provide for extra-curricular facilities for boys, not for girls which may constrain girls' participation.

School Absenteeism

A major concern among day secondary schools would be absenteeism because students attend school while they live in their homes unlike boarding schools where boarding facilities are provided. Shahidul and Karim (2015) argued that irregular attendance is a precursor for school dropout among both girls and boys. Generally, girls take on more responsibilities for household chores compared to boys while rural girls take more household chores than girls living in the urban areas (Ersado, 2005). Studies have continued to show that girls are at higher risk for absenteeism from school due to child labor and household chores. Shahidul (2012) conducted a study in Bangladesh on the factors that contributed to girls' dropout from school and found that, if a mother participated in the household's decision-making process in the family, the chances of dropout by her daughters is reduced.

School Distance

An important factor considered in this study relates to the availability of school as determined by the distance between the home and nearest secondary school. School distance has been observed as a key factor influencing dropout among students, especially females. According to Juneja (2001), when a school is too far from home, girls tend to drop out for they are more vulnerable to sexual harassment. Similar observations were made by Nekatibeb (2002) who concluded that school distance was the biggest obstacle for girls' education

among many countries of Africa. Studies have also shown that parents are concerned about the safety of their children, especially when they have to travel long distances to be in school. Similar observations were made by Ainsworth et al. (2005) in that the likelihood of a girl attending school decreased with longer distances from home to the school.

Cultural Factors

Preference of Boy Education to Girl Education

The decision to take children to school and the willingness to invest in children by parents can become gender biased. There is considerable evidence that shows that, in some cultural settings, parents have been found to be pro-male in case of parental investment in children (Glick & Sahn, 2000; Kingdon, 2005). Leung and Zhang (2008) observed that parents' preference for investing more in sons was also motivated by the expectation that they would in the future, take care of them. Accordingly, families with limited resources and especially those with many children demonstrate more parental gender bias, causing girls to drop out of school earlier than boys. Fuller and Laing (1999) conducted a study in South Africa and observed that a family's financial strength was strongly associated with the likelihood of a daughter's dropping out from school. Furthermore, Chege and Sifuna (2006) explored the claims that many cultures favored education for boys more than for girls. Their findings were consistent with Save the Children's (2005) observation that some beliefs and cultural norms constrained education for girls in some developing countries.

Early Pregnancy and Early Marriage

Other factors contributing to the higher drop-out rates among girls as compared to boys include teenage pregnancies and female involvement in household chores (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). Girls are more vulnerable among day secondary schools as compared to boarding schools where schools provide boarding facilities, reducing the exposure of girls to the risks of early pregnancy. With the introduction of day schools in Yatta, the extent to which this factor contributes to dropout among female students is unknown. Juneja (2001) argued that, given the long distance between the school and the home, girls tend to drop out due to vulnerability to sexual harassment and the risks of exposure to early pregnancy. In addition, parents are hesitant about enrolling their girls in secondary school if the distance is long.

There is consensus within the literature that girls are at higher risk of absenteeism and eventual dropout due to teenage pregnancy, child labor and household chores. Lack of sanitation facilities and the unavailability of hygiene supplies for girls contributes to high absenteeism and eventually to dropping out (Grant, 2013). Some parents in many rural communities still do not consider girl's education as an important investment as they leave their own family when they get married (Holcamp, 2009). Mansory (2007) conducted a study in Afghanistan and revealed that early marriage was the main cause of school dropout among girls and that, among the study communities, when girls reached puberty, parents considered them to be mature and arranged for their marriage rather than continuing their education.

Summary and Conclusions

In Kenya, despite the efforts by the government and other stakeholders, enrollment at the secondary school level has remained very low at 50 % (World Bank, 2008) with the low enrollment being worse among the remote regions in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. There is strong consensus among scholars that dropping out of school is an issue with significant consequences for both the student and society at large. The review of literature showed strong evidence that socioeconomic status is a key determinant of the choices that parents make in regard to enrolling their children in secondary school and that these factors influence the continuity of schooling. Other factors include those associated with the school, the individual as well as household and community factors. Yatta constituency faces many socioeconomic challenges in view of the main economic activity of the region being peasant farming in a semi-arid region.

Although there was extensive literature on access to education, there was limited research on the implications of CDF on education and particularly at the sub-national level. Most of the studies on CDF as a concept and its effect on development were mainly in urban settings. I conducted this study at the sub-national level and within a rural setting to explore the contextual factors which influenced enrollment and dropout. Moreover, most of the research conducted in Kenya had been mainly on the FPE and at the national level; thus, few studies had focused on decentralized policies and their implications on access to secondary education. A review of the literature had not shown any study having

been conducted on the implications of either the CDF or the FSEP on student's enrollment and dropout from schools among students in Yatta.

In chapter 2, I summarized the review of literature and highlighted the benefits of education in development and also demonstrated the consensus among the scholars that there are far-reaching negative effects of student dropouts on the economy. In this chapter, I also reviewed the aims of CDF, and the FSEP including the highlights of the major implications of FPE on increased enrollment at the primary level and how the gains at the primary level did not result in improved transition rates from primary to secondary levels of education. Gaps in knowledge regarding the role of the two study policies in regard to access to education were also identified. Thus, I conducted this exploratory study in order to explore whether and how CDF and FSEP had contributed to increased access to secondary school education through improved school enrollment and retention.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Research has been described as an effort to understand a phenomenon (Stake, 2010). In this chapter, I describe my research methodology and approach, including the techniques that I followed to achieve the objectives of this research. In this chapter, I explain the choice of the study setting and its relevance for the study, and I describe the research design, setting, and the sampling process. I also highlight the instruments used for data collection and analysis.

Education is an indicator of human development and progress (World Bank, 2005). In Kenya, the efforts by the government to improve education date back to independence in 1963 when the government committed to fighting illiteracy, poverty, and diseases. Such efforts included the abolition of fees for primary education in 1973 to increase access to basic education. In addition, at the tertiary level, the government introduced a loan scheme to help students who qualified for university education (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). Student enrollment, transition from primary to secondary school, and dropout rates are influenced by institutional and political factors as well as economic, cultural, and school factors. In this study, I explored whether and how the CDF and FSEP influenced the two dimensions of access to secondary education, student enrollment and dropout, among secondary school students in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County, Kenya.

Education is an indicator of human development and progress (World Bank, 2005). In Kenya, the efforts by the government to improve education date back to independence in 1963 when the government committed to fighting illiteracy, poverty and diseases. Such efforts included the abolishment of fees in primary education in 1973 to increase access to basic education. In addition, at the tertiary level, the government introduced a loan scheme to help students qualifying for university education (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). Student enrollment, transition from primary to secondary school, and student dropout rates are influenced by institutional and political factors as well as economic, cultural and school factors. This study explored whether and how the CDF and FSEP had influenced the two dimensions of access to secondary education: student enrollment and dropout among secondary school students in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya.

Research Design and Approach

Rationale for Choice of Design

Researchers use qualitative case study approaches when they are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Stake, 2010). Although there are many paradigms that exist in the qualitative tradition, this study was greatly shaped by constructivist philosophy which holds that a phenomenon is best understood in the context in which it is studied, and that the problems and respective solutions are not generalizable from one situation to another (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Generally, policies addressing bottlenecks that impede access to education have been developed in a variety

contexts (Mwangi, 2013; Ndiku & Muhavi, 2013; Ohba, 2011; Shahidul & Karim, 2015). In this study, I held the constructivist position that a generalization cannot be assumed on the basis of success achieved in other contexts. Specifically, I assumed that the effectiveness of the CDF and FSEP was not only influenced by how they were implemented, but also by the context (see Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore, based on the philosophical framework and the purpose of the study, I determined that a qualitative approach was the most suitable. The experiences, ideas, and views of the key stakeholders about the effects of the two policies on access to secondary education were sought, collated, coded, and analyzed (see Stake, 2010).

Research Design

A research design is a plan which outlines how, when, and where data for a study are collected and analyzed (Parahoo, 1997). Stake (2010) underscored the quest for deeper understanding about a study phenomenon coupled with the holistic treatment of the phenomenon being studied as distinguishing factors of qualitative research design. Qualitative research is characterized by the researcher's interpretations of the data based on his or her experiential understanding of the phenomenon, the experiences of others participating in the study, and information from materials used in the process.

Qualitative research design facilitates the interpretation of data through document reviews and interviews during the data collection stage, and through coding, analysis, interpretation of results and reporting (Stake, 2010). While explaining the alignment between the qualitative research design and the iterative process in which the researcher

plays an integral role, Maxwell (2013) observed that qualitative inquiries have the potential to become situational, interpretative and personalized in nature. Yin (2003) explained that a case study design is most suitable when the research questions are “why” or “how” questions, and in situations where the researcher has no or little control over behavioral events. I used a multiple-case study approach with a purposive sampling strategy to gather primary data from the key stakeholders in the study phenomenon. A multiple-case study design was advantageous over the single-case design because it was far more robust (see Herriott & Firestone, 1993). Furthermore, I treated the two purposely selected schools as separate entities (see Yin, 1994).

In this qualitative study, I interviewed teachers and parents from two purposely selected secondary schools. In the interviews, I sought to collect information about the opinions, experiences, and perspectives of the various stakeholders about the aspects of education which were of interest to policy makers, curriculum experts, and educators (see Borg & Gall, 1989; Kothari, 2009; Orodho, 2005). This study allowed me to explore the opinions, feelings, views, preferences, and attitudes of the participants regarding the study phenomenon.

Research Questions

Research questions are central in research design and greatly influence the methodology a researcher uses (Stake, 2010). Maxwell (2013) argued that the formulation of the research questions determined the feasibility and the choice of methodology. The study’s main research question was: What are the effects of the CDF

and FSEP on access to secondary school education in the Yatta constituency? Moreover, the study's associated sub-questions were:

1. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced the decision to enroll into secondary school among students in Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?
2. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced students' dropout decisions from secondary school in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?
3. How have the direct effects of these factors been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays a key role as the instrument through which the study observations, descriptions, and interpretations are noted (Maxwell, 2013; Stake, 2010). In addition, Stake (2010) observed that the role of the researcher in a qualitative enquiry is personal and thus has the potential to be subjective. In this study, I used an interpretive approach aimed at generating a deep insight into the live experiences of the study participants and documenting their point of view (see Schwandt, 1994).

In this study, I used data collection tools for qualitative data and gathered the study information, prepared the data, conducted analysis, and presented the study results. I did not have any professional or personal relationship with the participants. In the data

collection phase, I prepared the interview protocol and the questions, selected the participants, and conducted the interviews. I then interpreted and analyzed the data, and subsequently compiled the report based on the findings. Despite the highly personal role I played, a deliberate effort was made to ensure that data gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation were objectively carried out (see Stake, 2010). I conducted the interviews directly with the interviewees, ensuring that all ethical considerations were observed including obtaining consent from the participants and ensuring confidentiality of participant information and data.

Researcher Bias

Research bias, though undesirable, is ever-present. When conducting qualitative research, researchers ought to deal with bias by recognizing its existence and making efforts to alert others about it (Stake, 2010). Guba and Lincoln (1989) contended that the opinions and perceptions of the researcher are not problematic if they are explained and critiqued in the same way the researcher critiques the other inputs. To show the centrality of the researcher in a qualitative study, Maxwell (2013) observed that it is not possible to eliminate the theories, beliefs, and the perpetual lens of the researcher entirely; instead, the researcher should provide an explanation of possible bias and how such bias was handled. In conducting this study, I handled potential researcher bias through full disclosure that I had no personal interests that could have potentially influenced the selection of the participants or framing of the research questions. I did not have any

personal nor professional relationship with the participants. Credibility of the study was improved through triangulation of data and in-depth checking of the gathered data.

Methods

There are five primary qualitative methodologies: phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, and case study (Creswell, 2013). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) emphasized that the choice of the methodology depends on the research questions and the sampling strategies adopted, while the overall intention of the study drives the expected outcome. According to Stake (2010), research questions and the researcher's preferred style of inquiry form the basis for assessing the suitability of the research methods used in data collection and subsequent analysis. Maxwell (2013) added that the purpose of the study and the role of the researcher are equally important considerations when choosing the research method.

My choice of a qualitative approach in this study was guided by the nature of the research questions. I used qualitative data to explore the influence of CDF and FSEP on enrollment and dropout decisions among students. Specifically, I collected and analyzed the perspectives of the various stakeholders regarding the influence of the two policies. Combining both primary and secondary data provided a more comprehensive picture of the study phenomenon.

Strategy of Enquiry

I used a multiple-case study design. Yin (2003) described case study designs as the most suitable when answering "why" or "how" types of research questions that tend

to be explanatory in nature. Case studies are also mostly used when the researcher does not have or has very little control over behavioral events. Considering the type of the research questions which I sought to answer and the fact that I had no control over the events which were being examined, the case study design proved to be most suitable. Furthermore, there was strong evidence that other researchers had used case study designs to successfully facilitate deeper understanding of complex social phenomena in various fields (Yin, 2003).

In this study, I used a multiple-case study approach with a purposive sampling strategy to gather primary data from key informants. I selected study participants from among the categories of key stakeholders including the principals, teachers of the two selected schools, and parents of students who benefitted from the CDF. The collected data were cleaned and coded thematically (see Stake, 2010). With a multiple-case approach of enquiry, the researcher can handle a variety of evidence from several sources, including documents and participant interviews (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that enables a researcher to understand a real-world case, with contextual factors that are pertinent to the case under study. Multiple-case study design presented more advantages over the single-case design in this study. Furthermore, I treated the two purposefully selected secondary schools as complete and separate entities.

Sampling Strategy

The study population for this study was secondary schools in Yatta sub-county while the unit of analysis was the individual student. Patton (2002) argued that, there are no rules that govern the size of a sample in qualitative inquiry. Thus, sample size depended on what the researcher sought to ascertain, considering what would be useful, what would be credible, as well as the resources and time available. In this study, I selected a sample size that would help me achieve data saturation. The purpose of this qualitative research was not for generalization rather I aimed at enhancing the understanding of the study phenomenon through contextual examples examined in the study (see Stake, 2010). This argument was consistent with Patton (2002) that, the sample size for a qualitative inquiry would be considerably smaller compared to the sample size required for generalization and representativeness.

In this study, I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy. Patton (1990) described purposeful sampling as a technique used by a researcher for “selecting information-rich cases for study in depth”. The argument was built on Patton’s (2002) observation that the nature of the case is usually decided during the design phase, which determined the basis for the purposive sampling strategy used during data collection. In this study, I used a sample of 14 which was slightly above the approved sample of 12 participants which Creswell (2003) presented as adequate for the required depth of experience. Moreover, in qualitative research, there is a point of diminishing returns when gathering more data does not lead to more information. According to Creswell (1998), sample size for a

phenomenological study should range between five and twenty-five while Morse and Janice (2000) argued that a sample size in qualitative research should be a minimum of six.

From each of the two secondary schools purposely selected for this study, I conducted seven one-on-one interviews with key informants, including school principals, the deputy principals, and six parents of children who had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme identified through the office of the principal. I included both female and male parents in order to ensure a balance in terms of gender as well as a good representation of parents for both boys and girls. Through the office of the respective school principal, I sent request letters for participation in the study to the potential interviewees. The letter provided information about the research problem, purpose of the study, and the details of what would be required during their participation.

Study Setting and Sample

I conducted the study in Yatta constituency, administratively known as Yatta sub-county. Yatta sub-county was selected for this study because it had few secondary schools compared to the number of primary schools, although with the CDF, many day secondary schools had been established. The constituency has a relatively high number of students who never enrolled in secondary schools coupled with high dropout rates. In 2014, Yatta sub-county had 53 registered public secondary schools with an enrollment of 11, 750 students and nine private secondary schools. The school with the highest enrollment had 759 students while the school with the lowest school enrollment had 35

students. The sub-county had 134 registered public primary schools and 15 private primary schools (Ministry of Education, 2014). Furthermore, the district is not endowed with a good climate as it lies within the arid and semiarid region (Munyao et al., 2013).

Like most of the neighboring sub-counties, Yatta sub-county is also characterized by adverse climatic conditions although the main economic activity is peasant farming. I purposely selected one mixed boarding secondary school and one mixed day secondary school. The boarding school was established by the local community in the late 1970s while the day secondary school was started through the CDF in 2010. Both schools have benefitted from the FSEP, depending on their respective enrollments. Prior to the establishment of CDF schools in Yatta, many children who completed their primary school education never transitioned to secondary school; while girls who dropped out of school went to work as house help or got married early while their male counterparts worked as casual laborers or remained unemployed.

I focused this study on public secondary schools and excluded private schools in consideration that private institutions did not benefit from the allocation of resources from both the CDF and FSEP. I used a qualitative approach and with a multiple-case study approach, explored whether and how the CDF and the FSEP had contributed to improvement of access to secondary school education among secondary school-age children in the sub-county.

The research problem for this study was based on the premise that many children who completed primary education had not transitioned to secondary school level, and,

among those who enrolled into form one, many of them dropped out of school before completing the four years of secondary education. The purpose of the study was to explore whether and how the CDF and FSEP had contributed to an increased access to secondary school education in the Yatta. To address the research problem, I explored the factors that influenced students' enrollment and dropout among the two secondary schools in Yatta and further examined how the direct effects of these factors had been modified by the CDF and FSEP. The two schools had been purposely selected based on criterion of their proximity to each other, and one of them being a mixed boarding school which existed prior to the CDF, while the second one was established with the support of the CDF.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was the best technique for this multiple-case study because it allowed me to select participants based on their experience and knowledge about the study phenomenon (see Merriam, 2002). Similar argument was echoed by Rubin and Rubin (2005) who noted that, the selection of experienced and most knowledgeable participants improved study credibility. Study participants were drawn from two selected secondary school communities within the same locality. In this study, I collected qualitative data on the perspectives of both boys and girls in order to examine the gender differences and equity issues in accessing secondary education among eligible students. I also held key informant interviews with parents of students who had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme, principals of two selected secondary schools, and teachers.

Data Collection

In this study, I collected primary data through interviews with the sampled stakeholders. According to Patton (2002), the quality of qualitative research depends on the researcher's sensitivity and skills as well as the methodological integrity. I developed an interview protocol to ensure good quality and included a debriefing session with the interviewee at the end of each interview session. Subsequently, I conducted data validation immediately after the interview with the interviewees to improve on completeness and reliability (Creswell, 2007). In addition, I reviewed secondary data from available documents from the Yatta sub-county education office and school records from the respective principal's offices.

Interviewing facilitates the gathering of information that the researcher cannot observe directly and thus allows the researcher to access the perspectives and thoughts of the interviewee (Patton, 2002). He further argued that open-ended questions used in qualitative interviews provides participants the opportunity to put in their own experiences, feelings and perspectives regarding the study phenomenon (Patton, 2002). In this study, I collected qualitative data in an interactive and developmental manner, allowing for emerging ideas to be explored. According to Stake (2010), interviews are among the most important sources of case study evidence, however there are also limitations in their use including weaknesses due to recall errors and the risk that some responses may be distorted for political reasons and correctness, personal bias of the

participant, due to a participant's reaction to the interview, anxiety of the interviewee, or due to limited awareness about the issue under question (Patton, 2002).

I conducted interviews using open-ended questions which allowed the participants to bring out their personal views about the topic. To answer the research questions, I collected data relating to the various categories of factors to be explored using a data collection plan which had summarized the links between the research questions and data collection process, including information about where the data was to be collected, from and by whom, the duration of data collection and how the data were to be recorded.

Instrumentation and Materials

In this study, I used both primary and secondary data. I gathered secondary data on school enrollment, funding provided by the ministry and staffing were obtained from the Ministry of Education offices at the Yatta sub-county education office at Kithimani. I collected primary data through interviews with key informants, including administrators and parents. Data collection included a standardized open-ended interview protocol which ensured the efficient use of time during interview sessions, facilitating easier categorization and sorting of the responses for quick analysis. The use of standardized protocol reduced credibility issues since the same information was collected for each case while still ensuring that each interviewee was treated uniquely (see Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

While there is no single and most correct way of analyzing qualitative data, Maxwell (2013) argued that, the application of any strategy of analyzing qualitative data

should be well planned and modified whenever necessary to fit the data so that the researcher may answer the research questions while also guarding against validity threats that might jeopardize the research findings and conclusions. Essentially, case studies are either confirmatory (deductive) or explanatory (inductive) based on single or multiple cases (Yin, 2014). This study, being exploratory in nature, I used inductive coding approaches. Bryman (2003) explained that qualitative research methodologies provide the opportunity to obtain the perspectives and experiences of the audience through in-depth interaction on the phenomenon. Stake (2010) had also pointed out that data analysis involves the searching for elements and association. It is in view of this aspect that rather than imposing a priori ideas and categories, I endeavored to identify emergent categories and theories from the participants' perspectives and, while respecting the uniqueness of the cases, conducted a cross-case analysis with the aim of developing explanations rather than cause.

In this study, I coded the experiences and perspectives of the various categories of participants including parents, caregivers, and teachers into themes, and analyzed using qualitative approaches to examine whether the CDF and FSEP had influenced the decisions of parents and caregivers in enrolling and retaining their children in school. Data analysis involved cleaning and organizing the data collected during the interviews. Notes collected during the interviews were then cleaned and examined for possible categories and relationships. I sorted and classified the data, and coded them for further categorization to facilitate the identification of themes for comparisons. Through data

analysis, I identified the associations and patterns which aided in explaining the study phenomenon more meaningfully.

In organizing, coding, categorizing and presenting qualitative data and information, I used NVivo 11.0 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2008) software which according to Gibbs and Taylor (2005) made it easy for me to organize, analyze the qualitative data, including coding and identifying themes and concepts. According to Yin (2014), there is generally an increase in the usage of computer applications during the analysis of qualitative data.

Reliability and Validity of Instrumentation

In order to create a set of complementary data gathering and analysis activities to triangulate the data, I used both secondary and primary data. Some of the potential weaknesses and threats in the study included potential biases emanating from the interviews and the threats to credibility and validity of the findings. I controlled these potential weaknesses through conducting the interviews personally and by using an interview protocol which ensured consistency of the interview questions.

Data reliability in qualitative research implies that repeating the data collection procedure would yield the same results (Yin, 2009). In this study, I ensured data reliability through following a case study protocol to standardize the investigation. In addition, similar data were gathered from the various interviewees and analyzed into common themes. Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) supported the use of multiple sources of data and argued that it enabled the researcher to triangulate and corroborate evidence

for the study. I also took advantage of the benefits of using secondary data to explain the findings from the primary data analysis to improve the reliability of the study. A major advantage of qualitative methods is that they generate detailed and rich data on the issue under study.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting research where the subjects are people or animals, researchers are required to pay attention to the ethical issues associated with carrying out their research (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Ethical measures are principles by which the researcher should bind himself or herself when conducting research (Schulze, 2002). In this study, I put in place measures for ethical considerations including: First, obtaining an approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) which reviewed the adherence of the study proposal in regard ethical considerations while conducting any research. Second, only adults were included as participants. Third, I obtained a permit from the regulating authority in Kenya. Fourth, I obtained an informed consent from the participants who were also provided with enough information pertaining to the study prior to their inclusion as participants. In addition, the possible benefits and value of the study were also explained to the participants which motivated them to participate in the research.

Participants' confidentiality were not compromised as their names were not used nor did they appear in the collection of data. No private or secret information was divulged since the right of confidentiality of the participants was maintained. During and

after the interview, to establish a good relationship and to secure the confidence with the participants, I developed a good rapport with them which was positively received.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the methodology and the approach used in the study including describing the study setting, research design, data collection, instrumentation, and quality control for ensuring reliability and validity. I also highlighted the sampling approach and the selection of participants including the rationale for purposeful sampling technique which was most suitable for the selection of participants based on criteria of knowledge and experience (see Merriam, 2002). Study participants were drawn from two selected secondary school communities within the same locality. The sampled schools comprised of a mixed boarding and a day secondary school established in 1970s and 2010 respectively. The 14 study participants were comprised of the principals, deputy principals and parents of students who had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme.

Furthermore, the section summarized plans for analyzing the data and highlighted the role of the researcher, the protection of participants and ethical considerations for the study. Chapter four summarizes the data collection and data analysis processes, describes the sample and presents the results and the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the results of data analysis. The purpose of the study was to obtain a deeper understanding of the effects of the CDF and FSEP on access to secondary education by students in Yatta sub-county in Machakos. I answered the research questions through a multiple-case study in which I interviewed 14 participants including principals, deputy principals, and parents of students from two purposely selected public secondary schools in Yatta.

This chapter includes an overview of the study findings and a presentation of the experiences and perspectives of the key informants in regard to the specific study questions with which I sought to highlight (a) the household, constituency, and national factors that influenced student decisions to enroll into secondary school in Yatta sub-county; (b) the household, constituency, and national factors which influenced students' dropout decisions from secondary school in Yatta; and (c) how the direct effects of these factors had been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in Yatta sub-county. I addressed the study questions by interviewing participants using a data collection protocol. In this chapter, I also present the setting of the study, the demographics of the participants, how the data were collected and analyzed, and the key findings of the study.

Context of the Study

I used a multiple-case study research design to gain an in-depth contextual understanding of the study phenomenon. In this chapter, I analyze the interview data collected from the participants in regard to the role of the CDF and FSEP on access to secondary education in two sampled schools in Yatta sub-county. Participants were purposefully selected from the school communities and comprised school administrators (two principals, their respective deputies), and parents of children who had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme. Both schools had benefitted from the FSEP support based on their respective total student enrollments.

The study sites were one mixed boarding school and a day secondary school which was established through the CDF. Both schools are within the same geographical context, with the surrounding communities having very similar social, economic, and cultural settings. The study was exploratory and was therefore not aimed at generalization of findings but at enhancing an in-depth understanding of the study subject via contextual examples examined in the study (see Stake, 2010). I conducted interviews with 14 participants purposively selected in consideration of their knowledge and experience with the study phenomenon.

Prior to my visit to the ward in the Yatta sub-county where this study was conducted, I contacted the principals of the two secondary schools and gained their commitment to participate and that of their respective school communities, including deputy principals and parents of students who had benefitted from the CDF. The two

principals had also committed to assist me in holding the one-on-one interviews with parents, especially in regard to identifying of potential parent participants and providing a room in the school for the interviews. My direct involvement in data collection was important for ensuring the credibility of the study findings. Stake (2010) argued that, in qualitative research, the researcher plays a key role as the instrument through which the study observations, descriptions, and subsequent interpretations are noted. Likewise, Maxwell (2013) emphasized that the role of the researcher in a qualitative inquiry is both personal and critical to the success of the study.

Demographics

The initial sample size for this study was 12. However, the principals had contacted and gained consent from more parents, and hence I expanded the sample size to 14. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the two principals (males), the deputy principals (one male and one female), and 10 parents of students who had benefitted from the CDF bursaries from the two sampled schools. Of the 10 parents, 3 were males, while 7 were females. While age was not a factor I considered during data collection, all the participants were above 18 years of age.

I initially contacted the school principals by phone to obtain their consent as part of the IRB process. At the time, I requested that they facilitate identification of the parents who could be included as participants. They had acknowledged and communicated their agreement through the signing of the consent forms. All participants were informed about the interview schedule 1 week in advance; however, consent forms

were only signed after the introduction and brief information session about the purpose of the study prior to the start of the interviews. Although I interviewed 14 participants during data collection, data saturation was reached at 12 participants.

Data Collection

During the data collection process, I paid attention to the skills required of a good investigator (Yin, 2003), including the aspects of being able to ask good questions and interpret the responses, being flexible, having good listening skills, having a good understanding of the study subject, and being sensitive to contradictory evidence so as to manage personal bias. I conducted interviews with study participants within the respective schools. I managed to establish good rapport with every participant during the interviews, resulting in rich dialogue and generating good evidence for each of the research questions. Most of the questions asked were “how” rather than “why,” which aided in making the interview very conversational.

Data were collected through one-on-one interviews with the principals and the deputy principals in their respective offices, while the venue for parents’ interviews was a room provided by the school. I introduced the discussion and moderated it through the course of the interview. All the participants were very friendly and supportive, and they collaborated with me throughout the data collection period. They all considered the study to be very important and aimed at addressing an important aspect of their work and progress.

I used an interview protocol for this study that included semi-structured, open-ended questions. There were two sets of interview questions aimed at gathering similar information from participants in the same group: one for parents and the other for school administrators. Although standard questions were used, I had the opportunity to probe further in order to gather comprehensive information from the participants about the study phenomenon. All the interviews were tape-recorded, and responses were typed directly into the computer.

Description of the Study Sample

The study sample was purposely selected and comprised of 4 administrators/teachers (3 males, 1 female) and 10 parents (7 females, 3 males). Of the total sample, 57 % were females which was also because of deliberate personal effort to include more females as participants. This was aimed at bringing out the parents' perspectives regarding gender as well as contextual cultural factors which particularly influenced girls' education including attitudes towards the female child, traditional practices such as male child preference and the greater involvement of the girl child in domestic chores as compared to the boy child (Keme, 2007). The summary of participants' demographic distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Study Sample Characteristics

Groups	n	Proportion (% *)
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Participants	14	100
Gender		
Male	6	43
Female	8	57
Social Groups		
Administrators	4	29
Parents	10	71
School Community		
Participants from Boarding School Community	7	50
Participants from Day School Community	7	50

*Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole numbers

Although the sample comprised of equal participants (50 %) from the two schools, it was evident during the interviews that regardless of their category and school community, participants were well versed and had experience from their own families or communities about children attending either boarding or day secondary school education.

After the response to each question, I summarized the response in my electronic notes and validated it with the participant. I interviewed a total of 14 participants but reached data saturation at the end of the twelfth interview. There were no unusual

occurrences during the data collection phase, the entire process went as planned, and it concluded smoothly.

Table 2 summarizes the participants' interview data including date, time, duration of interview and the number of transcribed pages of 1.5-line spacing.

Table 2

Participants' Interview Information

Participant Code	Date of Interview	Time of Interview	Duration of Interview in Minutes	Number of Pages Transcribed
Administrators				
MTB01	04-03-2017	11.15 a:m	56.30	3.5
MTD02	10-03-2017	02.10 p:m	51.40	3.0
FTB03	04-03-2017	09.40 a:m	49.00	2.5
MTD04	10-03-2017	03.25 p:m	52.00	3.2
Parents				
FPB05	06-03-2017	9:30 a:m	47.00	2.2
FPB06	06-03-2017	10.45 a:m	51.00	3.0
MPD07	13-03-2107	11.40 a:m	46.30	2.4
MPD08	13-03-2017	12.55 p:m	48.40	2.0
FPD09	10-03-2017	10.35 a:m	45.30	2.8

FPB10	07-03-2017	11.00 a:m	46.20	2.5
FPD11	15-03-2017	12.05 p:m	48.00	2.8
FPD12	15-03-2017	10.00 a:m	53.00	3.0
MPB13	06-03-2017	12.50 p:m	47.10	2.8
FPB14	06-03-2017	01.47 p:m	49.00	2.5

I conducted all the interviews between the 4, March 2017 and 15, March 2017. Generally, interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Through this exploratory study, I sought to uncover patterns, determine meaning, as well as constructing evidence on the key determinant factors which influenced student enrollment and dropout among students as well establishing the role of the CDF and the FSEP in enhancing access to secondary education. During the interviews, I found the participants very knowledgeable about the study phenomenon, and this made the interviews very conversational which also enhanced the participants' interest on the study. In this study, redundancy was reached at the end of the twelfth interview which is the point of saturation when participants were not offering new information on the study phenomenon (see Patton, 2002). The interviews were transcribed directly into word documents with a 1.5-line spacing and an average of 2.7 pages of word document per participant.

I conducted this multiple-case study in two public secondary schools. Pertinent background information in regard to school enrollment disaggregated for girls and boys, school fees charged, admission requirements and the year of establishment were gathered

through interviews conducted with principals and teachers. This pertinent school information is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Secondary School Information

School	Category	Year Established	Cut-off marks for admission (F1)	Annual Fees in Ksh.	School Enrollment*	
					Boys	Girls
1	Boarding	1978	250	35,000	180	165
2	Mixed Day	2011	200	18,000	110	103

*School enrollment as at March 2017

I interviewed parents to establish some background information about their respective levels of education, the number of children in their families, their main economic activities as well as the key decision makers in their families in regard to their children's education. Of the 10 parents interviewed, only 30 % had attained secondary education while 50 % and 20 % had attained primary and attended polytechnic education respectively. Families generally had many children with the numbers ranging between 4 and 9. The average number of children per family was 6 with almost an equal average for

boys and girls per household. Two families were living with some orphaned children whom they had “adopted” and hence were included in the analysis. Most of the parents I interviewed were involved in peasant farming as their main economic activity, however few of the participants were also engaged as casual laborers, selling groceries and other low income earning activities. Decisions on whether to enroll or not to enroll a child into school among 70 % of the families represented in the sample were made jointly by the parents, 20 % were female headed households while in one of the families, the decision was made by the husband depending on availability of school fees.

Table 4

Participants’ Background Information

Participant Code	Level of Education	Number of Children in HH		Economic Activity	Decision of Whether to Enroll Child or Not
		Boys	Girls		
FPD05	Primary	3	2	Peasant farming	Husband
FPB06	Primary	5	4	Groceries shop	Jointly with husband
MPD07	Primary	3	1	Peasant farmer	Jointly with wife
MPD08	Polytechnic	3*	4*	Casual labor	Involves wife
FPD09	Primary	2	2	Peasant farming	Self (widow) / child
FPB10	Secondary	3	6	Sells water	Jointly with husband

FPD11	Primary	2	3	Peasant farming	Jointly with husband
FPB12	Polytechnic	5	4	Tailor	Self (widow)
MPB13	Secondary	3	2	Mason	Jointly with wife
FPB14	Secondary	2**	2**	Merchandise shop	Jointly with husband

*of the 7 children; one girl and two boys are adopted and living with the participant

**of the 4 children, one of the girls is adopted and living/supported by the participant

Data Analysis

In this study, I conducted data analysis through the process of examining, categorizing, tabulating, and finding the qualitative evidence to address the research questions (Yin, 2003a). The process was also aligned with Newman (1997) definition that, "data analysis means a search for patterns in data". To conduct an objective review of evidence from qualitative data, Yin (2003) recommended that researchers use of a case study database. I developed a case study database from the various data including case study notes from the interviews with the participants, documents and records from the principals' offices, and detailed narratives derived from the participants' responses to the open-ended questions drawn from the interview protocol. Each of the participants' responses was given a code to protect the participants and then included in the database. According to Yin (2014), computer software greatly assists researchers in coding, categorizing, and presenting qualitative data. I analyzed study data using NVivo 11, which aided in organizing, coding, and identifying emerging themes and concepts.

I inductively coded the interview data and then subjected it to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure which aided the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) in the data (see Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a method that involves identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data. They identified the six steps of thematic analysis which were followed in this study including familiarization with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes and the weaving up the analytic narrative in order to tell a persuasive and coherent story about the data while contextualizing it in the existing literature

For analysis, I also used a thematic approach in which the emerging themes were identified from the data and given a descriptive code. Subsequently, similar concepts were associated to form categories, further bringing them together into themes. Through categorization, I aggregated and grouped similar instances of information together and emerging themes to establish meaning. To increase reliability of the study, I sought to establish a chain of evidence to link the initial research questions to the ultimate multiple-case study conclusions.

Confidentiality

I worked to maintain participants' anonymity and confidentiality in line with the requirements of the IRB approval 12-21-16-0360714, thus participants' identity was expunged. Specifically, I used the following codes to identify the participants: male participants were coded as M (Male) while females were coded as F (Female),

administrators including principals and deputy principals were coded with T for teachers (Head Teacher) and (Deputy Head Teacher) respectively, while parents were coded as P (Parent). Participants from the boarding secondary school were coded as B (Boarding) while those from the day secondary school were coded as D (Day). Numbers 01–14 were included for the purpose of serialization of the participants and not in the order in which the interviews were conducted. Hence, participants were coded as MTB01, MTD02, FTB03, MTD04, FPB05, FPB06, MPD07, MPD08, FPD09, FPB10, FPD11, FPD12, MPB13, and FPB14.

Coding

The three main research questions were answered through asking participants a series of semi-structured questions following an interview protocol for teachers and parents. I grouped the gathered data into three main elements of the study: student enrollment, student dropout, and the effects of CDF and FSEP on enrollment and dropout respectively. I then generated response categories from the key words and statements used by participants in describing their experiences and perspectives about the study phenomenon.

Based on literature review and familiarization with the data, I identified six pre-codes to describe the main elements of the research questions including: determinants of enrollment, determinants of dropout, role of CDF on enrollment, role of CDF on dropout, role of FSEP on enrollment and the role of FSEP on dropout. I coded these pre-codes into six nodes in NVivo and categorized the responses of the participants into the six

dimensions of the study (see table 5). Subsequently, I clustered the responses into the emerging patterns and grouped into the sub-themes and ultimately into themes. The above description of the sequence and logical flow of how the main research questions were broken into a series of interview questions and participants' responses, followed by how the data were organized into categories/groups and subsequently into nodes/pre-codes and identification of patterns/themes is summarized on Table 6

Table 5

Summary of Distribution of Participants' Responses per Nodes in NVivo

Nodes	Sources	References
CDF on dropout	14	48
CDF on enrollment	14	44
Determinants dropout	13	82
Determinants enrollment	14	91
FSEP on dropout	10	14
FSEP on enrollment	11	20

Table 6*Sequential Flow of Logic from Research Questions to Themes*

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
1. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced the decision to	What is the school student enrollment disaggregated into girls and boys and class? Comment on how this has changed since 2003? After 2008?	Determinants of Enrollment	increased enrollment, more day schools available, new school yet double streams, equal parity of boys and girls, more day schools, also admit students from far - boarding facilities	Enrollment has been increasing with almost equal parity for boys and girls. More schools have been established

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
enroll into secondary school among students in Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?	Describe some of the factors that have influenced student's enrollment in your school, family or community?		school fees, distance to school, cut off mark of 250, cut off mark of 200, child decides, poverty in the neighboring area, low income, poor rains, poverty, performance - poor scores especially at form 3	Lack of school fees and high cost of schooling is the main determinant factor of enrollment, poverty and low income are main drivers of children not been in school. student performance, cut off marks, distance and unavailability of schools
	How does girls' enrollment compare to that of the boys in the school?		almost equal number of boys and girls, all children taken to school, depends on performance and availability	Equal opportunities given to boys and girls. No preference to boys' education as compared to girls, parents

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
			of school fees	desire to enroll all their children to school
	Are there any cases of student pregnancies in the school and how are they handled? How does this affect enrollment?		few cases of girl pregnancy, girl pregnancies have reduced in the community with girls' education, few cases in community, reduces enrollment, stigma issues	few cases of early pregnancies, reduced with girls enrolling into secondary school than when they were going to polytechnics, opportunity to return to school after delivery
	What are some of the cultural practices for example early marriages		few cases of early marriages, some few cases early pregnancies, reduces student	Few cases of girl pregnancies, trends in early marriages and girl pregnancies in

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	among the students? In your view how have they affected the school's enrollment?		enrollment, declined with girls not going to polytechnics, few cases when girls are in school	community have declined with girls not going to polytechnics
	Comment on the distance between the students' homes and the school and how it affects school enrollment?		long distance affects enrollment, with day schools more schools are available, distance has reduced, boarding schools preferred particularly for girls, riskier for girls	With the new day schools - education is more available, distance has reduced with more schools, parents' preference is for boarding schools however they are constrained by the high cost of schooling

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	What challenges do parents face while enrolling their children into the school?		lack of school fees, poverty, low income, poor rains, unavailability of schools,	High cost of schooling, low income and poverty are the main challenges faced, few schools and long distances to school
	briefly tell me about your family including how many children are in your household and in what level of education they are in.		with many children; parents cannot afford school fees for all, with day schools- education is less costly and more children going to school, we no longer take children to polytechnics	Number of children in the family is an important factor particularly with the low income and high cost of schooling, with day schools, education is less costly

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	Are there any children in your household who never proceeded to secondary school? If yes why?		there are few whose parents cannot afford, lack of school fees is main reason, we want education for our children, poor performance, cases of girl pregnancies	Even with the declining amount of school fees charged by day schools, cost of education is still high and some children still remain out of school. Other reasons include girl pregnancy and poor performance
	Do you know of any children in your community who did not enroll into secondary school? If yes, what		most cases are mainly due to lack of school fees, most children going to school, parents are unable to raise fees, community helps but	Parents desire their children to be enrolled, most of the cases constrained by lack of school fees, with day schools cost is low and education

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	could be the reasons of not continuing their education?		challenges, with day schools cost is low	more affordable
	Comment about the distance from your home to school? How do your children go to school?		walking, bicycles, boarding school preferred but more costly, risky particularly for girls, children get tired, more schools are now available with day schools, distance has reduced	Short distances imply availability, distance is a determinant of enrollment, day scholars are faced with other peculiar challenges particularly girls
	What challenges do children face in regard to the distance to		walking in the darkness to be in school early and very late, they get tired, risky for girls -	Distance from home to school is a determinant of enrollment, girls are more

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	school?		pregnancies, bad behavior for boys - drugs	affected by distance as compared to boys, parents prefer boarding schools
	Are children involved in any house chores before and after school? How does that affect their education?		Not involved, they leave so early, fetch water and firewood during the weekends, girls are more helpful than boys, they don't have time to help parents	Children are not involved in household chores before going to school. help in fetching water and firewood only during weekend
	Comment on the value of education for girls as compared to that of boys in your community		Girls and boys have equal opportunities, all children taken to school, depends on the child, girls are better	Girls and boys have equal opportunities, the culture has changed and children treated equally, no preference of boys

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
			behaved than boys, no preference of boys to girls, girls are helping parents more compared to boys, the culture has changed and children treated equally	as compared to girls in regard to enrollment into secondary school.
2. Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced	Comment on the drop out of students from your school across the various classes – form one, two, three and four?	Determinants Dropout	many children are in school, decline in dropout cases, dropout reduces enrollment, random cases of dropout and mainly due to lack of school fees	dropout due to lack of school fees, girls' dropout more than boys

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
students' dropout decisions from secondary school in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?	Comment on student's absenteeism in your school? What are the main causes of student's dropout from your school? And how can they be prevented?		students sent home due to fees arrears, performance issues contribute to dropout, few cases of indiscipline, boys involved in drugs, day scholars more prone to absenteeism compared to boarders most cases due to lack of school fees, unaffordability due to high fees, boarding school fees is high, poverty, lack of good income, poor and	day scholars are more prone to dropout due to absenteeism, cases of absenteeism due to distance, performance and when students are sent home to collect fees arrears lack of school fees is the most dominant factor of dropout, poverty and low income influence dropout

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
			unreliable climate with low rainfall, support from government, the local authorities to support poor students	
	How do you compare girls' dropout to that of the boys your school?		girls' dropout more than boys, cases of girl dropout due to girl pregnancies, boys' dropout due to indiscipline and being involved in drugs, girls affected more by distance, there are security risks associated with day	girl's dropout more than boys, girls' participation is constrained by high costs, risks of safety and distance from school, cases of early pregnancies contribute to dropout

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
			schools especially for girls, distance influences dropout	
	Are there any cases of student pregnancies in the school and how are they handled? How does this affect dropout?		few cases of girl pregnancy, girl pregnancies have reduced in the community with girls' education, few cases in community, reduces school enrollment, stigma issues	fewer cases of girl pregnancy with options to return to school, girl pregnancies have reduced in the community with girls' education, fewer cases in community,
	Are there any cultural practices for example early marriages among		less cases of early marriages with secondary education compared to polytechnics, girl	cases of early marriages have reduced with secondary education compared to when

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	the students? In your view, how have they affected students' dropout?		pregnancies contribute to early marriage, dropout of girls from school is higher compared to boys,	they accessed polytechnics, girl pregnancies contribute to early marriage, dropout of girls from school is higher compared to boys,
	Has any of your children dropped out of school? If yes, why?		dropouts mainly due to lack of school fees, poverty, distance from school, performance by the individual student, poverty, inability of the parents to pay, individual choice, few cases of pregnancy but they have	factors influencing dropouts: mainly due to lack of school fees, poverty, distance from school, performance by the individual student, poverty, inability of the parents to pay, individual choice, few cases of pregnancy

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
			options to come back to school.	
	Comment on the distance between the students' homes and the school and how it affects school dropout		distance from school is a key factor of dropout, there are more day schools, distance has declined, boarding schools are safer especially for girls, with good income parents opt for boarding schools	distance influences dropout, distance has declined with day schools, risks associated with walking to and from school especially for girls, parents prefer boarding schools but constrained by high cost of boarding

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	What challenges do parents face when financing secondary education particularly in regard to cost of uniform, books and learning materials and upkeep?		high cost of schooling, low income, poverty, poor income, size of the family, distance when parents have to provide transport, education becomes unaffordable especially with boarding facilities	poverty, high cost of schooling, low income, size of the family, distance from school, unaffordable education, unavailability of school facilities
	Are there any factors that especially negatively influence girl's education in your community? Are you		few cases of girls' pregnancies, cases of early marriages, security, distance to school affects girls more, costly to prepare a girl for	few cases of girls' pregnancies, cases of early marriages, security, distance to school affects girls more, costly to prepare a girl for

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	<p>aware of any cases of student pregnancies or marriages in your community?</p> <p>Comment on the practices of girls' involvement in house chores as compared to boys? What are some of the chores that may have affected girls' education in your community?</p>		<p>school compared to a boy,</p> <p>students no longer involved in house chores before going to school, there is no time because they start school early, only help during weekend with the fetching of water and firewood,</p>	<p>school compared to a boy,</p> <p>Children not involved in house chores before going to school, house chores do not influence student dropout</p>

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	Comment on the value of education for girls as compared to that of boys in your community.		No more preference of boys to girls regarding education, culture has changed, equal opportunities for boys and girls, through support from the government, more schools, boarding facilities introduced in day schools.	Girls and boys have equal opportunities, the culture has changed and children treated equally, no preference of boys as compared to girls about being maintained in school.
3. How have the direct effects of these factors been	How has the school benefitted from the CDF?	CDF on Enrollment and Dropout	infrastructure, classrooms, bursary for students, bore hole, laboratory, new schools established by CDF	With CDF, new schools established, improved facilities, education is more available, bursaries for students.

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?	Have you ever benefitted from a CDF bursary? Describe the process of application of a bursary from the CDF and your experience What has been the effect of the CDF on enrollment in your school? Briefly describe the CDF bursary process; who are the		yes, I have benefitted, little amount awarded, non-transparent process, depends on who you know, MP manages it, need to be improved CDF has contributed to increased enrollment, less students' dropout due to the bursary schemes, lengthy process, not transparent, compromised, manipulated, poor targeting of	CDF beneficial however needs process needs to be improved for effectiveness Enrollment and retention improved with the CDF CDF requires improvement, need to be more effective, process should be shortened

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	beneficiaries? And what role does the school play in the bursary award process		the most deserving, school involvement is verifying application forms for students,	
	In your own view, how has the availability of CDF funds led to: increase in enrollment? Improved retention?		CDF increased enrollment, cost of schooling reduced with day schools, school fees reduced, bursary scheme helps poor, made education more affordable, students continue with their education	CDF contributed to increased improvement, with CDF dropout has declined.
	How has the number and quality of physical		facilities increased and improved, new schools	CDF has aided infrastructure improvement. More schools

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	facilities in the school improved with the CDF funding?		established, equipment now availed by CDF including desks, tables, lab equipment	been availed through the CDF, distance from school has been reduced
	What is the effect of the CDF funds in reduction of cost of education especially levies charged by the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)?		burden reduced on parents, less cost to parents, school PTA levies reduced	education is more affordable with CDF, parents enrolled and keep their children in school with the CDF, enrollment and retention improved with the CDF, education more available with CDF
	What other support has the school and the		CDF supported improvement of health facilities, water	Other projects supported through CDF in health, water

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	community received from the CDF?		sources including boreholes and earth dams for irrigation	sector and agriculture
	How has the number and quality of the physical facilities improved as a result of FSEP?	FSEP Enrollment and Dropout	facilities improved in quality due to maintenance, running the school with the FSEP funds, costs of schooling less on the parents,	FSEP has led to improved infrastructure, reduced costs of schooling charged to parents, school fees reduced.
	How would you describe the effect of FSEP on enrollment in your school?		increased enrollment, reduced dropout, reduced school fees, levies charged to parents have declined, help in running the school	FSEP has led to increase in enrollment, reduced dropout, fees and levies reduced, helps in running the school

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	How has the school benefitted from the FSEP?		good infrastructure, maintenance of facilities, used to run the school, schooling costs burden reduced, parent's levies reduced, used for repairs and not new facilities	fees charged on parents reduced with FSEP, less levies charged, improved infrastructure, aided in operational and running costs
	What is the effect of the FSEP on reduction of the cost of schooling especially on levies charged by the PTA?		costs of schooling charged to parents reduced with the FSEP, levies reduced, released directly to the school	parents paying less for school fees, education more affordable with the FSEP, less fees are charged
	What is the effect of FSEP on student		school fees have reduced, levies have reduced, students'	FSEP has reduced students' dropout, education is more

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Questionnaire)	Pre-codes (Nodes in Nvivo)	Response Categories (Sub-themes)	Themes
	dropout in your school		dropout has declined with the FSEP	affordable, parents are able to pay the lower school fees
	Are you aware of FSEP?		Not aware, has benefitted	Most of the parents not aware
	If yes, briefly describe your understanding about it and how it has helped in regard to education for your children		school a lot, government support, known to the principal, running costs for the school, maintenance and repairs	about the FSEP, teachers have consensus that FSEP benefitted schools

Results

Case studies are either confirmatory (deductive) or explanatory (inductive) based on multiple or single cases (Yin, 2014). For this exploratory study, I used inductive coding approaches. I grouped participants' responses into categories with the bits of data and statements being organized into pre-codes which were coded as nodes through a computer-aided application NVivo 11.0 for Windows. Data revealed strong patterns and themes which described the experiences and the perspectives of the participants regarding the various research questions while respecting the uniqueness of the cases. I also used cross-case analysis to develop explanations rather than to establish cause and effect

According to Yin (1994), multiple cases are used to strengthen the results by replicating the patterns of the findings and hence the robustness of the study. In conducting data analysis, I used unique codes to identify participants which included letters (B) and (D) representing participants drawn from the boarding and the day secondary school communities respectively. This way, although the data were analyzed together and revealed robust patterns and themes with strong similarities in the findings, the value of each of the cases in some themes across the research questions also emerged. The study cases were thus mainly, as described by Yin (1984) as "literal replication, where the cases are designed to corroborate each other". It is also noteworthy to observe that, most of the participants had their experiences of having enrolled their children in either a boarding or a day secondary school which constrained the exclusivity of some of the study findings to either of the study cases.

Research Question 1

In this research question, I asked, “Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced the decision to enroll into secondary school among students in Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya?” With it, I sought to explore the factors that influenced children, parents, and caregivers when enrolling their children into secondary school. To answer the research question, I conducted interviews following the protocol where parents were asked to share their own experiences and perspectives regarding enrollment of their own children and the student enrollment practices in their communities.

Similarly, during the interviews with administrators (principals/deputy principals), I asked participants to relate their experiences from their own school settings about the school enrollment and in regard to the individual students to highlight some of the key factors that influenced the phenomenon. The study revealed the perspectives of the participants and categorized these perspectives into various emerging themes.

Determinants of Enrollment

To identify the factors which influenced student’s enrollment into school, I asked participants to describe the challenges which parents and caregivers faced when enrolling their children to school and how the decision of whether to enroll or not to were arrived at. In addition, I asked respondents to highlight some of the specific challenges facing girls’ participation in secondary education and particularly on the preference of boys’ education as compared to that of girls.

Further, I enquired from the respondents about the distance from their homes to the nearest secondary school and how it influenced the decision of parents in regard to enrolling their children into secondary school. Furthermore, I asked school administrator to provide their perspectives in regard to gender disparities and the factors that influenced school enrollment in their respective schools.

Schooling Costs

Among all the issues identified by the participants, household factors relating to lack of school fees was highlighted as the most dominant determinant of enrollment of children into secondary school. Participants' experiences and perspectives from their own households and their neighbors pointed to households' socioeconomic factors of poverty, low income and the constraints of raising school fees and other schooling costs as a key determining factor considered when deciding on whether to or not to enroll their children into secondary school. Fees charged from the two cases had huge variation with the boarding school fees being two times higher than the day secondary school. This was mainly due to boarding costs which participants from the day secondary school community expressed strong sensitivity in affordability. Some of the responses from the participants are summarized in the table 7 below.

Table 7

Influence of Lack of School Fees on Student Enrollment

Participant	Response
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- FPB05 In my community, many children completed primary and never proceeded to secondary school and this was mainly due to lack of school fees.
- Mainly challenges are about sources of looking for money for school fees – economic activities do not have good income, depends on rains which are very unreliable.
- FPB06 Due to lack of school fees, only one of my nine children enrolled in secondary school, while the other eight went to village polytechnics
- Enrolling children in a boarding school is costlier as compared to enrolling in a day secondary school
- None of the children in my community are out of school for any other reasons rather than lack of school fees.
- FPB14 Of the eight children, only two went to secondary school, the rest went to polytechnics because I could not raise the required fees
- FPD09 Lack of fees; parent's income is low and hence do not proceed to the secondary level.
- Challenges including preparing a girl to school is higher than preparing a boy. May be double cost of preparing a girl as compared to a boy
- FPD11 Many children have also not continued to secondary school due to lack of good income and poverty
- Most children did not proceed to secondary school, due to lack of school

- fees – the children wanted and still face difficulties to date
- FPD12 Have experience having children in boarding and day school – in boarding they have more time to read. Boarding has more fees, while day school have little fees if you haven't money it is easy to keep children in school.
- FPD12 Parents face problems – little income for fees and hence children fail to continue to secondary school
Decision to take children to secondary – by husband and mainly depends on the available funds
- FTB03 Experienced a decline in enrollment since now surrounded by so many day schools. Poverty in the catchment areas – and the competition from the day schools because they are more affordable
- MTB01 School enrolment is influenced by the amount of fees charged, performance; child friendliness, facilities, diet.
For schools with boarding facilities, distance does not affect – however it is costlier although compensated by a wider catchment as compared to the day schools. School fees of Ksh. 35,000 per year including boarding fees is a lot to most of parents
- MTD02 School has good enrollment; situated somewhere within a good catchment – centrally situated students. It is free; whatever is charged is for lunch; affordability, community ownership – local community

members feel they have a stake in it.

Challenges faced by parents when enrolling – poverty; economic activities are not bringing good income. Fees is ksh 18,000 per year

MPD07 many challenges is the level of income of the community members; consultations ongoing with the leaders for some of the primary leavers who continue to secondary to see if help can be provided from the community and church to see if the children can proceed to secondary school

The one who could not continue; due to lack of school fees – the elder brother had so many challenges – he is at home and not planning to continue –completed in 2015. With day school fees is less

Children of those parents who never went to school will remain without education due to the poverty.

Out of the 10 siblings of one my neighbors – the entire family except one child, all others stopped at standard 8 due to lack of school fees

MPD08 Most of the children completing primary school enroll into secondary school; there are few who don't – mainly parents don't have any income; get employed as casuals. Personally, I cannot afford boarding fees; my children are in day school

MTD04 Enrollment to school has been influenced by the affordability, proximity, accessibility, performance

Influence of Family Size on Enrollment

Family size and thus the number of children in the household influenced enrollment into secondary school. Participants revealed that children who had many siblings were either not enrolling into secondary school or they mostly went into village polytechnics. Participant FPB06 said, “Due to lack of school fees, only one of my nine children enrolled in secondary school, while the other eight went to village polytechnics”. This observation was reiterated by participant FPB14, that, “Of the eight children, only two went to secondary school, the rest went to polytechnics because I could not raise the required fees”. Similar observations were made by participant MPD07 who said that, “...out of the 10 children of one my neighbours – the entire family, except one child, all others stopped at standard 8 due to lack of school fees”.

Pointing to the influence of family size and low income as factors influencing enrolment and dropout of children from secondary school, participant MPD08 said that....

.....one of my neighbours committed suicide – the man has 10 children and the wife went to prepare children to get back to school, yesterday – the father committed suicide – citing stress to prepare a girl to school, has land but does not have capacity to do agriculture. Of the ten that is the only child the rest are working as house helps and houseboys. This also demotivates the children and hence they dropout

Occupation of the Father Influences Enrollment

Challenges of raising fees was more associated with low income and the occupation of the father. While commending about the challenges of lack of good income that parents faced while enrolling their children into school, participant MPD07 pointed that, “Children of parents who never went to school will remain without education due to the poverty. Similarly, parents who don’t have educated children still lack basic needs like food”.

On the influence of occupation of the father on enrollment of his children, participant FPD12 said, “...parents face problems – they have little income for fees and hence children fail to continue to secondary school. The decision to take children to secondary – by husband and mainly depends on the available funds”. Similar observations were made by participant FPB05 who commented that, “Many children drop out mainly due to problems relating to school fees; mainly challenges, sources of looking for money – economic activities do not have good income, depends on rains which are very unreliable”.

Student’s Performance and Enrollment

While identifying and describing the factors which influenced the enrollment of children into secondary school, both categories of participants (administrators as well as parents) highlighted that students’ performance was a key factor. Parents pointed out that some children who completed their primary school were not transiting into secondary school due to poor performance in their national examination. Participants also

highlighted that school enrollment was also being determined by how child friendly the school was and the performance of students in their national examinations. The two cases had a different cut off minimum admission requirements of 250 and 200 marks for the boarding and day school respectively. This also influenced the school enrollment as highlighted by the school administrators. The perspectives of the participants in regard to student performance as summarized on Table 8 below

Table 8

Student's Performance and Enrollment

Participant	Response
FPB05	Others never transited to secondary due to poor performance at primary level No preference for boy's education to that of girl's. All children are taken to school; as long as the parent is able and also when the child has passed well and qualified to proceed
FTB03	Enrollment to secondary school also depends on the performance in class 8 at primary level (cut off of 250 marks in my school)
MTB01	School enrolment is influenced by the fees charged, performance; child friendliness, facilities, diet. School has a cut-off of 200 marks

Disparities Between Boys' and Girls' Enrollments

I asked the participants about the value of education for girls as compared to that of boys within their communities as a determinant of student enrollment into secondary

school. There were no instances of preference of educating boys as compared to girls. Some of the strong perspectives were from participant FPD11 who argued that girls and boys were provided with equal opportunities for secondary education and that there was no preference to boys as compared to girls while FPD09 was categorical that all children were being taken to school and that, cultural practices of promoting boys' education as compared to girls' is not there anymore. The participant had also noted that the cost of preparing a girl child for school was much higher than preparing a boy.

Participant FPD12 reiterated that all both boys and girls were being given equal opportunities and underscored that girls were helping parents more than boys citing that the notion that girls would be married is no longer an important factor anymore. Table 9 summarized the responses regarding the disparities in enrollment for boys as compared to that of girls.

Table 9

Disparities in Enrollments of Boys and Girls

Participant	Response
FPB06	All children are going to secondary school. No disparities between girl and boy education
FPB05	No preference for boy's education to that of girl's. All children are taken to school; as long as the parent is able and also when the child has passed well and qualified to proceed
FPB10	All children are equally taken to schools; boys and girls

- FPB14 Parents would like to enroll all their children into secondary school – both boys and girls
- FPD09 All children taken to school both boys and girls, cultural practices of promoting boys' education as compared to girls' is not there anymore
- FPD11 The current child is the third born – girls and boys have equal access to education. Even in the community – all children are taken to school. Equal opportunities given to boys and girls. There is no preference to boys. Girls have accessed education equally with boys
- FPD12 All children are taken to school – girls are helping parents more than boys – and hence no preference to boy's education, the issue of girls would be married is not an important factor anymore
- FTB03 Girls' enrollment – compared with that of the boys' is almost the same. In terms of performance boys do better than the girls
- MTB01 In our school, gender parity depends on particular years – but boys are more than girls
- MTD02 School enrollment for girls and boys – good parity / balancing
- MPB13 girls are helping their parents more than boy children and hence no more preference for boys than girl's education
- MPD07 Girls doing better than boys– have higher marks than boys at primary level, may be minds of boys not settled because of the level of poverty at the household level.

- No cases of parents not taking girls children to school as compared to boys; in the community girl children are more stable
- MPD08 There is no difference between boys and girls. Depends mainly on decision of the child
- Parents are all committed to taking all to school however girls seem to be more interested as compared to boys
- Girls seems to know the needs of the parents than boys. Girls seems to be helping parents more and hence they have more value.
- The culture that did not promote educating girls has changed – interview the children if they want
- MTD04 Enrolment in this school is almost at par for boys and girls
-

Distance Between Home and School

I asked the participants to comment about the distance from the home to the nearest school and their views about how this distance affected student enrollment. Participants had the view that, distance from school was not an important factor for the boarded students however for day scholars, the factor was a key determinant of enrollment. There was strong consensus among respondents that distance from home to school was an important factor for enrollment into school. Parents had serious security concerns especially for girls which influenced their decisions while enrolling their children into school. Respondents highlighted that the establishment of day schools,

secondary education was more available and hence more parents enrolled their children into secondary school.

There was strong consensus among the participants that parents were concerned about the distance that their children and especially daughters had to walk to get to their schools. Thus, although parents expressed their preference for boarding schools for their children, the high cost of schooling inhibited them from enrolling them due to their low socioeconomic status.

Participant FPB10 observed that with the establishment of day schools in the area, distance to school has been reduced but parents had concerns about the security of the children especially girls while respondent MPB13 explained that day schools had brought secondary education closer to the community and hence more children were going to school. Participant FPD11 said “...my daughter walks to school and has to wake up so early; I have security concerns and if I had good income, I would prefer the child to be in a boarding school”. Responses from participants are summarized in table 10

Table 10

Distance from Home to School and Enrollment

Participant	Response
FPB10	With the establishment of day schools in the area, distance to school has been reduced Parents have security concerns especially for girls, they often walk long distances to school

- FPD11 Daughter walks to school and has to wake up so early; I have security concerns and if I had good income, I would prefer the child to be in a boarding school.
- MTD02 In isolated cases, due to the long distance there were students instead of arriving 6.45 a.m. they could arrive at 7.00 a.m. Early morning classes start 7.00 a.m. and at times they are arriving when the teachers are already in class.
- MPB13 Day schools have brought education closer to the community and hence more children going to secondary schools
- MPD07 Distance; 30 minutes walking – the boy walks to school, couldn't afford a bicycle
- MPD08 Daughter takes about 1 hour walking; leaves home at 4.30 a.m. – there are risks and security issues especially for girls.
Children in my community come to the same school, the children also walk. Parents don't have income to buy bicycles
- FPB05 Long distance, security challenges especially for girls, children usually get tired; when they come home even house chores given by the parent they may not do it. Parents only see their children only on Sundays

Research Question 2

In this research question, I asked, “Which household, constituency, and national factors influenced students’ dropout from secondary school in Yatta constituency of

Machakos County in Kenya? With it I sought to identify the determinants of students' dropout from school. During the interviews, I asked the parents a series of questions ranging from whether any of the children in their own households or from their communities had dropped out of school before completing their four years of secondary education and what were the reasons that led to the dropout. On the other hand, I asked administrators to describe the factors that had influenced their respective school's student's dropout and, their experiences about the cases of the individual student dropouts from their schools. Furthermore, participants were asked about the practice of involving children in handling house chores before going to school.

Determinants of Student Dropout

I asked participants a series of questions relating to awareness about the children in their school communities who had dropped out of secondary school or who had not continued into secondary after their completion of their primary education. I also sought to know the experiences of the participants about the distance from home to the nearest school and how this factor had influenced dropout. Furthermore, I asked participants to identify the main challenges that parents faced in retaining their children in school and whether there were any cultural and gender factors that especially affected education for girls in their communities.

Poverty, Income and Cost of Schooling and Student Dropout

Respondents indicated that most of the students' dropout from school were associated with the inability of parents to raise required funds to meet the cost of

schooling for their children. There was consensus among parents and administrators that, school fees and indirect costs of schooling including school uniform, levies charged by the PTA for development, food and maintenance were a major challenge to many parents and hence their children were not able to continue their secondary education to completion.

Participant MPD08 said, "...the problem of raising school fees is the main cause of the student dropout. Books and calculators are also required and if the child does not have, he or she can be demotivated and demoralized and hence drop out of school. Generally, participants observed that poverty and low income due to the unreliable economic activities were the root causes of student dropouts from secondary school. Participant FPB05 observed that drop outs were mainly due to problems relating to school fees and challenges driven by economic activities which did not have good income especially because they were mainly dependent on rains which are very unreliable. Similar observations were made by participant FPD11 who indicated that, many children failed to continue their schooling due to lack of good income and poverty. Responses from the participants about the influence of poverty and high costs of schooling on dropout are summarized in table 11.

Table 11

Effects of Poverty, Low Income and Schooling costs on Dropout

Participant	Response
MPD08	Problem of raising school fees is the main cause of the dropout. Books

and calculators are also required and if the child does not have, he or she can be demotivated and demoralized and hence drop out of school; One of my neighbors committed suicide – the man has 10 children and the wife went to prepare children to get back to school, yesterday – the father committed suicide – citing stress to prepare a girl to school, has land does not have capacity to do agriculture. Of the ten that is the only child the rest are working as house helps and houseboys. This also demotivates the children and hence they dropout

- FPB06 With day schools, school fees are low and hence dropout from school have reduced
- FPB05 dropout mainly due to problems relating to school fees
Mainly challenges, sources of looking for money – economic activities do not have good income, depends on rains which are very unreliable.
- FPB10 I know few children in my community who have dropped out of school due to parents not being able to raise the required fees
- FPD11 Many children have also not continued due to lack of good income and poverty
- FTB03 Students with school fees arrears are sent home to collect fees, however the Board of Management sometimes waives for needy and bright students to reduce dropout. In 2016 – waived 2 students who have qualified to go to the university

- FPD12 Parents face problems – little income for fees and hence children fail to continue to secondary school
- MPD07 The one who could not continue; due to lack of school fees – the elder brother had so many challenges – he is at home and not planning to continue –completed in 2015.
- MTB01 Completion rate of more than 95 %; minimal dropout mainly because of fees, few cases of early pregnancies and also early marriages. Few cases of indiscipline
-

Gender, Teenage Pregnancies, and Early Marriages on Dropout

Gender and individual girl child factors including teenage pregnancies, early marriages have contributed to student dropouts among girls in secondary schools. I asked participants whether they were aware of any cases of teenage pregnancies and or early marriages within their communities. I further asked them to identify some of the factors that negatively influenced girl's education in their communities. In her response, participant FPB05 explained that there were just but few cases of girls who dropped out due to teenage pregnancies however the girls could return to school to continue with their education. The participant was not aware of any cases of early marriage in her community.

Supporting the observation that girls who get pregnant during their schooling period had the opportunity to return to school after delivery, there was affirmation among the administrators with participant MTD04 having said that,

There are cases of girls' pregnancies; about cases 2 per year and mainly in Form 2 and 3. We get the information from the community; girl stops coming to school – at times other things have taken place; some cases after delivery they come back; some don't come back but they go to other schools to avoid stigma. Furthermore, a girl enrolled in form one when she was already married. She was over age – still in school and married. She is a parent; she completed class 8 and stayed for five years got married and later on returned to school and now in form three, she has a family with children.

On girl pregnancies, participant MTB01 highlighted that in 2016, the school recorded 2 cases and afterwards the girls often transfer from the school because of trauma. The participant further observed that,

It is a problem and contributes to girls' dropout but the cases were few. Regarding the overall dropout at the school, the overall completion rate in the school is more than 95 %; hence there are minimal dropout mainly because of fees, few cases of early pregnancies and also early marriages. There are also few cases of indiscipline which also leads to dismissal from the school.

Table 12

Effect of Gender, Teenage Pregnancies, Early Marriages on Dropout

Participant	Response
FPB10	In my community, one girl was in another school, she left at form one level in 2016 due to pregnancy
FPD11	Not common do girls get pregnant when in school; nor early marriages-

the cases on both are very few

- FPB05 Few cases dropout due to teenage pregnancies – but they go back to continue with the education. No cases of early marriages
- FTB03 In 2016 one girl dropped out of school, the grandfather of the girl has expressed interest to return the student to the school; there is stigma but they are ready. In 2014 a girl had come to repeat after delivering her baby; she has completed her education. School gives them a chance to return.
- MPB13 Girls go to day schools and come back home but they are told not to engage in bad behavior and hence few cases of pregnancies when they are accessing secondary education
- MPD07 Mostly girls love going to school – problems are usually due to bad behavior, mainly lack of finances. With bad behavior, they get pregnant – when kept in school reduced pregnancies. Mostly become house helps but mainly due to poverty
- MTD02 Minimal cases of girls pregnancies – with six years’ experience cases (3); normally do when such as case is noted, advise to the girl and the parents – not the end of education and schooling ; hence she will be disadvantaged; the three cases came back to the school – they deliver and take some time and come back to school
- MTD04 There are cases of girls’ pregnancies; about cases 2 per year and mainly

in Form 2 and 3. Get the information from the community; girl stops coming to school – at times other things have taken place; some cases after delivery they come back; some don't come back but they go to other schools to avoid stigma

A girl brought to form one when she was already married. She was over age – still in school and married. She is a parent; she completed class 8 and stayed for five years got married and later on returned to school and now in form three, she has a family with children

MTB01 Girls pregnancies – last year we had 2 cases, we share with the parent – either transfers the student – often because of the trauma they relocate to other schools – is it a problem contributes to girls' dropout but the cases are few

Completion rate of more than 95 %; minimal dropout mainly because of fees, few cases of early pregnancies and early marriages. Few cases of indiscipline

Effects of Performance, Absenteeism, and Peer Pressure on Dropout

I asked the participants to identify the individual factors which influenced student's dropout from school in their communities. Participants highlighted that, individual student factors including performance, absenteeism, health status, and peer pressure influenced dropout from secondary school among students in their school

communities. Citing individual child factors as determinants of dropout among students, participant FTB03 said,

There are cases of absenteeism; occurs when we sent them for school fees, like when we had the mocks we had to look for one boy. Health related cases are well managed in the school dispensary which is free, except for complicated cases which are referred to the hospital for example for x-ray cases”.

Similarly, participant MPD07 said, “I know two who students who dropped out – the parents wanted them to be in school but the students refused to continue because of peer influence; so they drop out of school; starts smoking and taking alcohol”. MTB01 explained that dropouts were more among girls as compared to boys because girls were more vulnerable; the participant added that the school received sanitary towels from the ministry but this was not reliable.

Summarizing the factors that influenced dropout among students, participant MTD02 linked the distance walked from school among day scholars especially among boys to have given them the opportunity to indulge in drugs as well as being exposed to bad influence from the local market, especially when they are reach Form 2. The administrator indicated that, “boys in particular, start to devalue school, the “boda-boda” business entices them to drop out and do business”. Furthermore, the administrator (MTD02) said that, “there were also cases of student dropout due to indiscipline; peer influence especially among the boys. Other factors influencing student dropouts include absenteeism which is more rampant during the market days”.

In the overall, the differentiated effect of absenteeism and peer pressure on student dropout between the day scholars and boarders was highlighted with a strong evidence showing that, dropout cases were more among day scholars than among students in boarding schools.

Table 13

Influence of Performance, Absenteeism, and Peer pressure on Dropout

Participant	Response
MPD08	Other times when they get to form three – they drop out citing fees as a problem while mainly it is because the subjects are difficulty and hence they fear and hence decide to stay at home.
FPD09	My daughter has a chest problem, because of cold; when it is raining; there are two streams with water floods during the rainy season; security concerns especially with the distance.
MPD08	Children are expected to be in school at 6.00 a.m. students drop out due to distance especially those who come from very far and are hesitant from arriving late to be punished
FTB03	There are cases of absenteeism; occurs when we sent them for school fees, like when we had the mocks we had to look for one boy. Health related cases are well managed in the school dispensary which is free, except for complicated cases which are referred to the hospital for example for x-ray cases”

- MPD07 I know two who dropped out – the parents want but the students refuse to continue because of peer influence; so they drop out of school; starts smoking and taking alcohol
- MTB01 Dropout of girls is more compared to boys because they are more vulnerable; school receives sanitary towels from the ministry but not reliable – distribution
- MTD02 Distance from school affects dropout; boys indulge in drugs and get a lot of influence from the local market, especially when in form 2 they devalue school, the “boda-boda” business entices them to drop out and do business.
- There also cases of dropout due to indiscipline; peer influence and hence dropout from school– indiscipline cases are due to drugs among boys mainly
- Absenteeism – it was rampant especially during the market days but has improved with the involvement of the parents so when a student is absent they need to be accompanied by the parent back to school
- Boys’ dropout due to peer influence and indiscipline is higher than for girls; counsellors talk to them and it helps
- MTD04 Too many functions and ceremonies – affects the continued running of the school and absenteeism and also peer influence and bad morals

MTB01 Completion rate of more than 95 %; minimal dropout mainly because of fees, few cases of early pregnancies and early marriages. Few cases of indiscipline

Involvement in House Chores

I asked participants to comment on the involvement of children in house chores before and after school and whether this had contributed to students dropping out of school; a factor which most applied to the day scholars. Participants explained that students were required to be in school as early as 6.00 a.m. in the morning and hence carrying out any house chores before going to school is impractical. Parents expected their children to help them with some house chores including fetching water and firewood and working in the farms.

In general, parents indicated that, children were not involved in house chores before going to school with participant MPD07 reiterating that, children could not be involved in any house chores before going to school because they used torches to walk to school. The participant however noted that children doing house chores shouldn't be a problem, except when they are required to do so when they ought to be in school. In the overall, most of the participants indicated that children were not involved in house chores before going to school and thus the factor was not a dominant determinant of student dropout (see table 14).

Table 14

Parents Involvement of their Children in House chores

Participant	Response
FPB05	Children not involved in household chores before going to school in the morning
MPD08	Children are expected to be in school at 6.00 a.m. students drop out due to distance especially those who come from very far and are hesitant from arriving late to be punished
FPD11	No house chores before coming to school; after school my daughter fetches water and at times farm work
MPD07	No house chores before going to school; used a torch to walk to school. Have neighbors with children in the same school House chores; not a problem does not affect because they were born to do those chores; that should not affect them because they ought to do that including looking for water and firewood. Problem comes in when told to do those things when supposed to be in school

Research Question 3

In this research question, I sought to examine how the direct effects of the factors identified in questions 1 and 2 on student enrollment and dropout had been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in Yatta constituency of Machakos County in Kenya. With this question, I aimed at exploring the role of the CDF and FSEP towards increasing access to secondary education as measured by increased student enrollment and decline in dropout.

I asked parents about their main economic activities and other sources of income in their households and in the communities while on the other hand, I asked administrators about the role played by the CDF and FSEP on their respective school enrollments and dropout including for the individual students based on their school setting.

Furthermore, while interviewing parents, I asked them to explain how they had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme and whether this had any effects on addressing any of the challenges that they had faced while enrolling and keeping their children in secondary school. With this research question, I aimed at exploring whether and how the aspects of CDF and FSEP may have eliminated or attenuated the severity of some of the effects of the bottlenecks that impeded students from accessing secondary education.

Influence of CDF on Cost of Schooling

There was consensus among all the participants that the CDF had contributed to increasing access to affordable secondary education for parents and their children in Yatta. Schooling costs including amount of school fees charged declined with the establishment of the CDF day schools which reduced the levies that schools charged for development activities and by providing parents with an option of not paying boarding fees as they enrolled their children in day schools. With reduction of schooling costs more children enrolled into school with some of the participants indicating that all the children of secondary school age in their communities were enrolled into school.

Participant FPB06 observed that with the CDF established day schools, parents were finding the low amount of school fees more affordable and hence they could keep

their children in school. The participant noted that prior to the CDF schools, parents were taking their children to village polytechnics because they could not afford secondary education. Similar observations were echoed by participant FPD11 who explained that with the CDF, the fees required for day schools had declined/reduced and hence more children were enrolled into school because parents were looking for less fees, uniforms and school books. Underscoring the positive effects of the CDF on providing affordable secondary education, respondent MPD08 recognized how a neighboring boarding school was charging form four students school fees amounting to Ksh. 18,000 per term which inhibited many children from poor families accessing secondary education. The parent further observed that, with the CDF day schools, this cost has reduced and made education more affordable hence increasing student enrollment.

Participants FPD09 and FPD11 narrated that the CDF had reduced school fees to as much as between Ksh. 5000 – Ksh. 6000 per term yet in the boarding schools, school fees remained over 10,000 per term and that the reduction of schooling costs in day schools had made education more affordable for parents. Participant FPD09 emphatically pointed that if the day school where she enrolled her children had not been established she would not have educated her children in secondary school just like her older children who never accessed secondary education. MPD08 reiterated how the CDF had reduced the schooling costs through bursaries which subsequently led to reducing student dropout and children remaining in school. Furthermore, among the administrators, observations were more like those of participant MTD04 who indicated that, the CDF aided in reducing the burden of school fees on parents through bursaries and hence students were

not sent out of school constantly. The observations on the effects of CDF on school fees and other costs are summarized on table 15.

Table 15

Effects of the CDF on Cost of Schooling

Participant	Response
FPB10	With CDF schools, fees is low and hence parents have taken children to school and they don't drop out due to lack of boarding fees.
MPD08	A neighboring boarding school at form four level charges Ksh. 18,000 per term which inhibits children from accessing school; with CDF day schools, this cost has reduced and made education more accessible
FPD11	With the CDF, the fees required for day schools has declined/reduced and hence more children going to school because the parent looks for less fees, uniforms, school books and upkeep
FPB06	With CDF established day schools, parents find the fees affordable and hence keep their children in school Prior to the CDF schools, we previously used to take them to polytechnics however education is now more affordable
FPD09	CDF has brought a lot of difference; fees in boarding schools is much; yet parents have little income; in day schools it ranges 5000 – 6000 per term yet in the boarding schools it is over 10,000 per term

- FPD11 Affordable; if this school had not been established I wouldn't have taken the children to the school like those ahead of them who never accessed secondary education
- CDF bursary has helped a lot even when it is low. If it was not the CDF, it would have been difficult; CDF has been supportive; helped – three times my child was allocated sh. 2000
- MPD08 CDF has reduced the schooling costs through bursaries hence dropout is declined and children remain in school
- MTD04 Fees has reduced drastically due to the CDF allocation. Levies mostly used to develop projects were taken by the CDF; the collection from the parents is reduced. Also, CDF has reduced the schooling costs through bursaries and hence students are not sent out of school constantly. In areas where the girls are coming from far distance; the CDF could build dormitories to board them so that we don't have pregnancies; sanitary towels; the school management borrows from the primary school. affects the attendance
-

Effects of the CDF on Availability of Secondary Education

There was strong consensus among the participants about the role of CDF in increasing availability of secondary education for parents and their children. Participants highlighted that the CDF had contributed to increasing the number of schools including

improved school infrastructure and learning spaces which resulted to increasing student enrollment in secondary school. Participant MTD02 compared the role of the CDF and that of the FSEP and noted that, "...the CDF had contributed to the establishment of new schools; the FSEP assumes the existence of these school facilities, even with the starting of the new CDF day schools, the enrolment in other schools has not changed – meaning that there was a need".

According to the participants, the CDF had made secondary education more available through a number of distinct ways ranging from the awarding of bursaries, establishment of new schools to improved infrastructure. Observations made by participant FPD11 revealed that, the CDF had helped a lot; and that families were now closer to schools, than before, and that children were no longer dropping out of school as like before. Similarly, participant MPB13 said that the CDF had provided bursaries, built classrooms, and as such the CDF had brought education to the grass root level with the day schools, which did not exist previously, although the participant also observed that the CDF may not have done other things.

Table 16

Role of CDF on Availability of Secondary education

Participant	Response
FPB06	CDF has been used to construct school dormitories, class rooms and a bore hole. At the community level – CDF; removed the old roofs at the primary

- schools, iron sheets and renovation and water tanks during the previously
MP
- FPB10 CDF – apart from building of classrooms, and schools. No other projects known which have been supported by the CDF.
- FPD09 The other benefits; bore hole was done by the CDF in addition to establishing schools; class rooms in primary schools were constructed by the CDF
- FPD11 CDF has dug bore holes and constructed the schools which has helped. In construction of classrooms, and renovate primary and secondary schools
- MTD02 CDF has contributed to the establishment of new schools; the FSEP assumes the existence of these school facilities, even with the starting of the new CDF day schools, the enrolment in other schools has not changed – meaning that there was a need
- FPD11 CDF helped a lot; we are closer to schools, than before, and children do not dropout from school as before
- MPB13 CDF beyond bursaries - built classrooms, CDF brought education to the grass root level with the day schools, which did not exist previously, although it may not have done other things.

Effects of CDF on Distance to Nearest School

I asked the participants to comment about the distance between the students' homes and the school and how it had affected student enrollment and dropout. I further

asked the participants whether there had been any changes in the distance from their homes to the nearest secondary school over the years. In the overall, the responses revealed that with CDF established schools, the distance to the nearest school has reduced and this had drastically contributed to the increased student enrollment and reduced dropout among secondary schools in their communities.

Participant MPD08 was categorical that many children had enrolled into school with the introduction of the day schools by the CDF which reduced distance to school and the fact that transport fare was not required. Similar observations were also reinforced by administrators with participant MTB01 pointing out that, with the CDF allocations for school infrastructure, student dropout had declined while enrollment had improved. Parents were strong in their observations that schools were now closer to the communities than prior to the CDF, which was captured by participant MPB13 who said that,

The problem of distance has been reduced by the former MP – schools are now closer to the community than before the CDF; even mine would not have continued to secondary if the day schools had not been started; a higher number of parents cannot educate their children from far schools.

Table 17

Effects of the CDF on Distance to School

Participant	Response
FPB10	Distance is reduced with the day schools which have been introduced

	through the CDF
FPB10	With the CDF, distance between the homes and school have been reduced and hence schools more accessible and available
MPD08	Many children have gone to school with the introduction of the day schools by the CDF, reduced distance, fare is not required.
FPD11	Distance from home to school has reduced and hence more accessible and availability.
MPB13	the problem of distance has been reduced by the former MP – schools are now closer to the community than before the CDF; even mine would not have continued to secondary if the day schools had not been started; a higher number of parents cannot educate their children from far schools
MTD04	CDF has contributed to reduction of dropouts despite the abuse. The cost of education has reduced and hence children remained in school
FPB06	CDF has increased school enrollment for students who would have dropped out remained in school. The CDF has helped beneficiaries and especially because when a child is allocated, it does not get to the parent in cash but directly to the school.
MTB01	With the CDF allocations for infrastructure, student dropout has declined while enrollment has improved
MTD02	CDF bursary scheme – there is a good boost from the CDF when a good number of students are awarded bursaries. The little balance that remains

parents have been aided to keep their children in school

CDF has contributed to increased number of children in secondary schools through bursaries and reducing cost of education and making it more affordable

Recommendations to Improve CDF – Equity and Effectiveness

I asked participants to describe how they had benefitted from the CDF bursary scheme and whether they were clear about the application process. Furthermore, I asked both parents and administrators to identify some of the challenges they had faced with the fund. I also sought to gather some recommendations from the participants about how the fund could be improved to have more impact within their communities. There was general overwhelming consensus that the CDF had helped parents in providing secondary education to their children, however there were strong recommendations to make the CDF more equitable and effective.

Participants demonstrated that the CDF had positive influence on improving access to secondary education, however the fund could have been more effective with some improvements. Participant FPB14 was of the view that, the fund should be increased for more parents and children to benefit, and that the process of allocation should be improved in view of the shortcomings that the actual deserving children were not properly identified and often there was no one to follow through on their behalf and as such they were being excluded. Similarly, FPD11 observed that regarding the CDF bursary scheme, there was the tendency of bias by the committee who reviewed the

applications and as such genuine applications were not benefitting from the fund. She observed the need for more transparency and impartial treatment. On his part, participant MPD07 revealed that on two occasions his child had been awarded a CDF bursary. He however was categorical and said that,

I always apply and also there is a language to getting. When I was advised by those who are informed about what to do. There are problems accessing the CDF bursaries. In the community, there are leaders and they know including to the level of sub-chief. Higher levels only know about the details only on paper – the challenges are if a deserving child is not awarded the bursary they don't have education. The bursary should be decided at the sub-chief level. The community people know those that deserve and hence the process is not well structured.

The observations and recommendations by participants on how to improve the CDF are summarized on table 18

Table 18

Recommendations to Improve the CDF

Participant	Response
MTD02	Challenges faced accessing the CDF especially for projects include – cartels that one school can be given 1 m for renovation when there is need for the physical structures – priorities not well set out; school bus for 3 m while schools do not have classrooms
MPB13	CDF bursary scheme has helped me to educate my children at secondary

- school level however the process should be made more transparent
- FPB06 The CDF bursary is very little and process of application is long– committee has favoritism and hence the deserving beneficiaries do not benefit. Local committees, should be more transparent and increase the allocation
- The child received only small amount (Ksh. 5,000), and hence keeps being chased from school to collect fees; at times, we apply and don't benefit from the fund
- FPB14 Should be increased for more parents and children to benefit from the CDF, process of allocation; the actual deserving children are not well known- no one to follow and hence they don't benefit
- FPD11 CDF bursaries – there is the tendency of the committee who are reviewing to be biased and hence don't allocate genuine applicants. There is partiality – needs transparency and impartial treatment.
- FTB03 With CDF bursaries, the number and amount is small compared to those who are needy but it has been useful.
- Bursary CDF – fairly managed; the parents struggle; the parent has to go an extra mile to know who is in charge – if you must fill a form and wait then you may not get it allocated.
- Loyalty – to the MP or the people connected to the MP; even if you are needy, application may not be awarded

- MTD04 The CDF has been used in the establishment of new schools and increased learning spaces including classrooms (2) and lab were provided the CDF
- Students apply – and are awarded little amounts of less than 5000 which still is inadequate
- If it well managed it can be more effective; if the process would include the principals would know who should benefit from the CDF bursaries
- MPD07 CDF gave bursary – two times. I always apply and there is a language to getting. When I was advised by those who are informed what to do. Problems accessing the CDF bursaries. In the community, there are leaders and they know including to the level of sub-chief. Higher levels only know about the details only on paper – the challenges are if a deserving child is not awarded the bursary they don't have education. The bursary should be decided at the sub-chief level. The community people know those that deserve and hence the process is not well structured.
- MTD02 CDF has helped parents get their children to continue their education. The process many a times a student may benefit with very little – there should be some consistency which are identified and taken through the course of four years; continuity to ensure needy cases benefit to ensure whatever is started goes thru the system

- MPB13 Application and the awarding process is not transparent, – this one was given and that one was not given; the main challenges – because the bursary is not given openly
- Full bursary given because I had connection with the MP. CDF bursaries should be awarded openly and publicly; and those that deserve are awarded support / aid. Some of the beneficiaries are just friends; not that they are deserving
- FPB06 lack of allocation; process is not transparent; the government should manage CDF– there is too much conflict of interest; interference
- If allocated more CDF bursaries there would be less students dropping out of school
- MPD08 Received a CDF bursary once when my child was in form one and this was a partial allocation of Sh. 5,000 out of the fees sh. 7000. Application process fully aware, may be political influence depends on voting patterns; need to have god fathers, people don't have voting cards and hence despite the children application for bursaries they don't benefit.

Role of FSEP on Student Enrollment

In the overall, FSEP has contributed to increased enrollment and reduced dropout among secondary school students. There was a difference in level of awareness between the administrators and the parents about the role of the FSEP on enrollment and dropout. I asked administrators to describe how their schools had benefitted from the FSEP and

whether there was any reduction of the cost of schooling especially on the levies charged by the PTA to parents for their children's education. I further asked the administrators to describe the effects of the FSEP on both enrollment and dropout among students in their respective schools.

Participant FTB03 explained that the FSEP had led an increase in student enrolment in view of the subsidies by the government which led to expansion of her school. Similar observations were also highlighted by MTB01 who noted that he could run the school with the funds from the FSEP. He observed that there would have been challenges if the school relied only on the fees paid by the parents. The participant further revealed that with the FSEP, there was reduction of the cost of education covered by parents because the government had taken up some of the levies that the PTA would have charged. Participants MTD02 and MTD04 underscored the role played by the FSEP and highlighted that sustenance of the school was mainly provided by the government especially because parents were poor and that funds from FSEP had reduced the burden of payment of school fees from the parents. The observations are summarized on table 19.

Table 19

Role of FSEP on Increasing Enrollment

Participant	Response
FTB03	FSEP – led to increase in enrolment – the government has subsidized a lot – led to the increase; led to the expansion of the school

- MTB01 Thru the FSEP – school can run because if the school relied on the fees by the parents there would have been challenges – it is reliable but at times it comes late.
- With FSEP, there is reduction of cost of education because the government has come in; some of the levies that the PTA would charge are now taken
- MTD02 the parents are poor so the sustenance has come from the government; when FSEP is received, there is benefit
- MTD04 FSEP has reduced the burden of payment of school fees from the parents
- The FSEP kit takes care of the most vital things like tuition, stationary, books etc.
- with the reduction of the fees; parents have been able to access secondary education for their children

Role of FSEP on Student Dropout

I asked the participants to explain how their schools had benefitted from the FSEP and whether there were any gains on retention of students in school because of reduction of the costs of schooling and decline in student dropout from school with the implementation of the FSEP. There was strong consensus among the administrators that, with the support through the FSEP, there is a decline in student dropout among secondary school students.

Participants MTB01 and FTB03 concurred that the FSEP led to reduction of student dropout from school which they associated with the subsidy by government and

the reduction of the fees required from parents to maintain their children in school. These views were also reiterated by participant MTD02 who observed that the national government direct allocations to the schools through the FSEP had helped in retaining students in school due to the reduced costs of schooling associated with the reduction of levies charged from parents. MTD04 noted that with the FSEP, the burden of payment of school fees on parents had been reduced with the removal of the indirect costs charged by the PTA, thus parents were enabled to retain their children in school (see table 20).

Table 20

Role of FSEP on Reducing Dropout

Participant	Response
MTB01	With the FSEP drop out has declined as many students are retained in school
MTD02	National government direct allocation to the schools has helped retaining students in school due to the cost of schooling When FSEP is received, there is benefit to the school and reduction of levies charged from parents
MTD04	Reduced the burden of payment of school fees from the parents It does reduce the indirect costs charged by the PTA hence students with fees challenges have been retained in school
FTB03	FSEP – reduced dropout of students from school; with the subsidy by government, parents raise little to maintain children in school

Parents' Unaware About FSEP

I asked parents to explain whether they were aware about the FSEP and its role on enrollment and student dropout. Of the ten parent participants who I interviewed, only two had heard about the FSEP. They were however not able to describe the FSEP nor its role on enrollment and dropout among secondary school students in their communities except that they had heard that there was additional subsidy by the government to secondary education directly allocated to the school. The other 8 parents had not heard about the FSEP neither did they know about its role on increasing enrollment and reducing student dropout. A summary of these observations is presented in table 21

Table 21

Parents Unaware of FSEP, nor its Effects on Enrollment and Dropout

Participant	Response
MPD07	FSEP not known, only known by the principal
MPD08	Not aware of the FSEP
FPB10	Not known
FPB05	Only known by teachers
FPD11	I have never heard
FPD09	not aware about FSEP
FPD12	not aware about the FSEP
FPB14	Not known
MPB13	I only hear about it, not sure what it is about

Other pertinent information which was not part of answering any of the elements of the three main research questions emerged from the data during the analysis and is presented in this section.

Complementary Roles of CDF and FSEP on Access to Education

Administrators concurred about the role of the CDF and the FSEP in improving access to secondary education through increasing enrollment and reducing student dropout from school. It is however observed from the responses that the two policies were complementing each other in view of the overall comments about the effectiveness of the CDF and FSEP in addressing challenges that faced parents while enrolling and retaining their children in school. Participant MTD02 indicated that the CDF had been used in establishment of new schools; while the FSEP assumes the existence of the school facilities.

The above observations were complemented by MTB01 who highlighted that with the support from the FSEP – the school carried out repairs and maintenance only which keeps the facilities in good condition since the allocation did not cover building of new infrastructure. He further said that, “...with the CDF and FSEP retention and enrolment has improved – the two policies have complimented each other”. Similar observations were also presented by participants MTD04 and MTD02 who concurred that FSEP allocation was not for physical facilities and hence was not used for construction of

new facilities and that FSEP assumed the existence of the school facilities respectively (see table 22).

Table 22

Complementary roles of CDF and FSEP on Access to Education

Participant	Response
MTD02	CDF has contributed to the establishment of new schools; the FSEP assumes the existence of these school facilities, even with the starting of the new CDF day schools, the enrolment in other schools has not changed – meaning that there was a need
MTB01	With the support from the FSEP – the school does repairs and maintenance only which keeps the facilities in good condition With the CDF and FSEP retention and enrolment has improved – the two policies have complimented each other
MTD02	The FSEP assumes the existence of the school facilities PTA still charges some levies which are not provided in the FSEP – government should consider covering all these indirect costs to relieve parents
MTD04	The FSEP allocation is not for physical facilities and hence is not used for construction of new facilities.

Secondary Education Reduces Girls' Pregnancies and Early Marriages

Participants indicated that because of increased enrollment, there was a reduction in the number of cases of girl pregnancies and early marriages in their communities. I asked participants whether they were aware of any cases of girl pregnancies and early marriages within their school community and how they were being handled. Participants highlighted that there were exceptionally fewer cases and that enrollment of girls into secondary school had reduced girl pregnancies and early marriage among girls in their communities. Furthermore, I asked them to comment on how their communities valued the education for girls as compared to that of boys and how the participation of girls in secondary education could be improved in their communities.

With reduced cases of teenage pregnancy and early marriage, school enrollment had increased. Participants highlighted that, there were few cases of girl pregnancies experienced in their schools and their communities. The girls were however being given an opportunity to continue with their education after delivery although there was a lot of stigma when they return to school. Participant FPD11 observed that it was not common for girls to get pregnant when in school; nor were there cases of early marriages, and if there were there then they were very few while participant while FTB03 said that,

In 2016 one girl dropped out of school, the grandfather of the girl has expressed interest to return the student to the school; there is stigma but they are ready. In 2014 a girl had come to repeat after delivering her baby; she has completed her education. School gives them a chance to return.

Table 23 summarizes the observations of the participants on incidences of girl

pregnancies and early marriages.

Table 23

Incidences of Girl Pregnancies and Early Marriages

Participant	Response
FTB03	Not aware of any cases of early marriages – the minimal if there is – I don't know any; with the starting of day schools most ; parents used to take girls to polytechnics and girls would not access education – this problem has been solved
MPB13	Girls go to mixed day schools and come back home but they are told not to engage in bad behavior and hence few cases of pregnancies when they are accessing secondary education
MPD07	Mostly girls love going to school – problems are usually due to bad behavior, mainly lack of finances. With bad behavior, they get pregnant – when kept in school reduced pregnancies. Mostly become house helps but mainly due to poverty
FPD09	When parents take their daughters to polytechnics, they complete the courses and they are still young children of 13 to 15 years and they become pregnant and are married. When they remain in secondary school they mature more and hence do not get married early
FPD11	Not common do girls get pregnant when in school; nor early marriages, the cases are very few

FTB03 In 2016 one girl dropped out of school, the grandfather of the girl has expressed interest to return the student to the school; there is stigma but they are ready. In 2014 a girl had come to repeat after delivering her baby; she has completed her education. School gives them a chance to return.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, credibility is ensured through use of rigorous methods and procedures and the belief of the researcher on the value of the strategy of enquiry used (Patton, 2002). In this study, I followed the approved interview protocol rigorously during the interviews conducted with both parents and administrators. To ensure dependability, I also followed questionnaire through which I ensured that, respective categories of participants were asked the same questions as per the protocol.

In addition, as the only researcher, I did not have any personal or professional relationship with the participants. To ensure credibility of the results, I also probed and asked some questions severally to ensure truthfulness of the data. I also triangulated the information by gathering data on same phenomenon from both administrators and parents. Furthermore, the study used a multiple-case study design which has been described as more advantageous and more robust than the single case design (Herriott & Firestone, 1993).

In terms of transferability, and thus the ability of the data being generalized or transferred to other settings or contexts, in this study, I did not aim to generalize the

findings to different populations, rather the purpose was to explore the concepts about the phenomenon among the participants in the context of the broad conceptual framework on enrollment and dropout. Despite the unintended transferability, there was strong consistency and similarity between participants from the multiple cases. In addition, the findings from the purposeful sample also revealed results which were consistent with literature and findings from other studies in similar settings.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 1

Through research question 1 of this study, I sought to explore the key determinants of student enrollment into secondary school. The study results showed that affordability and as such, the availability of school fees was the most dominant determinant of children enrollment in secondary school in Yatta sub-county. These findings were consistent with existing literature which have extensively shown that, direct and indirect schooling costs and especially school fees were central determinants of children's education (Shahidul & Karim, 2015). There was strong consensus among the participants from both the study cases that, the household's economic status greatly influenced the decisions of parents and caregivers when enrolling their children into school.

Study findings revealed that, the challenges of lack of school fees were also compounded by the low income and the high poverty levels in the region. Study results also showed that student enrollment was also influenced by family size and hence the number of children in the household; families with many children struggled more to getting the required funds to enroll and maintain their children in school. These findings

were well aligned with existing literature evidence by Bansagan and Panganiban (2010) that family size is significantly and negatively correlated with children's enrollment in school. Similarly, when parents have many children attending school, the financial demands on the parents are much higher and hence the negative effects on their children's participation in education.

The study results also showed that decisions of whether to enroll children in school or not were mainly made by the fathers and depended on the available resources which was determined by their level of income and greatly linked to their economic activities and occupation. Other factors that influenced the decision of parents and caregivers while enrolling their children in secondary school included the performance by the individual student and the availability of schools which was closely linked to the distance from home to school.

Literature has shown that, many cultures favored education for boys more than girls' (see Chege & Sifuna, 2006), a view which has been reinforced by parental gender bias investment which occurs particularly when parents have limited resources (Leung & Zhang, 2008). Contrary to most of the existing literature, results from this study revealed that there was no preference for boy's education to that of girls among parents and their communities. With these findings, the study revealed that, despite the extensive literature showing the preference for boys' education as compared to education of their girl children by parents in some other societies in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the findings may not be generalizable to all contexts. Results from this study showed that, parents were providing equal opportunities to their children regardless of the gender. The

divergent view revealed by results from this study may be explained by several factors including cultural diversity, the observed rapid pace of social change with the increased awareness by parents about the importance of education which was explicitly exhibited by the participants in this study.

In this study, I found that, increased enrollment of girls into secondary school had contributed to a reduction in the number of cases of girl pregnancies and early marriages among girls in Yatta sub-county. These findings were consistent with existing literature that keeping girls in secondary school has a positive impact on reducing teenage pregnancies and improved educational outcomes (see Manlove, 1998) who observed that, teenage pregnancies were a major reason why teen mothers ultimately had lower educational levels due to their disengagement from school prior to pregnancy.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 2

Through research question 2 of this study, I sought to explore the determinants of students' dropout from secondary school. Consistent with existing literature which shows that, high student dropout rate does not occur due to a single factor; but through a composition of many factors (Shahidul & Karim, 2015), study findings showed that, student dropout was strongly influenced by myriad of factors ranging from household socioeconomic status to individual student factors of performance and peer pressure. The study results pointed that, high cost of schooling and the lack of school fees was associated with most of the cases of students who dropped out of school and those who never transited to secondary after their completion of primary education. These study findings were consistent with existing literature including observations by Shahidul and

Karim that, “schooling costs especially school fees, are a central reason for early dropout from school”. The study revealed that most dropout cases were due to the unaffordability of education as a result of the high direct and indirect costs especially school fees. The challenges of lack of school fees in the context were compounded by high levels of poverty, lack of good income, poor and unreliable climate with low rainfall in a region whose main economic activity is agriculture.

In this study, I found that there were other factors which contributed to student’s dropout among them, gender and individual girl child factors including teenage pregnancies and early marriages, student’s performance, absenteeism, health status, and peer pressure. Across the two cases, study findings revealed the differentiated effect of absenteeism and peer pressure on student dropout between the day scholars and boarders with evidence showing that dropout cases were more prevalent among day scholars than among students in boarding schools.

In addition, in this study, I found that, student dropout rates were higher among girls compared to boys. The higher dropout rates among girls was due to individual girl child factors including early pregnancies and performance rather than due to parental gender bias on investment in their children as observed by Brown and Park (2002). Contrary to Fuller and Liang (1999) who observed that, female children were taking many household chores and responsibilities which caused them to dropout from school, findings from this study did not show involvement of children in house chores as a factor influencing enrollment and dropout. The findings from this study were thus in contrary to

some of the existing literature in sub-Saharan Africa in regard to involvement of children in house chores and its negative impact on student dropout especially among girls.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 3

Through research question 3 of this study, I explored whether and how the direct effects of the factors which influenced enrollment and dropout may have been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school age in the Yatta sub-county. To answer the question, I examined how the adverse effects of the factors identified in research questions 1 and 2 had been attenuated or moderated through the subject policies among the students in the two cases of schools sampled.

In this study, I showed that, the CDF had greatly contributed to both the affordability and availability of secondary education through reduced cost of schooling, reduced distance from home to the nearest school and the support provided to students from poor households through the bursary scheme. With reduced costs of schooling due to the establishment of day secondary schools, parents were finding secondary education more affordable and this contributed to increased enrollment and reduced student dropout respectively. The study results revealed that, FSEP resulted to reduction of the indirect costs for schooling when the levies charged to parents for repairs and maintenance were waived or reduced.

In this study, I found that, school distance influenced student enrollment and dropout especially among day scholars and particularly girls. The findings were consistent with Juneja (2001) who observed that when the distances from home to school are too long, girls tend to dropout more as they are more vulnerable to sexual harassment

and potential threats to teenage pregnancies (Colclough et al., 2000). Similar observations were also made by Nekatibeb (2002) who had concluded that school distance was a major obstacle for girls' education in similar contexts in Africa.

Similarly, Ainsworth et al. (2005) had argued that parents were afraid about the safety of their children when they walk long distances to school and that the likelihood of enrolling and attending secondary school for female students decreased with distance from home to school. Consistently, in this study, I found that, parents were concerned about the safety of their children particularly those attending day secondary schools, and who walked long distances during early and late hours of the day; a reason that participants showed preference for boarding schools compared to day schools. Results indicated that, the desire to enroll their female students in boarding schools was however constrained by the high costs of schooling associated with boarding fees.

In this study, I showed that, the establishment of day schools through the CDF coupled with the CDF bursary scheme for the poor families contributed immensely to improved enrollment and retention in secondary school. It was however notable from data that, although the CDF had positive impact on access to secondary education, participants stated that there was need to make it more equitable and effective in targeting the poor.

Study results revealed that, FSEP had contributed to increased school enrollment and reduced student's dropout from secondary school. Data revealed that, the two policies complemented each other, otherwise the role of FSEP could have been ineffective in situations where schools were not available. Subsequently, it was evident

from data that both the CDF and FSEP had addressed some of the direct effects of the key factors which influenced the decision of parents and caregivers while enrolling and retaining their children in school and thus the two policies had positively contributed to the improved access to secondary education through increased student enrollment and declined dropout.

Conclusions

I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis procedure in analyzing qualitative data in this study. In conducting data analysis for this study, I progressed through a rigorous familiarization with the data, coding and subsequently a theming process through which I weaved the findings as evidence of results obtained against each of the research questions while contextualizing it within the broader existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I then aligned the results with the three research questions that guided the data collection and analysis. Through research question 1, I sought to explore the individual, household, constituency, and national factors which influenced students' enrollment; in question 2, I aimed at exploring the factors which influenced students' dropout from school while in question 3, I sought to establish whether and how the direct effects of the factors identified in questions 1 and 2 on enrollment and dropout respectively had been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among children of secondary school ages in Yatta sub-county.

In the overall and in conclusion, study results obtained from this research were largely consistent with existing literature on factors influencing enrollment and dropout in similar contexts. In this study, I established that, high cost of schooling and

household's socioeconomic factors of low income and inability to raise the required school fees were the most dominant determinants of student enrollment and dropout from secondary school in Yatta. Similar findings were observed by Njeru and Orodho (2003) who had established that, high cost of education and especially among vulnerable groups and the poor had inhibited their children from accessing education. Hunter and May (2002) argued that in South Africa, lack of school fees was the most significant reason for the dropout rate of 30 % of girls and 27% of boys before completion of secondary school education.

Through this study, I showed that, besides economic and school affordability factors, there were other factors ranging from unavailability of schools to individual student factors of performance, absenteeism, indiscipline which influenced enrollment and dropout among secondary school students. These study findings were similarly consistent with Lewin (2007) who observed that a myriad of challenges ranging from socioeconomic to cultural factors influenced enrollment into form one which is the entry level for secondary education as well as student's dropout from school before completing their secondary school education. A similar conclusion was made by Shahidul and Karim (2015) that, student dropout does not occur due to a single factor; but through a composition of many factors. Literature showed that absenteeism and irregular attendance is a trigger for dropping out from school regardless of the gender of the pupils.

There is literature evidence that that school dropouts end up with less options for employment and when they get jobs they are employed in low paying and less skilled jobs with less opportunities for advancement (World Bank, 2006). This study results

revealed that, children of parents who never went to school were not accessing education due to poverty and that those children who never enrolled into secondary school were working as house girls while others were employed as casuals. These findings were consistent with those from a study conducted by Ohba (2009) on whether free secondary education had enabled children from poor households to access education; a study which revealed that major gaps in the awarding of bursaries had contributed to children from the poorest families being excluded from obtaining financial support. In this study, I was able to show that, both the CDF and FSEP had positive effects on increasing enrollment and reducing dropout among students. These findings were consistent with Muasya (2013) conclusions that FSEP had contributed to increase in school enrollment. His study had established that retention was higher after 2008 and thus decline in student dropout.

Similarly, through this study, I identified some weaknesses in the way CDF bursaries were being awarded as also highlighted by Ohba (2009) that, some deserving beneficiaries were being excluded during the award of bursaries. Through this study, I recommend a more transparent approach of awarding bursaries and making it more effective in reaching the most disadvantaged in the society. On the other hand, study results however revealed some findings which were contrary to most of the existing literature in other similar settings in the following two areas (a) involvement of school children in house chores as a factor influencing dropout, (b) parents' preference of education for boys as compared to that of girls. In this study, I showed that, children were rarely involved in carrying out household chores, and that parents were providing equal opportunities to their children regardless of their gender. These inconsistent findings may

be explained by the increased awareness by parents on the importance of education of their children as well as the rapid pace of social change which has eroded some of the cultural practices.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the context and the sample of the study, summarized the data analysis process and presented the study findings and results. The results were based on the data which I had gathered from 14 one-on-one interviews conducted with the key informants comprised of principals and deputy principals (administrators) and parents from the two respective secondary school communities. I conducted qualitative data analysis and interpretation with the aid of a computer application (NVivo 11.0 software).

In conducting qualitative data analysis, I coded the data, categorized and clustered them into key theoretical concepts from literature on the study phenomenon and summarized into tables generated alongside key sub-themes and themes that emerged from the evidence. I then summarized the key findings from the results against each of the respective research questions. Aligned with the main research questions for this study, I was able to identify the key household, constituency, and national factors which influenced student enrollment and dropout among the students in two secondary schools sampled in the study. Furthermore, from the study results, I concluded that, the CDF and the FSEP had modified and attenuated the direct adverse effects of these factors and thus

both policies had contributed to the increased access to secondary education as measured by enrollment and reducing dropout among students.

In chapter 5, I will reiterate the purpose of the study, summarize the interpretation of the key findings as well as presenting the main conclusions drawn from the study. In

the next chapter, I will also highlight the impact of this study for social change, summarize the recommendations for further research as well as for policy considerations.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this qualitative study, I aimed to explore the determinants of student enrollment and dropout among the secondary school age children. I also sought to establish whether and how the CDF and the FSEP had influenced the access to secondary education among students in public secondary schools in Yatta sub-county of Machakos County, Kenya. To achieve my intended aims, I conducted a multiple-case study in which I purposely sampled 14 participants comprised of administrators and parents from two secondary school communities.

With this study, I also sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the role of the CDF and FSEP policies on access to secondary education in Kenya. The two purposes were achieved. In this chapter, I summarize the findings and interpret how the findings fit into the Huisman and Smits (2015) theoretical model, which I had adapted for this study, and the broader body of knowledge on school enrollment and dropout. Conclusions, recommendations for further research and implications of this study for social change are also presented in the chapter.

Interpretation of Key Findings

I conducted this study in two secondary school communities in Yatta sub-county. The two cases sampled included one mixed boarding secondary school which was established in 1978 and sponsored by the African Inland Church (AIC). The school had a single stream (Form 1 to 4) until 2007 when it became double streamed. At the time of

this study, the school had a student population of 320 students with 16 teachers employed by the Kenya National Teachers Service Commission (KNTSC) and one teacher employed through the school board of management (BOM).

The second case sampled in this study is a mixed day secondary school which was established through the CDF in 2012 with the aim of providing affordable education to children in the community. The school is registered under the District Education Board (DEB). The school enrollment at the end of 2016 was 218 students comprised of 110 boys and 108 girls. In both case-study sites, I collected qualitative data from adult key informants including principals and their deputies (administrators) and parents who had experience about the study phenomenon. Of the 14 participants, 8 were females while 6 were males.

I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method in conducting data analysis. The procedure allowed for thorough familiarization with the data, coding and theming process which aided me in the weaving of evidence against each of the three main research questions on determinants of enrollment, factors influencing student's dropout and effects of the two policies under study on students' enrollment and dropout. I further contextualized the study findings within the existing body of knowledge and literature on the study subject (see Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Discussion of Findings for Research Question 1

With Research Question 1, I aimed at exploring the key determinants of student enrollment into secondary school. Researchers have shown that households need to have resources to be able to send their children into secondary school. Children born from families with more socioeconomic resources have been found to be more likely to enroll and stay in school (Mingat, 2007; Huisman and Smits, 2015). Consistent with literature, results from this study showed that affordability was the most dominant determinant of student enrollment into secondary school.

Results from this study showed that poor households characterized by unreliable sources of income from peasant farming in the dry and arid climatic conditions faced huge challenges in raising the required fees to meet the direct costs for the education of their children. Similarly, Huisman and Smits (2015) found that wealthier families faced fewer obstacles while raising funds associated with education, including fees, uniforms, and books. Further, my findings showed that enrollment of children into secondary school was also influenced by the size of the family, and hence the number of children in the household. Parents with many children were taking their children into village polytechnics because of their inability to meet schooling costs. Similar findings were shown in a study by Blake (1989), who argued that the number of siblings in the home was negatively correlated with enrollment attainment.

I also found that decisions of whether to enroll children in school or not were mainly made by the fathers and primarily depended on available resources which were determined by their level of income and hence their occupation. According to UNESCO

(2010), there is ample evidence that children born to educated parents were more likely to enroll in school and drop out less.

Availability of quality educational facilities is an important factor for educational participation (Ersado, 2005). This study showed that there was a big boost to student enrollment with the establishment of day schools through the CDF. Existing schools were also expanded and benefitted with improved infrastructure through the CDF. In short, availability of schools improved with the CDF. The data showed that the distance from home to the nearest school had reduced, which made secondary education more available to parents and their children, thereby increasing student enrollment.

Similar findings were highlighted by Colclough, Rose, and Tembon (2000), who noted that if schools were fewer, then average distances to school would be greater, thus negatively affecting enrollment and retention. Long distances from school was a major concern among the parents, especially regarding the safety of their daughters (see Mingat, 2007). In this study, parents showed preference for enrolling their daughters into boarding schools rather than in day schools; however, the large schooling fees for boarding facilities was a strong inhibitive factor.

Results from this study showed that enrollment decisions at the household level were also influenced by the performance of the individual child, especially in their national primary exam which is the entry examination into secondary school. This is an important factor because secondary schools also set some minimum admission requirements; hence, for students to get enrolled they needed to have passed their exams and achieved the minimum cut-off points or grade. Parents also expressed their desire to

enroll their children into secondary school; however, they expressed that this depended on the willingness of the children and their performance. In a study on why students drop out of school, Rumberger's (2010) concluded that students' dropout was also associated with their school performance during the period immediately preceding their decision to leave.

Local culture has been associated with education (Huisman & Smits, 2015). Cultural values influence whether education is valued or not and whether education is valued more for some children as compared to others. There is extensive evidence that has shown parents' preference for boys' education as compared to that of girls for various reasons. Colclough et al. (2000) showed that there were cultural influences that led parents to be more highly motivated to invest in the education of their sons with the expectation that they would take care of them during old age. Enrollment decisions and willingness to invest in their education has been shown to be gender biased in some communities. Glick and Sahn (2000), Kingdon (2005), Leung and Zhang (2008) showed that in some cultural settings parents have been found to be pro-male in case of parental investment in children. Thus, families with limited income, especially those with many children, prioritized the education of boys over that of their girls.

Contrary to most of the existing evidence, results from this study showed that there was no preference for boy's education to that of the girls among parents and communities in Yatta. Thus, study results showed that girls and boys were provided with equal opportunities for secondary education and that there was no preference to boys as compared to girls.

Participants were categorical that cultural practices of promoting boys' education as compared to girls' is not there anymore with some parents strongly reiterating that girls were helping parents more than boys, noting that the notion that girls would be married after completion of their education is no longer an important factor in deciding about investment in the education of their boys and girls. Furthermore, study results showed that there was an increase in the enrollment of girls into secondary school, which had resulted to reduced cases of girl pregnancies and early marriage among girls in Yatta sub-county.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question 2

With Research Question 2, I explored the determinants of students' dropout from secondary school. Studies have shown that the context where students live influences their likelihood of dropping out of school or continuing with their education (Huisman and Smits, 2009). There is extensive literature indicating that the student's socioeconomic status remains the most important determinant associated with drop out from secondary schools (Hunt, 2008; Kopp, 2008). Consistent with literature, I found that high cost of schooling and the lack of resources to pay school fees was associated with most of the cases of students who dropped from school and those who never transited to secondary school after their completion of primary education. My results showed that the highest number of student dropout was associated with the inability of parents to raise the funds required to pay schooling fees.

There was consensus among parents and administrators that, school fees and indirect costs of schooling including school uniform, and levies charged by the PTA for

development, food, and maintenance were a challenge to many parents; hence, their children were not able to continue their secondary education to completion. Participants attributed the root causes of student dropouts from secondary school to the lack of reliable sources of income and poverty. I therefore concluded that household poverty and the lack of school fees is the main cause of the student dropout. This is consistent with the findings of Rose and Tembon (2003) who argued that household wealth was strongly associated with children being or not being in school

On the same vein, existing literature shows that social-cultural factors among other determinants influenced student's dropout. Household chores including fetching water, gathering firewood, caring for young siblings and sick family members also contributed to children not being in school (Hunt, 2008). In many cultural settings, girls take up a big chunk of the household chores compared to boys while rural girls take more household chores than girls living in the urban areas (Ersado, 2005). Despite the extensive literature linking household chores with dropout of students from school, this study did not associate this factor with dropout of students from schools in Yatta. There was consensus that parents did not involve their children in any house chores before going to school noting that children had to walk and be at school as early as 6.00 a.m. in the morning and hence carrying out any house chores before going to school was impractical.

Consistent with the existing literature, this study revealed that dropout was also influenced by the individual student factors including performance, absenteeism, health status, peer pressure, and indiscipline. A study by Shahidul and Karim (2015) showed

that, irregular attendance is a precursor for school dropout among schoolers. Subsequently, studies continue to show that girls were exposed to higher risk to absenteeism from school due to child labor and household chores; there were cases of absenteeism however this study did not link these with household chores. The study linked the cases of absenteeism to demotivation, frequent times when students were sent home to collect fees, peer pressure and indiscipline which eventually contributed to the dropout of the student from school. The study showed there were cases of peer influence among the students and especially boys indulging in drugs, taking alcohol and smoking which eventually led to dropout. Some of these findings also concurred with the study conducted in western Kenya by Achoka (2007) which concluded that drug abuse had contributed to student dropout.

The study revealed that some gender and individual girl child factors including teenage pregnancies and early marriages influenced student dropout among girls in secondary schools. These study findings were consistent with literature that girls were more at risk of dropping out of school compared to boys due to their exposure to teenage pregnancies (see Shahidul & Karim, 2015). Accordingly, my results showed that girls were more vulnerable if they attended day schools as compared to boarding schools where schools provided boarding facilities which reduced the exposure of girls to the risks of early pregnancy. Similar observations had been made by Juneja (2001) who presented that girls who attended day schools tended to drop out of school because of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, my results from this study showed that, parents were hesitant enrolling

their girls in secondary school if they had to walk long distances. In addition, the study revealed that, there were few cases of teenage pregnancies and early marriages among secondary school children. There was consensus among parents and administrators that the few cases that dropped out due to teenage pregnancies were given opportunity to return back to school to continue with their education although they were exposed to stigma. In the overall, based on study results, I concluded that the overall students' dropout from secondary school level was minimal and was mainly influenced by lack of school fees, few cases of early pregnancies and early marriages and exceptionally few cases due to performance and dismissal from school due to indiscipline.

Discussion of Findings for Research Question 3

With Research Question 3, I aimed at exploring whether and how the direct effects of the factors which influenced student enrollment and dropout identified in questions 1 and 2 may have been modified or moderated by the CDF and FSEP among the children of secondary school age. In summary, my results to research questions 1 and 2 had identified the key individual child, household, community, constitutional and national factors that influenced student enrollment and dropout. Study findings pointed to the following key determinants: affordability of secondary education and the associated high cost of schooling, poverty and unreliable income, family size, availability of schools, distance from school, individual student factors of performance, absenteeism, indiscipline, teenage pregnancies, and early marriage among girls.

Study results showed that that the CDF had particularly greatly contributed to the improvement of access to secondary education in Yatta through several mechanisms:

(1) Support through the CDF had directly improved on the affordability of education. Many day schools were established with the support of the CDF; these schools charged less school fees compared to boarding schools and hence parents found them more affordable for their children. This resulted to a direct increase in enrollment among children of secondary school age. These study findings were consistent with the observations by Mwangi (2005) that, the CDF had helped in the provision of basic social services particularly in education and health, among rural communities which for many years had not benefitted from the services previously provided by the national government.

(2) Study results showed that, with the CDF, secondary education has become more available for parents and their children. The CDF had been used in establishment of new schools, construction of classrooms, laboratories and bore holes. Similar findings through a study conducted in Kisumu by Akoth et al. (2016) showed that, with the CDF, there was a drastic increase in the number of new secondary schools while the existing schools had benefitted with improved infrastructure including construction of new classrooms and laboratories. This study also showed that the distance from home to the nearest school had declined; which is an indicator of availability of education which resulted to increased enrollment and reduction in dropout. Tembon (2000) had noted that, fewer schools were associated with longer average distances to school; which affects both enrollment and retention. Similar conclusions had been made by Nekatibeb (2002); that school distance was the biggest obstacle for girls' education in Ethiopia and among many countries of Africa.

(3) Through the CDF bursary scheme, children born in poor households enrolled into secondary school and their risk of dropout due to lack of school fees was reduced. Results from this study showed that many students were enrolled and continued their schooling because of the support provided to them through the CDF bursary scheme. This study, however, revealed some gaps in the way the CDF bursaries were allocated and administered. The study recommended for more transparency and mechanisms to make allocations more equitable with better targeting in order to assist the most vulnerable children in the communities. Such findings were also in line with existing literature (see Mwangi, 2005) arguments that although the CDF had contributed to the improvement of the access of basic social services by the poor at the grassroots level, there were still numerous concerns about the optimal utilization of the funds and the processes of its administration. Similarly, Ng'alu and Bomett (2014) highlighted that, the success of the CDF had been undermined by the little amounts awarded, discrimination and the mismanagement of funds.

(4) Results also showed that FSEP had contributed to increased school enrollment and reduced student's dropout from school. The FSEP covered direct and indirect costs which would have otherwise been charged from parents through PTA levies. From the results, I subsequently concluded that, with the FSEP, the fees charged from parents had reduced and hence education became more affordable which enabled parents to enroll their children in school. The findings were very similar to those from a study conducted on the impact of FSEP on secondary education in Mbita and Suba sub-counties which showed a significant improvement in access to secondary as measured by

increase in enrollment and improved transition rates. Khamati and Nyongesa (2013) had also noted that, with the FSEP, the average number of students in public schools had increased and resulted to overstretched facilities and inadequate teachers.

(5) In addition, study results revealed that, participation of girls in secondary education had improved with the CDF and FSEP. Results from this study showed that with the increased enrollment and reduced dropout of girls from school due to improved affordability and availability of secondary education, cases of girl pregnancies and early marriage among teenagers had declined. The study showed that when girls are enrolled in secondary school, cases of early marriages are reduced as compared to when they attended short courses in local polytechnics. Akoth et al. (2016) argued that, the CDF was a significant predictor of enrollment and retention among secondary students in public schools in Kisumu.

(6) In conclusion, study results also highlighted that both the CDF and FSEP were complementary and that their simultaneous interactions complemented each, otherwise the role of FSEP could have been ineffective in situations where schools were not available. It is noted that the FSEP allocations are disbursed directly to the school based on enrollment and hence the policy pre-supposes that the school is available and that the child is already enrolled in school, dimensions which have been greatly improved through the CDF otherwise in such contexts where the school facilities are non-existent, the FSEP would have been ineffective. My study findings were consistent with Ngeno, Simatwae and Ayodo (2015) argument that FSEP alone cannot be used to improve on girls' enrollment and gender inequality in education. Furthermore, with the CDF and the

FSEP, the fees required for day schools had declined/reduced and hence more children were enrolled into school because parents were looking for less fees, uniforms and school books.

Application of Theoretical Framework

In this study, I applied an adapted Huisman and Smits (2015) theoretical model which frames the household and student's contextual factors which have influenced dropout of students from school among developing countries. Based on the model, the context in which children live is divided into: household, community, national; and the factors that influenced students drop out from school were clustered into three categories: resources, structure and culture. Using Huisman and Smits (2015) adapted model, key determinants for student enrollment and dropout were hence clustered into the three categories: resources, structure and culture and defined at the three levels of household, community, and national / constituency.

As shown in chapter 4, the results obtained from this study fitted into the theoretical framework. In answering the research questions 1 and 2, I identified the set of key factors which influenced student enrollment and dropout among students in the sampled cases. Aligned with the theoretical framework, these factors including cost of schooling, lack of school fees, unavailability of schools, distance from home, family size, and some individual student factors ranging from student performance, misconduct and girl pregnancies were all within the categories of resources, structure, and culture and at the three levels of national, community, and household which were the main elements of the theoretical framework. In addition, aligned with the research question 3, the study

revealed a strong positive role of the CDF and the FSEP on reducing the adverse direct effects of the factors which constrained student enrollment and their continued education by highlighting that the two policies had contributed to increased enrollment and decline in student dropout.

In view of the above, it is clear from the results obtained from this study that, the choice of the conceptual framework was appropriate and best suitable in the answering study's the research questions. By the results from this study, the main tenets of the framework emerged clearly that: (a) the context in which the children lived at the various levels of the individual student, household, constituency/national had influenced (b) the decision of parents and caregivers to enrol or not to enrol their children and student's dropout or continued education, and (c) the existence of the simultaneous interactions of the different determinants at the various levels which influences the decisions of enrolling, dropping or continuing in school.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in this study which included the following: (a) the inherent weakness and criticism of qualitative research pointed out by Firestone (1993) in regard to the inability to generalize the study findings to settings not included in the study. In this study, although there were 62 public secondary schools in Yatta sub-county (Ministry of Education, 2014), the study was limited to only two purposely selected secondary schools. My study was aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the study phenomenon rather than generalizing the findings. This informed the choice of qualitative methods and a multiple-case-study design for this study; (b) there were limitations

associated with the case study design as a strategy of inquiry and the narrow focus. In this study, I addressed this limitation by the use of a multiple-case study and hence findings were more compelling than a single-case study inquiry; (c) the inherent weaknesses of potential researcher “bias” and use of interview data; a potential limitation which I addressed by following a rigorous protocol during data collection. In addition, with this knowledge of potential bias, I also endeavored to report all evidence fairly (see Maxwell, 2013); (d) Data was collected through interviews with only 14 purposely selected participants; a potential limitation which I alleviated in this study by ensuring that data saturation was reached during data collection.

Delimitations

There were delimitations in this multiple-case study which included the following: (a) this study did not explore aspects of education quality which is also an important dimension of the study phenomenon. Although the dimensions of quality were not purposely included in the study, gathered data revealed some aspects of quality particularly regarding student performance and minimum “cut off” marks for enrollment; (b) this study explored a set of institutional, cultural, socioeconomic and school factors, however in practice, there exists other factors that may potentially have influenced enrollment and dropout. I addressed this by following interview protocol rigorously and by ensuring that data saturation was reached during data collection. This way, I envisaged that, the dominant factors were thus prioritized; (c) the study did not seek the perspectives and the experiences of children (students) who were the main “subjects” of the study. In this study, I considered the perspectives of parents and school administrators

to have been comprehensive and adequate; (d) the observed changes on the direct effects of the determinants of enrollment and dropout, can neither be exclusively attributed to the CDF and the FSEP nor can their individual or collective attribution be known with precision; I however made recommendations for further research on some of the important aspects of the two policies which were not addressed in this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study revealed that poor performance of pupils at the primary level was a determinant factor for enrollment to secondary school. Participants highlighted that the CDF had been used to improve the infrastructure in primary schools including refurbishment, renovation, and construction of classrooms and provision of safe drinking water. The effects of these activities towards improvement of performance at the primary level were not explored as the scope of the study was limited to enrollment and dropout at secondary level of education. I recommend conducting further research to explore whether and how the CDF has influenced the quality of education at the primary level as this has a direct influence on performance and transition rates to secondary level.

This research focused on exploring the role of CDF and FSEP on enrollment and dropout among students in Yatta constituency. Findings revealed that there was an increase in enrollment into secondary schools especially with the establishment of day schools in the region. Furthermore, student dropout declined with the CDF and FSEP mainly with the reduced cost of education and availability of CDF bursaries. In the light of the study findings, I recommend further research on the following areas: (a) effects of

the CDF on the quality of secondary education in Kenya (b) does type of school (boarding or day) influence student's performance?

Implications for Positive Social Change

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore whether and how the CDF and the FSEP had contributed to increasing the access to secondary school education among students in public schools in the Yatta constituency of Machakos County. To achieve this purpose, I designed and conducted a multiple-case study which aided me in answering the three research questions which identified the household, constituency, and national factors which influenced enrollment and dropout among the students in two purposely selected public secondary schools. The study further explored how the direct effects of these factors had been modified and moderated by the CDF and FSEP.

By this study, I sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and literature on student enrollment and dropout in rural settings in Kenya and subsequently examine how the constraining effects of these factors were being addressed through public policy and specifically by the CDF of 2003 and the FSEP of 2008. The two purposes of this study were achieved. By this study, the Yatta sub-county specific contextual factors which influence enrollment and dropout among students have been identified. In addition, through this study, I have highlighted some of the ways through which the CDF and FSEP have contributed towards increasing access to secondary education as measured by improved enrollment and reduced students' dropout.

From this study, I found that, the CDF and FSEP had contributed to an increase in enrollment and reduction in dropout rates among secondary school students. The study linked the improvement in enrollment and the decline in dropout with the establishment of day schools and improved infrastructure in existing boarding schools which led to a drastic reduction of schooling costs and particularly school fees and the levies charged from parents as indirect costs. The implication is that, with the CDF and the FSEP, secondary education has become more affordable for parents and as such the need to sustain the two policies.

From this study, I established that, despite the good progress achieved on increased enrollment and reduced dropout rates, with the high levels of poverty and the low household income, many families continue to struggle while raising boarding fees and funds to cover for the indirect costs of education including school uniforms, learning materials and for the upkeep of their children while in school. Thus, I recommend increasing the allocation of the CDF to the education sector at the constituency in order to relieve parents from this burden which would result to more children enrolling and completing their secondary school education.

In this study, I found that, with more schools having been established and or improved, the distance from home to school had been reduced with implications that secondary education has become more available to children and the communities. Study results revealed that, there were still cases of children who had not enrolled in secondary school, in addition to few students who dropped out due to lack of school fees, girl pregnancies and poor performance. Furthermore, study results showed that, children

attending day schools still walked long distances to school which posed high risks and especially for the female students. Based on these study findings, I recommend: (a) that parents, caregivers and communities should ensure that every child who graduates from primary school enrolls and completes his/her four years of secondary education; (b) increasing the CDF bursary allocations to reach all the deserving children; (c) establishing boarding facilities among all day schools without increasing the indirect costs and levies charged to parents.

Study results revealed some gaps in regard on how CDF bursaries were awarded including the little amounts allocated per beneficiary, and the ineffective process of identification of the most deserving children. From the results, it was evident that, the application process for the bursary lengthy and characterized with lack of transparency. Based on these findings, I recommend that, school administrators should be more involved in the process of identifying the most deserving children in the school to improve on the targeting. Implementation of these study recommendations would help to sustain the gains already achieved and make more progress in increasing student enrollment and reducing dropout through continued availability of equitable and affordable secondary education for the children in Yatta sub-County.

Conclusions

Education has been identified as an important factor of development for individuals, the society and nation at large (World Bank, 2005). The problem has been that, Kenya's secondary school enrollment has remained quite low at 50 percent (World Bank, 2008) which implies that, access to secondary education has remained a far-off

dream for many children in the country particularly in the rural areas. The low enrollment situation was not different in Yatta sub-county located within Machakos which has a 57 percent transition rate from primary to secondary and a 4.7 percent secondary school dropout rate (Machakos County Integrated Development Plan, 2015). In view of the above need, I conducted this study to understand the main contextual factors that influenced enrolment and dropout as well as the role of the national FSEP and the devolved CDF policy in addressing the constrains. Furthermore, the findings from this study is an addition to the existing knowledge on enrollment and dropout among students in rural settings in Kenya.

The two purposes of the study were met. I designed a multiple-case study, answered three research questions through conducting interviews with key informants comprised of parents and administrators from school communities of two purposely sampled public secondary schools in Yatta. I conducted qualitative data analysis and presented study results against each of the research questions. Through this study, I sufficiently answered the research questions, having identified the determinants of student enrollment and dropout, in addition to describing the role of the CDF and FSEP on increasing enrollment and reducing dropout among the students.

Results from this study may be useful to a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector including the local community leaders, education sector policy makers and the CDF committees about providing insight for increased and effective investments in education sector to ensure that every child of secondary school age is enrolled in school and completes their secondary education. The findings are also useful to

researchers and the academia as it contributes to the knowledge in the subject of student enrollment and dropout among secondary school students.

In the overall and in conclusion, findings from this study showed that, the two public policies explored in this study had effectively addressed some of the direct constraining effects of the key factors which influenced the decision of parents and caregivers about enrollment and retention of their children in secondary schools. Thus, based on the evidence gathered from this study, I concluded that, the CDF and FSEP had positively contributed to the improvement of access to secondary education through increasing enrollment and reducing dropout among secondary school students in Kenya.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Participants

Interview Protocol for Administrators

Enrollment

1. Give me a brief background about your school including year of establishment, category, and sponsorship
2. What is the school student enrollment disaggregated into girls and boys and class? Comment on how this has changed since 2003? After 2008?
3. Describe some of the factors that have influenced student's enrollment in your school?
4. How does girls' enrollment compare to that of the boys in the school?
5. Are there any cases of student pregnancies in the school and how are they handled? How does this affect enrollment?
6. What are some of the cultural practices for example early marriages among the students? In your view, how have they affected the school's enrollment?
7. Comment on the distance between the students' homes and the school and how it affects school enrollment?
8. What challenges do parents face while enrolling their children into the school?

Dropout

9. Give me a brief background about your school including year of establishment, category, and sponsorship

10. Comment on the drop out of students from your school across the various classes – form one, two, three and four?
11. Comment on student's absenteeism in your school?
12. How does the board of management in your school address the issue of fees arrears by parents in your school?
13. What are the main causes of student's dropout from your school? And how can they be prevented?
14. How do you compare girls' dropout to that of the boys your school?
15. Are there any cases of student pregnancies in the school and how are they handled? How does this affect dropout?
16. Are there any cultural practices for example early marriages among the students? In your view how have they affected students' dropout?

Support from the CDF, FSEP policies

17. Give me a brief background about your school including year of establishment, category, and sponsorship
18. How has the school benefitted from the CDF?
19. How has the school benefitted from the FSEP?
20. Briefly describe the CDF bursary process; who are the beneficiaries? And what role does the school play in the bursary award process
21. In your own view, how has the availability of CDF funds led to: increase in enrollment? Improved retention?

22. How has the number and quality of physical facilities in the school improved with the CDF funding?
23. How has the number and quality of the physical facilities improved as a result of FSEP?
24. What is the effect of the CDF funds in reduction of cost of education especially levies charged by the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)?
25. What is the effect of the FSEP on reduction of the cost of schooling especially on levies charged by the PTA?
26. How has the availability of the CDF contributed to reducing the schooling costs for benefiting students?
27. What are some of the challenges that you have faced accessing and implementing CDF supported projects in the school?
28. What has been the effect of the CDF on enrollment in your school?
29. How would you describe the effect of FSEP on enrollment in your school?
30. What has been the effect of CDF on student's dropout in your school?
31. How would you describe the effect of FSEP on retention in your school?
32. How can girls' enrollment and retention be improved in your school through the CDF?

Interviews for Parents

Enrollment

1. Introduce yourself and briefly tell me about your family including how many children are in your household and in what level of education they are in.
2. Are there any children in your household who never proceeded to secondary school? If yes, why?
3. Do you know of any children in your community who did not enroll into secondary school? If yes, what could be the reasons of not continuing their education?
4. Comment about the distance from your home to school? How do your children go to school?
5. What challenges do children face in regard to the distance to school?
6. Are children involved in any house chores before and after school? How does that affect their education?
7. Comment on the value of education for girls as compared to that of boys in your community

Dropout

8. Has any of your children dropped out of school? If yes, why?
9. Comment on the distance between the students' homes and the school and how it affects school dropout
10. What challenges do parents face when financing secondary education particularly in regard to cost of uniform, books and learning materials and upkeep
11. What are the main factors that have influenced student's dropout from school?

12. Do you know of any children in the community who dropped out of school before completing their secondary education? What are some of the reasons that influenced student's dropout from school in your community?
13. Are there any factors that especially negatively influence girl's education in your community? Are you aware of any cases of student pregnancies or marriages in your community?
14. Comment on the practices of girls' involvement in house chores as compared to boys? What are some of the chores that may have affected girls' education in your community?
15. Comment on the value of education for girls as compared to that of boys in your community. How can participation of girls in secondary education be improved in your community?

Support from the CDF, FSEP policies

16. What is your highest level of education?
17. What is your main economic activity? What are other sources of income to your family?
18. How do you finance the schooling costs for your children? School fees, uniform, learning materials
19. In your household, how is the decision of whether to take your child to secondary school arrived at?
20. Has the distance between your home and nearest secondary school changed over the years? Describe how?

21. Have you ever benefitted from a CDF bursary? Describe the process of application of a bursary from the CDF and your experience
22. How has the CDF helped you in educating your children or children in your community?
23. What other support has the school and the community received from the CDF?
24. Are you aware of FSEP? If yes, briefly describe your understanding about it
25. How has the FSEP helped in regard to education of your children or children in your community?

Thank you.

Appendix B: Invitation Letter to Participate in Study

Dear Participant,

My name is Charles Kyalo Nzuki, a doctoral student of Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. I write regarding a research I am conducting in the education sector on the topic: Exploring the relationship between the CDF, FSEP and access to secondary education in Kenya. The study will be conducted in Yatta sub-county and will focus on two public secondary schools.

Based on your expertise, knowledge and experience on the study area, I write to invite you to participate in this research. The findings of the study will be useful in contributing to knowledge on education sector particularly in regard to secondary education while also informing policies for social change.

In this regard, I would be pleased if you spare your time for an interview which will last for about half an hour (40 – 45 minutes).

I would like to assure you that your responses will be kept strictly confidential and that as the researcher, I promise that I will not use your personal information for any other purposes beyond this research project. At the conclusion of the study, a 1 – 2 pager summaries of the results will be availed to you.

Kindly note that your participation is voluntary and therefore will not attract any form of financial benefit. I will fully understand if you wish to decline, however I would like to thank you in advance as I anticipate a favorable response.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Nzuki

Public Policy and Administration


Walden University

Charles.nzuki@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Authorization to Conduct Research

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. CHARLES KYALO NZUKI
of WALDEN UNIVERSITY, 0-200
Nairobi, has been permitted to conduct
research in Machakos County
on the topic: EXPLORING THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND
(CDF), FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION
POLICY (FSEP) AND ACCESS TO
SECONDARY EDUCATION IN KENYA
for the period ending:
11th February, 2018

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/60169/15221
Date Of Issue : 14th February, 2017
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000



.....
Applicant's
Signature

.....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No.

NACOSTI/P/17/60169/15221

Date:

14th February, 2017

Charles Kyalo Nzuki
Walden University
USA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Exploring the relationship between the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Free Secondary Education Policy (FSEP) and access to secondary education in Kenya,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Machakos County** for the period ending **11th February, 2018**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Machakos County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Machakos County.

The County Director of Education
Machakos County.