

**EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AMONG
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KITUI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution for consideration of any certification. This project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged and references cited using current APA system in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my parents Francis Wainaina and Anne Wainaina for their unwavering support during this time of the study.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BES	Boarding, Equipment & Stores
CATs	Continuous Assessment Tests
EFA	Education for All
EW&C	Electricity Water and Conservancy
FPE	Free Primary Education
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GoK	Government of Kenya
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
LT&T	Local Travel and Transport
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NACOSTI	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
PE	Personal Emolument
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RM&I	Repair, Maintenance and Improvement
SID	Society for International Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSE	Subsidized Secondary Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UPE

Universal Primary Education

ABSTRACT

In Kenya, user charges can be classified as one of the factors that influence the participation in secondary education; they typically add to the cost of education faced by households resulting to children from the poor households being in and out of school due to financial constraints. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of user charges on participation in education among students in Kitui County, Kenya. The objectives of this study were to identify the types of user charges, to find out the effect of user charges on the daily attendance of the students, to investigate the effect of user charges on completion of assignments by the students and to find out the effect of user charges on the performance at continuous assessment tests by students in public secondary schools. This study was premised on the theory of justice and fairness as developed by John Rawls. This study used descriptive survey research design. The target population was 308 which comprised of all the 42 principals and 266 class teachers in public secondary schools in the study locale. A sample size of 154 was used which comprised of 21 principals and 133 class teachers. Two research instruments namely questionnaires and document analysis schedules were used. The questionnaires were piloted in two schools to refine the instruments while content and face validity was determined through consultation of a three experts panel in Educational Planning. Results for the reliability level of principals' questionnaire was 0.77 while reliability level for the teacher's questionnaire was 0.74. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Results generated from various data categories were presented in graphs and tables to enhance clarity. On the types of user charges in public secondary schools, the study found out that all the schools levy a number of user charges ranging from purchase of text books and other educational materials to motivational charges. The study found out that on average, 16% of the students are absent from school due to fee balances. The study found that 55% of the principals and 49% of the teachers felt that the escalation of fees and levies charged to a high extent contribute to poor performance in class work assignments among the students. In addition, 35% of the principals and 38% of the teachers felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to poor performance among the students is high. Based on the research findings, the study recommends that the level of financing of education by the government and other stakeholder should be increased in order to cater for some hidden costs. Also, school administrators should find alternative sources of income to supplement the funds raised through fee levies. Lastly, the government should enforce regulations on fees charged in public secondary schools in Kenya. The findings of this study shall benefit the government by giving an insight of the effect of user charges on participation in secondary education. Further, the findings shall enlighten planners and educators on possible strategies of enhancing participation in secondary education and rekindle more research in financing secondary school education in general and the effect of user charges on secondary school participation in particular.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers background of the study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In Kenya, the introduction of cost sharing in 1988 was an official mark of the end of government's free and highly subsidized education. The Government of Kenya accepted the recommendations of the working party in the Sessional Paper no. 6 that was on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (Government of Kenya, 1988).

The launch of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 saw a high demand of both secondary and primary education recorded. For instance the numbers of students enrolled in secondary schools escalated from 30,120 in 1963 to 652,283 in 2000 (Orodho & Njeru, 2003). The demand for education thus has been on the increase since 1963 amidst the cost-sharing policy which is a challenge to most households in Kenya. This may have been one of the initial phases of the introduction of user fees in education since the public coffers would not adequately cater for education expenses.

Historically, education in Kenya like in most African countries, for example Nigeria, Rwanda and Tanzania were offered free, with the government covering both tuition and

living expenses (Weidman, 1993). The government, parents and community at large still have difficulties in dealing with finances that relate to education expenses and participation to education is negatively affected (Ngware, Onsomu, Muthaka & Kosimbei, 2007). It is critical to identify strategies of financing education that will ensure maximum resource utilization. Education financing encompasses all financial outlays to educational institutions and sections, as well as all the stakeholders involved in the education sector (MoEST, 2009). It includes resources from parents, families and communities in form of tuition fees, “harambees” (voluntary community fundraising) and other levies.

Over the last decade, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) recurrent expenditure constituted over a third of Government of Kenya’s recurrent and development budgets (MoEST, 2003). As asserted by Eshiwani (1993), high demand for education has led to high expenditures on education globally. To address the issue of high costs of secondary schooling, the Kenyan government introduced the cost sharing concept which involved the community and government taking part in financing education. Odada and Odhiambo (2003) gave comments on user fees impact by noting that high fees were charged to a degree that the poor could not access education. MoEST (2005) asserts that over the last decade, low enrollment ratios of secondary education compared to primary education has been as a result of: high cost of secondary education and poverty. Additionally, the escalating cost of learning and teaching materials, high

cost of school uniforms purchase, transport charges and development levies were also seen as factors hindering secondary education.

Table 1.1 shows the proposed fee structure by the Ministry of Education in Kenya.

Table 1.1: Proposed Fee Structure for Day and Boarding Secondary Schools

VOTE HEAD	GoK Subsidy		Parent Fee	Total
	Day Schools	Boarding Schools		
Tuition	3,600	3,600	0	3,600
BES	0	0	13,034	13,034
RMI	400	400	400	800
LT&T	400	400	500	900
Admin. Costs	500	500	350	850
EWC	500	500	1,500	2,000
Activity	600	600	0	600
PE	3,965	3,965	2,743	6,708
Medical	300	300	100	400
Total School Fees	10,265	10,265	18,635	28,892

Source: Ministry of Education (2009)

According to the fee structure for day and boarding secondary schools as proposed by the education ministry, the government pays Kshs. 10,265. This amount is irrespective of whether the student attends a day or boarding secondary school. As a condition of cost

sharing, the balance Ksh. 18,635 is to be met by parents and guardians which is an extra cost incurred by the household. It is worth noting that there exists a chance that the figure Ksh. 18,635 is not what is charged. Possibilities exist that some schools charge up to twice, worse still, thrice the amount. This amount thus accounts for the user fees in public secondary schools. User fee charges do have an effect on participation in education in terms of the student being present in school and spending quality time at the institution.

In 2010, a poverty assessment was done in Kenya and the results were that communities that were deprived financially had difficulties keeping children. This was inability to raise the cost of schooling. Statistics indicated that over 50% of the households interviewed had their children drop out from school due to financial constraints (World Bank, 2011). However, this survey did not indicate how participation in education in the countries surveyed was affected by financial constraints faced by the surveyed communities.

In Kenya, it goes without argument that the community does contribute a certain percentage to education irrespective of the household and mostly the poor households fail to meet the finances required by the school thus their children are in and out of school. In light of this background, it was of crucial value to find out the effect of user fee on secondary education participation.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Kenya, the Government's task is paying teachers and education administrators as well as providing the Ksh. 10,265 to all students accessing secondary school education and also provision of some limited school facilities. The rest of financial costs in relation to education are to be catered for by the parents and guardians. This money paid by the parents and guardians to the school for secondary education comprises the user fees. Some households are poor hence it is difficult to get the money for user fees such that it is common to see children with school uniforms on the road going to get finances from their parents in order to pay to the particular schools.

Time spent going home means less quality time is spent in school for academic purposes. The students sent home to collect the fees miss out on the syllabus coverage, class assignments and all the other activities going on in the school in their absentia. Whether or not the time wasted going for the fees affects the way the student participates in secondary education is an area of concern. More so, it still remains unclear to policymakers on how the increasing demand for participation to quality secondary school education by the citizenry can be met against the background of user fee charges in secondary school escalating day by day. This study, therefore attempted to investigate the effect of user charges in participation of secondary school education in Kitui County-Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at establishing the effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Kitui County-Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the types of user charges in public secondary schools in Kitui County.
- ii. To find out the effect of user charges on the daily attendance of the students in public secondary schools in Kitui County.
- iii. To investigate the effect of user charges on completion of assignments by the students in public secondary schools in Kitui County.
- iv. To determine effect of user charges on the performance at continuous assessment tests by the students in public secondary schools in Kitui County.

1.5 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions.

- i. What are the types of user charges in public secondary schools in Kitui County?
- ii. How is the daily attendance in public secondary schools affected by user charges in Kitui County?

- iii. What is the effect of user charges on completion of assignments in public secondary schools in Kitui County?
- iv. How do user charges affect student performance at continuous assessment tests in public secondary schools in Kitui County?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Findings of this study are significant in the following ways:

- i. Are of great benefit to the government in giving an insight on the issues arising from the effect of user charges on participation in secondary education in Kenya.
- ii. Provide information to the educational officials on how participation in secondary education is influenced by user fees.
- iii. Act as a basis of evaluating the participation in secondary schools in relation to user fees by the school administrators, which can help identify if it does also influence the overall academic performance in the school.
- iv. Hopefully enlighten planners and educators on possible strategies of enhancing participation at secondary education.
- v. Rekindle more research in financing secondary school education in general and the effect of user charges on secondary school participation in particular.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The study made the following assumptions:

- i. That all the students in public secondary schools in Kitui County experience the same socio-cultural factors.
- ii. That there exists a relationship between user charges on one hand and participation to secondary education on the other.
- iii. That all the students have related motivational factors as they access secondary school education in Kitui County.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following delimitations:

- i. The study was restricted to public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-County which benefit from the government subsidy. Private secondary schools in the County do not receive the government subsidy thus were excluded
- ii. The respondents were the principals and class teachers present in the time frame the study was carried out.
- iii. Despite several factors that affect participation in public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-County, the study only focused on user fees.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in the following ways:

- i. The study covered Migwani sub-county only because of time and financial constraints.
- ii. The study relied on information given by the sampled population due to financial constraints.
- iii. By focusing on public secondary education, it was not possible for the generalization of the findings to other school categories and levels.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The theory of justice and fairness as developed by John Rawls guided this study. John Rawls advocates that modern social order be guided by principles of justice (Davion & Wolf, 1999). The theory of justice and fairness advocates for students to access and participate in education actively (Audard, 2007). In relation to this study, user fees keep children away from school as they try to look for the money required for the school fee. The poor households have their children out of school mostly since they are the ones who feel the high cost to education compared to the rich households. In a family where the income is low, such that the basic needs are fulfilled with a difficulty, then education is not a priority.

Kitui County has in the recent past experienced escalating poverty levels. This is because of the high population growth, inadequate water supply, inadequate food production and low resilience to changes in the climate. In the county, poverty is prevalent where it is manifested mostly in poor access of education, poor nutrition as well as lack of access to basic services (KNBS & SID, 2013). The aforementioned factors among others deny households the chance to educate their children. For instance, a poor household who cannot meet basic needs such as food and shelter due to lack of finances will definitely view paying of user charges in an attempt to seek education for the children as the least priority. For this reason, there is a need to come up with strategies to ensure the student in whatever region in the country is not locked out from participating in education due to user fees. The Theory of Justice and Fairness is the most suitable in the study of effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Kitui County.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 provides a conceptual framework from which to examine effect of user charges to participation in secondary education.

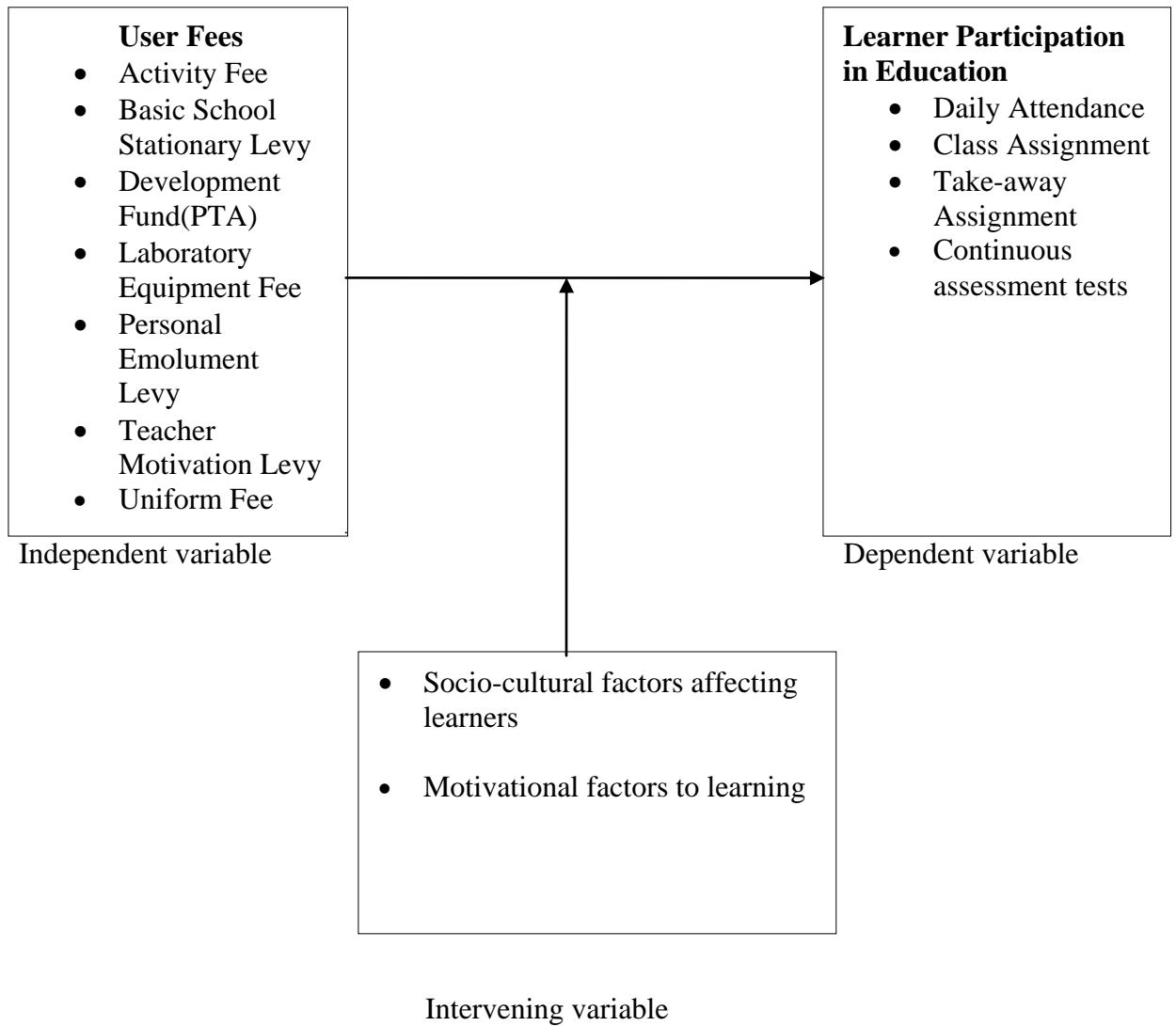


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework on effect of user fee charges on participation

Source: Researcher 2015

The conceptual framework shows the user fee to comprise of funds charged by schools in terms of activity fee, basic school stationary levy, development (PTA) funds, laboratory equipment fee, personal emolument levy, teacher motivation levy and uniform fee. This forms the independent variable in this study. The outcome of user charges in secondary education forms the dependent variable which is composed of the daily attendance of the student in school. This is in light of being absent from the school due to lack of funds that have been aforementioned as user charges. Completion of class assignments in the sense that the charging user fees may deter the student from completing assignments as they are out of class due to inadequate user fees. Completion of take-away assignments also known as homework is another outcome which may be influenced by user fee charging in schools in terms of the student being able to do the assignment and come back to class for marking.

Performance at continuous assessment tests to a great extent is affected by the presence of the student in class since it is often assumed that the student was engaged in the teaching-learning process thus the knowledge gained can be tested through exams. Participation as per the conceptual framework thus can be defined in terms of the student being in class during school hours and actively participating in the learning process. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables is confounded by other factors beyond the scope of the study. Such factors include motivational and socio-cultural factors experienced by the students in public secondary schools at Kitui County.

1.12 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Academic performance: The outcomes in terms of grades after an examination for instance end of term examination in a particular school.

Community financing: The contribution made by to a community without any individual assessments of users.

Cost sharing: Contribution in any form to costs by a user which is undertaken in kind or labor and at times in form of cash.

Daily Attendance: This is the presence at school on a daily basis during the normal school hours, five days per week for the entire term during a particular academic year.

Participation: Attendance to school daily, completion of school assignments (both class and take-away assignments) and sitting for continuous assessment tests.

User Charges: The total contribution to costs either by a household or an individual in form of cash or a charge given per unit of the specific service delivered. It is mostly the private costs per pupil which covers uniforms, textbooks, building fees and PTA contributions. The terms user fees or user levies are synonymous to user charges.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There is a plethora of literature indicating that efforts to enhance participation and access in education is thwarted by multifarious and intertwined factors where the greatest percentage is accounted by financial constraints where households do not get the money to pay school levies. For this reason, their children are constantly in and out of school to collect the necessary school fees.

2.2 Types of User charges in Secondary Education

The main reason why many countries fail to provide education for their children is due to financial barriers. The financial barriers can be categorized into two. The first category is the cost incurred by households which often is too high especially when economies are in trouble while the second is the cost incurred by the government where in most cases the finances are inadequate. However, in most cases, the state's resources derived from taxes cannot finance basic learning inputs due to inefficient financial management of education systems (Colclough, 2000). Further, when financial constraints prevent households from enrolling their children to a secondary education, it becomes detrimental both to the

student and society at large. This is because during preparation of human capital for provision of life opportunities and development, education at the secondary level is vital. It is unfortunate however that resource for secondary education have been diminishing amidst escalating costs of expansion and provision of quality secondary education. In Kenya, unless urgent interventions are put in place to address the problems in financing of education, the scenario is likely to remain unchanged as indicated by current statistics (Ngware, Onsomu, Muthaka& Kosimbei, 2006).

A study carried by the World Bank (2009) on Seventy Five countries revealed that almost all - approximately Seventy one countries which was over 94% - were seen to have the same type of fee except four countries where tuition in secondary education was provided free of charge. Countries that had free education were Tunisia, St.Kitts, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica. Fifty one countries – inclusive of Kenya – had five types of user fee that were common. The user fees included tuition fees, uniform fees, textbook fees, financial contributions and other school-based fees. This was seen to influence the enrollment of students to secondary education, where most households argued that tuition fee was not easily accessible thus the students were constantly out of school. However, the study did not indicate how participation in education was affected by these levies in the countries that were studied.

A study by UNESCO (2001) asserts that there can be additional economic costs to education where it mentioned two costs precisely. The first cost is incurred by households. It is in the form of transport cost of the children to and from school where it accounted for 21 per cent of household education spending in Cambodia. The second cost was incurred by parents as they hired private tutors for their children outside school hours. This was evident in most countries except Asia. Bray (1996) concurred with this study and added that though these fees are not compulsory, they often add to the household costs to primary education, either because there is a form of blackmail where during school hours, some teachers provide only the bare minimum and the real teaching is reserved for private classes or some parents feel that supplementing formal schooling through tutoring is important for good academic performance of their children.

The missing data from the UNESCO (2001) is how participation to education was influenced as the GER escalated and the results of the later decline in GER to participation in education in the African countries like Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania are not indicated. The studies do indicate that there exists a certain direct cost to education that is incurred by households while accessing education at a secondary level but none is bringing out how the specific types of the levies charged at the secondary level affects the student's participation to education.

2.3 Effect of User Charges on Daily Attendance of Students in Secondary Schools

A report by the World Bank indicates that among the first countries to move towards the direction of user fee elimination in primary education in the mid-1990s were Malawi and Uganda who received a lot of support from non-governmental organizations and development agencies (World Bank, 2009). Further, the report asserts that the early efforts that aimed at eradicating fees in African countries showed enormous powers in rapid increase of enrolment in schools. However, there were massive increases in class size against falls in school level funding leading to compromised quality in education that left the children of the poor no better than before. The report from the World Bank implies that whereas the imposition of user fees would affect the poor children, if they are removed without proper plans, then the most affected would be the poor. This is in light of the quality of education being compromised with removal of user fees owing to high school enrolment.

Ironically, it is still the poor, who would be subjected to free education yet of poor quality. However, the report did not clearly give the direct effect of the user charges in relation to school daily attendance in these countries. An assessment on effect of user charges on enrolment and attendance revealed that when households contribute to cost of education, there is reduced attendance ratios (Reddy & Vandermoortele, 2009). As a result, there is an increase on repetition rates and a decrease in achievement rates. Additionally, the assessment did have adequate evidence on the negative effect to

attendance ratios when students are sent home to collect the required school fees. The assessment failed to indicate how the cost of education incurred by household influence the student's daily school attendance.

An occasionally realistic view though cynical is that “whereas the rates of return to schooling compare to the rates of return to the pupil with the costs to the parents, the most important issue is the perceived balance between the costs and benefits to the parents of sending their children to school.” This is because the parents accrue only some portion of the returns to schooling the report further stated. For this reason, there may be justifications for households that appear to under-invest in schooling irrespective of high economic return (World Bank, 2011). Thus, the overall effect is that there arises a possible divergence of interest between the parents and children due to the school levies thus discouraging school enrolment. This study did not explicitly discuss the implication of the school levy to the children already accessing their education; it only considered the effect on enrolment. Specifically, the study did not specify the effect of the school levies on students' daily attendance at the secondary school level of education.

A study carried out by Kiveu and Mayo (2009) observes that school levies in form of fees and other related costs have escalated over time such that secondary education has become too expensive for parents to afford given their low average incomes. Access to

secondary schools in Kenya by the poor has remained elusive despite government efforts to ensure equal access to basic education (Martim, 2008). These studies did not explicitly indicate how participation in secondary education is impacted.

2.4 Effect of User Fee on Completion of Assignment

Various countries are on the track to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) and are currently in search of financing options and innovative ways for expanding secondary education considering the fact that there is over-reliance on government revenue for education financing. African countries have considered the idea of sharing the cost of education instead of fully relying on public expenditures.

In 2011, a poverty assessment in Africa particularly the southern part poor households had a big challenge in keeping their children in school mainly due to the cost. Girls in particular were found to be twice as likely to be absent from school compared to boys which was attributed mostly to socio-cultural factors (Lewis, 2011). The study majorly based on primary schooling thus the effect to secondary schooling was left out. Additionally, the study indicated only the effect of the school levies to attendance but scarcely mentioned what the effect was to completion of assignment by the children.

Further, a report by World Bank (2011) on why some children are left out on schooling indicated that the parents are the key decision makers with respect to schooling; the children that undergo the system are the principal beneficiaries.

2.5 Effect of User Fee in Performance at CATs

Recent studies in two African and Asian countries confirmed that parents make significant contributions to the cost of education. The private costs per pupil – covering uniforms, textbooks, tuition and building fees and PTA contributions, but excluding individual tuition and contribution in kind – were found to be equivalent to between 10-20 per cent of per capita income (Mehrotra, Nigam and Thet, 1996). Similarly, a survey in Kenya revealed that households contribute 34 per cent of the total cost of education (World Bank, 1996). Similar figures have been reported in other countries thus reflect the high value parents place on the education of their children. However, households feel the returns after investing in education are of poor value. This is especially due to poor grades attained by their children after completing their studies.

World Bank (2009) observes that there is lack of sufficient evidence on the impact of introduction or removal of user fees in educational attainment and that the available evidence is mixed. However, Fafchamps and Minten (2007) in a study at Madagascar

indicated that removal of user fees in the rural areas resulted in escalated enrollment rates.

UNESCO (2007) indicates that significant enrolment growth in the region is attributed to increased access in education since the 1970s. More so, the Gross Enrollment Rate in 2005 shot up to 97 per cent from 80 per cent in the year 1999. This represents a 5.2 per cent annual increase rate. Similarly, a survey by the World Bank revealed that in Kenya, households contributed more than 34 per cent of the total cost of basic education while in Uganda, parental financing of education in the country consumed more than 39 per cent. Further, the survey showed that most of the households under study perceived poor value for money spent in education (World Bank, 2009). However, the study did not reveal the reasons as to why poor value of money was a complaint by many households. This is because, if the students are not actively involved in the learning process at schools- by being present- then poor grades are inevitable. There was need to investigate the effect of keeping the child away from school due to financial constraints on the academic performance of the child.

Summary

From the studies reviewed, the research gaps identified were that there is insufficient data on the effect of being away from school in academic performance at continuous assessment tests and completion of assignments at the secondary level and also how daily attendance to school is affected by user fee charges. Most studies simply generalize that the student drops out of school prematurely due to user fees.

Extensive research has been done on effect of households incurring a direct expense to educating their children. The result in most cases is either dropping out of school prematurely or total failure on enrolling in school. However, very scanty literature exists on the effect of user fees to participation in secondary school education at public schools. In Kitui County in particular, there was a need to investigate this issue which is the main purpose of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, the locale of the study, the target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instrument, piloting of research instruments, data collection techniques, methods of data analysis and logical and ethical considerations in collecting data.

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are defined as procedures and plans for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Best and Kahn, 2009). The design adopted by this study was descriptive survey. This was because the study entailed describing the characteristics of a particular individual or of a group. The researcher was required to define clearly what was measured in this study along a clear-cut definition of a study population. Orodho (2008) asserts that descriptive studies are not only confined to formulation of important principles of knowledge and fact findings but also to formulation of principles that act as solutions to significant problems. Additionally, descriptive studies can also be said to be the method of collecting information by administering a questionnaire or interviewing a sample of individuals. In

this study, the design involved measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of the collected data. The variables were effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-County.

3.3 The Study Locale

Kitui County is the sixth largest in Kenya. Specifically, it is large in terms of its size as it covers an area of 30,520 square kilometers. Based on 2009 census, Kitui county has a 1,000,012 individuals as its population and has steadily grown since. Kitui lies between altitude of 400m and 1,800m above sea level (Hansen, Potapov & Hancher, 2013). Kitui County has two main urban centres: Mwingi and Kitui. It is mainly inhabited by Akamba people. Other tribes in the county are the Tharaka, Kikuyu, Aembu, Ameru and Somali (KNBS & SID, 2010). Subsistence farming of crops such as pigeon peas, cassava , millet, maize, beans, and sorghum is the main economic activity. Livestock rearing of goats and cattle is very popular. The County has several Sub-Counties which are very diverse with some being arable while others semi-arid. Migwani Sub-County is one of the Sub-counties in Kitui County which has experienced a high expansion in secondary education thus the specific study location for this paper. Migwani Sub-County lies East of Kitui town, approximately 80 kilometers on the Kitui-Mbondoni-murram road. To the West is Mwingi town, while North is a small town called Nuu (Hansen, Potapov & Hancher, 2013).

3.4 Target Population

In Migwani Sub-County there are 42 public secondary schools (MoEST- Migwani, 2015). Sixteen are boarding schools, twenty one day schools and five day and boarding schools. Of the sixteen boarding schools, four are boys' schools, four girls' schools and eight are mixed boarding schools. The twenty one day schools are mixed schools comprising of both male and female students. Five of the schools are day and boarding comprising both the male and female students, otherwise known as mixed day and boarding secondary schools. Sixteen schools are mixed day secondary schools. The entire population under study comprised of 42 principals and 266 class teachers.

3.5 Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were employed in this study. Purposive sampling in particular was suitable for the teachers since there were those teachers with special characteristics and information required for this study. These were the class teachers as they are better acquainted with how their students participate in education. More so, it is the class teachers' duty to take roll calls every day and compile the student's academic results each term. They interact with the students thus understand them better. A cumulative sample of all the respondents was 50% as illustrated below which is higher than the minimum 10% as recommended by Gay (2009).

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame for the Respondents

Category	Population	Sample Size	Percentage representation
Principals	42	21	50%
Class Teachers	266	133	50%
TOTAL	308	154	50%

Source: Researcher, 2015

3.6 Research Instruments

This study used questionnaires and document analysis as the instruments for data collection. The researcher prepared two sets of questionnaires; for the principals and teachers which had both open-ended questions and close-ended questions. The choice of questionnaire for this study was appropriate due to time limitations. Questionnaire for the principals aimed at collecting information on the types of user fees and general effect on participation while that of the class teachers primarily collected information on the daily attendance, completion of assignments and performance at continuous assessment tests of the students with respect to user fee. Document analysis was carried out on attendance registers, school fee levies and academic progress records.

3.6.1 Questionnaire for the Principals

The questionnaire was divided into five main sections; Section A, B and C. Section A was basically general demographic information that highlighted the length of experience of the principal and duration of stay in the work station at the session of study. This information would help ascertain the reliability of the information gathered. Section B dealt on how the user charges influence the student's daily attendance to the school. Section C of the questionnaire was the head of institution's opinion on how user charges contribute to student's inability to complete assignments.

3.6.2 Questionnaire for the Class Teachers

The questionnaire had four main sections. Section A was on the duration of stay in the current work station at the time of study. Section B aimed at collecting primary data on daily attendance of the students in light of user charges in the schools that these teachers teach. Information on how completion of assignments is affected by user charges was obtained also using this questionnaire in Section C. In addition the overall effect of the user charges on the academic performance of the students in the school was sought in section D, specifically at CATs.

3.6.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted by the researcher. The documents analyzed were attendance registers and school fee levies.

3.7 Pilot Study

The questionnaires were piloted in two schools which were not included in the main study. During this time, the researcher made any necessary changes in the instruments before the research instruments were applied for actual study. The pre-testing helped to refine the instruments before they were applied in the actual study. The pilot study helped the researcher familiarize with the data collection techniques, ascertaining the accuracy and coverage of the questions. This exercise guided the researcher in modification of the research instruments for reliability and content coverage.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity answers whether the data collected are accurate enough to reflect the true happenings in a study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This implies that validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. To determine content and face validity, a panel of three experts in Educational Planning was consulted. Their feedback and recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire which ensured that the instrument used had the relevant content of the study, was appropriate for the sample and it was comprehensive enough to collect all the information needed to address the purpose and objective of the study.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which a test gives consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). A reliable instrument therefore, is the one that constantly produces the expected results when used more than once to collect data from two samples drawn from the same population. Birkman (2001) noted that reliability levels of 0.70 and above are considered highly related thus the instrument used is reliable. A test-retest method was used to estimate the degree to which same results could be obtained with a repeated measure of accuracy of the same concept in order to determine reliability of the questionnaires used in this study. Results for the principals' questionnaire was 0.77 while reliability level for the teacher's questionnaire was 0.74 which were higher than 0.70 hence the instruments were considered adequately reliable.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure entailed the researcher obtaining an introductory letter from Kenyatta University and a research permit from NACOSTI authorizing her to carry out a research in Kitui County. The researcher sought permission from the County Director of Education to visit schools within her area of jurisdiction. The researcher visited the sampled schools to inform the principals about the study and made arrangements to administer questionnaires. The researcher gave enough time for the respondents to fill the questionnaires and collected the primary data after two weeks. The

researcher also sought secondary data in form of published materials and information such as records kept by the schools, books, journals and the internet.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the whole process which starts immediately after data collection and ends at the point of interpretation and processing (Kothari, 2004). After collecting data, the responses were coded and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis such as frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions was analyzed thematically based on the study objectives and research questions and thereafter conclusions were drawn. The analyzed data was presented using tables and graphs to enhance clarity.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought approval from the Kenyatta University graduate school. Being granted, the researcher sought for an introductory letter from the Dean, Graduate School of Kenyatta University. The researcher then sought for a permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation. The researcher sought consent from the County Director of Education to visit schools included in the study. Appointment date for data collection was arranged with the school authorities before the actual day to ensure that convenient and appropriate time was set aside for the exercise. The researcher made sure that all the respondents were aware of the type of information required, why

the information was sought, the purpose the information and how the respondents were expected to participate in the research. The researcher assured the respondents on confidentiality and utmost anonymity on all the information they provided by presenting the data collected in a way that could not be linked with the respondents except by the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the data presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings of the study. The study aimed at providing information on the effect of user charges on participation in education among students in public secondary schools in Kitui County. The data was collected from 18 principals and 120 class teachers using questionnaires and document analysis schedules. The results have been summarized and presented in form of tables, bar graphs and narratives.

Analysis was done according to the following research questions:

- i. What are the types of user charges in public secondary schools in Kitui County?
- ii. How is the daily attendance in public secondary schools affected by user charges in Kitui County?
- iii. What is the effect of user charges on completion of assignments in public secondary schools in Kitui County?
- iv. How do user charges affect student performance at continuous assessment tests in public secondary schools in Kitui County?

4.2 Response Rate

This refers to the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample. Data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to 154 respondents (21 to principals and 133 to class teachers). A total of 138 duly filled questionnaires were returned. Table 4.1 displays the response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Sample Size	Actual Respondents	Percentage Response Rate
Principals	21	18	85.7%
Class Teachers	133	120	90.2%

Source: Research Data (2015)

N=138

Every attempt was made to ensure that all the questionnaires were completed and returned but it was not possible. 18 principals and 120 class teachers returned their questionnaires duly filled. The unreturned questionnaires did not have negative implication; one hundred and thirty-eight questionnaires were computed which represents a response rate of 85.7% for principals and 90.2% for class teachers. The response rate was attributed to the good rapport the researcher created with the respondents, the

researcher's familiarity with the location of study and the fact that the researcher self-administered the instruments so as to ensure maximum response rate.

4.3 Sample Analysis by Demographic Characteristics

This section represents respondent's analysis by demographic characteristics. The respondents in the sample were principals and class teachers. The researcher found it important to carry out sample analysis by demographic characteristics in order to justify the extent to which the data collected could be relied on. Analysis of the principals' distribution was by length of service and experience in the current work station while analysis of the class teachers was by years served in the work station.

4.3.1 Length of Experience

The years served in the field of education in the capacity of a principal referred to the length of experience. In particular, it is the length of time the individual served as the head of a secondary school irrespective of the location of the school within the country.

4.3.2 Principals' Length of Experience

Tables 4.2 show the principals' distribution by length of experience in the office of the school principal irrespective of the different work stations in the years of service.

Table 4.2: Principals' Length of Experience

Length of service	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 Years	2	11.1
4-6 Years	3	16.7
7-9 Years	9	50.0
Over 10 Years	4	22.2
TOTAL	18	100.0

Source: Principals' Questionnaire, 2015 N=18

From the findings, majority (50%) of the principals had a wealth of teaching experience having served in their current stations for 7-9 years, 22.2% of the principals had worked for over 10 years while 16.7% had worked for 4-6 years and only 11.1% had worked for less than 3 years. The results of the study show that over 50% of the principals who participated in the study had a working experience above 7 years. This gives them an added advantage of understanding and dealing with students and parents in relation to academic performance and financial management. With such an experience, principals were better placed to carry out prudent financial management. This implied that they were aware of the issues concerning their students and were in a position to offer valid information on the subject under investigation.

4.3.3 Duration in current station

The researcher sought to establish the distribution of principals in the sample by the duration they have been in the current station. Duration in the current station is the specified amount of time spent by an individual in the present institution as the principal in the particular secondary school.

Table 4.3 shows distribution of principals by duration in the current station. The data was from eighteen principals who responded to the questionnaires issued by the researcher.

Table 4.3: Principals' Duration in the Current Station

Job Position	Frequency	%
Less than 3 Years	3	16.7
4-6 Years	5	27.8
7-9 Years	8	44.4
Over 10 Years	2	11.1
TOTAL	18	100

Source: Principal's Questionnaire, 2015

N=18

Findings displayed in Table 4.3 shows 44.4% of the principals had been in the current station for a period ranging from 7-9 years while 27.8% had been in their current station for 4-6 years. The principals who had been in the current stations for less than 3 years

were 16.7% while 11.1% of the principals had been in the current stations for more than 10 years.

Cumulatively, the findings indicated that over 50% of the principals had served in the current station for more than 5 years. On the basis of long term service in their current stations, it is expected that the principals have good understanding of the financial management in their schools and in most cases they have been instrumental in developing the fees structures of their schools. This enabled the principals to provide well informed responses.

4.3.4 Length of Service for Class Teachers

Analysis of the teachers' distribution was by length of service in the current work station. The experience was in terms of the number of years that the teacher had served as a class teacher in the current work station. Table 4.4 shows distribution of class teachers by years of service in the current work station. This data was generated from responses got from the sampled class teachers in the study locale.

Table 4.4: Class Teachers' Length of Service

Number of Years	f	%
Less than 2 Years	23	19.2
3-4 Years	33	27.5
5-6 Years	52	43.3
7-8 Years	8	6.7
More than 9 Years	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Class teacher's Questionnaire, 2015

N=120

Findings displayed in Table 4.4 shows that 43.3% of the class teachers had been in the current station for a period ranging from 5-6 years while 27.5% had been in their current station for 3-4 years. Class teachers who had been in the current stations for less than 1 year were 19.2% while 6.7% had been in the current station for 7-8 years and only 3.3% of the class teachers had been in the current stations for more than 9 years.

Cumulatively, the findings indicated that over 50% of the class teachers had served in the current station for more than 5 years. On the basis of long term service in their current stations, it is expected that they have good understanding of the issues to do with school attendance and impact of user fees on participation of students in learning. This enabled the class teachers to provide well informed responses that could be relied on.

Additionally, working in the current work station for more than five years gave the class teachers an opportunity to fully interact with the student on a day to day basis hence they were in a better position to monitor the daily attendance, completion of assignments and individual student performance in continuous assessment tests with respect to the user fee charged in the school.

4.4 Types of User Charges in Public Secondary Schools

The first objective sought to identify the types of user charges levied in schools. This was achieved through the use of document analysis where the fee statements and other related documents were scrutinized. User charges refer to the total sum of contribution to costs by users in the form of cash or a charge per unit of service delivered. It is mostly the private costs per pupil which covers uniforms, textbooks, building fees and PTA contributions. The user charges levied have an impact on the ability of parents to raise the fee required which contributes to high rate of students being sent home to collect fee balances. Consequently, the students lose quality learning time.

Different schools levy different charges under different names. In order to obtain the data on types of user charges, researcher used document analysis schedules that indicated the nature of user charges levied by the schools. Table 4.5 summarizes the some common user charges identified.

Table 4.5: Types of User Charges in Schools

User Charge	Frequency	%
Activity Fee	18	100.0
Basic school Stationary	8	44.4
Development(PTA)	13	72.2
Laboratory Equipment	18	100.0
Personal Emolument	11	61.1
Teacher Motivation	16	88.9
Uniform Fee	18	100.0

Source: Document Analysis Schedule

The information presented in Table 4.5 indicates that schools charge a variety of user charges. All the 18 schools that responded had the following charges: activity fee, laboratory equipment fee and uniform fee. The three user fees mentioned were the most common in public secondary schools. The schools that charged teacher motivation fee were 16 which represents 88.9% charged while in 13 of the schools which represents 72.2% charged development fee. In the study locale, 11 schools whose representation was 61.1% charged personal emoluments fee while 8 of the schools which was 44.4% charged basic school stationary fee.

The findings indicate that the user charges are far above the subsidy given by the government. This implies that some of the user fees charged to the parents is a duplication of those catered for by the government subsidy such as activity fees, laboratory equipment and personal emolument.

Data accrued from the study showed that all schools sampled did charge extra levies. Student absenteeism was also attributed to being sent home to collect the money. As a result, the students stay at home while their counterparts are in school learning thus a negative impact to participation in the learning process. The findings of the study hence concurred with findings of UNESCO (2001) which reported that though the government has substantially subsidized the cost of education by providing capitation for secondary school students, most schools still charge high fees which are at times not affordable to most parents. The report further stated that the increased levies are charged in form of other user charges not catered for in the capitation. However, it did not mention how the extra levies impacted on student participation in the schools. This study found out that students were constantly in and out of school due to financial constraints. Time spent at home in an attempt to get school fees meant that the students lost valuable learning time.

The study further strengthens the findings of Odada and Odhiambo (2003) who argue that despite provision of free tuition in secondary schools in Kenya being one of the major education policy reform upon which the government sought to attract the poor and

vulnerable groups into the secondary school system, tuition charges had been introduced in most county schools; charges varied by school, but were generally on the upward spiral. Some schools disguised these levies under different names, such as remedial levy, education support programme, and academic welfare. The report further notes that this is done without official approval for such levies.

Furthermore, the findings of this study shed light on how the user charges affect participation in education which was not mentioned by a study carried by the World Bank on Seventy Five countries which revealed that almost all – approximately Seventy one countries which was over 94%- were seen to have the same type of fee except four countries where tuition in secondary education was provided free of charge. Countries that had free education were Tunisia, St.Kitts, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica. Fifty one countries – inclusive of Kenya – had five types of user fee that were common. The user fees included financial contributions and other school-based fees (World Bank, 2009). The study was more specific on the types of user charges in public secondary schools, which included fees for activity, basic school stationery, development, laboratory equipment, personal emolument, teacher motivation and uniform. It is these specific user charges that were seen to account for students being absent from school due to financial constraints.

4.5 Effects of User Charges on Daily Attendance

The second objective sought to evaluate the effect of user charges on the daily attendance of students in school. To achieve this objective, the researcher conducted document analysis and teachers' and principals' questionnaires to ascertain the total enrolment, average daily attendance and the percentage of students who are absent due to fee related problems.

Daily attendance of students is an important factor in determining the level of student academic achievement. The amount charged by schools in levies affect the ability of parents or guardians to afford the fees and at times students have to be sent home to collect fee balances. This affects their daily attendance owing to the time spent at home. The data collected was summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: School Attendance Data

Form	Total enrolled	Regular attendance	% absenteeism
1	1125	1002	11
2	1109	910	18
3	1085	847	21
4	967	824	13

Source: Document analysis schedule

The information displayed in Table 4.6 indicates that a substantial number of students are absent from school due to fees problems. The highest percentage of those who miss school is in Form 3 due to fees problems (21%) followed by Form 2 (18%), Form 4 (13%) and Form 1 records the lowest percentage (11%) of students who miss school due to fees related problems. The Form 1 students were least affected because school levies are paid on admission of the student to the school.

The study also sought to establish the extent to which escalation of fees and levies charged by schools contribute to absenteeism among the students. Figure 4.1 displays a summary of the responses obtained from principals.

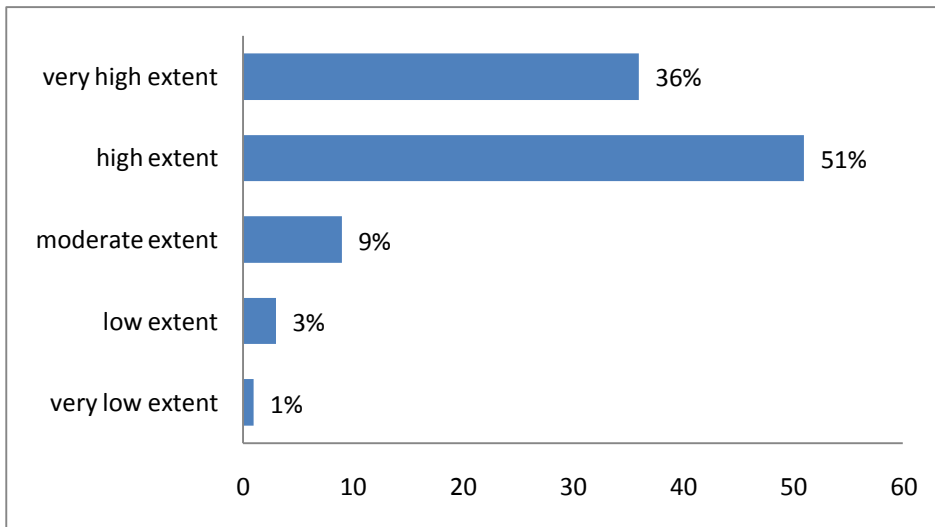


Figure 4.1: Effect of User Fee on Absenteeism

Source: Principals' Questionnaires, 2015

N=18

The information displayed in Figure 4.1 indicate that majority of the principals (51%) had the opinion that escalation of user fee contributed to absenteeism of the student to a high extent while only 1% of the principals felt that school absenteeism was affected by user fee charge to a low extent. It can therefore be agreed that indeed participation to education is negatively affected when schools charge levies in form of user fee. Worse still, if the levies are escalated, then absenteeism become widespread. Additionally, the findings from the study indicated that user charges at secondary schools promoted absenteeism among students.

Class teachers who interact with students on a daily basis also gave their opinion on how escalation in user levies affect absenteeism as displayed in figure 4.2.

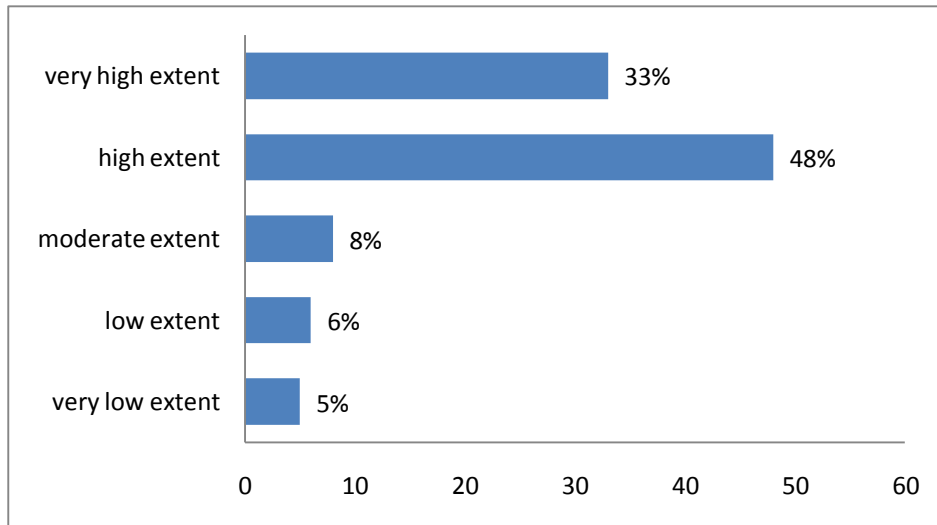


Figure 4.2: Effect User Fee rise on Absenteeism

Source: Teachers' Questionnaires, 2015

N=120

The information in Figure 4.2 indicates that majority of the class teachers (48%) felt that the escalation of fees and levies charged to a high extent contribute to absenteeism among the students while 33% felt that it contributes to a very high extent. Further 8% of the class teachers felt that school absenteeism due to escalation of fees was at a moderate extent with 6% of the class teachers suggesting that school absenteeism due to escalation of fees was at to a low extent and 5% of the teachers were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent.

Majority of the principals and class teachers felt that escalation of the fees and levies charged contribute to a high extent to absenteeism among the students which implies that user charges have a negative impact on daily attendance of students to schools. More principals were seen to agree to a high extent that indeed user fee charges had an effect on the student's daily attendance. The principals are the financial managers of their schools thus they are able to keep in track how student's absenteeism is affected by user fee charges.

The findings of this study that user charges impact negatively on the daily attendance of students' concur with those of other research work done on the impact of user charges on school absenteeism. For instance, an assessment on effect of user charges on enrolment and attendance by Reddy and Vandermoortele (2009) revealed that when households contribute to cost of education, there is reduced attendance ratios. The assessment reported that there is an increase on repetition rates and a decrease in achievement rates but did not clearly reveal how the cost to education affects daily school attendance. Findings of this study suggest that attendance ratios are negatively affected by user fees as children are sent home owing to non-payment of the required fees by the schools. In addition, it can also be argued based on the findings that user charges policy at secondary schools had promoted absenteeism among students; created room for corruption where some schools requested extra levies than what was indicated by the government. This is in tandem to a research done by Martim (2008) who observed that the extra levies

charged at secondary school level created a leeway for public secondary schools to demand higher fees compared to the fees guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. The high amounts of levies are unmanageable to some parents especially the poor.

Findings of this study shed more light on how daily attendance of students is affected by user charges. This issue had not been clearly brought out by a the report compiled by World Bank (2011) that attempted to explain why some children are left out on schooling with the view that “whereas the rates of return to schooling compare to the rates of return to the pupil with the costs to the parents, the most important issue is the perceived balance between the costs and benefits to the parents of sending their children to school.” This is because the parents accrue only some portion of the returns to schooling the report further stated. For this reason, there may be justifications for households that appear to under-invest in schooling irrespective of high economic return. Thus, the overall effect is that there arises a possible divergence of interest between the parents and children due to the school levies thus discouraging school enrolment. The report was based mostly on enrolment unlike the findings of this study that indicated that on average, 16% of the students are absent from school due to fee balances. Thus, daily attendance of the student is directly affected by user fee charges.

4.6 Effects of User Charges on Completion of Assignments

The third objective of the study sought to investigate the effect of user charges levied by schools on the completion of school work. The data was obtained using principals and teachers' questionnaires. Completion of assignments refers to the ability of the students to work on and complete the extra work assigned to be done. For the learning process to be effective, the student must be able to work on and complete the work assigned on timely basis. A student who is able to complete the work assigned participates well in classroom learning since they can benefit from the extra work assigned. User charges may influence the ability of the student to complete assignments since when the parents have a problem raising the extra fees; students are kept away from school and therefore cannot get enough time to follow up with the assigned work.

In order to meet this objective, the researcher sought to establish the extent to which the respondents attribute user charges to inability to complete assignments among the students. Figures 4.3 displays the responses obtained.

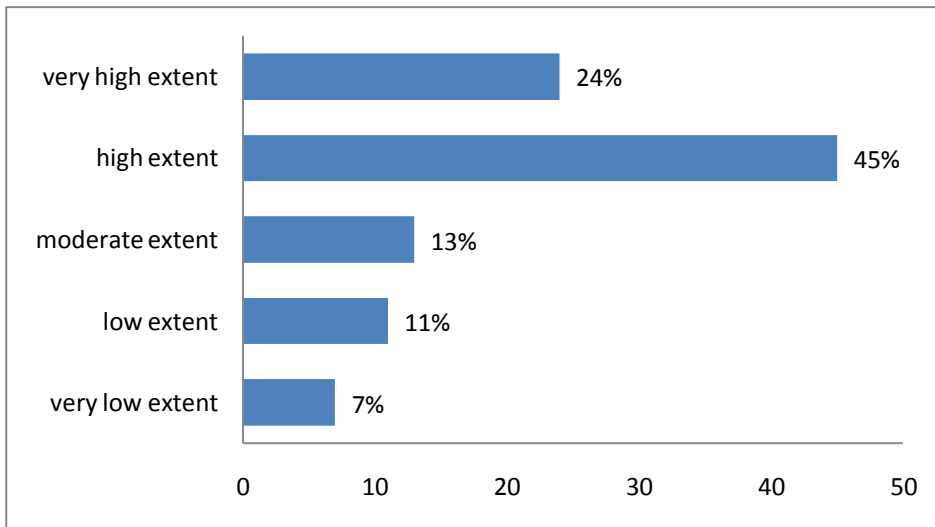


Figure 4.3: Effect of User Fees on Class Assignments Completion

Source: Teachers' questionnaires, 2015

N=120

The responses summarized in Figure 4.3 indicate that 45% of the class teachers felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to inability to complete assignments among the students is high, 24% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a very high extent, 13% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a moderate extent, 11% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a low extent and 7% of the class teachers were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent. It was therefore the feeling among majority of the class teachers that the extent to which user charges contribute to inability to complete assignments among the students is high. The students who are in and out of school have challenges in completing their assignments. This is because they are ever

home to collect fees miss out on quality school hours where teaching-learning process occurs.

4.6.1 User Charges on inability to complete Assignments

The study also sought to establish the extent to which the respondents attribute the escalation of user charges levied on the parents contribute to inability to complete class work assignments. Figure 4.4 summarize the responses obtained.

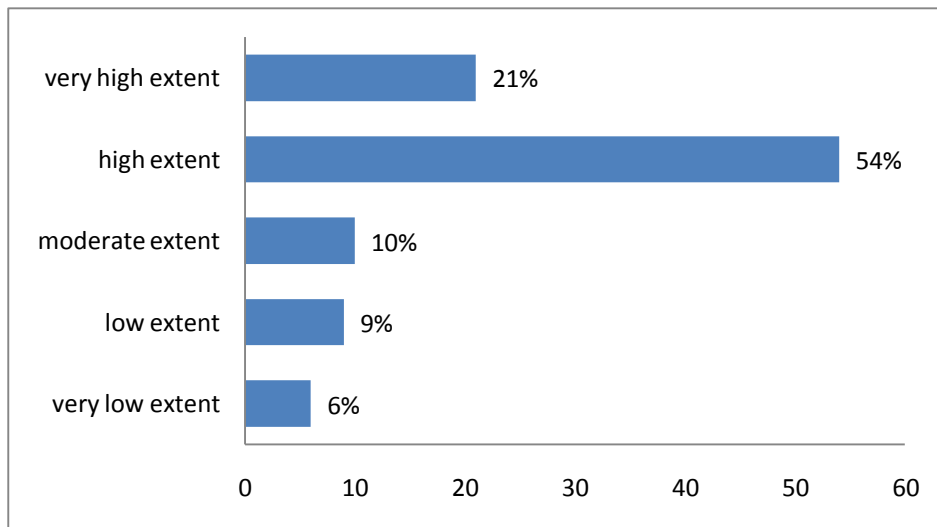


Figure 4.4: Effect of User Fee on Class Assignments

Source: Principals' Questionnaire, 2015

N=18

The information displayed in Figure 4.4 indicates that majority of the principals (54%) felt that the escalation of fees and levies charged to a high extent contribute to inability to complete class work assignments among the students while 21% of the principals felt that

it contributes to a very high extent, 10% of the principals to a moderate extent, 9% of principals to a low extent and 6% of the principals were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent to the inability to complete class work assignments among the students.

Cumulatively, it was therefore the feeling among majority of the class teachers that escalation of the fees and levies charged contribute to a high extent to poor performance in class work assignments among the students. Data accrued from class teachers responses could be relied on basing on the fact that the class teachers taught the student's on a daily basis and thus more enlightened on the factors hindering individual students from completing their assignments. For instance, high user fees mean more cost to the parents or guardians and may pose challenges to the promptness in payment. As such students may be sent home or parents keep them at home until they are able to raise the required levies. This affects the ability of the students affected to complete school work in time. The findings of the study that escalation of the fees and levies charged contribute to a high extent to poor performance in class work assignments among the students strengthens the findings in other related studies. In addition, the findings of the study echo those of a poverty assessment in Africa (2001) which found that poor communities had difficulties in keeping their children in school mainly due to the cost. The study reports that nearly half of the households interviewed in seven poor districts, there was one or more children absent from school at least on a monthly basis due to their inability

to pay school fees and their participation to education was affected. Findings from this study are in tandem with those of a study carried out by Kiveu and Maiyo (2009) who observes that the adoption of cost sharing policy in education has witnessed poor participation of children in education due to poor completion rates following fee burden as the root cause. In particular this study in particular revealed that time spent at home in an attempt to look for money means loss of quality school hours by the students. Hence, the individual students sent home would be adversely affected in terms of inability to do the assignments.

4.7 Effect of User Charges on the Performance at CATs

The fourth objective of the study sought to investigate the effect of user charges levied by schools on the performance in the CATs. Performance at CATs was measured from the class teachers' questionnaires and the document analysis schedules. Performance at CATs refers to the percentage score and grade obtained by the students in the continuous assessment tests.

The trend in the performance in the CATs is a measure of how well the student is participating in schoolwork. High user charges pose a challenge to the parents and guardians in raising the required amounts. This may lead to students being kept away from school and may affect their performance in the internal examinations due to lack of continuity in learning. The study sought to establish the extent to which the respondents

attribute user charges to poor performance in the CATs. The responses of obtained were as summarized in Figure 4.5.

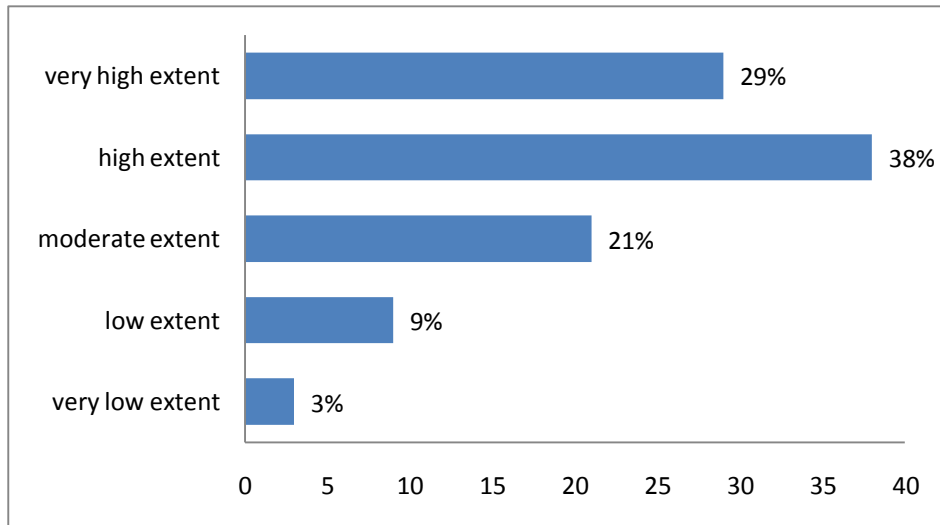


Figure 4.5: Effect of User Charges on CATs

Source: Class Teachers' Questionnaires, 2015

N=120

The responses summarized in Figure 4.5 indicate that 38% of the class teachers felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to poor performance among the students is high, 29% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a very high extent, 21% of the class teachers to a moderate extent, 9% of the class teachers to a low extent and 3% of the class teachers were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent. Cumulatively, it was therefore the feeling among majority of the class teachers that the extent to which user charges contribute to poor performance in the CATs among the students is high.

The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that extra school levies have negative effects on academic performance. These shows that poor academic performance is influenced by parent's inability to pay school fees, parents withdrawing their children from school in order to have them engaged in income generating activities, inability of parents to provide basic needs, labor market conditions and level of financing by government and other stakeholders. The poor the performance in CATs strengthen those of Ngware et al. (2007) where he asserts that effective demand for education at each level is a positive function of income a fact further supported by Lewis (2011) who asserts that low income among households has been identified as one of the factors that discourage parents from investing in their children's education and by extension some communities are not able to meet the ever increasing cost of schooling adequately.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this study presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations for future study. The aim of this study was to provide information on the effect of user charges on participation in education among students in public secondary schools in Kitui County. This was based on the research findings that is presented and discussed in the previous chapters. The purpose of this chapter was to present a summary of the study, to depict conclusions and present recommendations in accordance with the research results.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The following sections provide a summary of findings of the study based on its objectives.

5.2.1 To identify the types of user charges in public secondary schools

The study found that all the schools that participated in the study levy a number of user charges. The findings from Table 4.5 indicated that schools charge a variety of user charges. All the 18 schools that responded had the following charges: activity fee, laboratory equipment fee and uniform fee. The three user fees mentioned were the most common in public secondary schools. The schools that charged teacher motivation fee

were 16 which represents 88.9% charged while in 13 of the schools which represents 72.2% charged development fee. In the study locale, 11 schools whose representation was 61.1% charged personal emoluments fee while 8 of the schools which was 44.4% charged basic school stationary fee.

Majority of the charges levied by the schools are not authorized by the ministry of Education. This suggested that most schools charge extra school levies which many parents find it difficult to raise and hence students are sent home to collect money which may impact on their participation in education.

5.2.2 To find out the effect of user charges on the daily attendance of the students in public secondary schools.

The study found that a substantial number of students were absent from school due to fees problems. Figure 4.1 indicated that majority of the principals (51%) had the opinion that escalation of user fee contributed to absenteeism of the student to a high extent while Figure 4.2 indicated that majority of the class teachers (48%) felt that the escalation of fees and levies charged to a high extent contribute to absenteeism among the students. Students sent home to collect fees would miss classes due to quality learning hours spent away from school.

5.2.3 To investigate the effect of user charges levied by schools on the completion of assignments.

The study found out that 45% of the teachers felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to inability to complete school work among the students is high, 24% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a very high extent, 13% of the teachers felt that it contributes to a moderate extent, 11% of the teachers felt that it contributes to a low extent and 7% of the teachers were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent. The student spent quality school hours out of school due to lack of finances thus they missed the chance to complete their assignments. This can be argued on the background that the individual students would stay home for a while as their parents sourced for funds. Time spent at home meant quality teaching-learning hours lost thus when they went back to school, their counterparts would have already moved on with the syllabus.

5.2.4 To investigate the effect of user charges levied by schools on the performance in the CATs.

The responses summarized from Figure 4.5 indicated that 38% of the class teachers felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to poor performance among the students is high, 29% of the class teachers felt that it contributes to a very high extent, 21% of the class teachers to a moderate extent, 19% of the class teachers to a low extent and 3% of the class teachers were of the opinion that it contributes to a very low extent.

Cumulatively, it was therefore the feeling among majority of the class teachers that escalation of the fees and levies charged contribute to a high extent to poor performance at CATs among the students. Time spent at home by the students in an attempt to get user levies meant inactive participation of what the other students back in the school were learning. As a result, when assessment and evaluation would be done, then these students would perform poorly since they missed out on what was taught in their absentia.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- i. The predominant types of user charges were activity fee, laboratory equipment fee, uniform fee, teacher motivation fee and basic school stationary in public secondary schools.
- ii. User fee charges contribute greatly to school absenteeism in public secondary schools as perceived by principals and class teachers.
- iii. User charges highly contribute to inability to complete school work assignments among students in public secondary schools as perceived by principals and class teachers.
- iv. User fee charges lead to poor performance of students at continuous assessment tests. This is because the student spends quality school hours at home instead of actively engaging in the teaching-learning process at school. Class teachers who

felt that the extent to which user charges contribute to poor performance was at a high extent.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made.

- i. The level of financing of education by the government for activity, laboratory equipment and purchase of basic stationery should be increased in order to significantly reduce the user charges in public secondary schools thus students do not miss out on quality schooling time in an attempt to look for these levies.
- ii. School uniforms should be abolished in public secondary schools since they contribute to absenteeism of the students who lack funds to purchase the school uniform.
- iii. The government should establish the unit cost of secondary education, come up with fee guidelines and enforce regulations on fees charged in public secondary schools to avoid extra cost to the parent. This will ensure no student is sent home to collect user levies thus actively participate in the teaching-learning process.
- iv. The government through salaries and remuneration commission should increase teacher's salaries to avoid extra charges by the parent in an attempt to supplement the teacher meager salary. This way, there will be less user charges and the student will not miss on syllabus coverage which ultimately boost their academic performance.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The present study concentrated on user charges in public secondary schools only. However, there are other charges levied in schools over and above the publicly acknowledged ones therefore:

- i. Further research should be directed to the hidden charges and study carried out on the relationship between hidden costs and participation rates. This is because, other than user fees charged directly by the schools, there are other costs incurred by the households in an attempt to secure secondary education for their children.
- ii. The study was only limited to principals and class teachers. However, the views of parents who play a crucial role in educating their children were left out. There is need to carry out a similar study involving the parents in order to incorporate their views so as to have a comprehensive report.
- iii. Since the study was carried out in one rural setting, a similar study should be conducted in an urban setting and the results compared. This is due to the fact that challenges faced in urban setting are unique and different from those faced in rural setting due to different economic and socio-cultural backgrounds.

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APPENDIX I

LETTER TO THE COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**VIOLET WAINAINA,
P.O BOX 161-90402,
MWINGI.**

**TO THE COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
KITUI COUNTY.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN KITUI COUNTY

I am a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a Master of Education degree in Educational Planning. As part of my course, I am required to do a project on the effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-county, Kitui County. The purpose of this letter is to seek your permission to collect relevant data from schools in Migwani Sub County. I promise to abide by the relevant rules and regulations as well as ethical consideration.

Yours Faithfully,

Violet Wainaina.

Cell phone: 0712995084

E-mail : wambuiwainaina7@gmail.com

APPENDIX II

PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a Master of Education degree in Educational Planning. I am carrying out a study on effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-county, Kitui County.

Data from this questionnaire are meant for academic purpose only. Kindly you are requested to provide answers to these questions in the most honest and precise way.

Please do not write your name or that of your school or place of work anywhere on this questionnaire. Please tick [✓] where appropriate or fill the required information on the spaces provided.

Thank you.

Violet Wainaina.

Instructions

Kindly use tick (✓) inside the boxes to indicate correct answer(s) where the answers are given in choices.

SECTION A: GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is the length of your experience as a principal?

- a) Less than 3 Years ()
- b) 4-6 Years ()
- c) 7-9 Years ()
- d) Over 10 Years ()

2. For how long have you been in this school?

Duration in years	Tick (√)
Less than 3 Years	
Between 4– 6 Years	
Between 7-9 Years	
Above 10 Years	

SECTION B: EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON DAILY ATTENDANCE

3. To what extent do fees and levies charged by the school account for drop out from school?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

4. To what extent does the escalation of fees and levies charged by you school contribute to school absenteeism among the students?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()

- v. Very low extent ()

5. What remedies does your school put in place to ensure that the fees and levies charged do not lead to school dropout or absenteeism among the students?

SECTION C: EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON COMPLETION OF SCHOOL WORK

6. To what extent do fees and levies charged by the school account for inability of students to complete their class assignments?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

7. To what extent does the escalation of fees and levies charged by you school contribute to poor performance of class work assignments among the students?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()

iv. Low extent ()

v. Very low extent ()

8. What remedies does your school put in place to ensure that the fees and levies charged do not lead to poor completion of class assignments among the students?

APPENDIX III

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a Master of Education degree in Educational Planning. I am carrying out a study on effect of user charges on participation among students in public secondary schools in Migwani Sub-county, Kitui County.

Data from this questionnaire are meant for academic purpose only. Kindly you are requested to provide answers to these questions in the most honest and precise way. All responses will be treated with high confidentiality and anonymity. Please do not write your name or that of your school or place of work anywhere on this questionnaire. Please tick [√] where appropriate or fill the required information on the spaces provided.

SECTION A: GENENERAL INFORMATION

1. For how long have you served in the current work station?

- i. Less than 2 Years ()
- ii. 3-4 Years ()
- iii. 5-6 Years ()
- iv. 7-8 Years ()
- v. More than 9 Years ()

SECTION B: EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON DAILY ATTENDANCE

2. To what extent do fees and levies charged by the school account for absenteeism from school in your class?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

3. To what extent does the escalation of fees and levies charged by you school contribute to school absenteeism among the students in your class?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

4. What remedies does your school put in place to ensure that the fees and levies charged do not lead to absenteeism among the students?

SECTION C: EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON COMPLETION OF SCHOOL WORK

5. To what extent do fees and levies charged by the school account for inability of students in your class to complete their class assignments?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

6. To what extent does the escalation of fees and levies charged by you school contribute to poor performance of class work assignments among the students in your class?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

7. What remedies does your school put in place to ensure that the fees and levies charged do not lead to poor completion of class assignments among the students?

SECTION D: EFFECT OF USER CHARGES ON PERFORMANCE IN CATs

8. To what extent do fees and levies charged by the school account for poor performance of students in the CATs in your class?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

9. To what extent does the escalation of fees and levies charged by you school contribute to poor academic performance among students in your class?

- i. Very high extent ()
- ii. High extent ()
- iii. Moderate extent ()
- iv. Low extent ()
- v. Very low extent ()

10. What remedies does your school put in place to ensure that the fees and levies charged do not lead to poor performance of students in examinations?

APPENDIX IV

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

School Code _____

1. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

FORM	TOTAL NUMBER ENROLED	REGULAR ATTENDANCE	% OF STUDENTS MISSING SCHOOL DUE TO FEES/ LEVIES REASONS
1			
2			
3			
4			

2. SCHOOL FEES LEVIES

VOTE HEAD	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4
BES				
PE				
Activity				
RM&I				
EW&C				
Examinations				
LT&T				
Medical				
Caution				
Uniforms				
TOTAL				