



FREE DAY SECONDARY EDUCATION POLICY AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TURKANA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of free day secondary education policy on student attendance in secondary schools in Turkana County. The study was guided by the Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunities. The study adopted a mixed research design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The study target population was 451 respondents consisting of both education officers, school principals and teachers. A cluster sample design was used to arrive at sample size of 212 respondents. The study used interview schedules and structured questionnaires to gather primary data from respondents and secondary data consisted of the use of document analysis targeting official records from sampled schools and the county education office. Data was analyzed using the SPSS Version 22 and included use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The mean, frequencies, and percentages were the descriptive statistics that were used while correlation and regression was used as inferential statistics. The study sought to determine the extent to which Free Day Secondary Education policy influences school attendance in education by the students in public secondary schools in Turkana County. The study finding rejected the null hypothesis and therefore concluded that Free Day Secondary Education policy significantly affects school attendance in education in secondary schools in Turkana County. The study concluded that free day secondary school education has positively influenced attendance in education. The researcher made the following recommendations; that the government should come up with mechanisms to monitor and evaluate FDSE funded projects in public secondary schools to ensure accountability. Based on the other finding that the government subsidies were not adequate to support acquisition of teaching and learning resources, the researcher recommended that the government should increase its allocation towards subsidizing teaching and learning resources in schools in the country.

Key Words: Free Day Secondary Education Policy, Student Attendance Rates, Public Secondary Schools County, Kenya

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INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized as a basic human right and the resulting advocacy is that everyone has the right to it without pay, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages of education. Economically, educational attainment is becoming more increasingly important, relative to other factors of production, as it leads to the transformation of other resources to enhance civil and better livelihoods among communities (OECD, 2005).

Globally, Nations around the world have adopted policies and strategies to increase access to basic education. According to Ashraf, & Hafiza (2011) these policies are aimed at increasing attendance, achieve gender parity, and increase transition of learners from one level of education to another. The Pakistan Constitution mandates the state to provide free primary and secondary education. Basing on Article 25-A of Constitution of Pakistan, Ashraf, & Hafiza, (2011) points to the obligation the state has in provision of free and compulsory quality education to children of age 5 to 16 years. Furthermore, secondary education in Pakistan is from the age of 14–18 years which means that most students who qualify for secondary education yet their age bracket is beyond sixteen years may not be able to enjoy the free education policy as enshrined in Pakistan's constitution.

In Africa, one of the countries that has implemented the free basic education is Ghana. Abdul-Rahaman (2018) states that in 2001, the Government of Ghana introduced subsidies at the Senior High School which was meant to reduce the burden on parents and guardians onwards in public schools. The government of Ghana in 2017 accordingly, switched the policy to a free senior high school education finally eliminating the financial burden parents' faces in paying their children's fees in a cost sharing arrangement. The free senior high school policy put more students on seats in helping to reduce financial burdens on parents than the pre-existing progressive free

education policy since nothing is paid by parents or guardians.

Regionally, the Tanzanian government in 2014 launched the new 2014 Education and Training Policy according to Godda (2018). This policy led to provision of 10 years of free and compulsory primary and lower secondary education to all citizens. In 2016, the government abolished all fees and additional financial requirements for lower secondary education and allocated an additional Tanzania shilling 137 billion (\$62 million); sourced from cost-cutting measures and savings within the government ministries. The free day secondary education policy increased attendance and number of students in primary and secondary schools thereafter.

Further, Essuman (2018) looks at the Ugandan government which started a universally free day secondary school education in 2007. This was a first of its kind in Sub-Saharan African region. Although this was taunted as free, the government paid only the tuition while students paid boarding and other school requirements. The universal secondary education was essentially aimed at increasing access into secondary schools and also to increase the quality of education. The free day secondary education was also geared at sustaining the gains of the universal primary education. The Uganda Secondary Education (USE) policy has considerably increased public secondary school enrollment especially for girls from poor households.

The Kenyan government has developed policies that make her citizens access this basic commodity. Adaptation of Education for All (EFA), a declaration by leaders from various third world countries aimed at pushing for improved literacy levels through acquisition of basic education (the primary and the secondary education) in 2000 Dakar. This was a need in addressing the rising demand for education of the citizens of the third world countries in Africa as per the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (2007).

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school student participation in education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) continues to be the lowest in the world. It is approximated that there are about 104 million secondary school-age children in the region; however, only one in four (25%) were enrolled in secondary school in 2006 (UNESCO, 2008). Out of these, there were 83 girls for every 100 boys (*ibid*, 2008). In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) in secondary education is 40 percent with 107 boys for every 100 girls. The Government of Kenya's policies such as initiating out of school programmes for pastoralist children's mobile schools and boarding institutions to cater for nomadic children (GoK, 2019) is laudable. Despite the existence of this policy, the evidence suggests that there are still disparities in terms of secondary education attendance, quality, completion, and gender parity in secondary school in the country. The Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) which the County of Turkana belong are lagging behind other counties in the country in terms of gender parity and student attendance rates. Comparatively, Aoko, Simatwa, & Ayodo, 2016 concluded that FDSE policy had significantly increased access in medium and large secondary schools. However, these factors coupled with other intervening factors have led to low attendance, transition rate and gender parity in Turkana County advocated by the FDSE policy. The Turkana County Annual Development plan of 2018/19 estimates that by 2019 the county school going age for secondary schools was at approximately 164,231 students. However, the county director of education records of 2019, despite the free day secondary school policy, reports that the annual student participation stood at 33,674 students which is only 22.6% of the estimated population pointing at a serious gap in both enrolment and attendance of learners in the county. Its against this background that the study sought to examine Free day secondary education policy and its effect on student participation in public secondary schools in Turkana County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined free day secondary education policy and its effect on student participation in public secondary schools in Turkana County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objective;

- To determine the influence of Free Day Secondary Education policy on school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County.

The study aimed to answer the following research hypotheses;

- **H₀:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Free Day Secondary Education

Significance of the Study

The study may be of value to policy and decision makers in education sector which include teachers, principals of schools, board of management, education officers and county department of Education. The findings may give insight into the impact of FDSE on student participation. This will help all education officers in the county to develop means of reaching school going students to attend school and together thus allocate FDSE appropriately. The study will also be significant to county government officials, school principals, and board of management of secondary schools in Turkana County to be able to mitigate the challenges that impede effective implementation of FDSE in the county. The study may also be of importance to scholars and academia as it will contribute to the body of knowledge on the impact of FDSE on secondary education in ASAL areas and was a blueprint for further research on the topic of FDSE.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on evaluating FDSE policy effectiveness on attendance in secondary school education in Turkana County. The study was conducted in public co-education day secondary schools within Turkana County. The co-education

aspect is necessary to know the gender parity. On the other hand, public day schools are assumed that education is free for all students attending these schools. The study assessed secondary data on attendance in various schools in the last three years 2017 to 2020. The data was collected from head teachers' monthly returns, Sub-County Quality Assurance Officers, County Education Official and the County Education Chief of Staff, Turkana County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

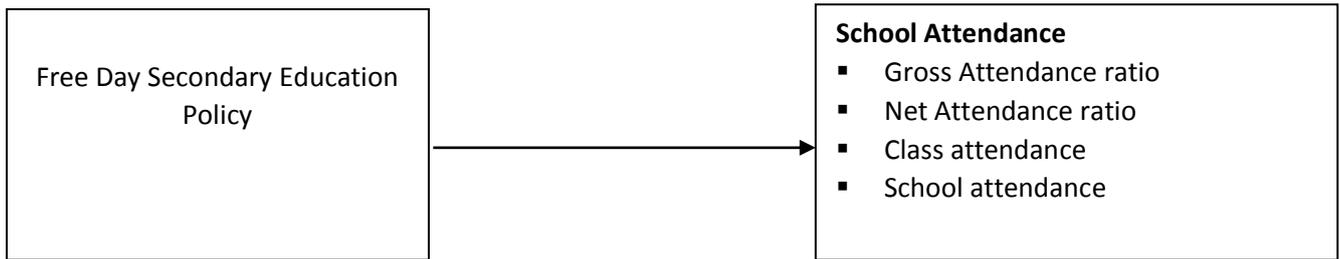
Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunities

This theory was developed by Sherman & Wood (1982) who advanced the classical liberal theory of equal opportunities which expressed the view that there should be equal opportunities in education for all. This theory asserts that each individual is born with a given amount of capacity. In this case, educational systems should be designed with a view to removing barriers of any nature, for example, barriers based on socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, geographical factors, school-based factors which prevent learners who have a learning disability to take advantage of their inborn talents since disability is not inability Opere (2015).

Therefore, the study was focusing on how the FDSE policy has over time helped the learners access the opportunity to study. Also, the study will focus on other factors that could determine the success of the FDSE policy in secondary schools in Turkana County especially to the boys and girls of school going age in secondary schools. If all factors are considered as outlined by the theory, the study focused on effects of FDSE on gender parity in secondary student participation.

On the other hand, Classical Liberal Theory of Equal opportunities, an individual's Socio-Economic Status (SES) is a product of the environment they live in. Thus, nature and nurture have a bearing on an individual's destiny. Equal opportunity is a stipulation that all people should be treated similarly, unhampered by artificial barriers or prejudices except when a particular distinction can be explicitly justified Sava & Orodho (2014). In essence, this struggle in the economic sense could hamper the transition rate of learners from primary to secondary school in Turkana County despite the policy making it a compulsory venture for all people to access education opportunities. This part of the theory forms the assumption that FDSE policy could be making little impact in terms of access to quality education in the county and that other recommendations to be made by this study to make the policy not only relevant but effective to the people it targets in the arid and semi-arid areas.

Arid and Semi-Arid Lands are areas that are on a larger part neglected by the central government in terms of equal opportunities leading to exclusion in terms of social and economic development and this impacts negatively on education. This theory is thus relevant to address the role of FDSE policy in improving educational attainment among communities in the ASAL region. Other studies by (Dube & Orodho, 2014; Areba, Ayodo, & Chemwei, 2016) have adopted the theory of equal opportunities to explore the role of FDSE in improving educational outcomes. This theory then guided the study to interrogate the effects of FDSE policy on a number of areas of interest in the empirical literature.



Independent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2020).

Dependent Variables

Empirical Literature on Free Day Secondary Education on School attendance rates

Learners' retention has been studied for decades with a variety of research and conclusions made on factors that influence student retention and success. Retention is measured by the 'completion rate' the proportion of those students who enroll in form one complete the four years cycle of post primary education and sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination (KCSE)(NAO,2007). One persistent constraint in attaining the goals of education for all (EFA) is the rate of drop out from education systems. (Wamahiu, 1997) According to MOE (2007) completion rates in 2004 in secondary schools registered 91.5% for boys and 87.5% for girls. The girls registered 12.5% drop out. In spite of the government policies to enhance enrolments in secondary sub sector, the girl's participation, retention, transition and completion at secondary school education level are lower than boys. In 2004 the national Gross Enrollment rate (GER) was 31.7% for boys and 27.3% for girls (MOE, 2007). This became a contention which the current study sought to address.

Wafula and Kiplagat (2017) conducted a study on attendance dilemma and its consequence on academic performance of students in public mixed secondary schools in Kisii County. The study examined the school attendance rates patterns,

causes of attendance challenge and their impact on the academic performance of Secondary Schools' students. This research study was conducted using a comparative and correlation design. The study sampled scores of attendances and examinations of 2,372 students from 30 public mixed secondary schools using simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. The study found that attendance was influenced by school related factors, family or home related factors, and student related factors and economic or cultural related factors. This is a further demonstration that FDSE policy framework lacks the directive on considering the intervening factors that can act as an impediment to the effectiveness of the policy on attendance of students in secondary school in Turkana County.

Yaakov (2015) in his paper presentation, examined the concept of Financing Post-Primary Education in Kenya conducting a review of structure, trends and challenges. The paper was based on the mix of desk research and interviews with selected key informants. The desk research entailed review of relevant policy documents, grey literature and peer-reviewed articles. Data on education outputs and financing was analyzed from cross-country comparable sources. The field research entailed a two-week interview with selected key informants in the education sector and education financing. Semi-structured interviews were held with approximately

40 stakeholders. The findings revealed that costs make attendance of boarding schools unaffordable for those students coming from the poorest and most vulnerable background. However, the study never looked at the day schools that this research is focusing on. It is thus necessary that the gap in day schools be addressed in order to make informed conclusions on how the FDSE policy affects the attendance of students in public day secondary schools.

Korir (2014) undertook an investigation of students' attendance patterns and measures in place to curb the menace in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County. The study was set to look into student's school attendance rates, causes of student school non-attendance and students' performance in order to establish ways of mitigating this trend. The study used descriptive survey design targeting all public secondary schools in Njoro sub-county. The target population for the study comprised of 169 male and 89 female teachers. There were more than 30 public secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 8 schools and 156 teachers. The study found that absenteeism was relatively high which suggested that free day secondary education policy has done less in students' school attendance rates leading to questionable retention rate in schools as a result of FDSE.

Lelei (2018) assessed the influence of tuition free day secondary educational subsidy on students' attendance rates in public secondary schools in Kasarani Sub County. The study aimed to assess the influence of free day secondary education on completion rates, retention rates, dropout rates, and attendance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 1,138 students and a sample size of 341 respondents using simple random procedure. The study adopted the human capital theory. The study found that levies met by parents include payment for lunch programs and uniform which were not

covered by the subsidy to schools but had a great impact on school attendance rates. This research although it intended to look at completion, retention, dropout and attendance, it only focused on the completion rate creating a gap in the findings on how FDSE affected the attendance in public day secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study target population was 451 respondents consisting of education officers, school principals and teachers. A cluster sample design was used to arrive at sample size of 212 respondents. The study used interview schedules and structured questionnaires to gather primary data from respondents and secondary data consisted of the use of document analysis targeting official records from sampled schools and the county education office. Data was analyzed using the SPSS Version 22 and included use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The mean, frequencies, and percentages are the descriptive statistics that were used while correlation and regression was used as inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics Results on the Influence of Free Day Secondary Education policy on school attendance rates

This section sought to give a detailed account of the data obtain and interpret it accordingly using in-depth description. The study analyzed results based on the study objectives.

Objective one sought to determine the effect of Free Day Secondary Education policy on school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County. To achieve this, respondents were asked to give their opinions on how they agree or disagree with the statements in Likert scale of 1-5, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. The results were presented in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for school attendance rates

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Tot.	Mean	SD
The school has experienced regular student attendance since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	14	20	168	208	4.6829	.705
	%	0	2.9	6.7	9.6	80.3	100		
There has been a marked improvement in student participation rates since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	14	20	168	208	4.6829	.705
	%	0	2.9	6.7	9.6	80.3	100		
The attendance of students have improved since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	16	80	106	208	4.37	.753
	%	0	2.9	7.7	38.5	51.0	100		
Student involvement in classroom activities have increased since introduction of FDSE	F	4	46	18	108	34	208	3.58	1.07
	%	1.9	22.1	8.7	51	16.3	100		
	%	1.9	22.1	8.7	51	16.3	100		
There has been an increase in active participation in school work since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	0	94	108	208	4.46	.652
	%	0	2.9	0	45.2	51.9	100		
There has been an increase in active participation in school activities since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	14	20	168	208	4.6829	.705
	%	0	2.9	6.7	9.6	80.3	100		
Absenteeism has reduced due to FDSE	F	0	6	14	20	168	208	4.6829	.705
	%	0	2.9	6.7	9.6	80.3	100		
Students are present the whole day in school since introduction of FDSE	F	0	6	16	80	106	208	4.37	.753
	%	0	2.9	7.7	38.5	51.0	100		
	%	0	2.9	7.7	38.5	51.0	100		
There has been an increase in punctuality since introduction of FDSE	F	4	46	18	106	34	208	3.58	1.07
	%	1.9	22.1	8.7	51	16.3	100		

Source: Research Data (2021)

On whether the school had experienced regular student attendance since introduction of FDSE, 168 (80.3%) strongly agreed, 20 (9.6%) agreed, 14 (6.7%) were not sure, while 6 (2.9%) disagreed. Since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it is therefore agreeable to say that the school had experienced regular student attendance since introduction of FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether there has been a marked improvement in student participation rates since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 168 (80.3%) strongly agreed, 20 (9.6%) agreed, 14 (6.7%) were not sure, while 6 (2.9%) disagreed. Since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents

agreed, it is agreeable to say that there has been a marked improvement in student participation rates since introduction of FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether the attendance of students has improved since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 106 (51%) strongly agreed, 80 (38.5%) agreed, 16 (7.7%) were not sure while 6 (2.9%) did not agree. This shows that 186 (89.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that the attendance of students has improved since introduction of FDSE as opposed to only 6 (2.9%) who did not agree. This is reflected in the mean of 4.3750 which is above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On the issue of whether student involvement in classroom activities has increased since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who took part in the study, 34 (16.3%) strongly agreed, 106 (51%) agreed, 18 (8.7%) were not sure, 46 (22.1%) disagreed, while 8 (1.9%) strongly disagreed. From the study 140 (67.3%) agreed with the assertion that student involvement in classroom activities has increased since introduction of FDSE as supported by the mean of 3.5769.

On whether there has been an increase in active participation in school work since introduction of FDSE, the study found out that, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 108 (51.9%) strongly agreed, 94 (45.2%) agreed, 6 (2.9%) disagreed while there was no response for not sure and strongly disagree respectively. This implies that majority of the interviewed 202 (97.1%) agree that there has been an increase in active participation in school work since introduction of FDSE. This is confirmed with a mean of 4.4615 which is way above the composite mean of 4.1442.

On whether there has been an increase in active participation in school activities since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 168 (80.3%) strongly agreed, 20 (9.6%) agreed, 14 (6.7%) were not sure, while 6 (2.9%) disagreed. Since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it implies that there has been an increase in active participation in school activities since introduction of FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether the absenteeism has reduced due to FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 168 (80.3%) strongly agreed, 20 (9.6%) agreed, 14 (6.7%) were not sure, while 6 (2.9%) disagreed. Since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it is agreeable to say that absenteeism has drastically reduced due to FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether students are present the whole day in school since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, 106 (51%) strongly agreed, 80 (38.5%) agreed, 16 (7.7%) were not sure while 6 (2.9%) did not agree. This shows that 186 (89.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that students are present the whole day in school since introduction of FDSE as opposed to only 6 (2.9%) who did not agree. This is reflected in the mean of 4.3750 which is above the composite mean 4.3053.

On the issue of whether there has been an increase in punctuality since introduction of FDSE, out of 208 respondents who took part in the study, 34 (16.3%) strongly agreed, 106 (51%) agreed, 18 (8.7%) were not sure, 46 (22.1%) disagreed, while 4 (1.9%) strongly disagreed. From the study 140 (67.3%) agreed with the assertion that there has been an increase in punctuality since introduction of FDSE as supported by the mean of 3.5769.

The findings from the interview schedules showed that respondents believed that free secondary school education has improved school attendance rates in most public secondary schools in Turkana County. One of the respondents is quoted saying, "Nowadays our students are always in class because rarely do they go home for fees." Also, the school attendance registers examined during the interviews showed regular attendance of learners in most schools.

To investigate whether there was any significant statistical influence of Free Day Secondary Education policy on school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County, regression analysis was conducted to demonstrate the relationship between variables. The study hypothesized that free day secondary education policy has no significant influence on school attendance rates and the regression results in Table 2 indicates FDSE policy against the school attendance rates.

Table 2: Relationship between FDSE and school attendance rates

ANOVA statistics						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	.20670458	1	.20670458	F (1,102) = 74	0.000	
Residual	46.56868	207	.456555687			
Total	46.7753846	208	.454129948			
R-squared = 0.530		Adj R-squared = -0.440		Root = .0563		
Coefficient estimates						
FDSE	Unstd Coefficient.	Std beta	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Constant	3.67462		.510756	7.19	0.000	2.66154 4.6877
FDSE and school attendance rates	.079151	.0664762	.117632	0.67	0.503	-0.15417 .312473

Source: Research Data (2020)

The statistic, $F(1, 207)$, $p < 0.00$, shows that the regression model is statistically significant in predicting the dependent variable. Therefore, Free Day secondary education policy explains a variation in school attendance. Since the overall model is statically significant, all the beta coefficients are significant. The study sought to determine the extent to which Free Day Secondary Education policy influences school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County. The null hypothesis was stated as follows: Free Day Secondary Education policy has no significant influence on school attendance rates. The study finding therefore, rejects the null hypothesis and thus concludes that FDSE policy significantly influence the school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County. This is as a result of subsidized education where the burden of fees payment is significantly reduced and enables learners to attend school albeit other challenges.

These study findings are supported by previous works. For instance, Wafula and Kiplagat (2017) conducted a study on attendance dilemma and its consequence on academic performance of students in public mixed secondary schools in Kisii County. The study examined the school attendance rates patterns, causes of attendance challenge and their impact on the academic performance of public secondary school students. This research study was conducted using a comparative and correlation

design analysis. The study sampled scores of attendances and examinations of 2,372 students from 30 public mixed secondary schools using simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. The study found that attendance was influenced by school related factors, family or home related factors, and student related factors and economic or cultural related factors. However, it supports the fact that FDSE has in the long run enabled majority of learners attend school in as much as other factors are present.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study sought to examine the effect of Free Day Secondary Education policy on school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County. On whether the school has the school has experienced regular student attendance since introduction of FDSE, since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it is agreeable to say that the school has experienced regular student attendance since introduction of FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053. On whether there has been a marked improvement in student participation rates since introduction of FDSE, since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it is agreeable to say that there has been a marked improvement in student participation rates since introduction of FDSE. This

is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether the attendance of students has improved since introduction of FDSE, majority 186 (89.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that the attendance of students has improved since introduction of FDSE as opposed to only 6(2.9%) who did not agree. This is reflected in the mean of 4.3750 which is above the composite mean 4.3053. On the issue of whether student involvement in classrooms activities has increased since introduction of FDSE, From the study 140 (67.3%) agreed with the assertion that student involvement in classrooms activities has increased since introduction of FDSE as supported by the mean of 3.5769.

On whether there has been an increase in active participation in school work since introduction of FDSE, the study found out that majority 202 (97.1%) agree that there has been an increase in active participation in school work since introduction of FDSE. This is confirmed with a mean of 4.4615 which is way above the composite mean of 4.1442. On whether respondents there has been an increase in active participation in school activities since introduction of FDSE, since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it implies that there has been an increase in active participation in school activities since introduction of FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053. On whether the absenteeism has reduced due to FDSE, out of 208 respondents who participated in the study, since 188 (90.4%) of the respondents agreed, it is agreeable to say that absenteeism has reduced due to FDSE. This is supported by the mean of 4.6827 which is way above the composite mean of 4.3053.

On whether respondents' students are present during the whole day at school since introduction of FDSE, majority 186 (89.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that students are present during the whole day at school since introduction of FDSE as

opposed to only 6 (2.9%) who did not agree. This is reflected in the mean of 4.3750 which is above the composite mean 4.3053. On the issue of whether there has been an increase in punctuality since introduction of FDSE, from the study 140 (67.3%) agreed with the assertion that there has been an increase in punctuality since introduction of FDSE as supported by the mean of 3.5769. Findings from the interview schedules showed that the respondents believed that free secondary school education has improved school attendance rates among Kenyan schools.

The study sought to determine the extent to which Free Day Secondary Education policy influences school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County. The study concludes that free day secondary school education has positively influences school attendance among learners. The study finding also rejected the null hypothesis and therefore concludes that Free Day Secondary Education policy significantly affects school attendance rates in secondary schools in Turkana County.

The researcher made the following recommendations;

- The government should come up with policies and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate FDSE funded projects in public secondary schools to ensure accountability
- Based on the other finding that the government subsidies are not adequate to support acquisition of teaching and learning resources, the researcher recommends that the government should increase its allocation towards subsidizing teaching and learning resources in schools in the country.
- Since subsidized funding for schools by government is not adequate, communities, parents, and sponsors should continue to support schools in developing and maintaining physical infrastructure.

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