

**EFFECTS OF SUBSIDIZED TUITION FEES ON MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC DAY
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of subsidized tuition fees on management of secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. The objectives of the study were to: determine the opportunities that head teachers had in the implementation of subsidized tuition fees, find out the challenges that head teachers are facing in implementing subsidized tuition fees and establish the strategies that the head teachers have employed to address the challenges they are facing in the implementation of subsidized tuition fees. This study presumed that subjects would complete the research instrument accurately and truthfully and would not interact with each other to affect the results of the study and that the sample size would be representative of the larger population. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and the target population was 55 head teachers, 275 HODs and 495 BOG members totaling to 825. The study involved 69 subjects comprising of 17 head teachers, 35 HODs and 17 BOG members. The study used a questionnaire and interview schedules to collect data. A pilot study was conducted in 10 schools using 30 subjects in the same district. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by supervisors while reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient reliability test where reliability coefficient of 0.8 was obtained with the headteachers and HODs questionnaire and the instrument was considered to be reliable. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Mount Kenya University and a research permit from National Council for science and technology. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the participants. Interviews were conducted on a one to one basis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Specifically, frequencies and percentages were used for quantitative data while qualitative data was discussed thematically and the results presented in form of tables and discussion of themes. The study established that subsidized tuition fees had enabled headteachers to improve sanitation facilities, procure enough textbooks and employing teachers. The study also found that with subsidized tuition fees, student's retention was enhanced. The challenges that head teachers were facing in the implementation subsidized tuition fees in public day secondary schools included: having incompetent account clerks that made them to engage services of external auditors at a fee, the funds allocated per student was inadequate and most of the times the funds were stretched to the limits to take care of school necessities, dropout and transfer of students to other schools leaving the school with huge fees arrears, delays in the disbursement of the funds making it difficult for schools to procure teaching and learning materials. The study recommends that government should either increase its budgetary allocation to finance secondary education or make secondary education totally free, offer grants and employment of teachers. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be of significance to curriculum developers, Ministry of Education and other stakeholders as they provide a picture of the current impact and practices regarding the implementation of subsidized tuition fees in secondary education.