

**INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION ON
TRANSITION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF MWINGI WEST SUB-
COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

MARY NZOKI MBILA

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ABSTRACT

Policy makers in Kenya have shown an increasing interest in expanding and strengthening the country's secondary education system, but many challenges remain. As the country try to successfully boost secondary school enrollment rates to nearly universal coverage, the number of children seeking public secondary schools has soared. In an attempt to enhance access, programmes such as Free Secondary Education (FDSE) have been launched by the government. Yet secondary education must fill dual roles: providing skills, knowledge, and technical training for youth planning to enter the labour force, while at the same time preparing others for continuing their studies in secondary education. Unfortunately, secondary school education may fail to fulfill these roles due to a myriad of challenges. Delayed disbursement and inadequate government subsidies, a shortage of physical facilities, teaching learning resources, teachers and the inability to pay for compulsory items are collectively threatening to compromise the quality and even derail the free day secondary education. This study investigated the effects of free secondary education on transition among secondary pupils of Mwingi West Sub-County and Kitui County. The study looked at the teacher pupil ratios, the textbook pupil ratios, the adequacy and timeliness of government subsidies, the physical facilities and the compulsory items that parents purchase. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design to conduct the study. The target population consisted of all public secondary schools in Kitui County. The district had a total of 33 public secondary schools with a student enrollment of 11,094 students and 403 teachers. A stratified random sample of 18 schools was selected. Data was collected using two sets of instruments, a questionnaire for the headteachers and an observation guide. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analyzed data was presented using frequency distribution tables, bar graphs, pie charts and frequency polygons. The findings of this study provide information to all stakeholders in the education sector that could be useful in ensuring success of the secondary school education programme. The government, through the Ministry of education, could use the study in evaluating and strengthening access to education. The information is useful to parents in determining the necessary contributions they ought to make towards secondary education; the parents will also be aware of the extent of government support towards free secondary education and thus make them adequately prepared to meet their responsibilities towards education of their children. The study established that; the government FDSE subsidies are inadequate and are not disbursed in time, cost of compulsory items and other direct payments by parents are prohibitive, all schools are facing an acute shortage of teaching staff, textbook/pupil ratios are adequate, physical facilities directly related to classroom teaching are adequate others are not. The following recommendations have been made, budgetary allocation review, address cost of compulsory items, disbursements of funds should be timely, employ more teachers, identify and assist those students who are eligible to enroll to secondary schools and provide the infrastructure for special rooms. Further research can be conducted to identify cost cutting measures in schools, identify the percentage of eligible students who fail to enroll in secondary schools and the use of ICT integration to cater for the teacher shortage.