

**IMPACT ASSESMENT OF HIDDEN COST OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION ON
ENROLMENT AND COMPLETION RATES OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN THARAKA DISTRICT**

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
EAST AFRICAN COLLECTION

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND
PLANNING.**

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DECLARATION

This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university



MITUGO STEPHEN NTHIGA

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.



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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my mother Celine Muchandi for her indispensable financial and moral support throughout my education. Secondly to my daughter Fionna for her encouragement. May this work be an inspiration to her as she pursues her education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.
DEO:	District Education Officer.
EFA:	Education for All
FPE:	Free Primary Education.
GNP:	Gross National Product.
ILO:	International Labour Organisation.
KCPE:	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
MOEST:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
NCEOP:	National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies.
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisations.
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity.
PTA:	Parents' Teachers' Association.
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the existence of hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District, their impact on enrolment and, completion rates of pupils in public primary schools. Information was obtained from both the headteachers and pupils of public primary schools in Tharaka District. Lastly, the study sought to determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment of pupils according to gender in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

The study targeted all headteachers of public primary schools in Tharaka District. The district has a total of 145 primary schools out of which 45 primary schools were randomly sampled for the study. Also included in the study were class eight pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

The study findings revealed that there are hidden costs associated with free primary education in Tharaka District much as the Kenyan Government had banned payment of levies in public primary schools. The study also found out that public primary schools in Tharaka District still charge direct levies such as the PTA fund to pay teachers employed by the school, watchman fees and fees for field trips among others. There are also other statutory fees that parents still have to pay. For instance, parents whose children are in class eight still have to pay KCPE examination fees.

The study shows that enrolment and completion rates of pupils is very low due to these hidden costs. Whereas many parents were encouraged with the introduction of free primary education in 2003 and enrolled their children in school, the hidden costs associated with free primary education has forced many pupils to fall by the wayside and fail to complete the primary cycle.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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1.0 Background of the Study

Education is a fundamental human right. It is an important key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries. Using formal and non-formal approaches education should take on board the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged groups particularly girls.

Despite the crucial position that education occupies in the lives of individuals, financing of education has been at cross roads in most governments due to stiff competition from other sectors of the economy. According to a study by Coombs (1985), various governments are forced to sacrifice funding of other sectors in order to finance education.

This is necessitated in view of the fact that governments are challenged to meet the target of education for all by 2020. Key sectors like health, defence, agriculture among others have therefore not been spared the budget cuts despite the fact that they are very crucial to any economy.

Coombs (1985) acknowledges that it is the moral obligation of governments to carry their people over the hump of mass illiteracy, to level gross educational inequalities and to widen access to education. World Bank (1988), asserted that Sub-Saharan Africa allocated over twenty percent of the government budgeting allocation to education. These education budgets have produced facts, which reveal a shockingly lopsided and inequitable pattern of both economic and educational development.

This inequitable pattern is worse in rural areas where the majority who suffer from absolute poverty live.

In a report released by Education for All (EFA, 2001), it was revealed that financial requirements of education have affected universal access to basic education. Due to poverty many households are not able to meet the direct and indirect costs of schooling. As a result, many school age children have limited or no access to schooling. Alternatively, those who access schooling are forced to dropout before completing the primary education cycle. With the status of poverty and slow economic growth rate, the major challenge facing governments of Sub-Saharan Africa is how to control the costs of education and provide the services that are affordable by all people in every part of the country (EFA, 2001).

The planned rate of increase in school places has not been achieved in many countries because of financial constraints. Despite political commitment to Universal Primary Education (UPE), rising costs and the rapid increase in the primary-school age population have delayed the achievement of that goal in many low-income countries. A study of UPE in Africa by Lee (1984), suggested that in many countries the goal could remain unrealized even by 2020 unless recurrent costs are reduced and a greater share of the Gross National Product (GNP) is devoted to education. Commenting on the same subject, Meerman (1979), estimated that it would cost low-income countries three to five percent of their GNP to achieve UPE.

Countries vary greatly in the proportion of the age group enrolled in primary, secondary, or higher education. There are also marked differences in enrolment rates for males and females, for rural and urban areas, and for different income groups.

Although the ratios of enrolments in developing countries have increased, the number of children who are not enrolled in school has also increased. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1984) argued that the problem is particularly severe in the poorest countries. They say that “in some cases, school enrolment is low because facilities are not available; in other cases, young people or their families do not choose to take advantage of existing opportunities.” (P. 110)

Even when schools are sufficient to provide the opportunity for universal primary education, shortfalls may occur since a wide variety of other factors also affect enrolments. These factors may include the geographical distribution of school places, the private costs of schooling, and wastage and dropout. Additionally, there are socio economic and cultural factors (which may help to explain differences between male and female enrolments or differences between social or ethnic groups) and admissions policies (for example, restrictions on the age of entry to different levels, promotion and repetition practices) (Cohn, 1978).

These factors brings to the fore the question of demand for education by households. Economic analysis of the private demand for education must take into account a number of factors that help to determine demand, such as the private costs of education including both earnings forgone and fees and other direct costs such as expenditure on books or materials. Also important are sex, region, the expected private benefits (in the form of increased lifetime earning), the level of personal disposable income, and unemployment rates.

According to Psacharopoulos (1982), one of the most powerful influences on primary school enrolment rates in some developing countries, is the level of family income. In his words:

“Poor families will certainly find it difficult to pay fees, but even free education imposes a substantial financial burden through earnings forgone and out-of-pocket expenses for clothes, travel, books, or materials. Moreover, poor families on the average tend to have more school-age children than higher-income families. In rural areas, where many of the poorest families live, communications are likely to be difficult and there may be no access to a local school.” (p.53-54)

A study in Malaysia by Meerman (1979), concluded that effective demand at each educational level is a positive function of income. One reason is that out-of-pocket expenses represent a substantial financial burden for poor families. This view is further reinforced by Sabot and Knight (1990), who observes that another equally powerful reason for keeping children at home is that poor families need the additional income that even very young children may generate. Safilios – Rothschild (1980) echoed this point when they said that from the time children are five to six years old, children of both sexes can make important contributions to the house-work and child care as well as productive work. A case in point is Philippines and rural Bangladesh where children in poor households start contributing to family income or home production at a much lower age than children in higher-income household. This translates into less chance for poor children to attend school.

Nag (1977) also suggested that the economic efficiency of households in peasant societies increases with greater total work input from children. This reinforces the conclusion that the value of earnings forgone, or unpaid work in the household, accounts in large part for the lack of demand for education among the poor.

In many developing countries, girls are expected to contribute to childcare or home production at a much earlier age than boys. This is but one reason why girls are less likely to be enrolled in education. Many poor families regard the education of girls as a low priority, whereas the education of sons is considered an investment in security for old age. The dowry system also helps to explain differences in male-female participation in education. The more daughters in a family, the more schooling the father wanted for his sons in the hope that they could contribute to their brother's fees (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2004).

There is some evidence that poverty and reluctance to bear the costs of educating girls reinforce each other as determinants of demand. A study in rural India by Joshi and Rao (1964) showed that girls' participation in schooling may be much more affected by parental wealth than boys' enrolment rates. According to a study of private expenditure on schooling in Tanzania by Jee Peng (1985), the direct costs of schooling-such as books, uniform, and incidental expenses, - can also be higher for girls than boys.

According to a report by UNESCO (1975), these differences are not purely economic in origin. They have deep cultural roots. In the Middle East and North Africa, for example, religious and socio cultural traditions, such as the early age of marriage and child bearing and the unwillingness to allow girls to travel, help to explain low

female participation in education. A principal factor, however, is the employment possibilities for girls. Where these are limited by tradition, the demand for girls' education is low but an increase in employment opportunities for women will lead to an increase in demand for education, as was demonstrated in an experimental project in Nepal. Between 1968 and 1973 the employment of rural women as primary school teachers in Nepal increased the average enrolment of girls in primary schools from 13 percent to 25 percent (UNESCO, 1975).

As has been illustrated in the preceding paragraphs, demand for education by households is related to the private rate of return. Private rate of return measures the relation between costs and economic benefits for the individual. Private costs include both the direct and indirect costs of education for the individual pupil, student or family. The direct costs include fees, and expenditure on books, materials, school uniform, travel to and from school, and other out-of-pocket expenses. The importance of fees varies considerably among countries, but even when tuition is free, out-of-pocket expenses on books, clothes and other similar items may be substantial (Blaug, 1995).

In some developing countries, such as Mauritius, primary and secondary schooling is free, but parents still incur considerable private expenditures on private tuition to supplement regular school instruction. In addition to the direct costs of education, the individual student or his family must also meet the indirect cost of earnings forgone, or the loss of student's productive work while in full-time education. Earnings forgone can be derived from age-earnings profiles, and are measured by the average earnings of those with lower levels of education: thus the earnings forgone of

University students are measured by the average earnings of secondary school leavers (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1984).

Private benefits are measured by the additional lifetime earnings of educated workers and are derived from age-earnings profiles in the same way as social benefits. The only difference is that private benefits (and earnings forgone) are measured after payment of taxes, whereas social benefits are measured in terms of gross, pretax earnings. Other adjustments may be made to age-earnings profiles.

According to UNESCO (1960), decisions about educational investment depend on judgments about the balance between costs and benefits. These judgments in turn are based on a systematic comparison of the economic benefits of education and its opportunity cost, which is measured not by actual monetary expenditures, but by the alternative opportunities forgone when scarce resources are invested in education. In developing countries where educational investment is financed by and large from government revenue, the alternative opportunities forgone when a new school is built may be an irrigation project, a fertilizer plant, or agricultural investment or transport (Coombs and Hallak, 1972).

During the 1960s and 1970s total educational expenditure in Sub Saharan Africa increased at a remarkable rate, both in money terms and in real terms, that is, in terms of constant purchasing power. According to Zymelaman (1976), the amount a country or region devotes to education does not depend on the level of economic development, as measured by GNP per capita, but is influenced by unit costs as a ratio of GNP per capita and the enrolment ratio. In East Africa, for example, the proportion of GNP devoted to primary education in the late 1970s was higher in

Kenya than in East Africa as a whole and unit costs as a proportion of GNP were below average, but enrolment ratio was well above average and this clearly influenced total expenditure (Zymelman, 1976).

The current state of education in Kenya today is that primary education is free. Parents are only duty bound to take their children to school as the government meets most of the costs including paying teachers' salaries, buying books, providing stationery, school maintenance and sports equipments. This is done in recognition of the role of education in enhancing economic growth, enhancing productivity, reducing poverty, increasing individual earnings, the spill over benefits to the society resulting from educating individuals, enhancing democracy and good governance among others.

The quest for free primary education in Kenya started in the early seventies when the government committed itself to improve the lot of the poor by opening opportunities for the poor through education. This position was reinforced by the report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP), (Gachathi Report, 1976), which even went ahead to propose a phased implementation of the free primary education programme that had started in 1974. However, the rise in the level of poverty has continued to discourage parents from investing in their children's education. Parents and by extension, many communities, are not in a position to meet the ever- increasing cost of schooling adequately. Despite free education, parents are expected to meet hidden costs of their children's education. A report released by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST, 2005), revealed that since the level of poverty has also gone up in the country and the

costs of education and training at all levels have continued to rise, many parents are unable to meet the cost of education and no longer have access to education.

Due to poverty levels in the country, child labour has become crucial for family survival. Child labour is increasingly employed in domestic activities, agriculture and petty trade in rural and urban Kenya. Poor households, and in some cases children themselves have to carefully analyze the opportunity costs of education. Consequently, parents have continued to send their children, particularly daughters, into the labour market mainly as domestic workers in urban centres. Parents' view the benefits of education as far fetched and choose to pre occupy their children as casual labourers where immediate meagre income is guaranteed. The effect being that whereas quite a number of children are able to see the inside of class one, their ability to complete the primary cycle of education is put to jeopardy by family poverty levels. Low completion rates, under utilization of teaching and learning time imply that primary schools waste a lot of resources if saved, the resources could enhance efficiency and improve learning in primary schools. More than fifty percent of enrolled pupils fail to complete the education cycle, yet education consumes about sixty five percent of the government's recurrent expenditure (EFA, 2001).

The cost of education in Kenya has been on the increase for the last decade. This fact is also acknowledged by Koech (1999) that this is due to poor economic growth and the increase in inflation. Households experience a heavy financial burden in meeting the cost of education. Although there is no direct fees paid in public primary schools, there are various indirect costs borne by the parents. Annual average expenditures on schooling by households (not as per enrolled child) show that about a half of the total

expenditure is spent in uniforms and other indirect costs like meals and transport (Koech, 1999)

These costs have a bearing on enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public schools in the country. Some pupils may not enrol at all in school partly due to fear of dropping out in the course of their primary cycle thereby wasting what they would describe as their valuable time. Some may enrol but are subsequently forced out of school due to financial pressures exerted upon them by the hidden costs of education. Therefore despite free primary education in Kenya, enrolment and completion rates are still major casualties of hidden costs of education. A challenge is thus posed to the government to ensure universal access to primary education.

Republic of Kenya (2001), a hand book for 2000 and beyond on education for all, lays this challenge bare. It states that:

“The cost and financial requirements of education affect universal access to basic education. With the increased incidence of poverty in the last ten years, many households fail to meet the direct and indirect costs of schooling. As a result, many school age children have limited or no access to schooling. Additionally, many school going children drop out before completing primary cycle”. (P. 69)

If the implications of hidden costs of free primary education are not properly addressed, then the gains made so far on free primary education are going to be rolled back due to low enrolment and completion rates. According to Elimu Yetu

(2004), in Tharaka District, parents withdraw their children from school to herd cattle, hunt, brew alcohol and marry between the age of 14 and 17years.

Table 1: Pupils enrolment and completion rates per year in Tharaka District

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	*2005
1	5160	4728	5182	6559	6620	6529
2	3760	3946	4283	5151	5466	5598
3	3294	3274	3724	4422	4428	4612
4	3242	3080	3449	4276	4377	4578
5	2650	2751	2990	3554	3808	3737
6	2068	2309	2570	3052	3354	3418
7	1890	1949	2329	2800	3035	3271
8	1259	1504	1796	2015	2040	2177

Source: D.E.O.'s Office Tharaka District 2005

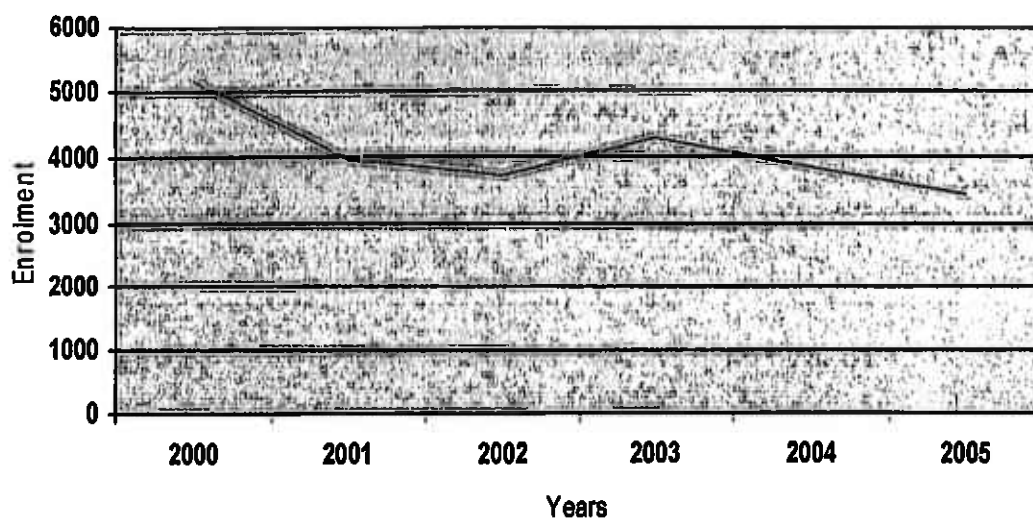
*Year 2005 information is up to August.

The number who joined class one in the year 2000 were 5160. In the following year, that is 2001, the total enrolment in class two declined to 3946. A total of 1214 could not be accounted for. By the time the same group reached class three in the year 2002, the number had decreased further to 3724. Again a total of 222 were not in the Classroom.

However, in 2003, with the onset of free primary education the numbers of the same group shot up to 4276. This was an increase of 552 pupils in class. Despite free primary education, when the same group reached class five in the year 2004, their number declined again to 3808. Once again 468 pupils were out of school. By August 2005, the number of pupils who were finally in class seven decreased further to 3418

pupils. Therefore, for that year, 390 pupils were out of school. This shows that there are hidden costs associated with free primary education in Tharaka District.

Figure 1: Graphical representation of primary enrolment and completion rates per year in Tharaka District.



Source: D.E.O.'s Office Tharaka District 2005

Note: Year 2005 information is up to August

For instance of the 6,559 children who enrolled in class one in 2003 when any form of fees was abolished in public primary schools, only 4612 are in class three. Approximately thirty percent cannot be accounted for already. This is definitely a grim picture of enrolment and completion rates of pupils in the district. This may mean ten percent of the pupils disappear from school every year. Through careful extrapolation of these figures, more than sixty percent will disappear from school before reaching class eight.

According to Odipo (1997), Socio-cultural and religious factors, such as initiation ceremonies and gender socialization are to blame for pupils' failure to complete

primary education. Tharaka District is an area where traditional circumcision is still being practiced with the consequence that pupils are pulled out of school to participate in initiation ceremonies. Once initiated some pupils develop negative attitudes towards teachers and school. In this connection, some circumcised boys are not ready to be taught by women whom they now consider as inferior. Additionally, pressure is put on them by the community to leave school and meet traditional expectations (Odipo, 1997)

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As the economic growth dwindles, the country is faced with a challenge of diversifying its sources of financing education. Too much reliance on the central government for education resources has limited the development of education for all. Thus, there is need to investigate and encourage a range and alternative sources of financing of education. The education sector faces a range of legitimate competing claims on the limited public and private resources. Decisions have to be made about allocations to keep the sectors functioning. Besides, there is need to examine and appraise allocation of resources within sub-sectors and within specific programmes/projects of education. The challenge is therefore not just how much resources are available, but how efficiently and effectively these resources are distributed and utilized. This requires a systematic and holistic analysis of the entire education system and developing a strategic plan of implementation. The assessment of financial requirement to meet the national targets is an imperative priority (Abagi, 2001).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to a report by Elimu Yetu (2004), Kenya has never gone beyond fifty percent completion rate. Most pupils are not able to cope with both the direct and indirect costs associated with going to school.

In Tharaka District alone, about fifty eight percent of pupils who enrol in class one each year, do not complete the primary cycle of education. Although there is no direct fees paid in public primary schools, there are various hidden costs of education borne by parents. The costs are thought to have a bearing on enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in the district. Parents, majority of whom live on less than a dollar a day, hardly spare a coin to buy school uniforms, provide adequate lunch for their children, pay Parents Teachers Association fund to employ the much needed teachers due to understaffing, pay watchman fees among other hidden levies. Therefore this study seeks to find the effects of these hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment and completion rates in Tharaka District.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to undertake an assessment of the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the existence of hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District.

2. To determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.
3. To determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment of pupils according to gender in public primary schools in Tharaka District.
4. To determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District
2. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and enrolment rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District?
3. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and enrolment of pupils according to gender in public primary schools in Tharaka District?
4. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study to both theory and practice are that:

1. It will help education policy makers and implementers pay more attention to special needs of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.
2. It will provide the relevant data on incentives that can encourage children from Tharaka District to enrol in schools.

3. It will be a source of reference for educators and general readers interested in hidden costs of free primary education.
4. It will help stakeholders of education to look into possible ways of reducing inequalities in education.
5. It may stimulate further research in a similar topic in other areas.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to Tharaka District; therefore, the findings obtained may not be generalized to reflect hidden costs of free primary education in other parts of the country. Lack of repeaters' and dropout data made the calculations of actual enrolment ratio difficult. It was also not possible to get information from pupils who dropped out although they have information that is useful to the study.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The research study was conducted only in public primary schools in Tharaka District. The study does not include private primary schools from the district because of their uniqueness in terms of management. The study will undertake an assessment of impact of hidden costs on completion and enrolment rates and ignore impact on equity, access and other related variables.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Due to lack of repeaters' and dropout data, it was assumed that pupils who are not in school had dropped out.

2. It was assumed that pupils dropped out due to hidden costs of free primary education.
3. It was also assumed that headteachers and pupils gave honest responses.

1.9 Definition of Significant Terms

Access: Refers to the opportunity to get enrolled in school.

Community: Refers to a group of people living in a particular area.

Drop outs: Refers to pupils who leave primary school without completing the requirements for primary school education.

Hidden costs: Refers to the cost of opportunities forgone because of attending fulltime education.

Impact: Refers to the effects, results or changes experienced as a result of hidden costs of free primary education.

Participation rate: refers to the rate in which pupils are either absent or present in school.

Repetition: refers to a case where a pupil spends more than one academic year in one class.

Completion rate: refers to the rate at which pupils are able to finish/complete the primary education cycle.

Enrolment rate: refers to the rate at which a certain number of pupils are able to join the primary education.

Public primary schools : refers to the category of primary schools sponsored by the government.

1.10 Organization of the rest of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters.

Chapter One gives the background to the problem. It highlights what hidden costs of free primary education are and their effects on access, completion, quality, equity and gender disparities in education.

Chapter Two deals with what other people had done in terms of research on hidden costs of education.

Chapter Three consists of research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection and analysis techniques.

Chapter Four consists of research findings, interpretation and discussions.

Chapter Five is summary, conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature reviewed consists of the following sections; equity and quality of education, poverty and enrolment of pupils, poverty and girls' education, the gender gap in education in Sub-Saharan Africa, issues behind the increasing rates of dropping out of school by young people in Sub-Saharan Africa, reducing barriers to primary school completion for Kenyan girls, the rationale of financing primary education, financing education and its resource, the suggested sources of education funds other than governments, the role of communities and the conceptual framework.

2.1 Equity and Quality of Education

Growing concern about quality and equity in education is reflected in numerous declarations, but has not resulted in effective reforms. The importance placed on education is explicit in the Declarations of the first two Hemispheric Summits of Presidents and Heads of States and those of the first six summits of Heads of States of Ibero-American community of nations. It was also evident in the assembly of development in the fourth world conference on women and during the recent conferences on population and environment (Jee – Peng, 1985)

Because problems of quality generally affect certain groups with characteristics that compel them to enter the public education system (the only one willing and required to serve them), equity in education can no longer be measured based on coverage alone. It must instead be gauged in terms of equity in the quality of education, that is,

is, the number of grade levels passed and the quality (compared to the national average) achieved by the students from disadvantaged-urban and the poorest rural sectors, minority ethnic groups, and learning disabled children. This requires a closer look at new aspects of education. If the problem of quality is to be solved, it is imperative to identify the factors impeding learning in certain groups of students. And, while additional resources and improved resource distribution are necessary, as is often stressed, it is essential to foster initiatives that reshape the methods used in most classrooms at every level of the educational system.

There are factors external to the learning process that influence the quality of education, such as the characteristics of each student, his or her family and immediate environment. Internal factors, inherent to education, also determine whether learning occurs. But these factors operate differentially since, in low income areas, they centre on: (i) the most ineffective but available learning resources (ii) smaller institutions that often do not offer all grade levels; (iii) multi-grade or multi-area classrooms that require individualized attention; (iv) school materials in short supply and not conducive to individualized classes; (v) inflexible curricular unrelated to the students' experience or life situation; and (vi) 40% of teachers lacking degrees and who use memorization and authoritarianism to teach class. It should come as no surprise, then, that three out of four children who leave schools in these areas cannot comprehend what they read from a text.

Governments consider improving education a political priority in order to overcome their status as developing countries, since education offered in the region is unresponsive to the demands of the current national and international panorama.

There is consensus that the region must offer a quality education to everyone, especially at the early levels, in order to achieve social equity and reduce extreme disparities in income. The technical support required to diagnose problems and to define or choose among alternative solutions, however, is not always available.

Governments are convinced that they must offer an education that: (i) equips people with the ability to communicate effectively and to continue to learn throughout their lifetime; (ii) assures them an adequate entry into the workplace; (iii) fosters scientific and technological research for regional development and competitive insertion into the international arena; (iv) eliminates poverty, increase social mobility and leads to a quality of life that ensures social peace; (v) prepares people to become responsible citizens who value peaceful means of resolving conflicts and consensus-building; (vi) is decentralized to the extent that a significant level of community participation in the supervision and administration of local education is possible. Therefore, it is especially important to identify new resources for education, as well as improved distribution of existing resources.

2.2 Poverty and enrolment of pupils

Because of widespread poverty, many children begin to work at a very young age. The government estimates that approximately 6.6 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 years work. Working children were found engaged in 200 different types of activities, of which 49 were regarded as harmful to children's physical and mental well being. Of the total children engaged in economic activities 22.92% are sellers/vendors, 16.10% are factory workers, 5.72% brick stone breakers, 4.77%

agricultural work, 2.27% are in crafts, 0.65% in fish processing and 0.44% are beggars (World Bank,1988).

Some 123 million children will not be in school as classrooms around the world open their doors for the start of the new school year. According to UNESCO (1960), families will not share in the pride of sending their children off to school. This is a disheartening reality in a world where education is the right of every child.

According to the agency, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 46 million school-aged children have never stepped foot in school, a figure that has risen steadily every year since 1990. Another 46 million South Asian youngsters are not in school. These two regions account for three-quarters of the world's entire population of children who are not in school. By contrast only 2 per cent of the global out-of-school population, about 2.5 million children, lives in industrialized countries. Ignoring the children who are not in school translates into huge losses in this generation and the next. Far beyond the child losing the direct benefits of an education, absence from school puts children closer to the threat of disease, abuse and sexual exploitation. This is especially so for girls. Globally, some 66 million girls of school age are not in school. While the gender gap in enrolment has narrowed over the last decade, girls are still the ones most often denied their right to go to school, and those who attend drop out earlier (UNESCO, 1960)

UNICEF has spearheaded a strategic effort to get girls into school by focusing on the specific barriers that prevent girls from accessing and completing an education. According to UNICEF (2003), strategies that get more girls into schools also make schools more welcoming for boys. When girls are encouraged to attend school, and

the school welcomes them and they are able to complete a quality basic education. the benefits are enormous. These girls grow up to take better care of both themselves and their families. Girls who get an education are much more likely to have healthy children, and their children are more likely to go to school themselves. This is the key to breaking cycles of poverty (UNICEF, 2003).

2.3 Poverty and girls' education

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In poor families that cannot afford the costs of schooling, girls tend to be the most disadvantaged. In Kenya, the demand for schooling has surged since the government abolished school fees in January 2003. Primary school enrolment has increased by 1.3 million children, upping the national primary school enrolment from 5.9 million to 7.2 million students. Classroom sizes have mushroomed dramatically to accommodate the infuse of new students (UNICEF, 2003).

2.4 The Gender Gap in Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: status

Access to good quality education is acknowledged as a basic human right. Nevertheless, while enrolment rates have increased globally over the last three decades, in the developing world today: More than 130 million, 6 -11 year olds are out of school. Some 81 million (60 percent) of them are girls. More than 273 million 12 – 17 years olds are out of schools, 148 million (54 percent) of whom are girls. Of the 100 million children who drop out of school before completing the primary cycle, two-thirds are girls. The gender gap is wider in the poorest countries, the majority of which are in Sub-Sahara Africa. Explanations for this human tragedy abound. Tuition and other fees are beyond the means of the majority of families. Adolescent pregnancy and child bearing, which take girls out of school, are on the

rise. Traditional beliefs about girls and women's' roles discourages investment in their education. Moreover, teachers are often poorly trained, schools inadequately equipped, and curricular biased and irrelevant. And in some cultures, the lack of separate facilities, the long distances to school and the predominantly male teaching staff constitutes major barriers to girls participation in education (UNESCO, 1995).

Compared with other regions of the world, Sub-Saharan Africa is doing poorly in retention of children in schools. Except in a few countries like Seychelles with Mauritius following very closely – dropout and repetition rates are high especially among girls beginning at the primary level and continuing through secondary schools to universities and colleges. Only 67% of the children who enter the first grade of primary school eventually reach grade five, which means that a full third drop out along the way. Dropping and repeating rates exact a terrible personal toll on the pupils involved and absorb a large share of the limited resources available for education. it is estimated that countries in sub-Saharan Africa spend US dollars 18800 million per year on education and US dollars 16167 (32.8%) is spent on wastage before grade five. This is the highest wastage in all less developed regions of the world (EFA 2001)

There is a distinct disparity between the quality of education in rural and urban areas in almost all countries in sub Saharan Africa. Urban institutions enjoy better teachers and more resources and facilities than the rural institutions. This in turn gives rise to disparities in rates of pupils' enrolment, participation and performance. In countries like Ghana, Cameroon, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, where bold initiatives have been used to improve schooling through out the country attendance in primary

schools in rural schools is lower than urban areas by about 19% or less. In countries like Niger and Burkina Faso, attendance is lower by nearly 50 percent (EFA, 2001).

The combined effects of continuing low enrolment, high repetition and dropout among girls in Sub-Saharan Africa have undermined and frustrated efforts to eradicate adult illiteracy, particularly among women. According to UNICEF's state of the World children – 2000, some 16 of the 22 countries with 70 percent or more illiterate women are found in Sub-Saharan Africa. In two of these, over 90 percent of the women are illiterate.

2.5 Issues behind the increasing rates of dropping out of school by young people in Sub-Saharan Africa

Low school completion rates by children from Sub-Saharan Africa have had several devastating effects. These are discussed below.

2.5.1 Paralyzing Effects of Poverty

The average person in nearly every Sub-Saharan Africa Country is poorer today than they were a decade ago. Most countries are in deep financial crisis manifested in mass retrenchments, collapse of businesses, unprecedented unemployment, rising costs of food, education, health services, power, water etc.

According to World Bank reports, the rates of economic growth in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are stagnant or declining. The annual per capita Gross National Product (GNP) growth in the region up to the early 1980s was 2.8percent. By mid 1990s, it had plummeted to -0.1 percent. For many countries, the capacity to manage the education sector is increasingly under threat. Rising levels of poverty have

reduced families' abilities to provide for the basic needs of their children. This is reflected in the growing rates of school dropout particularly among girls.

2.5.2 AIDS – HIV SCOURGE

Today in Sub-Saharan Africa, home to the 21 countries with the highest HIV prevalence, HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects the young, the poor and the powerless, girls and women in particular. In this region alone we find: more than 80 percent of the world's HIV/AIDS – infected women, 87 percent of the world's AIDS orphans. The majority of the orphans are left with no hope for education. Resources that could have been used for their education go to caring for the sick. Girls, more than boys are likely to drop out of school to care for the sick or to bring up orphaned siblings. Or they end up as prostitutes out of despair. HIV/AIDS threaten to undo much of what has been accomplished in education in the last several decades.

2.5.3 Conflicts – POLITICAL INSTABILITIES

In the last three decades, over 30 wars have gone on in Africa alone, mostly within countries. These created more than 8 million refugees or displaced persons, In 1998 alone, an estimated 200,000 Africans, most of them women and children, died as a result of war and conflict. Thousands of others were maimed and remain psychologically scarred by what they endured or witnessed. Like the ravages of poverty, today's conflicts threaten many of the achievements in education that people have laboured long decades to attain. Insecurity, destruction of infrastructure, displacement of people, among others, cut short the education careers of many pupils, particularly girls.

2.6 Reducing Barriers to Primary School Completion for Kenyan Girls

Many people consider girls' education to be one of the best investments in international development. An association exists in improvements in national development indicators and an increase in the number of girls receiving formal schooling. Women who complete their education are more likely to lead productive life with families, take good care of their children, and practice healthy behaviours than women with little or no education. Reproductive health identified the importance of educating young girls before their sexual debut through participatory, community based approach. Globally, girls represent 60 percent of all out-of-school children (USAID, 1998). In some countries, girls' initial enrolment rate is lower than those of boys, indicating barriers to access. In other countries, such as Kenya, initial enrolment rates are roughly equal, but adolescent years, they drop out of school. However, girls also drop out for other reasons directly related to reproductive behaviours. Some of these other reasons include early marriage, sexual maturity (where upon girls and boys believe they no longer need to attend school because they are of marriageable age), pregnancy, low and sexual harassment by male teachers and boys. Girls may also drop out of school because they are uncomfortable if they are in their teenage years in primary school. Girls are often older than their male counterparts, because they join school at a later age and may repeat grades due to the difficult curriculum or having to perform household chores in lieu of school and in addition, parents place a low value on girls' education, which contributes to their increased drop out rate. Girls who cannot overcome these barriers are often denied the chance to enjoy healthy and productive adult lives (USAID, 1998).

The contributions that educated women make have been verified by research on poverty, infant and child mortality, population growth, anti-AIDS strategies, general education and many other social challenges. If girls are kept in school, infant and family health and nutrition improve, literacy accelerates, birth rates fall, and the economy strengthens. The benefits are dramatic if girls are able and motivated to stay in school.

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2.7 The Rationale of Financing Primary Education

Education helps in the development of child's personality. It includes positive attitude towards co-operation with fellow human beings, functional literacy and numeracy, among others. Primary education has not only highest rates of returns but also it promotes equity. According to Psacharopoulos (1985), expanding primary education is a profitable investment that would promote equity, since in general primary education tend to redistribute resources towards the poor.

Evidence from Africa and elsewhere have proved that basic education can yield significance benefits in terms of higher incomes, lower fertility and improved family health: all critical to Africa's present situation. Primary education, whether fully financed by government or households has both private and social benefits.

**Table 2: Average returns to Primary Education by Country, and level
In Percentage**

Region	Socio Rate			Private Rate		
	Pri.	Sec.	High	Pri.	Sec.	High
Africa	26	17	13	45	26	32
Asia	27	15	13	31	15	18
America	26	18	16	32	23	23
Advanced Counties	-	11	09	-	12	12

Source: EFA 2001

The above table shows that primary education in all Developing countries yield more in both social and private rate of returns. In the Advanced countries, primary education is not shown, probably because their basic education is up to secondary level. The implication here is that primary education has the highest capacity to stimulate economic growth of the developing countries. Politically, education is important in maintaining and sustaining sovereignty of Africa states. Africa needs to sustain and maintain its sovereignty against ethnic balkanization. It should do this by producing educated and informed leadership of sufficient saviour faire to deal with constant external threats to the integrity of their growing nations (UNICEF, 2003).

According to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1984), the equity of participation requires removal of barriers for those who do not choose to enrol. By removing the

barriers through public financing of education, the incentive for these children shall be given hence end up participating in the learning process. Educational financing also helps in bringing the choices and interests of various stakeholders closer. So, to narrow the gap on educational choices, in this case, the financing of education ought to be harmonized. According to draft budget strategy paper, April 2005, the education sector takes the largest chunk of public funds. For example, in 2004/2005 financial year, education was allocated Kshs. 84.6 billion out of the total government expenditure of Kshs 277.3 billion that year. This translates into 30.5085% of the total national expenditure. The year 2005/2006, according to the paper, education shall be allocated Ksh 91 billion out of the total government expenditure of Ksh 281.8 billion. This amounts to 32.2924 percent of the national budget.

2.8. Financing of Education and Its Results

The problem of financing of education has affected the provision of quality education. Primary education's expenditure in the financial year 1999/2000 was Ksh 809.4 million. This proves that the cost of education is a major impediment to schooling. The poor people cannot send their children to school due to this fact. Although primary education is free, it is estimated that at least 45% of the costs of education are borne by parents (Republic of Kenya, 1976).

On enrolment, early advances in education in the 1960s are being seriously threatened by population explosion. The number of children seeking access to education increased and also a number of potential illiterates increased. This means that more resources are required to keep pace with the population's demand. The

slow rate of primary education experienced over the years in Africa, meant that there existed widespread inequities in education (World Bank, 1988).

2.9. The suggested sources of educational funds other than governments

The private benefits accrued to education are more than social benefits. Various governments have been overburdened by huge financial obligations on education but get less in terms of productivity of the school graduates. It is due to the above fact that “hard decisions on educational policy” have to be made. It is these hard decisions, which have made various countries to “resort into various cost-recovery measures”. The World Bank suggested the use of the ‘bump-up technique of allocating resources to the poorest or most deprived areas as one of the ‘cost recovery’ measures. Families or individual beneficiaries have to pay for educations they receive have been suggested as source of educational finance. In support of this argument, Vaizey, Keith and Sheehan (1972) states that because benefit of education goes to individuals, it is reasonable for them or families to finance their education (World Bank 1988).

In Kenya, cost-sharing strategy of financing educational costs was in place between 1988 and 2003. Other sources of financing education suggested are the communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), fundraising among others. Other sources of financing educational costs are the external aid, loans to students, student work programme and sponsorship (Ayot and Briggs, 1992). However, despite free primary education some of these methods of financing are applied in some schools today.

According to UNICEF (2003), costs still remain the major constraint to primary education despite the fact that it is nominally free. To achieve the Free Primary Education (FPE) objective several measures have to be taken. These are grants from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology be given to poorer children; and, intensification of school feeding programme in the priority areas (UNICEF 2003).

2.10 Role of Communities

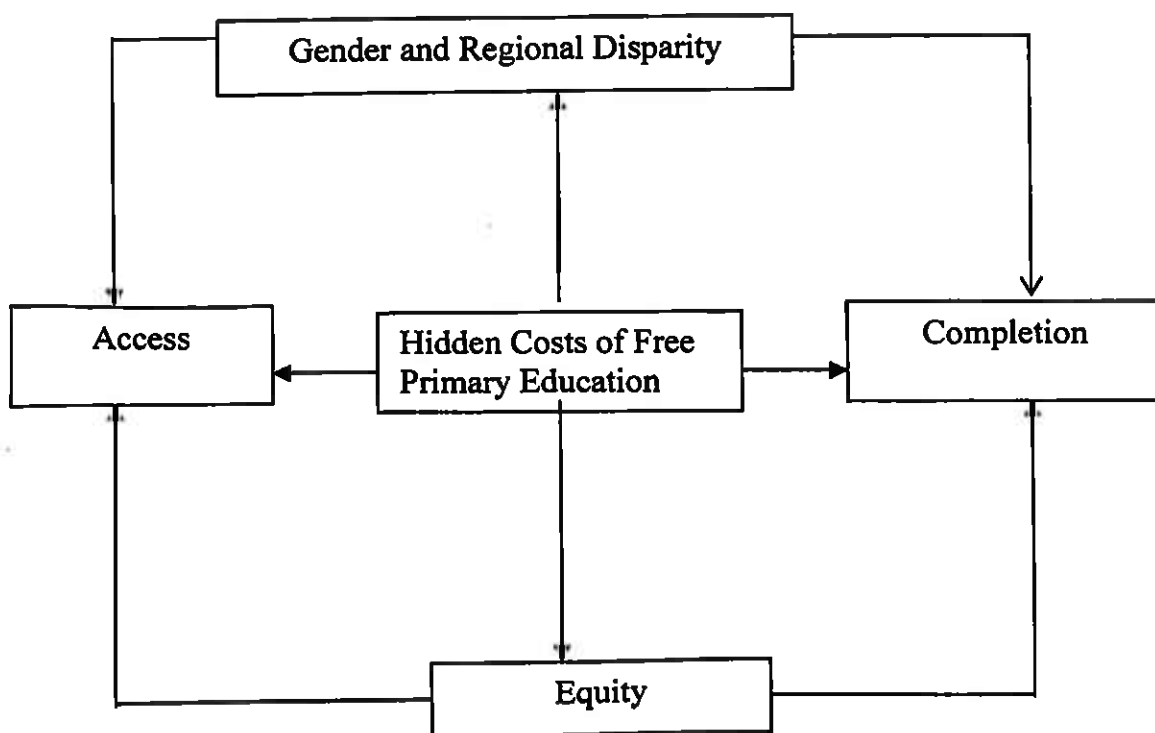
Partnership in education between Government, communities, religious, donors and private individuals has been a practice in Kenya since independence. However, during the past decade owing to the increased demand for education and the rising cost of providing education and training, the need for community participation and for partnership between government and other organizations has become even more pronounced. The government has reiterated its commitment to partnerships in the provision of education to its citizens in various policy documents (EFA, 2001).

Communities play a pivotal role in basic education and their effective contribution will accelerate Kenya's attainment of education for All (EFA) by 2015 if the following challenges are addressed: First, raising community awareness of roles and responsibilities. The effectiveness of school communities and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) depends on the community's awareness about the functions of these institutions and the role the community is expected to play. Secondly, increasing community participation. The tendency for PTA meetings to focus on generating funds for the school, nevertheless, deters parents from attending such meetings. Communities are hardly consulted on matters related to teaching and learning in schools. Third, community attitude towards education. In some cultural

settings the communities see little or no value of education, neither do they see their children's future being different from their own.

Fourth, conflict between school expectations and traditions. Low community involvement in school governance often stems from conflicts of interest. Such conflicts centre on religion, political, and ethnic differences. These differences adversely affect schools especially long term internal conflicts among groups within the same community. The result is that schools suffer from lack of support from the local community.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the study



Source: Researcher (2005)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section deals with the methods the researcher will use in carrying out the study. It is organized along the following sections; research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures and research instrument. A discussion on pre-testing the research instruments will then follow.

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted using an ex-post facto Research Design. Kerlinger (1973) defined an ex-post facto design as follows:

“A system of empirical enquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made, with direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables.”

In this study, the dependent variable is the pupils' completion and enrolment rates.

The independent variables are the hidden costs of free primary education.

3.2 Location of the Study

Tharaka District is about 200 km North East of Nairobi. It is inhabited by Tharaka people, formerly part of the larger Meru community. Tharaka is a semi-arid land East of Mount Kenya. It borders Mbeere District to the South; Mwingi District to the East; Meru North District to the North; Meru Central to the West; and Meru South to the South West. Tharaka District has three divisions; Tharaka North, Tharaka Central and Tharaka South. This study covered the public primary schools in the three divisions.

Tharaka people keep livestock, poultry and bees. They are also peasant farmers growing millet, sorghum, cowpeas and green grams among others. The rain in the area is unreliable and over 56% of the population live in absolute poverty. This means they cannot get the recommended calorie requirement of 2,250 calories per day (Republic of Kenya 2000). Tharaka people are also deeply cultural people; they have norms and customs, which are detrimental to development and acquisition of education. Boys and girls are circumcised at puberty as a sign of graduation into adulthood. The above phenomena have impacted negatively to schooling in the area. Enrolments have stagnated with either overage children being enrolled in lower primary and very low enrolments in upper primary especially standards seven and eight.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted all headteachers of public primary schools in Tharaka District. The district has a total of 145 primary schools (D.E.O'S office Tharaka). Also

included in the study were class eight pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka district.

According to information obtained from the D.E.O.'s office in Tharaka District, there are 145 head teachers of public primary schools in the district and a class eight-pupil population of 2,177.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The best sample population is that which covers 30% of the total population (Best and Khan, 1993). In Tharaka District, there are 145 public primary schools with 145 Headteachers. Therefore, the desired sample for this population is 30% of 145.

This translates to: $0.3 \times 145 = 43.5$, which is approximately 44 schools.

These schools were divided among the three divisions in Tharaka District such that the researcher sampled 15 schools per division. This helped in ensuring equitable representation of all the primary schools in the district.

To determine the 15 schools to take part in the study from each division, the researcher used simple random sampling. The names of all public primary schools in a given division were written on pieces of paper that were folded and placed in a box. The box was shaken and paper picked at random one at a time and the name of the school in the paper recorded. The process continued without replacement until the required number of schools was obtained.

To determine the pupils to take part in the study in each school, whole classes were used. Use of whole classes was necessary in order to save time and to make the administration of the research instruments less tedious. Therefore the researcher got

responses from 30% of class eight pupils. This number compares well with the number determined using the formula: $n = 0.3N$ that would have given 654 pupils.

That is 30% of $2.177 = 653.1$ pupils which is approximately 654 pupils

3.5 Research instruments

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The research instruments used in the study were the questionnaires. Questionnaires were prepared for the headteachers and the pupils. They made the respondents to give accurate information, as there was confidentiality and no writing of names. It was also a fast method of data collection. The respondents were required to fill in the questionnaires and return them to the researcher for analysis.

3.5.1 Headteachers' Questionnaires

These consisted of parts A and B with a total of 14 questions. Part A gave the demographic variables of the headteacher. Part B attempted to get the headteachers' comment on impact of hidden costs of education in Tharaka District.

3.5.2 Pupils' Questionnaires

Pupils' questionnaires also consisted of part A and B. Part A obtained the demographic variables of the pupil. Part B tried to assess the problems pupils encounter as a result of hidden costs of education and the ultimate impact.

3.6 Pre-testing the Research Instruments

The purpose of pre-testing was to assess the clarity of the instrument items, the validity and reliability of each of the items in the instruments as well as the suitability of the language used in the instrument. The researcher carried out a pilot

study in 15 primary schools in the District, which constituted 10% of 145 public primary schools.

Reliability and Validity are essential to the effectiveness of any data-gathering procedure. It is feasible through a variety of statistical treatments to quantitatively assess the reliability and validity of psychological tests and inventories.

3.6.1 Instrument Validity

A test is said to be valid if it measures what it claims to measure, or, in the case of predictive validity, to the extent that it predicts accurately such types of behaviour as academic success or failure, job success or failure, or stability under stress. Tests are usually validated by correlating test scores against some outside criteria, which may be scores on tests of accepted validity, successful performance or behaviour, or the expert judgement of recognized authorities (Best and Kahn 1993). In this study, the researcher relied on the expert judgement of the University Supervisor who commented on clarity of the instruments and content coverage.

3.6.2 Reliability

This is the ability of the research instruments to produce same results consistently.

The reliability or stability of a test is usually expressed as a correlation coefficient. In this study, the researcher used split halves stability of items technique to establish the reliability of the research instrument. This was accomplished by correlating scores on the odd- numbered items with the scores on the even-numbered items. However, this method yielded lower correlations because of the reduction in size to two tests

of half the number of items. This was corrected by the application of the Spearman - Brown prophecy formula.

$$r_e = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

Where:

r_e is the reliability coefficient.

r is the correlation co-efficient between the two halves.

The correlation coefficient r was calculated from the formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{(\sum x^2 \sum y^2)^{1/2}}$$

Where: x = Represents odd-numbered scores

y = Represents even-numbered scores

$\sum x^2$ = The sum of the mean of x subtracted from each x - score squared

$\sum y^2$ = The sum of the mean of y subtracted from each y - score squared

$\sum xy$ = The cross-products of the mean subtracted from that score

Source: Best and Khan (1993).

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought permission and authority to conduct the study from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). The researcher then set aside between a week to two weeks to visit the schools sampled for research and then administered questionnaires to eligible pupils and head teachers.

The researcher waited for the pupils to fill in the questionnaires and took them away there and then. This was intended to minimize cases of students mishandling the instruments. However, the headteachers were given time to answer the

questionnaires depending on how busy they were. In exceptional cases, the researcher left behind self-addressed and stamped envelopes with the headteachers to enable them forward to the researcher the filled in questionnaires at a later time. To encourage honest responses, the researcher assured the pupils and headteachers the confidentiality with which the responses would be treated.

3.8. Data Analysis Techniques

The raw data obtained from the questionnaires underwent preliminary preparation before they could be analyzed using statistical techniques. The major data preparation technique included data editing and coding.

Data editing was necessary to identify omissions, ambiguities, and errors in the responses. Data from the questionnaires consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions were coded to allow quantitative analysis. The coded data and quantitative data was then analysed using descriptive statistics. The statistics calculated were frequencies, percentages, as well as means and modes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the data and present the findings of the study. The findings were based on the collected data on hidden costs of free primary education. The data were collected from 45 primary schools. The study sought to analyse, compare and determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education and enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

4.1. The Demographic Data of the Respondents

The data presented in this section of the study was obtained from completed headteachers' and pupils' questionnaires. The questionnaires were given to 45 headteachers and all of them were returned. This was 100% return rate. However, of the 653 questionnaires given to pupils, 650 were returned and three were mishandled. This represented 99.5% return rate. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic data of the headteachers and pupils who were selected for this study.

4.1.1. Demographic Information of the Headteachers

Table 3: Gender of the headteachers

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Females	5	11
Males	40	89
Total	45	100

According to table 3, only 11% of the headteachers are women. Eighty nine percent (89%) are men. Male teachers are more than female headteachers in Tharaka District a fact that was confirmed by the District Education Officer's office data.

Professional experience of the headteachers is presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Headteacher's Professional Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 2	12	26
2 – 4	7	14
5 – 6	6	13
7 – 8	6	13
9 – 10	5	11
Over 10	10	23
Total	45	100

According to Table 4, 26% of the headteachers have a professional experience between 0 to 2 years and 23% have a professional experience of over 10 years. This implies that a small percentage had less experience in heading primary schools. About (60%) of the headteachers have an experience of 5 years and above. This indicates that most of the headteachers have enough experience in heading primary schools.

Professional qualification of the headteachers is presented on Table 5

Table 5: Professional Qualification of the Headteachers

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
P1	24	54.0
ATS	15	34.0
Diploma	3	6.0
Total	45	100.0

In Table 5, 54% of the headteachers have P1 qualification and 34% have ATS qualification, while 6% have diploma qualification. This shows that all the headteachers meet the qualifications of primary school training colleges and above.

Table 6 presents types of public primary schools in Tharaka District

Table 6: Types of Public Primary Schools in Tharaka District

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Primary mixed day	35	76
Primary Girls' Boarding	3	7

Primary Mixed Boarding	3	7
Primary Boys Boarding and Mixed Day	2	5
Primary Mixed day and Boarding	3	5

According to Table 6, 76% of the public primary schools are primary mixed day, 10% are either boys' boarding and mixed day or mixed day and boarding. Majority of the pupils attend the primary mixed day where education is expected to be absolutely free. A small percentage (21%) from well to do families attends the boarding schools.

Table 7 presents headteachers' responses on whether pupils pay levies in their schools or not.

Table 7: Response of Headteachers on whether their pupils pay any Levies

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	84
No	7	16
Total	45	100

According to Table 7, 84% of the headteachers admitted that there are levies that they charge in their schools. Only 16% said that they do not charge any levies in their schools. The findings contradicts Machilla (2005) Research Project on Universal Primary Education in Taita Taveta Division where he observed that cost sharing in schools (Levies charged) is a least factor contributing to pupils' low completion rates.

Table 8 presents headteachers comments on whether the pupils pay the levies promptly or not.

Table 8: Promptness in payment of levies

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	-	-
No	38	100
Total	38	100

According to Table 8, 100% of the headteachers alleged that pupils do not pay levies promptly in their schools. This implies that headteachers are faced with a number of fee defaulters in their schools.

Table 9 presents measures taken by headteachers against pupils who do not pay levies promptly.

Table 9: Consequences for failing to pay levies

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Given time to pay	11	18
Parents summoned by head teacher	20	53
Sent home	7	29
Total	38	100

From Table 9, 53 of the headteachers summon parents of children who default to pay school levies while 29% send the pupils home and only 18% give them time to pay.

The percentage sent home may not have the opportunity to come back to school especially if their families are unable to raise the required funds.

Table 10 describes the various levies pupils pay in school.

Table 10: Levies paid in schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Extra coaching	14	37
Watchman	8	21
KCPE fees	38	100
Evaluation tests fees	22	58
Building fund	27	72
Boarding fund	2	5
PTA fund	16	42
Field trips	28	73

Other than the KCPE exam fees where 100% of the headteachers stated they charge the pupils, 72% admitted they charge pupils building fund and 58% charge pupils for evaluation tests. 37% charge pupils for extra coaching. This is consistent with the fear expressed by UNICEF (2003) that despite free primary education, costs still hinder access to education in Sub Saharan Africa.

Table 11 presents views of headteachers whether the pupils in class eight in their schools are the same pupils who were in class one eight years ago.

Table 11: Views of headteachers whether the pupils in class eight in their schools are not the same pupils who were in class one eight years ago

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	96
No	2	4
Total	45	100

From Table 11, 96% of the headteachers stated that the pupils who were in class eight are not the same ones who were in class one eight years ago. Only 4% felt that the pupils who are in class eight are the same ones who were in class one eight years ago.

Table 12 presents the headteachers' comments on possible reasons for decrease in enrolment in their schools.

Table 12: Causes of decrease in enrolment according to headteachers

Causes of the decrease	Rank
Dropping out	1.67
Transfer	1.8
Repetition	2.6
Do not know	3.6

Dropping out was cited as the leading cause of decrease in enrolment. This finding is consistent with what Ado (2005) found out in her Research Project on the role of

headteachers in curbing dropout rates from schools in Isiolo District. In her project Ado (2005) cited dropout as the leading cause of decrease in enrolment of pupils from public primary schools in Isiolo District.

Measures taken by headteachers against indiscipline of pupils are presented on Table 13.

Table 13: Measures taken against undisciplined pupils

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Give warnings	31	69
Expulsion after several warnings	4	9
Corporal punishment	13	29
Counselling	23	51

From Table 13, 69% of the headteachers prefer to give warnings, 51% counsel undisciplined pupils and only 9% resort to expulsion after several warnings. The presence of guiding and counselling programmes in schools as implied by 51% of the headteachers suggests that there are also costs associated with maintaining the department.

Classes that are most affected by dropout problem are shown on Table 14.

Table 14: Classes that witnessed highest dropout rate between 2003 to date

Class	4	5	6	7	8
Frequency	8	10	10	10	7
Percentage	18	22	22	22	17

Most headteachers felt that class 5 and class 6 witness the highest dropout rate. Twenty two percent (22%) felt class 5 is most affected and another 22% felt class 6 and another 22% felt class 7 is most affected. It is during this age period that the pupils are active enough to take part in domestic duties and other related child labour. Class 4 and 8 have the least percentage of dropout.

Table 15 presents what pupils who dropout of school does.

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Table 15: Occupation of those who fail to complete primary cycle

Occupation	Rank
Get casual employment	1.7
Get married	2.5
Herd cattle	2.85
Do business	3.7
Engage in criminal activities	4.12

The most attractive activity to pupils who dropout of public primary schools in Tharaka District is casual employment. This is followed by early marriages as an attraction to dropouts. However, according to a project report by Ado (2005), pupils

who dropout of school from public primary schools in Isiolo District engage in herding of animals, roaming in manyattas and doing domestic duties.

Table 16 presents the opinion of headteachers on whether it is appropriate to allow back those who drop out of school.

Table 16: Headteachers' opinion on re-admission of dropouts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	100
No	-	-
Total	45	100

From Table 16, 100% of the headteachers felt that the pupils who drop out of school should be allowed back.

The opinion of headteachers on whether there are hidden costs associated with free primary education in their schools is presented on Table 17.

Table 17: Response of headteachers on whether there are hidden costs associated with free primary education in Tharaka District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	100
No	-	-
Total	45	100

From Table 17, 100% of the headteachers acknowledged that there are hidden costs associated with free primary education in their schools. This is in agreement with the

findings of Cohn (1978).Cohn cited private costs of education as a limitation to enrolment of pupils from poor countries.

Table 18 presents how headteachers describe the enrolment rates of pupils in their schools

Table 18: Enrolment rates of pupils as described by headteachers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
High	16	36
Low	14	31
Very low	15	33
Total	45	100

From Table 18, 36% of headteachers described enrolment rates in their schools as high, 31% described the enrolment rates as low. Whereas 33% of the headteachers described enrolment as very low.

Table 19 presents feelings of the headteachers on whether they think there is a relationship between enrolment rates of pupils in their schools and the hidden costs of free primary education.

Table 19: Opinion of headteachers on whether there is any relationship between enrolment rates of pupils in their schools and the hidden costs of free primary education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	96
No	2	4
Total	45	100

From Table 19, 96% of the headteachers stated that there is a relationship between hidden costs of the free primary education and enrolment rates in their schools. Four percent (4%) felt there was no such relationship.

Table 20 presents the feelings of headteachers on whether they think hidden costs of free primary education has affected the ability of pupils to complete the primary school cycle or not.

Table 20: Opinion of headteachers on whether hidden costs of education have affected the ability of your pupils to complete the primary cycle

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	44	97
Yes	1	3
Total	45	100

From Table 20, 97% of the headteachers admitted that the hidden costs of free primary education have affected the ability of their pupils to complete the primary

cycle. Only 3% felt that the ability of their pupils to complete the primary cycle has not been affected by the hidden costs of free primary education.

Table 21 presents the feelings of headteachers on the gender they think is most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District.

Table 21: Group of pupils most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Girls	29	64
Boys	27	50

According to Table 21, 64% of the headteachers feel girls are most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education. Fifty percent (50%) feel boys are most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education. This reinforces the findings of Elimu Yetu Coalition (2004) that many poor families regard the education of girls as a low priority.

Table 22 presents effects of hidden costs of free primary education as ranked by the headteachers from most to least cited effect

Table 22: Rank the following factors from the most to least cited effects of hidden costs of education

	Rank
Negligence by parents	1.7
Low completion rate	1.82

High dropout rate	2.4
Early marriages	2.63
Negative traditional practices	3.1
Lack of motivation to learn	3.5
Malnutrition	4.7
Weak academic performance	5.23
Low enrolment rate	6.71
Understaffing of teachers	7.9
Lack access to education	8.2
Gender inequity in schools	9.57
Conflict between pupils and teachers/administration	10.1
Repetition	11.2
Child labour	11.8

The most cited effects of hidden costs of free primary education include negligence by parents, low completion rate and high dropout rate. This is in agreement with EFA (2001) Report that revealed that financial requirements of education have affected universal access to basic education. However, child labour and repetition are not main effects of hidden costs of free primary education.

4.1.2. Demographic Information of the Pupils

Table 23 presents the number of pupils in class 8 according to gender.

Table 23: Gender of the Pupils

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Males	390	60
Females	260	40
Total	450	100

According to Table 23, 60% of the class eight pupils are males. Forty percent (40%) are females.

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Table 24: Age of the Pupils

Response	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 15	520	80
16 – 18	90	14
Over 18	40	6
Total	650	100

According to Table 24, 80% of the pupils lie between the age bracket (13 – 15) years, 6% are aged over 18 years.

Table 25 presents the people whom the pupils live with.

Table 25: Relatives who stay with pupils when they are away from school

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents	520	80
Mother alone	85	13.1
Father alone	40	6.2
Relative	10	1.5
Total	650	100

According to Table 25, 80% of the pupils live with both parents. Only 1.5% live with their relatives. About 19.3% of the pupils have single parents.

Table 26 presents means of transport used by pupils to school.

Table 26: Transport by pupils to school

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Go on foot	622	95
Public vehicle	28	5
Total	650	100

Majority of the pupils go on foot to school. About 5% use public vehicle.

Table 27 presents the situation of pupils who use public vehicles whether they go without bus fare.

Table 27: Lack of bus fare

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	85
No	2	15
Total	28	100

About 85% of the pupils who use public vehicles to school lack bus fare at times . Only 15% can afford to raise bus fare throughout.

Table 28 presents the distance between pupils' residence and school.

Table 28: Distance from school to pupils' residence.

Distance	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 1 km	98	15
1 – 5 km	362	56
5 – 10 km	150	23
Over 10 km	40	6
Total	650	100

Ninety eight percent (98%) of the pupils live within one kilometre from school. Fifty six percent live between five to one kilometres from school. Geographical distribution of schools is therefore not a main factor that affects access to school as cited by Cohn (1978).

Table 29 presents pupils' opinion on whether there are some classmates who they were with in class one and are no longer with them in class eight.

Table 29: Failure to complete primary cycle

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	640	98
No	10	2
Total	650	100

According to Table 29, 98% of the pupils admitted that there are some of their classmates whom they were with in class one and are no longer with them while 2% felt there was no change.

Table 30 ranks the reasons for decrease in enrolment from the time they joined class one eight years ago.

Table 30: Rank the reasons for decrease in enrolment from the time you joined class one eight years ago

Reason	Rank
Dropping out	1.7
Repetitions	2.91
Transfer to other schools	2.99
Don't know	3.73

According to Table 30, the main cause for decrease in enrolment is dropout. This is followed by repetitions. This agrees with the findings of Odipo (1997) that dropout is

a leading factor that influences pupils' completion rates of school. Additionally, Aduda (2003) in a newspaper article cited repetition, which is a form of dropout as a main reason for decrease in enrolment.

Table 31 presents reasons for dropout.

Table 31: Reasons for Dropout

Reason	Rank
Lack of food	2.3
Family problems	2.82
Lack of school uniform	3.4
Early marriages	3.9
Indiscipline leading to explosion	4.1
Lack of school fees	4.7
Illness	4.8
Pregnancy	5.5

According to Table 31, lack of food, family problems and lack of school uniform which are as a result of poverty are the leading cause of dropout. These findings concur with earlier studies conducted by Amunga (1997), Kibogy (2001) and Wanjohi (2002). Pregnancy was ranked last as a cause of dropout. This contradicts findings by Machilla (2005).

Table 32 presents whether those who dropout of school opt for employment.

Table 32: Opinion of pupils on whether those who drop out of School opt for employment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	635	98
No	15	2
Total	650	100

According to Table 32, 98% of the pupils said that those of them who dropout of school opt for employment. 2% said they do not opt for employment.

Table 33 presents what happens to pupils who fail to pay levies.

Table 33: Opinion of pupils on whether fee defaulter are sent away from school

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	479	74
No	171	26
Total	650	100

According to Table 33, 74% of the pupils said that they are sent away if they fail to pay levies while 26% said that they are not sent away if they fail to pay levies.

Levies commonly charged in schools are ranked on Table 34 in the order in which how often they are charged in schools.

Table 34: Ranking of Commonly charged levies in school

Levies	Rank
Mock exams	1.13
Holiday coaching	1.75
KCPE examination fee	1.90
School development fund	2.33
Harambee fund	2.5
Watchman fees	3.6
School uniform fees	4.52

According to Table 34, mock fee was ranked as the most common levy charged by schools. This was followed by fees for holiday coaching. However, fees for school uniforms is not frequently charged in schools. It is ranked last among the levies charged by schools. The findings contradict Machilla (2005) who found that there are other factors other factors other than cost sharing (levies charged) that contribute to pupils low completion rates.

Table 35 presents whether pupils are normally sent away from school for indiscipline.

Table 35: Opinion of pupils on whether undisciplined pupils are normally sent away

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	350	54
No	300	46
Total	650	100

According to Table 35, 54% of the pupils said they are normally sent away from school for indiscipline while 46% said they are normally not sent away from school for indiscipline.

Table 36 presents the opinion for pupils on which class they feel most pupils fail to complete.

Table 36: Classes which pupils fail to complete

Class	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Percentage	23	52	60	79	65	39

According to Table 35, 79% of the pupils were of the opinion that most pupils fail to complete class VI. Only 23% felt pupils fail to complete class III. About 52% and 60% cited class iv and v respectively.

Table 37 shows the reasons why pupils fail to complete the primary school cycle ranked from strongest reason to the weakest reason.

Table 37: Reasons for failing to complete the primary cycle

Reason	Rank
Lack of food	1.7
Lack of parental care	1.82
Get jobs in urban areas	2.3
Lack of school uniform	2.78
Forced repetition	3.0
To do business	3.25
Get married	3.68
Work in farms	4.12
Negative traditional practices	5.03
Distance to school	5.27
Lack of teacher	5.9

According to Table 37, the strongest reason why pupils fail to complete the primary cycle is lack of food followed by lack of parental care. The least reason cited is lack of teachers. This is consistent with the findings of Mogire (2004) who blamed dropout of pupils on lack of food at home. However the findings contradicted earlier studies conducted in other parts of the country such as those of Nderitu (1982) and Wambui (1995) as quoted by Wanjohi (2002).

Further, lack of parental care ranked second as a major factor contributing to low completion rate agrees with Machilla (2005) that parental ignorance is a major cause of dropout in primary schools.

Feelings of pupils who fail to complete the primary cycle are presented on Table 38.

Table 38: Feelings of dropouts as is expressed by other pupils

Response	Percentage
Feel bitter and dejected in life	81
Would like to go back to school	67
Feel contented with life	53
Do not want to go back to school	59

According to Table 38, 81% of the pupils said that those who fail to complete the primary school cycle feel bitter and dejected in life. About 53% feel contented with life whereas 59% do not want to go back to school.

Events and activities most common in schools is presented on Table 39.

Table 39: Events and Activities most Common in schools

Events	V.F	F	R	N	Mode
Guidance and counselling	250	299	95	3	F
Athletics and sports	170	120	350	10	R
Career advice	115	395	90	150	F
Participation in community development	70	101	70	409	N
Health programmes	30	38	69	513	N
General school cleanliness	502	103	18	27	F
Meetings with non-governmental organisations	33	46	471	100	V.F

Key:

V.F. – Very Frequent **R** – Rare
F – Frequent **N** – Never

According to Table 39, general school cleanliness is a very frequent activity in schools. However, health programmes never takes place.

Table 40 presents the feelings of pupils on whether they are happy with free primary education.

Table 40: Opinion of pupils on whether they are happy with free primary education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	650	100
No	-	-
Total	650	100

According to Table 40, 100% of the pupils are happy with free primary education in schools.

Table 41 presents pupil's comments on whether there are expenses they incur despite free primary education.

Table 41: Opinion of pupils on whether there are expenses incurred despite free primary education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	450	69
No	200	31

Total	650	100
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According to Table 41, 69% of the pupils stated that there are expenses they still incur despite free primary education. Thirty one (31%) of the pupils said they no longer incur any expenses on their education. This justifies the existence of hidden costs of education.

Table 42 presents the feelings of the pupils on what action they would opt for in case they are not able to meet expenses required in school.

Table 42: Opinion of pupils on actions they will take if they fail to meet the hidden expenses

Response	Percentage
Leave school	73
Seek employment	41
Stay at home	69
Get married	23

According to Table 42, 73% of the pupils would decide to leave school while 23% would opt to get married. Hidden costs of education are therefore forcing pupils out of school.

4.2. Other Findings

Other causes of decrease in enrolment as cited by headteachers include:

1. Child labour.
2. Early marriages.

Reasons for Dropout of Pupils between class four and class eight as observed by head teachers include:

1. Lack of motivation to learn
2. Weak academic performance in class.
3. Class repetitions.
4. Transfer of pupils by parents to other schools with better facilities.
5. Early marriage.
6. Child labour.
7. Negligence by parents.
8. Negative traditional practices.
9. Peer influence.
10. Adolescence.
11. Starvation.
12. Lack of role models.
13. Inability to pay levies.
14. Attainment of puberty age.
15. Health problems.

Other activities attractive to pupils who dropout of school as observed by headteachers are:

1. Joining of youth polytechnics
2. Becoming turn-boys.

Economic activities of communities in Tharaka District include:

1. Livestock keeping.

2. Subsistence farming.
3. Bee keeping.
4. Charcoal burning.

Economic activities most attractive to the pupils making some of them to drop out include:

1. Herding cattle.
2. Farming.

Measures taken by head teachers of public primary schools to ensure high completion and enrolment rates in Tharaka District are:

1. Sensitisation meetings with parents.
2. Guidance and counselling programmes.
3. Cheap boarding facilities.
4. Involving the provincial administration.
5. School feeding programmes.
6. Seeking of sponsorship for needy pupils.
7. Motivating good achievers through rewards.
8. Use of appropriate teaching methodology.

Hidden costs of free primary education as cited by headteachers of public primary schools in Tharaka District include:

1. Cost of desks and other sitting facilities.
2. Cost of putting up classrooms for extra enrolment due to free primary education.
3. PTA fund to pay teachers employed by PTA to alleviate understaffing.

4. Cost of sanitation programmes in schools.
5. Cost of remedial coaching.
6. Evaluation tests.
7. Payment of support staff.
8. Funds required to take care of orphans in schools.
9. Funds for legal matters.
10. KCPE registration levy.
11. Building fund.
12. Cost of school uniforms.

This agrees with the findings of Machila (2005) who acknowledged existence of hidden costs of free primary education.

The manner in which hidden costs of free primary education has affected completion rates of pupils as cited by headteachers are as follows:

1. Congested classrooms.
2. Understaffing of teachers.
3. Inadequate seats.
4. Parents transfer children to school already built or with good facilities.
5. Pupils whose parents cannot pay the levies are forced to drop out.
6. Malnutrition.

This reinforces Abagi (2001) that free primary education has led to pupils learning in congested classrooms and poor pupil to teacher ratio.

Reasons why headteachers feel boys are most affected include:

1. Since boys are majority, they require more facilities in terms of sitting space, latrines etc.
2. Boys are easily frustrated.
3. Boys are involved in casual employment more than girls.
4. Negative traditional practices.

Reasons why headteachers feel girls are most affected are:

1. Teenage pregnancy is on the rise.
2. Early marriages have increased.
3. Household chores are targeted at girls.
4. Female genital mutilation still practised.
5. Community feels educating a girl means educating somebody else's wife.
6. Negative traditional practices.

Types of employment that dropouts engage in as is indicated by the pupils are:

1. Look after animals.
2. Shamba work.
3. House keeping.

This is in agreement with EFA (2000) that many parents have continued to send their children into the labour market as a source of earning livelihood. Amounts earned on the average by child labourers as cited by pupils ranges between 300 to 1,500 shillings per month.

Activities commonly practiced in the area as observed by the pupils are:

1. Fetching of water.
2. Fetching of firewood.

3. Baby sitting.
4. Grazing of animals.
5. Weeding.
6. Harvesting tamarinds.
7. Charcoal burning.

Common types of indiscipline in schools cited by the pupils are:

1. Rudeness
2. Poor dressing.
3. Fights.
4. Cheating.
5. Smoking.
6. Drunkenness.

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Suggestions by pupils to ensure high enrolment and completion rates of pupils are as follows:

1. Provision of food in school.
2. Provision of school uniform.
3. Provision of tap water.
4. Government to meet examination fees and expenses of field trips.

Reasons why pupils are happy with free primary education are:

1. No payment of fees.
2. Provision of books and pens.

From the data collected, the hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District has been deduced as follows: Information on Table 7 revealed that schools still charge various forms of levies despite the introduction of free primary education. According to the Table, 84% of the headteachers interviewed stated that their schools still charge various forms of levies. Sixteen percent (16%) of them denied this fact. On the other hand, 69% of the pupils interviewed said that there are expenses them and their families still incur despite the introduction of free primary education. This information is illustrated on Table 40.

The headteachers whose schools charge other levies cited a number of them. According to Table 10, levies charged in school included the following:

1. **Extra coaching:** Schools charge pupils to pay teachers for the overtime work undertaken during extra coaching. Extra coaching implies that pupils remain behind after normal school hours for remedial teaching. Remedial teaching is also undertaken during weekends.
2. **Watchmen fees:** These are levies charged to meet security expenses in the school. Schools employ watchmen to guard schools at night and during holidays.
3. **KCPE exam fees:** This is a mandatory levy for class eight preparing to sit the KCPE exams. The exam fees charged is Kshs 320 per candidate.
4. **Evaluation tests:** Besides the KCPE exam fees, schools charge pupils for evaluation tests. These evaluation tests may take the form of internal mocks, zonal mocks, divisional mocks and district mocks.
5. **Building fund:** Schools charge pupils to put up new and extra buildings in the school. The introduction of free primary education resulted in explosion of

enrolment necessitating more classroom space, increased sanitary facilities and so on.

6. **Boarding fund:** Boarding schools charge this fund to meet pupils' accommodation and welfare services. Additionally, schools with lunch schemes for pupils charge this fund to pay cooks and meet other costs of labour.
7. **PTA fund:** Schools charge this fund to pay teachers employed by the PTA. Acute understaffing in schools has necessitated employment of PTA teachers. This fund is also used to pay other support staff in the school.
8. **Field trips:** Schools charge pupils for field trips. These are academic trips that are not catered for by the free primary education.

In addition to the levies charged directly by schools, there are other costs that parents incur as a result of taking their children to school in Tharaka District. These costs are directly incurred by the parents or can be imputed. Costs that are directly borne by the parents are:

1. **School uniform fees:** According to Table 35, lack of uniforms is ranked fourth by pupils as one of the reasons why pupils fail to complete the primary school cycle. Therefore, parents have to buy for their children school uniform to attend school.
2. **Lack of food:** This is a critical issue for learning to take place. According to Table 36, lack of food is ranked as the first reason that prevents pupils from completing the primary cycle. Parents therefore have to spend on food to enable their children attend school.

3. **Transport to School:** According to Table 26, 5% of the pupils go to school using vehicles. On Table 27, 85% of the pupils who use public vehicles admit that there are occasions they lack fare to school. Parents are therefore obliged to meet transport expenses for their children to school. This is aggravated by the fact that according to the table 29% of the pupils live beyond a distance of 5 kilometres from school.

4. **Child health:** Parents have to spend on the health of their children if they are to attend school. This is because sick children can't learn. Table 30 reveals that illness is one of the reasons why pupils drop out of school.

Indirect costs incurred by parents for taking their children to school relates to the income and labour forgone by families of pupils who would have otherwise taken part in income generating activities and provided labour to the family but instead chose to go to school. When pupils go to school, their parents forego their labour in the following activities in the district:

1. Fetching of water.
2. Fetching of firewood.
3. Baby sitting.
4. Grazing of animals.
5. Weeding.
6. Harvesting of termites.
7. Charcoal burning.
8. Bee keeping.
9. House keeping.

In Tharaka District, amounts earned on the average by children who take part in income generating activities range between Kshs 300 to Kshs 1,500 per month. This constitutes part of hidden costs of free primary education as families have to forego this income when they take their children to school.

Relationship between Hidden costs of the Free Primary Education and Enrolment and Completion Rates of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Tharaka District

According to Table 11, 96% of the headteachers admitted that pupils in class eight are not the same pupils who were in class one eight years ago. They observed that there had been a decrease in enrolment.

According to Table 12, the headteachers ranked dropout as the foremost reason why there was a decrease in enrolment. When pupils were asked to state why some of their colleagues were not able to complete the primary cycle, they cited lack of food as the main reason, followed by family problems and lack of school uniform. The implication therefore, is that so many pupils in Tharaka District are not able to enrol in school due to lack of food which is one of the hidden costs of free primary education. It can therefore be argued that hidden costs of free primary education have kept pupils away from primary schools in Tharaka District. Those that enrol in primary schools cannot complete the primary cycle.

According to Table 21, 64% of the headteachers felt that girls are most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education. 60% felt boys are most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education. The headteachers therefore seemed to be undecided on which gender is most affected by the hidden costs of free primary

education. They tended to distribute the effect of hidden costs of free primary education equally among the gender.

Headteachers who felt girls were most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education touted the following reasons for their argument:

1. Teenage pregnancy is on the rise in the district, implying more girls than boys fail to complete the primary cycle.
2. Early marriages among girls have increased. This has therefore affected their enrolment rates in schools.
3. Household chores are targeted at girls. More girls are involved in house keeping than boys.
4. Female genital mutilation is still practiced in the area.
5. The community feels educating a girl means educating somebody else's wife.

On the other hand, headteachers who felt boys were most hit by the effects of hidden costs of free primary education gave the following reasons:

1. Since boys are majority. They require more facilities in terms of sitting space, latrines etc. Lack of these facilities force them out of school.
2. Boys are easily frustrated. Those who can't cope with the hidden expenses associated with going to school, decide not to complete the primary cycle.
3. The number of boys involved in casual employment in the area out number that of girls. This means that more boys than girls are forced out of school to take up casual employment.
4. Negative traditional practices. After circumcision many boys feel they are adults and thus dropout of school.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Summary

This study had five objectives. First, the study sought to determine existence of hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District. This information was obtained from both the headteachers and pupils of public primary schools in Tharaka District. The second objective was to determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District. Thirdly, the study also sought to determine the impact of hidden costs of the free primary education on completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District. Lastly, the study sought to determine the impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment of pupils according to gender in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

In order to investigate these issues, four research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are the hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District?
2. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and enrolment rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District?
3. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District?
4. Is there any relationship between hidden costs of free primary education and enrolment of pupils according to gender in public primary schools in Tharaka District?

The literature relevant to this study provided guidelines and laid the background for this research. Using an ex-post-facto research design and the research questions outlined in chapter one as a guide, a questionnaire was developed and used to collect data from 45 headteachers and 653 pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District. The data gathered was analysed by use of descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages.

Details of hidden costs of free primary education and impact of hidden costs of free primary education on enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District is presented in subsequent sub-sections.

5.1. Conclusions

From the foregoing findings and arguments, the study came up with the following conclusions:

1. There are hidden costs associated with free primary education in Tharaka District. Whereas, the Kenyan Government had banned payment of levies in public primary schools, parents are still compelled to meet hidden expenses that are associated with taking a child to school. Top among these expenses include the provision of food as a hungry child cannot learn. This is the case despite spiralling level of poverty in the district. As has been stated earlier, many parents live below the poverty level. Additionally, parents still provide for shelter, clothing and health for their children. They have to buy school uniforms for their children and cater for their health.

2. Public primary schools in Tharaka District still charge direct levies. These levies include PTA fund to pay teachers employed by the school, watchman fees and fees for field trips among others.
3. There are other statutory fees that parents still have to pay. For instance, parents whose children are in class eight still have to pay KCPE examination fees. KCPE examination fee is Kshs 320 per candidate which is still beyond many households.
4. The spiralling poverty in the district and by extension the Sub-Saharan Africa, force parents to withdraw their children from school to work as child labourers. This has been necessitated by need for extra pennies to keep the family surviving. However, those who choose to leave their children in school are forced to put up with indirect costs associated with leaving the child to attend school. These costs take the form of income foregone by children going to school. In Tharaka District, pupils forego income that would have been generated from casual employment, herding cattle, doing business, and harvesting tamarides among others.
5. The completion rate of pupils is very low. Whereas many parents were encouraged with the introduction of free primary education in 2003 and enrolled their children in school, the hidden costs associated with free primary education
6. took its toll forcing many pupils to fall by the wayside and fail to complete the primary cycle.

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7. The enrolment rates of pupils in Tharaka District is still low. Boys are particularly discouraged by enrolling in school especially if they project their inability to complete the primary school.
8. The hidden costs of free primary education in Tharaka District has entrenched negative traditional practices. Enrolment in schools according to gender is tilted in favour of boys. Many parents view the education of girls as educating somebody else's wife. Consequently there are few girls enrolled in schools. Girls are further disadvantaged with female genital mutilation which is still practiced in the district.

5.2. Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing findings and conclusion following recommendation have been made:

1. School feeding programme should be strengthened in the district.
2. Boarding facilities should be expanded in primary schools in the district.
3. Non-governmental organisations should be mobilised to play active role in educational development in the district.
4. The local communities should discard negative traditional practices like female genital mutilation.
5. Many primary schools should be built up in the district so that pupils do not travel long distances to school.
6. Schools should avoid charging unclassified forms of levies.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

There is need to conduct further research in the following areas:

1. Impact of hidden costs of education on gender equity in education.
2. Relationship between poverty levels and access to education in the district.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

HEADTEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is designed to gather general information about yourself, hidden costs of free primary education, enrolment and completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Tharaka District.

You are assured that your answers will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL**. Therefore, **DO NOT WRITE** your **NAME OR THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL**.

Please indicate the correct option as correctly and honestly as possible by putting a tick [✓] on one of the options and give a short explanation if required.

Part A

1. Indicate your sex

Male Female

2. For how long have you been a head teacher?

Years.....Months.....

3. What is your professional qualification? (Please [✓] tick where applicable).

P₁ S₁

P₂ A.T.S

P₃ B.ED

P₄ Diploma

Others (specify).....

4. What is the type of your school?

Primary mixed day Primary Girls boarding

Primary Boys boarding

PART B

5. (a) (i) Do your pupils pay any levies?

Yes No

(ii) If yes, do they pay promptly?

Yes No

(iii) If no, what happens to those who do not pay?

Given time to pay

Parents summoned by head teacher

Sent home

Others (Specify)

(b) If your answer to 5 (a) (i) was yes, which levies do they pay?

Extra coaching

Watchman

Examination fees

Building

Other (s) (Please specify)

6. (a) Are the present pupils in standard eight in your school the same pupils who enrolled in class one?

Yes No

(b) If the number of enrolment has decreased, what was the cause of the decrease? Rank the following causes from the strongest to the least beginning from 1 – 4.

Transfer Repetition

Dropping out Do not know

Other(s) (Specify)

7. In case of indiscipline, what measures from the following, does your school normally take?

Give warnings

Expulsion after several warnings

Corporal punishment.....

Other (s) (Specify)

8. Rank the following factors from the most to the least cited effects of hidden costs of education. Indicate in order from first to last.

Effect	Girls	Boys
Low completion rate		
Early marriages		
Repetition		
Conflict between pupils and teachers/administration		
Negligence by parents		
Weak academic performance		
Lack of motivation to learn		
Negative traditional practices		
Low enrolment rate		
Child labour		
Understaffing of teachers		
Malnutrition		
Lack of access to education		
Gender inequity in schools		

High dropout rate		
-------------------	--	--

Any other (specify)

9. (a) Between the year 2003 to date which class in your school do you think has witnessed the highest dropout rate?

Give possible reasons.....

.....

(b) Where do most of the pupils who fail to complete the primary school cycle go? Please rank from No.1 – 5 starting with where you feel majority go.

Get married ...

Do business ...

Get casual employment

Herd cattle

Engage in criminal activities

Any other specify

10. (a) What are the main economic activities of the local community?.....

.....

.....

.....

(b). Which of the economic activities cited in 10(a) above are most attractive to

the pupils making some of them drop out of school? Explain.....

.....

.....

11. (a) What is your school doing to achieve high completion and enrolment rates?

Explain.....
.....
.....

(b) In your opinion is it appropriate to allow those who drop out back to school?

Yes No

12. (a) In your opinion are there hidden costs associated with free primary education in Tharaka District?

Yes No

(b) If your answer to 12 (a) above is Yes, can you list the hidden costs you are aware of?

.....
.....

13. (a) How would you describe the enrolment rates of pupils in your school?

High.....

Low.....

Very low.....

(b) Do you think there is any relationship between enrolment rates of pupils in your school and the hidden costs of free primary education?

Yes No

(c) Do you think hidden costs of education have affected the ability of your pupils to complete the primary cycle?

Yes

No

(d) If your answer to 13(c) above is yes, in what manner?

.....

14. (a) Which group of pupils do you think is most affected by the hidden costs of free primary education in your school?

Girls

Boys

(b) Can you give reasons for your answer in 14(a) above?

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

This questionnaire is aimed at finding out the hidden costs of free primary education in public primary schools in Tharaka District. Please respond to the questions by giving the most accurate answer. Information you give will be treated confidentially.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE or the NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL.

Section A

1. Indicate your Sex

Male Female

2. How old are you?

13 to 15 years 16 to 18 years

Any other age Specify.....

3. If you are in a day school, whom do you live with?

My both parents ..My mother alone

My father alone A relative

Please specify the relative.....

Others (Please specify)

4. (a) How do you normally get to school?

I go on foot Public vehicle

Other(s) (Please specify)

(b) If you go by public vehicle, are there times that you find yourself without bus fare?

Yes No

(c) Who provides the bus fare? (Tick where applicable).

Father Mother

Father/Mother Brothers/Sisters

Relatives

Others (specify).....

5. How far is your school from your residence?

100 metres 1 – 5 Km 5 – 10 Km More than 10 Km

.....

Section B

6. (a) Are there some of your classmates who joined standard one with you, who have not completed the school?

Yes No

(b) If the number is less, what do you think caused the difference? Please rank the causes from 1 – 4 beginning with the strongest cause to the least cause.

Transfer to other schools..... Repetitions

Dropping out Don't know

Other(s) (Please specify).....

(c) For those who dropped out of school. What was the reason? Please rank in order from 1-7 beginning with the strongest reason to the least reason.

Pregnancy.....

Lack of school fees

Family problems

Early marriages

Lack of school uniform.....

Indiscipline leading to expulsion

Illness

Others (Please specify)

(d) (i) Do those who leave school opt for employment?

Yes No

(ii) If yes, what do they do?

Please specify the nature of the work they do

.....

.....

.....

(iii) On average, how much do they earn in Kshs?

Specify

(iv) Classify the following activities as either **APPLICABLE** or **NOT APPLICABLE**

in the area: By putting a tick [✓].

Activity	Applicable	Not Applicable
Fetching water		
Fetching firewood		

Baby sitting		
Grazing		
Weeding		
Line fishing in the river		
Harvesting tamarinds		
Taking care of the parents (old/sick)		

Any other activity, *specify*

(vi) In the spaces provided indicate the number of brothers and sisters in your family.

Brothers..... Sisters

(vii) Indicate how many are in the following ages.

Years/AGE	Brothers	Sisters
0 – 2		
3 – 5		
6 – 8		
9 – 11		
12 – 14		
15 and above		

(viii) In your family, what is your position in the family in order of birth? Tick where applicable.

1st born 2nd born 3rd born

4th born..... Last born

Any other (specify)

7. (a) In your school, are pupils normally sent away if they fail to pay levies?

Yes No

(b) Rank the following levies in the order in which they are commonly charged in your school. Rank them from 1 – 7 beginning with the most common to the least common.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| School development fund | <input type="checkbox"/> | School uniform fee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Harambee fund..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Examination fee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Watchman | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mocks exams | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Holiday coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Others (Please specify) | | | |

8. (a) Are pupils normally sent away from school for indiscipline?

Yes No

(b) What are the most common types of indiscipline that pupils are sent away for from your school?

- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| • Rudeness | <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor dressing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fights |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| Cheating | <input type="checkbox"/> | Smoking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drunkenness |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

Any other (specify)

9. In your opinion, in which class do pupils fail to complete?

10. What do you think are the reasons for failing to complete the primary school cycle? (Please rank in order from 1 – 11 beginning with the strongest reason to the least reason.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lack of school uniforms | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Distance to school..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced repetition..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of parental care | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Negative traditional practices | <input type="checkbox"/> | Get jobs in urban areas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work in farms | <input type="checkbox"/> | Get married | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do business | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Others (specify)..... | | | |

11. Which of the following statements do you think best describes the feelings of pupils who fail to complete their school cycle in primary?

- Would like to go back to school
- Do not want to go back to school.....
- Feel bitter and dejected in life.....
- Feel contented with life.....
- Any other (specify)

12. What do you think should be done to ensure high enrolment and completion rates of pupils?.....

.....

.....

SECTION C

Which of the following events and activities are most common in your school?

Please indicate with a tick [√].in relevant column the extent to which one of these processes take place in your school.

Scale V.F= Very Frequently F= frequently R= Rarely N= Never

	V. F	F	R	N
Guidance and counselling				
Athletics and sports				
Career advice				
Participation in community development				
Health programmes				
Maintenance and repair of school facilities				
General school cleanliness				
Meetings with Non-governmental organizations				

13. (a) Are you happy with free primary education?

Yes No

If yes, give reasons.....

If No, why

Are there expenses that you and your family still incur despite free primary education?

Yes No

(b) If your answer to 14(b) above is yes, can you list the expenses?.....

.....
.....
.....

If you were not able to meet the above expenses which of the following decisions would you opt for? **Please tick one.**

Leave school

Seek employment.....

Stay at home.....

Get married

Any other (Please specify).....

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