

IMPACT OF NON-PAYMENT OF SCHOOL LEVIES BY PARENTS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN AINABKOI SUB- COUNTY, UASIN-GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *Service delivery in educational institutions is entirely dependent on financing. In Kenya, public secondary school education services are financially supported by both government subsidy and parents' payment of minimal levies. This study focused on the role of parents in payment of school levies. The study sought to establish effects of non-payment of school levies by parents on service delivery in selected public secondary schools. Based on the study, this paper examines the influence of non-payments of school levies by parents on school programmes and projects. The study utilized descriptive survey research design. It targeted 31 public secondary schools in Ainabkoi Sub-County of Uasin Gishu County. A total of 18 public secondary schools were sampled using stratified random sampling. All of the schools' principals (18) and bursars (18) were sampled purposively. The research data was then collected using open-ended interview schedule and document analysis methods. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (tables, frequencies, percentages and graphs) with the help of SPSS (Statistical package for the social Sciences version 20 for Windows) program. From the interviews, the study established that non-payment of school levies by parents negatively affected educational programmes and school projects. Document analysis also indicated that all the schools had arrears of unpaid levies by parents across the three years from 2012-2014. It was therefore concluded that non-payment of school levies was a critical threat to school programmes and school projects. In accordance with these research results, the schools, the Ministry of Education and other sponsors of education in secondary schools should enforce school fees payment regulations. Moreover, parents should be sensitized on the importance of paying school levies on time. Similarly, future researchers should consider modalities of levy payment, for better service delivery.*

KEYWORDS: Non-Payment, School Levies, Parents, Secondary School Programmes

INTRODUCTION

Many African countries have sought to expand access to education through the creation of more private and public institutions and funding options for these institutions. The continent has therefore seen a rise in the number of secondary graduates' entering tertiary institutions. This is directly attributed to high enrolment in high schools (Otieno, 2007). However, despite this enrolment demographic hike, levy payment in secondary schools is declining tremendously in low-income African countries such as South Sudan and Somalia (World Bank, 2007). Students in such places end up dropping out of school or complete but with very poor grades due to poor services offered to them.

Ensuring that everyone can access educational opportunities has been the lasting focus of Kenya. Over the years, several crucial education commissions were appointed to provide

recommendations for improvement of education in Kenya. The Kamunge Commission (GOK, 1988) made suggestions on improvement of education financing, quality and relevance. The Gachathi Commission (GOK, 1976) suggested that Free Secondary Education should be attained by 1980. The Koech Commission (GOK, 1999) emphasized on cost sharing through mutual social responsibility among others. Therefore, the Kenya government has over the past years sought to formulate levy payment structures and policies to ensure that secondary school education is affordable to all.

Effects of Non-payment of School Levies on School Programmes

Research studies, according to Stephens and Schaben (2002), indicate that effective extra-curricular activities contribute to students' academic performance involving the specific choices the learners select as part of their interest or subscribed by the school. Stephens and Schaben claim that studies conducted by United States Department of education support the fact that participation of students in co-curriculum enhance their academic performance. Simon (2001) disagrees with his finding and said that not only the student background but also prior achievements that form the major contributor to learner's performances. He attributes the pupils' degrees to be inversely proportional to input influences of parents, volunteers and their home environment. It is evident that numerous studies have examined factors influencing school's achievement, but extracurricular activities are said to have significant influence on the learning performance.

Stephens and Schaben (2002) found evidence to suggest a significant relationship between academic achievement and participation in interscholastic sports. On the contrary, Brown, Cozby, Kee and Worden (2009) argue that extracurricular activities affect school's performance but the main issue is whether they are effectively financed. Early educationist viewed non-academic activities as being primarily recreational and therefore detrimental to school achievement hence discouraged (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Observations made by Dean and Bear (as cited in Millard, 2002) assert that extracurricular activities supplement and extend those contacts and experiences found in the more formal programme of the school. On the contrary, Marsh and Kleitman argue that the programmes have positive effects on life skills and also benefits school accomplishments. It is obvious that extracurricular activities play a major role as far as school performance is concerned. The question is how non-payment of school levies affects extracurricular activities today.

Research conducted by Broh (2002) has found evidence to suggest that Total Extracurricular Activity Participation (TEAP) is associated with an improved academic performance. Thus, many studies have been conducted concerning relationship between extracurricular participation and school finances. Some of the scholars in this subject are Guest and Schneider (2003), who found a significant relationship between extracurricular participation and school finances. This means non-payment of school levies would hinder such programmes in schools.

A study conducted by Ponter (2009) found evidence to suggest, a strong relationship between music and academic performance hence concluded that music is fundamental to the curriculum as mathematics and reading. Ponter asserts that instrumental music training enhances brain functioning required for mathematics, science and engineering. In support of this finding, Kelstrom (2008) has found out that students involved in band and orchestra performed better in science and research associates than non-music students and had subsequently fewer days of absenteeism. This case study concluded that music student reach higher academic achievement levels in academic studies than non-music students (Forgeard *et al.*, 2008). More

studies need to be developed on how non-payment of school levies impacts on proper functioning of extracurricular programmes in secondary schools.

Some literatures have shown a close association among hours of volunteer work and academic performance and general improvement in the society (Hinck & Brandell, 2009). In agreement with this observation are Reinhart (2006) and Belkin (2011) who maintain that poor performance by secondary schools is caused by factors related to personal characteristics and their abilities to access uninterrupted education by payment of school levies and students' environment, the school and the home. In contrast to this finding, Maclean (2006) and Thompson (2003) observes that the difficulties resulting in failure by the students may not necessarily lie with the child but with the school programmes like sports, music festivals and community volunteering. It is evident that money is needed to support extra curricula activities in school.

Tuition presents a case for extra levies. For example, cost of uniforms occurs all over the world. In Bangladesh, Ardt *et al.* (2005) found out that there are extra levies in the educational system that abolishing tuition fees do not address. Annual testing and activity fees exist in many schools and families often employ private tutors outside of school. If a family cannot afford a tutor, children often fail because of the limited time they have with the teacher, others may drop out of school. Many schools also require a uniform. This problem is also evident in Latin America and parts of Australia where the extra levies of education, uniforms and transportation, make it different for all but the wealthy to send every child in family to school.

In a study conducted by Munda and Odebero (2014), secondary school principals reported that a school's stable financial base as a catalyst for activities that enhance improved academic performance in schools. Though ability to pay fees was not a criterion for students' admission into all schools, school levies played an important role in sustaining school activities. Fees charged were decided by school Boards of Management (BOM) in consultation with the Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) and with approval from the District Education Board (DEB). This was the standard Ministry of Education requirement. Apart from the government subsidy which came in guaranteed tranches, most schools collected less than 70% of their other budgeted revenue which almost entirely came from fees. An examination of revenue trends indicated general rise in levies to match the escalating cost of living. It was established in this study that fees largely contributed to students' irregular attendance and eventual dropout from school; this undermined their academic performance. However, there was a feeling among principals that school programmes cannot be sustained without adequate revenue collections (Munda & Odebero, 2014).

A study of rural public secondary schools in Nyando District, Gogo (2012) reported that though it would be ideal to reduce fees in schools in view of the poor response in payments, principals felt that this was not feasible, and that fees should be raised instead. They argued that prevailing budgets in public schools were the lowest in the face of consistent increase in prices of goods and services which in effect strained school budgets. Despite the Government introducing grants to the tune of 10,265 per student per year in 2008, complaints from principals and parents about the unbearably high costs arising from increased prices of school uniforms, stationery and food have persisted (Muindi, 2009). And the grants whose disbursement is erratic seem not to be adequate to sustain the targeted vote heads such as tuition fees, exercise books, laboratory equipment and teaching aids, internal examinations, electricity, water, conservancies and students' activities (Shikanda *et al.*, 2013).

Constituency development fund in Kenya, allocates funds to schools for maintenance and management of school projects like buses, sports grounds and other materials that the related to school programs (Ngolovoi, 2010). According to the Government of Kenya, each school is allocated Ksh 600 for extra curriculum activities (Daily Nation, 2008). Since the allocated funds are in most cases insufficient, Romer (2003) found out that school heads should source for other funds from parents in form of levies to cover the deficit. However, non-payment of school levies makes school programs to stagnate. This affects management of extra curricula activities because enough money is needed to buy games kit, equipment, hire coaches and train the games teachers.

Students have become demanding and expensive. Parents want their children to be given expensive meals which include rice, bread, fruits, meat, *ugali* made of shifted flour. Such meals come add an extra cost which is naturally pushed to parents (Bowen, 2015). Therefore, non-payment of school levies on services delivery; the researcher will seek to establish the role of non-payment of school levies on school programmes. PTA funds and other levies are costs that research studies have shown to affect education. Mason and Rozelle (1998) indicate that cost of education greatly influences the attractiveness of investing and participating in schooling. This education cost includes levies for remedial classes, motivation, building fund, PTA teachers and lunch expenses for day secondary schools. Colcough, Rose and Tembon (2000), in their research, therefore, non-payment of school levels greatly affects school programmes.

In the support of this view, Rose and Al Samaria (2001) found that ability to buy exercise books; pen and necessary clothing for school also influence whether children could enrol or mere withdrawn from the first grade. Additional costs like registration payments, getting copies of birth certificate (for registration), text books and uniform cost were indirect cost that many parents in Guinea found difficult to meet (Colclough, Rose & Tembon, 2000).

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Impact of Non-payment of School Levies on School Projects

A research conducted by Hanushek (2006) on logistic studies in the United States of America and the rest of the world found a correlation between school projects and services offered, which he claims school levies form the financial basis for any school projects. Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996), in support of this finding, asserts that successful completion of such projects: show a strong consistent relationship with achievement. In-depth studies still revealed an association between increased spending with significant increase in achievement. Therefore, success of school, projects entirely depend on timely payment of school levies.

Further studies by Wenglinsky (2006) agreed said on input outcome and result impact on project. Hedges and Wenginsky's analysis found that 'per pupil' expenditures for instruction

and the administration of school districts are associated with achievement. More recent studies examining the relationship between financing projects and school outcomes, made incremental improvements to production analysis and found a statistically positive significant relationship between school achievement gain and financing projects. Minimal studies have evaluated this relationship between school-level spending and student-level outcomes.

Research conducted by Maicibi (2005) observed that all institutions are run by projects. He further observed that, Substantial effective projects are worth consolidating to manipulate other resources towards realizing institutional performance. a critical review of these was centred on the relationship between school performance. It follows that money is needed for implementation of these projects which this study seeks to enlighten by analysing impacts of non-payment of school levies on school projects.

Langlo and Norman (2007) assert that practical subjects face several challenges including cost implications, equipment and managerial expertise. It follows that practical subjects require facilities like land, equipment and laboratory hence demanding a lot of funds which may be hard for many schools. This has to inadequate and theoretical instruction in many schools. In support of this finding, Ssekamwa (2007) has found evidence to suggest that, in Uganda, high cost of running practical education reduce effectiveness of conducting them. In agreement, Epeju (2009), found evidence to suggest that practical education involves highly organized skill development and practice in labs through demonstrations and projects work. Therefore, non-payment of school levies would jeopardize those practical and vocational subjects.

UNESCO (2009) blames lack of financial resources for hindering expansion of facilities which lead to reduction in school achievements. This is as a result of non-payment of school levies forming the major reason for the stagnated position of performance in Kenyan education. Therefore, timely payment of school levies is required for quality facilities that enhance better service delivery. This is the reason behind most schools having no labs or has ill equipped ones and recommends that the ministry of education should allocate special grants to schools. In recommends with the observation is UNESCO (2003) argues that secondary school projects lack financial support forcing practical courses to be reduced to theoretical classroom presentation? Labs and lab materials require a lot of funds which school heads raise through school levies. When this fail, it would not be possible to build sound attitudes. Earlier, UNESCO and World Bank (2000) had revealed that technical/vocational subjects are more expensive per unit cost than theoretical ones. Hence practical subjects to be offered parents should adequately pay school levies on time.

Research done by Ssekamwa (2007), point out that offering practical education discourages school operators' form being enthusiastic making them prefer literacy course. The scholar further found out pioneers of private schools whose original aims were to provide practical education essentially failed and began offering literacy curriculum. This implies that money provides purchasing power with which education acquires its human and physical inputs. In support of this observation, Kalyango (2008) asserts that financial constraints have effects on institutional performance because it determines material facilities needed. Non-payment of school levies therefore inconveniences school managers as far as offering of practical subjects is concerned. The present study seeks to objectively analyses impacts of non-payment of school levies on school projects.

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Ogot and Ochieng (1995) had also noted that most schools could not meet their recurrent cost and thus were restricted to cheaper purely academic curriculum. With those shortcomings, the quality education offered was questionable. A report by ActionAid Nigeria (2012) has highlighted that inadequate infrastructure, facilities and various hidden levies have been identified as some of the major issues affecting the smooth running of free education in Kogi State in Nigeria, and therefore non-payment of school levies discourages developments of infrastructure and other facilities in schools.

Cumming *et al.* (1995) report that World Bank studies show China, El Salvador, Malaysia and Indonesia are serving communities that engage in school financing as a result of demand of alternative forms of education. In East Asia all kind of fess are prevalent. Fees are standard in south Asia as well, yet the recent trend has been for parents to transfer to the private system where although fee exist, the quality of the schools and availability of resources appear to be higher. In East Asia, all kind of fees are prevalent, as is the added cost of private tutoring. Fess existed in 97% of the 79 countries surveyed by the World Bank (2005) of these, about 1/3 of all fees charged are unofficial. Most countries charge more than one type of fees and even countries which had recently abolished fees still had some fees. PTA contributions were most common type of fee 71% of countries surveyed): followed by tuition fees (38%), texts books fees (47%), uniforms (49%) and other activity fees (43%) (Kattan & Burnett, 2004). In Kenya, provision of free tuition in secondary schools was to attract the poor and vulnerable groups in the secondary school system.

Martin (2000) states, “service delivery should be designed around the needs of end users, rather than departmental bureaucracies, or the convenience of delivery institutions.” Since the South African government is encouraging citizen participation in all its activities, especially in the local sphere of government, this principle means that when municipalities deliver services to their constituencies, such services should be centred on the needs of the local people, not according to the needs of the municipal official (municipality). This means that services that are delivered by municipalities should be services that reflect the local challenges the municipality faces.

Enrolment is one measure of access to education. Major determinants of enrolment include; income, schooling costs, presence of schools, community involvement, transportation, education quality and relevance (Raja & Burnett, 2004). Secondary school enrolment rates in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) continue to be the lowest in the world. UNESCO (2009) notes that only 25% of school age population was enrolled in secondary schools in 2006 in SSA, and that there were 83 girls only for every 100 boys compared to NER of 40% in secondary schools in Caribbean with 107 girls for every 100 boys. The statistics show that children, particularly girls, in SSA have the lowest opportunity to enrol in secondary schools at their official age.

UNESCO (2010) adds that majority of adolescents in school are still enrolled in the primary level in SSA, a case of 39%.

In SSA, one of the greatest challenges of gaining access to secondary education is affordability. Household income is found to be an important factor in determining access and retention in education as schooling incurs a range of costs such as school fees, uniforms, travel and opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Hunt (2008) links household income to a range of factors; when children start schooling, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out. Hunter and May (2003), terms poverty as 'a plausible explanation of school disruption'. Dachi and Gallet (2003) asked a series of questions to parents/guardians about the financial circumstances surrounding children's school enrolment in Tanzania and virtually all households that responded said that their main barriers to sending children to school was financial and their inability to pay.

Statement of the Problem

On 20th February 2008, the Kenya government implemented the free day secondary education programme with the aim of providing more opportunities to the disadvantaged school age children (Otach, 2008). It removed tuition fees and other payments on the basis that such costs prevented children from accessing education in schools. This was supported by the passing into law of Basic Education Act Number 14 of 2013 in Kenya which undermined parental and community involvement in financing schools. It included the in-kind contributions and admission fees. Instead the law states that any parent who fails to take their children to school commits an offence. Again, the press statement issued by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology under article 35(3) limits schools from levying beyond what they have stated for them. The situation affects services offered in schools because service delivery is entirely dependent on levies paid by parents. The problem is not limited to Anabkoi Sub-County Schools of Uasin Gishu. It therefore raises a problem that needs a clear and objective analysis on impacts of non-payment of school levies on service delivery in selected public secondary schools which formed the basis of the present study. The purpose of the survey study was to explore the effects of parents' non-payment of school levies on service delivery in selected public secondary schools in Anabkoi Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study targeted public secondary schools in the Anabkoi Sub-County of Uasin Gishu County. It adopted a descriptive survey design in its attempt to gather data from a selected population to determine the current status of that population with respect to a set of variables. The study targeted public secondary schools in the Sub-County. Therefore, the target population comprised all staff, parents and students of all the 31 secondary schools in the area. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to identify the schools that participated in the study. Since 31 schools were reasonably small, the researcher sampled 18 of them. This comprised 58.6% of the total number of schools in the study area. The public secondary schools were sampled using stratified random sampling. Using purposive sampling, all the head teachers/principals of the 18 schools were sampled to respond to interview schedule. Eighteen bursars were also chosen purposively to provide documented information on levy payment.

The study used open-ended interview schedule and documentary analysis to collect the data required for this research. Qualitative data from open-ended interviews was analysed thematically. This began with the categorisation of interview responses based on the objectives of the study. The researcher then re-read through the responses and identified themes under every category. This helped to break down the discussions to provide exhaustive interpretation and analysis of findings. The quantitative data obtained mainly in form of records from document analysis was analysed using descriptive statistics. This analysis entailed comparison of various records of paid and unpaid school levies. The findings were then broken down into frequencies and percentages to provide a narrative of the actual situation of the research in schools.

RESULTS

State of School Fees Payment

The research sought to establish the trends in school fees payment in the study area for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014. The results were as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below.

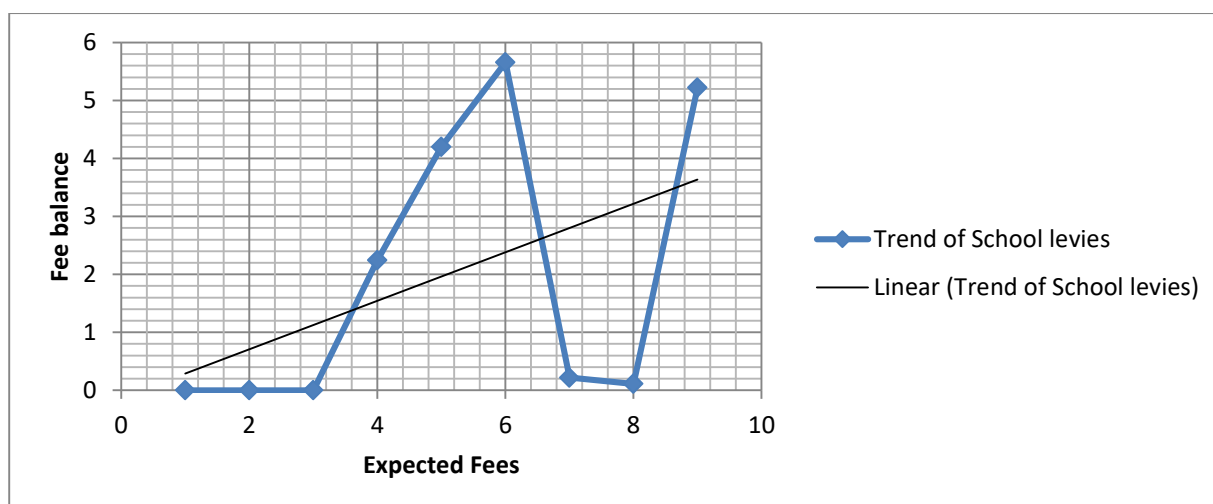


Figure 1: Trend of fee balances in millions for the year 2014

From the results in the figure above, it was shown that the fee balances were generally increasing across the eighteen schools under study. Increasing fee balances can be attributed to flexible rules governing fee payment. This culture reduces parents' commitment to pay school levies. However, high fee balances are not desirable in a school. This is because service delivery is entirely dependent on levy payment. The figure below presents the research findings on the trend of fee balances versus school levies for the year 2013.

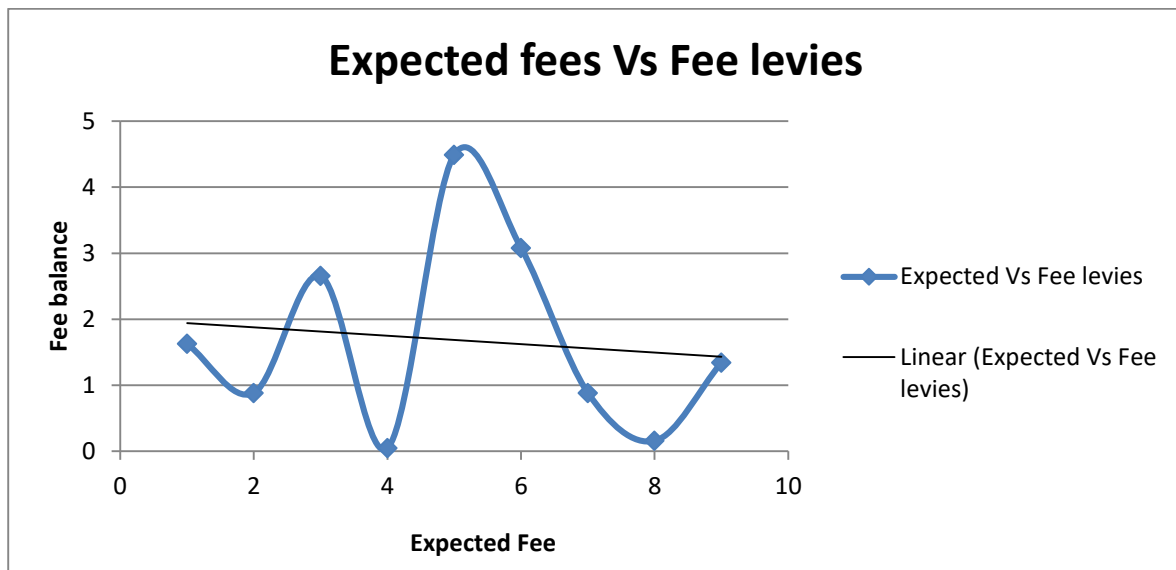


Figure 2: Trend of fee balances in millions for the year 2013

The figure above shows that there was a general decrease in the fee balances across the year 2013. This implies that there was increasing compliance by parents with the school fees payment policy. Figure 3 below shows the trend of expected fees versus fee balances for the year 2012.

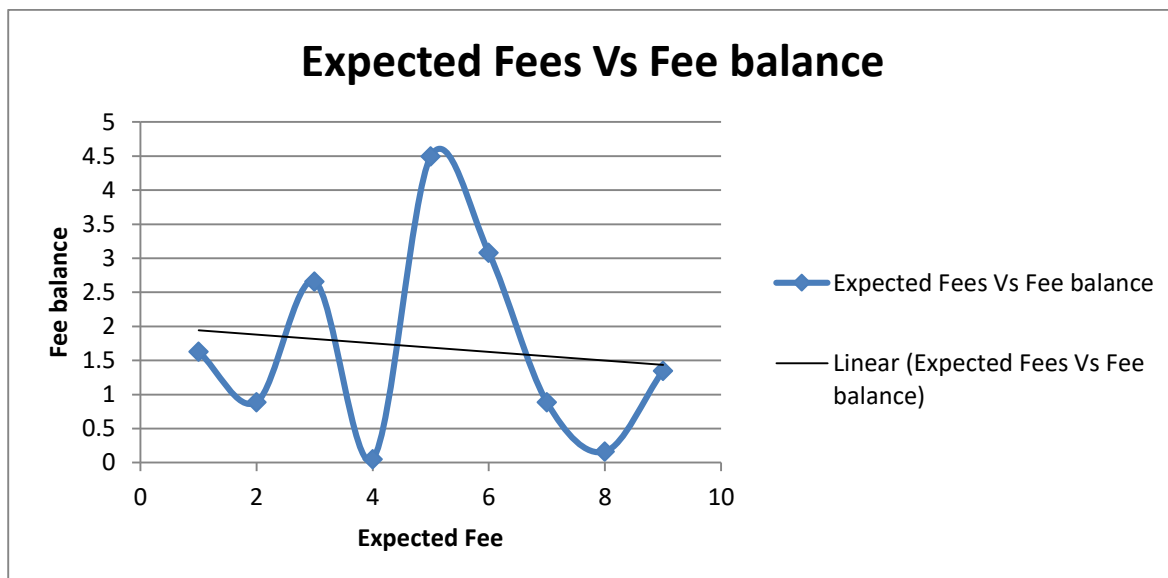


Figure 3: Trend of fee balances in millions for the year 2012

As shown above, the trend of fee balances for the year 2012 showed a decreasing behaviour of non-payment. Decrease in fee balance may be as a result of stronger reinforcement of strict regulations requiring parents to clear fee within stipulated time. Low fee balances are desirable for schools as this would enable them to more effectively achieve their goals.

Effects of Non-payment of School Levies on School Programmes

The second objective of this study was to assess the effect of parents' non-payment of school levies on school programmes. The respondents interviewed were thus asked to state whether or not non-payment of school levies affects school programmes. All the 18 respondents agreed that non-payment of school levies affected school programmes. The respondents were further asked to list some of the challenges facing school programmes due to non-payment of school levies as follows:

- i. Equipment required for various programmes are insufficient
- ii. The school is not able to hire coaches for various sports programmes
- iii. Patrons are unable to attend seminars which are necessary
- iv. Invitation of external speakers for various programs is hampered
- v. The kind of food offered in school depends on availability of funds
- vi. Remedial classes are affected by lack of funds.

On further probing, one of the teacher respondents further explained her response as follows:

Schools levies balances in my school are very huge. Most of our planned programs were not running. Early this year we were to attend a seminar in a neighbouring school concerning teaching of languages but we did not and this would have been beneficial to our students (Personal Communication, Teacher, School E, 2016).

Another teacher added thus:

In my school, we had planned to build a modern school laboratory to cut on costs incurred while taking students for practical in a neighbouring school. The project has not kicked off since students have huge arrears. It is really a problem (Personal Communication, Teacher School B, 2016).

Effects of Non-payment of School Levies on Implementation of School Projects

The fourth objective of this study was to identify the impact of parents' non-payment of school levies on the implementation of school projects. To achieve this objective, the respondents in the interview were asked to state whether or not non-payment of school levies affected implementation of school projects. All the eighteen head teachers agreed that non-payment of school levies affected the implementation of school projects.

The study further sought to identify the nature of challenges that schools faced in terms of project implementation due to non-payment of school levies. The respondents cited the following as challenges facing implementation of school projects due to non-payment of school levies:

- i. Planning for infrastructural requirements is affected
- ii. Successful completion of initiated projects is affected by insufficient funds.

- iii. Quality of projects is determined by levies paid
- iv. Projects affect services rendered in school
- v. Practical subjects are affected by amount of land, laboratory, its chemicals and equipment
- vi. Expansion of school facilities is affected due to insufficiency of funds.

One of the head teachers gave the following explanation for his response:

This year, we had planned to build a computer lab for the school. We communicated to the parents and they promised to support the project. However, it has turned out to be a challenge despite the many times we have sent students home to bring fee arrears. We laid the foundation for the building and everything stopped there (Personal Communication, Principal School B, 2016).

DISCUSSION

The findings on the relationship between non-payment of school levies and school programmes indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that non-payment of school levies negatively affects school programs. These findings are in agreement with those of Rutter (2004) who supports importance of school programmes on school performance by asserting that non-payment of school levies affects the school management's abilities to run extracurricular activities. It is evident that money is needed to support extra curricula activities in school. The findings also concurred with the views of Eshiwani (2003) that investing on human resource will contribute tremendously to quality of service hence determining performance in public schools in Kenya.

The study findings indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that non-payment of school levies hampers implementation of school projects. Other findings from Whateley (2008) emphasized that, building conditions affect quality of services rendered. A study conducted by Sir Craham Balfour (1929) also emphasizes that education require excellent infrastructure in line with social political aspiration of the people. These findings further support observations made by UNESCO (2009), which blames lack of financial resources for hindering expansion of facilities which led to reduction in school achievement. Other findings in support of these views are from Kalyango (2008) who asserts that, financial constraints have effects on institutional performances facilities needed. Therefore, non-payment of school levies affects school projects.

Implications of the Study

This paper provides recommendations to the interviewed schools, the Ministry of Education and the sponsors of education in secondary schools on the importance and benefits of levy payment, proper planning and formulation of effective and excellent management policies and practices. The study contributes to debate in forums, workshops and seminars for policy design and implementation processes in schools. The research also serves to correct the communities' negative perception on school levy payment.

CONCLUSION

The study established that non-payment of school levies affects several school programmes and projects. For instance, equipment required for various programmes in school are insufficient due to non-payment of school levies by parents. Schools are also unable to hire coaches for various programmes in school because of non-payment of school levies by parents. Further, non-payment of school levies hinders patrons for various programmes from attending seminars, invitation of external speakers for various programmes is hampered by non-payment of school levies by parents. Lastly, non-payment of school levies hampers maintenance in different departments and the kind of food offered in school depends on school levies paid by parents. Moreover, planning of infrastructure depends on school levies paid by parents and successful completion of initiated projects is inhibited by non-payment of school levies. Again, insufficient funds affect quality of school projects hence affecting services rendered therein.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that school managers should come up with strategies that will allow for timely payment of school levies. This can be achieved by enactment of regulations such as 'there shall be no student allowed to sit for the end of term examinations without clearance of school fees.' Additionally, all stakeholders contribute to quality of service delivered therefore they should be consulted when it comes to matters pertaining to non-payment of school levies for solutions to be sought early enough before services are affected. There is also a need to conduct more research on the modalities through which levies can be effectively realized to improve school management and performance in public secondary for better service delivery.

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