



Original Article

Challenges Facing Implementation of Fee-free Education in Public Secondary Schools. The Case of Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

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The purpose of this study was to examine challenges facing the implementation of fee-free education in public secondary schools, the case of Morogoro Municipality. The sample size of this study was 73 respondents that include 65 ordinary teachers, 4 heads of schools, 1DEO and 3 WEO. Convenience sampling techniques and purposive random sampling techniques were used in the selection of ordinary teachers and heads of schools, DEO, and WEO, respectively. Data were collected by questionnaires and interview methods. Quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. The findings revealed that the implementations of fee-free education policy encounter several challenges including the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources, shortage of classrooms, and shortage of latrines are addressed properly. The challenges may be overcome if all stakeholders are involved and take part in education matters by working hand in hand with the government, as the government cannot do it all by itself.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Education and Training Policy was developed as a key policy for encouraging universal primary and secondary education to conform to commitments made by countries as part of the education for all goals Agenda (UNESCO, 2013). Implementation of this policy was strongly accelerated by the general presidential campaign promises made by the ruling party CCM in 2015, where the late Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, the CCM flag bearer and the current President of Tanzania (Her Excellency, Samia Suluhu Hassan as running mate) vowed to implement fee-free education policy (Mwangota, 2019).

In showing how the 2014 Education and Training Policy would be implemented the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania issued three circulars to ensure that education is provided for free from primary school level up to ordinary secondary school (HakiElimu, 2017). The first circular was that of November 2015, the second circular was issued in December (2015) and the third circular was issued on May 2016.

These circulars made clear that the government is financing textbooks, lab chemicals and equipment, furniture, sports facilities and equipment, repair of machines, construction and repair of school infrastructures, provision of meals in boarding schools and subsidies to each student (Marwa, 2019). Parents are obliged to pay the costs of school uniforms, sports gear, and exercise books, pay medical and meals expenses of day students, pay travel charges, buy mattresses and bed covers as well as personally give properties to residential students of government schools (HakiElimu, 2017).

The Government of URT started to provide subsidies towards the funding of free public secondary school education in January 2016 with the aim of eliminating school fees and other contributions at the ordinary level in public secondary schools (Kindyamtima, 2017).

Despite the government's clarification about fee-free education, still the implementation of free education in public secondary schools faces different challenges as some education stakeholders appear to believe that they are not required to bear any cost for their children. According to HakiElimu's (2017) report, 51.3% of parents and guardians believed that fee-free education excludes the formal costs of raising the education of their children in public schools. Only 23% and 32% had a feeling that parents should contribute part of their children's total education costs. Based on the beliefs, the enrolment rate increases by 37%, leading to larger class sizes, a high teacher-student ratio, and reduced teacher motivation towards work performance. Thus, the current study seeks to investigate the challenges facing the implementation of free education policies in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Approach

The study employed the mixed research approach in collecting, analyzing data and interpreting the data. This approach enabled the researchers to overcome the weaknesses of each approach in order to provide a clear report as one approach in data collection may not be fought for better. A descriptive survey design was used in this study.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted at Morogoro Municipality within public secondary schools from which were randomly sampled. Out of 73 from the target population, 65 Ordinary teachers, 4 heads of schools, 1 DEO and 3 WEOS were selected through simple random sampling. In addition, Convenience sampling techniques were used in the selection of ordinary teachers and purposive random sampling techniques were used in the selection of heads of schools, DEO, and WEOS.

Instrumentation

This study employed questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire and the interview schedule were employed with students and teachers. The questionnaire collected the quantitative data which was analyzed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Science. On the other hand, qualitative data was collected through interviews and was analyzed thematically.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

A pre-test where 3-5 cases of respondents were used to test understanding, the difficulty of questions and willingness to respond was done to increase the validity of this tool (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005; Orodho, 2012). Pretesting made the term language clear and tested the accuracy and sustainability of the instrument. This, therefore, generated adequate data. It also got rid of irrelevant and sensitive items in the tool. Respondents in the pre-test survey were randomly selected from the target population. To avoid problems brought about by tests and retests, these respondents were used in the final survey. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was given

to both a researcher and an education expert to check whether all the major factors in fee-free education have been captured. Their corrections together with those from the pre-test were corporate in the final questionnaire.

Reliability

Reliability is the measure of consistency over time over similar samples. It means a similar instrument for a piece of research yields similar data from similar respondents over time (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Reliability is also considered as the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives equivalent results over a number of repeat editorials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

Reliability is also defined as the condition in which the same results were achieved when the same technique is repeated to do the same study (Babbie, 1997). To ensure their liability for the study, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. As suggested by Cronbach co-efficient of between 0.7-1.0 for Cronbach's Alpha is the recommended value for reliability. The results of Cronbach Alpha were 0.859. These results indicate that the study was reliable

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to find out the challenges facing the effective implementation of fee-free secondary education. Findings of this objective are presented below: -

Teaching and Learning Resources

To determine this, respondents were asked to rate the adequacy or inadequacy of teaching and learning resources in their schools, to which they responded, as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Adequate and Inadequate Resources

| Resources | Adequate | | Inadequate | |
|--|----------|------|------------|------|
| | No | % | No | % |
| Classrooms | 111 | 78.7 | 30 | 21.3 |
| Sanitary units (Toilets/latrines, urinals) | 152 | 86.9 | 39 | 13.1 |
| Desks | 4754 | 99.4 | 27 | 0.6 |
| Textbooks | 2621 | 54.8 | 2160 | 45.2 |

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 1 shows that 78.7% of the respondents indicated that the classrooms were adequate, while 21.3% indicated that they were inadequate. Sanitary units such as toilets and urinals were rated adequate by 86.9% of respondents and inadequate by 13.1% of respondents. An equal proportion of respondents rated desks adequate at 99.4% and inadequate at 0.6%. Textbooks were rated adequate by 58.8% of respondents and inadequate by 45.2% of respondents. The majority, 73.2% of the respondents rated other teaching and learning resources such as writing materials, charts, and chalk as adequate, while 26.8% rated them inadequate. Based on this analysis, it emerges that the most inadequate resources in the sampled four (Morogoro, Kilakala, KolaHill and Lupanga secondary) schools at Morogoro municipality according to respondents were textbooks and sanitary resources.

The inadequacy of these resources could make it difficult for head teachers and teachers to perform their functions adequately. Most of the schools in Morogoro municipality including the sampled

schools, face increasing administrative difficulties. These include inadequate and badly constructed buildings; shortage of books and equipment; lack of proper school furniture, particularly desks; poor or sometimes non-existent maintenance and repairs; over-crowded classrooms; and poor communication infrastructure and few supporting services, especially health services. Shortage of these resources could compromise the quality of secondary education in the country. For instance, inadequate classrooms would mean overcrowding and hence make the classroom environment unfavourable for learning.

Number of Classrooms

Another challenge that could be experienced in the implementation of fee-free secondary education is related to the adequacy of classrooms. Consequently, data was collected from head teachers on the number of classrooms available and the number required for each school. *Table 2* shows the number of classrooms available in the schools and the number required.

Table 2: Number of Classrooms Required in the Schools

| School | Required No. | Available No. | Deficit |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| Lupanga | 21 | 14 | 7 |
| KolaHill | 28 | 21 | 7 |
| Morogoro | 42 | 31 | 11 |
| Kilakala | 20 | 15 | 5 |
| Total | 111 | 81 | 30 |

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 2 shows that the number of classrooms required in the schools ranged from 20 to 42 per school. On the other hand, available classrooms ranged from 14 to 31. All 4 schools required a combined number of 111 classrooms averaging 27 classrooms per school. However, there were a total of 81 classrooms in the four schools, which translates to 20 classrooms per school, giving an average deficit of 7 classrooms per school.

In order for a school to advance the learning opportunities of free education to the students, it has to adequately utilize the facilities available. School facilities include the administrative office, staff rooms and offices, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, equipment, stores, libraries, hostels, staff houses and the school grounds. If such facilities are inadequate, then the school fails to

provide quality education. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that there is adequate classroom space to enable the teaching-learning process to take place without any hitches. He/she should ensure that the facilities are used efficiently and effectively. URT (2000) advises that well-structured Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can help diversify the sources of financing and provision.

Sanitary Facilities

Another very important facility in schools is sanitary facilities such as toilets and latrines, whose lack would prove hazardous to the school environment. *Table 3* shows the number of latrines in each of the sample schools and the ratio to the number of students.

Table 3: Number of Latrines in the Schools

| School | No. of latrines | No. of students | Ratio |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Lupanga | 25 | 977 | 1:27 |
| KolaHill | 34 | 1150 | 1:55 |
| Morogoro | 48 | 1860 | 1:46 |
| Kilakala | 32 | 794 | 1:50 |
| Total | 152 | 4781 | 1:45 |

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 3 shows that the number of toilets per school ranged from 25 to 48, while the number of students per school ranged from 794 to 1860. The ratio of students per toilet ranged from 1:27 to 1:55 with an average ratio of 1:45. According to the Ministry of Education (2020) guidelines, sanitation facilities in schools should be in the following ratio: 1:15 for boys; 1:12 for girls, and the three schools in the study had over 30 students sharing a toilet.

The District Education Officer (DEO) and WEO concurred with head teachers and teachers by noting that none of the public secondary schools had adequate physical facilities in the district. They added that free secondary education had made the situation worse because of the rise in enrolment in

all the public schools. Shortage in physical facilities, according to one DEO, had an adverse effect on curriculum delivery and implementation. The other DEOs added that lack of facilities such as laboratories led to poor performance in sciences and that there was congestion due to lack of classrooms, which was a drawback to teacher-student interactions.

Inadequacy of sanitation facilities (toilets and urinals) was among the challenges experienced in the public secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. The lack of adequate toilets can prove to be a health hazard to the schools and the community around them. The findings presented here indicate that the main challenges faced in

public secondary schools include the inadequacy of textbooks, classrooms, and sanitary resources.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on study findings fee-free education policy could only work effectively and successfully be implemented without interfering with the provision of quality education if all the mentioned challenges including the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources, shortage of classrooms, and shortage of latrines are addressed properly. The challenges may be overcome if all stakeholders are involved and take part in education matters by working hand in hand with the government, as the government cannot do it all by itself. Also, enrolment of students in secondary schools should consider the capacity of schools to accommodate a certain number of students. This will thus play an important role in improving teachers' job performance since their working environment has been improved.

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