



Original Article

Teachers' Attitude on Implementing the Free Basic Education in Kiteto District Council, Tanzania

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21 September 2022 This paper sought to highlight teachers' attitudes on implementing the Free Basic Education Policy in Kiteto District Council, Tanzania. Data were collected from

Keywords: 169 respondents by using questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was done by descriptive statistics and content analysis. The findings showed that the teachers generally had positive attitudes towards the implementation of the free basic education policy. In their efforts to implement the policy, the teachers treated the students with passion, listening to students' problems, encouraging students to participate in implementing the policy and motivating students to study hard to attain their goals. Teachers' practices included their participation in school decision-making, communicating with parents to encourage them to side school in implementing the free education policy, preparing the learning environment for the implementation of the policy, monitoring, supervising, and distributing teaching/learning materials to students equitably, and supervising students' academic progress. It was concluded that teachers' attitude is very important in the implementation of any program or policy in the school. It is recommended to the government that all plans, programs, and policies that are related to education need consultation from the teachers so that they can be sustainable and effective.

*Attitude,
Teachers,
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INTRODUCTION

The right to education has been a global agenda (Nowak, 2016). With free basic education, it is considered that the child becomes an active participant in the education process and is able to rebuild it according to the needs of his individual self-interests (Lundy, 2007). Free education is viewed as a chance to create two equal units out of a parent and child, a teacher and a student. This equality indicates that they all share an equal amount of duties and rights in educating future citizens who will be contributing members of society. In order to further both national and individual development, many nations around the world have made significant investments in the education sector, especially in basic and secondary education (Busemeyer et al., 2018).

Every nation should give its inhabitants access to primary and secondary education because they are considered to be the foundation of education. Many nations now offer free basic education as a result of the realization that it is a link to both economic and social development. It is evident that the country trains long-term human resources for all sectors through its free education program (Doriye et al., 2020). Being a significant investment in the development of human capital, it is essential for long-term productivity and growth at both the micro and macro levels. According to data from Shukia (2020), who studied the UNESCO report from 2018, 161 nations had already passed laws allowing free primary and secondary education as of 2018. Due to this, the world is now witnessing increased enrolment rates in primary and secondary schools, especially for girls.

In Africa, the majority of the countries have adopted the free basic education policy. The adoption of the policy has brought tremendous changes in the education sector. Statistics show that under the influence of the free education policy, primary school net enrolment rates increased from 54% in

2000 to about 85% in 2015 (Earle et al., 2018). For example, a year after Malawi introduced free primary education in 1994, enrolment rates increased by 51%; in Burundi, which eliminated tuition fees in 2006, net primary school enrolment rose from 41% in 2000 to 94% in 2010 (Nishimura & Byamugisha, 2011). Moreover, eliminating fees has reduced socioeconomic gaps in education access, suggesting that school fees are particularly significant barriers for lower-income families. In Uganda, for example, after fee abolition in 1997, the difference in primary school attendance rates between the bottom and the top quintiles decreased from 43 %age points (46% versus 89%) in 1992 to just 11 %age points (78% versus 89%) in 1997 (Earle et al., 2018).

In Tanzania, the free basic education policy is not new. The government of Tanzania attempted to offer free basic education for the first time in 1963, which reduced the enrolment disparity between children from rich and poor households (Doriye et al., 2020). The government financed the education system and provided free primary to university education in Tanzania (HakiElimu, 2017).

Nevertheless, as one can trace the history, in the 1980s the Tanzanian government was facing economic crisis leading to suffocation to provide free education. The international financial institutions including the IMF and the World Bank were pressurizing the government through their imposed strict conditions forcing the government to establish what was named cost-sharing policies (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007).. The fee for primary and secondary education was introduced whereby the fee ranged between Tshs. 20,000 to 40,000 per year (Doriye et al., 2020). In addition to this, the parents were obliged to give contributions. It was in 2015 when the government reversed the policy through the circular of 2014 that abolished fees for both primary and secondary education. The circular emphasised the free education that basically targeted the pupils from poor families who had

failed to attend school because of the lack of fees. The implement of this went hand in hand the guidance of three circulars demonstrating how the policy would be implemented as explained by HakiElimu (2017).

These educational circulars directed street-level bureaucrats to make sure that education is provided free from primary school level up to secondary school (at the ordinary level). From 2015 to the present, the government has been disbursing billions of money to implement the free basic education policy in all public primary and secondary schools in the country (Doriye et al., 2020). The introduction of the free basic education program was a factor in the substantial rise in primary and secondary enrolment rates. For instance, according to national data, the number of students enrolled in government primary schools increased by 13.8% from 10,111,671 in 2018 to 10,605,430 in 2019. (URT, 2018). The introduction of a policy requiring basic education is free and mandatory is responsible for this rise. Free basic education has an effect on enrolment rates, dropout rates, academic achievement, and teacher workload, according to Shukia (2020). Teachers have a crucial role in education and in carrying out the free education program. This study aims to shed light on how instructors view the free basic education policy.

Teachers in Tanzania are important education stakeholders and key implementers of the free basic education policy. However, there is limited literature in Tanzania on the teachers' perception of the implementation of free basic education. Studies such as Doriye et al. (2020); HakiElimu (2017); Khamis (2017); Mashala (2019); Shukia (2020); Kapinga (2017); Mbawala (2017); Awinia (2019); Shukran (2019); Tieng'o (2019); Mkoma and Rwekaza (2021); Mmasa (2020) focused on free education, but they have neglected the perception of teachers and concentrated on the issues of challenges, impact, community perceptions, management, the impact of stakeholder participation, gender disparities, general implementation, facilities, and resources. These studies have not shown how teachers perceive the policy they implement. The increase in the number of students in public schools has been witnessed due to the free basic education policy.

However, the free basic education policy has come with a number of challenges that have been identified by researchers such as Mashala (2019), as students' congestion in classrooms causes difficulties in managing classes and schools and poor relationship between parents and schools, which cause difficulties in student disciplinary cases that sometimes result in havoc. This implies that the basic needs of education have not been in place during the implementation of the free basic education policy. This has caused dissatisfaction among the teachers because the increase in students has not changed the income of the teachers. The number of students has increased, but the number of teachers has remained the same. The teaching/learning resources had remained the same as before the free basic education policy was introduced. Nevertheless, free basic education has positive results, including reduced student dropout, school heads have been receiving allowances, and academic performance has increased. However, most of the teachers are still uncomfortable and dissatisfied. This study seeks to investigate why teachers are still dissatisfied despite the positive consequences of the free education policy. The objective of the study was: To highlight teachers' attitudes toward implementing the Free Basic Education Policy in Kiteto District Council, Tanzania.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey research approach to investigate how teachers felt about the Free Basic Education Policy's deployment in Tanzania's Kiteito District. Kiteto recorded an increased number of students with increased performance, increased enrolment, and decreased dropouts (Mollel, 2019). Data were collected from 169 respondents by using questionnaires and interviews. School administrators and educators from public secondary schools were among the responders for this survey. The teachers' responses to a questionnaire were used to collect the quantitative data. The quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics analysis involving frequencies, means, and %ages. The analysis of qualitative data consisted of examining, categorising, tabulating, and recombining the evidence to address the research problem. The study used a thematic analysis in analysing data, meaning that it must test

the assumptions about the word, but the assumptions were not reproduced. The data to be analysed qualitatively were those obtained from the interviews with the DEO and heads of schools.

The study was to highlight teachers' attitudes towards implementing Free Basic Education in the Kiteto District council. The respondents were requested to show their responses to the closed-ended questions that were given to them in the questionnaire and some interviews which were conducted with the school heads and the DEO. The respondents in the questionnaire were asked to show their attitude towards the statements given. The teachers' attitudes in the implementation of free education were analysed in levels of teaching with passion, treating students with care, treating students with respect, listening to the students' problems, and motivating students. This was tested on a four-point Likert Scale of 1-4, where 4 represented "Never", 3 represented "Rarely", 2

represented "Sometimes", and 1 represented "Often".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Treating Students with Respect

The interest of the study was to know if in the process of implementing the free basic education policy, the teachers were treating the students with respect. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, "Free education policy makes us teachers treat students with respect". The findings of the study showed that 59 (34.9%) of all respondents showed that they often treat the students with respect; 45 (26.6%) of all respondents showed that because of the free basic education policy, they were sometimes treating the students with respect; 33(19.5%) of all respondents showed that they rarely treat the students with respect; while 32 (18.9%) of all respondents showed that they never treat the students with respect.

Table 1: Treating Students with Respect

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Often | 59 | 34.9 |
| Sometimes | 45 | 26.6 |
| Rarely | 33 | 19.5 |
| Never | 32 | 18.9 |
| Total | 169 | 100.0 |

Source: Author (2022)

Among those who responded to this poll were administrators and teachers from public secondary schools. The quantitative information was gathered by using a questionnaire that the teachers responded to. The implication of the findings is that the teachers loved their students and wished them well in their academic activities. It is a fact that respecting students is essential for boosting teacher effectiveness.

During the interviews with the heads of schools, it was revealed that the implementation of the free education policy did not make the teachers get away from their ethical and moral doings. It was revealed that the implementation of the free education policy was expected to make teachers parents of students from diverse backgrounds. One of the interviewees said:

The respect that a teacher has for his or her students is essential. As we would want our students to treat us with respect, in the same way, we should treat them with respect as well. We usually tell teachers that they should always have a pleasant attitude while dealing with pupils. Although the free basic education policy has had significant drawbacks, such as overcrowding and poor discipline, teachers have consistently been advised that they should never berate or disgrace a pupil. It is preferable to speak to them separately from the rest of the class and make them feel they are respected.

The findings suggest that the teachers do forget where many of these students come from and the situations that they deal with on a daily basis for the sake of respecting their students. The implementation of the free basic education policy

needs a school which is safe and where the students trust all of their administrators, teachers, and staff members. Where the students feel respected, they will back the same respect and trust. This will enable the school administration to have a positive school climate where teaching and learning can take place fully.

Treating Students with Care

The study was interested to know how the free basic education policy had influenced the teachers to treat

Table 2: Treating students with care

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Often | 42 | 24.9 |
| Sometimes | 70 | 41.4 |
| Rarely | 27 | 16.0 |
| Never | 30 | 17.8 |
| Total | 169 | 100.0 |

The findings show that about 66.3% of the respondents had a positive attitude that following the free education policy, they were able to treat their students with care. However, one-third of the respondents showed that they had a negative attitude toward the implementation of the free basic education policy regarding the treatment of the students. The findings suggest that despite its benefits, it has a number of drawbacks, especially for teachers who were the key implementers of the free basic education policy. The implication of the findings is that with its benefits, the free education policy dwarfed the positive school climate, which the teachers did not like. This is in line with the findings of Mashala (2019) found that the free basic education policy had caused a number of challenges, including students’ congestion in classrooms causing difficulties managing classes and schools and poor relationships between parents and schools causing difficulties in student disciplinary cases that sometimes result in havoc. It is likely that these challenges lead to the negative attitude of teachers. This is because these challenges make some schools a place for social disorder, teachers’ stress, and fatigue, causing the school climate to be unsuitable. Moreover, Shukia (2020)

their students with care. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, “Free education policy makes us teachers treat students with care”. The findings of the study showed that 70 (41.4%) of all respondents showed that they sometimes treated their students with care; 42(24.5%) of all respondents showed that they often treated their students with care; 27(16%) of all respondents showed that they rarely treated their students with care; while 30 (17.8%) of all respondents showed that they never treated their students with care.

found that despite the benefits of the free education policy in Tanzania, one of the great challenges was that it increased the number of students in the class-leading to the difficult management of the class, causing chaos and poor discipline of students.

Treating Students with Passion

The study was interested to know how the free basic education policy had influenced the teachers to treat their students with passion. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, “Free education policy makes us teachers treat students with passion”. The findings of the study showed that 61(36.1%) of all respondents showed that they sometimes treated their students with passion; 43(25.4%) of all respondents showed that they often treated their students with passion; 45(26.6%) of all respondents showed that they rarely treated their students with passion; while 20(11.8%) of all respondents showed that they never treated their students with passion.

Table 3: Treating Students with Passion

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Often | 43 | 25.4 |
| Sometimes | 61 | 36.1 |
| Rarely | 45 | 26.6 |
| Never | 20 | 11.8 |
| Total | 169 | 100.0 |

Generally, the findings show that about 61.5% of all respondents had a positive attitude towards the implementation of free basic education and treatment of the students with passion. This suggests that the teachers are the parents of their students. They are called to handle the students with passion, care, respect, and love. Teaching is their call.

The findings have revealed that despite the challenges and ups and downs brought by the free education policy, teachers are still committed to treating their students with passion. Treating students with passion creates students' curiosity and interest in the subject. Students who are engaged in their work stay motivated, work harder and longer, and can build new knowledge on top of existing knowledge. The greatest method for a student to identify their areas of strength is to immerse themselves in challenging physical, intellectual, and artistic endeavors. They will have more possibilities to find their interest as they experiment more.

Listening to Students with Problems

The study was interested to know how the free basic education policy had influenced the teachers in handling students with problems. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, "Free education policy makes us teachers listen to students' problems". The study's findings indicate that 82 (48.5%) of all respondents indicated that they occasionally listened to students who had concerns after the free education policy was put into place; Following the adoption of the free education policy, 51 (30.2%) of all respondents demonstrated that they frequently listened to pupils who had concerns; Following the implementation of the free education policy, only 18(10.7%) of respondents from all respondents demonstrated that they were ever listening to students with problems; the remaining 18(10.7%) respondents from all respondents demonstrated that they were never listening to students with problems.

Table 4: Teachers Listening to Students' Problems

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Often | 51 | 30.2 |
| Sometimes | 82 | 48.5 |
| Rarely | 18 | 10.7 |
| Never | 18 | 10.7 |
| Total | 169 | 100.0 |

Generally, the findings show that the majority (78.7%) of all respondents had a positive attitude that within the implementation of the free basic education policy, the teachers were able to listen to students' problems. This suggests that the teachers were readily available to motivate and encourage the students to do well with their learning activities. The findings imply that it does not matter when and how the situation is; the teachers are there to act as parents to make the students work hard and smart to

attain their goals. The students can be facing difficulties emotionally and behaviourally, the teachers are there to help them. The teachers are expected to provide counselling and guidance in order for their students to not get lost and disappointed by these difficulties. The implementation of the free basic education policy was expected to support the parents and the children who were from low-income families to have their rights to education without payments. Before the

policy, the majority of the children failed to attend school because of poverty in their families, which made them not manage to pay school fees for them. However, apart from the school fee, still, there are a number of requirements that the students need to have, but because of poverty in their families, they fail to afford them. Most of these children are affected emotionally and psychologically. It is at this time that the teachers need to pay attention to them by listening to their problems and helping them to get out of that situation.

Motivating Students

The interest of the study was to know the attitude of the teachers in implementing the free basic education policy by showing their commitment to motivating students. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, “*Free education makes us teachers motivate students*”. The findings of the study show that 60 (35.5%) of all respondents showed that they often motivated their students; 44 (26.0%) of all respondents showed that they sometimes motivated their students; 46 (27.2%) of all respondents showed that they rarely motivated their students, and 19 (11.3%) of all respondents showed that they never motivated their students.

Table 5: Teachers Motivating Students

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Often | 60 | 35.5 |
| Sometimes | 44 | 26.0 |
| Rarely | 46 | 27.2 |
| Never | 19 | 11.3 |
| Total | 169 | 100.0 |

Generally, about 61.5% of all respondents had a positive attitude toward motivating their students in their process of implementing the free basic education policy. It is a fact that students need to be motivated. The students have their goals to attain. To reach this goal, there is a long way to go. On the way, they meet a number of obstacles. The teachers are there to motivate them. The implication of the findings is that the teachers had a positive attitude towards the implementation of the free education policy. This is due to the fact that the teachers were aware that the basic purpose of free basic education was to motivate the students with their parents and the community at large to be able to attain their goals. The teacher gets in the process of motivating the students by making them know their purpose in

life here in the world and their potential contribution to the development of the nation. It is in this regard that the teacher becomes an important person to prepare good citizens of the nation by motivating them to be good people with aims and purpose.

Teachers’ Practices in the Implementation of FBEP

The study was interested to know the teachers’ practices in the implementation of the free basic education policy. Different statements were given to the respondents, who were asked to indicate the level of their agreement with each in relation to their implementation of free education.

Table 6: Teachers' Practices in Implementing FBEP

| Teachers' Practices | n | Positive | | Neutral | | Negative | |
|---|-----|----------|------|---------|------|----------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Participation in decision-making | 169 | 87 | 51.5 | 35 | 20.7 | 47 | 27.8 |
| Participation in budget planning | 169 | 65 | 38.5 | 36 | 21.3 | 68 | 40.2 |
| Encourage parents to side school | 169 | 119 | 70.4 | 17 | 10.1 | 33 | 19.6 |
| Implement Ministry Guidelines | 169 | 89 | 52.7 | 50 | 29.6 | 30 | 17.7 |
| Prepare Learning Environment | 169 | 119 | 70.4 | 34 | 20.1 | 16 | 9.5 |
| Monitor and Supervise T/L Materials | 169 | 126 | 74.6 | 19 | 11.2 | 24 | 14.2 |
| Distribute Materials Equitably | 169 | 128 | 75.7 | 21 | 12.4 | 20 | 11.9 |
| Supervising Students' Academic Progress | 169 | 130 | 76.9 | 18 | 10.7 | 21 | 12.4 |

Teacher's Participation in Decision-making

From *Table 6* above, the study found that 87 (51.5%) of all respondents agreed that teachers were involved in the decision-making for the implementation of free basic education, while 47 (27.8%) of all respondents disagreed that the teachers were involved in decision-making for the implementation of free basic education policy.

According to the data, more than half of all respondents took part in the decision-making process at their schools on the implementation of the free basic education program. For the implementation of crucial programs like free basic education, it is crucially vital to involve the teachers in the decision-making process. This stems from the fact that teachers are the key implementers of the policy, without whom the policy cannot be implemented. The teachers are the key stakeholders in making the policy successful or failing. Involving them in the decision-making shows their importance. The findings are in line with the procedural justice theory, which demands the stakeholders to be involved in decision-making as one way of motivating them and making them committed to attaining the organisation's goals (Gangl, 2003).

However, the findings are contrary to those of Khamis (2017), which noted that the participation of teachers in the decision-making for the implementation of the free basic education policy was very minimal. Khamis found that the government involved the parents and school community while the teachers were neglected. It was noted that in the implementation of the free education policy, the government was obliged to

involve parents and the school community in the school decision-making process and the implementation of the policy and teachers who are the key implementers were forgotten. What was looked at was the question of finances and payments as the government was obliged to pay for the education and the parents are supposed to be filling the gaps to make the education process to be smoothly undertaken.

Participation in Budget Planning

From *Table 6* above, the study found that 65 (38.5%) of all respondents agreed that they participated in the school budget planning, while 68 (40.2%) of all respondents disagreed that they did not participate in school budget planning. The findings have revealed that the teachers were not involved in the process of planning the school budget.

The findings are contrary to the procedural justice theory that demands the involvement of the stakeholders in the decision and planning process. According to the procedural justice idea, employees will be more motivated to work hard when they believe the processes used to decide how outcomes are distributed are fair (Gangl, 2003).

The findings are not different from Mgeni (2015), which noted that most schools do not follow the budget guideline provided by the government to budget the capitation grants. Kahavizakiriza et al. (2015) found that school budget preparation was carried out by principals, heads of departments and bursars. Monitoring and supervision of the school budget were done by principals without involving

the teachers, who are the key implementers of the free basic education policy.

Planning the school budget is a crucial first step in putting the free education policy into practice. The quantity of capitation that will be given to the school is determined by the budget for the institution. Without proper budget planning, the policy cannot be fully implemented because there will be some gaps to be filled. In this regard, the process of budget planning needs the participation of key stakeholders, including the teachers to make the budget successful and sustainable.

Involving the teachers in the budget planning gives the teachers to have a sense of ownership and that it makes the budget to be sustainable. A sustainable budget makes it easy for the school to be able to attain its goals. According to the findings, the teachers have rarely involved in the budget planning something which is so dangerous to the implementation of the free education policy. It is the obligation of the school management board to consult and actively involve them so as to gain inputs that are based on the real situation of the teaching and learning process. Other stakeholders can be giving inputs which are not grounded in the school's real situation and learning process that is based on the particular school.

The findings are supported by Lydia (2019), who noted that the implementation of the free basic education policy is dominated by the politicians instead of being dominated by the key stakeholders like teachers. As a result, the politicians have not done enough to improve the quality of education, especially in Tanzania. The problems such as financial, human, and physical resources have not matched the growing enrolments resulting from the implementation of the free education policy. The implementation of free basic education is characterised by crowded classrooms, inadequate textbooks, and inappropriate curricula because of poor planning. The politicians will say nothing in regard to these problems, or they will give unrealised promises so that they can be elected again and again to remain in power.

Encouraging Parents to Back up the School to Implement FBEP

The study found that 119 (70.4%) of all respondents agreed that they encouraged parents to side with the school in the implementation of the free education policy, while 33 (19.6%) of all respondents disagreed that they did not encourage the parents to side with the school in implementation of the free education policy (see *Table 6*).

The results generally indicate that the teachers were responsible for motivating and persuading parents to support the school in the execution of the free education program. One of the major players in the execution of educational programs and policies is the parent. The results support the procedural justice theory, which contends that when employees believe the methods used to decide how outcomes are distributed are fair, they will be more motivated to work hard (Gangl, 2003). When the teachers perceive the implementation of fee-free basic education is fair, they will always like to make it known and perceived positively by others.

It is noted by different scholars such as Khamis (2017) that the parents conceived and perceived the efforts of the government differently as they considered the implementation of the free basic education policy to be the government's business and they were less concerned. This gave a hard situation to the schools as without parents the policy cannot be implemented successfully.

The parents had previously helped pay for their children's school lunches. For example, parents at one primary level paid up to Tshs 10,000 year for each student's meals. For use in school meals, parents in some schools donated maize and beans. However, after the free education program was implemented, everything went south. The community was not sufficiently organized or prepared to carry out its duties. Parents in many schools had stopped paying for meals as a result of the fee-free policy's implementation because they thought the government now covered the cost of providing these products. Additionally, Serem and Ronoh (2012) proposed a few ways that parents could participate in the implementation of the free education policy, including by initiating and carrying out small school projects, selling cattle to

fund educational projects, and making the necessary contributions to cover costs that government grants are unable to cover.

Preparing Learning Environment

From *Table 6* above the study found that 119 (70.4%) of all respondents agreed that they were preparing a learning environment to implement the free basic education policy, while 16 (9.5%) of all respondents disagreed that they were not preparing a learning environment for the implementation of the free basic education policy.

It was found by the study that the main duty of the teachers in the implementation of the free basic education policy was to prepare the environment for learning. This is in line with the main focus of the free education policy. The main focus of the policy is to make the students have their right to education and get rid of all those obstacles that made the majority of the Tanzanian children miss this opportunity due to poverty and the low income of their families. To make this feasible, the teachers had their contribute to preparing and implementing the learning process.

However, various problems that have arisen as a result of the free education policy are restricting the execution of the free basic education program. These problems include unruly kids, overcrowding in the classrooms, and a lack of resources. The results of Doriye et al. (2020), which showed that head teachers labored in more difficult conditions to administer the free basic education policy as compared to when the policy was not in existence, support this.

Monitoring and Supervising the Teaching and Learning Materials

From *Table 6* above, the study found that 126 (74.6%) of all respondents agreed that they were monitoring and supervising teaching and learning materials to implement the free basic education policy, while 24 (14.2%) of all respondents disagreed that they were not doing monitoring and supervising teaching and learning materials.

The results usually indicate that the teachers were doing a wonderful job of helping the school and the government's attempts to put the free basic

education program into effect. The government provided and distributed books and other instructional resources to the school through the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE). After arriving at the school, these materials were supposed to be under observation for the benefit of the pupils and the institution. The results demonstrate that the teachers made every effort to preserve and effectively use the provided teaching and learning resources for both the present and future generations.

The results are in opposition to those of Shukia (2020), who contends that the free basic education policy was misunderstood, leading to uncertainty and dissonance among key implementers, including principals, teachers, and parents, and that it was endangering the provision of high-quality education. The results of this study, however, showed that teachers, one of the major stakeholders, comprehended the policy and put out the necessary effort to put it into practice.

Distribution of Teaching and Learning Materials Equitably

From *Table 6* above, the study found that 128 (75.7%) of all respondents agreed that they were distributing the teaching and learning materials equitably, while 20(11.9%) of the respondents disagreed that they were not distributing the teaching and learning materials for the implementation of the free basic education policy.

The findings show that the teachers were committed to supporting the implementation of the free basic education policy through the distribution of the teaching and learning materials to the learners equitably. The government, through TIE, supplied the books and other learning materials to the school. It remained the duty of the teachers to distribute them to the students according to their needs for studying.

The findings are supported by Mmasa (2020), that found a great relationship between the resources available in schools and students' performance. The teachers were committed to supporting the government and the school administration in implementing a free basic education policy by making the teaching and learning materials available and accessible to learners according to

their needs. Following this, the teachers are likely to make the students perform well in their academic areas as they provide their support. In this regard, the implementation of the fee-free basic education policy can have a positive impact on the accessibility and acquisition of relevant teaching and learning material for students in schools.

Supervising Students' Academic Progress

According to data from *Table 6* above, 130 (76.9%) of all respondents agreed that they were monitoring students' academic achievement for the best possible implementation of the free basic education program, whereas 18 (10.7%) of all respondents disagreed and said they were not.

The findings showed that the teachers were there to support and guide the students for better academic performance. One of the student's goals is to have the best academic performance. Through the implementation of free basic education, the government intended to provide room for improved academic performance for all students in public schools. Before the policy was introduced, some of the children were denied their right to attend school and show their abilities and potential. The findings show that the teachers were committed to supporting the government in implementing the free basic education policy.

The students are probably making more academic progress in this setting. This is because children from low-income families and those with special needs now have greater access to basic education. Additionally, dropout rates in the schools have plummeted since the free basic education policy's adoption, and some dropouts have come back. According to Shukia (2020), the dropout rate dropped from 9% in 2015 to 6% in 2016, a decrease of around 3%.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, a number of conclusions can be drawn. First, it is concluded that teachers' attitudes are very important in the implementation of any program or policy in the school. The attitude of teachers determines the success or failure of the school programmes. Because the teachers are the key implementers of

the free education policy, it is important to make them have a positive attitude in order to make it successful through the way they handle the students who are the beneficiaries of the policy. Secondly, it is concluded that teachers are the main implementers of the free education policy. The teachers implement the policy in different ways, such as practising teaching, preparing the environment for the policy to be implemented, regular communication with parents, and motivating them to participate in the implementation of the policy. This shows the importance of the teachers in the implementation of the policy without whom the policy cannot be implemented. Thirdly, it is concluded that the free education policy needed more preparations before it was initiated. This is due to the fact that there are some impediments that act as drawbacks to the implementation of the policy, which were to be tackled before the establishment of the policy for the best implementation. The preparations that were needed before the policy was put into effect were involving teachers from the planning stage, creating awareness among the students, and building infrastructure for the implementation of the policy.

Recommendations

- It was found that the government was the major source of financial resources in the public primary schools, but the parents contributed to support the given capitation grants. It is therefore recommended that the government should extend its financing to other hidden costs such as meals and copybooks so that parents can be freed from the contribution burdens because most of the parents in rural Tanzania are living in extreme poverty.
- It was found that teachers were not involved in the planning of the free basic education policy. It is recommended to the government that all plans, programs, and policies that are related to education, need consultation from the teachers so that they can be sustainable and effective.
- It was found that students lacked understanding of the free basic education policy. It is recommended to the public secondary schools in Kiteto to create awareness among the students so

that they can be effectively involved in the implementation of the policy.

- The schools were facing the challenges of insufficient funding for the implementation of the free education policy. It is therefore recommended that the individual schools in Kiteto should be given more autonomy to search for more funders, such as NGOs, FBOs etc. so that to ensure that daily school operations are undertaken to their fullest without being limited by insufficient funds.

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