

Perceptions of Teachers on the Removal of School Fees: A Study of Selected Secondary Schools of Kapiri Mposhi District

Nephat Kasebusha¹, Martin Banda², Beatrice Mwansa³

¹Kapiri Girls National Technical Secondary School, Zambia

²University of Edenberg, Zambia

³Mulungushi University, Zambia

Corresponding author: nehatkasebusha@gmail.com

Received: 10 May 2022; Received in revised form: 05 Jun 2022; Accepted: 10 Jun 2022

©2022 The Author(s). Published by TheShillonga. This is an open access article under the CC BY license

[\(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore the teachers' perceptions on the removal of school fees in the secondary schools of Kapiri Mposhi district in Central province. The study was guided by the following research objectives: to find out the teachers' perceptions on the removal of school fees in the selected secondary schools of Kapiri Mposhi district, to analyse the benefits of removing school fees in the selected secondary schools of Kapiri Mposhi district, to explore views on challenges due to the removal of school fees in the selected secondary schools of Kapiri Mposhi district and to suggest measures on challenges due to the removal of schools fees in the selected secondary schools of Kapiri Mposhi district. The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect, integrate and analyze data. The study utilized descriptive research design. The target population were subject teachers and school heads of departments from the five selected secondary schools. The sample size for the study was 40 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select heads of departments. The research instruments used in the study were questionnaires and interview guides. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview methods. Content analysis was used to analyse collected data. The study shows that that the removal of school fees in schools lead to an increase in class sizes, lead to an increase of the school overall enrolment, lead to shortages of classrooms and compromise the lead to poor academic performance among learners. The removal of school fees would lead to reduction of learners' dropouts in secondary schools. contribute to reduction of financial burdens among parents, lead to equal access to education in society, reduce the financial challenges on schools as schools are paid by government at once and the removal of school fees would lead minimize of absenteeism among learners.

Keywords—Perceptions, teachers, removal, school fees, secondary school.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The free primary education policy introduced in 2002 has greatly improved the primary school enrolment rates in the last decade, and Zambia is on track to achieving universal primary education. However, few Zambians progress to secondary school, and tertiary level enrolments are very low. A well-educated, highly skilled and healthy labour force is essential to propel Zambia to a thriving, industrialised and services-based economy envisioned in Vision 2030. Central to Vision 2030 goal of transforming Zambia into a prosperous middle-income country are investments in human capital development to improve peoples education and skills and ensure they are healthy (Lusaka Times, October 2021).

Despite laudable efforts to improve human capital development, most Zambians are unable to progress beyond primary school. There is a substantial gap between the skills level of workers and the labour market needs (Ministry of Finance, 2015). Adopt a universal secondary school policy to improve progression rates to secondary and increase enrolment in tertiary institutions. Increase commitment and budgetary allocation to ensure adequate distribution of gender-sensitive school facilities, well trained and motivated teachers and quality learning materials at all levels of education. This will improve the quality of learning, reduce school dropout, and help achieve universal secondary education (Lusaka Times, October 2021).

The UPND Government commits to reform the bursary and student loan system so that students who cannot afford to pay school or university fees can take up their places is one of the priorities of the UPND Government. Under this system, every student who wants to study will learn regardless of financial status with any recoveries differed they are financially capable of doing so (UPND manifesto, 2021).

Lirodo (2015) conducted a study on challenges of implementing free primary education and coping strategies in public. The main findings of the study were that whereas the free primary education policy had led to an exponential increase in the numbers of children enrolling in primary schools, this had over stretched the available human and physical resource base to cope with these numbers. This had led in poor teaching strategies resulting into poor academic performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Examinations. The major coping strategies included hiring of extra teachers paid by parents through school management committees to supplement those posted by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as well as providing material and financial incentives to teachers to enable them go an extra mile and teach longer hour outside the recommended workload. It was recommended that that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should rationalize and equally distribute the few available teachers to all schools in the country. The SMC should also be accorded legal and logistical means of engaging in viable income generating activities that could boost the resource base of various primary schools in the study locale of Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya primary schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.

The study by Arul (2017) indicated that massive enrolment the pupil teacher ratio increased tremendously this resulted into heavy workload for teachers and in the end school pupils lack personalized attention. This is a disadvantage to pupils especially those who are termed as slow learners. The classes have become so huge to handle by one teacher effectively. This does not only contribute to poor performance of pupils but a hindrance in the fight of illiteracy and also reduce the morale of teachers. In some schools, high pupil-teacher ratios are not matched by an increase in the number of recruited teachers. The United Nations (2019) noted the overstretched resources, in Kenyan education system which threaten the quality of education, other difficulties include teacher shortages in some areas, which mean that pupils receive fewer assignments as teachers have no time to mark papers.

Increased enrollment at the primary school level has created serious understaffing in a majority of schools, forcing SMCs in some areas to hire untrained teachers whose qualification and competency are questionable.

Fabian (2020) discussed that the major challenge to implementation of universal primary education was the incapacity of primary stakeholders to support their children with school requirements. These challenges included lack of enough teachers, lack of knowledge and skills to utilise experience developed by learners when participating in education activities, shortage of teachers at school level, inadequate resources for implementation at schools, and lack of community members' awareness of the importance.

Statement of the problem

Reform the bursary and student loan system so that students who cannot afford school or university fees can take up their places. Under this system, every student who wants to study will learn regardless of financial status with any recoveries differed they are financially capable of doing so. Free education was there during the UNIP government. In 2021 the UPND government pronounced abolishing all related fees in schools. However, Zambia has two divided groups of people: those that support abolishing school fees in secondary schools and those against it. The perceptions among teachers on the removal of school fees in secondary schools have not yet been established, hence the study.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect, integrate and analyze data. The study utilized descriptive research design. The target population of the study were all head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of departments and music subject teachers in the selected secondary schools. The research instruments used in the study were interview guides. Data was collected through interview method. Data was analyzed by using content analysis method.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Teachers' perceptions on the removal of school fees in secondary schools

In order to find out the teachers' perceptions on the removal of school fees in secondary schools, teachers were asked their perceptions on the removal of school fees in secondary schools. Figure 1 shows teachers perceptions on the removal of school fees in secondary schools

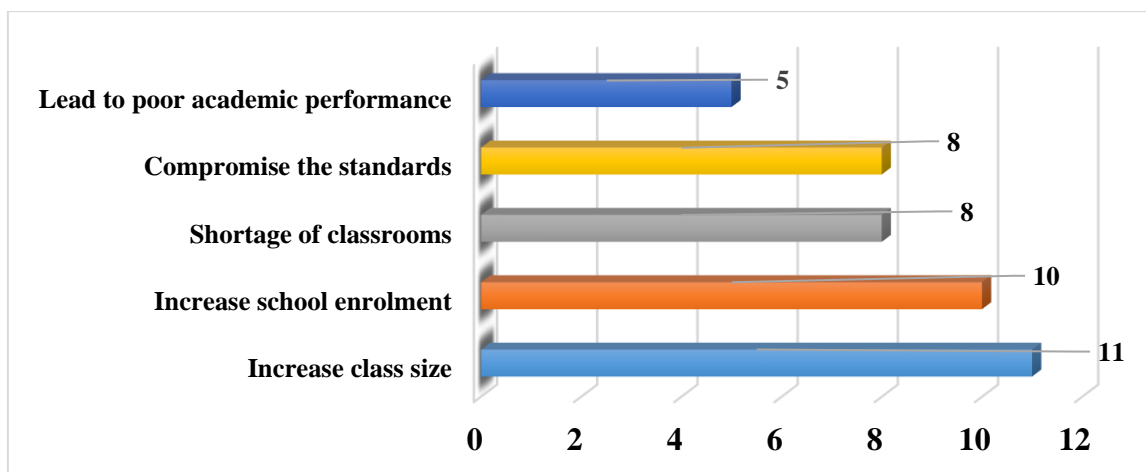


Fig.1: Perceptions on the removal of school fees N = 40

Source: Field Work, 2022

The study shows that there is the problem of overcrowding in public schools, hence there is an obvious strain in the limited resources available. There is the danger of education being downplayed. Funding the program will definitely lead to increased taxation and reduced quality. Other scholars such as Edho (2009) argued that secondary education is an investment, therefore learners should pay for their studies, not the taxpayer. Learners from rich families do not need free education. Many learners may actually not be suited for school, educational inflation. learners may not take education seriously. If the free education policy wont be handled well, it may contribute to poor academic performance among our learners. This is because the learners wont take education seriously as they will not be paying school fees. The free education will compromise the education standards. This is because there is no cost

attached to education access to the service. The shortage of classrooms is an obvious expectation. The introduction of free education for sure leads to shortage of classrooms in schools. The schools already do not have adequate classrooms. This is an additional burden on schools. The increased school enrolment contribute to shortage of classrooms in schools. Therefore, leads to increased class sizes.

3.2 Benefits of removing school fees in secondary schools

In order to establish the benefits of removing school fees in secondary schools, the respondents were asked the question on the benefits of removing school fees in secondary schools. Table 1 below shows the responses.

Table 1: Benefits of removing school fees in secondary schools

Benefits of school fee removal	Frequency	Percentage %
<i>Reduction of learners' dropouts</i>	12	30.0
<i>Reduction of financial burdens on parents</i>	10	25.0
<i>Equal access to education</i>	5	12.5
<i>Schools paid by government at once</i>	6	15.0
<i>Minimisation of absenteeism among learners</i>	7	17.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Work, 2022

N = 40

Reduction of learners' dropouts, reduction of financial burdens on parents, equal access to education, schools paid by government at once and minimisation of absenteeism among learners. The introduction of free education is of great benefit to learners and society at large. It may indeed help to contribute to minimisation of absenteeism among

learners. For children from poor families to stop school was mainly due to lack of financial resources. The introduction of free education will surely contribute to reduction of financial burden on parents with learners in secondary schools as well. This will indeed enable parents save their financial resources for other family needs and want, hence

inturn helps to improve their standards of living and eventually the intellectual ability of learners in schools.

The intoroduction of free education will give learners and society at large equal access to secondary education. This study supported the findings of Deininger (2003) that learners should have equal opportunities to education and that free education enables both the children from the vulnerable and well to do families have equal access to education in Zambia. This will eventually help to rduce the poverty levels in society as children will be empowered with education as it is the best equalizer between the rich and the poor people in our society. Free education brought a relief to most schools in Zambia today. It is important to note that all schools are paid at once now. Therefore, the schools will

no more be complaining of inconsistency payment of school fees by learners. Not all learners could pay school fees, and others could remain with balances. To make the matters worse if the child stop school. Most schools were failing to collect fees from all the learners because of their vulnerability, therefore free education has brought a relief to secondary schools.

Challenges due to the removal of school fees in secondary schools

In order to determine the challenges schools face with the removal of school fees in secondary schools, the respondents were asked for challenges schools face due to the removal of school fees in secondary schools. Figure 2 below shows the responses from the respondents.

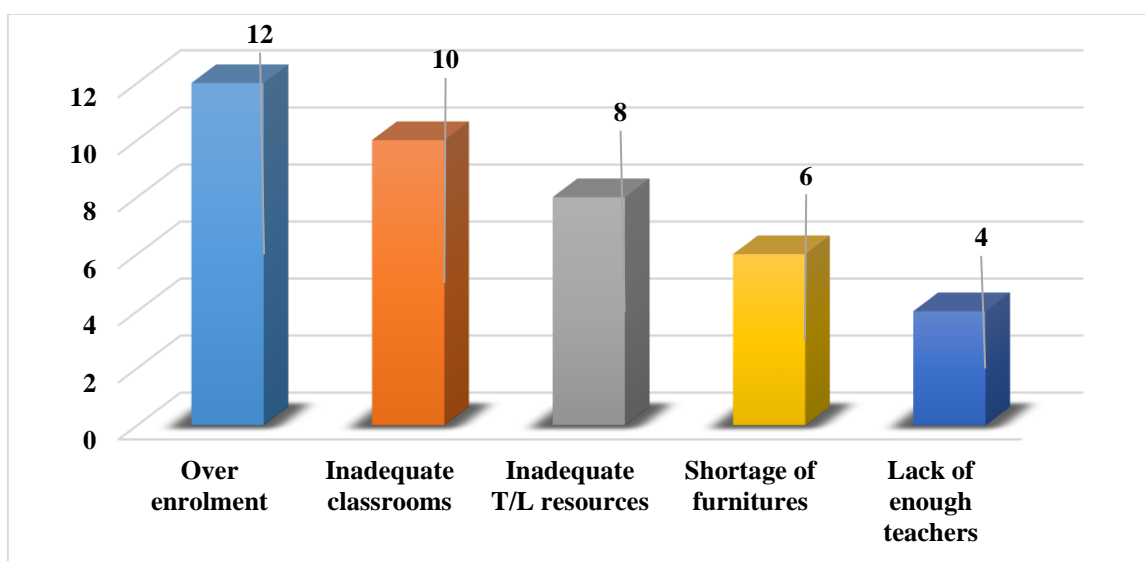


Fig.2: Challenges due to the removal of school fees

N = 40

Source: Field Work, 2022

The study agrees with Fabian (2020) that free education lead to over enrolment in schools, inadequate a challenge schools face, inadequate teaching and learning resources , shortages of furnitures in schools and lack of enough teachers. The introduction of free education will contribute to over enrolment in schools and classes. Besides this, schools lack enough teachers to handled the over enrolled learners in schools. This will create pressure on the already available teachers in schools. The shortage of furnitures like desks in schools will compel learners to sit on the floor if not taken care. In addition, inadequate teaching and learning resources will pose a great challenge in schools. If this will not be handled well will indeed compromise the education standard in schools and country at large.

The Ministry of Education should introduce the cut off point at grade seven (7). The study agreed with Otike (2015) that standard criteria help help to select the most talented to the

next grade to control over enrolment in schools. It is important to indicate that the cut off point at grade 7 will help in controlling the school enrolment and class sizes. The establishment of infrastructures like classrooms will help control challenges brought as a result of free education. In addition, more furnitures such as desks, tables and chairs for the classrooms. The schools should procure more teaching and learning resources to carter for all learners in schools. Since the enrolment in schools increases, the government should deploy more teachers if the effective teaching and learning is to take place.

IV. CONCLUSION

Basing on the foregoing study objectives the following conclusions can be drawn: The removal of school fees in schools lead to an increase in class sizes, lead to an incease

of the school overall enrolment, lead to shortages of classrooms and compromise the lead to poor academic performance among learners. The removal of school fees would lead to reduction of learners' dropouts in secondary schools. contribute to reduction of financial burdens among parents, lead to equal access to education in society, reduce the financial challenges on schools as schools are paid by government at once and the removal of school fees would lead minimize of absenteeism among learners.

Recommendations

- i. The MOE should introduction of cut off point at grade 7
- ii. The MOE should build more classrooms in secondary schools
- iii. The government through the MOE should procurement more furnitures
- iv. The government should deployment of more teachers in schools
- v. The government should procurement of more teaching/learning resources.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chimombo, J. (2009) Changing Patterns of Access to Basic Education in Malawi: A Story of a Mixed Bag? Comparative Education.
- [2] Edho, O. G. (2009). The Challenges Affecting the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Delta State, Nigeria.. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 20(3) , 183-189.
- [3] Fabian, D, Mussa, S, Muneja & Onesto, I. (2020). Challenges on the Implementation of Free Education Policy in Tanzania: A Case of Public Primary Schools in Babati Town. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 32-38
- [4] Lidoro, C, M and Aluko O, J. (2015). Free Primary Education Policy: Coping Strategies in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol.6, No.12; 162-172
- [5] Ministry of Finance (2015). Policy brief: Accelerating human capital development to optimise Zambia's chances of harnessing the demographic dividend. Lusaka: African Institute for development policy.
- [6] Muhindi, D, M. (2009). Challenges facing the implementation of free day secondary education: a case study of nyeri south district, nyeri county in kenya. Dissertation: Kenyatta University
- [7] Muyanga, M., Olwanda, J., Mueni, E., & Wambugu, S. (2010). Free Primary Education in
- [8] Oketch, M. O., & Rolleston, C. M. (2007). Policies of Free Primary and Secondary Education in East Africa: A Review of Literature. United Kingdom : CREATE.
- [9] Otike, w, F. (2015) Free Primary Education in Kenya and its challenges in fighting Illiteracy *Journal of Education and Practice*. Volume 2. No 3; page 2222-1735
- [10] Serem, D., & Ronoh, R. K. (2012). Challenges Faced in Implementing Free Primary Education for Pastoralists in Kenya . *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 41 (2012) , 100-111.
- [11] United Nations (2019). Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Retrieved September 15, 2019, from sdg4education.org
- [12] UPND Manifesto (2021). UPND Manifesto 2021-2026