

Effects of Funds Disbursement on Financial Sustainability of Public Secondary Schools in Alego Usonga Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Financial sustainability in public secondary schools has been tested, with disbursement of funds and school fee payments cited as major issues. This study is therefore intended to examine the relationship between fund disbursement and the financial sustainability of public secondary schools. The study applied fund accounting theory. The study employed a descriptive research design employing a mixed approach and targeted 50 public secondary schools, hence a target of 100 respondents, two per school (school bursar, accounts clerk, and school principal) in Alego Usonga, of which a census was conducted involving all the schools. Primary data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire, while secondary data was extracted from audited financial statements for public secondary schools. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was conducted for validity as well as Cronbach alpha for reliability. Piloting on 10 respondents (5 bursars and 5 principals) was conducted in Kakamega County. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, mean, and standard deviation, while inferential statistics included correlation analysis, multiple regression, and hierarchical regression. The findings of this research may be of great importance to public secondary school administrators, managers of various financial institutions, and school suppliers wishing to deliver items to the public secondary schools on credit terms. It may equally be of importance to researchers and future scholars who might need to refer to or build on this work for further research. The R square, or coefficient of determination, demonstrates that fund disbursement accounts for 46.7% of the variance in performances ($R^2 = 0.467$). This suggests that fund disbursement has a major bearing on the results achieved. Fund disbursement was a significant predictor ($p < .000$). The study recommends that public secondary schools should have stronger fund disbursements. This should happen through the Ministry of Education providing timely capitation. Other agencies, such as NG-CDF and county bursaries, should be timely remitted to the public secondary schools.

Keywords: Financial Sustainability, Funds Disbursement, Public Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Financial sustainability describes the ability of an institution to cover its annual budget without any constraints (Metto & Ombaba, 2021). Financial sustainability refers to the ability of a public secondary school to collect sufficient cash from fees levied on students, amounts that can enable the learning institution to cover all its recurrent expenses and fund budgeted development projects. Financially sustainable public secondary schools raise sufficient and adequate funds to fully implement their recurrent and development budgets, thereby achieving their objectives. Achieving financial sustainability in public secondary schools is crucial to ensuring quality basic education (Kiure et al., 2023), while maintaining low levels of accounts payable or creditors.

Financial sustainability in public secondary schools has been a challenge across the globe. In a bid to understand the differences in ICT equipment and digital literacy training among rural schools in Germany, Rundel & Salemink (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with school heads and teachers drawn from secondary schools drawn from two federal states—Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony, Germany—during the COVID-19 period, during which lockdowns had been imposed across the country. The study largely linked the difficulties in the integration of information and community technology among rural schools to inadequate funding by the government. To address the challenges, the researchers recommended additional funding by development partners and donors as well as additional fundraising to address the funding challenges.

In Indonesia, challenges in the financial sustainability of compulsory education have been reported and have resulted in a shortage of teachers across the country (Suryahadi et al., 2021). To address the funding challenges, the country encourages parent-teacher groups and school alumni to fundraise to fill the funding gap in school funding.

Countries in East Africa face the same challenges in their public secondary schools. In Rwanda, for instance, the rollout of the Geographic Information System in public secondary schools as tools of practical learning has failed due to limited financial resources advanced by the government (Mzuza & Van, 2019). The end result is the reduced quality of education offered in public secondary schools.

To address the financial unsustainability across schools across Tanzania, the government has enacted various policies and circulars, resulting in an annual capitation grant of 12,500 Tanzanian Shillings per student (Shukia, 2020) and the entrenching of parent-teacher platforms tasked with supplementing the government's capitation.

The financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Kenya has equally been adversely affected, as witnessed by the increasing number of court cases lodged by suppliers against school principles (Too et al., 2023), unpaid workers' salaries, and insufficient laboratory chemicals (Awange, 2022). Even though the ministry has designed a cash disbursement schedule for the capitation funds, Achieng et al. (2021) observe that the government often delays the disbursement of the capitation funds, a situation that affects learning in public secondary schools. Too et al. (2023, May 24) contend and further note that some principals have had to suspend other commitments and focus only on food items and electricity. The delay in disbursement of capitation funds to public secondary schools has persisted, and the government has yet to disburse capitation funds to the institutions a month after the learning institutions re-opened for the second term of the 2023 academic year (Muchunguh et al., 2023).

Public secondary schools implement debt management strategies in order to facilitate the timely settlement of overdue fee invoices by students. This can be achieved by authorizing both cash and non-monetary payments, implementing periodic proportional payments, implementing learning suspension actions, implementing fee follow-up techniques, and providing fee reminders. The study conducted by Tang (2014) aimed to assess the impact of trade credit, originating from both suppliers and demand, on the profitability of schools in the Netherlands during the period of 2009 to 2013. The study employed descriptive statistics and encompassed a total of 71 institutions that were operational inside the country. The study found a favorable correlation between trade credits and profitability. It also emphasized the importance for schools to establish enduring relationships with suppliers in order to provide easier and expedited access to trade credit.

In a similar vein, Afza and Nazir (2019) endeavored to examine the conventional correlation between debt management strategies and a company's financial performance. The survey revealed notable variations in the receivables criteria and financing practices of companies operating in diverse industries. Additionally, the regression study demonstrated a negative correlation between the profitability of companies and their level of assertiveness in managing receivables.

Regionally, scholars have not relented in conducting continuous studies pertaining to the management of debtors across institutions. In Nigeria, for instance, Kayonde and Hassan (2018) confirmed that hire purchases led to the growth of medium-scale enterprises in the country. A further discussion equally concluded that meeting the credit worthiness target by the said companies could be realized if a proper system for credit management was entrenched in the companies' institutional policies and manuals.

Afza and Nazir (2019) looked at how public secondary schools in Ethiopia handled their school funds and how well they did their jobs. The study revealed that public secondary schools suffer from inadequate funding. The exorbitant expenses associated with education are a significant concern for parents in Egypt, leading many to refrain from registering their children in schools (Mena, 2014). Low-income parents' failure to cover school expenditures results in their children being expelled from school, which negatively impacts the financial viability of schools and the students' access to education.

According to Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, every child in Kenya has the right to receive free and mandatory basic education. According to the Basic Education Act of 2013, basic education refers to the educational programs provided to individuals in public or private institutions of basic education, including schools, tuition facilities, educational centers, academies, research institutions, school correctional facilities, or private institutions. In addition, Goal Number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as endorsed by the Government of Kenya (GOK), aims to guarantee that every child receives a primary and secondary education that is free, fair, and of high quality. Moreover, the Basic Education Act of 2013 requires parents who are Kenyans or whose children reside within the country to ensure that children of school-going age are enrolled in primary and secondary education in their quest to attain universal basic education.

As a result of the GOK's continued commitment to provide free and compulsory basic education, the government introduced Free Primary Education and FDSE in 2003 and 2008, respectively (Awange, 2022). The introduction of the FDSE was meant to address the plight of children from poor backgrounds who could not access secondary education upon completion of primary education due to a lack of school fees. Through the program, the government initially allocated Kshs. 10,265 to each student enrolled in all public secondary schools. The amount was

then increased to KShs. 12,870 and finally to KShs. 22,244 and KShs. 57,974 per student per year in regular and special needs public secondary schools, respectively, as of January 2018 (Awange, 2022). Additionally, the government has enforced a uniform fee framework and set of regulations throughout the different classifications of public secondary schools. Day secondary schools are provided at no cost, requiring parents to provide only meals for the students. In contrast, parents of pupils enrolled in Category A boarding secondary schools (which include national schools and extra-county secondary schools situated in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Nyeri, Thika, and Eldoret Counties) remit a sum of KShs. 53,554 pe. Other researchers have expressed criticism towards the allocation of KShs. 22,244 to each pupil in secondary schools using a standard unit cost of education as the foundation. Regarding the allocation of capitation grants to students in conventional and special needs schools, Awange (2022) suggests utilizing a research-based differentiated unit cost. This is to account for the varying degrees of infrastructure development that exist among different institutions.

The parent's contribution to the fee needs of their students can either be settled directly by the parents or through bursaries from the NG-CDF, the county government, and the Ministry of Education. Parents who wish to get assistance from the bursary funds apply to the respective funds or bodies, who then vet the applications and select the most deserving cases for the award of the bursaries based on the available budgetary allocation. The disbursement of the bursary funds to the benefiting schools is then effected upon the receipt of funds from the exchequer. However, the Auditor General has flagged several NG-CDFs for misusing bursary funds (Mwangi & Mwai, 2021). In the highlighted instances, NG-CDFs have had their audit reports qualified as a result of issuing stale checks to the benefiting schools and indicating similar admission numbers against the names of several beneficiaries. These factors delay the disbursement of bursary funds by the NG-CDFs.

Despite the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoES&T) issuing approved fee guidelines for public secondary schools, Chebet (2020) reported instances in which head teachers required parents to pay extra charges, some totaling KShs. 10,000 per student per year of study. The extra levies, which are neither documented nor listed in the formal fee structures issued to parents, are communicated verbally or through circulars sent to parents and are meant to cater for the construction of dormitories, the motivation of teachers and remedial classes, and the additional cost of commodities as a result of the run-away inflation experienced in the country. Such extra levies are meant to supplement the insufficient capitation awarded by the government (Achieng et al., 2021).

With regards to the timing of the disbursement of government capitation, the MoES&T (2017) posits that the first disbursement of capitation funds to public secondary schools in Kenya is made in December, and subsequent disbursements are made in April and August each year, or as resources flow to the National Treasury, and that such disbursements are made in the ratio of 50:30:20, respectively. Notably, the capitation funds are transferred to schools that are duly registered by the County Education Board, headed by a principal appointed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), and have submitted the relevant bank accounts operated by the school. Further, the school must have accurately fed the details of its students into the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) portal (Achieng et al., 2021). Capitation funds are remitted to the schools' bank accounts through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Further, the ministry's citizens' service delivery charter indicates seven days after receipt of the exchequer as the timeline within which the ministry should disburse the capitation funds to schools.

As a result of the government's concerted effort to ensure that all children of school-going age attain formal and organized education, the number of students enrolling in secondary education has increased tremendously to hit over 3.4 million students in 2020 (MOES&T, 2020), up from 1.2 million in 2007.

Public secondary schools largely rely on the revenues generated both from exchange transactions (rendering of services to students) and non-exchange transactions (government capitation) to finance the majority of their operations, both recurrent and development projects. Consequently, a delay or default in the disbursement of capitation funds by the MoES&T, coupled with non-payment of school fees by parents or guardians, affects the financial sustainability and liquidity of learning institutions to whom the fees should be paid (Oudia, 2023). As a result, public secondary schools require parents and guardians to promptly pay fees at the beginning of each term or year, as stipulated in the fee payment policies. Such prompt payment not only enhances the ability of the school to develop its budgets and prudently manage its resources, but also to settle supplier invoices within reasonable timelines and not later than the sixty days as stipulated by the PPADR 2019.

In view of the foregoing, student debtors' management may be associated with disbursement of funds, debt collection techniques, socio-economic facets, and school factors that may affect the financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Kenya. The study is therefore interested in interrogating the effect of fund disbursement on the financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub-County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to MOES&T (2023), secondary schools have material student debts totaling KShs. 3.1 billion, which are largely the result of fee defaults by students. Many students complete Form 4 before clearing school fees. The GOK (2021) ordered the release of KCSE certificates for students who had cleared Form 4 yet had outstanding fee areas. Pursuant to this directive, several schools, including those in Alego Usonga Sub-County, released the several withheld certificates to the affected students. This nexus directly touches on the financial sustainability of public secondary schools across the country. Further, government capital has never been released on time, making financial sustainability a challenge. In Alego Usonga, most parents pay fees in kind by offering services to schools or even items like firewood, which cannot sustain the financial goals of an institution (Moranga & Job, 2017). Achieng et al. (2021) assert that delays and insufficient capitation grants affect teaching and learning in most public secondary schools. Ayako (2015) opines that late payment of school fees erodes a school's financial sustainability, while the failure to pay the fees results in a total loss or deficit. Previous studies done and concluded had mixed results on fund disbursement and the level of financial sustainability of various institutions. Siele and Tibbs (2019) researched accounts receivable management and financial performance and found that there exists a positive relationship between accounts receivable and financial sustainability. However, Moranga and Job (2017) examined the relationship between fund disbursement and financial predominance among Nairobi City Council institutions, Kenya, and noted a negative relationship between the level of fund disbursement and financial performance in the said institutions. In summary, whereas Ayako (2015) established that proper management of debtors resulted in better financial performance, Moranga and Job (2017) found that the level of fund disbursement resulted in poorer financial performance, hence mixed results. Similarly, Wainaina (2016), in her study, suggested a further study on fund disbursement and financial stability. These and many more relevantly validate my current research since it stands on various gaps previously created by earlier scholars and researchers.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

To determine the effect of funds disbursement on financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub- County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of funds disbursement on financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub- County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The Fund Accounting Theory was postulated by economist William Joseph Vatter in 1947 in his book "The Fund Theory of Accounting and Its Implications for Financial Reports" (Pavan et al., 2017). According to Joseph, the proprietary and entity theories of accounting, which are commonly employed, have not adequately addressed contemporary accounting difficulties. These theories primarily concentrated on the ownership of assets and liabilities as well as the accountability of organizations. According to him, government units consist of several groupings and cannot be personified. He expressed the view that the theory primarily emphasized a fund as a unit of operations or a hub of interests without considering its personal nature as an accounting entity. As a result, the identification or association of a fund with a particular individual was not possible, and there was no designated recipient for the funds or any specific individual to whom the reports pertain.

The primary objective of responsible administrators of public finances is to ensure a consistent availability of cash to cover essential expenses that are deemed crucial for the dignity, honor, and well-being of the state (Pavan et al., 2017). It appears that the most effective approach to accomplishing this objective is to limit the allocation of funds from certain annuities or tax obligations to each payment. This is accomplished by safeguarding these funds in distinct instances. The primary priority of responsible administrators of public finances is to provide a consistent availability of cash to cover essential expenses that are deemed crucial for the integrity, reputation, and well-being of the public sector institution.

In a nutshell, the Fund Accounting Theory states that public sector entities can enhance their financial sustainability by adopting the concept of fund accounting, in which specific constraints constrain specific payments of

funds from certain specified annuities or taxes and guard the funds in separate cases. This is in line with the first specific objective of the study, which attempts to determine the effect of fund disbursement on the financial sustainability of public secondary schools. The national government operates several funds under the standard chart of accounts through which capitation funds are disbursed to public secondary schools. Furthermore, public secondary schools operate vote heads under which specific payments are made. Capitation funds received from the Ministry of Education, for instance, largely comprise funds meant for the tuition vote head from which learning materials are procured. Only tuition expenses can be applied to offset expenses under the tuition-related expenditure, with a view to ensuring financial sustainability.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Funds Disbursement in Public Secondary Schools

Sharma (2017) defines disbursement as the actual delivery of funds from one party's bank account to another. He explains that in business accounting, a disbursement is a payment in cash during a specific time period and is recorded in the general ledger of the business. Funds are disbursed to individual accounts for given purposes and timelines, as duly agreed upon. Public secondary schools receive their funds from the Ministry of Education accounts purposefully to aid in the smooth operations of the individual schools' operations (MoES&T, 2017). The disbursement of funds was measured through the Ministry of Education's capitation, constituency development bursary funding, and county bursaries.

2.2.2 Financial Sustainability in Public Secondary Schools

This refers to the ability of a public secondary school to collect sufficient cash from fees levied on students, amounts that can enable the learning institution to cover all its recurrent expenses and fund budgeted development projects. Tang (2014) conducted a study to assess the impact of trade credit on the financial sustainability of schools. The study found a positive correlation between trade credits and sustainability. It also emphasized the importance for schools to establish long-term relationships with suppliers in order to access trade credit more easily and quickly (Achieng et al., 2021). Financial sustainability was measured by student debtors' weighted proportion to total debts, creditor weighted proportion to recurrent expenditure, and creditor weighted proportion to development expenditure, budget variance, rate, and time of fee payment.

2.3 Empirical Review

In the words of Riegner (2016), government capitation, county bursary awards, and CDF awards essentially form the basis of funding for public secondary schools. It is always the norm that after the award lists or various beneficiaries of the said funds, it is the duty of the management to ensure that a prompt disbursement is done to the individual school accounts. Such exercises often take quite a while due to the regulations and laws that govern their disbursement (Riegner, 2016). Disbursement still plays a central role in the gains and benefits seen to be derived from government or public sources since it marks part of the final stages of fund transfer (Sharma, 2017).

Available government policies and guidelines provide that the first disbursements of capitation funds to public secondary schools in Kenya are made in December and subsequent disbursements are made in April and August each year, or as resources flow to the National Treasury, and that such disbursements are made in the ratio of 50:30:20, respectively (Achieng et al., 2021). A review of the news available in the Kenyan media points to the fact that this policy is rarely implemented and public secondary schools do not receive prompt disbursements from the MoES&T.

A scrutiny of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Board (2023) website revealed that the constituency committees across the 290 constituencies awarded bursaries totaling KShs. 57 billion to over six million students during the 2017–2018–2021–2022 financial years. However, as Mwangi & Mwai (2021) note, the Auditor General has flagged several NG-CDFs for misusing the bursaries. We can therefore not confirm that the disbursed bursary funds are actually received at the public secondary schools.

UNESCO (2014) established that the Government of Kenya began the school grants policy in 2003 out of a desire to fulfill the promises that had been made by the then president during the 2002 general elections. In 2003, the government introduced the Free Primary Education program, which aimed at increasing access to primary education for all school-going ages across the country. The government introduced the Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) Program in 2008 (Muhindi, 2012) and has since been remitting funds to public secondary schools across the country. Whereas part of these funds aims at covering operational expenses in the learning institutions, the other part is meant to improve education quality through the acquisition of capital assets and other educational materials. The allocation is made on a per-pupil basis, which makes it easier for schools to determine the exact amounts they expect to receive in

any given academic period. The Ministry of Education has enacted several policy documents that guide the disbursement of funds from the national government directly to the school's bank accounts.

According to UNESCO (2014), there exists a deficiency in the fairness of the funding formula implemented by the government. According to the organization, the fund has failed to take into account the unique attributes of the school and its students, thus failing to effectively address the existing discrepancies among schools. The small, less-established schools face significant disadvantages due to delayed and irregular payouts. Moreover, quantitative research conducted by UNESCO in 2014 revealed instances of insufficient expenditure on certain vote heads and excessive expenditure on others. This has resulted in frustration among school stakeholders, who perceive the procedure of obtaining clearance for the transfer of unused funds to alternative budget categories as excessively burdensome.

Muhindi (2012) observed that the execution of the school grant policy in Kenya encounters several obstacles. Muhindi (2012) observed that the government's subsidies for free day secondary education in Nyeri County, Kenya, are insufficient and not distributed promptly (p. 12). The research design employed in this study was a descriptive survey, which was conducted in all 33 public secondary schools located in Nyeri South District. These schools had a total of 11,094 students and 403 teachers. The researcher employed a stratified random selection technique to choose a sample of 18 schools. Surveys were administered to the principals, and additional data was collected through the use of observation guides. The acquired data was analyzed using SPSS. The research emphasized the necessity of reassessing the distribution of financial resources and guaranteeing the transfer of funding to secondary schools in order to tackle the difficulties faced by the Free Day Secondary Education initiative in Kenya.

Ayako (2016) mixed desktop research and interviews to explore 'Financing Post-Primary Education in Kenya: A Review of Structure, Trends, and Challenges.' The researcher reviewed relevant policy documents and peer-reviewed literature and interviewed approximately 40 key informants in the educational sector and education financing, including senior government officials, development partners, academia, students, and head teachers. Ayako (2015) confirmed the inadequacy of funding for free education programs and doubted the sustainability of funding both at the public and private/community levels.

According to Achieng et al. (2021), public secondary schools, particularly those in West and East Africa, are no longer able to operate efficiently due to delays in the distribution of Free Day Secondary Education Funds. The research was carried out in Migori County, Kenya, with a focus on retention theory. The study had a sample size of 215 public day schools, consisting of 19 schools, 19 school principals, 76 class teachers, 228 students, 31 parents, and 1 quality assurance and standards officer. The study found that fund disbursement does not operate efficiently due to delays in the distribution of Free Day Secondary Education Funds.

Kaindi et al. (2019) conducted research on the effects of timely funding of public schools in Makueni County. The study adopted a descriptive design with a population of 31 principals, 307 form 4 pupils, and 164 form 4 class instructors. The study found that funding was a challenge and delays existed in all sectors, right from government to CDF and even parents.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study employed a descriptive research design using a mixed approach, incorporating both cross-sectional and descriptive research techniques. The research design adopts a descriptive approach, utilizing measures such as means, frequencies, and percentages. Descriptive research design, as defined by Mugenda & Mugenda (2008), is a research approach that seeks to gather information in order to systematically depict a phenomenon, situation, or population. A cross-sectional research design, in contrast, is a research design that involves the collection of data from a diverse group of individuals at a certain moment in time. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that the utilization of a cross-sectional survey design proves advantageous in elucidating the state of variables and facilitates the acquisition of novel insights directly from the participants. A cross-sectional study design offers the advantage of enabling researchers to simultaneously compare many variables. This study looked at income level and income diversion as factors that determine the ability of households to settle fee arrears. The sample of respondents was drawn from account clerks, bursars, and school principals.

3.2 Target Population

The study population refers to the group of people who meet the researcher's operational definition of the target population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The study population shall comprise the 50 public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub-County. In this case, two respondents were selected from each school, namely the school

principal and the school bursar. In areas where the school has both the bursar and accounts clerk, the bursar was involved, while accounts clerks were used where the bursars were absent. The unit of analysis for the study was all public secondary schools operating under the Ministry of Education within Alego Usonga Sub-County.

3.3 Sampling Size and Sampling Procedure

The study used the entire population hence census study. The number of schools is few and accessible hence census. Census eliminates cases of sampling error and hence leads to a higher accuracy of results.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather the primary data. The surveys utilized closed-ended questions. The questionnaires provided valuable insights into the management of student debtors and the financial viability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub-County, Siaya County, Kenya. These responses accurately reflect the perceptions of the respondents, contributing to a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. Questionnaires were employed as the research instruments in this study. The development of the questionnaire is based on a literature evaluation in order to maintain its relevance to the research problem. This study employed a drop-and-pick method for data collection. The utilization of questionnaires is favored due to their capacity to facilitate the collection of data from a broad geographic scope at a comparatively affordable expense. The survey consisted of two distinct sections: the first piece provided background information, while the second section focused on the management and financial sustainability of student borrowers. Section two utilized a Likert scale consisting of five response options: "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." With a maximum value of 5 and a minimum value of 1. A pilot study was conducted in public schools in Kakamega County, using 10% (10 respondents) of the chosen sample, as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008).

3.5 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Reliability is the ability the ability to ascertain whether a measurement instrument in a study consistently yields identical results when employed in the same context with the same group of participants and whether it delivers reliable outcomes. The internal consistency of the study instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as the questionnaire included Likert-type questions. The minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha (α) should exceed 0.7.

According to Ahmed and Emin (2017), validity refers to the extent to which the test instruments accurately assess the study topics. In this study, content and construct validity were assessed. Content validity involved seeking expert opinion from questioners, including one of the center managers of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga County and my supervisors. This was done to ensure that the questionnaires adequately addressed all the research parameters. Construct validity necessitates the utilization of diverse factor analysis techniques, wherein variable rotation is performed and those exhibiting factor loadings below 0.4 are excluded.

3.6 Data Analysis

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between the management of student debtors and the financial stability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga sub-county, Alego Usonga, Kenya. This research employed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were employed as descriptive measures. Correlation and regression analysis were employed as inferential statistics. The study of regression encompassed basic simple linear regression model as follows.

$$\text{Model 1 } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Dependent Variable (financial sustainability of public secondary schools)

X= Aggregate influence on fund disbursement and financial sustainability within public secondary schools.

Independent variables, which include:

X₁ is Funds Disbursement

β_0 = the constant

β_1 = the regression coefficient

ε = Error term

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

The researcher delivered two questionnaires to each of the 50 public secondary schools within Alego Usonga Sub-County, for a total of 100 questionnaires. At each school, the bursar, the accounts clerk, and the school principal were each required to complete a questionnaire and were discouraged from filling the questionnaires jointly. The study achieved a response rate of 91%, as all 50 school bursars and accounting clerks in total were found and 41 school principals participated. In other words, the researcher was successful in obtaining data from 91 respondents (91%). According to Champion and Sear (2009), an appropriate response rate is one that is above 49%, and a response rate that is over 69% is considered extremely high. A very high rating was achieved since the response rate of 91% was higher than the required 69%. The findings indicated that this response rate was adequate for producing credible research results from the intended and sampled populations. The high response rate can be attributed to the use of the effective questionnaire administration technique—the drop-and-pick technique—adopted after its success during piloting and the presence of research authorization letters from the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, all of whom issued letters authorizing the researcher to collect the data from the schools within the sub-county. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the fund disbursement were 0.840, hence reliable.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

A quantitative approach was used to examine the data in order to generate descriptive statistics for the investigation. The researcher drew inferences about the link between the independent variables and the dependent variable by analyzing this descriptive data. The study evaluated the data in relation to the objectives in order to ascertain the relationships among the variables. Significantly, the inquiries posed to each participant were in accordance with the objectives of the study. A Likert scale with five points was employed to assess the respondents' sentiments about each survey topic (1–5), ranging from strongly to strongly. 1 = disagree; 2 = disagree. The scale ranges from neutral to fairly agree, agree, and strongly agree.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Funds Disbursement

Participants were requested to assess their level of concurrence with eight statements pertaining to technological progress using a rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The results are succinctly presented in Table 4.4. The disbursement of funds was classified into three distinct categories. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the allocation of funds for the NG-CDF Bursary and the County Bursary.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Funds Disbursement Ministry of Education Capitation Basic

Funds Disbursement (Ministry of Education Capitation)	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	STD
Capitation per student as allocated by MoES&T is sufficient to cater for the learner education	12 (13.2%)	42 (46.2%)	21 (23.1%)	16 (17.6%)	0	3.55	0.93
The MoES&T disburses funds as per the number of students registered in the NEMIS	16 (17.6%)	30 (33%)	32 (35.2%)	13 (14.3%)	0	3.54	1.11
Capitation received by my school is of the exact number of students registered in NEMIS	10 (11%)	33 (36.3%)	43 (47.3%)	5 (5.5%)	0	3.47	1.06
My school receives timely disbursement as per the school calendar – money disbursed each term	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	33 (36.3%)	14 (15.4%)	0	3.34	9.89
The ratio of disbursement (50:30:20) does not affect my school operations	14 (15.4%)	31 (34.1%)	28 (30.8%)	18 (19.8%)	0	3.77	0.72
The entire ratio for each term is disbursed by the MoES&T	28 (30.8%)	19 (20.9%)	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	0	3.91	1.28

The allotment of funds under the Ministry of Education's capitation has been observed to be adequate in meeting the educational needs of learners, as indicated by the capitation per student provided by the Ministry of Education. Regarding this matter, 12 respondents (13.2%) highly agreed, whereas 42 respondents (46.2%) agreed with the same remark. In addition, 21 respondents (23.1%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 16 respondents (17.6%) disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disputed that the capitation per student granted by MoEST was



adequate to support learner education. The presence of a mean of 3.55 and a negligible standard deviation of 0.9 suggests that the capitation was inadequate.

When evaluating the allocation of money by MoEST in relation to the number of students registered in the NEMIS, According to the study, 16 respondents (17.6%) highly agreed and 30 respondents (33%) agreed with the statement. The data indicates that the funding adhered carefully to the NEMIS records, as seen by a mean of 3.55 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.11.

The study determined that 10 respondents (11% of the total) highly agreed and 33 respondents (36.3%) agreed that the capitation paid by schools corresponds to the precise number of students enrolled in NEMIS. Additionally, 47.3% of the participants expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 5.5% disagreed and none strongly disagreed, with the notion that the capitation received by schools is directly proportional to the number of pupils enrolled in NEMIS. The data indicates that capitation was consistent with students under NEMIS, as seen by a mean of 3.47 and a substantial standard deviation of 1.06.

The study revealed that 19 respondents (20.9%) highly agreed and 23 respondents (25.3%) agreed that schools receive timely allocations of funding according to the school calendar for each term. In addition, 33 respondents (36.3%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 14 respondents (15.4%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, on the timely disbursement of funding to schools according to the school calendar for each term. Based on a mean value of 3.34 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 9.89, it can be inferred that schools experienced delays in receiving funding from the ministry.

The survey revealed that 14 (15.4%) of the respondents highly agreed, while 31 (34.1%) agreed, regarding the impact of the disbursement ratio on school operations. In addition, 28 respondents (30.8%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 18 respondents (19.8%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, on the timely disbursement of funding to schools according to the school calendar for each term. The data indicates that the ratio of disbursement has a notable impact on school operations, as evidenced by a mean of 3.77 and a high standard deviation of 0.72. Finally, regarding the disbursement of the entire ratio for each term by the MoEST, the study revealed that 28 respondents (30.8%) highly agreed, while 19 respondents (20.9%) agreed with this statement. Based on the calculated mean of 3.91 and the observed standard deviation of 1.28, it may be inferred that the whole distribution of each word was not distributed.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Funds Disbursement NG-CDF Bursary

Funds Disbursement (NG-CDF Bursary)	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	STD
The amount disbursed by NG-CDF bursary is sufficient for the learner fee needs	28 (30.8%)	19 (20.9%)	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	2 (2.2%)	3.82	0.91
My school receives timely disbursement as per the school calendar	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	33 (36.3%)	14 (15.4%)	0	3.34	0.98
The students awarded NG-CDF bursary are indeed needy students	12 (13.2%)	42 (46.2%)	21 (23.1%)	16 (17.6%)	0	3.55	0.93
The NG-CDF help my school in reducing student debtors	10 (11%)	33 (36.3%)	43 (47.3%)	5 (5.5%)	0	3.47	1.06
The NG-CDF bursary significantly contribute to financial facilitation of my school's operations	28 (30.8%)	19 (20.9%)	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	0	3.91	1.05
Some non-needy students do receive NG-CDF bursary in my school	12 (13.2%)	42 (46.2%)	21 (23.1%)	16 (17.6%)	0	3.55	1.03

The allocation of funds under the NG-CDF bursary received a significant response. With respect to this matter, it was found that 28 respondents (30.8%) expressed strong agreement, while 19 respondents (20.9%) agreed that the amount disbursed by the NG-CDF bursary is adequate to meet the learner fee requirements. Furthermore, 19 respondents (20.9%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, 23 respondents (25.3%) disagreed, and 2 respondents (2.2%) strongly disagreed with the notion that the sum disbursed by the NG-CDF bursary is adequate for the student. The NG-CDF bursary dispensed an insufficient amount, as indicated by a mean of 3.82 and an insignificant standard deviation of 0.91.

Upon analyzing the adherence of schools to the school calendar, the study revealed that 19 respondents (20.9%) highly agreed and 23 respondents (25.3%) agreed with this statement. In addition, 33 respondents (36.3%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 14 respondents (15.4%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, on



the timely disbursement of funds to schools according to the school calendar. The absence of a timely payout is shown by a mean of 3.34 and a substantial standard deviation of 0.98.

The survey determined that 12 (13.2%) of the respondents highly agreed and 42 (46.2%) agreed that the students who received the NG-CDF scholarship were genuinely needy pupils. In addition, 21 respondents (23.1%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 16 respondents (17.6%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, regarding the fact that students given the NG-CDF bursary were genuinely needy students. The presence of a mean value of 3.55 and a statistically insignificant standard deviation of 0.93 suggests that a portion of the supported pupils did not exhibit signs of neediness.

The survey revealed that 10 respondents (11% of the total) strongly agreed and 33 respondents (36.3%) agreed that the NG-CDF assists schools in lowering student debt. Furthermore, 47.3% of the participants expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 5.5% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed with the notion that NG-CDF aids schools in mitigating student debtors. The data, which has a mean of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.06, suggests that NG-CDF has the potential to assist schools in mitigating student debt.

The survey revealed that 28 (30.8%) of the respondents highly agreed, while 19 (20.9%) agreed, regarding the major contribution of the NG-CDF bursary to the financial facilitation of school operations. With the calculated mean of 3.91 and the observed standard deviation of 1.05, it may be inferred that the NG-CDF bursary has a substantial role in facilitating the financial operations of schools. The presence of a mean value of 3.55 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.03 suggests that a subset of non-needy pupils in their school do get the NG-CDF bursary.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Funds Disbursement County Bursary

Funds Disbursement (County Bursary)	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	STD
The amount disbursed by County bursary is sufficient for the learner fee needs	16 (17.6%)	30 (33%)	32 (35.2%)	13 (14.3%)	0	3.54	0.90
My school receives timely disbursement as per the school calendar	10 (11%)	33 (36.3%)	43 (47.3%)	5 (5.5%)	0	3.47	1.06
The students awarded County bursary are indeed needy students	14 (15.4%)	31 (34.1%)	28 (30.8%)	18 (19.8%)	0	3.77	0.72
The County help my school in reducing student debtors	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	33 (36.3%)	14 (15.4%)	0	3.34	1.06
The County bursary significantly contribute to financial facilitation of my school's operations	16 (17.6%)	30 (33%)	32 (35.2%)	13 (14.3%)	0	3.54	0.9
Some needy students do receive county bursary in my school	19 (20.9%)	23 (25.3%)	33 (36.3%)	14 (15.4%)	0	3.34	1.06

The disbursement of funds through county bursaries elicited a wide range of responses. Out of the replies, 16 individuals (17.6%) highly agreed, and 30 individuals (33%) agreed that the amount granted by the county bursary was adequate for the learner fee requirements. Furthermore, 35.2% expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 13 respondents (14.3%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed about the adequacy of the amount disbursed by the county bursary for learner fees. The county bursary distributed an insufficient amount for learner fee demands, as indicated by a mean of 3.82 and a negligible standard deviation of 0.91.

Upon analyzing the adherence of schools to the school calendar, the study revealed that 10 respondents (11%) highly agreed and 33 respondents (36.3%) agreed with this statement. In addition, 14 respondents (15.4%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, as none significantly disagreed, on the timely disbursement of funds to schools according to the school calendar. The absence of timely disbursement is shown by a mean of 3.57 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.06.

The survey determined that 14 (15.4%) of the respondents highly agreed and 31 (34.1%) agreed that the students who received the county bursary were genuinely needy students. Furthermore, 28 (30.8%) of the participants expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 18 (19.8%) disagreed, and none significantly disagreed, regarding the fact that students who received county bursaries were definitely students in need. Based on a mean value of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 0.72, it may be inferred that a portion of the supported pupils did not exhibit signs of neediness. The survey revealed that 19 respondents (20.9%) strongly agreed and 23 respondents (25.3%) agreed that the county assists schools in lowering student debt. In addition, 33 respondents (36.3%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 14 respondents (15.4%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed about the assistance provided by counties to schools in lowering student debtors. The presence of a mean value of 3.34 and a statistically significant standard

deviation of 1.06 suggests that county assistance plays a role in mitigating student debt inside schools. Regarding the extent to which the county bursary contributes greatly to the financial facilitation of school operations, the study revealed that 16 respondents (17.6%) highly agreed, while 30 respondents (33%) agreed with this statement.

4.4 Descriptive statistics for Financial Sustainability

This research investigated the overarching notion of financial sustainability within the context of public secondary schools.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for Financial Sustainability

Financial Sustainability	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev
The BOM has initiated strategies to minimize student debt levels	21 (23.1%)	23 (25.3%)	23 (25.3%)	10 (11%)	14 (15.4%)	3.29	1.35
Relevant analysis of financial statements are done to check on student debtor levels	19 (20.9%)	30 (33%)	24 (26.4%)	4 (4.4%)	14 (15.4%)	3.39	1.29
Budget variances on income projections are analysed and corrective measures taken where necessary	10 (11%)	49 (53.8%)	30 (33%)	2 (2.2%)	0	3.73	1.68
Our school encourages timely fee payment	13 (14.3%)	48 (52.8%)	28 (30.8%)	2 (2.2%)	0	3.79	1.71

The study revealed that 21 (23.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 23 (25.3%) agreed that the BOM has implemented initiatives to reduce student debt levels. In addition, 23 respondents (25.3%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 10 respondents (11%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, regarding the implementation of policies by the BOM to reduce student debt levels. The presence of a mean value of 3.29 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.35 suggests that the Board of Management (BOM) has implemented measures aimed at reducing levels of student debt.

The survey revealed that 19.9% of the respondents highly agreed and 33% agreed that a suitable examination of financial statements is conducted to assess student debtor levels. In addition, 24 respondents (26.4%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, 4 respondents (4.4%) disagreed, and 14 respondents (15.4%) strongly disagreed with the notion that financial statements are analyzed to assess student debtor levels. The presence of a mean value of 3.39 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.29 suggests that a thorough examination of financial documents be conducted in order to assess the levels of student debtors.

Regarding the analysis of budget deviations on income predictions and the implementation of corrective actions, the study revealed that 10 respondents (11%) highly agreed, while 49 respondents (53.8%) agreed with this statement. Furthermore, 30 respondents (33%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, while 2 respondents (2.2%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, on the analysis of budget variances on income projections and the implementation of remedial measures when needed. The presence of a mean value of 3.73 and a statistically significant standard deviation of 1.68 suggests that the analysis of budget variances on income predictions is conducted, and appropriate corrective actions are implemented as needed. Regarding the promotion of punctual fee payment in schools, the study revealed that 13 respondents (14.3%) highly agreed, while 48 respondents (52.8%) agreed with this statement. In addition, 28 respondents (30.8%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, whereas 2 respondents (2.2%) disagreed, and none strongly objected to the idea to the idea that schools promote prompt payment of fees. The presence of a mean of 3.79 and a substantial standard deviation of 1.71 suggests that schools actively promoted the prompt payment of fees.

4.5 Correlation Matrix

The correlation between the distribution of funds and the level of output is 0.683 (p value 0.00), indicating a statistically significant association at a 95% confidence level (refer to Table 4.8). The financial viability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub County, Kenya, is enhanced by the timely release of money. The findings presented in this study support the findings of Kaindi et al. (2019), which indicate that the timely distribution of free secondary school tuition funds has a statistically significant and favorable impact on the financial sustainability of public secondary education in Makeni County.



Table 5
Correlation Analysis

		Fund disbursement	Financial sustainability
Fund disbursement	Pearson Correlation	1	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	91	91
Financial sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.683**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	91	91

4.5.1 Effect of Fund Disbursement on Financial sustainability of Public Secondary Schools in Alego Usonga Sub County

To ascertain the effect of fund disbursement on financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub County, a regression analysis was conducted. Findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Effect of Fund Disbursement on Financial Sustainability

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.683 ^a	.467	.461	.62167		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.079	1	30.079	77.830	.000 ^b
	Residual	34.396	89	.386		
	Total	64.475	90			
a. Dependent Variable: Financial sustainability						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Fund disbursement						
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.485	.354		1.369	.174
	Fund disbursement	.878	.100	.683	8.822	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Financial sustainability

The model summary tabulation reveals a moderately positive correlation between money disbursement and the financial sustainability of public secondary schools in Alego Usonga Sub County, as indicated by the R value of 0.467. Consequently, an increase in the allocation of funds is expected to result in enhanced outcomes. The coefficient of determination, commonly referred to as R square, indicates that fund disbursement explains 46.7% of the variability observed in performances ($R^2 = 0.467$). This implies that the allocation of funds significantly influences the outcomes attained.

The results of the F test suggest that the model well captures the variability in the dependent variable, as evidenced by an F value of 77.830 and a p-value of less than 0.05. Furthermore, this illustrates that the disbursement of funds is a dependable measure of financial sustainability. Based on the findings presented in Table 4.18, it can be shown that the unstandardized regression coefficient (β) for fund disbursement was determined to be 0.878 at a significance level of $p < .000$. This finding indicates that a change of one unit in the allocation of funds would result in a significant improvement in financial sustainability of 87.8%. The regression equation was used to quantify the impact of fund disbursement on results in public secondary schools.

$$\text{Financial sustainability} = 0.485 + 0.878 \text{ fund disbursement} + 0.354 \text{ error}$$

Based on the research findings, it is evident that the allocation of funds significantly contributes to the financial viability of public secondary schools. These findings indicate that public secondary schools with more robust money allocation will attain greater levels of financial sustainability. The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Achieng et al. (2021), which demonstrated that the delayed disbursement of Free Day Secondary Education Funds had a statistically significant adverse impact on the financial sustainability of Migori County in Kenya. There is additional concurrence with the findings of Kaindi et al. (2019), who conducted a study examining the effects of timely allocation of the free secondary school tuition fund on the quality of curriculum implementation in public secondary education within Makueni County. Contrary to Ayako's (2015) findings which indicated that the

insufficient funding of free education programs had a little impact on the financial viability of schools. The study conducted by Ayako (2015) focuses on the provision of free education rather than the management of student debtors, which is the underlying reason for the distinction.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Given that fund disbursement is a significant predictor of financial sustainability, it is clear that fund disbursement has a major beneficial impact on the financial sustainability of public secondary schools. This suggests that public secondary schools that have stronger fund disbursements will achieve higher levels of financial sustainability. Fund disbursement is executed through national government capitation, CDF, and the disbursement of county bursaries. Parents play a role in school funding through the payment of school fees. It is therefore noted that fund disbursement has a significant effect on financial sustainability.

5.2 Recommendation

The study recommends that public secondary schools should have stronger fund disbursements. This should happen through the Ministry of Education providing timely capitation. Other agencies, such as NG-CDF and county bursaries, are timely remitted.

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