

ABSTRACT

The Kenyan government introduced Free Tuition Secondary Education (FTSE) policy in 2008 with the main objective of increasing access, completion rate and improving the quality of education in public secondary schools. Before the introduction of FTSE policy, access, completion rate and students' performance in KCSE examinations for Emuhaya Sub-county in 2007 was 53.4%, 88.27% with a mean score of 5.45C (minus) respectively falling below the national transition rate of 70% and completion rate of 95% of the same year 2007. In comparison with other neighbouring sub-counties like Vihiga, Sabatia and Hamisi, the primary to secondary transition and completion rate for Emuhaya was the lowest for the year 2007. With the introduction of FTSE policy in 2008, this study sought to establish the effect of FTSE policy on access, completion rate and the quality of education in public secondary schools in Emuhaya for the cohort 2008. The 2008 cohort was the first group to fully benefit from FTSE funding graduating in 2011. Objectives of the study were to: establish the effect of FTSE policy on access; determine the effect of FTSE policy on completion rate and determine the effect of FTSE policy on the quality of education in public secondary schools. Conceptual framework was used to show the relationship between FTSE policy as independent variable and access, completion rate and the quality of education as dependent variables. The study adopted an Ex-post facto and descriptive research designs. The study population included 30 Principals, 30 Directors of Studies (DOS), 2410 form four students and 1 DEO. Saturated sampling was used to identify 27 Principals and 27 DOS of all public secondary schools in the Sub-county. Proportionate random sampling was used to select 330 Form 4 students while purposive sampling was used to identify 1SCDE. Data was collected through questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion, interview schedules and document analysis guide. Face and content validity of the research instruments was established by experts in the department of Educational Management and Foundations. Stratified random sampling was used to select 3 Principals, 3DOS and 33 students who were used as pilot study representing 10% of the target population. Reliability of the instruments was determined using Pearson's product moment co-efficient which was $r = 0.782$ for Principals and $r = 0.832$ for Directors of studies which proved to be reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was organized according to themes as they emerged. The study established that FTSE policy had a positive effect to students accessing secondary education since the primary to secondary transition rate increased from 53.4% in 2007 to 69.6% in 2011. Similarly, the study established that FTSE policy had a positive effect on completion rate since it improved from 87.35% during the 2004 cohort to 95.2% compared to the 2008 cohort. However, there was no significant effect of FTSE policy on the quality of education since students' performance in KCSE remained the same at 5.1 C (minus) after the introduction of FTSE policy. The study concluded that FTSE funding improved access and completion rate but had no significant effect on student performance. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should consider increasing FTSE funding to enable many students access secondary education. Schools and the MOE should device appropriate measures to mitigate against factors preventing students from successfully completing secondary education. Relevant measures should be put in place by stakeholders of respective schools in improving the provision of quality education. The study findings are significant to stakeholders in education as they will inform on the way forward on utilization of FTSE funds in promotion of access, completion rate and the quality of education.