

**Title: School Levies and their Effects on Access and Retention since the Introduction of the Subsidized Secondary Education in Nyandarua North District, Kenya**

**Author: MIAKO, JAMES KAGO**

**Abstract:** The study sought to establish the school levies charged in secondary schools in Nyandarua North District and how the levies affected access and retention since the introduction of the subsidized secondary education policy. The objectives of the study were to: assess the appropriateness of fees guidelines provided by The Ministry of Education (MOE) in addressing the financial needs of secondary schools in Nyandarua North District, document the various school levies charged in secondary schools in Nyandarua North district, find out how school levies affect student access and retention in the secondary schools and to determine possible strategies to deal with the problem of school levies in Nyandarua North District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study was all the 24 secondary school principals and 168 class teachers in the district and The District Education Officer (DEO) Nyandarua district. A study sample of 10 principals (42%) and 40 class teachers (24%) were selected through stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The study instruments included questionnaires for the school principals and class teachers, interview schedule for the DEO and document analysis in the sampled schools. Test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires while validity of the instruments was determined through guidance from experts who included the supervisors. Data was coded and keyed in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Qualitative data was analyzed thematically according to objectives and presented in narration form according to objectives. Quantitative data were analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as averages, percentages, mean and range. The findings were presented using frequency distribution tables, bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts. The study revealed that MOE fees guidelines fell short of addressing financial needs of secondary schools in Nyandarua North District. It was also found out that secondary education costs remain high despite the government subsidy of Kshs 10,265. This was because of variety of school levies charged in the secondary schools. Notable effects of school levies on access and retention in the secondary schools was absenteeism, transition from primary to secondary education and drop outs which affected poor households. The study recommended that the government should increase the subsidy particularly targeting the extreme poor cases. Schools should also initiate and diversify income generating activities. The schools should also partner with well wishers who include NGOs and old students to assist in funding development projects. Schools should also procure food stuffs at the right time e.g. during harvest time when supply is high in order to attract low prices. It was expected that the study would provide the education policy makers with information showing how school levies influence access and retention in secondary education despite abolition of tuition fees. This would enable the policy makers and other educational stakeholders to come up with policy options for further relieve of cost-burden to poor households. The study would also be significant to educational institutions in coming up with ways of mobilizing more funds to meet the high costs of secondary education. The findings would also be important for the policy makers in exploring cost saving measures instead of always reverting to school levies. These measures would help in

improving the internal efficiency in secondary education.