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# **An evaluation of shared governance in public universities in Kenya: Students lens**

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Shared governance is an ideal form of Institutional governance providing all stakeholders with opportunity to participate, fostering acceptance of decisions and effectiveness of organization. This paper evaluates the current state of shared governance as the ideal form of Institutional Governance in public Universities, in line with the provisions of the individual University Statutes drawn from the University Act 2012. There have been continued complaints, claims of un-involvement and dissatisfaction evident in many riots and demonstrations that have characterized higher educational institutions, despite the Kenyan Government's concerted efforts to increase and ensure student participation in the Public Universities Governance. The purpose of the study therefore was to evaluate the state of university governance in public universities in Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design. The study was carried out in seven public universities in Kenya that had university charter by the year 2012. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 194 student leaders from 362 based on the offices within the student council. Quantitative data was collected using a survey research tool: questionnaire. The findings of the study on students' involvement in share governance revealed that universities exercise shared governance within the organizational structure with a mean rating of 2.85, access to information (3.18) and conflict resolution (3.48). However, traditional governance was practiced in influence on resources (2.30) being a subscale of shared governance. I make a case therefore for student involvement in shared governance as envisaged by the legislation. The paper concludes that structures of shared governance provides overall, opportunities for students participation and these exists in the organization to increase shared decision-making across all four subscales of shared governance. However, the University Management need to improve on the students official authority to influence resources specifically in order to realize shared governance as envisaged in The University Act 2012 and their individual University Statutes in order to full promote the benefits of shared governance.

**Key words:** Student participation, student involvement, institutional governance, shared governance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The term "shared governance" began to emerge in the literature following the American Association of University

Professors (AAUP) pivotal "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" adopted in 1966 (AAUP,

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**Table 1.** Trends in university students riots.

| Trend                              | 2010      | 2011       | 2012     | 2013       | 2014         |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| University affected by strikes (%) | 100 (5/5) | 66.7 (2/3) | 50 (2/2) | 44.4 (4/9) | 90.9 (10/11) |

Source: Individual universities dean offices.

1966). The statement rallies internal stakeholders governing boards, administrators, faculty, and students “in the belief that the colleges and universities of the United States have reached a stage calling for appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution” (AAUP, 1966). By the late 1960s, the stance of the AAUP for increasing consultation and communication between institutional constituencies “had the strength of general tradition” (Duryea, 1973 as cited in Boland 2005). The early 1970s signaled an early turning point in institutional decision making (Riley and Baldrige, 1977 as cited in Boland 2005). Ibijola (2010) noted that the history of students’ participation in management of institutions dated back to the 19th century when Bell introduced the method of drilling older children who later taught the young ones. By so doing, the teachers’ efforts became multiplied. The extent of student involvement in decision making is debatable with often conflicting viewpoints propagated by differing stakeholders depending on their background and world view. Basically, there are three viewpoints that guide the extent of student involvement in decision making.

Shared governance means a shared responsibility and joint effort in decision making by all the major groups of stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students, according to Cohen et al (1998). Shared governance is to formulate and implement meaningful ways to engage large numbers of people in the sharing process (Mortimer and Sathre, 2007). Other terms equivalent to shared governance seen in the literature include shared leadership, shared decision making, decentralization, decisional involvement, collaborative governance, and professional governance. Boland (2005) opined that, student representation in governance featured only marginally in heated debates in Ireland leading to the passing of the Universities Act (1997). More recently, although, recommending student participation in shared governance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report (OECD 2004) offers no rationale for their inclusion, while making a clear case for the inclusion of lay members. Despite being largely uncontested, student participation in shared governance of higher education institutions deserves greater critical attention, both in principle and in practice. While governance within higher education attracts increasing critical attention, participation of students has not featured prominently in these discussions (Salter 2002). In support of this the ministry of Education in Kenya under the leadership of Professor Kaimeyi (2015)

recommended that student participation be put to practice as envisaged in the University Act 2012 that provides for student involvement in Institutional governance. These followed a wave of violent demonstrations and protests experienced in public universities as represented in Appendix Table A and Table 1; This table only represented the cases that were reported by the media and confirmed by the individual university dean offices not to mention the demonstrations and picketing witnessed within the schools/Faculty that went unreported. Of the 32 strike cases reported between 2010 to 2014 79.9% were directly involving student affairs as annexed in Appendix A. This then implied that the students were supposed to have participated in arresting these issues one way or the other, and suppose students did, it then implies that they re-engaged on their involvement, thus, the issues go beyond the actual involvement hence, the need to evaluate participation in shared governance. This therefore was the aim of the study, to evaluate institutional governance from student perspective both as stated and practiced. Based on the aforementioned therefore, student involvement cannot be over stated. Coupled with the continued complaints and unrests witnessed in the universities the study sought to evaluate the stated of the institutional governance shared governance being the ideal form of governance.

### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the state of university governance.

### **Research objective**

The research objective is to evaluate the state of shared governance in Public Universities in Kenya.

### **Research question**

The research question is what is the state of shared governance in Public Universities in Kenya?

### **Significance of the study**

The study is significant as it has shade light on the actual state of institutional governance with a view of

providing insight on how institutions of higher education can fully benefit from the shared governance thus, making the Institutions meet their objectives through reduced students unrests and riots.

### **The concept of institutional governance**

The literature describes several terms used interchangeably to describe shared governance such as shared leadership, shared decision making, and collaborative models (Hess, 1995). Tim Porter-O'Grady is well known for his extensive research and foundational groundwork on shared governance models. He describes shared governance as "a structural model through which nurses can express and manage their practice with a higher level of professional autonomy" (Porter-O'Grady, 2003). Porter-O'Grady describes his groundwork in his 1992 landmark book *Implementing Shared Governance: Creating a Professional Practice*. A review of the literature shows Dr. Tim Porter-O'Grady's fundamental concepts of shared governance models are still relevant today and have not changed over the years. Many definitions are used to describe shared governance, but in summary, the literature defines it as a structure that promotes a culture of empowerment, autonomy, and decision making that occurs at the front line by the staff that performs the work (Doherty and Hope, 2000; George et al., 2002). Shared governance is the extension of power, control, and authority to the frontline staff and nurses over their clinical practice (Fray, 2011). Shared governance focuses on four main principles that serve as the foundation and the cornerstones of the concept. Collectively, when one incorporates the four principles of shared governance (partnership, accountability, equity, and ownership) into a team's behavior, one creates a professional work environment of empowerment (Bates, 2004; Porter-O'Grady, 1992; Swihart and Porter-O'Grady, 2006).

"Shared governance is both an ideal and an operational reality that pertains to ways in which policy decisions are made in colleges and universities" (Hines, 2000). Corson (1960) as cited in (Kater et al, 2003) is credited for applying the term "governance" to higher education when dividing decision making between faculty, who had authority over curricula, instruction, research and classroom issues, and administration, who had authority over other institutional operations such as finance, student affairs, physical plant, and public relations (Mortimer and McConnell, 1978; Hines, 2000). Despite differences in spheres of influence in the governance of academic institutions, the role of faculty is both steeped in tradition and assumed as significant by those within the higher education community (Lee, 1980, 1981; Benjamin and Carroll, 1998). However, contemporary conditions such as globalization, academic capitalism, increasing governmental interaction, and turbulence (Kaplin and

Lee, 1995; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Morphew, 1999; Hines, 2000; Levin, 2001a) affect the balance of power and players in institutional decision-making. The rationale for student participation therefore, was critically examined by Boland (2005) who, argues that if students are to play an effective role in governance, then they need to be positioned, not merely as clients, but as partners in the academic community with a long-term commitment to democratic principles and practice. The responsibility which higher education shares for the democratic socialisation process is raised. Thus, making a case for democratic practice at all levels of decision making, from the boardroom to the classroom, higher education institutions are to effectively prepare students for democratic citizenship. She concludes that shared governance is a necessary but an insufficient condition for the realisation of the democratic ideal within tertiary education and that other strategies should be adopted in tandem with statutory measures if higher education to play a role in cherishing, nurturing and protecting democratic values. Academics have a critical role to play in this endeavour (Boland, 2005).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This was a descriptive study to evaluate the current state of shared governance in public universities in Kenya. Thus, descriptive survey design was used because it helped to gather data at a particular point in time for the purpose of describing the nature of existing conditions, it identifies standards against existing conditions can be compared, and determines the relations that exist between specific events (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The population for this study consisted of 369 students' leaders and from seven public Universities that had attained university charter by 2013 in Kenya. From the targeted study population, a representative sample was determined using the guidelines by Israel (1992) which was used to calculate a sample size for a given finite population such that the sample will be within  $\pm 0.05$  of the population proportion with a 95% level of confidence. According to Israel (1992), he provides published tables, which provide the sample size for a given set of criteria. Thus, sample for this study was made up of 194 student leaders, stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample population. The population was divided into stratas based on the offices they hold within the university to enable a fair representation of all offices. The questionnaire titled Students' leaders Questionnaire (SLQ) was used for data collection. The tool was adopted with modification from the Index of Professional Nursing Governance (IPNG) survey tool to obtain a measurement of shared governance. The face and content validity of the instrument was assessed by two experts in Test and Measurement in the Faculty of Education, Maseno University, in order to ensure that the instrument adequately measured the intended content areas of the study. Their observations were used as a guide in reviewing the instrument before administering it to the subjects. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the split-half method, that is, the study utilized the scores from a single test to estimate the consistency of the test items. The split-half method reliability coefficient was corrected to full-length coefficient using the Spearman Brown prophecy formular. The resulting co-efficient was 0.89. Data obtained from the instrument were analyzed using



**Table 2.** Students' Leaders view on influence on resources in institutional governance (Study Data, 2016).

| Items   | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | Mean | SD   |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| Write policies and procedures of student operating                        | 77 (40.5%) | 40 (21.1%) | 32 (16.8%) | 21 (11.1%) | 20 (10.5%) | 2.19 | 1.08 |
| Written standards and quality assurance improvement programs for students | 67 (35.3%) | 34 (17.9%) | 44 (23.2%) | 28 (14.7%) | 17 (8.9%)  | 2.38 | 1.16 |
| Organizational charts that students' union structure and positions        | 59 (31.1%) | 26 (13.7%) | 46 (24.2%) | 31 (16.3%) | 28 (14.7%) | 2.05 | 1.11 |
| Written guidelines for disciplining students                              | 83 (43.7%) | 20 (10.5%) | 42 (22.1%) | 21 (11.1%) | 24 (12.6%) | 2.47 | 1.17 |
| Requirements for capacity building  | 92 (48.4%) | 12 (6.3%)  | 38 (20.0%) | 28 (14.7%) | 20 (10.5%) | 2.22 | 0.95 |
| Process of formulating and recommending and budgets                       | 76 (40.0%) | 24 (12.6%) | 33 (17.4%) | 30 (15.8%) | 27 (14.2%) | 2.49 | 1.16 |
| Procedures for adjusting salaries and benefits                            | 95 (50.0%) | 19 (10.0%) | 22 (11.6%) | 32 (16.8%) | 22 (11.6%) | 2.29 | 1.12 |
| Overall   | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | 2.30 | 1.11 |

1 = University management only; 2 = primarily university management with some students' inputs; 3 = equally shared between student leaders and university management; 4 = primarily student leaders and some university management input; 5 = Student leaders only. Scale: 1.00-2.45 = Traditional Governance; 2.46-3.95 = shared Governance 3.96-5.00 = self-governance.

descriptive. SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data. The return rate of questionnaire was 97% as 190 out of the 194 respondents filled in the questionnaire and returned. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are given as Appendix Table B.

## RESULTS

To answer the research question: what is the state of shared governance in public universities in Kenya? The institutional governance was investigated through the use of a questionnaire that measured institutional governance on a continuum ranging from traditional, to shared and to self-governance. Institutional governance is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the structure and process through which stakeholders control their governance practice and influence the organizational context in which it occurs. Higher mean scores indicate that the respondents, as a group, believe that they have more influence over governance practice and governance decisions in their organization. Student leaders' opinions were sought on their universities state of governance. The respondents were presented with questionnaire

whose items were related to areas of decision making linked to institutional governance as manifested by shared responsibilities and joint effort in decision making by major groups of stakeholders including administrators, staff and the students. The respondents were presented with items whose constructs sought which group in their institution had official authority to influence decisions and direct resources that influence decisions. The findings were presented separately in the four sub-scales and later jointly. The students' leaders views were computed into percentage frequencies as tabulated in Table 2.

The findings of the study show that university management solely command most of the official authority to influence and direct resources that influence decisions in the university; students through their leaders have minimal authority granted and recognized by the institution to influence important issues in the university. This minimal influence by the student leaders was reflected by a low mean of 2.30 with standard deviation of 1.1.

Thus, the universities practiced traditional governance. It was established by the findings of the study that the university management alone

preserves most of the authority to write policies and procedures of student operations in the university. This was revealed by many [7(40.5%)] of students leaders who took part in the study who held a general feeling that university management involvement in shared governance was overwhelming in terms of influencing and directing resources in writing policies and procedures of student operations, some 40 (21.1%) of the students also believed that although, students are involved in decision making as regards policies and procedures, university management primarily commands most of the authority in regards to policies and guidelines in the university. Only 32 (16.8%) of the student leaders held a perception that there is equal sharing of decision making between student leaders and university management in regards to policies formulation and general operations. On the contrary, some 21 (11.1%) of student leaders respondents alluded that although university management influence some decisions in the university, it is primarily dominated by student leaders and a further 20 (10.5%) of student leaders were of the general belief that student leaders have authority to

**Table 3.** Students' Leaders view on organisational structure that supports involvement in institutional governance (Study Data, 2016).

| Items  | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | Mean | SD   |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| Participation in committees for formulating students' areas of involvement | 77 (40.5%) | 40 (21.1%) | 32 (16.8%) | 21 (11.1%) | 20 (10.5%) | 2.19 | 1.08 |
| Participation in committees for administrative matters such as budgeting   | 67 (35.3%) | 34 (17.9%) | 44 (23.2%) | 28 (14.7%) | 17 (8.9%)  | 2.38 | 1.16 |
| Participation in academic committees                                       | 37 (19.5%) | 49 (25.8%) | 32 (16.8%) | 42 (22.1%) | 30 (15.8%) | 2.82 | 1.16 |
| Participating in multi-disciplinary committee                              | 39 (20.5%) | 56 (29.5%) | 34 (17.9%) | 26 (13.7%) | 35 (18.4%) | 3.01 | 1.19 |
| Participating in university administrative committee e.g. senate           | 43 (22.6%) | 58 (30.5%) | 35 (18.4%) | 32 (16.8%) | 22 (11.6%) | 2.97 | 1.33 |
| Forming new committee  | 48 (25.3%) | 48 (25.3%) | 44 (23.2%) | 25 (13.2%) | 25 (13.2%) | 2.65 | 1.15 |
| Total  | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | 2.85 | 1.20 |

1 = University management only; 2 = primarily university management with some students' inputs; 3 = equally shared between student leaders and university management; 4 = primarily student leaders and some university management input; 5 = Student leaders only. Scale: 1.00-2.45 = Traditional Governance; 2.46-3.95 = shared Governance 3.96-5.00 = self-governance.

significantly influence and direct resources towards policies and procedures in the university (Table 3).

The findings of the study show that more than half of the students who took part in the study generally held the perception that university management enjoy considerably more authority to influence and direct resources towards written standards and quality assurance improvement programs for students. This was revealed by 67 (35.3%) and 34 (17.9%) of students leaders who believed that university management only and primarily university management with some students' input respectively, influence decisions regarding written standards and quality assurance improvement programs for students. On the flip flop, nearly one out of every four [44 (23.2%)] of the students leaders who took part in the study said their universities fully observe and practice shared governance in regards to standard and quality assurance improvement programs for students. However, 28 (14.7%) of them indicated that although, university management have some inputs on writing of standard and quality assurance programs, student leaders primarily has a bigger influence in this field, but a further 17

(8.9%) of the students leaders believed that the students solely have official authority to influence development of programs on the students standard and quality. It emerged from the findings of the study that many of the universities in Kenya involve student leaders in organizing structure of student unions only to some extent. For example, it was confirmed by 85 (44.8%) of the student leaders respondents that official authority to influence and direct resources on student union structure and positions majorly lies with university management. However, slightly less than a quarter [46 (24.2%)] of the students were satisfied with student involvement in shared governance; they alluded that decision on organizational charts that students' union structure and positions were influenced by both the university management and student leaders in equal measure. On the other hand, some student leaders who took part in the study alluded that their influence on student leadership organization structure and position was overwhelming; some 59 (31.0%) of them observed that although, university management has influence but the major influence on student leadership is bestowed upon the student leaders themselves. On the contrary, it was established

from the findings of the study that guidelines for disciplining students was largely [103 (54.2%)] a preserve for the university management, notwithstanding the fact that (42) 22.1% of the students leaders who were sampled for the study held a belief that there was shared governance in matters related to guidelines for disciplining students.

On matters related to capacity building for the students and staff, it came out from the findings of the study that majority [92 (48.4%)] of the student leaders respondents were in agreement that only university management alone have influence on requirements for capacity building. Only a fifth [38 (20.0%)] of student leaders were of the general feeling that students leaders were adequately involved in university governance in respect to capacity building matters, but some 20 (10.5%) of them alluded that only student leaders had influence on requirements for capacity building. The findings of the study show that although students' leaders enjoy shared governance with the university management in some facets of decision making in the university, some decisions are left to a greater extent to the management only. For instance, it was

established that university management enjoy full authority in influencing the process of formulating and recommending university budgets, as indicated by 100 (52.6%) of student leaders who took part in the study. Similarly, three out of every five [114 (60.0%)] student leaders who were sampled for the study were in agreement that procedures for adjusting salaries and benefits in the university were prerogative of the university management alone and the student leaders have no say over them and cannot influence anything at all. On the contrary, some respondents held a general feeling the student leaders, to some extent, have influence or involved in way or the other in almost all the activities in the university, including process of formulating and recommending budgets [22 (11.6%)] and procedures for adjusting salaries and benefits [33 (17.4%)].

The findings of the study show that many universities have formulated ways of involving students in most of the decision making forums within the university, which have ultimately incorporated student voice into university governance forums. However, despite the formulation of these committees to create forum for students to participate in governance, students' participation is still very low (mean =2.85 and Standard deviation =1.20). For instance, whereas only 44 (23.2%) of the student leaders accepted that they usually get involved to participate in committees for formulating students' areas of involvement, more than a half [97 (51.1%)] of them insisted their involvement in such forums do not count much, given the fact that university management enjoy official authority to influence and direct resources where they are required. It emerged that only small proportion, 43 (22.6%), of the student leaders who took part in the study agreed that students leaders participate in committees for administrative matters such as budgeting, a bigger proportion [105 (55.3%)] of them alluded that although student leaders may have representation in committees for administrative matters such as budgeting, the university management have overwhelming influence on administrative matters. Similarly, although student leaders participate in university administrative committee such as senate meetings, their influence was established to be relatively low [35(18.4%)] with university management enjoying most of the official authority to influence both decisions and resources directed by this body. In addition, it emerged that a considerable majority of 101 (53.1%) of student leaders who took part in the study observed that university management alone has official authority to significantly influence decisions reached in committees for administrative matters. This finding implies that although students' leaders participate in this committee, it is for no good since they cannot influence any decision, defeating the tenacity of shared governance.

It was also established that although students' leaders are incorporated in academic and multi-disciplinary

committees in the universities their influence was established to be non-significant. For example, 86 (45.3%) student leaders who participated in the study asserted that participation of the student leaders in academic committees was quite minimal compared to that of university management; the university management has the greatest influence in decisions made in academic committees. Similarly, 95 (50.0%) of the respondents observed that university management has the biggest influence in multi- disciplinary committee (mean=3.01 and Standard deviation =1.19). On the contrary, 32 (16.8%) and 34 (17.9%) of student leaders who participated in the study held the belief that there is sufficient involvement of student leaders in academic committees and multi-disciplinary committees, respectively. They alluded that the student leaders in these committees have equal opportunity of influencing decision reached in these committees. The study sought to investigate the level of access to information that the student leaders have as an aspect of shared governance. It emerged that the student leaders have fair information to enable them effectively participate and influence decisions in the university. This was revealed by slightly above average mean of 3.18, with a standard deviation of 1.18. For instance, whereas only 33 (17.4%) of student leaders respondents held the perception that student leaders have relevant information on criteria for students' participation, 89 (46.9%) of the respondents said such knowledge is mainly held by the university management. However, nearly one out of every five [37 (19.5%)] of the student leaders who took part in the study were of the general feeling that information on criteria of student leaders participation in governance process was equally known by both student leaders and university management. On the same note, it was established that both the student leaders and university management have equal access to information on compliance with the university statutory requirements. This was reflected by nearly a fifth [37 (19.5%)] of the respondents who believed that university management have better information on compliance with the university statutory requirements and 38 (20.0%) others who were of the opinion that students leaders were equally informed.

On the other hand, the findings of the study show that student leaders have better access to student union budget and actual expenditure compared to the university management. This was reflected by 48 (25.3%) of the student leaders who were in agreement that student leaders were more accessible to student union budget and actual expenditure compared to only 18 (9.5%), others who claimed that university management were more informed on student union income and expenditure than the student leaders. Similarly, the findings of the study show that the university management has the unequivocal access to information about the university financial status, as was held by a majority of 91 (57.9%) of student leaders. However, slightly more than a fifth

[41(21.6%)] of the respondent held a contrary opinion, arguing that access on information on university financial status was equally shared between student leaders and university management. On the flip flop, the findings of the study indicate that although a sizable proportion [57 (30.0%)] of student leaders' were of the belief that both student leaders and university management have equal access to information on goals and objectives of student leadership for the year, many student leaders have access to this information than the university management as confirmed by 70 (36.8%) of the student leaders who took part in the study. For instance, it was established that whereas nearly one out of every four, 44 (23.2%), of the student leaders who took part in the study observed that student leaders were more privy to information on student leadership goals and objectives, only 7 (3.7%) others who of the belief that university management have more access to this information than the student leaders. In addition, it emerged from the results of the study that a majority of 86 (45.3%) of the student leaders' respondents held a perception that access to student union strategic plan for the next or few years was either fully or primarily held by student leaders in the universities. However, it was also discovered that some 40 (21.1%) others held a feeling that such information are equally shared between student leaders and university management, but another 55 (28.9%) were of the feelings that although the students have access to this information, university management primarily have the official authority over this information. Similarly, the findings of the study revealed that although more than a fifth, 41 (21.6%), of the students leaders who participated in the study generally believed that there is equal share between student leaders and university management on access to information concerning students' involvement in university governance, 71 (37.4%) of them insisted that university management enjoy major influence in this field. When the study sought to find out whether student leaders' were satisfied with their participation in university governance, it emerged that whereas about a quarter [48 (25.3%)] of student leaders indicated that they were happy, alluding that there was equal share in governance between student leaders and university management, a majority of 59 (31.1%) of them revealed that they were not satisfied with their participation in governance. They argued that the official authority to influence or redirect any action within the university is primarily owned by the university management and that student leaders are not given adequate authority to influence anything. On the other hand, it emerged that student leaders are fairly satisfied with the remuneration they receive for being student leaders. While only 57 (30.0%) of the respondents held a contrary opinion, a majority of 96 (50.5%) of them indicated that they were satisfied with their salaries and benefits as student leaders. The findings of study has shown that although university management has greater influence in most of the areas

that involve decision making, the student leaders too have ability to shape some decisions in the university, as was reflected by slightly above average mean of 3.48 at a standard deviation of 1.34. For example, the finding of the study reveal that at the level of dispute between the students and the university, students' leaders are invited to help in resolving conflict, as reflected in Table 4 and 5. It has been shown by the findings of this study that although nearly half, 90 (47.4%), of the student leaders who took part in the study held the perception that university management has major role to negotiate resolutions to conflict between students and university management, a significant proportion [52 (27.4%)] of them held that student leaders have more authority to influence the outcome of the negotiation during conflict resolution between students and university management. On the same note, it was discovered from the results of the study that both student leaders and university management have complementing roles in resolving conflict between students and faculty/school.

This was revealed by sharply divided opinions of the respondents; whereas 77 (40.5%) of the sampled student leaders held that university management has major role in resolving conflict between students and faculty/school, almost a similar proportion [76 (40.0%)] of the student leaders who took part in the study were of the view that student leaders have major role to influence negotiation for resolutions to conflict between students and faculty/school.

On creation of formal grievance procedures, the findings of the study show that university management enjoy a bigger authority to influence it. This was revealed by a majority of 87 (45.8%) of the student leaders' respondents who held that university management has official authority to make decisions on creation of formal procedures of handling grievances in the university. These findings resonates with generally held opinion that although shared governance is necessary, there are some areas where student leaders make lack relevant experience and knowledge to effectively contribute in decision making. This means that although the students' leaders get involved in most areas of decision making, however due to their limited exposure, they are not given equal status with their university management members in decision making in areas such as creation of formal procedures of handling grievances in the university. On the contrary, the findings of the study show that the student voices are easily heard in some areas compared to other areas, they get fully involved in matters that directly affect them and the fellow students. The findings of the study show that student leaders have naturally held control over resolving some conflicts. For example, whereas only 16 (8.4%) of the respondents strongly believed that university management has greater influence in the negotiation of conflict between student leaders and student community, twice as much [32 (16.8%)] others held that student leaders have the major

**Table 4.** Students' Leaders view on access to information in institutional governance (Study Data, 2006).

| Items  | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | Mean | SD   |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| Criteria for students' participation                           | 29 (15.3%) | 60 (31.6%) | 37 (19.5%) | 31 (16.3%) | 33 (17.4%) | 2.78 | 1.41 |
| Compliance with the university statutory requirements          | 37 (19.5%) | 53 (27.9%) | 30 (15.8%) | 32 (16.8%) | 38 (20.0%) | 3.40 | 1.31 |
| Student union budget and actual expenses                       | 18 (9.5%)  | 66 (34.7%) | 23 (12.1%) | 35 (18.4%) | 48 (25.3%) | 3.66 | 1.27 |
| University financial status                                    | 38 (20.0%) | 53 (27.9%) | 41 (21.6%) | 26 (13.7%) | 32 (16.8%) | 3.67 | 1.35 |
| Student leaders' goals and objectives for the year             | 7 (3.7%)   | 57 (30.0%) | 35 (18.4%) | 47 (24.7%) | 44 (23.2%) | 3.22 | 1.41 |
| Student union strategic plan for the next or few years         | 9 (4.7%)   | 55 (28.9%) | 40 (21.1%) | 30 (15.8%) | 56 (29.5%) | 2.75 | 1.46 |
| Student leaders' satisfaction with their participation         | 3 (1.6%)   | 56 (29.5%) | 48 (25.3%) | 42 (22.1%) | 41 (21.6%) | 2.77 | 1.31 |
| Student leaders' satisfaction with their salaries and benefits | 8 (4.2%)   | 49 (25.8%) | 37 (19.5%) | 42 (22.1%) | 54 (28.4%) | 2.92 | 1.23 |
| University management opinion on students' satisfaction        | 8 (4.2%)   | 62 (32.6%) | 50 (26.3%) | 40 (21.1%) | 30 (15.8%) | 3.43 | 1.37 |
| Access to information concerning students' involvement         | 10 (5.3%)  | 71 (37.4%) | 41 (21.6%) | 27 (14.2%) | 41 (21.6%) | 2.78 | 1.41 |
| Total  | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | 3.18 | 1.34 |

1 = University management only; 2 = primarily university management with some students' inputs; 3 = equally shared between student leaders and university management; 4 = primarily student leaders and some university management input; 5 = Student leaders only. Scale: 1.00-2.45 = Traditional Governance; 2.46-3.95 = shared Governance 3.96-5.00 = self-governance.

**Table 5.** Students' leaders view on conflict resolution in institutional governance in public university (Study Data, 2006).

| Items   | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | Mean | SD   |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| Negotiate solutions to conflicts among student leaders                        | 13 (6.8%)  | 62 (32.6%) | 40 (21.1%) | 66 (34.7%) | 9 (4.7%)   | 3.10 | 1.46 |
| Negotiate solutions to conflict between students and faculty/school           | 15 (7.9%)  | 62 (32.6%) | 37 (19.5%) | 64 (33.7%) | 12 (6.3%)  | 3.63 | 1.40 |
| Negotiate solutions to conflict between students and university management    | 11 (5.8%)  | 90 (47.4%) | 37 (19.5%) | 23 (12.1%) | 29 (15.3%) | 3.34 | 1.24 |
| Negotiate solutions to conflict between student leaders and student community | 16 (8.4%)  | 64 (33.7%) | 34 (17.9%) | 44 (23.2%) | 32 (16.8%) | 3.19 | 1.30 |
| Create formal grievance procedures  | 20 (10.5%) | 67 (35.3%) | 38 (20.0%) | 35 (18.4%) | 30 (15.8%) | 3.39 | 1.35 |
| Write done goals and objectives for student unions                            | 7 (3.7%)   | 72 (37.9%) | 35 (18.4%) | 28 (14.7%) | 48 (25.3%) | 3.20 | 1.44 |
| Total   | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | 3.48 | 1.34 |

1 = University management only; 2 = primarily university management with some students' inputs; 3 = equally shared between student leaders and university management; 4 = primarily student leaders and some university management input; 5 = student leaders only. Scale: 1.00-2.45 = traditional governance; 2.46-3.95 = shared governance 3.96-5.00 = self-governance.

influence in the outcome during negotiation of conflict between student leaders and student community. Similarly, during conflict among student leaders almost equal proportions of the respondents were of the opinion both student leaders and university management enjoy authority to negotiate resolutions to conflicts among student leaders. This was reflected by 75

(39.4%) of the students leaders who took part in the study who held that university management primarily influence the nature of resolutions to conflicts among student leaders and another equal proportion [75 (39.4%)] of them who were of the opinion that student leaders primarily influence solutions to conflicts among student leaders. On the contrary, more than one out of every five [40

(21.1%)] of the student leaders who took part in the study insisted that power to influence solution of conflict resolution between the student leaders is equally shared between student leaders and university management. On goals and objectives for students unions, the findings of the study discovered that nearly a fifth [35 (18.4%)] of the student leaders who participated in the study were

satisfied that they equally involved in their formulation and setting. Nonetheless, there was a sharp division on opinions on which group wield more influence in this area; whereas 79 (41.6%) of the student leaders held the opinion that university management has official authority to influence decision on goals and objectives for student unions, another 76 (40.0%) of them held a contrary opinion. They were of the view that student leaders held a bigger share of influence on matters of student unions.

## DISCUSSIONS

The study established that Kenya public Universities practiced shared governance with a mean rating of 2.95. However, there was disparity in the four sub-scales of the shared governance that is, with regard to influence on resources, the institutions had very minimal involvement in mean rating of 2.30 and a standard deviation of 1.11, thus, indicating traditional governance. The other three subscales had adequate student participation that is; organisational structure that support involvement in institutional governance (2.85), with conflict resolution having the highest level of involvement that is, 3.48 and access to information having a mean ration of 3.18. These disparities then imply that shared governance was more practiced in some areas than others. It is worth noting that, students' views on their participation as regards to influence on resources, received very low mean rating because student participation at this level is by representation and not direct. This subscale was concerned with policies, processes and procedures within the public universities and thus, recorded per low student participation. These findings were in agreement with OECD report (2004) that recommended student participation in shared governance, although, not offering justification for their inclusion, making an apparent case for the addition of lay members. The study also concurs with others who established benefits of student participation in institutional governance; Adesanoye (2000) who, while citing Douglas submitted that, the rationale for students' participation include among others, the development of ideas of right conduct, self control, co-operative and fairness, provision of training in leadership and development of a sense and appreciation of individual responsibility for the welfare of all group interest. The study also established a significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance. These findings point to shared governance as they are associated with benefits of thereby upholding shared governance to an organization. Thus, the rationale for student participation is critically examined and the argument is, if students are to play an effective role in governance, then they need to be positioned, not merely as clients, but as integral part of the governance especially where student affairs are concerned in both principle and practice. Institutional governance- university

governance should be shared that is, there should be processes and/or practices that maximize the opportunities for involvement/participation of stakeholders at all levels in discussions, idea sharing and input to the decision-making processes that reduce discontentment and serves to guide strategic decisions by the organization and institution. It should also promote collaboration, thereby achieving optimal outcomes for the university.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that Institutional governance is shared in public universities in Kenya evidenced by a mean rating of four sub-scales of 2.95. There is however traditional governance being practised with regards to Official Authority to influence on Resources with a mean rating of 2.30 and standard Deviation of 1.11. Shared governance is indeed evident in the other three sub-categories that is, organisational structures that support participation through the various committees, Access to Information and Ability to influence conflict resolution with mean ratings of 3.01, 3.18, and 3.48, respectively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the results on Official Authority of influence on Resources, organisational structures that support participation through these various committees, Access to Information and Ability to influence Conflict Resolution that constitute shared governance. The students need to be given orientation in areas where they are supposed to be involved in Institutional Governance. The University Management needs to provide adequate involvement/participation of students to improve on the students' official authority to influence resources. This can be done by allowing students to participate directly as they do in other committees. Communication should reach all the students in instances where participation is by representation. University management needs to solicit student views on the process, policies and procedure within the universities in order to facilitate student ownership of decisions thereof. In order to realize shared governance as envisaged in The University Act 2012 and their individual University Statutes in order to promote the benefits of shared governance in full.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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**Appendix Table A.** Student leaders' demographic data.

| <b>Variable</b>           |                                    | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Year of study             | First                              | 28               | 14.4              |
|                           | Second                             | 87               | 44.8              |
|                           | Third                              | 62               | 32.0              |
|                           | Fourth                             | 17               | 8.8               |
| Duration in office        | 0-3 months                         | 9                | 4.6               |
|                           | 4-6 months                         | 23               | 11.9              |
|                           | 7-12 months                        | 162              | 83.5              |
| Students' faculty/schools | Education and extensional studies  | 49               | 25.3              |
|                           | Humanities and social sciences     | 68               | 35.1              |
|                           | Agriculture and veterinary science | 29               | 14.9              |
|                           | Biological and physical sciences   | 23               | 11.9              |
|                           | Architecture and engineering       | 11               | 5.7               |
|                           | Health sciences                    | 14               | 7.2               |
| Gender                    | Male                               | 160              | 82.5              |
|                           | Female                             | 34               | 17.5              |
| Office held               | President                          | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Secretary general                  | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Treasurer                          | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Organizing secretary               | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Director finance                   | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Director academic affairs          | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Director accommodation             | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Director entertainment             | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Director health services           | 7                | 3.6               |
|                           | Faculty/School representatives     | 58               | 29.9              |
|                           | Congress men                       | 42               | 21.6              |
|                           | Hall representative                | 31               | 16.0              |



## Appendix A. Contd.

|                        |                               |     |      |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|------|
|                        | Faculty/School representative | 21  | 10.8 |
| Previously held office | Congress men                  | 27  | 13.9 |
|                        | Vice president                | 3   | 1.5  |
|                        | None                          | 143 | 73.7 |

## Appendix B. Records of university student strike 2010-2014.

| S/N | Period              | Institution  | Reasons  |
|-----|---------------------|--|--|
| 1   | 18th May 2010       | University of Nairobi                                  | Botched student union elections and dissolution of SONU  |
| 2   | 18th March 2010     | Kenya University                                       | Decision by university administration to bar their colleagues from registration  |
| 3   | 18th June 2010      | University of Nairobi                                  | Dissolution of student union   |
| 4   | 11th September 2010 | Moi University   | Barring some student from participating in student union elections   |
| 5   | 8th November 2010   | Masinde Muliro University for Science and Technology   | Refusal by administration to allow students to sit for examinations without completing fees  |
| 6   | 23rd March 2011     | University of Nairobi                                  | Killing of their colleague   |
| 7   | 20th May 2011       | University of Nairobi                                  | Botched student union elections  |
| 8   | 17th October 2011   | Kisii University                                       | Law students strike because Commission of University Education closing the school for lack of accreditation                                      |
| 9   | 2nd October 2012    | Maseno University                                      | Killing of a student following rape of a student three day earlier   |
| 10  | 13th September 2012 | MMUST  | Protesting university staff strike   |
| 11  | 6th November 2012   | Laikipia University                                    | Death of a student accusing administration of laxity and institutions health facility of being ill equipped                                      |
| 12  | 15th December 2012  | University of Nairobi                                  | Death of a student in police custody   |
| 13  | 12th February 2013  | Kenya University                                       | University administration refusal to extend registration deadline for 2000 students with fee balances  |
| 14  | 25th June 2013      | Multimedia University                                  | Threat from administration to send them out of class for failure to pay fees. Accusing administration for not taking their issues seriously      |
| 15  | 29th October 2013   | Maseno university                                      | Increased insecurity and accommodation problems  |
| 16  | 16th October 2013   | Laikipia University                                    | Student run over by a vehicle  |
| 17  | 13th December 2013  | MMUST  | Protesting the ongoing lecturers strike  |
| 18  | 19th December 2013  | University of Nairobi                                  | Examinations registration related  |
| 19  | 19th December 2013  | Egerton University                                     | Administration barring students from registering in examinations   |
| 20  | 10th July 2013      | Kisii University                                       | Death of two second year students after being knocked  |
| 21  | 6th November 2013   | Laikipia University                                    | A student killed by a vehicle belonging to police officer  |
| 22  | 11th March 2014     | Kisii University                                       | Protest over 10,000/= attachment fees that was introduced at the beginning of the year   |
| 23  | 20th May 2014       | Masinde Muliro University for Science and Technology   | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 24  | 20th May 2014       | University of Nairobi                                  | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 25  | 20th May 2014       | Egerton University                                     | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 26  | 20th May 2014       | Technical University Mombasa                           | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 27  | 20th May 2014       | Maseno University                                      | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 28  | 20th May 2014       | Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology | Thesis by the government to increase fees and reduce the maximum loan amount given to students   |
| 29  | 18th October 2014   | Laikipia University                                    | Conflict over graduation of two cohorts at the same time   |
| 30  | 3rd November 2014   | Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology | University policy to have students pay half of the school fees within the first month of every semester and the entire amount by the eighth week |
| 31  | 6th December 2014   | Moi University   | Messes serving less and low quality food to students and power rationing thus interfering with students cooking                                  |
| 32  | 9th December 2014   | Maseno University                                      | Increased insecurity around the campus   |

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Utilization of Free Primary Education Funds in Public Primary Schools in Kenya: Exploring Administrative Antecedents**

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**The purpose of this study was to investigate the administrative antecedents influencing the utilization of Free Primary Education funds in public primary schools within Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and used a study population comprising of head teachers, chairmen of the school management committees of public primary schools and teachers. A sample size of 52 public primary schools in which 52 chairmen of the school management committee, 52 head teachers and 104 teachers were used. The chairmen of the school management committee and head teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique while the teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Data collected was then analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. The results were then presented in tabular summaries and charts for easier interpretation. The findings show that all head teachers, being the fund managers of the free primary education funds, had undertaken some form of financial training to enable them effectively utilize free primary education funds. However, the level of utilization of free primary education funds in public primary schools was not impressive. The main factors affecting the utilization of free primary education funds were mainly insufficient funding, delay in disbursements, high pupil enrolment levels and high cost of materials.**

**Key words:** Administrative factors, utilization of free primary education funds, public primary schools, Nakuru Municipality.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the inculcation in each generation of certain knowledge, skills and attitudes by means of institutions, such as schools, deliberately created for this end (Kaether, 1966). The Amman Mid-Decade Review of Education for All (EFA, 1996) reaffirmed the commitment to enhancement of education for all persons in the less

industrialized countries. This was said to be particularly so in Africa where ethnic tensions and conflicts have displaced many households thus denying children opportunities of going to school.

In April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, sub-Saharan African governments, along with

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governments from around the world, recommitted themselves to achieving Education for All. However, realizing that the target date of 2000 (agreed to in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990) would not be met, the African representatives postponed the realization of this commitment until 2015 (UNESCO, 1990). The Dakar Conference of 2000 in a quest to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the African continent set as one of the EFA goals “Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015” which was further endorsed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Among other things, the conference delegates set targets “to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (Republic of Kenya and United Nations, 2003).

Avenstrup et al. (2004) observed that during the 1990s, only three African countries came close to achieving Education for All: Malawi, Namibia and Uganda. The international commitment to EFA was given a further boost in 2001 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a road map toward implementation of the United Nations (UN) development declaration. In its second development goal, the declaration includes a commitment to the achievement of universal completed primary education (United Nations General Assembly, 2001).

Over the past decade, several countries in sub-Saharan Africa have abolished primary school tuition fees typically as part of renewed attempts to resurrect their education systems which have been on the decline, and even suffering reduced enrolments after the initial growth following Independence. Kenya is among the five African countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that have abolished primary school tuition (offering FPE) in an attempt to resurrect and strengthen their education systems (Riddell, 2003). The other four are Malawi in 1994, Uganda in 1997, Tanzania in 2001 and Zambia in 2002 (Riddell, 2003). The measure increased both gross and net enrolment rate significantly. Whereas in the 1980s and early to 1990s, cost-sharing had been a policy promoted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the direct (and indirect) costs to parents of their children’s education became obstacles to their attendance and continued enrolment.

The implementation of free primary education in Malawi is amidst challenges such as loss of national vision, corrosion of pupil, teacher, and parent relations, corruption (education for MP’s poverty alleviation), politicization of the school and its staff, decline in “respect for authority”, increase in educational access, decline in educational quality for the poor (increase in private schooling for the rich), breakdown in school/state communication, decline in teacher professionalism, decline in the value of “being educated”(few jobs; educated people are “just sitting” and more business opportunities for youth since democratization) and increased demands on parents and pupils for labour

inputs (Kendall, 2003).

In early 2003, the Government of Kenya introduced free primary education (FPE), which meant the abolition of tuition fees, a part of the increasing costs of education to parents that had accounted largely for the decreasing primary and secondary school enrolments in the 1990s. Following this announcement, enrolments surged from about six million to about 7.2 million pupils, resulting in a gross enrolment rate of 104% compared with 87.6% in 2002. Before the Government’s pronouncement, the number of primary schools in the country had increased steadily from 14,864 in 1990 to 18,901 in 2001/2 representing a 27.2% increase. Net enrolment ratio rose in absolute terms had also up gone from 5,392,319 to 6,314,726, being a 17.1% rise over the same period and from around 6,314,726 to 7,614,326. It was also estimated that another 3 million children were not enrolled in school (Sifuna, 2003; Okwach, 1999).

The implementation of FPE, like similar interventions by previous governments, has been a matter of political expediency rather than a well thought out and planned reform. The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government, like its predecessors, did not carry out a situation analysis prior to the implementation of FPE. The consequences are: poor quality education as a result of overcrowding, lack of teachers and learning materials. The inefficient administration at the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST), which attempts to deal with problems relating to funding and infrastructure in an ad hoc manner only serves to exacerbate the situation. With these challenges, similar to those faced by previous governments, the attainment of UPE will continue to be illusionary. Apart from to the logistical problems in the implementation of FPE, the key question remains whether the programme is sustainable (Sifuna, 2003; Okwach, 1999).

In the 2003/04 financial year, the government increased its education budget by 17.4% to Kshs.79.4 billion, with over Kshs. 7.6 billion specifically allocated to the FPE programme. The donor community, which received the FPE policy with high enthusiasm, was quick to assist the government. The World Bank, for example, gave a grant of Kshs. 3.7 billion, while the British government through the Department for International Development gave Kshs. 1.6 billion. Other donors included the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Kshs. 1.2 billion, the Swedish government, Kshs. 430 million and UNICEF Kshs. 250 million. It goes without saying that such donor funding is usually temporary (Okwach, 1999).

The aim of the FPE programme is to provide opportunities, especially for the individuals from poor background. The argument was that the payment of school fees tended to prevent a large proportion of the children from attending school. However, whilst FPE has increased participation, it has at the same time created considerable problems. The success of the free primary education programme is dependent on the utilization of

free primary education funds. Yieke, (2006) postulates that lack of professionalism is a great challenge facing utilization of free primary education funds. The expanded role of head teachers in respect to Free Primary Education and their leadership styles have been cited as factors influencing utilization of free primary education funds in Kenya. Politics and unclear decision making process also emerged as challenges.

The same study also indicated that head teachers lacked financial education required for efficient management of the funds. Therefore, there was need for the government to review or develop a guiding policy towards ensuring that professionalism, proper leadership, and decision making processes are promoted in primary schools. At the same time, conditions laid down to request for concessions to institute levies are so cumbersome that they hesitate to embark on the process (Sifuna, 2003). It appears like FPE funds are not effectively utilized and therefore this study investigated this phenomena in Nakuru Municipality. The purpose of this study was to examine the administrative factors influencing utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools of Nakuru Municipality, Kenya.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in public primary schools within Nakuru Municipality amongst public primary school head teachers, School Management Committees (SMC), Chairmen and teachers, since they were directly involved in implementation of the FPE programme of schools in Nakuru municipality. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The purpose of descriptive research is description of state of affairs of the variables examined, as they exist (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The design was chosen because it was an efficient method of collecting descriptive data regarding characteristics of a sample of a population, current practices, conditions or needs.

The target population of the study was public primary schools within Nakuru municipality. The municipality comprised of 5 zones (Western, Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern) and a total of 59 public schools. The study targeted different public schools spread in different environments within the municipality. The target population comprised of the primary Chairmen of the SMC, school head teachers, and teachers who were involved in management of schools in Nakuru municipality.

The study adopted multi stage sampling approach, whereby after determination of the study sample, the sub sample was determined. The study used a sample size of 52 primary schools basing on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size. The procedure involved two stages. Stage 1 was the determination of the study sample, while stage 2 was the determination of the sub sample. Cluster sampling was used in the selection of the sub sample. The clusters included chairmen of the SMC, head teachers and teachers. All Head teachers and chairmen of the SMC of the target sample (52 schools) were interviewed. The teachers sample was selected using simple random sampling technique, whereby 2 teachers per school was selected from 52 primary schools; that is, one teacher representing lower primary and the other representing upper primary. This gave us 52 Chairmen of the SMC, 52 Head teachers and 104 teachers. This translated to a target population of 208

respondents in this study.

An interview schedule was used in the collection of data from the chairmen of the SMC. The interview schedule captured information related to the perspective of the chairmen of the SMC in regard to the utilization of the FPE funds at their schools. The study also used two sets of questionnaires containing both structured and unstructured questions. One set was used in the collection of data from the school managers (Head teachers), while the other was used for the teachers. The purpose of the questionnaires was to obtain information related to factors influencing the utilization of the Free Primary Education funds. The researcher personally administered the data collection process; whereby the instruments were completed in the presence of the researcher.

According to Mutai (2000), an instrument can be validated by proving that its items or questions are representative of the skills or characteristics that it is intended to measure. Content validity was established using experts to determine if the items were a representative sample of the skills and traits that comprised the area to be measured. The experts provided guidance on the content of the instruments that is ensuring that all the research objectives have been addressed by the questions or information sought in the instruments. The manner of construction of the questionnaires was checked to ensure that the questions were not misinterpreted and only relevant information was obtained. The findings from the pilot study were used to improve on the questionnaires, thus enhancing their validity.

Reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures a variable (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). To check their reliability, the two sets of questionnaires were pilot-tested amongst the school managers (Head Teachers), parents and SMC chairmen. A pilot study was carried out in 5 neighbouring schools in the study area. The findings of the pre-test were then analyzed to find out if the instruments were reliable in answering the key research questions. The results of the pre-test survey helped in restructuring of the questionnaire by incorporating the missing information, omitting irrelevant questions and paraphrasing questions that appear ambiguous to the respondents. The researcher created an atmosphere conducive to the Head Teachers and teachers, to enable them open up and answer the questions asked correctly.

As an ethical consideration, the researcher obtained an introduction letter from the graduate school of Mt Kenya University to get a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST). Prior to the commencement of data collection, the Municipal Education Office was informed of the planned data collection exercise so as to get necessary cooperation from the respondents. A letter of introduction to the respondents stating the purpose of the study and assuring them of confidentiality of information provided was also prepared. Bookings were made through the head teachers of the selected schools prior to the data collection exercise. The study carried out the data collection exercise within a period of two weeks. The two sets of questionnaires and interview schedule administered were distributed to the identified and selected public primary schools.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that all the head teachers (100%) had received some form of financial training. The finding showed that 20% had undertaken financial and leadership training, 18% indicated that they had financial management at school level, 16% had undertaken book keeping and budgeting, 16% had attended workshops on financial management, 8% human resource management, 8% cash book balancing, 8% prism, whereas 4% had

undertaken management, while 4% had undertaken spread. According to Franklin (2002), school managers need to be trained to equip them with the relevant skills and techniques to prepare them to be effective in implementation of educational policies. However, this finding is not in agreement with Cheruto and Wambua, (2010) who posit that most head teachers had not been trained on financial management and worse still they were not inducted on introduction of FPE and this affected utilization of FPE funds.

The SMC chairmen were asked to describe the utilization of FPE funds at their school and the findings revealed that most of the respondents 31% described utilization of FPE funds as effective, 25% described it as slightly effective, 24% described it as moderately effective, 12% described it as not effective, while 8% described it as very effective. The interpretation was that most of the SMC chairpersons described the utilization of FPE as effective. This finding points towards favourable performance and which needs to be enhanced.

The teachers were asked through lead statements to describe the management styles used by the school management and a majority of the respondents (69%) agreed to the statement that head teachers sought ideas and inputs from teachers on upcoming plans and project while 31% disagreed. Majority of the respondents (69%) agreed to the statement that teachers were included in making major decisions while 31% strongly agreed. The study further revealed that majority of the respondents (69%) disagreed to the statement that the head teacher had the final say over decisions made within their group, while 31% were neutral. It was further established that that majority of the respondents (53%) agreed to the statement that the Head teacher had the final say over decisions made within their group. The head teacher considers suggestions made by others in the group, 22% were neutral, 18% disagreed, while 8% strongly agreed. The study also showed that majority of the respondents (67%) agreed that the head teacher told staff members what to do, how to do it, and when to do, so long as school goals are met, 21% disagreed, while 12% were neutral.

The study sought to investigate the strain on resources and the result is given in Table 1. According to the finding, It was also established that majority (70%) of the respondents agreed that the number of pupils enrolled in the school was so high thus affecting utilization of the FPE funds, 25% were neutral, while 6% strongly agreed, and 7% agreed. It implied that most schools in Nakuru Municipality had experienced high pupil enrolment levels and this was affecting utilization of the FPE funds.

Majority (70%) of the respondents agreed that the number of pupils enrolled in the school was so high thus affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds, 25% were neutral, while 6% strongly agreed, and 7% agreed. It also, implied that most schools in Nakuru Municipality had experienced high pupil enrolment levels. This is in

agreement with Sifuna (2003) who found out that as a result of the free primary education, the situation of the teaching force in most of the districts was generally bad. Teachers complained of increased pupil teacher ratios. Many primary schools were understaffed as a result of the free primary education programme. This did not augur well for the quality of education being delivered. Many school management committees were of the opinion that as a result on the ban of levies, they were unable to recruit extra teachers through the PTAs and this has also seriously affected the pre-school units.

The findings showed that majority of the respondents (58%) agreed that teachers lack motivation to provide quality services amidst limited funds in school, 30% strongly agreed, while 12% were neutral. This implied that teachers in most schools were not motivated and this was affecting effective utilization of FPE funds. The findings showed that majority of the respondents (59%) were neutral to the fact small size of classrooms was a hindrance to the utilization of the FPE funds, 40% agreed and 1% strongly agreed. The interpretation was that the size of classroom was a problem affecting the utilization of FPE funds in most schools and therefore needed to be addressed.

The findings revealed that 89% of the respondents agreed that limited number of educational support equipment was a hindrance to the utilization of the FPE funds, 10% disagreed, while 1% were neutral. This implied that provision for education support equipment was not adequate in most schools and this was affecting the utilization of the FPE funds. The administrative challenges experienced by the school in regard to the utilization of FPE funds were also identified from the SMC's perspective and the finding is given in Table 2.

According to the findings, the administrative challenges experienced by the school in regard to the utilization of FPE funds were as follows:

1. Insufficient funding (53%)
2. Delay in disbursements (37%)
3. High pupil enrolment levels (33%)
4. High cost of materials (31%)
5. Teaching staff not enough (31%)
6. Illiteracy of some committee members (16%)
7. Time frame maladjustments in vote-books (12%)
8. School demands are as per vote (RMI) (12%)

Teachers were asked to what extent they felt leadership style used by the school management negatively affected utilization of FPE, and most of the respondents (47%) felt that leadership style used at the school affected utilization of FPE to a large extent, 28% indicated to a very large extent, while 25% indicated to a small extent. These implied that most teachers were not comfortable with the leadership style used by the school head teachers and that they felt that this had a negative effect on proper utilization of FPE funds. This situation was

**Table 1.** Factors related to strain on available resources.

| Variable  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | Total % |
|---|----------|---------|-------|----------------|---------|
| The number of pupils enrolled in the school is so high thus affecting utilization of the FPE funds          | 0        | 24      | 70    | 6              | 100     |
| Available teaching resources do not match the pupil population  | 0        | 4       | 81    | 15             | 100     |
| Individual attention to the pupils is limited due to the large size of classes                              | 0        | 1       | 76    | 23             | 100     |
| Teachers lack motivation to provide quality services amidst limited funds in school                         | 0        | 12      | 58    | 30             | 100     |
| Learning and teaching resources are not availed in time for use thus affecting utilization of the FPE funds | 23       | 0       | 50    | 27             | 100     |
| Small size of classrooms is a hindrance to the utilization of the FPE funds                                 | 0        | 59      | 40    | 1              | 100     |
| Limited number of desks and chairs for pupils is a hindrance to the utilization of the FPE funds            | 52       | 0       | 48    | 0              | 100     |
| Limited number of educational support equipment is hindrance to the utilization of the FPE funds            | 10       | 1       | 89    | 0              | 100     |

**Table 2.** SMC's perspective of administrative challenges experienced by the schools.

| Challenge                               | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Insufficient funding                    | 27        | 53             |
| Delay in disbursements                  | 19        | 37             |
| High pupil enrolment levels             | 17        | 33             |
| High cost of materials                  | 16        | 31             |
| Teaching staff not enough               | 16        | 31             |
| Illiteracy of some committee members    | 8         | 16             |
| Time frame maladjustments in vote-books | 6         | 12             |
| School demands are as per vote (RMI)    | 6         | 12             |

worrying and needed to be investigated further; since as Cheruto and Wambua (2010) argue, without dynamic leadership on the part of the heads, who develop a clear vision for their schools and who communicate it well to their staff in such a way as to mobilize all members so that they all take part in school-based development, effective improvement in schools cannot occur. This is an argument supported by Maicibi (2005) who contends that, without a proper leadership style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Even if the school has all

the required instructional materials and financial resources, it will not be able to use them effectively, if the students are not directed in their use, or if the teachers who guide in their usage are not properly trained to implement them effectively.

The study sought to investigate the administrative factors affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds and the findings indicated that a majority of the respondents (70%) agreed that the number of pupils enrolled in the school was so high thus affecting effective utilization of

the FPE funds, 25% were neutral, while 6% strongly agreed. The interpretation here was that enrollment levels were high, thus impeding quality utilization of FPE funds. The study also found out that majority of the respondents (81%) agreed that available teaching resources did not match the pupil population, 15% strongly agreed, while 4% were neutral. The interpretation here was that enrollment levels were high, thus impeding quality utilization of FPE funds. Hence the interpretation was that available teaching resources were inadequate.

It was also established that majority of the respondents (76%) agreed that individual attention to the pupils was limited due to the large size of classes, 23% strongly agreed, while 1% were neutral. The interpretation here was that enrollment levels were high, thus impeding quality utilization of FPE funds. Hence the interpretation was that individual attention to the pupils was limited due to the large size of classes. This was brought about by high enrollment levels. This means that the fact that available teaching resources were not enough for the pupil population did not influence utilization of FPE funds in most schools, while individual attention to the pupils was limited due to the large size of classes, hence influencing utilization of FPE funds at school. This shown in the report by a 2003 UNESCO and Kenya government study which revealed an increase in enrolments in private schools within the Langas slum area of Eldoret. Notable in the report was that since FPE implementation, many private schools had sprung up in the community. Many of the students in these schools had transferred from government schools because they were too congested, with unacceptably high student/teacher ratios and, consequently, low educational standards. Private schools were filling a substantial niche within the overall primary education system in Eldoret.

According to the findings, majority of respondents (58%) agreed that teachers lacked motivation to provide quality services amidst limited funds in school, 30% strongly agreed, while 12% were neutral. The interpretation here was that teachers lacked motivation and this affect proper utilization and management of resources provided by FPE. This means that lack of teacher motivation influenced utilization of FPE funds at school. This is in agreement with Namirembe, (2005) who argued that in some schools in Uganda in the advent of free education there was increasing poor performance in mainly the science subjects. The poor performance in the said subjects was attributed partly to poor leadership at the school level. Since teacher morale and welfare is so low at present many of them are forced to work at more than one school.

According to the findings, majority of the respondents (50%) agreed that learning and teaching resources are not availed in time for use thus affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds, 27% strongly agreed, while 23% disagreed. The interpretation here was that there was a delay in availing teaching and learning resources

and this affected utilization of the FPE funds through associated delays. It was also established that majority of the respondents (59%) were neutral to the statement that small size of classrooms was a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds, 40% agreed, while 1% strongly agreed. The interpretation here was that small size of classrooms was a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds. This was brought about by high enrollment levels.

The study also found out that majority of the respondents (52%) disagreed to the statement that limited number of desks and chairs for pupils was a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds, 48% agreed. The interpretation here was that enrollment levels were high, thus impeding quality utilization of FPE funds. Hence the interpretation was that limited number of desks and chairs for pupils was a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds. According to the findings, majority of the respondents (89%) agreed that limited number of educational support equipment was hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds, 1% were neutral, while 10% disagreed. The interpretation here was limited number of educational support equipment was hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds.

The study also established that majority of the respondents (63%) agreed that lack of adequate facilities (text books and exercise books and pupil uniforms is also an hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds, 22% strongly agreed, 15% were neutral, while 1% disagreed. The interpretation here was that lack of adequate facilities (text books and exercise books and pupil uniforms is also a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds (Table 3).

This section contains the findings in respect to objective 3, which sought to assess strategies put in place to mitigate administrative factors and utilization of FPE funds in primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. The findings are presented in Table 4 and Table 5. This is presented according to the head teachers and according to the chairmen of SMC. The study sought to find out from the head teachers what strategies could be put in place to mitigate administrative factors in utilization of FPE funds in primary schools in Table 4.

The number of times the remedies are cited by the head teachers is given in Table 5, this is reported in percentages as follows: requesting for parental support (top ups) (29%), follow the vote heads (27%), involving all key stakeholders (25%), prioritization of school needs (24%), regular meetings (22%), ensuring transparency (22%), involvement of school committee members to oversee use of funds (20%), all purchased materials are under the care of parents and teachers (18%), budgeting (16%), periodical reviews of expenditure (12%), seeking for donors (12%), consultation before use of funds (10%), assign the responsibilities of damages by children to parents (10%) and sensitizing parents on the role of

**Table 3.** Administrative factors affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds

| Variable  | Response       | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Learning and teaching resources are not availed in time for use thus affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds.                | Disagree       | 23        | 23             |
|   | Agree          | 51        | 50             |
|   | Strongly agree | 28        | 27             |
| Small size of classrooms is a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds   | Neutral        | 60        | 59             |
|   | Agree          | 41        | 40             |
|   | Strongly Agree | 1         | 1              |
| Limited number of desks and chairs for pupils is a hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds                            | Disagree       | 53        | 52             |
|   | Agree          | 49        | 48             |
| Limited number of educational support equipment is hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds                            | Disagree       | 10        | 10             |
|   | Neutral        | 1         | 1              |
|   | Agree          | 91        | 89             |
| Lack of adequate facilities (text books and exercise books, pupil uniforms is hindrance to the effective utilization of the FPE funds | Disagree       | 1         | 1              |
|   | Neutral        | 15        | 15             |
|   | Agree          | 64        | 63             |
|   | Strongly agree | 22        | 22             |

**Table 4.** Strategies put in place to mitigate administrative factors in utilization of FPE funds.

| Measure  | Frequency | Percentage of the respondents |
|--|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Assign the responsibilities of damages by children to parents      | 5         | 10                            |
| All purchased materials are under the care of parents and teachers | 9         | 18                            |
| Involvement of School Committee members to oversee use of funds    | 10        | 20                            |
| Follow the vote heads  | 14        | 27                            |
| Prioritization of school needs                                     | 12        | 24                            |
| Budgeting  | 8         | 16                            |
| Requesting for parental support (Top ups)                          | 15        | 29                            |
| Seeking for Donors   | 6         | 12                            |
| Consultation before use of funds                                   | 5         | 10                            |
| Ensuring Transparency  | 11        | 22                            |
| Involving all key stakeholders                                     | 13        | 25                            |
| Regular meetings   | 11        | 22                            |
| Periodical reviews of expenditure                                  | 6         | 12                            |
| Sensitizing parents on the role of monitoring school projects      | 3         | 6                             |

monitoring school projects(6%). The chairmen of the school management pointed out that in the quest to tackle these administrative challenges the schools affected could adopt the following solutions and the finding is given in Table 5. According to the findings, the SMC chairmen proposed the following strategies in solving administrative challenges impeding utilization of FPE funds: communication of parental obligations / soliciting support (31%), advocate for timely disbursement of funds (29%), mobilizing funds from donors (20%), training of head teachers in accounting (16%), fund

raising through well wishers (12%), in service in record keeping (10%), ensuring proper allocation of money to the vote-heads (8%), construction of more buildings (8%), sensitizing parents on positive attitude towards materials (6%), construction of materials store (4%), SMC bearers should be given seminars (4%), P. T. A -Help (2%).

### Conclusion

The study determined the administrative factors that



**Table 5.** Proposed strategies in solving administrative challenges impeding utilization of FPE funds.

| <b>Strategy</b>  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage of the respondents</b> |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Communication of parental obligations / soliciting support | 16               | 31                                   |
| Advocate for timely disbursement of funds                  | 15               | 29                                   |
| Mobilizing funds from donors                               | 10               | 20                                   |
| Training of Head teachers in accounting                    | 8                | 16                                   |
| Fund raising through well wishers                          | 6                | 12                                   |
| In service in record keeping                               | 5                | 10                                   |
| Ensuring proper allocation of money to the vote-heads      | 4                | 8                                    |
| Construction of more buildings                             | 4                | 8                                    |
| Sensitizing parents on positive attitude towards materials | 3                | 6                                    |
| Construction of materials store                            | 2                | 4                                    |
| SMC bearers should be given seminars                       | 2                | 4                                    |
| P. T. A Help   | 1                | 2                                    |

influence utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. It established how administrative factors influenced utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools, and suggested the strategies that can be put in place to mitigate administrative factors in utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. Following the findings, the study had the following conclusions:

1. The main administrative factors affecting the utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality were: insufficient funding, delay in disbursements, high pupil enrolment levels, high cost of materials, inadequate teaching materials, lack of teacher motivation teaching staff not enough, and illiteracy of some school committee members.
2. The administrative factors identified in this study, negatively influenced utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality teaching resources did not match the pupil population individual attention to the pupils was limited due to the large size of classes learning and teaching resources are not availed in time for use thus affecting effective utilization of the FPE funds. The level of utilization of FPE funds in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality was not impressive. Most chairpersons of the SMC for instance described utilization of Free Primary Education funds as either ineffective or slightly effective.
3. The strategies used by school managers of public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality in mitigating administrative factors impeding utilization of FPE funds included requesting for parental support, following the vote heads, involving all key stakeholders, prioritization of school needs, regular meetings, ensuring transparency, and involvement of school committee members to oversee use of FPE funds.
4. The findings show that all head teachers, being the fund managers of the FPE funds, had undertaken some form of financial training to enable them properly utilize

FPE funds. These courses or forms of training included financial and leadership training, financial management at school level, book keeping and budgeting, financial management, human resource management, cash book balancing, PRISM, SPRED and Management.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following the findings, the study recommended the following:

1. The Government of Kenya (Ministry of Education) should consider mobilizing resources to increase the allocation disbursed to schools. This is in order to enhance its capacity to increase allocation of funding to public primary schools, subsequently, improving the efficacy of school head teachers in utilization of FPE funds.
2. The Ministry of Education should consider organizing more financial education and management training and workshops for the school head teachers and all persons involved in the utilization of FPE funds. This can be actualized if stakeholders in the Ministry are sensitized on the value of organizing such events or forums; that is, the need to enhance the head teachers capacity in utilization of FPE funds. The school management committee chairpersons and also other SMC members need to be reached.
3. The school management teams should consider organizing regular meetings with parents to enhance effective communication of parental obligations and thus encourage their support to school projects and programmes linked to the utilization of FPE funds. The school management committee chairpersons and other committee members need to be encouraged to communicate to other parents on this aspect, clearly.
4. The school management teams should consider getting in touch with other fundraising options such as donors so

as to tackle issues such as additional classrooms to cater for the high pupil enrolment experienced in most schools, or in general infrastructural support hence, enhancing utilization of FPE funds.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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