

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEE-FREE BASIC
EDUCATION POLICY TO THE RETENTION OF LEARNERS IN
TANZANIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF MOROGORO
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND POLICY STUDIES (MED-APPS)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION
OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

2025

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania, a dissertation entitled; **“Assessment of the Contributions of fee-free basic Education Policy on the retention of Learners in Tanzania Secondary Schools”**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in Administration Planning and Policy Studies of the Open University of Tanzania (MEDAPPS).

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.....
Date

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DECLARATION

I, **Paul Laurence Kahemele**, declare that this report is my own original work and that it has not been presented to any university for similar or any other degree award. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in Administration Planning and Policy Studies of the Open University of Tanzania (MED-APPS).

.....

Signature

.....

Date

DEDICATION

I would like to return a lot of thanks to the almighty God the most grateful and merciful Father for his daily miracles in my life since I was born. He has never forsaken me all the time.

I then dedicate this dissertation to my beloved mother JOSEPHINE P. MGOMATI for without her directions and strictly taking care of me in this world since I was born to date, I could not be here where I am today. And again, in the memory of my late father LAURENCE S. KAHHEMELE (R.I.P) to God be glory.

Lastly but not least, in the importance, I thank my second-hand beloved AUGUSTINA E. TEMBA (Family General Secretary) a wife of mine for her support in everything towards the accomplishment of this work. I really appreciate and love her to the best of my ability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the best of my sight acknowledging first of all the almighty God for keeping me healthier and thus making me carry out this important special work and for enlightening me from the beginning to the end of my master's course.

I really appreciate the financial support given by my family with which my study was made possible. I also appreciate the recommendable efforts made by my supervisor Dr. Karoli Mrema (PhD) for his guidance, advice, warm care, constructive enthusiasm and his understanding from the beginning of my dissertation to its end Sir, I really honour your time and love you showed to me.

I then give thanks to my lovely wife AUGUSTINA E. TEMBA, my children Anvil, Anvay, Ivan and Ivy Paul Kahemele for their harmony support and encouragements they have been giving me till my Master Degree was accomplished.

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the contributions of Fee-free basic education policy to students' retention in Tanzania secondary schools in Morogoro District Council with the general objective of exploring the contributions of the policy to students' retention. The study had four specific objectives, assessment of the stakeholders' perception of the implementation of the Policy; determined the factors that affect students' retention; analysed the strategies that the stakeholders use in controlling students' dropouts; and analysed the responsibilities parents are obliged to undertake to their children according to the policy. The study employed pragmatism research paradigm and a mixed research approach while using convergent parallel research design. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and document review. Quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive data analysis and spread sheet. Qualitative data were analysed by using content analysis. The findings disclosed that; the stakeholders were aware that the government was providing free secondary education. The study also disclosed that students were affected by hunger, distance from home to school, and lack of hostels/ dormitories; Third, the study revealed that the strategies to prevent students' dropout were creating awareness among parents on educational matters, school feeding and food programmes for students in schools, Fourthly, the study also discovered that parents were obliged by the policy to supply stationeries, school uniforms and food contribution. The policy therefore is not enough to prevent students' dropout rather the government should address and control factors like, pregnancy, hostels construction, and school feeding.

Keywords: Fees free Education, Student dropout, Retention, Learner.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMIS	Educational Management Information System
ESDP	Educational Sector Development Plan
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
SATF	Social Action Trust Fund
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
GLAMI	Girls' Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
PEDP	Primary Education Development Plan
SEPD	Secondary Education Development Program
SEQUIP II	Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project Number 2
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease Number 19
ETP	Educational and Training Policy
USDOE	US Department of Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
TM	Teacher Mentor
BEST	Basic Education Statistics of Tanzania
PO-RALG	President's Office Regional Administrative and Local Government

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study and the extent of the problem in the targeted area of the study. In this chapter again, the researcher gives the statement of the research problem and the objectives of the study. Likewise, the significance of this study is also given in this chapter. Lastly, the researcher explains the organisation of the study in general.

1.1 Background to the Problem

According to UNESCO (2023), worldwide 250 million students are out of schools, UNICEF (2021) remarks higher rate of dropout of students from pre-primary to secondary level. However, UNESCO (2022), stipulated that those 244 million children out of school, including 50 million girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNESCO (2022), the number of students out of school in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 0.9 million students. The total number of students out of school amounted to 37.14 million. However, one year later, according to UNESCO (2016), 93 million children of secondary school age were out of school across Sub-Saharan African countries like Ethiopia, Tanzania, Niger, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Chad, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Guinea and Ghana.

According to IMF (2018), Sub-Saharan African countries experience a very high rate of secondary students dropping out from school. According to URT (2016), in the year 2014, the Tanzanian government introduced the revised Education and Training

Policy (ETP) to replace that of 1995, the policy advocates for among other issues, a “Fee-Free Basic Education” the policy states that every child would have access to fee and contribution-free basic education.

According to ETP (2014), initiatives distinguished the current ESDP from the previous plans with two important strategies which were: Tanzania's commitment to provide twelve years of free and compulsory Basic Education to the entire population, leaving no one behind; and the progressive expansion of Technical and Vocational Education. According to ESDP (2021) for the year 2016-17, the total budget was again increased from 3.870 trillion to 4.768 trillion shillings (23%), (UBE). According to BEST (2019), a total number of 2,338,457 students were enrolled in secondary schools from form one to form six.

However, the basic education statistics of Tanzania, verified that there was also a higher dropout rate in secondary schools from form one to form six. A number of 136,313 students dropped out of school (BEST, 2022). ESDP (2021) sampled five regions which in most cases, were the ones experiencing a drastic secondary school students' dropout. In Dodoma region with a total of 8,872, Kongwa district has the highest rate of dropout with 25.66%, of all the drop out cases Kagera region has 13,575 cases of student drop outs where, among the districts in Kagera, Muleba has the highest dropout rate with 31.01% of all the drop out cases. Mwanza has 18,188, where the Kwimba District leads with 26.5% of all the cases. Tabora has 16,303 cases. In this region, Igunga leads with 21.27%, and Geita region which has 18,016 where Chato district is marked with the highest rate of students' dropout with

31.09%. Generally, at secondary school level, class with the highest dropout is form two, where 53,932 students dropped out which equals to 71.95% of all the students who dropped out in the five sampled regions (ESDP,2021).

The government on the other hand has been taking some measures trying to mitigate the challenge through educational and training policy (ETP) 2014 version of 2023. The policy has analysed various statements as the solution towards students' retention and prohibiting the students' dropout. Among many educational objectives in Tanzania one of the national Education objectives is "to enable a learner to complete the learning cycle at which she/he is admitted". According to ESDP (2021), Tanzania's Education Vision of 2025, the policy explains Tanzania to be a country with a well-educated and learning society by the year 2025. It is expressly stated in the Tanzania Development Vision document (pg. 19) that, Education should be treated as a strategic agent for mindset transformation and for the creation of a well-educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge needed to competently and competitively address the development challenges which face the nation.

ETP (2014) version of 2023 articulates that the government provides fee-free basic and compulsory education from standard one to form four. It is then expected that the number of students retained in the school will be 100% of the registered students. According to EMIS Data (2016), statistically in Tanzania, it was shown that 2.3 million (57%) of the secondary school age children 14 - 17 years were out of school. Various reasons have been stipulated towards this adverse school children dropout. BEST (2024) described the regional variation of secondary school students' dropouts

whereby Mwanza has been leading with more dropouts (9,097), Geita (9,008), Dodoma (8,846), Tabora (8,153), and Simiyu (6,975), respectively. The total dropout rate for secondary schools was 136,313 in which boys made a total number of 69,847 with girls making a total number of 66,466. In this regard comparing girls with boys, girls were the more vulnerable to dropout than boys.

According to Tanzania National Census (2022), the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has described the rate of secondary school students' dropout region wise. However, the issue of students' dropout still persists across regions although it is being distinguished gender wise. The researcher used sixteen regions to show how the problem was extensive across the region in Tanzania mainland, Morogoro being one of them.

Table 1.1 Number of the Dropouts in Secondary Schools by Sex, in Regions, Tanzania Mainland

No	REGION	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1	Dodoma	4,427	4,375	8,802
2	Geita	4,693	4,293	8,986
3	Kagera	3,543	3,391	6,934
4	Kigoma	2,463	1,994	4,457
5	Mara	2,565	2,293	4,858
6	Morogoro	2,405	2,364	4,769
7	Shinyanga	2,922	2,722	5,644
8	Simiyu	3,322	3,472	6,794
9	Tabora	4,139	4,088	8,227
10	Tanga	3,373	3,163	6,536

Source: 2022 Tanzania Census

Through Fee-free basic educational policy, the government has been providing capitation grants to schools, constructing infrastructures like classes and buying other

teaching and learning facilities like chalks and books. As a result, enrolment rate has increased too. However, there has been variation of the number of learners dropping out from school from one region to another even if the education given has been free with no fee or any contribution taken from parents and other education stakeholders in general.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

According to the Education Circular No. 6 (2015) (URT, 2015b) (issued on 10 December, 2015); and Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 (issued on 25 May 2016) Fee-free basic education meant learners were being given education with no any fee or any contributions from the parents or guardians that were being given to schools before the implementation of the policy. However, parents were required to make contributions for their children's education. They were required to purchase uniforms for school and sports activities, give food contribution especially for day students, buy exercise books and pens and pay for the medical expenses of their children (URT, 2016: p. 8). Despite all these being done, the retention of learners had become one of the critical problems for learners when it came to completing their learning cycle in their intended basic educational level. Against the expectations, learner's dropout rate was an ever-increasing problem that was found to diminish the retention rate of learners in secondary schools.

Despite the effort made by the Tanzanian government to provide fee free education, retention of students was a major problem. The number of students out of school in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 0.9 million students (UNESCO, 2022). Yet, the

total number of students out of school amounted to 37.14 million one year later. Moreover, according to UNESCO (2016), 93 million children of secondary school age were out of school across Sub-Saharan African. Based on these data, this study assessed if the fee-free basic education policy in Tanzania satisfied the educational basic demand by boosting retentions and preventing dropouts of learners in our secondary schools. The study analysed the contributions of fee-free basic education policy to students' retention and came up with suggestions whether this policy complied with the real-life situation of the needs of learners and the educational stakeholders in general. The study concentrated more on the retention and learners' dropping out problem in secondary schools that is, for form one to form four which the fee-free basic education policy recognised as the basic and compulsory primary education.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study was to explore the contributions of fee-free basic education policy to students' retention in secondary schools in Morogoro District Council.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess stakeholders' perception on the implementation of the Fee Free Education Policy.
- ii. To determine the factors that affect students' retention in Morogoro District secondary schools.

- iii. To analyse the strategies that the educational stakeholders use in controlling students' dropout in Morogoro District secondary schools.
- iv. To analyse the responsibilities parents are obliged to undertake to their children according to Fee Free Education Policy.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the perception of the education stakeholders towards the implementation of Fee Free education Policy in the educational stakeholders?
- ii. What are factors affecting students' retention in Morogoro District Secondary schools?
- iii. What are the strategies secondary schools and the educational stakeholders use in controlling students' dropout in Morogoro District's secondary schools?
- iv. What are the responsibilities of the parents to their children according to the Fee Free Education Policy?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are as follows: firstly, they increase awareness to the educational stakeholders especially the roles of the parents to their children to support the governments' efforts on prohibiting students' dropout which affects learners' retention. This study raises awareness of the parents and the educational stakeholders in general to support the government's efforts of providing basic facilities to retain students in schools. Again, the study contributes some skills to the educational planners as it makes them pay attention for allocating basic facilities such as hostels in the mostly needy areas. To the policy makers, the study is

significant since the family and educational stakeholders' responsibilities are clearly addressed to make sure that the dropout problem is permanently resolved. The study helps the government assess the extent to which the Education and Training Policy (ETP, 2014) has been perceived by other educational stakeholders.

The implementation of the policy has been a two-way traffic activity between the educational stakeholders, the government and the community in general. The study shows also gender-based information as it compares the number of male and the female students that dropped out from school in Morogoro District Council in the three consecutive years from 2021 to 2023. This realisation adds something to the existing body of knowledge by encouraging new enactments of educational Acts that are aimed at addressing gender-based issues in education. This study is also significant to the modification of traditional and customs since the findings show some shortfalls that are based on the locality's traditions and customs which therefore should be addressed for education parity in the study area.

1.6 Limitation and Delimitation

The study was limited by one of a sampled population especially parents. Meeting with parents was a little bit difficulty due to location schools are found and also time factor since some parents were busy with socio-economic factors for their family, so a researcher had to be patient waiting for their time.

However, this study was delimited on day co-secondary schools only in Morogoro District council ordinary level only. The researcher had enough budget and time for

data collection. Again, the study was conducted in education department a researcher has been currently working.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

This research report is organised into six chapters. Chapter one gives the introduction of the study. It has seven sections which are background of the study, the statement of the problem, research question, significance of the study, theoretical framework, Definition of the key terms and lastly the organisation of the study. The second chapter is about literature review of different theories, the review of the empirical studies and the identification of the knowledge gap. The third chapter contains the research methodology. This chapter consists of the research design, target population, description of the sample and sampling procedures, description of data collection instruments, description of data collection procedures, reliability and validity of the research instruments, description of data analysis procedures and lastly the ethical considerations in research. Fourth chapter presents the findings or results from the field. This chapter answers the research objectives specifically on how the questions were responded to by the respondents. The fifth chapter discusses the findings. Chapter six gives the summary, implications of the study and the recommendations emanating from the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews different previous studies related to the current study. Through this review, the researcher understood what others had already done or covered and what they had not. Through this review, the researcher identified the existing research gap of knowledge. this chapter review both reviews both theoretical and empirical studies.

2.2 Theoretical, Literature and Models

In this study the researcher discusses two theories regarding students' retention and dropout. One was the dropout theory by Vincent Tinto in Student Departure and another was Truancy Theory by Battin Pearson.

2.2.1 Theories which relate to the Study

Student' Departure Theory by Vincent Tinto's

Tinto (1975), defines retention as a longitudinal process incorporating both the academic potential of the student and institutional social systems, thus creating a directional model based on continual variance in social commitments that influence the academic performance. He determined two factors for students' dropout which are Social and Academic Integration. He argues that, the more academically and socially integrated the student is in the institution, the greater the probability of staying. According to Tinto, the individual who is not socially integrated will not commit himself or herself adequately to the educational institution, thus increasing

the probability of dropping out. This is because he or she starts to look for other activities outside the school environment. In that way, not only will personal characteristics lead to evasion, but also the professional and motivational expectations of the individual in relation to the academic and social environment, prevalent in the institution. In view of that, the author proposed a conceptual scheme that encourages dropping out from the schools as, shown in the figure below:

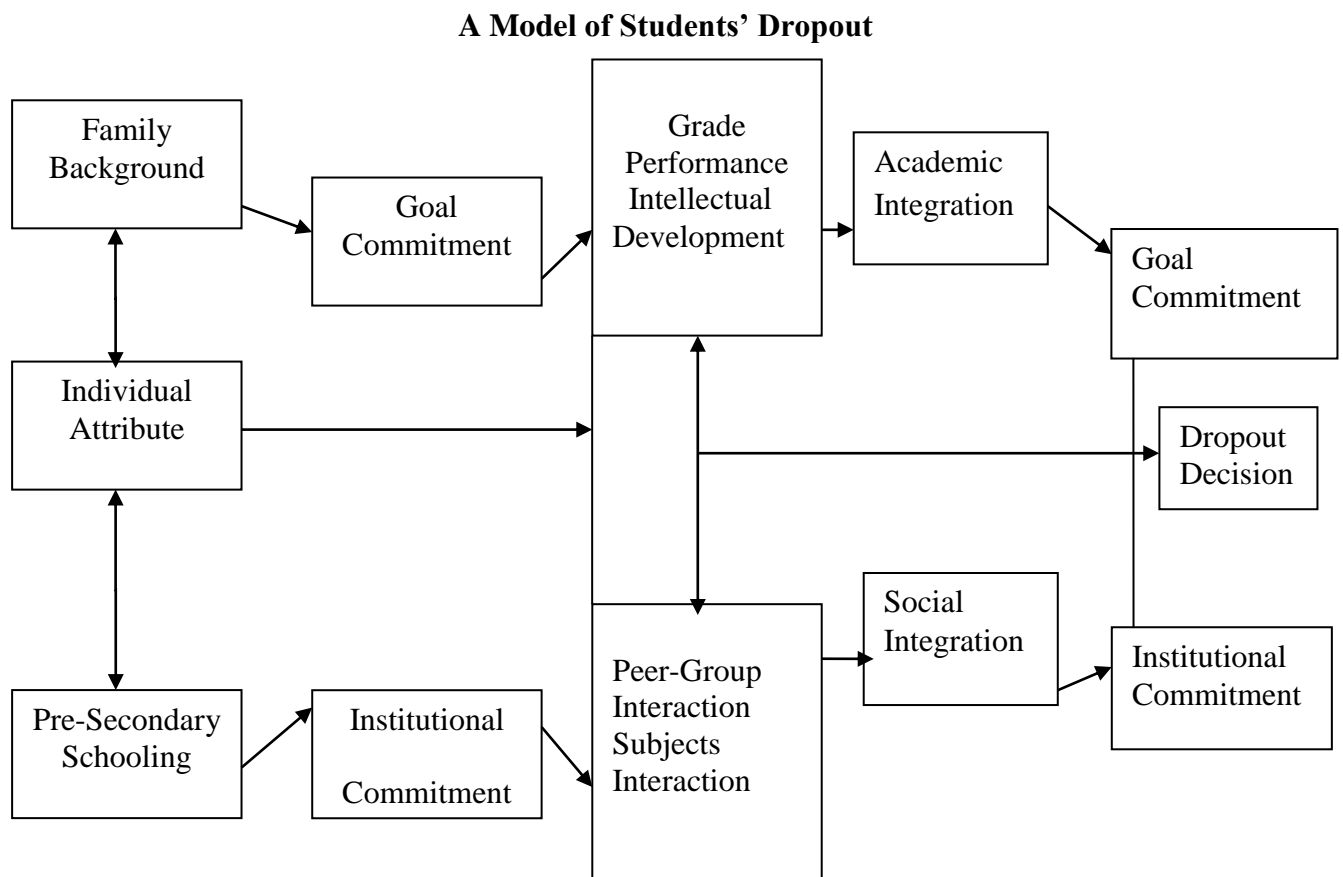


Figure 2.1: Dropout Model Source based on Tinto's Model of Dropout

Vincent Tinto (1975) in his departure theory model explains the relationship between social context and the academic context as to how they gear or reduce the rate of students' dropout if controlled or not controlled. These factors adversely affect the

life and existence of the student in school. In contrast, a conducive school environment attracts students to stay in school, with the teacher-students relationship also playing a great role. Social factors like provision of lunch at school, school uniforms, and shorter distance to and from school, may also contribute to students' retention in school.

Truancy Theory by Battin Pearson, (2000)

According to Battin-Pearson et al. (2000) stated that "the concept of antisocial is a concept that results in low school engagement and dropout". When students are isolated physically and emotionally distanced from the school, their school belongingness weakens and their alienation from the school increases and as a result, students may start to consider dropping out of school. According to Şimşek & Katitaş (2018), the results of some studies on the subject indicate that school dropout may be the consequence of negative feelings towards school such as alienation from school, a low sense of belongingness and lack of interest in school.

According to this theory school uniforms and provision of food at school (school feeding) are taken into an account, when a learner has school uniform, he/she becomes comfortable at school and does not isolate himself from others at school, unlike when learners have no school uniform something that may encourage truancy. Another is schools feeding, when some of learners are getting food (lunch) at school they become comfortable the school attendance is improved unlike when they don't have lunch at school something that will encourage truancy because of hunger. However other scholars have provided strategies of preventing students dropping

from schooling such as: listening to their issues and encouraging them to communicate better, talk to them about their future with and without proper educating by citing notable example, don't pressure them too much to excel allow them to take break when they are stressed, engage them with extracurricular activities to support their mental and physical health lastly contact the school to learn about their academic and social progress.

2.3 Empirical Analysis of Relevant Studies

Various scholars have discussed the concept, prevalence and various cases in the country, which emerged as a result of the implementation of the free education policy. However, a bulk of these studies were conducted in other countries with only some of them being done within our country. Shang'wet conducted research in 2020 with the title "the Impacts of Fee-Free Education Policy Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Tanzania, a case study in Morogoro Municipality. This study examined the way parents and other educational stakeholders were perceiving the fee-free basic education policy after its introduction. The study also examined the impacts of fee-free basic education and its results as it observed that the fee-free basic education resulted in the abruptly higher enrolment rates of learners to schools both in secondary schools and primary schools.

The higher enrolment rate of learners in schools required the government to construct and increase some facilities like the construction of classrooms, employment of more teachers, balancing of teachers in public schools and buying more text books. The implementation of the fee-free basic education according to this study required the

government to provide the capitation grants to schools. Again, according to the study, the distribution of this fund to schools considered the number of students/pupils enrolled in the specified academic year. There is then a monthly variation in capitation grants from one school to another depending on the number of pupils enrolled in a year.

According to Kattan (2006), it is reported that, caution for countries intending to abolish school fees needs serious planning to avoid the overwhelming impact to the system of education. Kattan observed that the limited knowledge about the link between education and industry among parents, the walking distance to and from school as well as to the exposure to job opportunities, contribute to the children not enrolling in schools.

Dumadag C.T et al, (2023), in the International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies (IJIRSS) conducted a study on “Drop-out determinants that influence the out-of-school youth in Iligan City and Lanao Del Norte in Philippines” the study addressed various reasons for students quitting schools ranging from family level, the customs and tradition, early marriage, pregnancy to female students, family economic hardship, low parents’ illiterate rate, drug abuse and alcohol. In this study, the data showed that all respondents disagreed that they did not leave school because of their general deviance.

However, a significant number of the respondents (42 females and 25 males, or equivalent to 33.5% claimed that they quit school because they married early. The

other 30 females agreed that they stopped schooling because they were already mothers. 29.5% or equivalent to 25 females and 34 males, said they left school because they felt they were already old enough to study. Due to financial and family problems, the respondents' parents told them to stop schooling and find a job for their new families. It was found that many students were working to support their families.

Orion et al. (2014), state that, financial resources are the leading cause of student dropout. The family monthly average income of the respondents was less than 10,957 pesos. In Philippines, a monthly income below P10, 957 is considered poor. Other studies discussed too that most students dropped out for personal reasons, mainly a loss of interest due to family poverty. Fee-free education is one of the objectives of the United Nations' Summit conducted in Dakar Senegal in the year 2000, that in order to achieve the Universal Primary Education and the development and education strategy; reforms of the Millennium Development Goal should focus on poverty alleviation (UN, 2000). Fee free education was one of the strategies to eliminate the problem of omission and demotion of the children and youths to have access in education (UNESCO, 2009).

The strategy follows the global declaration of human rights and opportunities to have access in education. Several countries have been providing free education after realising the essential role of the basic education to the social as well as economic development (UNESCO, 2009). Thus, the emphasis was put on the inclusion education that responds to different learning needs and removes exclusion to ensure

equity and equality for children from the poor and disadvantaged communities for quality education. Nation wise, the strategy started soon after the launch of the Education and Training Policy 2014 that insisted on fee free basic education (MoEVT, 2013).

Barro and Kolstad (1987), explained that early research suggested that certain social and family background factors were associated with an increased risk of dropping out, such as being poor, minority, from a single-parent family, or from a family with low educational attainment or low support for education.

Haki Elimu (2017), carried out a survey in seven districts in Tanzania including Njombe, Mpwapa, Muleba, Korogwe, Sumbawanga, Kilosa, and Tabora Urban in Mainland Tanzania to explore stakeholders' views about the merits and demerits of implementing fee free education policy and practices of spending grants and subsidies to facilitate the policy. The study involved 910 participants from the mentioned districts. The results indicated the impact of implementing fee free education in Tanzania was rapid increase in student enrolment for basic education during SEPD and PEDP. The declining quality of education amplified by the lack of enough classrooms increased teaching loads among secondary school teachers, shortage of schools, and shortage of teaching resources.

2.4 Synthesis and Research Gap

A good number of studies have discussed the fee-free basic education policy in a variety way, others have observed its implications, others have discussed its view on

communities, but others have discussed the results after the implementation of the policy. However, no any studies among them were conducted like this study especially on how fee-free education is really free and how it helps in maintaining learner retention in secondary schools and how the policy prevents learners from dropping out from school. The selected study area and the sample used for the data collection in this study were also different from other studies done previously. Therefore, the findings, conclusion and recommendations of this study bridged the gap. Again, this study suggested other factors to control to enable students complete their learning cycle to which they were admitted rather than just omitting fees in schools. The policy has however not considered some factors like distant walk from home to schools (accommodations and hostels), meals, girl learners' pregnancies, extreme family poverty, single parents (divorce among parents), traditions and customs and other factors that limit learners' dropout.

2.5 Conceptual Frame Work

This study was guided by the conceptual framework that described variables or factors that could affect the rate of students' dropout in schools and the factors that create conditions that prohibit truancy and dropout from school. Other factors are such as guidance and counselling, stable educational policies and other social support needed by learners out of school fees. It is obvious that school fees omission in public schools has great impact on students' enrolment rates in secondary schools. However, the government has the responsibility of constructing more infrastructures to cope with the high enrolment rate.

Factors Influencing Students' Dropout Rate in Schools

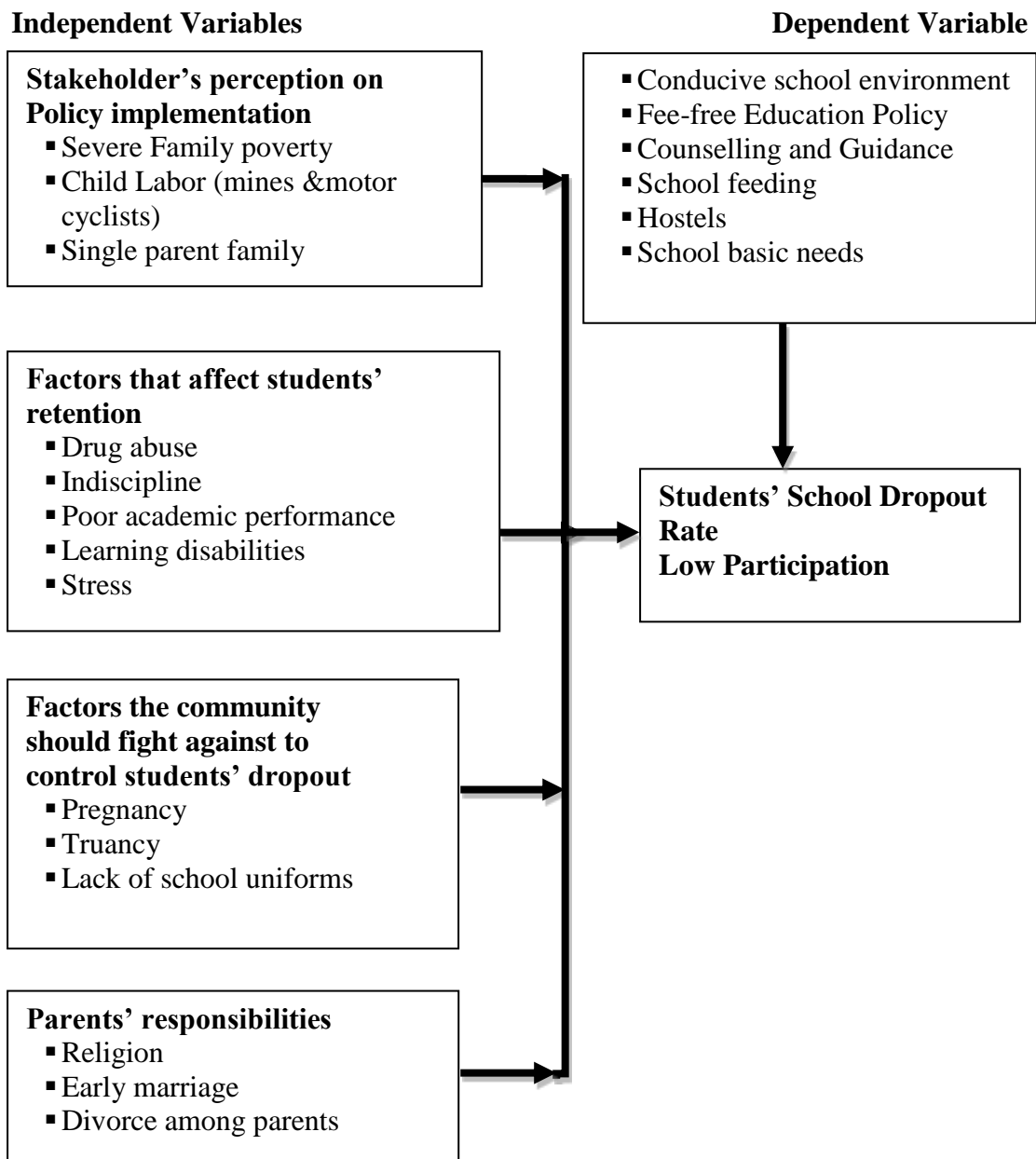


Figure 2.2: The Study's Conceptual Framework

Independent variables are the specific objectives like awareness of educational stakeholders, factors affecting learners' retention, strategies to prevent dropout and responsibilities parents have towards their children. These objectives are affected by dependent variables such as conducive environment, free education, counselling and

guidance, school feeding. The dependent variables when kept constant and effective implemented, were expected to mitigate the problem.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the research strategies, survey population, and area of the research or survey, sampling design and procedures, variables and measurement procedures, methods of data collection, data processing and analysis and expected results of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

In this study, the researcher used pragmatism research paradigm, since both qualitative and quantitative types of data were expected to be collected and analysed simultaneously. Therefore, pragmatism research paradigm satisfied the study. This model of research paradigm was suitable for mixed methodology approach, and it helped the researcher to discuss for or against whether fee-free basic education policy contributes to the retention of learners in secondary schools and if it really controls learners' dropout. Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research. (Creswell, 2009).

3.3 Research Approach

Creswell (2009.) argues that mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves a research paradigm that uses qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both

approaches in a study. In this study, the researcher used mixed methodology approach in collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative statistical data. In this study, questionnaires schedule and structured interview guides were used. The questionnaires schedule was used because it seemed to be straight forward and less time consuming for both the researcher and the respondents. The use of questionnaires in this study enabled the possibility to reach all the participants of the study, since they were left only at their own time filling in spaces. Interview guide gave lots of information in this study since it was very useful in determining the extent to which free basic education is really free, how parents and guardians perceived the policy implications in Morogoro District Council.

3.4 Research Design

This study used convergent parallel research design which involves two data collection series whereby the researcher used to collect and analyse qualitative data and also used to collect and analyse quantitative data by using tools like interview and questionnaires. The two results got were compared and analysed to give the fact about the problem. Convergent parallel design involves the collection of quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously for the purpose of understanding the research problem, (Creswell, 2009). The aim of this design was to supplement the information where other methods were seen to be weak.

The researcher determined the number of students that had dropped out of school in four years after the fee-free education policy was introduced while comparing with the four years before the implementation of the policy began. Blanche (2007) argues

that a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Convergent parallel research design provided the researcher with the in-depth information about the problem of students dropping out from school in the Morogoro District Council.

3.5 Area of the Study

Morogoro District Council was the study area. The researcher chose this area since no research of this kind had been done before in this area. The district has thirty-one wards, thirty-three public secondary schools and one private school. However, the area of study was the point of interest to the researcher since its geographical setup is complex and most of the schools are hardly reachable. So, the researcher would prefer to assess the contributions of fee free basic education in this marginalised area. The district also has few secondary schools which are averagely performing academically with few students completing form four per year. Therefore, the researcher wanted to determine the reasons for this situation regarding the fact that form one enrolment rate had at the time been increasing yearly.

3.6 Target Population

The target population of this study was obtained in a sample from among secondary schools in Morogoro District Council. This research targeted 33 secondary schools, 33 heads of schools 99 Teacher mentors (TM), 1,264 students 214 VEOs and 200 parents and guardians who were also targeted in this research. So, the total targeted population in this study was 1,810 respondents.

3.7 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Abu-Bader (2021) defines population as a collection of all objects or subjects to which generalisation of the study results are made. He also defines a sample as a subset of the population from which study data are to be collected.

3.7.1 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of the participants in the sample, as it is argued that the bigger the sample size, the better the research results. The larger the sample the more likely in its mean and standard deviation to be representative of the target populations (Ogula, 1998, p.59). The sample size of this study was obtained by the most common Yamane's formula $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$. Where n is the sample size, N is the total population and e is the correlation error expected. The researcher got the expected correlation error (e) basing on the results by using Bonett's formula $e = (1 - r^2 / N - 3)$, (Bonett, 2008). Therefore, this study used a sample size of 181 participants from a targeted population of 1,810.

3.7.2 Sampling Procedures

Sampling refers to the process of obtaining a sample size in a study. Sampling procedures are the techniques used to obtain a sample or a small group to represent the whole population in order to draw conclusion representatively. In this study, sampling techniques, which were used are:

3.7.2.1 Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling is the type of probability sampling. This technique was used to randomly select 17 heads of secondary schools and their schools. So, the

head of schools were informed in advance at what day the researcher was going to collect data so that they get plenty of time to prepare the relevant information needed by the researcher. All 33 secondary schools had equal chance of participating in the study. The researcher had a meeting with all 33 heads of school and introduced the study then prepared 17 pieces of paper written **YES** and only 16 papers with **NO**. Those who picked **YES** papers were involved in the study. The researcher also used simple random sampling to select students. The researcher prepared 2 pieces of paper with **YES** to mean those who picked were to be included in the study in each school while the researcher prepared other 98 pieces of papers with **NO** to mean students who picked them would not be included in the study. In order to ensure equal participation gender wise, during sampling the researcher grouped girls and boys separately.

3.7.2.2 Purposive Sampling

This is a non-probability sampling technique. This procedure was employed to select 85 parents, 5 parents from each school 17 VEOs and 28 TMs considering their responsibilities they were carrying in mentoring students. Since schools had been readily identified in the above procedure, then the TMs and VEOs were then the participants in the study by default.

3.7.2.3 Systematic Sampling

This is a probability sampling technique where by a sample was selected basing on the pre-determined selection and well-defined intervals. In case of parents and guardians, the researcher systematically selected them basing to their students who

were selected in the procedure above. They were also informed in advance so that they were around the place when the researcher was going in a specified school. However, to VEOs, the students, parents and guardians, the researcher used the Swahili language to make communication easy for them.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection and Instruments

In this study questionnaires schedule, structured interview guides and documentary review research methods were used in data collection.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

This method was used to obtain numerical information from the heads of school, TMs, and students. The researcher introduced himself to the respondent and explained the aim of his study then he distributed the questionnaire items to the respondents and assisted them. The questionnaires also included the background information of the respondents except their names so that they could be analysed categorically. Questionnaires were involved both open ended form and the closed ended items in order to capture the response of the participants regarding the contributions of the fee-free basic education to students' dropout prevention and how does the policy aid in retention rate of learners in schools.

3.8.2 Structured Interview

This research tool was used to collect information from the village executive officers and the parents. The interview was structured in such a way that the researcher prepared a structured interview guide to interview parents and village executive

officers. This instrument helped the researcher to have freedom of asking supplementary questions and understanding the emotions of the respondent while expressing himself or herself. In this regard, the researcher devised different organs of the interview guide ranging from semi structured interview, structured interview and focus group interview for parents.

3.8.3 Documentary Review

This method was used by the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative information basing on the written resources and documents. One of the documents the researcher consulted is the ETP 2014 version of 2023. Again, the researcher consulted various official articles and journals, magazines and official internet website sources to examine how the policy affects secondary school students' retention. The researcher obtained information basing on the suggestions of various scholars and education stakeholders as far as fee free policy is concerned.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Morrison et al. (2005) discusses validity as it concerns the integrity of conclusions that are generated through the research study. Therefore, validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it intends to measure. It is a situation to which the research tool provides what is actually anticipated from the research hypothesis. In this study, the researcher conducted a pilot survey in the study area by selecting few secondary schools and tested the data collection methods selected to see if they would bring the expected results before data collection. This allowed the researcher to test the validity of the data collecting instruments before the actual research was conducted.

Reliability

Abu-Bader (2021) defines reliability as the extent of random variations or random errors in the results of a study. It refers to whether a particular measure or test applied repeatedly to the same subjects or objects would yield the same results each time. In other words, reliability relates to the consistency of a measure or test over time. This study was reliable since the two different methods of data collection that is, the questionnaires and structured interview provided similar results about the problem. Also, test re-test method was employed and the results were correlated by the Spearman coefficient correlation formula to determine the results' reliability.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedures

In this study quantitative data were organised and analysed descriptive analysis procedures with the help of computerized system software, the spread sheets and the SPSS version 22. they were coded in numerals and symbols to be recognised by the analysis tools. The researcher used the descriptive statistics such as frequencies, distributions and percentages. Pie charts and tables were used to help data tabulation, analysis and interpretations of the information. The outcome of the quantitative data from the coded closed ended items were analysed using descriptive statistics in order to obtain the extent to which fee-free education basic policy was free and how does it help in preventing the students' dropouts and suggest other ways to increase their retention rate in schools.

Again, Qualitative data were analysed by using content analysis procedures. Textual, audio and visual data were coded and gave its value according to individual

responses and the consultation of official documentations, ETP (2014) document and students registers were consulted to give qualitative information. The researcher used as simple language as possible in information interpretations so that the study be easily understood and be of a great value to the respective community.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The cultural and traditional aspects of the Morogoro District Council was much considered so as not to distort the information which was given to the researcher in the whole research process. Respondents were not in one way or another forced to respond to some of the questions especially those which were attached to their family, parents, or relatives. This was considered when they were found to be emotional to an individual or on such bad situations. The researcher presented himself in such a way that did not bring chaos to the community concerned in terms of his general personality and the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the four research objectives. These were about

1. The stakeholders' perception on the implementation of Fee Free Education Policy
2. Factors that affect students' retention in Morogoro District secondary schools,
3. Strategies the educational stakeholders take in prohibiting students' dropout in Morogoro District secondary schools,
4. Responsibilities parents are obliged to undertake for their children according to the policy.

The four research objectives were guided by the following questions: What is the perception of the education stakeholders towards the implementation of Fee Free education policy in the community? What are factors affecting students' retention in Morogoro District Secondary schools? What are the strategies and steps secondary schools and the educational stakeholders take to prohibit students' dropout in Morogoro District? What are the responsibilities parents are obliged to undertake to their children according to the policy?

4.1 Demographic Information

This first part presents the background information of the respondents on questionnaire. To grasp the required information, several variables were set. Such variables included: age, and the education level. These variables were placed purposely to help understand the status of the respondents' demographics.

4.1.1 Respondents' Sex

The ratio of males to females was not the same. The number of the male respondents

exceeded two-point six percent (2.6%) to female respondents. This shows that men were mostly affected by the policy for they had much responsibilities on taking care of the students' school responsibilities and were not equally treated by the policy. This character was also significant since it improved validity and reliability of the research objectives because it ensured equal participation of the two genders in responding to questions where both women and men had equal chance in implementing the fee free basic policy in the community. Refer to Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Participants

Categories	Gender		Total
	Male f (%)	Female f (%)	
Head of Schools	13 (76.5%)	4 (23.5%)	17
TMs	5 (17.9%)	23 (82.1%)	28
Students	15 (44.1%)	19 (55.9%)	34
VEOs	12 (70.6%)	5 (29.4%)	17
Parents	46 (54.1%)	39 (45.9%)	85
Total	91 (50.3%)	90 (47.7%)	181

Source: Field Data, (2024)

4.1.2 Respondents' Level of Education

Respondents' level of education was another demographic characteristic observed to the sampled population. The researcher wanted to know the level of education respondents had to be sure that the problem was well understood by the respondents. All the basic levels of education were included ranging from those who had not attended school and those who had not completed the Doctorate level (PhD). Table 4.2 below shows that 8.3 percent of the respondents had not gone to school at all, 4 percent did not complete school. The researcher then included all kinds of people

regardless of whether they had gone to school or not. According to table 4.2 below only 1.7 percent had master degrees while none of the respondents had a PhD level of education.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of Frequency					Percentage (%)
	Heads of school	TM s	Studen ts	VE Os	Paren ts	
Not gone to school					15	8.3
Did not complete school					7	4
Primary school					36	19
Form One			6			3.3
Form Two			4		1	3
Form Three			16			8.8
Form Four			8	1	12	11.7
Form Six					3	1.8
Certificate					1	0.7
Diploma		10		8	2	11
Degree	15	18		8	7	26.7
Masters	2				1	1.7
PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	28	34	17	85	100

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to Table 4.2 above, the number of the respondents had diploma, degree and form four. This means that the researcher got the perfect respondents since the implementers of the policy are, in most cases, teachers and parents. The significance of determining the level of education of the respondents is that the education level affects the depth and accuracy of the responses. For example, the highly educated respondents may provide more detailed, reflective, and informed answers based on their knowledge and experiences. In this study, the degree holders mark 26.5% and

diploma holders' mark 16% of all the respondents. This means that fee free basic educational policy was well understood, its role in preventing students' dropout and retaining learners in secondary schools. On the other hand, parents who just ended up in standard seven marked 19% of the total respondents.

4.1.3 Respondents' Age

Age is another demographic character the researcher wanted to observe among the respondents. This was significant since age enabled the researcher to determine how old the policy's consumers and implementers were. This also implies the age at which dropout rate is experienced much for students. This was to make sure that the proper means of mitigating the problem were perfectly set according to a specific age.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
12-17	31	17
18-23	3	1.7
25-30	4	2.2
31-36	39	21.5
37-42	60	33.2
43-48	25	13.8
49-54	11	6.1
55-60	3	1.7
60-65+	5	2.8
Total	181	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 4.3 above represents the age of all the respondents in this study, ranging from students, teachers, parents and VEOs. Based on this Table, 60 respondents aged from 37 to 42 equal to 33.8 percent were many compared to other age groups. This

means that people at this age are affected by the policy. It is observed that age influences biological, psychological, and social processes and its significance relies on the differences the age groups respond to questions with different cognitive abilities. In this study, students' responses are quite different compared to those of teachers and parents due to their ability to think and understand the policy concepts.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

This part presents the research objectives, which formed the research questions. To achieve the objectives, the researcher formed four basic research questions which were presented in the form of guided or structured interview, questionnaires, closed and open-ended questions.

4.2.1 Stakeholders' perception on the implementation of Fee Free Education Policy

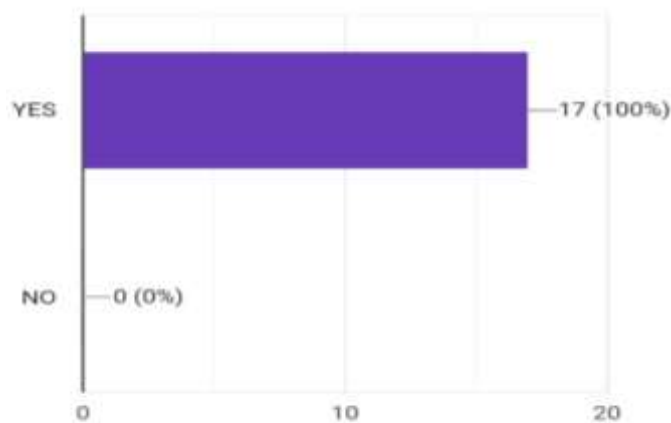
In this aspect, the researcher wanted to know if the respondents were aware of the policy. A structured interview guide and questionnaires with a question, *as an educational stakeholder who implements the fee free basic education policy, how do you perceive the policy in this community?* When students and parents were provided with a questionnaire with a YES or NO question, all of the respondents (100%) confirmed that they were aware of the fee free basic education policy in the community. This question aimed at obtaining the understanding of the respondents if they had any knowledge on the fee free basic education policy. Table 4.4 highlights these responses.

Table 4.4: Parents and Students' Responses

Categories	YES f (%)	NO f (%)
Students	34 (28.6%)	0 (0%)
Parents	85 (71.)	0 (0%)
Total	119	0

Source: Field Data, (2024)

The researcher supplied a questionnaire with a YES or NO the question to VEOs to see if they were aware of the fee free education policy. The outcome showed that 17 VEOs (100%) responded with YES. This implies that the Village Executive Officers were aware of the fee-free policy. It should be noted that the VEOs play a big role in the implementation of the policy. Figure 4.1 shows the VEOs' responses.

**Figure 4.1: VEOs' Responses**

Source: Field Data, (2024)

The researcher again asked the same question with an interview guide to Head of schools and TMs Through their responses. All of them showed to be aware of the fee free basic education policy in the community while giving their opinions on

how they were perceiving the policy. On this regard, Kisaki secondary head of school had the following to say:

“No school fees are paid by parents rather the government disburses to run the schools. The policy as it has been implemented in schools, has been taken in a positive way as it reduces the burden of contributions although there is perception that the government should provide each and everything and parents have nothing to contribute”.

He argued that parents are not paying school fees and education is freely given by the government. However, some of the parents had a misconception about it thinking that the government was going to provide every school needs like midday meals, schools uniforms, writing materials and transport means. He again recommended that schools were still educating parents with such notion towards the policy.

The Kisumu head of school on the other hand, when asked about his perception about fee free education policy he said:

“The policy is good by its approach but its implementation is not properly administered”.

His arguments relied on the mode of policy implementation that the means with which the policy was directed for implementation, was no properly arranged since some important educational stakeholders like classroom teachers were not fully involved in from the initial stages. Tawa Head of School perceived the policy as a means of increasing enrolment rates in secondary schools. She said:

“The policy is good since it has increased enrolment rates in schools.”

She appreciated the policy on increasing the enrolment rates to students in schools. While giving an example of her school, she argued that the policy had improved teaching and learning environment however, building of infrastructures like classrooms and the supply of books was not yet encouraging. She gave an advice on the part of human resource recruitments and the employment of teachers in schools to cope with the increased number of students. (Interview with HOs on the perception of the policy 2024).

But the TMS had also their arguments on the awareness of the policy. It should be taken into consideration that TMs like other teachers are the key implementors of the policy. Apart from teaching, they also take care of needy students through various NGOs operating in their schools. The researcher had an interview with the TMs on how did they perceive fee free basic education policy in schools. Regarding the appropriateness of the policy, their responses were as follows: A TM from Mkuyuni secondary school said “the policy is good; however, it has created chaos when the school introduces any contribution for the welfare of students”. She said that the midday lunch parents were required to contribute for their children at school. She noted that it was a problem to tell parents about contributions since they knew that education was freely being provided.

Another TM from Matombo secondary school said “It is good and helpful to the community, but it has created irresponsible people especially parents to their children”. The fee free basic education policy is good but the community thinks that the government is also required to feed the students something which is not true.

The TM from Mikese secondary school responded to the question while exposing the shortcomings of the policy, “The policy by itself is good, although it has a little bit of a challenge since parents have to incur subsidiary costs for their children”. According to her, parents had hidden costs of house rents for distant students, food contribution at schools and fare to school from home to school and back home. These costs are still a challenge to some of the poor families that is why NGOs are still helping students even if education is freely granted. However, the aid NGOs are giving is limited to cut across all education needs.

When asked how a TM from Gwata secondary school was perceiving the policy in the community she said “The policy in this community has somehow helped the students achieve their goals because those students who completed form four, were going to be supported by the organization”. In this circumstance, she referred to a marginalized community like that of Masai communities from Gwata ward who were at the time attending school. Therefore, the operation of CAMFED, a Tanzania NGO in the school, was also found to have much helped the students. The same interview guide was administered to the TM from Fatemi secondary school, who said,

“The policy is good and is beneficial as it allows most school-age children from poor families to access free, equitable and quality basic education thus it reduces the financial burden on poor families” (Interview with the TMs on the Perception of the policy 2024)

The researcher again wanted to know if there were organisations that were supporting students in schools apart from education being freely provided. To solicit

findings on this, the TMs were given a questionnaire which required them to put a tick on a correspondence alternative. The researcher listed some organisations both governmental and non-governmental for the TMs to select. Figure 4.2 below shows that CAMFED Tanzania marked 64.3 percent and GLAMI with 46.4 percent. The study shows that apart from education being provided for free, the policy does not satisfy all the school needs to students especially the neediest ones.

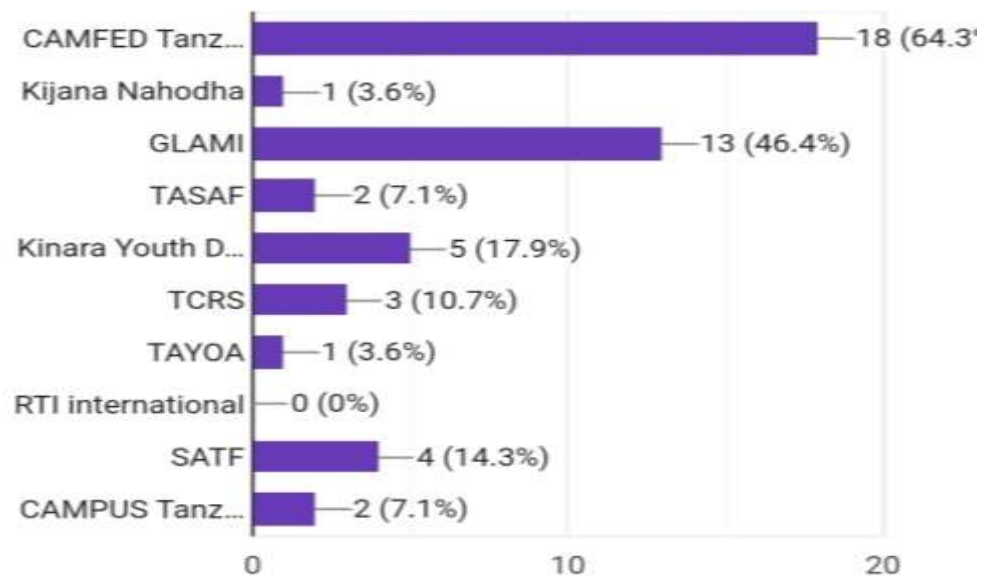


Figure 4.2: Organisations that Support Student in Schools

Source: Field Data, (2024)

The researcher wanted to know between the two genders what gender was receiving more support from the organisations. This question was asked to 34 students and their responses were as follows:

Table 4.5: Gender Wise Distribution of Social Support

Gender	Frequency	%
Girls only	19	55.9
Boys only	3	8.8
Both Boys and Girls	12	35.3
Total	34	100

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to Table 4.5 above, girls were found to be supported more than the boys. This might be just because of their number or due to NGOs' policy of gender sensitivity. However, the researcher wanted to know exactly what kind of needs were the organisations supporting the needy students. To get the required information, the researcher asked the respondents the following question what support do the NGOs provide to students instead of the parents. However, all 17 HOS confirmed that NGOs' support varied according to students' needs at the time and each organization had its own internal policy. That is, others supported both boys and girl while others were supporting only girls. The Head of school were interviewed and their responses were recorded as follows:

When asked about the social support the NGO was providing to his school, the HOs of Bwakira Chini Secondary School said that CAMFED was supporting students by giving them school uniforms, stationeries, sanitary pads, financial and material support, shoes, mattress, bed sheets, NHIF cards, solar lighting lamps, bicycles for the learners to use them when they come from home to school and pocket money. On his part, the Mvuhwa HOs said that apart from CAMFED Tanzania, also GLAMI was providing services in his school. He said this NGO was just teaching students on life and social skills. The NGO was instructing future leaders

and trying to install confidence into students. However, the NGO was rarely supporting the community with some basic needs. He gave an example from his school whereby the organization had helped in completing the construction of the students' toilet cubes.

Korelo secondary school HOs on the other hand when asked about the social support the school was receiving, he mentioned SATF through a program called Kinara Youth fund, the NGO has been providing students with School uniforms, shoes, sanitary pads for girls, mattresses, money for food contribution, and lighting torches. Moreover, it was revealed that the NGO was supporting both boys and girls. According to the interview responses above, it is noted that a single school had more than one NGO that were operating in it. (Interview with HOs on the NGOs supporting schools 2024).

All in all, both quantitative and qualitative research tools gave the same results on the perception of the educational stakeholders on the fee free basic education policy the community was all aware that the policy was on the operation. However, there were still students who could afford schooling 100% that is why the study shows that there were some organisations which were providing social support to most of the needy students. It should be noted that even if education is freely provided, the policy lacked some strategies of helping parents and other educational stakeholders to be aware of the policy implementation by itself.

4.2.2 Factors Affecting Students' Retention in Morogoro District Secondary Schools

The main focus of this objective was to determine issues, that when kept constant, would aid retaining students in schools but without them being in practice, they would make students drop out from school. In this objective, the researcher wanted to know what were the reasons for students' dropout. To get the needed information, the questionnaire schedule was administered to 28 TMs through a question on what were the reasons for students' dropout. In giving their responses, they were required to tick (✓) against the correct correspondent. They were also instructed to supply more than one response where applicable and their responses are shown in figure 4.3 below:

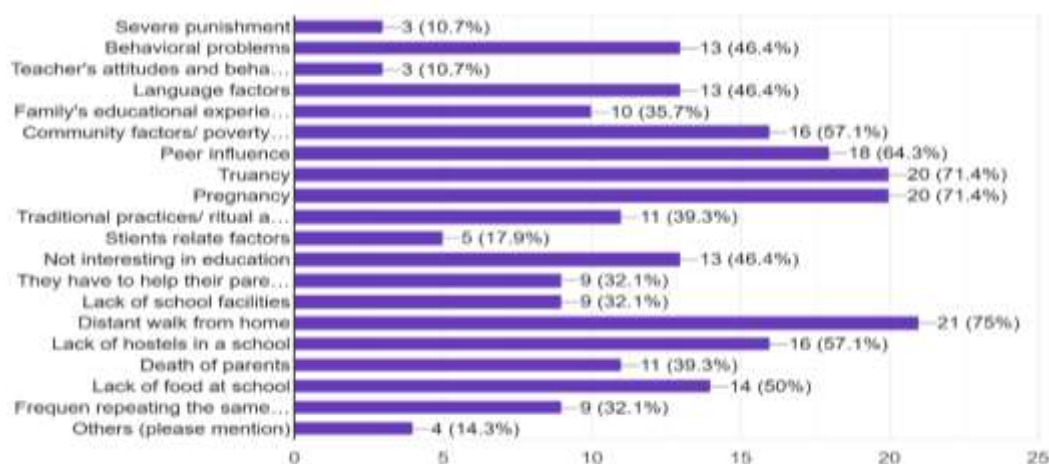


Figure 4.3: Reasons for Students' Dropout in Schools

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to figure 4.3 above when 28 TMs were asked what were the reasons for students' dropout, 20 (71.4%) of them said students were dropping out from

school because of pregnancy, 20 (71.4%) said students were dropping out from school due to truancy, 21(75%) said students were dropping out from schools because of distance walk from home to school, 13 (46.4%) of them said students were dropping out from school just because of language factor and lack of interest in school while 16 (57.1%) said students were dropping out from school because of peer influence and lack of hostels in schools. However, 16 (57.1%) TMs said that students were dropping out from school because of the community factors and poverty.

The researcher administered a structured interview guide on what were the factors affecting students' retention in their schools to 17 HoS. All HoS to all sampled schools confirmed that students' retention was still a problem in their schools, as schools were still experiencing dropout even if the rate differed from one class to another from one schools to another and their responses were recorded as presented below as follows:

The Ngerengere Day HoS when interviewed on what were the reasons for students' dropout, he mentioned the following to be the reasons. Lack of food at school was making some students drop out from school because of the varied food program that were being provided. Distance from their residences to school was another factor.

On his part, the Selembala HoS mentioned the following to be the reasons behind the lack of food services in the schools: "the educational policy itself" the use of English language makes it hard for learners to change from using Kiswahili in

primary schools to using English in secondary schools., The other reason is frequent repetition of form two. Also, the economic factors. It should be remembered that in primary schools, the medium of instruction is Kiswahili while in secondary schools, the medium of instruction is the English language.

The Kiroka HoS mentioned four reasons which he said were common in his school and the surrounding community: poverty, truancy, peer influence and pregnancies to girl students. He explained that some students who were raised in poor families were dropping out from school because they could not afford to meet the required needs. There was also the issue of pregnancies to girl students, truancy, and peer influence.

Lastly, it was noted that some parents were not that much responsible in taking and bringing up their children (Interview with HoS on the Reasons of students Dropouts 2024). Parents were given with a questionnaire on what were the reasons for dropout in schools. According to their experience, the same question the HoS and TMs were asked at different times, on what were the factors for students' dropout; 33 parents (38.8%) said that hunger was the most likely causative of the students' dropout as shown in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6: Parents Reasons for Students' Dropout

Reason for Dropout	f	Percent (%)
The language of instruction (English),	8	9.4
Form two frequent repetition	2	2.4
Unconducive school environment	1	1.1
The distance from home to school	14	16.5
Peer influence and truancy	13	15.3
Lack of school basic requirements	2	2.4
Lack of food at school	33	38.8
Pregnancy to girl students	12	14.1
TOTAL	85	100

Source: Field data, (2024)

Looking at the responses from HoS, TMs and Parents, the study shows that the following reasons were most often cited by parents: hunger, distance from home to school, language of instruction, pregnancies, truancy, peer influence, poverty among families, frequent repetition in the same class and lack of other school requirements as some of the factors and reasons for students' dropout from school.

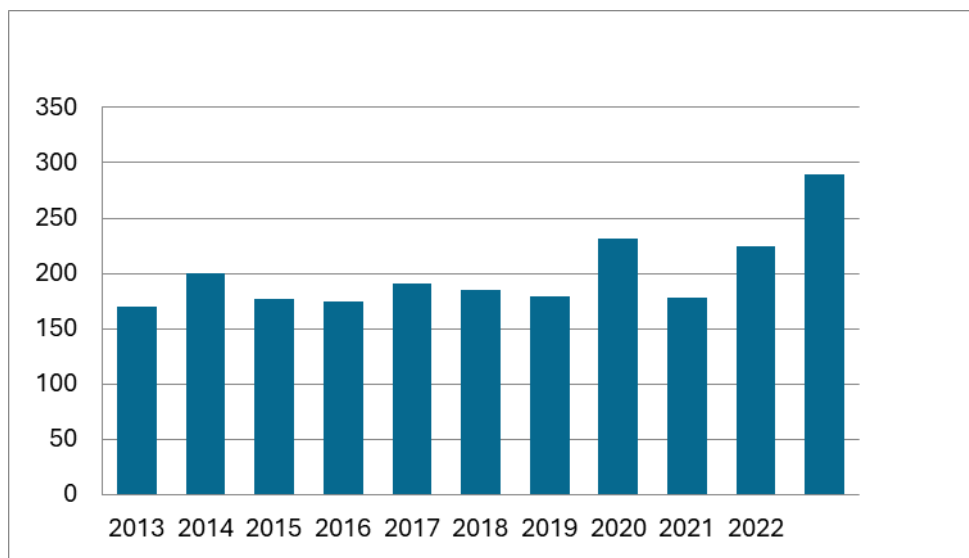
The researcher wanted to know statistically the number of form ones who had dropped out from school in the year 2024 specifically in the sampled 17 schools. The questionnaire schedule on how many form one students were selected in the year 2024 and how many of them were not admitted revealed that 3498 form one students were selected in 17 sampled schools but only 3044 students were admitted. This means that 454 (13%) students dropped out to indicate that dropout was still there even if education was free. Table 4.7 below shows the findings.

Table 4.7: Students' Selection in 2024

Students	f	(%)
Selected	3498	100
Admitted	3044	87
Dropped	454	13

Source: Field data, (2024)

On the other hand, the researcher wanted to know a statistical trend of students' dropout from the year 2013 to 2015 before the policy and another trend from 2016 to 2023 after the policy started to be implemented. A questionnaire schedule was administered to 17 heads of school on the number of students who dropped out from school in the stipulated years. The responses on this are shown in figure 4.4 below:

**Figure 4.4: Students' Dropout From 2013 – 2023**

Source: Field data, (2024)

According to figure 4.3 above, the years from 2013 to 2015 before the fee free policy implementation began, schools were still experiencing students' dropouts. For

example, in the year 2014, 200 students dropped out in the 17 sampled schools. Again, in the years after the fee free policy implementation began, dropouts were still there. For example, in the year 2023, only 300 students dropped from schooling. This means that apart from education being provided freely, there were other factors to be kept constant to retain students in schools. When 17 heads of schools were asked about the two genders which one was mostly affected by dropout, 7 (41.1%) said males while 10 of the 58.9 said female students were mostly affected by dropout. Table 4.8 below highlights the findings.

Table 4.8: HOs' Responses

Gender	f	%
Male	7	41.1
Female	10	58.9
Total	17	100

Source: Field data, (2024)

This study shows that female (girls) students were at high risk of not completing school compared to male students. The researcher again wanted to know the school basic requirements parents were obliged to supply to the students before admission. A structured interview guide was administered to 17 HoS with this basic question: as a head of school, what are the school requirements or facilities a parent has to supplement to his children for school? This question was significant as it enabled the researcher to determine the basic requirements for the school children especially when being admitted. On this regard, all sampled schools had different requirements for students especially when admitting them in school. On this, the HoS gave their responses which were recorded as follows:

The HoS of Milengwelengwe secondary school when interviewed he mentioned the following to be crucial and important requirements for a student to join his school “simple tools for cleanliness like a bloom, slasher, bucket, uniform, a ream of paper, pens and exercise books.”

The HoS of Nelson Mandela secondary school mentioned the following requirements:

“School uniforms, writing materials and lunch contribution. Generally, the requirements across government secondary schools were almost the same in the district except some few that related to the context and of which were minor thus they could not hinder admission”. (Interviews with the HoS on the basic school requirements 2024)

4.2.3 Strategies Secondary Schools and the Educational Stakeholders take to Control Students’ Dropout in Morogoro District

In this objective the researcher wanted to determine the strategies the educational stakeholders were taking to control students’ dropout. The researcher observed the main functions of the school organs like PTA/PTP and the School Board on preventing students’ dropouts in schools. It should be taken into consideration that school organs represent the community in implementation of the policy. This is because, the Fee free policy recognizes the availability of school organs like school boards, PTPs/PTAs and the village or ward governments. According to ETP, (2014) the educational stakeholders have a crucial part to play in implementing the policy as it states that “Following an increase in the demand for education and training, “the educational stakeholders have also been contributing to financing education

and training in different ways including construction and management of schools.” In this circumstance, PTP/PTA and school board are the best representative of the educational stakeholders including parents.

Village governments as one of the education stakeholders play an important role in preventing student’s dropout thus retaining them in schools. The local governments also have a significant role to play in implementing the fee free basic educational policy. The researcher wanted to know the strategies village governments were taking in preventing students’ dropout by asking the question what are the strategies and measures the village and the educational stakeholders take in preventing students from dropping out from school? The researcher prepared some alternatives where 17 VEOs were required to put a tick against more than one corresponding response. Figure 4.5 shows the responses.

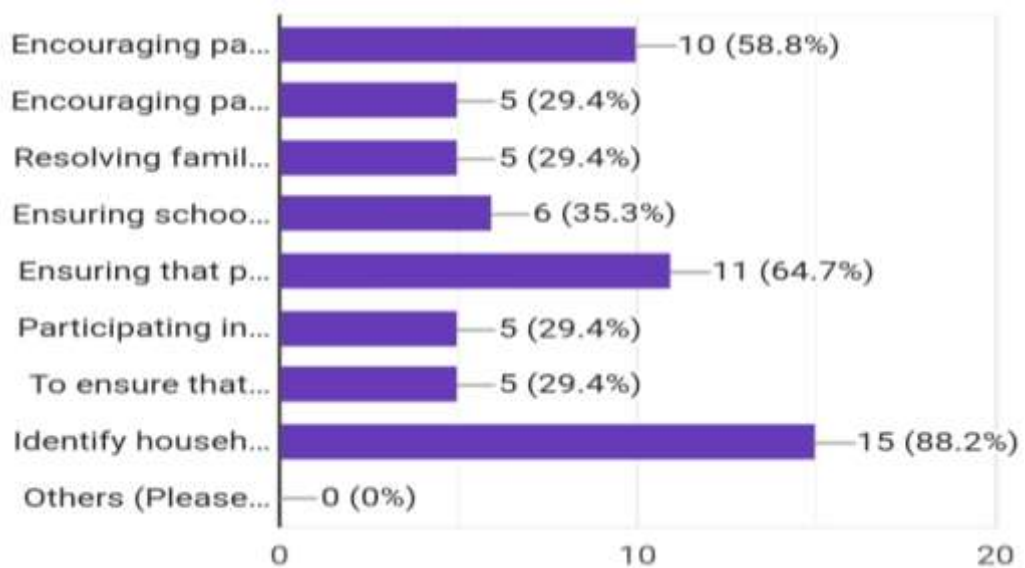


Figure 4.5: Strategies of Preventing Dropout

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to figure 4.4 above 15 (88.2%) VEOs out of 17 identified households which were poor economically and registered them to TASAF programmes as a means of preventing students' dropout. 10 VEOs (58.8%) said encouraging parents to buy school needs for their children, 11 (64.7%) said that they were ensuring that parents were contributing lunch to school. However other strategies were also identified in their marginalized number. So, village governments have strategies like facilitating schools providing lunch for students and parents buying school needs for their students. This means that midday meal and school needs are some of the factors that are affecting students' retention in schools even if the education is freely provided.

Village executive officers on the other hand control a government social action fund for the needy households. One of the factors for a household to be supported by TASAF is a family to have children who are schooling either in secondary school or primary school. The researcher wanted to know more reasons for a household to be registered in TASAF, so a schedule of questionnaires was administered to 17 VEOs. A set of seven alternatives was given for the respondent to choose. All the responses had equal chance to be selected and the respondent was free to select more than one alternative as shown in table 4.9 below

Table 4.9: TASAF Selection Criteria

Category	f	%
Poor households	15	88.2
One meal at home per day	4	23.5
Single living parent	2	11.8
The family of the village leader	0	0
Household with many school children	9	52.9
Homeless family	1	5.9
Poor daily income	9	52.9

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to Table 4.8 above the VEOs were selecting needy households to TASAF basing on poor households (88.2%), households with many school children (52,9%) and a household with a poor daily income. This means that community is still too poor to afford daily basic needs for learners. Thus, the government has been supporting the community in terms of capital but focusing on students to retain them in school.

The researcher then conducted a structured interview guide to 17 head of schools on what were the strategies being used by the school organs in preventing students' dropout in schools. All sampled schools confirmed that presence of the school boards and other organs like PTA/PTP who facilitated the day today schools' activities. When the researcher asked Kinole HoS she explained three activities as follows: "Planning parents' meetings to create awareness to other parents on the educational matters". The school board and PTP are responsible for planning the proper use of the school fund which was gotten through capitation grants, renovation and repairing some infrastructures like tables, chairs and classrooms. All these activities are to enable a learner comfortably enjoy the conducive school

environment. The Kisumu HoS on the other hand, explained the importance of school organs that “they give emphasis on food programme for students, help to prohibit malpractices like truancy to students” he was noted to insist on the counselling and coaching the students, school organs helping coach students to avoid behaviors like truancy. But also, through school organs, committees were made to emphasize the importance of food program in schools.

On his part, the MATOMBO HoS mentioned some few functions of the schools’ organs which were aiding in preventing students from dropping out from school to be: “reporting some issues on gender-based violence (GBV). Conducting regular meetings with parents and students so as to guide and counselling”. According to the findings, the area was a victim of gender-based violence where it was observed that a number of girl students were dropping out from school because of pregnancy.

Kisaki HoS added some other more functions of school organs to be: “insisting teachers to have close supervision to students, and giving information to school on truant students so that they can be dealt with”. According to the HoS, school organs were not allowed to deal directly with students’ disciplinary actions rather just giving information to the school administration so that teachers would take the needed measures.

Lastly schools’ organs have responsibility of participating in teachers’ meetings for the purpose of advising them. (Interview with HoS on the strategies school organs take to prevent Dropout 2024). Generally, the educational stakeholders apart from

the school organs, are responsible for sharing schools' challenges and to cooperate as whole society to reduce dropout in schools. Facilitating the construction of school infrastructures like buildings and dealing with students' disciplines. The researcher again, wanted to know if the fee free basic education policy was preventing students' dropout. The question asked to get information was *how does the fee free educational policy prevent students' dropout in schools?* A structured interview guide was scheduled and administered to 28 TMs. It should be remembered that TMs like all other teachers have been implementing the policy in schools differently. In different occasions but regarding the same question, all the respondents confirmed that fee free basic education was not preventing students' dropout directly but through the responsibilities the policy had given to parents and community. It was revealed that fee free policy had no direct impact on retaining students and preventing students' dropout and its impact was indirect and had to be collaborated by other factors:

The TM from Selembala secondary school was noted as saying that: not at all, but through abolition of direct academic costs like examination fee is experienced. When asked the same question, The TM from Fatemi secondary school said: "Fee free policy has no direct effect because schools still experience dropout as it does not prevent dropout directly". Again, when asked if the fee free basic education was preventing students from dropping out from school, the TM from Tawa secondary school, she said: "No, but entry and enrolment rates have increased and admission has improved, the policy prevents students' dropout indirectly since it has reduced the burden for parents to pay for school fees and other direct costs"

(Interview with the TMS on whether the policy prevents dropout or not). Looking at the strategies the local government (VEOs) are using towards preventing students' dropout and that of school organs and structure like school boards and PTA/PTP are almost the same. Both are taking measures like construction of infrastructures, giving guidance and counselling services to students, conducting school meetings and raising parents' awareness towards education matters but mostly they all insist on the importance of students having mid-day meal at school to prohibit truants.

4.2.4 Responsibilities Parents are *obliged* by the Policy to *take* for their Children in Schools.

Fee free education policy requires parents to undertake some responsibilities for their students. In this objective the researcher wanted to know those responsibilities and if the parents are able to meet all those requirements, but also, he wanted to understand which of the requirements were still challenging them to provide, why and what were the solution for those challenges.

Education Act number 3 of 25/5/2016 part 3.10 illustrates the parents' responsibilities which the policy requires them to fulfil for their children in schools, these responsibilities are such a buying school uniforms, mattresses, writing materials, and others of the like. All the information was gathered using the principal question what are the responsibilities parents are obliged by the policy to undertake to their children at school? The researcher prepared a questionnaire schedule that required 85 parents to confirm that they were aware that the policy required them to discharge some responsibilities for their children at school. The

study wanted to know if parents were aware that they were required by the policy to fulfil some of the requirements to their children apart from education being provided for free. The researcher provided a YES or NO question to parents and the results are as shown in figure 4.6 below,

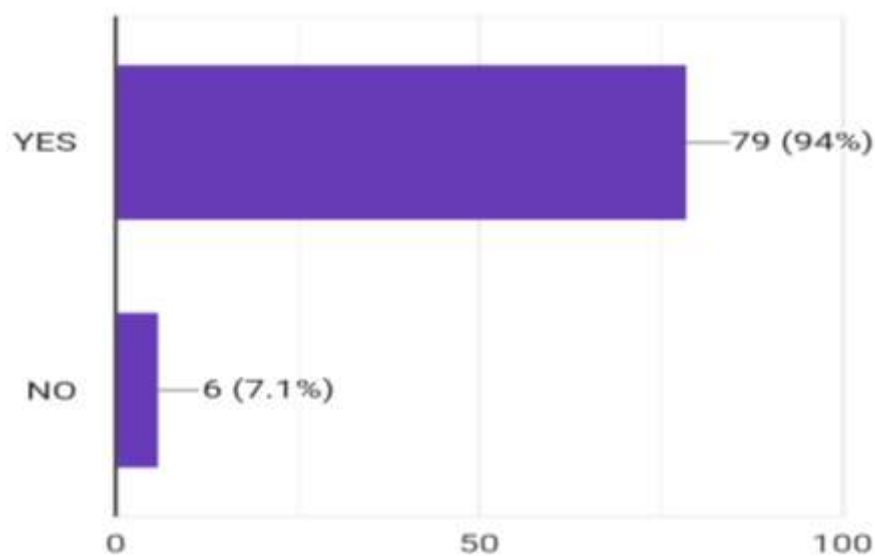


Figure 4.6: Awareness of Parents to Responsibilities

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to figure 4.6 above, the results show that 79 parents (94%) said YES when asked if they were aware that the policy required them to undertake some responsibilities for their children at school. This means that the policy's scope and delimitation was well known to all parents and the educational stakeholders in general. However, 6 (7.1%) parents replied NO to mean that they were not aware if they were required by the policy to meet some other requirements to their children. This might be because of the perception that education was free so they thought that the government had to do everything.

On the other hand, the researcher wanted to know if parents could afford providing all the school needs to their children. A YES or NO questionnaire schedule was administered to 85 parents where by only 28 (32.9%) parents said YES that they could afford giving all the school needs to their children but 57 (65.9%) parents said NO; to mean they were not able to provide all the necessary school needs to the children. Table 4.10 shows the findings.

Table 4.10: Ability of Parents to Supply all School needs of their Children

Response	f	%
YES	28	32.9
NO	57	67.1
Total	85	100

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to this study the number of parents who could not afford to provide all the necessary school needs to their children was higher, this might be because of the low or poor per capital income the community was known to have and this might be one of the major sources of students' dropout from schools. The responsibilities parents are required by the policy to provide to their children were found to be challenging to most of them. In this case, researcher wanted to know which of the requirements mentioned by the policy specifically were still a great challenge to them. The researcher prepared a checklist of all requirements and instructed 85 parents to put a tick against the corresponding item. More than one choice was allowed. Table 4.11 below shows the findings.

Table 4.11: Most Challenging Students' Requirements to Parents

Requirement	f	%
Food contribution	61	71.8
Buying school uniforms for your children every year	19	22.4
Helping your child learn at home	19	22.4
House for rent nearby schools	54	63.5
Writing materials such as pens, compasses and books	8	9.4

Source: Field Data, (2024)

According to this study, in Table 4.11 above 61 (71.9%) parents could not afford to supply food or give contributions to school for their children, 54 (63.5%) parents could not afford renting living rooms for their children who were from school. So, distance from home to school and unavailability of food at school are still two big problems that might lead to students' dropout.

The researcher again wanted to know the extent to which parents agreed that the government was providing for free education 100%. The question with parameters like PARTIALLY AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE and STRONGLY DISAGREE were administered to 85 parents. It was revealed that 49.4 percent said they partially agreed, 9.4 percent said they strongly disagreed and 41.2 percent said they strongly agreed, figure 4.7 below shows the findings

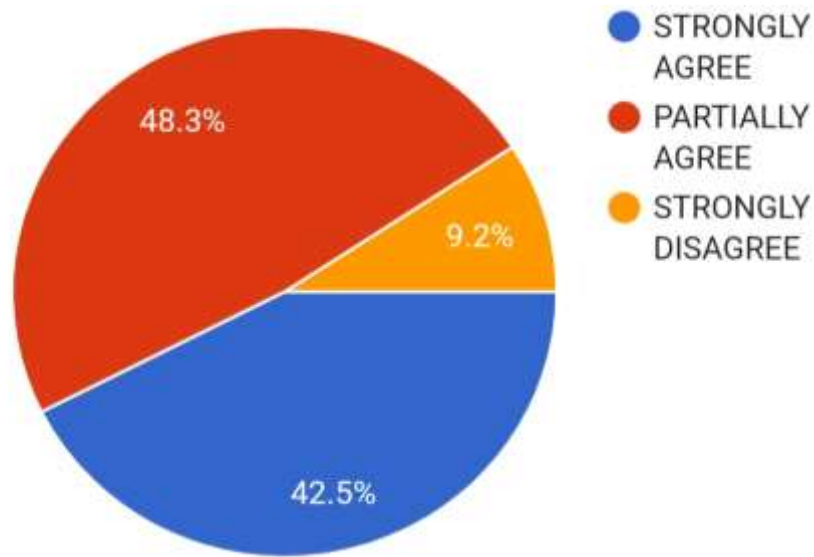


Figure 4.7: Parents' Agreements on Free Education Provision

Source: Field Data, (2024).

According to Figure 4.7 above, 37 (42.5%) parents who strongly agreed that the government was providing for the fee free education, but 42 (48.3%) parents who partially agreed that the government was providing for free education 100 percent. This might be just because of the impact the policy had brought since its implementation in the year 2016. However, 6 (9.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that education was 100 percent free. This might be because of the community's social economic status where by some of the parents were not able to afford some basic needs as they were being helped by donors to support their children at school.

All in all, various reasons were addressed but girls' pregnancy, poverty and life difficulty, lack of food at school (lunch) and distance from home to schools were highly mentioned by a good number of parents and other respondents who attempted

this question. A good number of the respondents said that the policy lacked some strengths to directly prevent students' dropout while trying to maintain retention. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection played a great role in giving almost the same responses. That is, they looked at the number of dropouts among the sampled schools that is, three years before the implementation of the policy, schools experienced dropout and again six years after the policy implementation, schools still experienced dropouts.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1.Overview

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings according to the objectives of the research, it should then be noted that the subject matter of this research project was “assessing the contributions of fee-free basic education policy on the retention of learners in Tanzania secondary schools: a case of Morogoro District Council”. The quantitative data from questionnaire were analyzed by frequencies, spread sheets, mean and percentages through a computerized assisted program (SPSS version 20) and presented into tables, charts and figures while nominal data were collected through interview guides and were thematically analyzed and presented by quotations in italic form.

The Tanzania Education Circular No. 5 of ETP of 2014 directed that primary and secondary education should be given freely by the government (URT, 2014). The Circular No 5 of 2016 reads: “Provision of free education means learners will not pay any fee or other contributions that were being provided by parents or guardians before the release of the new circular” (URT, 2016).

This study was guided by four basic objectives which were: 1. Exploring the stakeholder’s perception on the implementation of Fee Free Education Policy. 2. Examining the factors that affect students’ retention in Morogoro District secondary schools. 3. Examining the strategies the educational stakeholders were taking to control students’ dropout in Morogoro District secondary schools, and 4. Examining

the responsibilities parents are obliged to undertake for their children according to the policy. Based on the specific objectives, the following findings are discussed.

5.2 Stakeholder's Perception and Awareness on the Implementation of Fee Free Education Policy

According to objective number one, the study found that the educational stakeholders specifically parents were aware that the government was providing free secondary education. This implies that a great number of people in the study area were aware that the government was providing education without fee. This might be the result of the eight years implementation of the fee free education policy in the community. Data analysed quantitatively show that 85 (100%) parents said "YES" that they were aware of the fee free policy in the community. (Table 4.4). This finding is in line with the international sustainable development goals of education since it fulfils the second millennium development goal that is, "achieving universal primary education." Universal primary education here implies the basic education from primary to secondary level in Tanzania. The study then wanted to explore the role of the fee free education policy in retaining learners in secondary schools based on the international standards. Tanzania revised its Education and Training policy in 2014. Objective 3.6.1 of the policy stipulates on the need to establish and finance Fee-Free Education Programme (URT, 2014).

This study supports also what is stated in the ETP (2014) version of 2023 where a comprehensive statement that is given replaces that of 1995 aiming at improving the quality of education at all levels. The policy emphasises at providing free and

compulsory basic education, language of instruction, equity and inclusivity. It should be noted that according to the ETP (1995), parents and students in both public and private schools were required to pay school fees and other contributions. “Fees and other contributions provided by parents and students in private and public schools and colleges are also part of the contributions for running those schools and colleges” (ETP, 2014 pg. 54).

This finding also supports the ETP (2014) version of 2023, through Act No. 3 of 2016, 5, 25th, on the Implementation of basic Primary Education without Fee, in ordinary level secondary schools, where the government has been supporting running of schools through the capitation grants with the following distribution: Academic purposes (30%) Maintenance (30%) Continuous assessment (15%) Materials (30%) Office expenses (35%) Sports (10%) Minor repairs (10%) and Examinations (20%) Medicine and expenses related to female students (10%) (URT, 2015b). Nevertheless, in this finding, the costs of running schools were found to be higher than the budget set. This is because, the distance from home to schools was found to be longer something that was found to affect students since a number of schools were found to have no hostels.

Muhagama, Luvanga et al (2022), in EAJESS, conducted research on the “Stakeholders’ Perception on the Freeness of Fee-Free Education in Ordinary Secondary Schools: A Case of Rombo District, Tanzania. This research discussed the extent to which education was being freely provided, although it did not consider how the policy could act as a tool for retaining learners in schools.

The current study also found that there were governmental and non-governmental organisations that were helping students despite the fact that education was being given freely. According to this finding, 17 (100%) TMs and 17 (100%), school head mentioned the following organisations; CAMFED Tanzania (63.3%) GLAMI (46.4%) Kinara Youth Foundation (17.9%) and SATF (14.3%), (Figure 4.1) that were financially and materially contributing for the education of students in some of the schools in the study area. This implies that fee free education does not satisfy the communities' demand a hundred percent. This might be a result of differences in economic abilities of some of the parents in the community. The study found that both girls and boys in some of the secondary schools in which this study was conducted were supported equivalently. This implies that both girls and boys have been affected by the fee free education policy in equal proportions. Statistically analysed, data show that both boys (53.6%) and girls (53.6%) were being supported (Figure 4). This suggests that not only girls were needy when it came to school facilities but also boys.

This finding is in line with Michael Brophy (2020), in the Journal of International and Comparative Education, the role of NGOs in supporting education in Africa. that “non-government Organisations (NGOs) which support education in Africa such as small charities and foundations may use different titles such as council or trust, are almost always Non-profit organizations”. The NGOs' activities vary from villages to villages, schools of special groups like disabilities, most vulnerable communities and marginalised societies. This finding also supports what has been explained in the ETP (2024) version of 2023 that parents have responsibilities to support their

children such as buying them uniforms, writing materials, providing them fare to and from the school especially for day students and contributing for food.

The implication on the fee free basic education is that the parents were aware about the policy although there was misconception with some of the parents who believed that the government was responsible for everything. Although 100% of the parents confirmed that they were aware that the government was providing fee free education, it is quite true that fee free education has diverse implications. It should be noted that access to education is higher, there are higher enrolment rates, inclusivity and having a large population that has gone to school. However, there is a challenge on the overcrowded classes, limited facilities like books, latrines and laboratory chemicals and shortage of teachers. Again, there is the problem of students dropping out from school. Concerning this, all 181 (100%) respondents confirmed that they were aware that the government was providing for the fee free education.

5.3 Analysing the Factors that Affect students' Retention in Morogoro District Secondary Schools

According to the objective number two, the study found that hunger at school because of varied food programs being provided, distance from home to school, some students having single parents, lack of hostels/ dormitories, educational policy language (English language); were factors making it hard for students to retain in schools and complete the learning cycle. English language specifically was found to be a factor which does not allow students make a smooth transition from primary school to secondary school. It should be noted that in primary school a teaching

language is Kiswahili and English is just a subject while in secondary schools English is a medium of instruction. Other factors found were frequent repetition of form two, economic factors whereby students being raised in poor families, divorce, family conflicts, poverty, pregnancies to girl students, truancy, corporal punishment, peer influence, some parents not being that much responsible in taking care and upbringing of their children, negatively affect fee free education provision (Figure 4.2). This fact suggests that despite the differences in terms of geographical location of schools, a good number of students were found to face almost the same problems in terms of retention since they had the same characteristics. This finding is in line with the study by Anthony et al. (2013) who found that dropout levels were higher in Day compared to boarding schools, mixed compared to single sex schools. In this study the findings determined that all 17 (100%) sampled secondary schools were day and co-schools. That is why factors affecting retention of students were quite similar.

This finding on the other hand supports what is stated in the ETP (2014) that the language of instruction in secondary schools is English and the policy insists that Kiswahili remains the subject and the language of instruction in primary schools. However, as it was found, the language of instruction was found to be one of the dropout reasons. It should be noted that seven years of primary school are taught by using Kiswahili as the medium of instruction. Thus, the abrupt change from Kiswahili to English as the medium of instruction might make some students dropout out from school because they do not understand it thus making it difficult for them to use it in regular communication as well as a medium of instruction.

(EPT, 2014). Again, the study found that all 17 sampled schools were day schools which suggests that students were just coming to school and going back home after class hours. This was due to lack of hostels which made students walk from home to school. This might make students dropout from school because of tiredness and due to pregnancy (to girl students).

This study found that 454 (13%) out of 3498 form one students, selected in the academic year 2024 had dropped out from school. (Table 4.5). This suggests that dropout cases start from early classes. It should be understood that one of the significant aspects of fee free education policy is the improvement of quality of education and the enrolment rates. This finding is in line with the study by Kombich and Kariuki (2022), who conducted a study on “psychosocial factors influencing school dropout among Masai boys in marginalized communities.” They observed that a high rate of school dropouts had the capacity of reducing the pool and diversity of qualified workforce contributing to national building. Despite this affinity, their study focused much on the factors influencing boys’ dropouts in Kajiado county in Kenya. In contrast, the current study focused on the roles of fee free education policy to student retention.

Objective number two also compared the number of dropouts before and after the implementation of the fee free education policy from 2013-2016. The study found that from 2013 – 2015 which is before the implementation of the policy, 547 students dropped out from school. In contrast, 1655 students dropped out from school from 2016 - 2023 after the policy was put into effect (Figure 4.3). The implication of this

finding is that before the policy began to be implemented and after it began to be implemented, dropping out from school was still experienced although there were differences in number. However, the reasons for dropouts were different for both periods. It should be noted that the years 2013- 2015 support the implementation of ETP, (1995) which required parents and students to pay school fees and other contributions. The funding system of the policy required the contributions for construction of infrastructures and running schools, the policy again states that the fund was established from government sources, donors and parents' contributions. The policy's negative aspect was dropouts of students because of poor economic status of families that did not afford education costs including school fees and contributions.

The years from 2016 – to date support the ETP, (2014) the policy which insists on fee free education. Among the results of the implementation of the policy is the increased number of students in schools due to higher rates of enrolments, as the government has been funding education 100 percent. However, the negative aspect of the policy is dropping out of students from school due to distant walk, lack of food, pregnancy to girl students, overcrowding in classes and severe school truancy. Another is resource scarcity like teachers, lab chemicals and books.

This implies that the schools have been facing infrastructure crisis, shortage of teachers and other resources. Thus, dropping out from school in this case is notable because of insufficient infrastructures like classrooms, chairs, tables and latrines. Internationally, this study is related to the standards set by Millennium Development

Goals (2015), goal number 2 that intends to improve universal basic primary education worldwide.

The study also found that girls had a high dropout rate in relation to boys. This is significant when one deals with dropout's mechanisms since the means of preventing might be different due to its cause. (Table 4.7). This finding supports ETP, (2014) which insists on inclusive education to both girls and boys also disabled persons to have right for free education. However, the funding system of the policy considers special groups also. It should be noted that in the year 2022, the government ordered girls that had dropped out from school due to pregnancy to go back to school to start attending from where they ended. The government prepared special zones in each region for dropped out girls to attend for free. This was to abide to the international standards of quality education and the World Bank funded the programme.

5.4 Strategies and Measures the Educational Stakeholders Take to Prevent Students' Dropout in Morogoro District Secondary Schools.

Based on objective number three, the study found that school organs like PTA/PTP, school board, parents and village governments had responsibilities in preventing students' dropout by taking measures of planning for parents' meetings to create awareness to other parents on the educational matters, putting emphasis on food programme for students, strengthening the relationships with schools while helping to prohibit malpractices to students and reporting some issues on gender-based violence (GBV). Others included meeting with school staff to share the matters related to their fellow parents, conducting regular meetings with parents and students

so as to guide and counselling services to students. Likewise, discussing measure to overcome dropout in schools, facilitating the construction of school infrastructures like buildings and dealing with students' disciplines (Figure 4.4).

These findings suggest that the school organs like School Boards and PTA and village governments (community) are crucial stakeholders in implementing fee free policy. This is because, they supply common and basic needs of students that the policy does not support directly. This finding supports what is explained in both ETP (1995) and ETP (2024) that education stakeholders are by law required to implement the policy by supporting the government through fee and contributions or through organizing parents and the educational stakeholders planning strategies to prevent dropouts. This finding is significant since the educational stakeholders are not only implementers of the policy but also the direct consumers and first beneficiaries. For their part, school boards play a vital role in preventing dropouts in secondary schools by providing leadership, governance, and ensuring that policies and resources are in place to support student retention by development and enforcement resource allocation and management, monitoring students' performance and attendance, and oversight of discipline cases.

This finding is in line with the study by Iremeka, et al. (2021), who conducted a study on "Roles of Parent-Teacher Association in the Management of School Library." In their study, they defined the parent-teacher association (PTA) as a non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan body that comprises parents/legal guardians of students, teachers, and administrative staff of the school whose aim is to

collaborate with the school to promote students' educational success and wellbeing. This was an academic based study which tried to show the strategies PTA were devising and using to support students in library management. However, this finding is about the roles of PTA and School boards on the implementation of the fee free policy especially the retention of students.

Another researcher is Mrindoko (2014), who conducted a study on the capacity of school boards in administration and management of school in Tanzania. A case of public secondary school in Same District. The study among other administrative issues of school boards, the researcher addressed the limiting factors for School boards performance to be, limited financial and operational support; changing demographics (higher enrolment rates), perceived drops in students. This finding is about the roles PTA and school boards on the implementation of fee free policy especially the retention of students. The finding does not show that fee free policy prevents students' dropout. When 45 respondents were asked, they said that the policy did not prevent students' dropout directly but through mechanism of giving schools capitation grants something that was not seen by the students themselves.

Poor financial management and absence of budget reviews encourage the behaviour of people to supply the system with inaccurate information; as a result, people will have loopholes for financial embezzlement (Boddy, 2011). However, it was observed that the misuse of the capitation grants by the school management teams and the school organs was another challenge most schools were facing in the implementation

of the fee free education policy in terms of financial issues. For example, BEMIS data that are taken annually by PO-LARG every year on March, 30th normally reveal that a number of heads of school do not provide accurate data about the number of students. This situation leads to embezzlement of the financial resources in two ways either the school has more than what is required or less than it.

According to Onguko, Abdalla and Webber (2008), shortage of training for education leaders results into promotion of teachers to headship positions without undergoing any training. On the same note, Ogba and Igu (2014) argue that the quality of training acquired by heads of school determines their administrative visions and missions.

In Morogoro District Council a good number of heads of school were found to have not attended any leadership training course after their appointment. This marks the misuse of public funds due to the inability of planning and properly allocating the targeted budgets. The researcher wanted to know how the policy was preventing dropout of students in schools. Based on the findings, a big number of respondents explained that fee free basic education policy was not preventing dropout of students directly but indirectly by omitting contributions like examination fees and other unnecessary contributions.

However, others said that the policy had increased the enrolment rate of students while other resources were kept constant and hence became limited. Poor financial management policies and procedures result into embezzlement of financial resources

in schools by heads of school and bursars (Adan and Orodho, 2015). Poor planning and budgeting among school organisations also affect financial management, which would result into complication in reporting the revenues and the expenditures (Brimley, Versiegen & Knoepfel, 2020). Generally, it should be well understood that most of the government schools are under the local government's authorities, and so they are responsible for developing them and making sure students' retention is maintained with the help of the central government that funds them.

5.5 Analysing the Responsibilities Parents are obliged to Fulfil to their Children According to the Policy

According to objective number four, the study found that parents were obliged to supply stationeries such dictionaries, exercise books and supplementary books, food contribution, cleaning and working tools at school such as hoe sweeping blooms, students' means of transport for going to school and return home from school. These means of transport were like bus fare or bicycle depending on the geographical location of the school and pocket money. The study found that parents were aware that they were required by the policy to fulfil some requirements even if the education was being provided for free (Table 4.9). This implies that when dropping out from school is experienced by students, it does not mean that parents are not aware of their responsibilities as required by the policy.

Rather, this might be because of the socio-economic stratum the community is found in since parents and the educational stakeholders have social responsibilities to discharge by law as a way to supplement to students' school needs. This finding

supports the ETP (2014) version of 2023, which states that parents should meet the costs for the following items: school uniforms and uniforms for sports activities; learning materials such as books, pens and pencils, the provision of food for children attending day schools (in cooperation with the school leadership, medical expenses for the child, and travel expenses for both day and boarding school pupils; and mattress, bed-sheets, and personal hygiene materials for boarding schools' pupils and for those staying in government-owned hostels. (Circular No. 6 (URT, 2015b).

This finding again, is in line with the study by Edet, Pauline and Ekegre, Ekeng (2010) who conducted a study on Parental Socio-Economic Status, Family Type and School Dropout. The study found that a household income was an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially attracts a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include school fees while the more hidden costs include uniforms, travel equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Their study focuses on the direct and indirect costs. The direct costs according to this study are school fees while the hidden costs are the parents' responsibilities that the fee free education policy requires parents in Tanzania to meet. Like this former study, the current study on this finding implies the same responsibilities that parents have to fulfil.

The study also found that parents could not afford all the requirements as obliged by the policy. It was revealed that only 28 (32.9%) could afford but 57 (67.1%) parents could not afford (Table 4.10). This implies that a good number of parents were too poor to afford all the required needs especially food contribution and solving all the

problems of distance from home to school for their children. It should be noted that all 17 sampled schools were day schools where students were going to school and coming back home after class hours. Again, the study found that among all challenges, distance from home to school and food contribution to school were the major challenges to parents and therefore this might lead to a number of students dropping out from school (Table 4.11).

In the study area, it was found that there were non-governmental organizations that were still socially supporting the community in-terms of school basic needs. Organizations like GLAMI, CAMFED-Tanzania, SATF and Kinara Youth Foundations were supporting students with uniforms, shoes, sanitary pads to girl students, health insurance cards, pocket money and meeting charges to some of the most vulnerable students both girls and boys. This suggests that the action of removing school fees is not only the way to prevent students dropping out of school since when students miss some of the basic needs, the NGOs would supply them with such needs but, they would still likely drop out from school. The ETP (2014) requires parents to supplement some facilities to their children but in the context of the findings of the current study, this was not being adhered to that is why the community was receiving some aids from the non-governmental organizations and the other governmental organizations like TASAF.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This chapter is organized into three parts, the summary of the study, the conclusion and the recommendation for the further study. This study focused on assessing the contributions of fee-free basic education policy on the retention of learners in Tanzania Secondary Schools: A case of Morogoro District Council. Discussion on the findings was done in the previous chapter.

6.1 Summary

This study used pragmatic research approach and employed mixed methods of data collection where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the field with a sample size of 181 respondents including students, head of schools, village executive officers, parents and teacher mentors. This study had four objectives. With the first objective, the study explored stakeholders' perception and awareness on the implementation of Fee Free Education Policy by education stakeholders. It was revealed that all 181 respondents (100%) confirmed that they were aware that the government was providing fee free education.

However, it was found that despite the fact that education was being provided for free, there were organisations that were supporting the community especially in education issues. These organisations were like CAMFED Tanzania, GLAMI, SATF, Kinara Youth Fund and TASAF. These were supporting both boys and girls in those schools. The second objective examined the factors that were affecting students'

retention in Morogoro District secondary schools. These were found to be distance from home to school, lack of lunch, truancy, early marriage and pregnancy to girl students, frequent repeating of the same class specially form two. Another reason mentioned was the irresponsibility of parents who believed that the government would do everything since education was free. This was found to be one the factors behind students dropping out from school.

The findings show that in the year 2024 only, 454 form one students dropped out from the 17 sampled schools, while 547 students dropped between 2013-2015 before the policy implementations and 1655 students dropped out from school in eight years consecutively from 2016 – 2023. This was after the policy started to be implemented. The third objective revealed the strategies and measures the educational stakeholders were taking to prevent students' dropouts in Morogoro District secondary schools. It was noted from the findings that all school organs like PTA, School Board and the educational stakeholders were direct consumers and implementers of the fee free education policy.

Basically, the school organs had a vital role in preventing dropouts in secondary schools by providing leadership, governance, and ensuring that policies and resources were being implemented to support retention of students by doing the following to prevent dropping out from school: development and enforcement of resource allocation and management, monitoring students' performance and attendance, oversight of discipline cases. The findings show that the policy was not preventing dropping out directly but through the mechanism of giving schools

capitation grants something which was not directly seen by the students themselves. With regard to the last objective, the finding examined the responsibilities parents were obliged to discharge for their children according to the policy where it was seen that parents were aware that they were required by the policy to fulfil some of the requirements to their children despite the fact that education was being provided for free. Parents were required by the policy to facilitate school uniforms and uniforms for sports activities; learning materials such as books, pens and pencils, the provision of food for children attending day schools (in cooperation with the school leadership), medical expenses for the child. However, a good number of parents admitted that they could not afford satisfying all the needs all the time.

This chapter therefore gives the conclusion of the study and policy and research recommendations. The chapter is organised into three parts. First, the chapter gives the study's summary second conclusion, implications of the study and finally, recommendations on the study. also including the recommendations for further study.

6.2 Conclusion

The conclusion of this study bases on the four research objectives, the educational stakeholders and parents were all aware with the fee free education policy in almost nine years from 2016 to recent year 2024, it is notable that the educational stakeholders especially parents have a little bit misconception about the fee free education policy. The findings show that in all 17 sampled schools, only 29 parents (34.1%) could afford all the requirements for their children at school, 57 parents

67.1%) could not afford supplying all the required items for their children. There were also organisations like CAMFED Tanzania, GLAMI, SATF, TASAF and Kinara Youth Trust Fund that were still supporting students even if education was being freely provided.

The factors that were limiting students' retention in schools and leading to students' dropout are almost common in most of the places in Tanzania not only in Morogoro District Council. For instance, the issue of distance, unavailability of food that cause truancy, girl pregnancy and early marriage were found to be some of the common reasons for dropouts even if education was freely being given. Another issue has to do with school organs and their roles in preventing students' dropout and maintaining retentions. It should be noted that it is not only parents but the whole community that are responsible in joining hands with the government to make sure everybody takes responsibility in either supplying students' requirements in school apart from the basic needs the policy is addressing to the parents to obligatorily fulfil the needs of their children.

Implementation of fee-free education policy in Tanzania has been facing challenges which reduce the accuracy of reaching the government's expected goals. Again, the policy has not met the challenge of students' dropout in secondary schools as we have seen in the discussion above. This is because, before and after the policy implementation, schools are still experiencing dropping out of students in high rates. The policy then has not addressed issues like the availability of hostels for distant students, and the issue of food for students at schools, family economic issues. As it

was found, the family's daily per capital income is still low and the policy requires parents to incur some costs for their children governmental and non-governmental organisations like CAMFED Tanzania, GLAMI, SATF, TASAF and Kinara Youth Foundation were found to be still helping the community for the school boys and girls. This implies that the policy has something to do for students rather than just providing free education.

The findings determined that a total of 2656 students dropped out from school from 2013 to 2016 with girls making a big number of the dropouts. The reasons for dropout from all respondents were almost the same. In the year 2022, for example, the government directed that the once pregnant students come back to school after their breast-feeding time was over. However, despite this declaration, there were no official continuous directives and it just ended that year. In the meantime, then the government through fee free policy, addressed this officially by enacting an Act to officially address this issue. This act should again suggest severe punishment against sexual harassment issues.

It is obvious that the enrolment rates in schools have increased and parents have no good economic condition to incur education costs for their children in schools. Again, there is still a problem of overcrowding in classes, limited human resources (teachers' scarcity) and other facilities like toilets, tables and chairs. Among other challenges of fee free policy, there is poor budget review, lack of financial training and poor accountability by some school heads due to limited knowledge on financial management. The school board members do not have experience on accounting

procedure which reduces the power of making follow up of daily school expenditure. To address this problem, the government should capacitate PTAs and School Boards to improve the managerial and administrative programmes in schools. In that regard, head of schools should be given refresher seminars to improve their skills on planning and reporting the school expenditures effectively.

6.3 Implication

Basing on the research objectives this research is significant because a variety of issues not addressed in the fee free policy will have to be addressed. Also, the recommendations made basing on the findings if taken into consideration, will help other researchers on how to go through and assess the potentialities that this research did not discuss. Based on the results, the first question explored the stakeholders' perception and awareness on the implementation of the fee free basic education policy by educating the stakeholders. It was found that the policy was well known by all stakeholders' community, parents, teachers and students. This implies that the implementation of the policy is with no doubt acceptable by the whole society.

However, the findings suggest that the policy should adopt flexibility in such a way it addresses issues like distance, food security in schools and the issue of pregnancy to girl students. As a result of this study, fee free education policy is well known to all education stakeholders but when it comes to the economic stability of parents and community in general, the findings show that there are misconceptions among the parents that education is free and the government ought to do everything for students even buying school uniforms. However, there is still a problem to some of the

parents who seriously cannot afford supplying all items to their children even if education is free. As it has been observed from the findings, only 34.1% can afford supplying all the school needs to their students.

The second question examined the factors that affect students' retention. The findings show that schools were still experiencing dropouts. For example, in years 2013-2023, the findings revealed that 2656 students dropped out from all the 17 sampled schools. This implies that even if education is freely provided the problem of dropout still persists in schools. According to the findings, the reasons or factors for dropout were common in all schools. That is, distance from home to school, lack of food at day schools something that was found to encourage truancy, early marriage and pregnancy to girl students, frequent repeating of the same class specially form two. These were some of the factors that the study found to cause dropouts.

According to this study girls are most likely to drop out from school compared with boys. Based on the findings, the study suggests that the policy has to foresee the limiting factor to its 100% implementation. There are common limiting factors to students' retention while the policy is in operation. As a result of this study, factors for students' dropouts were real and were found to be common not only in Morogoro but also elsewhere in Tanzania and in other places worldwide. These are significant factors which if not taken into consideration, the government might be wasting a lot of financial resource through allocating capitation grants to students who have just dropped out from school because of these preventable reasons.

Lastly, the findings of the third and fourth questions of this study are all about the organs of the schools and the responsibilities parents and educational stakeholders should take in implementing the policy. The findings from this study show that school boards, PTA and parents have a vital role in the implementation of the policy. This implies that it is not only the government that ought to manage the policy but also the community that should be responsible for its implementation. Therefore, the policy implementation is a two-way traffic role between the government and the community. That is, the community now does what the policy does not cover.

According to this study, parents have been assigned responsibilities for their children. However, the study shows that not all parents can afford those requirements all the time that is why dropping out is still being experienced in our secondary schools. This study suggests the policy should make some small portable booklets to make the community read. Again, parents should be educated on their responsibilities through mass media such as the TVs radios and magazines. As it was observed, some of the heads of schools had no enough financial skills. Therefore, this study suggests that indoor seminars and workshops through teacher continuous professional development (MEWAKA) be conducted to heads of school, school boards and PTAs that they have skills on how to use allocated fund and affect school budgets accordingly. Again, the school boards had no knowledge doing their activities; therefore, capacity building should be directed to the school organs so that they help effectively implement the policy and prevent dropouts.

6.4 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study, apart from basing on the research questions and the findings obtained, they are structured into two parts, and the recommendations on the study to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, to PO-RALG and to District Councils, the second part form the recommendations for further studies.

6.4.1 Recommendations on the Study

The study recommends to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to do the following: Education and raising awareness to other educational stakeholders and parents on how fee free education policy operates, stakeholders' responsibilities and its limitations. Also giving feedback from the local communities in order to address the challenges encountered in the implementation of the fee-free basic education among public secondary schools. To PO-RALG, the study suggests the following: 1. Training to Head of Schools on financial skills and effective planning of the capitation grants. Again, skills on the preparation and submission of correct annual schools' statistics (BEMIS data) 2. PO-RALG to advertise on the media like TVs newspapers and official governments, magazines and in internets about the fee free education policy activities, 3. PO-RALG to prepare effective strategies of dealing with dropouts' issues.

To District Councils, the study recommends that, 1. School Heads, PTPs, School Boards, Village executive officers, parents and the local community are well equipped with appropriate skills on the strategies of dropout prevention. 2. Capacity

building to School Boards and PTPs and stabilising guidance and counselling units in schools, 3. Another recommendation is for the districts to prepare the correct number of the dropouts from schools annually and present them to the regional education administration. 4. Districts also should make sure parents meet their obligations effectively given by the policy as their part in the policy implementation.

Generally, the parents and other educational stakeholders' awareness will be raised and these educational stakeholders will be able to devise proper strategies that will retain students in schools and complete their learning cycle. Strategies like food programmes in schools, schools' Shamba projects, hot-cultures and gardening activities, the construction of hostels/dormitories nearby school premises, capacity building to teachers on how to handle truancy and dropout cases, establishment of guidance and counselling units, strong PTA systems and stabilising other school projects, frequent training to heads of schools on financial issues and effective planning strategies are all necessary.

6.4.2 Recommendations on the Further Study

For those who continue with the studies on the role of fee free education policy to students' retention in schools, The study recommend that other researchers conduct the same research topic to other places of Tanzania especially on the practical relationship of school organs like school boards and PTPs, their roles on the implementation of fee free basic education policy and how do they help in dropout prevention in Tanzania secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Semi structured interview guides for Heads of Schools

Dear Head of School,

My name is PAUL L. KAHHEMELE; I am a student from The Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Administration, Planning and policy studies. I am currently carrying out a study on the Contribution of Fee-free educational policy to retention of learners in schools and mitigating learners' dropout. Your school has been selected to participate in this study through random sampling and consequently you have been selected as a respondent of this questionnaire. Your assistance in answering all questions in this questionnaire will generate important information for this study. Your response will be treated with high confidentiality. Thank you very much for using your time in answering these questions.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

School name:

Please put just a tick (✓) in the bracket indicated as the correct response

Gender: Male (), Female ()

Level of Education: Diploma (), Degree (), Masters (), PhD ()

Age: 25 – 30 (), 31–36 (), 37 – 42 (), 43 – 48 (), 49 – 54 (), 55 – 60 ().

QUESTIONS:

Kindly respond to the following questions by supplying the required information

1. As an educational stakeholder who implements the fee free basic education policy, how do you perceive the policy in this community?

2. What are factors affecting students' retention in your school? (Factors that lead to students' dropout).
3. As a head of school, what are the school requirements or facilities a parent has to supplement to his children for school?
4. What are the strategies devised and implemented by the following school organs in preventing students' dropout in your school?
 - a) School Board
 - b) PTA
 - c) The educational stakeholders
5. How many form one students were selected in your school in the year 2024? []
6. How many form one students (in number 3 above) were admitted in the year 2024? []
7. How many students dropped out from school in the following years?

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023

8. What is the reason(s) for their dropout? (Please select among the following reasons by putting a tick (✓) in its correspondence, more than one response is applicable)
 - i. Severe punishments ()
 - ii. Behavioural Problems ()
 - iii. Teacher's attitudes and behaviour ()
 - iv. Language Factor ()
 - v. Family's Educational Experiences ()

- vi. Community factors /Poverty or Economic pressures ()
- vii. Peer Influence ()
- viii. Truancy ()
- ix. Pregnancy ()
- x. Traditional practices/ rituals and taboos ()
- xi. Student Related Factors ()
- xii. Not interesting in education ()
- xiii. They have help their parents and their families ()
- xiv. Lack of facilities for school ()
- xv. Distant walk from home ()
- xvi. Lack of hostel in school ()
- xvii. Severe students' punishments ()
- xviii. Death of parents ()
- xix. Lack of food at school ()
- xx. Frequent repeating the same class ()
- xxi. Others: (please mention them).

9. Among the two genders, which one is the most affected by dropping out from schooling? Male students (), Female students ()

10. Is there any organisation (Governmental/Non-governmental) that supports students in your school? (put a (√) sign in either of the choice) YES [] or NO[]

If YES [√] in No. 7 above. What is the funding organisation/s? and

.....

What support do the organisation/s facilitate the school students?

.....

Appendix II: Questionnaires for Teacher Mentors

Dear Teachers Mentors,

My name is PAUL L. KAHEMELE; I am a student from The Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Administration, Planning and policy studies. I am currently carrying out a study on the Contribution of Fee-free educational policy to retention of learners in schools and mitigating learners' dropout. Your school has been selected to participate in this study through random sampling and consequently you have been selected as a respondent of this questionnaire. Your assistance in answering all questions in this questionnaire will generate important information for this study. Your response will be treated with high confidentiality. Thank you very much for using your time in answering these questions.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

School name:

Please put just a tick (✓) in the bracket indicated as the correct response

Gender: Male (), Female ()

Level of Education: Diploma (), Degree (), Masters (), PhD ()

Age: 25 – 30 (), 31–36 (), 37 – 42 (), 43 – 48 (), 49 – 54 (), 55 – 60 ().

QUESTIONS:

Please put a tick (✓) against the appropriate response

1. As an educational stakeholder who implements the fee free basic education policy, how do you perceive the policy in this community?
2. What are factors affecting students' retention in your school? (Factors that lead to students' dropout)

3. Which Governmental/Non-Governmental organisation that support the students as per your guidance in this school?

- a) CAMFED- TANZANIA ()
- b) KIJAN NAHODHA ()
- c) GLAMI ()
- d) TASAF ()
- e) Kinara Youth Development Fund ()
- f) TCRS ()
- g) TAYOA ()
- h) RTI – INTERNATIONAL ()

4. What gender does the NGO supports in this school?

- a) Female students only (), Male students only (), Both Female and Male ()

5. As a teacher how does the fee-free basic education help prevent students' dropout in schools?

Please put a tick (✓) against the appropriate response (more than one response is applicable)

6. What support/aid does the NGO provide to students instead of the parents

- a. School Skirts ()
- b. School shirts ()
- c. Shoes ()
- d. School sweeter ()
- e. Stocks ()
- f. Mattress ()
- g. Accommodations ()

- h. Meal / allowances ()
- i. Pens, and counter books ()
- j. Bicycle ()
- k. Mathematical set ()
- l. Pads ()
- m. Underwear ()
- n. Lighting lamps/torch ()
- o. Others: (mention)

11. What is the reason(s) for students' dropout? (Please select among the following reasons by putting a tick (✓) in its correspondence, more than one response is applicable)

- i. Severe punishments ()
- ii. Behavioural Problems ()
- iii. Teacher's attitudes and behavior ()
- iv. Language Factor ()
- v. Family's Educational Experiences ()
- vi. Community factors /Poverty or Economic pressures ()
- vii. Peer Influence ()
- viii. Truancy ()
- ix. Pregnancy ()
- x. Traditional practices/ rituals and taboos ()
- xi. Student Related Factors ()
- xii. Not interesting in education ()
- xiii. They have to help to their parents and their families ()

- xiv. Lack of facilities for school ()
- xv. Distant walk from home ()
- xvi. Lack of hostel in school ()
- xvii. Severe student punishments ()
- xviii. Death of parents ()
- xix. Lack of food at school ()
- xx. Frequent repeating the same class ()
- xxi. Others: (please mention them).:

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Students Dear student,

My name is PAUL L. KAHEMELE; I am a student from The Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Administration, Planning and policy studies. I am currently carrying out a study on **the Contribution of Fee-free educational policy to retention of learners in schools and mitigating learners' dropout**. You have been selected among students to participate in this study through cluster sampling and therefore you have been selected as a respondent to this questionnaire. Your help in answering all questions in this questionnaire will provide important information for this research. Your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you very much for taking you time to attempt these questions.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Please put a tick (✓) against the appropriate answer.

1. Do you know that secondary education is freely provided? YES [], NO []
2. Although education is provided free of charge, some students still drop out of schooling.
A. I STRONGLY AGREE [] B. I PARTIALLY AGREE [] C. I STRONGLY DISAGREE []
3. The school has been taking appropriate measures for truants and dropout students.
A. I STRONGLY AGREE [] B. I PARTIALLY AGREE [] C. I STRONGLY DISAGREE []
4. What are the requirements a parent has to give to his children even if there is no school fee? (More than one response is acceptable).
i. School uniforms ()

- ii. Shoes ()
- iii. Mattress ()
- iv. Planning room ()
- v. School food contribution ()
- vi. Counter books, pens and school bag ()
- vii. Bicycle ()
- viii. Mathematical set ()
- ix. Pads ()
- x. Underwear ()
- xi. Other: (please specify)

5. What are the things which when done you cannot escape and remain at school learning calmly? (more than one response is acceptable)

- i. Have school uniforms ()
- ii. Have stationeries ()
- iii. Parents not divorced ()
- iv. Availability of hostels ()
- v. Availability of lunch at school ()
- vi. Other: (please specify)

6. Mention things that you think cause students to dropout from school

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.....

.....

Appendix IV: Structured Interview Guide for Parents

Dear, Parent.

My name is PAUL L. KAHEMELE; I am a student from The Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Administration, Planning and policy studies. I am currently carrying out a study on **the Contribution of Fee-free educational policy to retention of learners in schools and mitigating learners' dropout**. You have been selected among parents to participate in this study through cluster sampling and therefore you have been selected as a respondent to this questionnaire. Your help in answering all questions in this questionnaire will provide important information for this research. Your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you very much for taking you time to attempt these questions.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Name of the school, where your child studies:

Please only put a tick (✓) in the bracket shown if it is the correct answer

Gender: Male () Female ()

Your education: I have not studied (), did not finish school (), Standard seven (),

Form II (), Form IV (), Form VI (), Diploma, (), Certificate (), Diploma (),

Degree (), More than degree (). Age: 25 – 30 (), 31–36 (), 37 – 42 (), 43 – 48 (),

49 – 54 (), 55 – 60 (), 61 – 66 (), 67+ () **QUESTIONS:**

Please put a tick (✓) against the appropriate answer.

1. Do you understand that the government provides fee-free secondary education? YES [], NO []
2. The government implements fee-free education policy for 100 percent.

A. I STRONGLY AGREE [] B. I PARTIALLY AGREE [] C. I STRONGLY DISAGREE []

3. As a parent, do you know that the free education policy requires you to do some responsibilities for your child at school? YES [], NO []

4. Can you afford to provide your child/children with all the basic needs of school at all times? YES [], NO []

5. Which of the following school requirements is/are still a problem for you to give your child/children to school? [More than one answer is acceptable]

- i. Food contribution ()
- ii. Buying school uniforms for your children every year ()
- iii. Helping your child learn at home ()
- iv. House for rent nearby schools
- v. Walking distance to school from home ()
- vi. Buying writing materials such as pens, compasses and books ()

6. With your experience, what are reasons for many students to drop out of school?

- i. Lack of school uniforms ()
- ii. Regular truancy
- iii. Pregnancy for girls ()
- iv. Lack of stationeries ()
- v. Conflicts between family members ()
- vi. Poverty ()
- vii. Economic difficulty of the family ()
- viii. Single parent family ()

- ix. Parents divorced ()
- x. Distance from home to school ()
- xi. Lack of food at school ()
- xii. Death of one parent ()
- xiii. Sexual violence ()
- xiv. Lack of school fees ()
- xv. Lack of boarding school ()
- xvi. Other: (please specify)

Appendix V: Structured Interview Guide for Village Executive Officers

Dear Village Executive,

My name is PAUL L. KAHEMELE; I am a student from The Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Master Degree of Education in Administration, Planning and policy studies. I am currently carrying out a study on **the Contribution of Fee-free educational policy to retention of learners in schools and mitigating learners' dropout**. You have been selected among village executive officers to participate in this study through cluster sampling and therefore you have been selected as a respondent to this questionnaire. Your help in answering all questions in this questionnaire will provide important information for this research. Your responses will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you very much for taking you time to attempt these questions.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Name of the village:

Please only put a tick (✓) in the bracket shown if it is the correct answer

Gender: Male () Female ()

Your Education: Class VII (), Form II (), Form IV (), Form VI (), Diploma, (),

Certificate (), Diploma (), Degree (), More than a degree (). Age: 25 30 (), 31 36 (

), 37 42 (), 43 48 (), 49 54 (), 55 60 (), 61 66 (), 67+ ()

QUESTIONS:

Please put a tick (✓) against the appropriate answer.

1. Do you understand that the government provides free secondary education?

YES [], NO []

2. The government implements a 100 percent free education policy.

A. I STRONGLY AGREE [] B. I PARTIALLY AGREE [] C. I STRONGLY DISAGREE []

3. As the chairman of the protection and security committee at the village level, what are the reasons being given to you be major source of students dropping out of school? (More than one answer is acceptable).

- i. Lack of school uniforms ()
- ii. Pregnancy in girls ()
- iii. Lack of stationery ()
- iv. Conflicts between family members ()
- v. Poverty ()
- vi. Economic difficulty of the family ()
- vii. Single parent family ()
- viii. Parents divorced ()
- ix. Distance from home to school
- x. Lack of food at school ()
- xi. Death of one parent ()
- xii. Sexual violence ()
- xiii. Lack of school fees ()
- xiv. Lack of boarding school ()
- xv. Other: (please specify:

4. It is obvious that parents do not pay schools fees and other contribution, but the parent is responsible for providing him with the basic school needs so that he can attend classes every day

A. I STRONGLY AGREE [] B. I PARTIALLY AGREE [] C. I STRONGLY DISAGREE []

5. What are the strategies and measures the village and the educational stakeholders in general are taking to prevent students from dropping out of the secondary school in your village?

- i. Encouraging parents to buy school uniforms for their children ()
- ii. Encouraging parents to buy school items for their children ()
- iii. Resolving family conflicts that lead to parents separating ()
- iv. Ensuring schools have dormitories or hostels ()
- v. Ensuring that parents contribute lunch at school ()
- vi. Participating in parent meetings at school ()
- vii. Ensuring that all people who impregnate female students are taken strict legal measures ()
- viii. Identifying households with low economic income and register them in TASSAF () Other: (please specify)

Select and tick (✓) against the following answers. (More than one answer is acceptable.)

6. What are the reasons for households to be registered in TASAF?
- i. Poor households ()
 - ii. One meal at home per day ()
 - iii. Single living parent ()
 - iv. The family of the village leader ()
 - v. Household with many school children ()
 - vi. Homeless family

Research clearance letter



Ref. No OUT/PG201801906

6th August, 2024

District Executive Director (DED),
Morogoro District Council,
P.O Box 1880,
MOROGORO.

Dear Director

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MR. PAUL LAURENCE KAHEMELE REG NO:
PG201801906**

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1st March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1st January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Paul Laurence Kahemele, Reg.No: PG201801906**), pursuing **Master of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MEDAPPS)**. We hereby grant this clearance to conduct a

research titled “**Assessing the Contributions of Fee-Free Basic Education Policy on the Retention of Learners in Tanzania Secondary Schools: A Case of Morogoro District Council**”. He will collect his data at your area from 9th August 2024 to 30th October 2024.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA



Prof. Gwahula Raphael Kimamala

For: VICE CHANCELLOR



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
OFISI YA RAIS
TAWALA ZA MIKOA NA SERIKALI ZA MITAA



HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA YA MOROGORO

Unapojibu tafadhali taja

Kumb. Na. FB. 257/315/01/36

Tarehe: 14 Agosti, 2024.

Wakuu wa shule,

Shule ya Sekondari Kiroka, Mkuyuni, Kisemu, Matombo, Bwakira chini. Kisaki, Tawa, Fatemi, Ngerengere, Gwata, Mvuh, Selembe, Mikese, Milengwelengwe, Koler, Kinole na Nelson Mandela.

S.L.P 1880,

MOROGORO

Kuh: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI

Tafadhali husika na kichwa cha habari hapo juu

2. Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Mtendaji (W) imepokea barua yenye Kumb.Na BA.OUT/PG201801906 ya tarehe 06/08/2024 iliyomtambulisha kwetu mtafiti Bw. Paul Laurence Kahemele kutoka Chuo Kikuu cha Tanzania.
3. Kwa barua hii, ninamtambulisha kwenu mtafiti huyo ili aweze kufanya utafiti kuhusu "Assessing the Contributions of Fee-Free Basic Education Policy on the Retention of Learners in Tanzania Secondary Schools" kuanzia Tarehe 09 Agosti, 2024 hadi 30 Oktoba, 2024.
4. Mpokeeni na kumpatia ushirikiano.

Babra K. Sangija

K. n. y: MKURUGENZI MTENDAJI

Nakala:

1. Ndugu. Paul Laurence Kahemele,
Mtafiti