

**EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS'
ALTERNATIVE FINANCING MODELS AND
QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN BASIC
INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA**

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Abstract

Quality education is a key pillar of national development, particularly at the basic education level, which provides the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for the growth of young individuals. In Kenya, the right to quality education is enshrined in the Basic Education Act of 2013 and related policy documents. However, education financing in Kenya continues to face significant challenges, such as insufficient budget allocations, inefficiency in resource utilization, over-reliance on donor funding, inconsistent policy execution, and financial mismanagement. School leadership plays a pivotal role in addressing these challenges by promoting sustainable and inclusive financing strategies. This study explored the relationship between alternative funding models and the quality of education in Basic Education institutions in Kenya. Drawing on the Theory of Change typology and Resource Dependence Theory, the study examines how

alternative financing models, beyond capitation grants, affect the quality of education in basic education institutions. Specifically, it analyses the relationship between income-generating activities, public-private partnerships, and community-driven financing models on educational quality. The findings suggest that these alternative financing models positively contribute to improving education quality, but their success is contingent upon well-structured and policy-driven implementation. The study recommends the adoption of these financing models to supplement capitation grants to ensure the delivery of quality education, which is essential for Kenya's national development. Further, the study recommended that Kenya should build a sustainable education financing framework that aligns with the national education and the global education goals, such as Sustainable Development Goal 4, which advocates for quality education for all.

Keywords: *School Leadership, Income-Generating Activities, Education Financing, Financial Inclusivity, Sustainability in Schools*

1.1 Introduction

Education financing is a critical determinant of the quality of education systems worldwide, including Kenya (UNESCO, 2022). In many countries, particularly in developing regions, the

challenges of funding education systems have profound implications for student learning outcomes, equity, and overall educational quality (Kaso, 2021). In Kenya, education at the basic education level is free and compulsory, being financed by the government through capitation grants. However, the Kenya's education sector is at a pivotal moment with fluctuating and unpredictable capitation grants, requiring visionary school leadership to drive financial sustainability through alternative financing models (Africa Development Bank, 2022). This study explored how alternative education funding models can shape the quality of education in basic institutions in Kenya. It examines three funding models, including Income-Generating Activities, Public-Private Partnership, and community-driven/parental financing models in enhancing education quality in Kenyan basic education institutions (Aydin, Gumus & Bellibas, 2023). The study provides insights into sustainable financing models based on empirical analysis that supports the delivery of quality education. It contains the background of the study, problem statement, literature reviews, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.2 Background of the Study

Kenya's education sector has undergone significant reforms to

improve access, equity, and quality (Wekullo, 2022). The Constitution of Kenya (2010) grants citizens the right to free and compulsory quality basic education. Basic education in the country is enshrined to be free and compulsory (MOE, 2021). This no-fee paying financing model was introduced in the country in 2003. At the global level, developed nations heavily rely on public funding, where the governments fully finance education (Alfaiz & Jauhariyah, 2024). In developing countries, whereas education is free, it often depends on international aid, grants, and loans from organizations like the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO to finance their educational systems (Machinyise, Kasebula & Chabu, 2023)

In many cases, alternative funding models have emerged as a viable solution to complement government funding, bringing together resources from all sectors to enhance delivery of quality education (Alfaiz & Jauhariyah, 2024). The financing models globally have moved towards more inclusive and equitable frameworks, recognizing the importance of education in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Sari, 2023). Kaso (2021) posits that quality education has a long run positive

influence on individual earnings, on the distribution of income, and overall economic growth of a country. This underscores the need to employ more sustainable alternative financing models to ensure equitable access to quality education, reduce dependence on limited public resources, and promote inclusive development through innovative and diversified funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, income-generating activities, and community-driven initiatives (Mwasigwa & Wamukuru, 2022).

Zickafoose et. al. (2024) asserted that funding is a requirement for quality education. Despite adopting the government's funding through capitation grants, the Kenyan education financing remains a persistent challenge, characterized by inadequate budgetary allocations and grants, inefficiencies in resource utilization, and heavy dependence on external funding (World Bank, 2021). While government initiatives such as the Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) programs have increased enrolment, disparities in funding and resource distribution persist, particularly in marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2022). These disparities hinder the provision of quality education, with under-resourced schools struggling to meet

basic infrastructure, teaching, and learning material needs (UNESCO, 2022). As a result, there is an urgent need for more equitable and sustainable financing models that address both access and quality across all regions.

School leadership plays a pivotal role in addressing these financial challenges by fostering innovative and alternative financing mechanisms, enhancing governance structures, and strengthening public-private partnerships (OECD, 2023). Sustainable quality education requires leaders who can drive systemic change, optimize resource allocation and mobilisation, and advocate for equitable education policies (Alfaiz & Jauhariyah, 2024). Research indicates that transformational leadership in education can bridge funding gaps, improve financial accountability, and promote long-term sustainability (MoE Kenya, 2021).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Kenya's biggest challenge regarding basic education is no longer improving access but improving education quality (Northouse, 2021). Kaso (2021) posits that educational quality is the most important objective for the management of the nation's education system, which expects educational institutions to be competent and prepared to provide their people with an equal and thorough education service.

Quality education is recognized worldwide as the cornerstone to national development, social equity, and individual empowerment. Zickafoose et. al. (2024) indicated that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have failed to offer quality education due to many factors, including funding challenges. According to Pramana et. al. (2021), quality education should produce human resources who can compete in the international world. High-quality education will contribute to developing more stable and long-lasting communities by broadening access to opportunities and fostering greater tolerance in society (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022). Quality of education is measured in terms of the learner's performance, achievement of learning outcomes, teacher-learner ratio, classroom sizes, and competency demonstration, which continue to deteriorate even in the advent of education reforms that aims to produce holistic individuals (Sari, 2023) .

Despite the reforms to improve education quality in Kenya, there is a growing dissatisfaction among stakeholders such as parents, teachers, employers, and policymakers over the declining quality of education (Otieno, Kamau & Mwangi, 2023). Complaints range from overcrowded classrooms, inadequate learning materials, poorly motivated teachers, to limited access to technology and innovation in the classroom, which

depend on the funding levels. Failure to address these complaints affects the quality of education, which may further threaten the ability of the country to achieve Vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), and overall human capital development (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019). According to UNICEF (2023), the reliance on government funding, constituting approximately 5% of the GDP, along with donor contributions, has proven inadequate in addressing the disparities in education to improve the quality of education. Sari (2023) posits that educational funding strongly affects the quality of education.

This situation underscores the need for the adoption of other funding models other than capitation grants. The Basic Education Act (2013) mandates the Boards of management (BOMs) to mobilize financial resources to ensure the schools meet their goals and enhance financial inclusivity and sustainability within the education system. However, there is limited understanding of how school leaders can navigate and influence the broader educational financing ecosystem to improve financial efficiency, equity, and long-term sustainability. This research aims to explore the role of school leadership in shaping Kenya's education financing ecosystem, focusing on strategies that enhance financial inclusivity, ensure resource sustainability, and address the disparities within the

education sector, with the overall goal of providing quality education. Studies suggest that school leadership can leverage public-private sector partnerships, sustainable income-generating activities, and community-driven initiatives to bridge financing gaps (African Development Bank, 2022). Husnidar, Khairuddin, and Bahrin (2024) recommended that further research should be conducted to explore the implementation of education financing management in other schools or regions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the practices and challenges in improving the quality of learning through effective education financing management.

Financing models determine the availability, equity, and efficiency of resource allocation within schools (Aziziyah & Ahmad, 2024). Whether schools rely predominantly on government capitation, donor aid, internally generated funds, or public-private partnerships, the financing decisions made by school leaders directly influence key quality drivers (Sari, 2023). An empirical analysis of the relationship between these financing models and educational quality is thus critical (Abubakar, 2022). Therefore, this analysis seeks to explore the relationship that exists between financing models chosen by the school leadership and how they can yield better educational outcomes, and how

school leadership decisions on financing can be optimized to enhance the quality of education. Understanding this relationship will also provide evidence-based insights for policy interventions that promote equitable and effective resource use in schools (Kaso, 2021)

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- I. To examine the influence of the Income Generating Activities financing model on education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya.
- II. To establish the effect of the public-private partnership financing model on education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya.
- III. To determine the effect of the community-driven financing model on education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya.

1.5. Research Questions

- i. How does the Income Generating Activities financing model affect education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya?
- ii. How does the public-private partnership financing model affect education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya?
- iii. How does the community-driven financing model affect education quality in basic education institutions in Kenya?

2.0. Literature Review

This section contains the theoretical literature that outlines the theories that underpin the study. It also outlines the analysis of empirical studies that have been previously conducted on the relationship between school financing models and the quality of education.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the **Theory of Change** typology and **Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)**, both of which provide a foundation for understanding the role of school leadership in fostering education quality and sustainable education financing. The **Theory of Change typology** postulates that there are various components required to realize any successful change. Accordingly, the study underscored three components or drivers required to realize quality education in Kenya. First is the supply-side capability interventions that operate through the provision of physical and human resources and learning materials. Secondly, policies that, through incentives, seek to influence the behavior and preferences of teachers, households, and learners. Finally, the bottom-up and top-down participatory and community management interventions emphasize local engagement in decision-making processes. These interventions create a cycle of feedback and adaptation, ensuring that changes in educational practices are

responsive to the evolving needs of the school community.

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), proposed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), asserts that organizations rely on external resources to function effectively. In the education sector, RDT highlights the importance of diversifying funding sources beyond government allocations (Hillman et al., 2022). The theory underscores the significance of strategic partnerships with private entities, international donors, and community-based organizations in bridging financing gaps (Aydin et al., 2023). This perspective aligns with the need for Kenyan school leaders to explore alternative financing models, such as public-private partnerships, income-generating activities, and a community-driven funding model, to enhance financial sustainability, thereby supporting the provision of quality education.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Empirical studies have explored the intersection of education financing and quality of basic education, highlighting the significance of innovative alternative financing models in ensuring quality education for all. According to Mwasigwa and Wamukuru (2022), effective educational leadership plays a crucial role in mobilizing resources, enhancing financial accountability, and fostering quality in education.

2.2.1 Income Generating Activities and Quality of Education

Agogbua and Muoto, (2022) carried out a study on income-generating Activities Adopted by Principals in Rural Secondary Schools for School Improvement in the New Normal in Nigeria. Schools utilize income-generating activities (IGAs) to enhance school resources amidst economic challenges. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the study surveyed 157 out of 263 public secondary school principals. The findings indicated that both agricultural and non-agricultural IGAs, such as crop farming, livestock rearing, and tailoring, are actively adopted by principals to supplement school funding. These activities achieved mean ratings ranging from 3.07 to 3.45, with standard deviations between 0.74 and 0.90, suggesting a moderate to high level of agreement among respondents regarding their effectiveness. However, the study did not specifically measure the direct impact of these IGAs on educational quality indicators like student performance, teacher effectiveness, or learning outcomes. This gap underscores the need for further research to assess how IGAs influence the quality of education, particularly in rural settings. Such studies could inform strategies for integrating financial sustainability with educational excellence, aligning with the objectives of this current study

Using a mixed-method approach, Bushra and Yuya (2022) carried out a study on internal income generation and utilization practices in public secondary schools within Kombolcha Woreda, Ethiopia. In assessing the extent to which income-generating activities (IGAs) impacts school operations, the study revealed that schools engaged in various IGAs, such as agriculture and small-scale enterprises, generated funds that were primarily allocated to infrastructure maintenance and administrative costs. However, challenges such as inadequate training, lack of entrepreneurial skills among staff, and limited community involvement hindered the effective utilization of these funds for educational improvements. Notably, the study did not directly measure the impact of IGAs on educational quality indicators, such as student performance or teacher effectiveness. This gap underscores the need for further research to assess how IGAs influence the quality of education, particularly in rural settings to inform strategies for integrating financial sustainability with educational excellence, aligning with the objectives of this current study.

2.2.2 Public-private partnership and Quality of education

A study by Abebe and Teklehaimanot (2023) examined public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education financing across East Africa. The findings revealed

that PPPs have enhanced financial sustainability in education by attracting private investments, reducing government expenditure, and improving access to quality education. However, the study also noted that weak leadership structures and governance issues often hinder the full realization of PPP benefits.

Abdulbaki (2021) explored the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in improving educational access and quality for learners with special needs. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study conducted interviews with education stakeholders, including policymakers, school administrators, and private sector partners. The findings indicated that PPPs have the potential to enhance educational infrastructure, provide specialized learning materials, and offer professional development for teachers, which are key elements to quality education, thereby improving the learning environment for students with special needs. However, the study identified challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of coordination among partners, and limited involvement of parents and communities in the partnership processes. Notably, the study did not specifically examine the impact of these partnerships on overall educational outcomes, such as student performance or teacher effectiveness. This gap highlights the need for further research to assess how PPPs influence the quality of education, particularly in special needs settings,

aligning with the objectives of this current study.

Xiao (2025) investigated the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure development across Canada and China. The study employed a comparative case study methodology, analyzing the adoption, benefits, and risks associated with PPPs in both countries. The findings reveal that while Canada has developed a mature PPP framework characterized by a comprehensive legal system and regulatory mechanisms, China's PPP model is relatively newer and has faced challenges such as regional disparities. The study highlights the advantages of PPPs, including alleviating governmental financial burdens and ensuring effective public service delivery, but also notes inherent risks like high transaction costs and the need for strong public sector governance. However, the study does not specifically address the impact of PPPs on educational outcomes or the quality of education.

2.2.3 Community-driven financing model and Quality of Education

Whereas education is free in Kenya, parental contributions remain a crucial part of the financial structure supporting schooling (Wekulio, 2022). Despite the government's provision of free primary and subsidized secondary education, many schools still rely on parents to cover costs

related to uniforms, books, and additional resources that are not provided by the state. This has created a disparity, as families from different socioeconomic backgrounds may contribute varying amounts, leading to inequalities in access to educational resources and opportunities. The reliance on parental contributions has placed a significant burden on low-income households, contributing to issues of school dropout and reduced participation in school activities. As a result, the overall quality of education is affected, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack access to the necessary tools and opportunities for academic success. Without equitable funding and support, the achievement of quality education for all students remains an elusive goal, reinforcing cycles of inequality and limiting the potential for inclusive educational development across Kenya.

Lumosi (2022) studied the *effect of Parent-Funded Supplies on Students' Participation in Secondary Education in Public Day Secondary Schools within Kakamega County, Kenya*. A *mixed methods approach* was used to collect data from 17 school principals, 21 Form Four teachers, 47 parents, 450 Form Four students, and a Sub-County Director of Education through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The study found that over 60% of household education costs were attributed to

uniforms, stationery, and language set books. The cost of school uniforms, in particular, was identified as the major contributor to the overall cost of schooling. The research also highlighted that the transition to senior classes, especially Form 3, significantly increased the cost of education due to additional requirements leading to increased absenteeism and dropout rates. The study concluded that despite the government's Free Secondary Education policy, the hidden costs of parent-funded supplies and costs continue to impede student participation and completion, which affects the quality of education.

3.0. Methodology

This study employs a desktop research approach, relying on secondary data sources to analyse the relationship between school financing models and quality education in basic educational institutions in Kenya. The research involves an extensive review of peer-reviewed academic journals, policy documents, government reports, and international agency publications to assess education financing strategies and how they affect the quality of education in the country. These documents were reviewed through a three-stage process of initial screening of titles and abstracts, full text review to determine relevance and compliance, and finally categorization using the funnel approach (Drahota et. al.,

2022). Empirical literature not older than 5 years was selected to ensure the inclusion of contemporary literature (García-Peñalvo, 2022).

The study adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing content analysis to interpret and synthesize findings from credible sources such as the Ministry of Education (Kenya), UNESCO, the World Bank, and peer-reviewed articles. Data was systematically collected and analyzed to identify trends, gaps, and best practices in education financing and leadership. Recommendations are made from the reviewed literature to inform the policy and educational outcomes.

4.0. Results and Findings

4.1 Effect of the sustainable investment/IGAs financing model on Quality of Education

The findings indicate that income-generating activities (IGAs) in educational institutions can have a significant impact on the quality of education by providing additional financial resources that support infrastructure development, teaching materials, and staff remuneration (Agogbua & Muoto, 2022). When schools engage in IGAs, such as agriculture, vocational training, or small businesses, they can reduce their reliance on external funding, such as government allocations or parental contributions. This financial independence helps ensure a more stable

learning environment, with the ability to invest in necessary educational resources. Well-executed IGAs can contribute to the sustainability of educational programs, improve school facilities, enhance teacher motivation through better compensation, and support the overall educational experience, thus enhancing the quality of education (Bushra & Yuya, 2022). Leadership in schools also enhances financial sustainability by promoting income-generating activities, optimizing resource utilization, and implementing cost-effective management strategies. Evidence from various schools in Kenya suggests that institutions with proactive leadership experience improved financial stability due to diversified funding sources, transparent financial management, and long-term planning.

4.2 Private-public partnership funding model on quality education

The study found that school leaders leverage collaborations with private entities, NGOs, and international donors to secure alternative funding. Successful PPP initiatives have contributed to infrastructure development, the provision of learning materials, and teacher training programs. Abebe and Teklehaimanot (2023) found that public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education across East Africa enhance financial sustainability in education by attracting private investments, reducing government

expenditure, and improving access to quality education. Abdulbaki (2021) examined PPPs' role in improving educational access and quality for learners with special needs, indicating that PPPs could enhance infrastructure, provide specialized learning materials, and support teacher professional development. Xiao (2025) emphasizes the potential of PPPs to improve educational infrastructure and quality, but also points to governance challenges and gaps in measuring their impact on student performance. Therefore, the PPPs are very instrumental in improving the quality of education

4.3 Community-driven financial model and Quality of Education

Empirical studies by Lumosi (2022), Machinyise, Kasebula, and Chabu (2023), and Lumosi (2022) collectively highlight the significant impact of parent-funded initiatives on the quality of education. Lumosi's research in Kakamega East Sub-County, Kenya, revealed that over 60% of household education costs were directed towards uniforms, stationery, and set books. This financial burden led to increased absenteeism and dropout rates, particularly among students from low-income households, thereby compromising the overall quality of education. Similarly, the study by Machinyise, Kasebula, and Chabu in Zambia emphasized that the reliance on parental contributions for educational

supplies resulted in disparities in access to resources, affecting student participation and completion rates. These findings underscore the necessity for equitable funding strategies to ensure quality education for all students. Additionally, Xiao et al. (2022) explored the influence of parents' educational expectations on children's academic outcomes. Their study found that parental involvement, particularly in the form of academic tutoring, positively impacted children's academic performance, highlighting the role of parental engagement in enhancing educational quality. Collectively, these studies underscore the critical role of parental contributions and involvement in shaping the quality of education, advocating for policies that address financial disparities and promote equitable access to educational resources.

5.0. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions and recommendations are proposed to strengthen the education financing in Kenya. The overall conclusion is that education financing students' education through various models guarantees access to quality education for all learners. By integrating these alternative school funding models other than capitation grants, it should guarantee the development of human capital (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022). These would be instrumental in mitigating inequalities and

availing of high-quality educational opportunities, and enhancing social mobility.

The overall study recommendations include implementing continuous capacity-building programs for school leaders on financial planning, resource management, and accountability to improve their ability to handle education finances effectively. It is also important to enhance Policy Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement. School leaders should actively engage policymakers and stakeholders to advocate for increased education funding and also for the development of frameworks for alternative funding mechanisms.

5.1 Income-Generating Activities funding model

From the study findings, it can be concluded that IGAs serve as an essential supplementary funding mechanism for schools, enabling them to diversify revenue streams. This is consistent with the findings of Agogbua and Muoto (2022). Therefore, the study recommends that basic education institutions should explore innovative, low capital IGAs that align with the needs of the community to make IGAs sustainable and socially responsible. However, there is a need for clear policies and guidelines to ensure IGAs are not exploited for profit-making at the expense of the primary educational mandate.

5.2 Private-Public Partnership (PPP) and Quality Education

The study concludes that PPPs provide a strategic approach to financing educational initiatives by combining the strengths of both the public and private sectors (Abebe & Teklehaimanot, 2023). They help in infrastructure development, curriculum innovation, and providing access to modern educational technologies. Therefore, strong regulatory frameworks should be established to ensure equitable and transparent partnerships. The Ministry of Education and relevant agencies should play an active role in overseeing contracts to protect the public interest. Further, due diligence before entering into PPP agreements, ensuring long-term sustainability and value for money, should be carried out. Thus, partnerships that contribute to improving educational outcomes, not just infrastructure, should be prioritized.

5.3 Community-driven/parental contribution financing model and Quality Education

The study concluded that parents' contributions, through levies or fees, play a critical role in financing schools, especially in low-income areas (Lumosi, 2022). However, excessive reliance on this model can lead to inequalities, where students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be excluded from educational

opportunities. The study recommends that schools consider a more equitable fee structure, where contributions are linked to parents' economic capacity, with provisions for scholarships or subsidies for disadvantaged students (Paccaud et. al, 2021). Despite government policies outlawing extra charges, there should be thorough enforcement of regulations to

prevent school levies illegally imposed on parents to ensure that no child is denied access to education due to financial constraints. Further, schools should increase communication with parents to explain the rationale behind contributions, ensuring transparency and fostering collaboration.

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