

**EFFECTS OF COST SHARING ON UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT TEOFILO
KISANJI UNIVERSITY IN MBEYA CITY, TANZANIA**

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Abstract

In the early 1990s, Tanzania re-introduced a policy of students' university education cost-sharing, aimed at reducing financial support in higher learning institutions. However, little information is available on effects of cost sharing on academic performance. Therefore, this study investigated the effects of cost sharing on university students' academic performance. The study used experimental approach in which stratified random and purposive sampling plans were used to select units for study. Cross sectional data in which a sample of 105 University students and Lecturers from Teofilo Kisanji University and parents were interviewed. Both, open and closed questionnaires were used to collect data through interview schedule and descriptive analysis approach was used. The present study findings showed that cost sharing in universities had negative effect on academic performance. Therefore, it was recommended that, the government should finance or subsidize university tuition fees for those students engaged in higher learning institutions.

Key words: Cost sharing, higher learning institutions, academic performance, university students, Teofilo kisanji University

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1.0 Introduction

In recent years, knowledge has become more acknowledged as an important factor in economic development (World Bank, 2002). In this respect, higher education has an important contribution to economic growth as it produces skilled and qualified labor force and technological development. Before independence of Tanzania, students in universities paid tuition fees (Babygeya, 2002). However, in 1964 after independence, the government abolished education tuition fees. This enhanced student's enrollment in secondary schools because schools became cheap. As a result, enrolment increased in the country (Marcucci, Johnstone, and Ngolovoi, 2008). Contrary, enrolment in higher education has expanded while public funding has dropped in absolute terms (World Bank, 2008). Similarly, Johnstone (2003, 2004) adds that the enrolment expansion and decline in public funds have gone parallel with the increase in costs of education per student.

Although, the percentage financial support is declining while the enrolment is increasing, yet, the government is the only financer of education. However, the government budget allocation does not match with yearly demand pattern of clients. This opened the door for cost sharing from other stakeholders while the government has remained the main stakeholder. Babygeya (2002) expresses that the government re-introduced the cost-sharing due to inability to finance university education. Consequently, the decline of government revenue, therefore, there was a need for stakeholders to be involved. Also, Ishengoma (2004) found that, the government inability to finance education was due to greater cost-sharing in universities. As a result, it was necessary for the government to introduce cost sharing so as to share the hiking burden as well as to improve access of education (URT, 1998). However, the aim was to encourage students attain higher education through cost sharing so as to improve the accessibility of high quality education (Ishengoma, 2004).

As a way of generating other means of revenue, cost sharing was introduced in higher education through the government formal announcement in January 1992 (URT 1998). Johnstone (2004) reports that, cost sharing in higher education is the shift of the costs of higher education from the government and taxpayers in general to students and their families. This can be through tuition fees, paying user charges for accommodation, or reducing subsidies for costs of living. It is

argued that, higher education would be more responsive and efficient if people pay for it (Johnstone, 2003; 2004).

However, there is no consensus of the loan scheme and the cost sharing among university students in Tanzania. This can be evidenced in terms of categories that range from A to K introduced by Higher Education Students Loan Board (HESLB). It is in the range of 10% which starts from 100% to 0%. This ground of poor consensus of the loan scheme may result to the variation of academic performance among university students. However, Ngware *et al.* (2007), Ishengoma (2004), Maliyamkono (1991) and Johnstone(2004) focused much on the effects of cost sharing in general. On the other side, the focus on academic performance is an important problem to be addressed. Therefore, this study investigated how cost sharing among university students' affects academic performance.

2.0 Statement of the problem

To motivate students in their academic performance is one of the objectives of the loan scheme in any country. Most countries that have adopted loan schemes and/or targeted grants are unable to target the students in need of these funds (World Bank, 2010). As a result, there has been poor loan allocation, financial hardship and poor loan distribution to the needy students (World Bank, 2008). Similarly, Ngware *et al.* (2007) add that, loans are not fairly distributed according to students' economic status. Therefore, the problem of financial hardship and inefficient loans allocation may affect university students' academic performance since the situation may demoralize them to work hard. Similarly, this might be a factor for the increase of university students' dropout and discontinue due to poor examination results (World Bank, 2008).

Having this problem of loan distribution among university students in Tanzania, but little information is available on the effects of cost sharing on university students' academic performance. This was measured through income generating activities done by students and time spends by students seeking for part time jobs during class hours and test performance. Thus, the present study investigated the effects of cost sharing among university students' academic

performance at Teofilo Kisanji University so as to inform policy makers, teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders. Also, the knowledge obtained will help educational stakeholders to effectively implement the cost sharing strategy among university students so as to overcome problems caused by cost sharing towards academic performance.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study location

The present study was conducted at Teofilo Kisanji University in Mbeya campus in Mbeya city. The area was chosen due to easy accessibility, availability of data and units of analysis at low cost. However, third year students were selected as sampling frame because they were capable to provide relevant information that covered in their first, second and third years, respectively.

3.2 Research design

Research design can be thought of as the structure of research (Kombo and Tromp 2006). Orodho (2003) defines it as a plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Therefore, cross sectional experimental approach was employed, in which each third year student had an equal chance of participation (Fisher, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Krysik and Finn, 2007).

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is a scientific way of drawing a representative population from a large population for a study (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). Similarly, Williman (2011) describes sampling as a process of selecting a small group of cases out of a large group. In this study, stratified random and purposive sampling approaches were employed in selecting respondents. Stratified random sampling was used because the outcome of interest was expected to vary among different sub groups of respondents and that those sub groups could run the risk of being overrepresented or underrepresented (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). As indicated by Creswell (2007), purposive approach enabled the cases selected to answer research questions based on their best knowledge to meet

research objectives. In purposive sampling respondents were chosen basing on their percentages from loan board (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). Under purposive and stratified random sampling, therefore; third year students, lecturers and parents were involved. Therefore, sample size of 105 was collected and was comprised of 75 student and 10 lecturers from Teofilo Kisanji University and 20 parents from Mbeya City.

3.5 Data collection methods

Methods are specific research techniques that a researcher uses to gather information (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008). This study used both structured and unstructured interview schedule with the intention of collecting qualitative data from lecturers' and students' perspectives regarding the effect of cost sharing on the university students' academic performance. Through unstructured interview schedule, in-depth information was obtained in which verbal answers from interview were recorded. Also, information from the key informants and focus group discussion as a triangulation approach to confirm information collected were used (Newman, 2007).

3.6 Data analysis

The present study employed descriptive statistics present the extent of the problem and the percentage of students affected. Therefore, Statistical package for social scientist (SPSS) version 16 was used to analyze data.

4.0 Results and discussions

4.1 Gender characteristics of respondents

Results (Table 1) showed that (40%) and (60%) of students interviewed were females and male, respectively. Also, findings showed that 40% and 30% of interviewed lecturers and parents were female, respectively while 60% and 70% of interviewed were male lecturers and parents, accordingly. This shows that the number of male respondents is high compared to the number of

female respondents. The variation between gender respondents may be due to the fact that male are more likely to be affected in cost sharing compared to female due to gender consideration.

Table 1: Gender characteristics of respondents

Respondents	Responses By Gender	Distribution	
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Students	Female	30	40.0
	Male	45	60.0
	Total	75	100.0
Lecturers	Female	4	40.0
	Male	6	60.0
	Total	10	100.0
Parents	Female	6	30.0
	Male	14	70.0
	Total	20	100.0

4.2 Age characteristics of respondents

Findings (Table 2) showed that 68.0%, 30.7% and 1.3% of students interviewed were in the age category 20-39, 40-59 and 60-above, respectively. Also, findings showed 80% and 20% of parents interviewed were in the age category 51-60 and 61-above, respectively. Findings showed that the majority of students and lecturers interviewed lied between 20-39 years old while the minority lied between the ages of 61-above years. This meant that people aged between 20-39 years were more likely to be affected or participate in cost sharing.

Table 2: Age characteristics of respondents

Respondents	Age (years)	Responses distribution	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)

Students	20 - 39	51	68.0
	40 - 59	23	30.7
	60 - Above	01	1.3
	Total	75	100.0
Lecturers	20 - 39	7	70.0
	40 - 59	3	30.0
	Total	10	100.0
Parents	51- 60	16	80.0
	61- Above	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0

4.1.3 Education level of respondents

Results (Table 3) showed that 100% of lecturers interviewed had attained master's level while 54.7% and 45.3% of students interviewed had attained diploma and form six level, respectively. Also, findings showed that 60%, 20% and 20% of parents interviewed had attained degree, diploma and form four education level, respectively. This indicated that lecturers and the majority of parents had attained degree education level while students were attending degree level programs. This suggested that the majority of respondents were aware of and they had participated or likely to participate in cost sharing.

Table 3: Education level of respondents

Respondents category	Level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lecturers	Masters	10	100.0
	Degree	-	-
	Diploma	-	-
	Total	10	100.0
	Diploma	41	54.7

Students	Form six	34	45.3
	Total	75	100.0
Parents	Degree	12	60.0
	Diploma	4	20.0
	Form four	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0

4.2 Effects of cost sharing on university students' academic performance

4.2.1 Responses on whether students attended classes all the time

Findings (Table 4) showed that 60% and 73.3% of interviewed lecturers and students respondents respectively, disagreed that students attended classes all the time. Conversely, 40% and 26.7% of lecturers and students interviewed accordingly agreed that students attended classes all the time. Findings showed that cost sharing in universities affects students' academic performance. However, respondents reported financial problem, illness and social problem constrained them to attend classes all the time. Of all the problems reported, 78% of respondents reported financial problem to be the main constraint. Also, students interviewed reported that most of the time they were engaged in income generating activities so as to pay university tuition fees and for their own expenses. The present findings agree with observation made by Babyegeya (2002) and Ishengoma (2004) that cost sharing results into low quality education standards especially when the stakeholders fail to contribute necessary costs for education that no money no quality education.

On the other hand, 26.7% of interviewed students (Table 4) reported that they attended classes all the time because they succeeded to have loan to meet their requirements. The present study observed that those students who reported they attended classes all the time were financed 100% from HESLB and they were coming from health family. But, lecturers reported that financial problems resulted into truancy and that sometimes; students become truants because of missing financial assistance. When it happened that there was a check up for payments to university,

some students left classes without permission in order to escape the check up which resulted into truant as a result they missed lectures.

Table 4: Responses on whether students attended classes all the time

Respondents category	Responses	Responses distribution	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lecturers	Yes	4	40.0
	No	6	60.0
	Total	10	100.0
Students	Yes	20	26.7
	No	55	73.3
	Total	75	100.0

4.2.2 Responses on whether students perform better

Results (Table 5) showed that 70% and 84% of lecturers and students interviewed agreed that students perform better while 30% and 16% of them disagreed, respectively. This means that apart from different problems of HESLB students performed better in their studies. Probably, this could be due to the fact that most students tended to choose university which is nearly their home place and where it was easy to get accommodation. The reason provided by the interviewed students was that they did not use much time for finding funds for accommodation, fees and stationary. The present study findings agree with the observation made by Babyegeya (2002) that students are performing better regardless of problems in fee contribution.

Table 5: Responses on whether students perform better

Respondents category	Responses	Responses distribution	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lecturers	Yes	7	70.0
	No	3	30.0

	Total	10	100.0
Students	Yes	63	84.0
	No	12	16.0
	Total	75	100.0

4.2.3 Responses on whether there is any relationship between cost sharing and academic performance among the University students

On this aspect, it was found that there was a relationship between cost sharing and academic performance among the university students (Figure 1). Results showed that 93% of interviewed students reported that there existed relationship between cost sharing and academic performance while 7% of the rest reported that there was no relationship between cost sharing and academic performance. Results indicated that most interviewed students agreed that there was a relationship between cost sharing and academic performance. The interviewed students reported that they spent most of time in looking for tuition fee, meals and accommodation and field study. Another reason was psychological problem which disturbed students mind if s/he was grouped at low percentage. The reasons reported by interviewed students proposed that the relationship between cost sharing and academic performance had psychological and time effects as a result students could perform poorly. The present observation relates with Johnson (2004) who observed that cost sharing is the shift of costs to students and their parents from government which disturbs student progress in learning. Similarly, Ngware *et al.* (2007) found that poor distribution of loans among students affects academic performance and family.

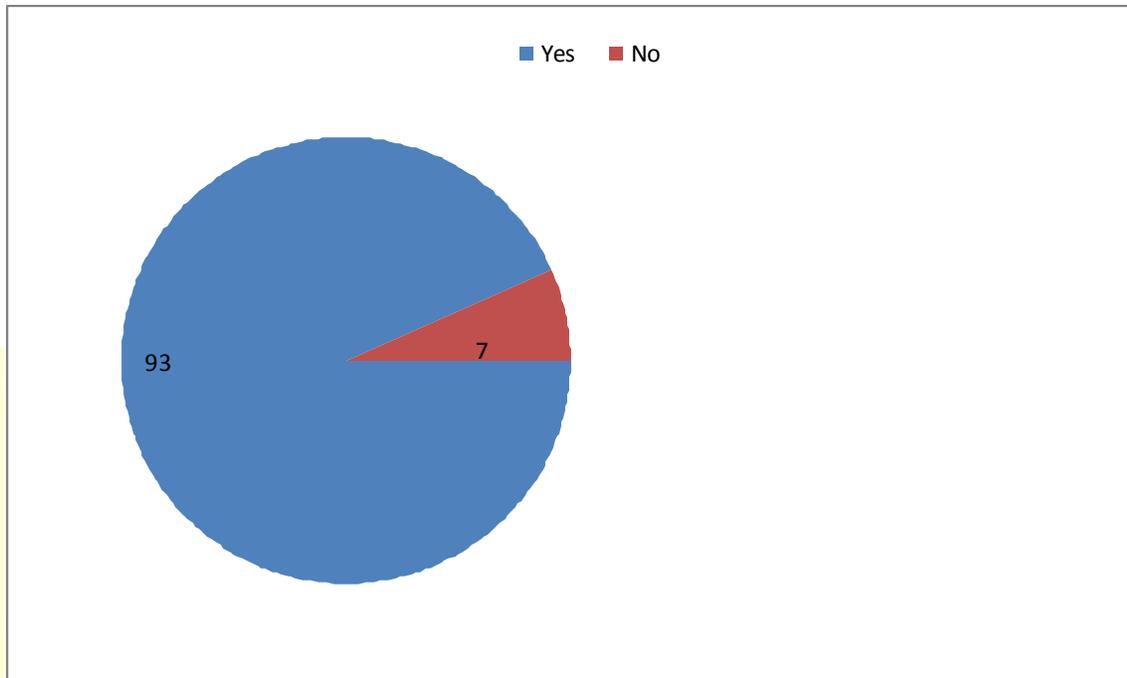


Figure 1: Responses on whether there was any relationship between cost sharing and academic performance among the University students

4.2.4 Responses to lecturers on whether all students succeed to complete their studies

Results (Figure 2) showed that 100% of lecturers reported that not all students complete their studies. The reason reported by lecturers was due to financial problem in paying tuition fees and other university needs. Present study findings suggest that financial problem had an impact to both students and university hence student could fail to complete fees consequently students may lose the chance or postpone their studies.

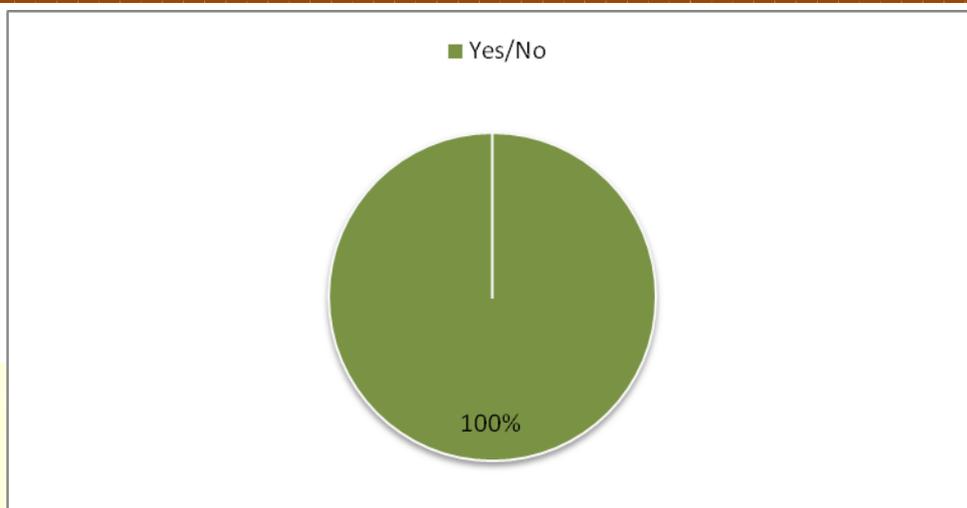


Figure 2: Responses to lecturers on whether all students succeed to complete their Studies.

4.6 Responses to parents on whether they like the system of contributing costs in education

Findings (Table 6) showed that 100% of interviewed parents disliked the system of cost sharing in education. The interviewed parents reported that education is not a business oriented rather it is for serving the community and the nation as well. Also, they reported that, students from low family income face challenges and difficulties in studies and it was observed when students missed necessary requirements such as tuition fees, stationeries, meals and accommodation.

The present study findings agree with the report made by World Bank (2010) that most countries introduced cost sharing with the will of few people that's why parents dislike cost sharing.

Table 6: Responses to parents on whether they like the system of contributing costs in education

Respondent category	Response	Responses distribution	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Parents	Yes	0	0.0
	No	20	100.0
	Total	20	100.0

4.7 Responses on strategies that will help to alleviate poor performance

Results (Table 7) showed that 50% and 64% of the interviewed lecturers and students respectively reported that free university fees and accommodations are strategies that will help to alleviate poor performance while 80% of parents reported the review of the cost sharing scheme. Other reported strategies were rational grouping from means testing and to remove means testing. Findings showed that reviewing cost sharing circular and providing free university fees and accommodations from HESLB could be the best strategies that will help to alleviate the situation. The reasons reported by the interviewed respondents were to: keep students busy in learning only instead of looking for university fees while at the university and to raise students' academic performance as well as improvement of quality of education at national level. The alternative suggestion provided by respondents agree with the observation made by Johnstone (2004) on strategies that students must be financed free in all university's costs so as to reduce stress for students who are coming from poor families.

Table 7: Responses on strategies that will help to alleviate the situation

Respondent category	Responses	Responses category	
		Frequency	Percentage
Lecturers	Free fees and accommodations	5	50.0
	Review of cost sharing circular	3	30.0
	Rational grouping	1	10.0
	Remove means testing	1	10.0
	Total	10	100.0
Students	Free fees and accommodations	48	64.0
	Rational grouping	19	25.3
	Remove means testing	8	10.7
	Total	75	100.0

Parents	Review of cost sharing circular	16	80.0
	Rational grouping	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

Based on results on effects of cost sharing on university students' academic performance that 66% of interviewed respondents agreed that there were effects of cost sharing on academic performance of university students. Therefore, it was concluded that poor performance in most of universities were likely to be caused by cost sharing and that there was a relationship between cost sharing and students' academic performance in universities. Therefore, it was recommended that the government should finance or subsidize university tuition fees for those students engaged in higher learning institutions.

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