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STUDENTS LOANS AND IT'S IMPLICATION ON THE LEARNING OUTCOMES .A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

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Abstract

This study examines Students loans and it's implication for learning outcomes in St. Augustine University of Tanzania. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 14250 students. 210 students were randomly selected as sample of the study. Two research question were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire tagged: Students loans and learning outcomes questionnaire (SLLOQ) was the main instrument used for data collection containing section A and section B, section A contain demographic variables while section B contain items in the instrument. It was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Department of Educational Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania. The reliability of the instrument was achieved using the trial test Cronbach Alpha method yielding coefficient of .71 - .86, The statistical tools employed for data analysis were the Means and Standard Deviation. From the analysis conducted it was indicated that students loan influences their learning outcome with an aggregate range of 2.59 and 2.64. It was recommended among other that Government should organize quality and regular training programmes for students in order to adapt to the effectives modalities use in applying for loans to ascertain their learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Students loans, learning outcomes, Effectiveness of loan system, Socio-economic consequences*

Introduction

Student loans have become more and more necessary for Tanzanians students to access higher education, yet many students face severe financial difficulties as a result of these loans, which may have an impact on their academic and professional performance. The government's student loan program was designed to give everyone access to higher education in light of growing tuition and living expenses, but problems including heavy repayment obligations and restricted loan availability have had unforeseen effects. Mzumara (2020).Research indicates that the buildup of student debt may result in prolonged economic instability for graduates, especially in developing countries such as Tanzania, characterised by competitive job markets and comparatively low salaries (Mkina & Mushi, 2022).

In the United States, as borrowing for education has become part of the fabric of life, the student loan industry has come to represent increasing access to postsecondary education for many people, while appearing to threaten the stability and security posted by middle - class life. By 2023, over 45 million Americans were indebted with over $1.7 trillion as student loans (Dynarski& Scott-Clayton, 2022). While student loans have been instrumental in allowing students from different socioeconomic backgrounds to attend college, many borrowers have struggled for decades with them. As scholars such as Avery and Turner (2020) find, climbing student loan debt billows out economic inequality, notably among low-income and minority borrowers, while delaying milestones such as buying a home and having children. Denying the education- it doesn't matter who's to blame- it would just put up the price of things, because these high interest rates and these long pay-back-the-payment of them several years are driving all this to the wall and has a big debt-load, and half of our students now are under some incredible debt for a full year. Student loan debt has both psychological and financial implications; in the inability to make student loan payments, many borrowers experience severe mental health issues (Joo, 2022). Avery and Turner (2020) have found that borrowers often suffer from depression and anxiety, which can limit their ability to become financially autonomous.

The Role of Student Loans in Financing the Tertiary Education Area in Asia, where tuition and living costs are increasing, student loans have also become an important source of funding for higher education in Asian countries. Student loans are now an important fund to cover the cost of education in China, because tuition fee increase in public higher education.According to Yang and Liu (2021), China's student loan market has grown dramatically in recent years as more students take out loans to pay for their tuition and living expenses. However, because many graduates find it difficult to find steady work in a crowded job market, the system's quick growth has also increased default rates (Yang & Liu, 2021). While student loans have made it possible for more students to pursue higher education, Sharma (2020) contends that because of the difference between the cost of education and the employment outcomes for graduates, many students especially those from lower-income backgrounds—have experienced long-term financial instability. Millions of students in India depend on student loans to pursue higher education, but difficulties with debt repayment have become a major worry. All things considered, these difficulties in Asia highlight the necessity of changing student loan policies to better reflect the demands of the labour market and the financial circumstances that recent graduates face.

West Africa, although the student loan system in West Africa is still in its infancy, its importance is growing as more people have access to higher education. Nations such as Nigeria established the National Student Loan Scheme (NSLS) to narrow the funding gap in post-secondary education. The program has run into numerous problems, however. The effectiveness of student loans in Nigeria has been hindered by poor funding, inefficient procedures of loan disbursement, and high rate of defaults, as reported by Akintoye and Abiola (2021). Even though loans are designed to provide students from low-income families greater access to higher education, it is difficult to comprehend the expected loan repayment plan, particularly in a volatile country's economy and the lack of job opportunities (Akintoye&Abiola, 2021). In a similar fashion, Ghana's student loan scheme has been starved of cash and suffering from administration problems in recent years - even though it is vital in providing access to university education. Acheampong (2023) argued that the Ghanaian student loan policy is intended to incentivise higher education except that the system often compounds the financial instability of graduates through late repayments and mismanagement of loan funds. To ensure equitable access to higher education and improve the process of repayment, these challenges in West African countries illustrate the need for change in student loan systems. That will require institutional strengthening and political will from government (Acheampong, 2023; Akintoye&Abiola, 2021; Kanu, 2021).

In Tanzania, access to higher education has expanded considerably in recent years, partly as a result of higher education student loans funded by the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB). HESLB was established in 2005 with a simple and direct mission of increasing access to higher education for Tanzanians, with focus on serving those from low-income families who possess the academic potential to pursue higher learning but lack means to finance their education. Although HESLB system has contributed greatly to the facilitation of access to higher education, there have been some challenges that surround the system such as sustainability of loans, delays in loans disbursement and access to loans by all eligible students. Mhando and Mwaimu (2021) posit that despite the scheme playing a significant role in supporting millions of students, funds available for fund disbursement fall short of the escalating market demand for financial support. This shortfall in funds undermines the efficacy of the loan program, and particularly for students from the very lowest income level. However, the high rate of loan defaults is one of the greatest weaknesses of the Tanzanian student loan system. According to Mollel and Ndyetabula (2020), a lot of the university graduates encounter challenges with the repayment of loans since the employment opportunities in the country have become a puzzle to several people. Unemployment rates are high (especially among university graduates), so many Tanzanians who borrow are unable to secure high paying jobs afterwards, and they find it hard to pay back their loans. This is exacerbated by inflation and economic turmoil, making it difficulters for new alumni to stand on stable financial ground. According to Mkony (2022), the loans are repayable on small installments after completion of studies and graduation but most graduates have been failing to service the loans as a result of poor follow-up and tracking. The lack of a clear and efficient framework for getting that money back has made it more difficult for the government to recoup funds, hampering its ability to fund loans for new students. Tanzania higher education also has structural problems: the increasing tuition and the living costs, which are not always satisfied by loan. This problem is especially dire for kids attending privates - they might need more loans or personal funding to cover the full cost of their education. Mollel and Ndyetabula (2020) suggest that part of the solution would be the development of more effective loan recovery methods and the provision of post-graduation support services like facilitating the unemployed graduates to secure jobs. It is therefore important that these challenges are addressed to maintain student loans funding in Tanzania and support access to higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Admission into tertiary education has become significantly easier in recent years, especially at such institutions as St. Augustine University. But for all that progress, many students are still struggling to make ends meet. As a result, in 2005, the Tanzanian government created the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB), which is intended to offer financial support to students seeking higher education. Although this program has provided assistance to many low-income students, opportunities for improvement still exist. Research findings have persistently demonstrated that funds from HESLB are almost always insufficient for the increasing demand for student loans. As a result, a number of prospective students cannot find financial assistance and are deprived of a higher education. This shortfall means that some students defer or are forced to find alternative sources of funding some of which are not immediately available or reliable. In order to make higher education less costly, the government has introduced new policies to make TULS more accessible and efficient, and clarify how students are classified and how they qualify for the loans, as specified in the Tertiary Education Policy of 2019. These reforms have a financial inclusion focus and are intended to broaden accessibility for credit through HESLB. Despite these interventions, the loan system is fraught with serious problems including high default rates, difficulties in tracking down loans, and delayed loan repayment. Despite the HESLB efforts at sensitizing students on loan application processes and loan repayment obligations, structural problems remain. Some of these factors include irregular government support and challenges in incorporating private higher education institutions into the system. For this reason, the researcher is concerned about whether the current student loan system is actually "meaningful in alleviating financial difficulties to students and enhancing the academic achievements" in the study area at St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

Objectives

a) To examine the effectiveness of the student loans system in St. Augustine University of Tanzania
b) To assess the socio-economic consequences of student loans debt on St. Augustine University of Tanzania graduates

Research Questions

a) To what extent does effectiveness of students' loans influence learning outcomes?
b) How does socio-economic consequence of student loans debt influence learning outcomes?

Literature Review

Effectiveness of the student loans system in St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Student loan programs in the US have been crucial in increasing access to postsecondary education, especially for those from low-income families. Millions of low-income students have been able to attend college thanks to federal student loan programs like Pell Grants and Direct Loans, claims Dynarski (2020). Since higher education has become more expensive over time, making it harder for students from underprivileged backgrounds to pay for tuition without financial aid, these loan programs have become more crucial. While student loans have made education more accessible, Dynarski notes that they have also resulted in an increase in student debt, which has become a major worry for many borrowers.

In Asia, the efficacy of student loans has also had a substantial impact on widening the access to tertiary education in countries, particularly for disadvantaged students who, otherwise could not afford to go to college. The efficiency made it more accessible to students from low SES families to be admitted, say Sharma and Deshmukh (2021). The government's funding is available at subsidised loans through public banks.

Refer to Ren and Cha (2025) for a comparative study of student loan system between China and US with a focus on system efficiency. The study indicates that the student loan system in China is ridden with difficultly many problems, for instance, scattered sources of information, cumbersome process for loan application, single type of loan, narrow-ranging support, and the insufficient method of repayment. These are what limit the effectiveness of the system and make it less available and flexible to the students. In comparison, the US federal student loan program is a more comprehensive model featuring specialized loan servicing agencies, loan varieties, support services, as well as numerous repayment types available, including, for example, the Income-Driven Repayment Plans of Income-Driven Repayment Plans. China may draw on the U.S. experience to build its student loan system, including setting up a unified loan platform system, extending student loans, diversifying loan forms and implementing a more flexible repayment system in order to cater to the different needs and expectations of students and graduates, the researchers point out.

Cho et al. (2024) analyzed in South Korea the impact of student loans and national scholarships on Korean university students' academic life, student life, leisure and life quality. Based on the Korea Education and Employment Panel (KEEP II) from 2018 to 2021, the study noted no statistically significant differences in academic achievements and university life between loan and scholarship recipients. National scholarship recipients, however, experienced significant improvements in health and quality of life impacts such as sleep, activity and happiness. National loans met financial needs best, but were not equally beneficial in terms of student welfare and quality of life as national grants. This implies that the economic assistance of student loan may aim at their material need, but the students' overall satisfaction and health may not be significantly improved as that of national scholarship.

Wu (2024)delves into the influence of student loans to students over the united states of america on the government ability of the nation in addition to pupil s comprehensive maturation and contrasts the efficacy of pupils loan system within higher education. The research has implications for the push to use student loans to ease the financial burden on students, and the potential long-term burden on borrowers. It also says that student loans are not a good indicator of a student's academic aptitude. Moreover, it is stated in the paper that part-time jobs have advantages and may also cause harm to students who work for a long time. The paper also examines the poor economic outcomes associated with high student debt burden, which in turn affect government revenue, household wealth and overall consumption. Wu (2024) stresses the need for a balance between repaying loans and maintaining an academic focus and suggests that fiscal policies should be implemented to keep student debt at levels that would not negatively impact on other parts of society.

Zhang et al. (2020) provides an assessment of the effectiveness and sustainability of national student loans in higher education, with a focus on the functions and behaviors of the main actors, i.e., universities, banks and students. The article is framed through a three-player behavioral evolutionary game model that analyzes how the players interact to produce the success of student loan systems. This research indicates that for the system to work, bank need to actively originate student loans under the rigorous scrutiny of prudent loan underwriting. Students must have an interest in establishing good credit from the interest rate side and penalties for breaking the rules for loan repayment and the performance of the system as a whole. Universities also have an important role to play to minimise information asymmetry, enhance financial literacy and encourage student integrity that allows for the loan system to work efficiently in the short-term and sustainable in the long-term. The study highlights that efficient operation and accessibility of student loan systems depends on close cooperation and co-operation of universities, banks, and students who collectively manage the loans in a planned manner.

Sennuga et al. (2023) studied the effect of student loan bill on undergraduate students in University of Abuja, Nigeria with the specific emphasis on how student loan system affects students academic performance and financial stability. The article reveals that there are positive effects of student loan use, with students more inclined to exhibit higher levels of study effort following the fear of debt. Socio-economic background was also considered in the loan assessment, therefore it seems that students from different economic backgrounds may be experiencing different levels of access and support. The study also suggested that increased recognition, visibility and transparency in loans process and counselling support are important elements of optimizing loan system. The study establishes through its results that, if properly administered, the student loan scheme could cushion the financial burden of Nigerian students and ease their transition to life after schooling, position the loan system as a potent instrument of promoting access to higher education in Nigeria.

In their research paper, Kamara and Momoh (2024) investigated the impact of student loans in increasing access to tertiary education in Sierra Leone, most especially for those student who are drawn from poor socio-economic backgrpunds. The study claimed that student loans plays a major role in developing human capital and reducing poverty by expanding tertiary education. Utilizing cases from around the world, including the US and Ghana, the research showed that high quality loan systems are capable of expanding university participation and completion. The direct returns on the investment are not especially lucrative, but student loans represent a sound investment in the future and ease the demands on the public purse. The study advocates for the adoption of income-contingent loan models to ensure sustainable growth and accessibility within Sierra Leone's education system.

In Tanzania lending money to students from low-income families, guarantees the effectiveness of Higher Education Students. Komba and Nkulila (2021) claims that by offering financial aid to cover living expenses and tuition, the HESLB has played a significant role in facilitating low-income students' entrance to public universities. Enrolment rates at Tanzanian institutions have increased significantly as a result of this loan system, especially for students from rural areas who otherwise would not have been able to afford higher education.

Socio-Economic consequences of student loans debt on St. Augustine University of Tanzania graduates

In the United States has become a significant socio-economic issue, especially for graduates who struggle with employment and loan repayment. According to the Federal Reserve (2020), student loan debt has reached record levels in the U.S., with over $1.7 trillion in outstanding loans as of 2020. This mountain of debt has had dire consequences for the financial health and employment opportunities of graduates.

The Callender and Davis (2023) study examines the socio-economic impact of student loans on graduates in England, where 94% of students took out government backed loans in 2020-2021. Through 98 semi-structured qualitative interviews, the research investigates graduates' strategies towards their student loan debt and the perceptions and nature of their relationship with the state lender. The results demonstrate ambivalence, in the form of acceptance, and anxiety, among graduates about their indebtedness and are informed by symbolic but also structural violence. The paper calls for recognition of graduates' experiences and is an answer to the call by citing graduates' responses to debt as one of affective acceptance and continued financial adversity, thereby demonstrating the emotional as well as financial cost of student loan debt for graduates in England.

Student debt is increasingly a problem in Tanzania, particularly for just-out-of-college graduates from low-income families. Despite the efforts, the Tanzanian government through the Higher Education Students Loan Board (HESLB) have made in the provision of funds for postsecondary education, many graduates are experiencing difficulty in their loans repayment, argue and Mhando (2020). According to the authors, that system is supposed to increase access to higher education, but the fact that there aren't job opportunities around the country means graduates are struggling to pay off that debt. It is difficult for graduates to get stable high-paying jobs against a backdrop of high unemployment, especially among young people, which in turn leads to them facing economic pressure and delaying their debt repayment. It not only prevents graduates from attaining financial security or upward mobility in their careers, but it also perpetuates a debt cycle. "Additionally, in Tanzania, student loan debt affects borrowers' social and economic stability beyond repayment challenges, and extends to financial well-being far in life. According to Nsimbi and Nchimbi (2021), even when students loans are available, the repayment schedule in Tanzania has been a major cause for concern. With high living costs and low wages in the labour market, many graduates cannot afford to repay their student loans on time. This financial burden, the authors argue, prevents graduates from achieving long-term financial stability, such as investing in key life goals—becoming homeowners or entrepreneurs, for instance. The financial situation of Tanzanian graduates in the long-run, is still miserable unless re-payment schemes are restructured and also job opportunities increased.

Msigwa (2019) discusses the socio-economic implications of student loan for low socio-economic background students in Tanzania with a special focus on University of Dar es Salaam and Tumaini University Dar es Salaam. The study findings suggest that the policy's objective is not in line with its actual distribution, as the majority of loans are given to students studying specific clusters of education and engineering while loans are not accessible for students who study other clusters of humanities and social sciences.This discrepancy undermines the capability of low-SES students to pursue their preferred occupations, suggesting that the Higher Education Student Loans Board (HESLB) should revise its loan criteria to ensure broader access and enhance opportunities for these students.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 14250 students in St. Augustine University of Tanzania. 210 students were randomly selected as sample of the study. Questionnaire tagged: Students loans and learning outcomes questionnaire (SLLOQ) was the main instrument used for data collection containing section A and section B, section A contain democratic variables while section B contain items in the instrument. It was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Department of Educational Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania. The reliability of the instrument was achieved using the trial test Cronbach Alpha method yielding coefficient of .71 - .86, from other higher institutions outside the study area in Tanzania. The statistical tools employed for data analysis were the Means and Standard Deviation

Result and Findings

Research question 1

To what extent does effectiveness of students' loans influence learning outcomes?

Table 1: Mean rating of the responses and standard deviation of the effectiveness of students' loan system

S/n	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Std Deviation	Decision
1	Students loan programs are	134	114	61	71	2.98	0.98	Accepted

	effective in my school							
2	Students loan increased students enrolment	104	149	62	65	2.89	0.93	Accepted
3	There are no effective students loans Recovery	96	155	58	71	2.81	0.93	Rejected
4	Successful students loans are effective in financing higher education	90	162	53	75	2.80	0.88	Accepted
5	The agency responsible for distribution of the loan are effective	100	154	60	66	2.34	0.78	Rejected
	Aggregate mean					2.59	5.59	Accepted

Table 1 above presented data on the effectiveness of student's loans and learning outcomes

From the table. It was observed that all the items were highly rated by the respondent with aggregate or grand mean of 2.59. It indicates that the respondents are of the opinion that effectiveness of students' loans influence their learning outcomes.

Research question 2

How does socio-economic consequences of student loans debt influence learning outcomes?

Table 2: Mean rating of the responses and standard deviation of socio-economic consequences of students' loans debt

S/n	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Std deviation	Decision
6	The students are capable of paying the dept of the loan	104	148	58	70	2.88	0.92	Accepted
7	The income generated after students study are sufficient enough to pay back the depth	152	100	51	77	3.00	0.83	Accepted
8	Low income students are not capable of paying the loans depts.	137	11	59	73	2.99	0.99	Rejected
9	The condition of students payment of the loans	102	150	61	67	2.92	0.96	Accepted
10	The students are capable of paying the dept of the loan	146	147	50	78	2.96	0.68	Accepted
	Aggregate mean					2.64	0.98	Accepted

Table 2 above presented data on socio-economic consequences of students' loans debt. It can be observed that all the items were highly rated by the respondents. However, with the aggregate or grand mean of 2.64 the results indicate that the respondents are of the opinion that socio-economic consequences of students' loans debt influence their learning outcomes

Conclusion

In conclusion, the student loan system in Tanzania has played a vital role in widening access to higher education, particularly for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It has enabled many individuals, who might not have had the opportunity otherwise, to pursue university education. Enhancing job creation and improving economic opportunities for graduates, along with implementing more adaptable repayment options such as income-based repayment plans, could help ease the financial burden on borrowers.

Recommendations

The study suggests the following:

1. The government should implement consistent and high-quality training programs to help students effectively understand and navigate the loan application process, thereby improving their academic success.
2. Educational institutions should closely monitor students' academic progress to ensure timely graduation, which will in turn support the efficient repayment of their loans.

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