

IMPLICATION OF EXTRA TUITION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON PUPILS' SOCIAL LIFE IN KISUMU MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN KENYA

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Abstract

The competitiveness of the education system in Kenya has compelled pupils to take extra tuition because of perceived benefits of good performance. The study used cross sectional survey data from 401 pupils and 10 teachers in Kisumu Municipality, Western Kenya. The results indicate that a majority of the pupils attend extra tuition which in their opinion is mandatory requirement despite a government policy abolishing extra tuition. Pupils suggest they need to be given time to get involved in other social activities and exploring talents. We conclude that children need to be involved in the decisions affecting their educational development.

Keywords: Extratuition; Primary school Pupils; Social life; Western Kenya

1.1 Introduction

Provision of “extra tuition” outside school hours has become a growing global phenomenon, yet many studies have not documented its implications on the social lives of pupils in developing countries (Bray, 1999, Bray 2005, Paviot, Heinsohn and Korkman, 2008). According to Bray (2003), provision of extra tuition occupies a fairly large amount of pupil’s time and denies them opportunities for engaging in other activities in social life. The main reason for children’s engagement in extra tuition is due to the desire by parents to help their children do well in entry examinations for secondary schools and tertiary institutions and to guarantee their children entry into competitive professional courses at University level. Several studies have shown that the Kenyan education system has become examination oriented with very high stakes (Nzomo, Kariuki and Guantai, 2001, Wanyama and Njeru, 2004). Most parents enrol their children into schools that obtain high mean grade in primary schools national examinations and guarantee them places in the best secondary schools that send large number of students to the Kenyan public universities (Wanyama and Njeru, 2004). School enrolment has increased tremendously because of the introduction of free primary education policy in Kenya in the year 2003. Most parents believe that the quality of education in these schools is compromised due to large numbers of enrolment, lack of

adequate facilities and teacher shortage (Daily Nation, 2008). Thus, most school management prefer to conduct extra tuition during weekends or after normal schooling hours either in the evening or very early in the morning. On the contrary, the Kenyan Government has continuously indicated that extra tuition is illegal and there have been circulars sent to schools with the warning against extra tuition. However, schools still conduct extra tuition (Daily Nation, 2008). This paper therefore, discusses the implication of extra tuition on the social lives of primary school pupils in Kisumu Municipality in western Kenya.

2.1 Methods

2.1.1 Study Setting

This study was carried out in Kisumu Municipality in western Kenya. Kisumu Municipality has a population of 259,258 as at the 2009 population and housing census (Republic of Kenya, 2002). It has high levels of skilled and unskilled unemployment. With a 30% unemployment rate, 52% of the working population are engaged in the informal activities and have their monthly wage in the range of Ksh3,000 - 4,000, and 48% of the urban population lives within the absolute poverty bracket (Kisumu City Council, 2005). Many people derive their livelihood from the lake, through subsistence fishing and agriculture. Agriculture and agro based processing are some of the important economic activities in the region. Kisumu still lacks basic processing and fabrication industries despite the variety of agricultural produce.

Kisumu Municipality has 114 public primary schools and 44 private primary schools, all grouped in nine zones (Unpublished monthly statistics: Enrollment rates For Schools from the Kisumu Municipality Education Office 2007). The Municipality registered an improved Kenya Certificate of Primary Examinations (KCPE) mean score of 279.7 up from 273.79 in 2008 (Unpublished Municipal Education Department Report presented on 4th February, 2009 to the Education Committee). Extra tuition has been conducted in most schools within the Municipality despite a government ban until early 2012 when the government embarked on actively implementing the ban by punishing school authorities where extra tuition is done.

2.1.2 Study design

The study design was descriptive cross-sectional. It employed both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The first phase involved collection of data using structured questionnaires that were self – administered (pupils filled out by themselves as the researcher read out the questions and provided guidance) to the pupils. The second phase involved qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the pupils, key informant interviews with the parents and the teachers in- charge of extra tuition in the schools that were studied.

2.1.3 Study population and sampling procedures

The study population was composed of pupils in upper primary who were in class six, seven and eight. Literature review of studies conducted in Kenya, shows that extra tuition is rampant within these classes (Abagi and Odipo, 1997, Nzomo et al, 2001, Paviot et al, 2008)). This study therefore, picked pupils from these class six to eight to compare findings with other studies. The total

population of pupils in the Municipality schools is 78,090 pupils. Out of this, pupils in classes six, seven and eight in all the public schools are 22,080 while those in private schools are 2,093. Thus, a total of 24,173 pupils are likely to be exposed to extra tuition within Kisumu Municipality.

Simple random sampling strategy was used to obtain the required sample for quantitative data. Three out of nine zones were selected randomly for the study. Pieces of paper were written with names of the zones, folded and shuffled. The researchers picked three of the folded papers to obtain the zones to work in. Five schools were picked randomly in each zone giving a total of fifteen schools to participate in the study. All the schools within a zone were written on pieces of paper and five of those were picked randomly to represent the schools. Simple random sampling of 434 pupils from the listed schools was chosen with an assumption of 20 per cent non response rate. Using the register of each class, pupils were randomly picked by pointing at any name blindly on the separate lists of girls and boys. In each of the sampled schools, twenty six pupils were picked; minimum of eight pupils from each of the three classes. At the end of the study, 401 pupils responded to the self-administered questionnaires. The sample size was calculated using a population base of 24,173 pupils in the Municipality schools with confidence interval of 95 per cent and a margin error of 5 per cent (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). Informants for the qualitative data were selected purposively based on their depth of knowledge on the subject under inquiry.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Questionnaire Administration

A total of 401 pupils in class six, seven and eight were guided to answer the questions in a questionnaire with both closed and open ended questions. Pilot testing of the instruments was done with 26 pupils in one school that was not among the schools chosen to participate in the study. The study organized with the school authorities and blindly picked 26 pupils from the registers of classes six, seven and eight. A room was availed where the researchers explained the purpose of the study and explained to the pupils the procedure of completing the questionnaires. The questions were read out one by one and also the responses read out and each pupil was to select their preferred response and circle. In cases where they were to write the responses they were allowed to write any of the 3 languages well understood in the research community (English, Kiswahili and Dholuo) that would best explain their response. The piloted questionnaires helped in modifying the sections of the instrument that were not clear to the pupils. From the questionnaire, the study sought to find out from the pupils the reasons for attending extra tuition, how extra tuition was conducted, their opinion about extra tuition and the socio-demographic characteristics of the pupils among other issues.

2.2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Four focus group discussions were conducted with homogeneously selected groups of boys and girls who attend classes where extra tuition was performed. Each group consisted of eight pupils from each of the schools that were covered during the questionnaire administration. The focus group discussions were facilitated by the researchers in local Dholuo language for pupils in schools with poor competence in Kiswahili or English, and in Kiswahili or English in schools with better

competence in the two languages. The discussions were tape recorded. They were later transcribed and translated from Dholuo language to English. These discussions enabled the study to assess the pupils' views on extra tuition, group opinion on reasons why pupils thought extra tuition was being done in their respective schools and its implication on their social life.

2.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using descriptive statistics. A code book was developed and the data entered into the data editor in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 12). From these, frequency and percentage tables were produced. Qualitative data from the focus group discussions were analysed using a rapid content analysis method in which the responses were collapsed into major themes based on study objectives and patterns and trends identified within the textual data.

3.1 Findings

The results of this study are presented in the following sub-sections.

3.1.1 Socio demographic characteristics of pupils

There were 401 pupils interviewed and their socio demographic characteristics are presented in the tables below. The mean age of the pupils was 13.28 years and the median age was 13.00. Both sexes; male and female participated equally, with males constituting 50.4 percent and females constituted 49.6 percent. Table I shows the specific ages of the pupils who participated in this study while table II shows the class distribution of the pupils.

INSERT TABLE I

INSERT TABLE II

Fifteen teachers, 7 males and 8 females in charge of extra tuition in the schools were chosen to participate in the in-depth interviews.

3.1.2 Mode of extra tuition in Kisumu Municipality

The findings indicate that the decision on extra tuition is mainly done by the teachers. Parents are called to meetings to be informed on the requirements (money to be paid) of extra tuition and there is little contribution from parents during such meetings. There were also parents who go to the schools to request the teachers to have extra tuition with their children and they agree to pay some fee for each session based on the agreement with the particular teachers. The pupils are not involved in the decisions on extra tuition in their schools. It was explained that their role is to attend the extra tuition classes. The pupils further explained during FGDs that extra tuition was made a mandatory requirement in their schools. They stated that teachers gave orders to attend and to pay the fee for extra tuition. The pupils reported that they would lag behind and miss what was taught if they missed to attend extra tuition lessons. They further pointed out that there was punishment given when one missed to attend extra tuition. One had to obtain permission from the concerned teacher. This shows clearly that pupils have no way of participating in the decision of whether to attend or

not to attend extra tuition. This was expressed by a female pupil in the focus group discussion. She stated thus:

on Monday when a pupil comes to school they are given punishment, you can be sent to bring a parent to explain why you did not turn up for extra tuition lesson

A boy in class seven also explained that:

Penalty given for not attending extra tuition is punishment, such as slashing, or suspension for one week. You will be told to stay at home and when you come back your parents have to accompany you to school. You are caned at the parade then you stay out of class to copy notes that you missed while you were at home. At the same time, you are to listen to the ongoing lessons from outside the classroom.

It was noted that almost all pupils attend extra tuition except for those who do not pay for it. Pupils reported that there were varied reasons that made them not to attend extra tuition. For instance, 64 percent of them mentioned that the fee levied was a major hindrance. They said that many pupils lacked the money to pay for extra tuition because they either didn't have enough money or their parents were not capable of raising the fee that was levied. Majority of the pupils (64 percent) indicated that extra tuition fee should be reduced or done away with. This was considered a major hindrance for the pupils to attend extra tuition.

Focus Group Discussions revealed that there were those who did not attend extra tuition because they felt it took so much of their time. They argued that it wasted their time (8 percent) and they wanted to do other things. This shows how much children are left out in making decisions about their lives in school. They feel they need to do an activity of personal choice instead of attending extra tuition yet they have to comply with the decisions made for them by the teachers and parents. A standard seven pupil thus stated:

It looks tiresome, when you see your fellow pupils go home or play, it seems you are wasting your time for playing

Pupils felt that their colleagues who didn't come for extra tuition didn't like it for non-completion of assignments or homework (6.8 percent) given by the teachers. They feared the teacher would cane them. Pupils who were weak in certain subjects feared those teachers and did not want to attend extra tuition lessons. For example, mathematics was mentioned as a subject that was feared by the pupils. In the focus group discussions, pupils stated that many of the mathematics teachers were fond of taking too much time (lessons that were not assigned to the teachers) hence making pupils not like extra tuition. The remaining percentage (18.2 percent) mentioned other reasons such as pupils found it difficult to come to school early, some pupils did not like learning and preferred to go out to watch videos, fishing or go to pick scrap metals to sell during non-school hours or days of the week. They also mentioned that there were some of the pupils who came late and teachers would not allow them to get into class. This made them miss extra tuition lessons.

When pupils were asked about their opinion on the length of school day, 68.5 percent reported that it was adequate. This shows that pupils have always spent their time at school and do not find any difficulty. They have learnt to cope with the situation. They are used to the instructions from parents (adults) and traditionally children are known to play with peers and also attend school. Those who indicated that the school day was too long (26.4%) were not happy with the extra tuition. They

mentioned that they were busy throughout with school work. They could not find time to stay at home or even be with their friends.

During the FGDs, it came out clearly that extra tuition influenced pupils social life in a major way. Pupils were always busy with school work and they did not interact with their friends. They explained that they missed the opportunity to learn from their peers and lost track of their childhood friends. As one of the class eight pupils put it:

From what I think, we need each other. May be sometimes notonly your classmates can be able to assist but even other friends outthere and because of extra tuition it is only your class mates yousee day in day out just learning, learning so you cannot receive other ideas from others

3.1.3 Pupils' views on implication of extra tuition on their social life

A majority (97.2 percent) of the pupils stated that they liked extra tuition. They attended extra tuition because: it improved grades or standards (30.6 percent), to pass examinations (24.4 percent), get more knowledge (22.4 percent) and to complete the syllabus and revise (1.4 percent). Other reasons included; to enable a pupil move to the next class, for the weak pupils to improve and for teachers to earn additional income to supplement their salaries. The pupils noted that extra tuition helped them to understand what they did not understand well in class since there was additional time. Pupils further reported that with extra tuition, teachers wanted pupils to pass their examinations to compete with other schools. A minority (0.3 percent) stated that extra tuition helped them get more clarification of the subjects compared to the normal class time. It also provided quality interaction between pupils and teachers where pupils had time to ask more questions and teachers obtained extra time to properly respond to children's questions.

Pupils suggested the need to reduce the time dedicated to extra tuition in order to improve it. They suggested that extra tuition should be done on Saturdays from 8am to 4pm and from 8.00 a.m to 1.00 p.m during school holidays. A similar suggestion was given by the pupils who participated in the FGDs. They felt weekend extra tuition, especially Sunday be reduced or done away with. This would give them more time to rest and participate in other activities such as learning the different chores at home, farming and even socializing with family members. Furthermore, they feared that school began too early and ended late and it would be insecure for some of them who came from far distances.

Information from both the focus group discussion and the structured interviews showed that pupils wanted extra tuition to be left for personal studies. This means that pupils prefer to remain in their classes to discuss in groups or do their own personal study. This was also mentioned by some of the teachers who were interviewed. The teachers further explained that extra tuition was good for the weaker pupils so that they would catch up with the others. In addition, they suggested that extra tuition ought to be done for these weak pupils in small groups to monitor their progress and to cater for those who did not understand certain areas/topics during normal class hours.

Discussions with pupils showed that homework was given and some pupils didn't have the relevant books to enable them complete their homework. In each class, one book was to be shared by two to four pupils. When homework was given in a subject, only one person among those sharing could carry the textbook home. This resulted in non-completion of homework by some pupils and they feared going into the class for extra tuition. Teachers would punish the pupils for non-completion of homework. The pupils suggested on having more instructional materials provided to the schools to enhance their learning.

Pupils reported that homework during extra tuition was given to them in an irregular manner. Almost all the teachers gave work whenever they finished their lesson. They mentioned that the fact that they had six subjects with different teachers was not a consideration whenever homework was given out. Those pupils who felt they were being given too much homework (52.5 percent) explained that teachers were giving too much work to make them busy. Some of the pupils during the FGDs expressed their feeling of too much homework in the statements below.

Different teachers come and give different work and you are expected to collect at a specific time. Teachers don't care about the amount of work we have. They expect each one of us to do the work they give us. Whenever the teacher comes for a subject s/he must give work and gives us short time to finish it.....one teacher gives work after their lesson, soon after another teacher comes and gives work... and it continues like that

More than half (59.7 percent) of the pupils stated that work was too much both at school and the chores at home. They reported that teachers gave too much work and continuously wanted their subjects to have a high mean score with the pupils passing examinations. They also indicated that they did not have time to rest and had to use their break, lunch and games time to complete the homework so they did not go out to play. A 36 year old female teacher attested to this and stated thus:

Their playtime is very little because after tuition you give them extra work to go and do and we leave school at around 5:30. By the time the child reaches home it is late they cannot go out to play. S/he has to sit and do chores. I feel it is eating too much into their time we are not allowing them to grow up as children. That, I know. In school they have the two breaks it is enough for them to play and the games time. It is only that the children refuse to go out to play because they have more work. But they should be made to realize that games time and break time is their time for playing

This study further revealed that some teachers who had been in the teaching profession for a long period indicated that the way extra tuition was being done presently denied pupils the time to interact with one another, play and rest. They explained that pupils were always in the confines of school and could not learn well from their peers as well as learn other skills such as cooking, farming, keeping a home tidy. The teachers considered these skills important to make an individual useful in the community. They indicated that such confinement would have negative effects such as compensating for what the pupil missed to do in childhood and do it in their adulthood as well as rebellion. They also felt that talent development would not be possible since there were no

opportunities and time provided. For those who were not academically gifted, their other potentials would be ruined or hidden. This can be seen from the statement of a 46 year old female teacher who stated:

Social life They only have to interact with those who are here but they have very minimal time with those who are outside. May be enclosing them here may deny them chances of interacting with the outside world... There are cases where you expect that they go for games only a few that who are involved will go, the rest will remain in class. There are those people who cannot learn and pass and may be in future they could find their talent somewhere in those other extra things.

One of the male teachers who had retired and was now teaching in a private school had this to say:

I think socially they are deprived, denied a lot of chance, they need to socialize, play together normally young people there are other things they must learn from their peers but they have been denied this, when they go out and are now exposed sometimes it has got negative effects...

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

This study has shown that a majority of the pupils attended extra tuition provided by their regular teachers. An important reason for the high attendance of extra tuition classes is due to the huge class size that did not allow for individualized attention, perhaps due to the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 in Kenya. Aduda and Abagi, (2005) in their study found that FPE had increased enrolment in the schools and caused congestion in the classes, thus limiting pupils-teacher interaction. It is therefore, perceived by the teachers, parents and some pupils that lack of quality interactive sessions within the normal school teaching hours negatively affect the performance of pupils. This could also lead to poor ranking of schools due to low mean score thus making the school not to be attractive to the pupils. Pupils in this study have explained that the double work of doing normal class assignments and those from extra tuition leaves them with no time to play thus, negatively affecting their social life. This view is also observed by the teachers who lament that the heavy workload in schools due to extra tuition is a barrier to other extra curriculum activities that the pupils might engage in and which can enhance their ability to develop other talents that are not purely academic in nature. The teachers further argued that pupils who are not bright but are talented in sporting activities are not provided opportunities to develop a career outside the academics due to the emphasis on school grades but not extra curriculum activities. This observation is similar to findings from other studies which have reported that the school system has focused on pupils' academic achievement as the main predictor of their educational attainment and ignored the need for such pupils to develop other talents which are not academic (Oketch et al,2012; Wentzel, 1998).

Findings of this study have also shown that extra tuition in schools and the heavy workload through the subject assignments carried out at home in the evenings and over the weekend denies pupils an opportunity to be exposed to the social life within the larger communities where they live. It is further shown that pupils combine the extra tuition assignments and the domestic chores, thus leaving them with no time to play with other children in the larger community. It is noteworthy that

pupils who are the intended beneficiaries of extra tuition were not involved in the decisions about their attendance of extra tuition. They however appreciate the fact that extra tuition helps them to improve their grades particularly for their colleagues who are weak. The study has shown that decisions to conduct extra tuition are made during the Parents Teachers Associations meetings (PTA) where pupils are not allowed to participate. Such decisions do not put into consideration the need for the school system to nurture other talents that school going pupils might have apart from academic achievements. The findings of this study have thus shown that schools that were studied have not developed realistic mechanisms through which the pupils can effectively participate in decisions about provision of extra tuition.

The findings of this study have provided lessons relevant for policies aimed at developing educational systems in the developing world where extra tuition is provided to pupils. Firstly, they have shown the importance of involving children in the decisions made about their educational development so as to avoid resentment. Secondly, the policies on educational development need to emphasize on the holistic approach to the pupils' development by balancing between class work assignments and the need to create time for pupils' extra curriculum activities. Thirdly, the need for the school system and the parents to recognise the importance of pupils' interaction and involvement in the social life of the community within which they live as a way of exposing them to general societal life outside the school environment. There are educational policies in Kenya that abolish extra tuition but the reinforcement of this policy has faced challenges and extra tuition is still practiced in different ways in the study area thus, negatively affecting the social life of many pupils. This underscores the fact that there are challenges in the implementation of the ban on extra tuition in Kenyan education system that is yet to be clearly understood in order for the ban to be effective.

5.1 Conclusions

This study aimed to explain the implications of extra tuition on the social lives of primary school pupils in Kisumu Municipality in Western Kenya. The findings show that majority of the pupils liked the extra tuition because it made them improve on their grades. The pupils however complained that extra tuition denied them time to participate in other aspects of social life within the school and the wider community, thus negatively affecting their overall social life. The study has further shown that teachers were equally concerned that extra tuition had denied pupils opportunities to be exposed to the general social life within the communities where they come from, although the same teachers continued to conduct the extra tuition. Furthermore, the results of the study have shown the ineffectiveness of the Kenyan educational policies in reinforcing the ban on extra tuition in the school system.

6.1 Recommendations

1. There is a need to conduct further research to understand how the aspirations of parents and teachers have negatively affected the implementation of the educational policy on abolishment of extra tuition in Kenya.

2. The Kenyan government through the Ministry of Education needs to put in place mechanisms to ensure proper participation of pupils in decisions made by the school authorities about extra tuition and other activities that directly affect the pupils.

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Table I: Agedistribution ofpupils

Ageinyears	n	Percent
10	8	2.0
11	26	6.5
12	72	18.0
13	115	28.7
14	118	29.4
15	43	10.7
16	19	4.7
Total	401	100.0

Table II: Class distribution of thepupils

Class	n	Percent
Class 6	131	32.7
Class 7	134	33.4
Class 8	132	32.9
Total	401	100.0