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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY ON REPETITION RATES IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF EMUHAYA SUB COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, the Government reintroduced Free Primary Education in 2003 to enhance access, retention, participation, progression and completion. In 2002 repetition rates were 9.8%, 8.0%, 10.8% and 8.4% respectively. In Emuhaya dropout rates were high before introduction of Free Primary Education policy and even after introduction of Free Primary Education policy repetition still persisted. The objective of this study was to establish the impact of Free Primary Education policy on repetition rate in public primary schools in Kenya. The study established that there was a strong negative relationship between Free Primary Education policy and repetition rates with Pearson's r correlation coefficient of -0.832 which was significant at p value of 0.05. It accounted for 68.7% variation in repetition rates. This means that increase in free primary education funding reduced repetition rate by 68.7%. The study concluded that Free Primary Education policy had reduced repetition rates of public primary schools in Emuhaya Sub County. The study recommended that Free Primary Education fund be disbursed on time to schools. The findings of this study are useful to stakeholders in education as it informs them on the need to assess implementation of Free Primary Education so as to achieve its objectives fully.

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INTRODUCTION

Universal Primary education is one of the principal concerns of governments around the world (Steer and Geraldine, 2010). In 1948 the United Nations Declaration of Human rights proclaimed that education is a fundamental human right (World Bank, 1980). Every person has a claim to basic level of knowledge regardless of his /her social, economic or political status. This document set a stage for the rise of Free Universal Education Policies around the world in subsequent years. After decolonization, education moved to the top of nation's post-independence development agendas. Many governments in developing countries allocated much of their resources to education after independence as a means of eradicating poverty, for future development and catalyst for social economic and industrial development (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). According to UNICEF (2001) investment in education is widely recognized as an important element in a given country's development strategy. A study by Bisika (2005) in Malawi notes that a number of countries in Africa introduced Free Primary Education with recognition of human right under Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The importance of primary education cannot be assumed. It is considered to be more important than higher education in terms of impact on poverty alleviation, social progress and economic development (Mukudi, 2004). According to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) primary education has been given priority as a form of investment in human resources since the average rates of return are higher compared to other levels of education. However, this does not imply that other levels are less profitable. One of the significant developments since the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in the Year 2000 was the steady rise in primary school enrolment (UNESCO, 2005). Most countries in the world have put in place measures to enhance access to children in Primary schools. However many nations have not achieved Universal Primary Education and about 101 million children are out of school. Some reasons hampering achievement are poverty, illness, absenteeism, high cost of schooling, cultural factors, in appropriate curriculum, examinations, lack of facilities and inefficiency in school system (UNESCO, 2007). Repetition are considered one of the key factors in wastage of human resources in terms of both students and teachers. Studies conducted in both developed and developing countries have confirmed that there are high dropout rates and repetition at primary level (World Bank, 2002). Primary school enrolment should be completed by improving on the indicators of school failures which include dropping out, repeating grades and poor

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quality of education. For instance in 2002 Burkina Faso had a paltry 36% of pupils enrolled in grade one reaching grade five (ADB, 2006). While some regions, notably Latin America, the Caribbean and East Asia are on course to achieving Universal access to Primary Education, other parts like sub-Saharan Africa have yet to realize the objectives of universal education for all. The progress has notably been sluggish on early childhood care and development. Governments are still for most part spending too little on primary education and ratio of pupils to teachers is over 50 in a large number of countries. Furthermore, there continues to be lack of data on such issues as efficiency suggesting an urgent need for more concerted efforts in this area (UNESCO, 2004b). Internal efficiency is concerned with the relationship between inputs and output in education such as number of graduates. The internal efficiency of a school is a key determinant of the overall output in education. Lerotholi (2001) point out that internal efficiency of education system is revealed by grade promotion, the higher the grade promotion the better the system efficiency. Galabawa (2003) also describes internal efficiency as follows: the internal efficiency of the system concerns maximizing the relationship between inputs and outputs. Lerotholi (2001) concurs with the above citation and remarks that since internal efficiency is calculated on basis of repetition, dropout and promotion rates, when dropout and repetition rates are high that portion of education system is said to have serious internal inefficiency. Internal efficiency is affected by various factors especially dropout, repetition, promotion, and cycle completion (Subedi, 2007). There are various factors which affect internal efficiency. This includes; availability of physical facilities, availability of instructional materials, family background, dropout and repetition, performance in national exterminations and utilization of teachers (Macharia, 2013).

Attempts to introduce Free Primary Education in Kenya were first made in 1974 and later in 1979 with the aim of achieving free and universal primary education. In January 2003Free Primary Education policy was ushered in by the National Rainbow Coalition as one of Campaign promises in its 2002 election Manifesto. All Public primary schools in Kenya received Ksh 1,020 per child per annum with the amount disbursed based on the number of pupils enrolled in a school (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2003). Its key concern was to improve internal efficiency by enhancing access, retention, quality and relevance, reversing declining enrolment rates at primary school, improving participation, progression and completion rates, reduction of burden of cost of education and implementing sector policy goals within education system (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Ogada (2014) did his study on factors influencing dropout and repetition in primary schools in Kakamega Municipality. He found that grade dropout rates are on decline from 17.3% in 2004 to15.1% in 2010. Ojwang (2012) in his study on analysis of internal efficiency using non schooling gap and school based inputs in public schools in East Karachuonyo division note that grade wastage rates are generally high in upper classes. Nyae (2012) reveal that average dropout rates gradually increased from class one to class seven that is from 12.76% to 22.16%.The dropout rates for class seven and eight decreased to 10.33% in 2010.Kiplagat (2012) established that as a result of implementation of FSE policy students were learning continuously and that cases of dropout had declined significantly from 11.34% in 2004 to 4.26% in 2011.Studies by Ojwang (2012), Nyae (2012),and Kiplagat (2012) did not focus on influence ofFree Primary Education policy on dropout rate. This is the gap in knowledge that this study intended to fill. Factors that influence repetition tend to differ. Apart from family and student factors internal variables of education system and quality of teaching have considerable effect on repetition. Such variables include teacher attitude, degree of preparation, and management of school and level of infrastructural facilities in the school (UNESCO, 2012). In Latin American 60 percent of every 100 pupil who enter primary school drop out before completion (Todaro, 1985). In developing countries a third of every a half of all pupils repeat first grade and a quarter or more repeat subsequent grades. In U.S.A it was found that in overall 29 percent of all primary students are repeating their grades each year. This was mainly due to inadequate learning brought about by low quality of factor inputs into the system (Hanushelk andWossmann, 2007). A survey conducted by open society 2007 in six developing countries found that low economic status of a family was the prominent reason for educational withdrawal. Abadzi (2007) points out that most Brazilian children attend both primary and secondary school but suffer from some of highest rates of grade repetition and dropout in the world as well as high disparities in the quality of education across rural and non rural populations. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) established that inadequate income among low class families hindered the provision of tuition fee, school books and other learning materials necessary to ensure good academic performance and continuation. Yang (2014) in his study found that poor school infrastructure, lack of experienced teacher, teachers absenteeism, student teacher ratio, lack of parent and community involvement are minor factors for student repetition even with Universal. Odhiambo (2014) found that there was increase in enrolment characterized by decline in enrolment as boys move to upper primary school level. Abala (2006) did his study on factors influencing internal efficiency of public primary schools under Free Primary Education policy in Suba East. The study found that despite introduction of Free Primary Education to improve internal efficiency in public primary schools; public primary schools in Suba East Division still revealed high rates of repetition and dropout. However this study was done before full cycle of Free Primary Education.

Ogada (2014) found that in public schools in Kakamega municipality repetition rates were on upward trend from 8.5%in 2004 to 11.6% in 2010 showing an increase of 36.47%. Kiplagat (2012) in his study on influence of free secondary education on access and completion in Kuresoi found that FSE has influenced completion rate positively and repeater rate had reduced by 0.51% in 2011.Nyae (2012) in his study found that the average highest repeater rate was in class eight at 0.2458 and lowest was at 0.1078 in class one. From the studies reviewed Abala (2006), Ogada (2014), Kiplagat (2012) and Nyae (2012) no study focused on influence of Free Primary Education policy on repetition. This is the knowledge gap that motivated the study. Table 1 shows that in Vihiga County repetition rates have been fluctuating from 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 average for which Emuhaya Sub County has experienced highest repetition rate of 10.5 as per ministry of Education 2007. This rate was higher than the National repeater rate in 2002 that was at 7.3% (Ministry of Education statistics section, 2007). Emuhaya, Vihiga, Sabatia, Hamisi and Butere Sub Counties are neighboring Sub Counties and share may things in common which include same economic activities and densely populated with same conditions that have direct influence on internal efficiency (Moulindi, 2008). Emuhaya Sub County lags behind in terms of efficient education.

Dropout rate and repetition rates in Emuhaya are higher than in Vihiga, Sabatia, Hamisi, and Butere. This means that pupils are more likely to drop out and repeat in Emuhaya than in Vihiga, Sabatia, Hamisi and Butere Sub Counties. With the implementation of Free Primary Education in the year 2003, there was an increase in enrolment in public primary schools. However, all those who are admitted in grade 1 do not complete grade eight or if they do they take more time in the system. In Emuhaya Sub County based on 2007 cohort out of 7,967 pupils admitted in class 1 in public primary schools only 4,097 completed grades 8 in 2014.This imply 3870 pupils are still in the system or have left the system before completion. Despite the government having introduced Free Primary Education policy, dropout and repetition rates are still there. Dropout and repetition are indicators of internal efficiency. The study wanted to determine whether Free Primary Education policy has had any influence on internal efficiency in public primary schools in Emuhaya Sub County. Table 2 below gives a description of gross enrollment in public primary schools in Hamisi, Vihiga, Emuhaya and Sabatia as per 2007 cohort. From Table 2 in Vihiga County, Emuhaya sub county had the highest percentage of pupils based on 2007 cohort who did not complete class 8 in 2014 at 48.83 5% despite introduction of Free Primary Education policy .

Research Objective

The research objective was: To determine the impact of Free Primary Education funding on repetition rate in public primary schools.

Synthesis of literature on iimpact of free primary education policy on repetition rate in public primary schools

Repetition rate can be higher or lower depending on individual country's policies and GDP (World Bank, 2004). UNESCO (2004 a) established that globally, 6.0% of primary pupils repeat a grade. Repetition rates are highest in West and Central Africa (average repetition rate 12.9%), Eastern and South Africa 12.4% and Latin America and Caribbean (10.0%). In East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the industrialized countries and South Asia, not more than 5% of pupils repeat a grade at primary level. Generally countries with low incomes have the highest repetition rates. Study by Abadzi (2007) found that in Brazil primary schools suffer from several systematic issues: too much time spent on organization which wastes valuable class time, teachers are always absent or off task diminishing student ability to concentrate on difficult material. Together problems of absenteeism and time mismanagement result in Brazilian children repeating a class.

Grira (2001) found that in Bangladesh nutrition deficiencies are associated with slow school progress due to its impact on children's cognitive development. Repetition reduces completion rates for any given cohort which further compromises internal efficiency of mixed day schools (DFID, 2001). It increases education cost because repeaters reduce the intake capacity of school and prevent other children from entering school or causes overcrowding of classroom. Repetition is one of the constraints of developing countries not to achieve universal primary education (Psacharopoulos and Wood hall, 1985). In developing countries grade repetition is often considered to be a remedy for low achievers based on the assumption that automatic promotion would disadvantage them. However neither repetition nor promotion addresses the problem of low achievers. Potential solutions lie in providing these children with better learning opportunities at school and home (Hungi, 2010). The South Africa Basic Education (2011) carried out a house hold survey and found that in 2009, on average 9% of learners enrolled in schools were repeating the grade they were in previous year. International comparative information for 2007 show that South Africa's level of repetition in primary schools at (7%) was higher than the average level for developing countries (5%) and for developed countries less than 1%. In general repetition is high among males than female learners and much greater in higher grades than in lower grades. This study was done after introduction of Universal Primary Education. However it did not look at how Free Primary Education policy has influenced repetition rates.

Yang (2014), in his study found that in Uganda high student teacher ratio and lack of student textbooks were major factors contributing to repetition. UNESCO (2007) found that repetition in Kenya schools was a common feature as a total of 7.7% of pupil enrolled had repeated their class hence providing finance for additional places for repeaters is costly. Abala (2006) in his study on factors influencing internal efficiency of public primary schools under Free Primary Education policy in Suba East used a cluster sample of 25 schools whose heads participated in the study. It involved 70 repeaters and 36 children who dropped out of school after inception of Free Primary Education. Questionnaires and focus group discussion was used to collect data. Data was analyzed descriptively by Pearson product moment correlation. The study found that despite introduction of Free Primary Education to improve internal efficiency in public primary schools; public primary schools in Suba East Division still revealed high rates of repetition and dropout. It was further found that there exists a positive and significant correlation co-efficient between textbook availability and repetition. However this study was done before full cycle of Free Primary Education policy. Ogada (2014) found that in public schools in Kakamega municipality repetition rates were on upward trend from 8.5%in 2004 to 11.6% in 2010 showing an increase of 36.47%.In the year 2008 repetition was found to be high at class seven at 11.6 % compared to repeater rates in other classes. This was because a number of pupils who had given up on school found their way back due to Free Primary Education. Unlike dropout rates repetition rates were found to be high in grade 7 at 11.6% compared to repeater rates in other classes. Further pupils (56.47%) alluded that repetition was carried out due to poor academic performance, they indicated that 47 (8.56%) made their own choice 77 (14.03%) said they had to repeat due to indiscipline.

Kiplagat (2012) in his study on influence of free secondary education on access and completion in Kuresoi found that Free Secondary education has influenced completion rate positively and repeater rate had reduced by 0.51% in 2011. Nyae (2012) in his study on determination of repeater rates, dropout rate and survival rate in public primary schools in Kubo division, Kwale District found that the average highest repeater rate tended to gradually increase from class one to class8 that is from 10.74% to 24.58%. Average repeater rates were lower in lower classes than in upper classes. It was established that grade repetition was highest in 2008 between class four to eight than any other year. He found that poor performance was the main factor that contributed to repetition. Others include underage, illness, school transfer, absenteeism, poverty and truancy. Yaola (2012) in his study on indicators of internal efficiency in

private primary schools in Lugari District established that poor performance in exam was the major reason for pupils repetition in class (indicated by 56% of pupils and 42% of teachers).This agrees with findings by Ogada (2014).However this study was done in private primary schools. This study was done in public primary schools. Owino (2014) established that Free Primary Education policy had relieved parents of the burden of paying large amount of fees and this has helped them to stay in school which finally led to their graduation. Despite the other challenges facing girls in primary education, most of the head teachers agreed that Free Primary Education policy has positively influenced completion rates of the girl child as the number graduating has increased as compared to previous period before introduction of the policy. Those who finally enrolled in class eight in relation to both gender ended up graduating. A study by Macharia (2013) in Gatanga District, Murang'a County established that repetition rates greatly increased. Survey design was used in the study. The target population was 23 day schools, 23 principals and 245 teachers. The sample population consisted of 8 day schools, 8 principals and 48 teachers. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Percentages and standard deviation were used. In this study population used was small to sample hence saturated sampling could have been adopted. The study did not focus on how Free Primary Education policy has influenced repetition rates. From the studies reviewed Abala (2006), Ogada (2014), Kiplagat (2012), Nyae (2012), Yaola (2012) and Macharia (2013) no study focused on influence of Free Primary Education policy on repetition rates. This is the knowledge gap that prompted the study.

Conceptual framework: This study was based on conceptual framework which is an input-output model propagated by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985). According to the model there is a relationship between inputs and output into education system. Conceptual framework postulates that Free Primary Education policy influences, repetition rates and coefficient of efficiency. The independent variable in this study is Free Primary Education policy. Free Primary Education policy was looked at in terms of the money the government sends to schools from the year 2007 to the year 2014 which fall under two accounts: the School Instructional Material Account Grant and General Purpose Account grant. The Framework shows the various vote heads under which Free Primary Education funds are spent. School Instructional Material Account Grant account covers: textbooks, textbook maintenance, exercise books, supplementary readers, reference materials, pencil, duster, chalk, register' chart and wall map. General Purpose Account covers: support staff wages, renovations, building of toilets, repair, maintenance and improvement of physical facilities, activity, local transport and travelling, electricity, water and conservancy and telephone box postage. Conceptual framework helped to focus on the variables of the study. The framework supposes that with introduction of Free Primary Educational pupils who enroll at primary level of education remain in school to learn and complete primary level of education within the required time.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted Ex-post facto, descriptive survey and correlation research designs. Study population included 89 Head teachers, 1 Sub County Quality Assurance Standards Officer and 3490 class 8 pupils. Sample size of 73 head teachers, 73 class teachers and 359 pupils was used. Saturated sampling was used to select Sub County Quality Assurance Standards Officer. Questionnaire, interview schedule, document analysis and focus group discussion were used to collect data. Content validity of the instruments was determined through the help of Supervisors. Reliability was established through test-retest method using 16 schools. Data obtained from pilot study was correlated using Pearson r at alpha level 0.05. Reliability index for head teachers' and class teachers' questionnaires were 0.72 and 0.76 respectively. Since they were higher than 0.70, the instruments were considered reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, means, cohort analysis, correlation and regression. Qualitative data was transcribed and reported.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: This section provides the characteristics of respondents in relation to gender, highest professional qualification and experience in leadership.

Head teachers: This has been presented in table form and provides the characteristics of head teachers in relation to gender, highest professional qualification and experience in leadership.

Table 3 shows that 65 (100%) head teachers involved in the study 53(81.54%) were male while 12 (18.46%) were female. This shows that few female teachers are appointed as head teachers in Emuhaya Sub County. This is in agreement with the study carried out by Odhiambo (2014) where it was indicated that out of 20 sampled head teachers 19 (95.0%) were male while 1(5.0%) were female. Concerning highest professional qualification for head teachers 2 (3.08%) had masters degree, 18 (27.69%) holds Bachelors of Education, 6 (9.23%) holds Diploma in Education while 10 (60.00%) holds primary teacher certificate in Education. Head teacher experience in current school indicate that 8 (12.31%) had experience of between 1-5 years, 34 (52.31%) had an experience of 6-8 years while 23(35.38%) had an experience of more than 8years. This findings are in agreement with a study carried out by Ngeno (2015) where it was indicated that out of 40 sampled school principals one (2.5%) had headship experience between 1-5 years,12 (30%) had an experience of 6-10 years, 17(42.50%) had an experience of 11-15 years while 10 (25.00%) had an experience of 16-20years.This implies that in this study Head teachers had enough experience on management and they were able to give important information on dropout rate and repetition rate in Emuhaya Sub County. Head teachers with experience can be relied on for the authenticity of data collected Ngeno (2015).

Class Teacher: Table 4 shows that 50(76.92%) of the class teachers involved in the study were males and only 15 (23.08%) were females. On highest professional qualification 20 (30.77%) of class teachers hold a degree in Bachelor of Education, 7(10.77%) held Diploma in Education and 38(58.46%) held Primary teacher certificate in Education. This means that the class teachers are well trained and have the necessary knowledge required to enhance internal efficiency in public primary schools in relation to drop out and repetition in Emuhaya Sub County. According to Robbins (2003) the technical, human and conceptual skills gained in training will enable class teachers and head teachers in understanding issues related to dropout and repetition. Experience gained by class

Table 1: Repetition rates and repeater rates in primary schools in Vihiga, Sabatia, Emuhaya, Hamisi and Butere Sub Counties between 1999 -2002

Year	Repetition Rate				
	Vihiga Sub- County	Sabatia Sub-County	Emuhaya Sub-County	Hamisi Sub-County	Butere Sub-County
1999	9.4	7.8	10.1	8.2	7.1
2000	9.7	7.6	10.5	8.7	7.5
2001	9.6	8.4	10.4	8.1	7.9
2002	9.8	8.0	10.8	8.4	7.6
Average	9.6	8.0	10.5	8.4	7.5

Source: Ministry of Education statistics section, 2007

Table 2: Gross Enrolment in Public Primary Schools in Sub Counties as per 2007 Cohort

Sub County	Admitted grade1 2007	Completed grade 8	Rates (%) of those who did not complete
Hamisi	6,554	3,547	45.88
Vihiga	8,141	4,632	43.10
Emuhaya	7,967	4,097	48.83
Sabatia	6,841	3,858	46.60
Butere	6,587	3,770	42.77

Source: Sub county Education Office Emuhaya, Vihiga, Sabatia Hamisi and Butere (2015)

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics as indicated by Head teachers (n = 65)

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	53	81.54
Female	12	18.46
Total	65	100.00
Highest Professional Qualifications		
PhD	0	0.00
M.ED	2	3.08
B.ED	18	27.69
Diploma	6	9.23
PI	39	60.00
Total	65	100.00
Headship Experience in Current School		
1-5 years	8	12.31
6-8 years	34	52.31
Above 8 years	23	35.38
Total	65	100.00

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics as indicated by Class teachers (n=65)

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	50	76.92
Female	15	23.08
Total	65	100.00
Highest Professional qualifications		
PhD	0	0.00
M.ED	0	0.00
B.ED	20	30.77
Diploma	7	10.77
PI	38	58.46
Total	65	100.00

Source: Field data

Table 5: Repetition Rates in Emuhaya Sub County for 1995-2002 before Free Primary Education Policy

Year	Class	Repetition rate (%)
1995	1	4.21
1996	2	5.40
1997	3	6.13
1998	4	6.84
1999	5	7.24
2000	6	11.22
2001	7	14.54
2002	8	9.82
Average Repetition Rate		8.18

Table 6: Comparison of Repetition Rate before and after Free Primary Education Policy in Emuhaya Sub County for 1995 and 2007 cohorts.

Class	Repetition rate before Free Primary Education (%)	Repetition rate after Free Primary Education (%)
1	4.21	2.70
2	5.40	3.42
3	6.13	3.64
4	6.84	6.33
5	7.24	4.87
6	11.22	7.95
7	14.54	8.03
8	9.82	5.14
Average Repetition rate	8.18	5.26

Table 7: **Impact of Free Primary Education Funding on Repetition as rated by head teachers and Class teachers**

Element of Free Primary Funding	Res	Rating										
		VL		L		M		H		VH		MR
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Provision of textbooks	H	5	7.69	6	9.23	5	7.69	32	49.23	17	26.15	3.77
	C	6	9.23	3	4.62	8	12.31	41	63.08	7	10.77	3.62
Exercise books	H	9	13.85	10	15.38	17	26.15	16	24.62	13	20.00	3.22
	C	5	7.69	15	23.08	25	38.46	14	21.54	7	10.77	3.09
Employ workers	H	8	12.31	22	33.85	13	20.00	12	18.46	10	15.38	2.91
	C	4	6.15	35	53.85	17	26.15	5	7.69	4	6.155	2.54
Physical facilities	H	9	13.85	22	33.85	22	33.85	8	12.31	4	6.15	2.63
	C	6	9.23	37	56.92	13	20.00	6	9.23	3	4.62	2.43
Provision of stationary	H	5	7.69	4	6.15	27	41.54	23	35.38	6	9.23	3.32
	C	6	9.23	11	16.92	22	33.85	20	30.77	6	9.23	3.14
Provision of electricity	H	2	3.08	11	16.92	14	21.54	27	41.54	11	16.92	3.52
	C	4	6.15	11	16.92	11	16.92	31	47.69	8	12.31	3.43
Provision of contingency (sanitary towels)	H	13	20.00	30	46.15	17	26.15	3	4.62	2	3.08	2.25
	C	17	26.15	34	52.31	6	9.23	6	9.23	2	3.08	2.11
Overall mean rating	H											3.08
	C											2.91

Key: VH= Very High, H=High, M=Moderate, L=Low, VL=Very Low. H=Head teachers, C= Class teachers, MR=Mean Rating
Interpretation of Mean Rating: 1.00-1.44 = Very Low, 1.45-2.44 = Low 2.45-3.44 = Moderate 3.45-4.44 = High 4.45-5.0 =Very High

Table 8: Cumulative Repeater Rates in Emuhaya Sub County per School Based on 2007 Cohort

Repeater rates (%)	Frequency(f)	Percentages (%)
0.00-9.99	0	0.00
10.00-19.99	7	10.77
20.00-29.99	33	50.77
30.00-39.99	21	32.31
40.00-49.99	4	6. 15
Total	65	100.00

Source: Field data

Table 9: Influence of Free Primary Education Funds on Repetition Rates in Public Primary Schools in Emuhaya Sub County

		Repetition Rate
Free Primary Education Funding	Pearson's (r)	-0.832
	Sig (2-tail)	0.000
	N	65

Table 10: Model Summary (Impact of Free Primary Education Funds on Repetition Rates in Public Primary Schools in Emuhaya Sub County)

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error of the estimate
2	0.832	0.692	0.687	0.384246

Table 11: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig
1 Regression	0.209	1	0.209	141.548	0.000
Residual	0.093	63	0.001		
Total	0.302	64			

a. Dependent variable: Repetition b. Predictor: Free Primary Education funds

Table 12: Simple linear Regression Analysis of the Impact of Free Primary Education Funding on Repetition Rates

		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	
Model	B	Std error	Beta	T	Sig
1 Constant	0.459	0.0155		30.193	0.000
Free Primary Education fund	-2.778E-0.007	0.000	-0.832	-11.897	

a. Dependent variable: Repetition rate, b. Independent variable: Free Primary Education funds

teachers should make them understand educational policies better

Research Question: The research question that was responded was: What is the impact of Free Primary Education Policy on repeater rates in public primary schools in Emuhaya Sub County? Table 5 shows that Grade repetition rates before Free Primary Education policy were; 4.21%, 5.40%, 6.13%, 6.84%, 7.24%, 11.22%, 14.54% and 9.82% in class 1, 2, 3, 4,5, 6,7, and 8 respectively. Average repetition rates were 8.18%. This means 409 pupils for every 5000 pupils were repeating a class before Free Primary Education policy. From Table 5 it can be observed that average grade repetition rates are lowest in lower classes and tend to increase in upper classes. For example repetition was high in higher grades than lower grades. It can be noted that lowest grade repetition is in grade one at 4.21%.Which meant 421 pupils were repeating a class for

every10, 000 pupils. Table 6 shows that repetition rates before Free Primary Education were ; 4.21%, 5.40%, 6.13%, 6.84 %, 7.24%, 11.22%, 14.54% and 9.82% in class 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively. Average repetition rates was 8.18%. This mean before Free Primary Education policy 409 pupils were repeating a class out of school for every 5,000 pupils. Repetition rates were higher between class 7 where 727 pupils repeated in school for every 5,000.This is because of increased pressure for good academic performance, school levies as pupils approached examination class therefore pupils were forced to repeat if they did poorly in examinations. Repetition rates were lower in class 1 where 421 pupils dropped out of school for every 10,000.This is because of less pressure for good academic performance is put to pupils in lower classes. Grade repetition rates after Free Primary Education policy were 2.70%, 3.42%, 3.64%, 6.33%, 4.87%, 7.95 %, 8.03%, 5.14% in class 1,2, 3,4, 5,6,7 and 8 respectively.

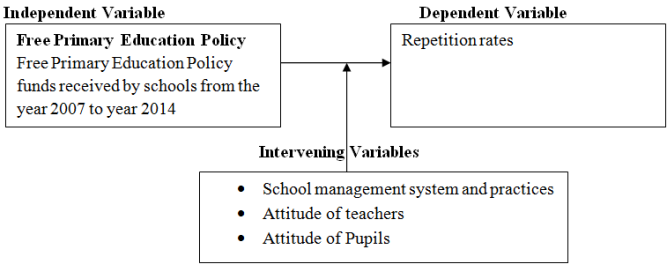

Figure 1: Impact of Free Primary Education Funding on Repetition Rates in Public Primary Schools

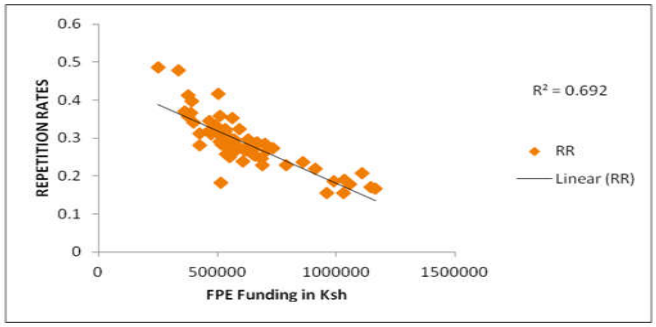

Figure 2: Scatter Plot showing Relationship between Free Primary Education Funding and Repetition Rates

From Table 8, it can be observed that generally free primary education funding had moderate influence on repetition rate of pupils in primary schools. This is signified by the overall mean rating 2.91. This data was used in computing the impact of Free Primary education policy on repetition rate in primary schools. Table 9 shows repetition rates in Emuhaya Sub County as indicated by 65 Head teachers. No school had repetition rates betweeen0.00% to 9.99%. Seven (10.77%) between 10.00% and 19.99%, thirty three (50.77%) between 20.00% and 29.99%, twenty one (32.31%) between 30.00% and 39.99% while six (6.15%) ranged between 40.00% and 49.99%. To establish the strength and direction of relationship between Free Primary Education funds and repeater rates for 2007 cohort, data on repeater rates and Free Primary Education Funds received per school as shown in Tables 10 and Table 11 were correlated and their relationship represented as in Table 10. From Table 10 results show that there is a strong negative relationship between Free Primary Education funds and repetition rates as signified by Pearson's correlation coefficient of -.832.This relationship was significant at p value of 0.05. This implied that an increase in Free Primary Education funding led to a decrease in repeater rates. The impact of Free Primary Education funds on repetition rates is illustrated in a scatter plot (Figure 2). From Figure 1, it can be observed that there is a negative relationship between Free Primary Education funding and repetition rates. This figure helped in getting the direction of the relationship. From Figure 1, schools which received more funds had low repetition rates while those that received less funds had high repetition rates. Since Free Primary Education fund were given per child, it means schools that had higher enrolment received more funds than those with low enrolment. According to economies of scale addition of one more pupil result to lower average cost instructional contact hour or their unit service. Schools that have higher enrolment receive more funds therefore can acquire more goods and service at a lower cost since they are purchasing them in bulk. This means they can be able to acquire more facilities i.e. textbooks, exercise books, maintenance of more classrooms, employment of more workers which in turn reduce repetition rates. Regression line drawn show that R^2= 0.692 which mean Free Primary Education funding accounted for 69.2% variation in repetition rates. Regression analysis was done to get the adjusted R Square which is free from any error and the results recorded in Table 11. From Table 11 it can be noted that Adjusted R square (Coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.687. This meant that Free Primary Education funds accounted for 68.7 % variation in repetition rates. Some of the factors contributing to repetition were eliminated by Free Primary Education. Pupils unable to pay school levies were sent home and those who could not manage to pay stayed at home for long leading to poor academic performance that made them repeat. Those who were absent from school for long were made to repeat. There are other factors which affect repetition which include poor academic performance. Head teachers said; ''There are high rate of repetition because Kenya education is based on academic certificates, learners therefore are made to repeat in order to acquire quality academic certificates''

From Table 12 it shows that Free Primary Education fund is a significant predictor of repetition rates. This means it can be relied on to explain influence of Free Primary Education policy on repetition rates. Analysis of variance confirmed that Free Primary Education is a significant predictor of repetition rates because most children were repeating because of poor academic performance due to absenteeism as a result of not being able to pay school fees, now that the government pays their school fees it is possible to know if they will repeat or not because one of the reasons of repetition has been removed. Table 13 shows the actual influence. It shows that for every one unit increase in Free Primary Education funds there was a decrease of 2.778 units in repetition rates. This means Free Primary Education reduced repetition rates. This finding disagrees with The South Africa Basic Education (2011) in which it was established that on average 9% of learners who enrolled in schools repeated the grade increasing repetition rates.

DISCUSSION

Average grade repetition rates are lowest in lower classes and tend to increase in upper classes. For example repetition was high in higher grades than lower grades. It can be noted that lowest grade repetition is in grade one at 4.21%.Which meant 421 pupils were repeating a class for every 10, 000 pupils This agree with study done by Nyae (2012) in which average grade repeater rate was lowest in grade one at 10.74 %. It also agrees

with study done by Ogada (2014) in which lowest grade repeater rate was lowest in Grade one at 8.5% in 2004. Grade repeater rate of 14.54% in grade seven is highest. This differ with study done by Nyae (2012) in which highest repeater rate was in grade eight at 24.58%. Findings of this study concurs with study done by Ogada (2014) in which grade repeater rate was highest in grade seven in 2010 at 11.60%.According to Ogada(2014) Repetition was encouraged in class 7 due to belief that in this grade it would make pupils improve their performance in examination. During PFGD pupils said; ''Promotion to next grade depends on better performance in class''. It can be noted that despite Free Primary Education policy repetition is still a phenomenon in educational system even after the ministry of Education has put in place Automatic promotion policy (UNESCO, 2012). Interview and Pupil Focus Group Discussion revealed that there are other factors that contribute to pupil progression in school other than Free Primary Education. They indicated that pupils still repeat because of poor performance, indiscipline and absenteeism. After Free Primary Education policy was introduced the number of pupils repeating all the classes reduced. The policy has allowed pupils to be in school throughout therefore absenteeism due to lack of school fees has reduced hence improved academic performance and reduced repetition. This finding agree with findings of UNESCO (2012) which revealed that in Brazil repetition rates dropped from 24% to 18% in 2006.These findings agree with South Africa Basic Education 2011 which revealed that 9% of learners who enroll in school repeat the grade they were in previous year. Repetition was high in higher grades than lower grades. Findings of this study disagree with findings of Ngeno (2015) who found that in Kericho County repetition rates increased after introduction of free secondary education funding policy. It agrees with Ogada (2014) who found that pupils (56.47%) alluded that repetition was carried out due to poor academic performance, they indicated that 47(8.56%) made their own choice 77 (14.03%) said they had to repeat due to indiscipline. It also agrees with Nyae (2012) who found that poor performance was main factor that contributed to repetition. Others include underage, illness, school transfer, absenteeism, poverty and truancy. During PFGD pupils said; ''our friends who we were with and did not do well in examinations were told to repeat or look for another school of their choice.'' Study by Kamwitha (2015) whom in his findings majority of teachers (65.3%) indicated that there were no adequate textbooks for all pupils in every subject. Majority of teachers (77.8%) felt that there were cases of repetition due to inadequate text books.

When there are adequate textbooks the students are able to access them without straining, they will be able to take assignments and read on their own. This will improve their academic performance and reduce repetition. In Mexico the government devised a policy on provision of free textbooks for primary school pupils to improve educational efficiency. This raised academic standards and increased efficiency of production (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). Lack of instructional materials was experienced in Philippine and Nicaragua. The Philippine with assistance of World Bank launched US dollars 37 million textbook to provide textbooks and to increase the ratio textbook and pupils from 1:10 to 1:2 whereas in sub sample schools, ratio of 1:1 was realized in teacher training in use of textbooks. The increase in number of textbooks had a sizeable impact on pupil achievement (Bray and Lillies, 1998). Bacolod et al (2005) observe that Pupils with low academic ability are often victims of grade repetition. Rating of head teachers and class teachers is almost equal. This implies that both respondents agree that Free Primary Education has reduced repetition rates through provision of electricity in public primary schools. This may be because through provision of electricity the teachers are able to vary teaching methods through the use of Information Communication Technology and media technology which makes learning interesting. Kimberly and Gamble (2001) in their study among people of Benin found out that there are many factors that influenced learning in schools. He noted that lack of facilities in schools such as water, electricity and enough workers negatively influenced learning. Kamwitha (2015) study found out that in Mwala Division provision of instructional materials influenced pupils to repeat. This was reported by the repeaters, dropouts who resumed classes and also head teachers who noted that their schools did not have adequate instructional material. Rating is not very high by both head teachers and class teachers. It may be due to the fact that the exercise books that are provided by the government may not be enough to sustain the pupil throughout the term. In addition sometimes there is delay by in disbursement of Free Primary Education funds and pupils have to buy exercise books. Head teachers said that; "There is delayed disbursement of Free Primary Education funds to schools therefore pupils are sent home to bring some money for continued running of activities in school". This agrees with the findings by Kipkoech and Kyalo (2010) "titled Challenges facing implementation of Free Primary Education in Kenya where one of the challenges cited by one of the head teachers was delay in disbursement of Free Primary Education funds. Provision of contingency (sanitary towels) as having reduced repetition was rated low by both head teacher and class teachers. This concur with findings by Owuor (2012) that three hundred (65.8%) of pupils were of the opinion that class repetition could be as a result of in adequate menstrual hygiene management. It was further reported that girls absented themselves during menstruation and absenteeism led to poor academic performance which eventually led to repetition.

To establish the influence of Free Primary Education policy on repetition rates, data on repeater rates for 2007 cohort and Free Primary Education funds per school were computed. According to UNESCO (2009) cumulative cohort repeater rate can be calculated for the whole level of education by dividing the sum of repeaters in all grades of the level by the total enrolment of that level of education and multiply by 100.This was adopted to get the cumulative cohort repeater rate per school for 2007 cohort. The following formula by (UNESCO, 2009) was used.

$$\text{Cumulative cohort repeater rate} = \frac{R_i^{t+1} + R_i^{t+1} + ... + R^{t+7}}{E_i^{t}} \times 100$$

Similarly findings do not agree with findings by Nishimura *et al* (2007) in which they established the status of dropout and repetition under UPE policy in Uganda. They found that the probability of repetition was higher in public schools than in private schools. To them there was a possibility that capitation grant might make schools want to have as many pupils as possible to extend of increasing repeaters. These findings agree with findings by Ngeno (2015) in her study in Kericho County in which she established that there was a moderate negative relationship between Free Secondary funding and repetition rates. This meant an increase in FSE funding led to a decrease in repetition rate. Free Secondary education funding

contributed to 0.81% variation in repetition rates. The finding agrees with that of Mwangi (2012) on repetition rates before and after introduction of FSE. In his study he found that repetition in public secondary schools had declined under FSE policy. Before the introduction of FSE, repetition rates were high in schools he studied with the leading causes of repetition being irregular school attendance due to lack of school fees.

Study by Kiplangat (2012) established Free Secondary Education had influenced completion rate positively and repetition rate had reduced by 0.51% in 2011. Alot of factors contributing to repetition were eliminated by Free Primary Education. For example pupils whose parents were unable to pay school fees were sent home and those who could not manage to pay the levies could sit at home for long time leading to poor academic performance that made them repeat a class. Similarly pupils whose parents could not pay school levies were sent home continuously and this made them to miss exams as a result they were forced to repeat. Before Free Primary Education funding pupils used to pay for tuition, personal emolument, electricity, water, local travel transport, activity and repair and maintenance. This meant that parents had a financial burden and pupils who could not afford to pay ended up being sent home continuously lead to poor academic performance hence leading to repetition. With introduction of Free Primary Education the government pays for tuition, personal emolument, electricity, water, local travel transport, activity and repair and maintenance. This mean parents have been relieved the burden of paying school fees therefore pupils can be in schools throughout making them attend all lessons hence improved academic performance. Findings of this study agree with those of Ogada (2014) found that pupils (56.47%) alluded that repetition was carried out due to poor academic performance, they indicated that 47 (8.56%) made their own choice 77 (14.03%) said they had to repeat due to indiscipline. It also agrees with Nyae (2012) who found that poor performance was main factor that contributed to repetition. Others include underage, illness, school transfer, absenteeism, poverty and truancy.

Conclusion

Funding reduced repetition rates. This mean few pupils repeated in school. As an indicator of internal efficiency it means it improved internal efficiency. This also means that Free Primary Education policy was achieving one of its objectives.

Recommendations

i) Free primary education funding should be increased on textbooks vote head to cover all subjects in the syllabus effectively. This can motivate pupils to participate in primary school education to completion and consequently reduce repetition rates.
ii) Physical facilities should be improved and expanded to provide opportunities for pupils to participate in recreational activities that in-turn reduces repetition rates as pupils find it appealing to pursue primary education to completion.
iii) All primary schools should be supplied with electricity to enhance use of computers in schools that in turn enhances learning thereby reducing repetition rates and pupils find learning interesting and desire to complete primary education and transit to secondary education on time.
iv) Automatic promotion from one class to another class should be implemented as outlined in the basic education act so as to reduce cases of repetition.

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