

An Assessment of How Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials Affects the Management of Teaching and Learning in Public Primary Schools in Uasin Gishu County

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Abstract

Since Kenya's achievement of political independence in 1963, the Government and the people of Kenya have been committed to expanding the education system to enable greater participation of its citizens. The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) impacted positively in the enrolment of both boys and girls. But the introduction of FPE in 2003 led to a rise in class size from 30 pupils per teacher per class to more than 100 pupils in some cases. The rise in numbers of learners has also impacted on the provision and use of teaching and learning materials. The purpose of the study, therefore, was to investigate the influence of this pressure on the materials on the management of teaching and learning in public primary schools by head teachers in Uasin Gishu County. The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population was, all the 400 public primary head teachers in Uasin Gishu County. A sample size of 200 was selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive (frequencies, percentages) and inferential (Chi-square) statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and presented in tables, and pie charts. The statistical tests were done at 0.05 level of significance. The study established that there was shortage of teaching and learning materials and shortage of text books in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The study further found out that teachers were not giving pupils adequate assignments and assessments, and that there was use of lecture method of teaching. The government, among other education stakeholders in the country, should increase budgetary allocation to teaching/learning materials for more text books to be purchased to a ratio of 1:1. The study findings should be useful to other researchers and policy makers in the Ministry of Education keen on adopting effective and efficient management to enhance successful implementation of educational innovation notably free primary education policy.

Keywords: Adequacy, Materials, Management, Teaching, Learning, Public Primary Schools, Uasin County

1. Introduction

According to United Nations, more than 40 million children in Africa, almost half of the continents' primary school age pupils, are not in school. About two-thirds of these children are female. Fewer than half of Africans' children get a chance to finish primary school (UN, 2004). The United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) global monitoring report released in 2004 which tracks countries' progress in achieving UPE has found that 22 countries in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are far from achieving the Education For All goal. Primary enrolments are low, gender ratios highly unequal, illiteracy is widespread and educational quality is poor leading to high drop outs which means that many pupils never complete primary school. Many African countries have well intended plans to implement the Millennium development goals (MDGS) but not the resources to implement them. The lack of dramatically increased aid and debt relief has hamstrung progress.

Development aid to basic education in Africa needs to increase significantly if UPE is to be achieved. Africa's poorest countries are still spending an average of 15% of revenue on debt servicing. In some countries UPE drives are compromising educational quality. Cash-strapped governments are raising enrolments drastically without significantly more teachers and resources.

The challenges facing UPE in Africa include poor teacher quality and quantity, low salaries for teachers, poor performance in Mathematics and science. Secondary education has been neglected and yet it is as important as UPE, educating girls deserve more attention because two thirds of the children who are out of school are girls. Corruption and embezzlement of school funds is rampant. This robs children of their fundamental right to education, shortage of physical facilities, teachers and teaching/learning materials. These must be provided if quality education is to be attained. Otherwise UPE alone is no quick fix (UNESCO, 2012).

As Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children Fund, notes, "Education may be the closest thing to a silver bullet for the kind of a cute developmental challenges Africa faces (UNESCO, 2004). Most African governments have pledged to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals, which include providing universal primary education by 2015. However, "the problem with policy is not generating it, but its implementation and management" says Keith Lewin, an education specialist at Sussex University in Britain (UNESCO, 2004).

In the sub-Saharan Africa, of the 42 million primary aged children not in school, 62% are girls, according to the Forum for African Women Educationalists. But in key respect, evidence is starting to indicate the MDGS have backfired by stifling a broader debate on education in Africa where schools once coped with one teacher for 50 students many have more than 100 students per teacher. The results? The quality of education may have plummeted in many countries that have embraced UPE, the opposite of the intended effect. Children are typically taught in much larger classes than is compatible with effective learning, and the average number of pupils per teacher in SSA is higher than in any other world region except south Asia (Colclough & Al-Samarrai, 2003).

Teachers are often unqualified. Teaching aids are few and textbook provision is desperately poor in many countries. In some countries, it is not uncommon for pupils to be taught in schools without desk, chairs or windows, nor is it unusual for classes to be held outdoors. Where quality is low, learning is slow and children are unable to meet the demands of the curriculum. Low quality leads to reduced effectiveness of schooling and thus to lower actual benefits and expected benefits from the schooling process. High rates of dropout are a major problem in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) primary schools (Colclough & Al-Samarrai, 2003).

1.1 Teaching and Learning Facilities

In most of the SSA countries, research have revealed shortages of teaching and learning materials in the classrooms, bringing great risk for educational quality and pupil performance. In most of the SSA countries, about five pupils share a textbook. In Ethiopia, 5 pupils share 1 text book, Malawi 5 pupils share 1 text book, Ghana 2 pupils share 1 text book, Guinea 10 pupils share 1 text book, Mali 5 pupils share 1 text book, Senegal 6 pupils share 1 text book, Tanzania 4 pupils share 1 text book, Uganda 6 pupils share 1 text book, Zambia 5 pupils share 1 text book 1, (Tembon *et al.*, 1997) and in Kenya 3 pupils share 1 text book (Kojwang, 2003).

In these circumstances, the provision of free textbooks to primary school children especially in rural areas would be a significant incentive for enrolment. The increased expenditures on teaching and learning materials would need to be supported by the use of locally available materials. The expansion of the village-based schools initiative in Malawi showed how teachers can be assisted to produce low cost teaching materials through local teacher development centers (Hyde *et al.*, 1996).

Lack of facilities has been a further headache in the implementation of free primary education in Kenya (Thiongo, 2003). While some rural areas had adequate school buildings there were many others, particularly urban areas with large slum populations, with none at all. Many rural schools also lack basic amenities such as toilets and running water. Despite the fact that an estimated two million people, or 60 per cent of Nairobi's population, live in slum areas, in the last 15 years almost no building of schools has taken place in the city (Thiongo, 2003).

While free primary education has increased participation, it has at the same time created considerable problems. It has exacerbated the problem of teaching and learning facilities. As a result of the high influx of new pupils, classrooms have become congested. Many school management committees feel that they are seriously constrained to improve the state of learning facilities due to the Government's ban on school levies. At the same time, conditions laid down to request for concessions to institute levies are cumbersome that they hesitate to embark on the process (Sifuna & Abagi, 2003).

1.2 Infrastructure

Long distance, lack of basic infrastructure such as adequate classrooms with desks and chairs, latrines and water prevent some children from attending school. In Malawi and Uganda the massive expansion in enrolment led to many children having to study outside the class room. Thus community involvement in construction and use of

local materials could help greatly.

In countries such as Malawi and Zambia, World Bank supported social funds, which aim directly to fund projects prioritized by communities, have resulted in many classrooms being built, with support from the community and the use of local contractors (Kadzamira, Chibwana, Parker & Serano, 2000). In Guinea and Uganda, the reports suggest that, where building constraints persist, churches, mosques and other public buildings could be used temporarily for teaching as already practiced in Malawi (Tembon, Diallo, Barry & Barry, 1997; Tumushabe, 2000).

Girls tend to be more affected by the lack of facilities in school than boys, especially after the start of menstruation. Where there are insufficient latrines or where separate units for girls and boys do not already exist their provision can reduce absenteeism and drop out of girls, (UNESCO, 2004).

2. Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Uasin Gishu County of Kenya. It used a cross-sectional survey research design. This design was chosen because it is used for collecting information at a single point in time which was the case in this study. This study was concerned with the investigation of the influence of FPE challenges on public primary school management by the head teachers in Uasin Gishu County.

The target population for the study comprised all the 400 public primary school head teachers in Uasin Gishu County. There are 360 public primary head teachers in Uasin Gishu (Eldoret East, Wareng, and Eldoret West) County and 40 in Eldoret Municipality, forming a total study population of 400 respondents (MOEST, 2003). The sample size was obtained by using the Table by Kathuri and Pals (1993). Given that the population of the study (N) was 400, then the sample size (S) obtained from the table was 200 respondents (Kathuri & Pals, 1993). The study used stratified random sampling technique and to obtain the required items from each stratum, the author used simple random sampling technique in which case the names of the head teachers were written on slip paper, which were then mixed thoroughly in a container. A questionnaire was used in collecting relevant data. The data generated by questionnaires was subjected to both descriptive (percentages, frequencies) and inferential (Chi-square) statistics. The questionnaires were first subjected to coding to reduce the mass of data obtained to a form suitable for analysis. The data were then entered into the SPSS computer software program and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Chi-square (χ^2) test of association technique was used to further analyze the data. Chi-square test was most suitable since it enabled the determination of whether there were any significant influences in the frequencies of the alternative responses under consideration and hence be able to reject or accept the hypotheses set. Chi-square (χ^2) test was used because the data that the author collected was of the type “one-variable-many-levels” and was basically categorical frequencies of the description of the experiences of respondents on the influence of free primary education policy challenges on school management. All data were analyzed at a level of significance of 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

The study sought to find out the influence of adequacy of teaching and learning materials on the management of teaching and learning by the head teachers in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. As such, it was hypothesized that there is no significant influence of adequacy of teaching learning materials on the management of teaching and learning by the head teachers in Uasin Gishu County.

3.1 Adequacy of Teaching/Learning Materials

Table 1 shows the head teachers’ responses to the item that tested whether or not, with the introduction of FPE, there was no shortage of teaching/learning materials in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The results illustrated that, majority of the head teachers, 138(72.6%), disagreed while 52(27.4%) agreed and none of them were undecided.

Table 1: No Shortage of Teaching Learning Materials

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	61	32.1
Disagree	77	40.5
Agree	22	11.6
Strongly agree	30	15.8
Total	190	100

3.2 Adequacy of Text Books

In the questionnaire, the head teachers were asked to respond to the statement that assessed whether or not there was no shortage of text books. As shown in Table 2, majority of the head teachers, 155(81.6%), disagreed with the statement that there were no shortage of text books, while 31(16.3%) agreed and only 4(2.1%) were undecided.

Table 2: No Shortage of Text Books

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagreed	113	59.5
Disagreed	42	22.1
Undecided	4	2.1
Agree	16	8.4
Strongly agree	15	7.9
Total	190	100

The study established and concluded that there is shortage of teaching/learning materials (72.6%), specifically shortage of textbooks (81.6%), in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. Majority of the respondents, 155(81.6%) disagreed with the statement that there was no shortage of textbooks while 31(16.3%) agreed and 2(1.1%) were undecided.

Teaching resources are one of the most important inputs in the education system (MOE, 1999), but these results demonstrated that despite the Governments' provision of funds for the purchase of textbooks, there was still shortage of these books in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. It was expected that with the introduction of FPE and subsequently the allocation of funds for the purchase of teaching materials, schools were now well equipped but these results demonstrated otherwise. This implied that head teachers may not be able to enforce the rule of giving pupils assignments. This was interpreted to mean pupils are sharing textbooks and teachers may not be able to give pupils carry home assignments; pupils may not be able to do private studies at home and this may lower the academic performance of the pupils.

These findings concurred with other findings by Wachira *et al.* (2011) in Embu West District who pointed out that FPE has negatively impacted on the management of pupils, staff, physical resources and that the teaching learning resources were not enough. Kenya (2008) found out that the ratio of textbooks to pupils is 1:3 and that the pupils were not taking care of the text books and other instructional materials as is required. However, he notes that the number of text books has increased significantly in all schools and is one of the major achievements of FPE Policy. The ratio of pupils to text books has not been reduced to a favorable 1:1 and thus it was still not possible for teachers to give home assignments to the pupils. School text books replacement policies have been ineffective due to lack of parent support and the inability of some parents to afford. Some schools have resorted to restricting text books to the school environment only and making parents responsible for losses and hence this inhibits teachers from giving pupils take home assignments. Parents in some schools had been forced to sign for books issued to their children and are responsible for their maintenance custody and replacement.

A UNESCO (2005) report shows that in most of sub-Saharan African countries, about five pupils share a text book. These numbers are as follows: in Ethiopia 5:1, Malawi 5:1, Ghana 2:1, Guinea 10:1, Mali 5:1, Senegal 6:1, Tanzania 4:1, Uganda 6:1, and in Zambia five pupils share one text book (Kadzamira *et al.*, 2000) and also in Kenya three pupils share one text book (Kojwang, 2003).

Yara *et al.* (2012), in their study carried out in Migori District, have found similar results, that public primary school head teachers face a variety of constraints in their efforts to implement FPE. These include poor curriculum delivery due to lack of teaching and learning facilities. Akoth (2012) also reports that head teachers experience a number of problems in Kisumu Municipality in relation to the implementation of FPE which include inadequate text books.

3.3 Lecture Method of Teaching

Table 3 presents the summary of the head teachers' responses to the item which assessed whether or not the lecture method of teaching was being used in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. Majority, 107(56.3%) of the head teachers agreed and 77(40.5%) disagreed while 6(3.2%) were undecided over the use of the lecture as a method of teaching.

Table 3: Use of Lecture Method of Teaching

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	27	14.2
Disagree	50	26.3
Undecided	6	3.2
Agree	81	42.6
Strongly agree	26	13.7
Total	190	100

From these findings, the study concluded that the lecture method of teaching was being used (56.3%) in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. This may have been due to the high pupil teacher ratio, shortage of teaching learning materials and shortage of teachers. The lecture method of teaching inhibits individual pupil

teacher interaction since it is teacher centered. Primary school children require more interactive methods of teaching. This implies that slow learners and children with special needs are not catered for and their potentials developed as required.

3.4 Test of Association between Teaching Learning Materials and Lecture Method of Teaching

Chi-square analysis was done on the head teachers' responses to the item that assessed whether with the introduction of FPE; there was shortage of teaching/learning materials and responses to the item that tested whether there was lecture method of teaching. The data was categorized into those who agreed and those who disagreed and undecided in each variable and entered into the SPSS computer soft ware and cross tabulated. The results showed a significant association $P=0.000<0.05$. Thus the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected and a conclusion was drawn that there was a significant relationship between shortage of teaching learning materials and the use of lecture method of teaching. The study, therefore, concluded that there was significant influence of the shortage of teaching and learning materials on the management of teaching methods by head teachers in Uasin Gishu County.

Kent (2006), on large classes, differs from these findings saying that the lecture method is used in primary schools as a result of large classes; however, in Uasin Gishu county, it was because of shortage of teaching/learning materials that lecture method was being used. Kent (ibid.) notes that instructions are too fast in lecturing and the teaching/learning become impersonal which is often overwhelming for young pupils and impacts negatively on their academic performance.

Majanga *et al.* (2011) also differ from the findings of the study which illustrated that lecture method was being used due to shortage of teaching/learning materials. Their study points out that the FPE policy has created high enrolments which have resulted to large class sizes, high pupil teacher ratio, congested classrooms, teacher shortages and high teacher workload and as a result the teacher pupil classroom interaction activities were not exploited to the full because teachers were using traditional lecture methods of teaching.

According to Wamukuru *et al.* (2006), the lecture method is used due to shortage of teaching/learning materials. They posit that teachers frequently use the lecture method of teaching due to large classes as a result of FPE. They conclude that teachers do not involve the pupils in the learning activities and that learning is mainly teacher-centered.

3.5 Adequacy of Teachers' Assignments to Pupils

Table 4 illustrates the head teachers' responses to the item that assessed whether or not, with the introduction of FPE, teachers were not giving assignments to the pupils as before. A total of 99(52.1%) agreed that with the introduction of free primary education policy, teachers were not giving pupils assignments as before while 85(44.7%) disagreed and 6(3.2%) were undecided.

Table 4: Teachers were not giving Pupils Assignments

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	24	12.6
Disagree	61	32.1
Undecided	6	3.2
Agree	71	37.4
Strongly agree	28	14.7
Total	190	100

The author subjected these results to Chi-square analysis. The head teachers' responses were sought to the statement that tested whether or not with the introduction of FPE, there was shortage of textbooks and responses to the statement that tested whether or not teachers were giving pupils' assignments. The data was categorized into those who agreed and those who disagreed and undecided in each variable and entered into the SPSS computer soft ware and cross tabulated and a significant association was noted at $P=0.01<0.05$ and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted and concluded that there was a significant association between teaching learning materials and giving of assignments to the pupils. It was, therefore, concluded that the two variables were not independent of each other and hence conclusion was made that, shortage of text books has significantly influenced the management of teachers' assignments to pupils.

This study established that, with the introduction of FPE, teachers were not giving pupils adequate (52.1%) assignments and that there was a significant association between giving pupils assignments by the teachers and shortage of text books. These implied that head teachers were not able to enforce, allowing pupils carry home assignments because they were sharing text books. Giving pupils assignments after lessons is an important element of teaching as it helps to evaluate whether pupils have understood what they have been taught or not.

Assignments enable the teacher to know which areas require remedial teaching. Thus if this is not done it may negatively impact on the academic performance of pupils. The study, therefore, concluded that FPE challenges (inadequate teaching/learning materials) have negatively influenced the management of pupils' assignments in

public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. These findings were similar to other findings. Wachira *et al.* (2011) have found that in public primary schools in Embu West District, most teachers were not giving assignments to the pupils. They point out that teachers cited large class sizes resulting in too many books to mark and shortage of teachers leading to increased workloads as reasons as to why teachers were not giving pupils assignments.

A UNESCO (2005) report also concurs that teachers are unable to give adequate assignments to pupils due to shortage of text books and that they find it difficult to cope with the marking and teaching workload. The UNESCO (*ibid.*) report points out that text books in public primary schools in Kenya in the wake of FPE are being shared at the ratio of 1 textbook to 5 students. Sharing text books affects accessibility to the books while at home and many pupils are forced to do their home work in a hurry in the morning in schools while slow learners were not able to do them completely. This resulted in poor academic performance of the pupils in KCPE.

3.6 Marking of Pupils' Assignments by Teachers

Table 5 summarizes the head teachers' responses to the item that tested whether or not with the introduction of free primary education teachers were marking the pupils' assignments. The results on the statement showed that majority, 96(50.6%), of the head teachers disagreed while 82(43%) agreed and 12(6.3%) were undecided.

Table 5: Teachers Marking Pupils' Assignments

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	29	15.3
Disagree	67	35.3
Undecided	12	6.3
Agree	58	30.5
Strongly agree	24	12.6
Total	190	100

From these findings, with the introduction of FPE, teachers were not marking pupils' assignments (50.6%) as before. This may have been due to the high pupil teacher ratio and shortage of teachers.

Assignments are important part of teaching and learning, since they give a picture of what is attained by individual learners and hence depict whether the learners have understood or not what they have been taught. This helps the teacher to plan for a remedial lesson or for a new lesson depending on the performance of the pupils in the assignments. Written assignments also help in developing writing skills. Wachira *et al.* (2011) concur that with the introduction of FPE the number of assignments given to the pupils reduced due to shortage of text books and large number of pupils resulting in too many books to mark

3.7 Adequacy of Pupils' Assessment by Teachers

Table 6 illustrates the head teachers' responses to the item that assessed pupils assessment in the advent of FPE policy, 115(60.6%) of the head teachers agreed that pupils were not being adequately assessed by teachers while 64(33.7%) disagreed and 11(5.8%) were undecided.

Table 6: Pupils were not being adequately assessed by Teachers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	16	8.4
Disagree	48	25.3
Undecided	11	5.8
Agree	90	47.4
Strongly agree	25	13.2
Total	190	100

These results show that 60.6% of the respondents agreed that, with the introduction of FPE, pupils were not being adequately assessed by teachers in Uasin Gishu County. Inadequate assessment results in inability to evaluate the extent to which the pupils have understood what they have been taught and gives the teacher the direction of what to plan for the next lesson. Wasanga *et al.* (2010) point out that in Kenya, teachers are not adequately assessing pupils. They add that assessment has a direct influence on teaching and learning process and hence it is imperative that the head teachers ensure that it is implemented.

This study concluded that there was shortage of teaching/learning materials (72%), shortage of text books (81.6%), there was use of lecture method of teaching (56%), inadequate assignments were being given to pupils (52%), and there was no adequate assessment (60.6%) of pupils in Uasin Gishu County. Chi-square analysis further depicted a significant association between teaching learning materials and assignments and lecture method of teaching respectively. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there was a significant influence of teaching learning materials on the management of teaching and learning in Uasin Gishu County.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study findings, it is clear that there is shortage of teaching and learning materials and shortage of text

books in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. In addition, teachers are not giving pupils adequate assignments and assessments, and that there is excessive use of the lecture method of teaching. The study also infers a significant association between the respondents' responses to the statement that tested the adequacy of teaching/learning materials and lecture method of teaching; and also between teaching learning materials and giving pupils assignments. This implies that there is a statistically significant influence of adequacy of teaching and learning materials on the management of teachers' giving pupils' assignments and management of the teaching methods.

It is thus recommended that the money allocated to the teaching/learning materials should be increased in order to enable the purchase of more text books to a ratio of 1:1, i.e. one text book per child and purchase of enough teaching/learning materials and exercise books. This will enable the teachers to adequately assess the learners by giving them carry home assignments and will also minimize the use of lecture method of teaching.

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