



# Targeting the reach of educational support interventions in Kenya



Njeri Kagotho

The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, 1947 College Road, 325-E Stillman Hall, Columbus, OH 43210, United States

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 15 September 2015  
 Received in revised form 14 December 2015  
 Accepted 14 December 2015  
 Available online 18 December 2015

### Keywords:

Free primary education  
 Household wealth  
 Regional disparities  
 Vulnerable children

## ABSTRACT

The Free Primary Education program introduced in Kenya in 2003 increased primary school attendance rates. However, disparities in primary school education are evident throughout the nation. Using data from the 2003 and 2008–09 Kenya Demographic Health Surveys (KDHS), this study investigates the household characteristics—in addition to poverty—associated with poor school attendance. Using bivariate analysis and logistic regression we confirm that indeed household wealth is a factor in accessing free primary education. Younger children, those living in households headed by a non-biological parent are also less likely to attend school. Moreover households in arid and semi-arid regions of the country—areas characterized by historical socio-economic and political marginalization report significantly low primary school attendance rates. Findings from this study call attention to continued education disparities in spite of the free tuition program. The study further directs policy makers on how best to deploy scarce resources to target households most unable to provide adequate educational supports to children.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Background

Education has been one of the sectors that the Kenyan government, in conjunction with local and external donors, has worked to strengthen. In response to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number two (universal primary education by 2015) (UN, 2015), Kenya reinstated free primary education (FPE) in 2003, leading to the abolishment of school fees in government-run primary educational institutions. The FPE program has not only increased enrollment in primary school—from 75.5% in 2003 to 87% in 2007—it has also been instrumental in guaranteeing education to vulnerable groups of children previously shut out of the education system. In spite of these commendable strides, a sub-population of children delay or forgo education all together. Several programmatic interventions are currently in place to address these vulnerabilities, including interventions that target economically fragile families. These means-tested programs, which include material and cash support interventions, are resource-intensive and thereby limited in their potential outreach to vulnerable groups. As the FPE program enters its second decade there is the need to target supplemental interventions to children who remain on the periphery of the educational sector. Using the 2003 and 2008–09 Kenya Demographic Health Surveys (KDHS) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics & ICF Macro, 2010), this study seeks to address two questions: 1) Is wealth still a significant contributor to accessing tuition free education? 2) Which other household characteristics define vulnerability for non-participation in education? (See Figs. 1 and 2.) (See Tables 1 and 2.)

### 1.1. Education in Kenya

Public schools, or government schools as they are sometimes called, are financed and administered through the Ministry of Education (MOE). Kenya spends a significant portion of her GDP on primary education, more so when compared to her two neighbors of Uganda and Tanzania (Colclough & Otieno, 2009). In 2004 Kenya's expenditure per student as a percentage of her GDP was 24.2%, while that of Uganda and Tanzania were 10.7 and 14.5% respectively (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). In spite of these investments, primary education in Kenya is not entirely cost free to families, but remains a cost sharing endeavor between the government, consumers, and external donors. Educational cost-sharing is an educational financing mechanism whereby stockholders other than the government finance the educational budget (Johnstone, 2004). Prior to the introduction of FPE, extreme forms of cost-sharing had affected primary school enrollment and retention rates (Ministry of Education Science & Technology, 2005). Although not an official mandated form of cost-sharing, parents and communities contribute towards educational infrastructure such as buildings, and school amenities. Other additional costs associated with primary education include the purchase of school uniforms, books, and other learning materials (Kagotho, 2012). Parents are estimated to spend approximately \$5–\$6 on school uniforms and roughly \$92 on building funds (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; Tooley, Dixon, & Stanfield, 2008).

Structural and individual constraints inform education participation. These include household poverty, gender role expectations, child labor, lack of parental guidance, and the changing family structure (Alwy & Schech, 2004; Mishra, Arnold, Otieno, Cross, & Hong, 2007; Onsomu, Kosimbei, & Ngware, 2006). At the geo-political level, the complex

E-mail address: [kagotho.1@osu.edu](mailto:kagotho.1@osu.edu).

intersection of ethnicity with the dynamics associated with the inequitable distribution of resources and poor resource management has resulted in regional educational disparities in Kenya (Alwy & Schech, 2004; Kramon & Posner, 2012). At the micro level, household characteristics such as wealth and income are significant determinants in educational outcomes for both orphaned and non-orphaned children (Akwaru et al., 2010). When families are unable to provide adequate economic supports, children are more likely to report interrupted education (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development, 2008). Further, households that need children to engage in the labor market to bolster household subsistence or take on child rearing or household responsibilities are less likely to send them to school. Other vulnerable households of interest are those providing care to orphans. Although the nuclear family is still a mainstay in the country, factors such as rural–urban migration, poverty, and pandemics including HIV/AIDS inform the structure of Kenyan families. Kenya is home to 2.6 million orphans (UNICEF, 2013) approximately 1.6 million of whom are HIV orphans (NASOP, 2005). This is in addition to many more vulnerable children whose parents are unable to adequately provide for their well-being. It is estimated that of children aged 0–14, only 64% live with both parents (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development, 2008). Finally, in spite of the great inroads made in bringing the enrollment of girls to par with their male counterparts, regional disparities continue to exist (Onsomu et al., 2006) with the Northern arid and semi-arid regions showing high gender disparities in favor of boys and Nairobi in favor of girls (Colclough & Otieno, 2009). With the lowest literacy rate in the country, 55% of the girl-child population is un-enrolled in primary school in North Eastern Province (UNESCO, 2012).

### 1.2. Current interventions

Although the government has made concerted efforts to make primary education more affordable, some households are still shut out of the education sector. Children in households such as these require targeted interventions that go beyond subsidized education to address the complexities of their situation. For instance, to address access gaps in Northeastern Kenya, the government funds primary boarding schools, and has also increased employment benefits to stabilize both teaching and non-teaching staff (Ministry of State for Planning & National Development and Vision 2030, 2011).

In addition, because the significant role income plays in securing education is well understood, several income and wealth based programs currently exist in the country. The Kenyan government has put in place several means-tested programs which include the social protection cash transfer program for older adults heading income-poor households (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development, 2009), the cash transfer program for orphans and vulnerable children (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development, 2008), and tuition bursaries (Ministry of Education Science & Technology, 2005). Family economic strengthening interventions targeting low-income and vulnerable youth are fast becoming established in sub-Saharan Africa. Programs such as those informed by the asset-based development model (Sherraden, 1991) use an integrated development approach that invests in the human, social, and economic capacities of communities. In sub-Saharan Africa, these interventions have focused on educational outcomes (Kagotho, Nabunya, Sewamala, & Ilic, 2013). Economic strengthening interventions bolster a family's financial capacity to invest in education by subsidizing some of the additional costs associated with accessing tuition-free education programs such as books and uniforms (Colclough & Otieno, 2009; Tooley et al., 2008). In addition to income and wealth orientated educational interventions, non-governmental organizations provide assistance to poor families in the form of food, cash grants, and other material resources (Evans, Kremer, & Ngatia, 2009; Omwami, Neumann, & Bwibo, 2011). These support mechanisms are designed to meet short-term needs. They are

offered as one-time assistance packages and are not guaranteed to all needy families.

The resource intensive nature of economic strengthening interventions limits their potential reach. These interventions, then, are targeted to the most vulnerable households only. Although the scalability of these interventions is still in question, extending their reach to the most vulnerable households continues to be a primary goal. One of the ways this would happen would be by targeting these interventions to households whose vulnerability extends beyond income or wealth poverty. To this end, using data from the 2003 and 2008–09 Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS), this study will seek to determine the household characteristics which in addition to poverty are associated with poor attendance in primary education and identify groups that could benefit from additional targeted interventions. This study will use two points of data, 2003 data—collected the year the FPE program was rolled out—and 2009 data. Findings from this study would enable policy makers to target scarce resources towards those families and household structures that lack the capacity to provide adequate educational supports to children.

## 2. Methods

Data from the 2003 and 2008–09 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) was used to answer the study question. KDHS is a nationally-representative dataset that surveys Kenyan households and focuses on population, nutrition, and health outcomes. KDHS utilizes a two stage stratified sampling design. In addition to English, 12 other Kenyan languages were used in the interviewing process. To account for the sampling design of the KDHS survey, estimation methods were applied to all univariate analysis (Rutstein & Rojas, 2006). Univariate and bivariate statistics including Ttest, Chisquare, and ANOVA were used to determine variable relationships. A logistic regression was constructed using KDHS 2009 data to establish the relationship between the outcome and independent variables. This study investigated the educational outcomes of children of primary age (6–13 years). The outcome variable of education outcome was operationalized as school attendance among school age children. The study set out to determine the household characteristics most likely to yield positive educational outcomes for children. The study answered the following questions: (1) Is wealth still a factor in determining access to the free primary education program? (2) What other household factors determine access to primary education?

### 2.1. Variables

#### 2.1.1. Outcome variable

Educational participation was a categorical variable constructed from several variables with 1 denoting children attending school and 0 for those who were not. Children of primary school-going age (6–13 years) who had entered school, those advanced from the previous year, and those who had either repeated or been demoted from the previous year were coded as 1. Conversely, those of school-going age who had never been enrolled or had dropped out were coded as 0.

#### 2.1.2. Independent variable

The wealth index as created by the Demographic Health Surveys is a calculation of household wealth characteristics including those measuring wealth and consumer items, many of which are country specific. The resulting variable is scored in quintiles. The resulting population quintiles poorest, poorer, middle, richer, and richest were used in this analysis.

#### 2.1.3. Control variables

The study used control variables known to impact education outcomes including head of household characteristics (age, gender, and education), and child characteristics (child parental status, age, and

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/345891>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/345891>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)