

8 April, 2024

We presented the research at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Japan Society for Africa Educational Research held at Tohoku University from April 6 to 7.

**Kyoko Taniguchi**

### **Exploring the Relationship Between Age at First Entry, Grade Repetition, and Academic Achievement: A Case of Malawi, Ghana, and Uganda**

Students in primary school often have unofficial ages at each grade in sub-Saharan Africa due to late school entry and grade repetition. Children often enter primary school late for various reasons, such as physical immaturity, lack of preparedness with school materials, and long distances to schools. Late entry tends to lead to delayed cognitive and non-cognitive development, grade repetition (Taniguchi, 2015), and early dropout (Taniguchi, 2017; Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021). Grade repetition is also common in some countries, with many students repeating a grade as a remedial measure for academic achievement. However, a question arises: "Do late entry and grade repetition actually help improve academic achievement?" To investigate this, the study drew data from Malawi, Ghana, and Uganda to analyze the relationship between age at first entry, grade repetition and academic achievement in primary school.

English and mathematics tests were developed based on each country's national curriculum and textbooks to measure curriculum attainment. Due to differing achievement levels in the three countries, two types of tests were created: Test A for Malawi and Uganda, and Test B for Ghana, with the latter being more advanced than the former. To compare Test A and Test B, common items were included in both tests. Each subject and both tests consisted of 40 question items. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to gather student background information such as gender, age, and experience with grade repetition.

The sample consisted of 900 grade 5 and 636 grade 6 students in 12 public primary schools in Lilongwe East and Nkhata Bay District, Malawi, 919 grade 5 and 981 grade 6 students in 23 public primary schools in the Lower Manya Krobo District, Eastern Region, Ghana, and 1049 grade 5 and 966 grade 6 students in 18 public primary schools in Mpigi District, Uganda. Data collection occurred in Malawi from October to November 2021, in Ghana from January to February 2022, and in Uganda from June to July 2022. For analysis, item response theory was employed to equate scales across the three

countries using common question items in each subject. Additionally, one-way analysis of variance was used to compare academic achievement among different ages at first entry and various numbers of grade repetitions.

Significant differences in English achievement were observed among ages at first entry in all countries, with children who entered primary school at the appropriate age generally achieving higher scores than those who entered early or late. In mathematics achievement, significant differences were found among ages at first entry in Ghana and Uganda, though not in Malawi. Furthermore, significant differences in English achievement were observed among different numbers of grade repetitions in all countries, with achievement decreasing as the number of grade repetitions increased. Similarly, in mathematics achievement, differences in the number of grade repetitions were found in Ghana and Uganda, but not in Malawi. These results suggest that late entry and grade repetition do not always improve student achievement, as achievement is influenced by various factors such as socioeconomic status and parental education levels. There is a need to reconsider policies related to early and late entries and grade repetition in primary education.



**NYIRENDA Matthews Kamzgezge**

## **The Impact of School Culture on Teacher Motivation in Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi**

### **Background**

In Malawi, the educational landscape comprises a diverse range of secondary schools, including Conventional Secondary Schools, Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), Private Secondary Schools, Open Schools, and Grant-aided Secondary Schools. However, the performance levels in CDSSs exhibit a notable deficiency compared to Conventional secondary schools. The research by Chimombo et al. (2013) posits that CDSSs face challenges such as inadequacy of qualified educators and deficient infrastructure. Previous studies haven't thoroughly explored the nuanced dynamics of how school culture influences teacher motivation, which may affect student performance in secondary schools. People differ not just in the extent or amount of their motivation but also in the direction or type of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Understanding what motivates teachers in a school is crucial in this regard.

### **Objective and Research Questions**

This study seeks to scrutinize the influence of school culture on teacher motivation within Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) in Malawi. The research aims to identify the factors within work environments that act as sources of motivation, focusing on exploring the existing shared beliefs, values, norms, traditions, and practices that characterize the environment and atmosphere within a school. Addressed are the following research questions: (1) What type of culture exists in CDSSs in Malawi? (2) What is the relationship between school culture and teacher motivation in CDSSs? (3) What is the nature and extent of the differences in motivation among teachers in CDSSs?

### **Significance**

This study supports the identification of the factors within the school environment that influence teachers' enthusiasm and commitment. This comprehension is imperative for improving educational practices and cultivating a conducive environment for educators and students. Correspondingly, students' academic achievement would improve.

### **Hypothesis**

The school culture influences the motivation of teachers in CDSSs. A more positive school culture correlates with increased teacher motivation.

### **Definitions**

School culture: This is a compilation of traditions and rituals that evolve over

time through collaborative efforts among teachers, students, parents, and administrators in navigating challenges and celebrating achievements (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 4).

**Teacher motivation:** This embodies the vigor or impetus propelling educators to actively participate and perform proficiently in their responsibilities, aiming to enhance students' academic achievements and attain predetermined objectives (Mulyani et al., 2022).

### **Theoretical framework**

This study will draw upon two theoretical perspectives: organizational culture theory and expectancy theory. Organizational culture theory by Edgar Schein states that any organization has a cultural structure composed of artifacts and symbols, espoused values, and assumptions (Etalong & Chikeleze, 2023). Victor Vroom's expectancy theory posits that individuals are motivated to act in specific ways when they perceive their efforts will result in desired outcomes (Suciu, Mortan, & Lazar, 2013).

### **Methodology**

This study will use mixed methods. While the qualitative methods will help capture rich, context-specific details and experiences of teachers, the quantitative approaches will furnish statistical information for identifying patterns and trends in the relationship between school culture and teacher motivation.

