

Examining the Roles of School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations on How They Influence the Level of Parental Involvement in Ugandan Primary Education

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I. Summary

<English Summary>

Decentralized education policy is considered to be one of the special characteristics in Ugandan primary education. The Uganda Education Act 2008, indicates to allow citizens to increase their participation in education and give them a stronger voice in service delivery (MoES 2008). It has mandated the School Management Committee (SMC) as the legal governance body at school level. Their role is to conduct financial management, infrastructure development, and ensuring the discipline of learners. Another important role for the SMC is to become a linkage between school and parents, to allow the parents to become involved in school education. In addition, the Education Act has outlawed the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) which were the representative body of the parents. Prior, the Education Act, the PTA originally had influence towards the management of school education, especially before the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy was introduced in 1997, which has abolished tuition fees in primary education. They had solicited money from parents of children to compensate the lack of government funds towards primary schools.

Despite the aim to engage more parents to contribute towards children's education, prior researches indicate that there are impediments towards parental involvement. Studies have shown that the outlaw of PTAs hinders parental responsiveness to school issues (World Bank 2013). Other studies show that parents do not understand other ways to participate in school education besides financially contributing towards schools (Marphatia et al. 2010). Moreover, there are issues related to the lack of capacity of SMCs to enhance parental involvement in school education.

This study will examine the roles of SMCs and PTAs on how they influence the level of parental involvement in Ugandan primary education. It will try to capture how the SMCs and PTAs collaborate with each other to enhance parental involvement. In addition, the study will look at how the parents actually contribute to the school affairs.

Field research was conducted from August 31st to October 3rd 2019, at Wakiso and Bushenyi districts. The researcher has visited 4 schools in each district and distributed questionnaires towards SMC/PTA members and parents. Interviews towards government officials were also conducted to capture their points of view.

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Host University: Makerere University, Uganda, August 31-October 3, 2019.

<Japanese Summary>

教育政策の地方分権化はウガンダの初等教育政策の中で重要な特徴の一つである。2008年に発行されたウガンダ教育法では、学校教育に対する市民の声を強め、それらのアクターが積極的に参加できるよう定められている (MoES 2008)。また、この教育法では、学校運営委員会 (SMC) に対して法的な権限を正式に与えている。学校運営委員会の役割は財政管理、学校インフラの維持・発展、学習者の規律性を保つこととなっている。さらに、学校運営委員会の重要な役割は、学校教育に対して親が積極的に携わるように学校と親の間の仲介組織として機能することである。

そして、この教育法では学校運営委員会の法的強化に対し、元々親の代表組織であった PTA は非合法化されたのである。2008年に新たに実施された教育法よりも前では PTA が学校教育の運営に対して大きな影響力を持っていた。特に初等教育無償化政策 (UPE) が行われる以前は PTA が中心となって、学校に子どもを通わせている親からお金を徴収するような役割を担っていたのである。

しかし、教育法で学校教育に対する親の積極的な参加を促しているのにも関わらず、実際の親の参加は不活発であると先行研究は述べている。例として、過去の調査では PTA が非合法化されたことにより、親の参加が削がれてしまったと分析している (World Bank 2013)。また、他の研究では、親が金銭的な貢献以外の方法でどのように学校教育に携わっていけばいいのかわからないと分析しているものもある (Marphatia et al. 2010)。これからの問題は、学校運営委員会が本来果たすべき役割を行えていないために引き起こされてしまうとも考えられている。

本調査では、ウガンダの初等教育における学校運営委員会と PTA の役割に着目し、それらの組織が親の学校教育に対する参加に対してどのような影響を与えているのか、見ていくことが目標である。その際に、本調査では、学校運営委員会と PTA がどのように協働し、親の参加を促そうとしているのかも着目していく。加えて、質問票調査を通じて、親が実際にどのように学校教育の運営に携わっているのか、見ていく。

今回の調査は、8月31日から10月3日にかけてウガンダのワキソ県とブシェニ県に行われた。調査では、各地区の中で4校ずつ訪問し、学校運営委員会メンバー、PTA メンバー、親に対して質問票調査が行われた。また、初等教育政策に関わっている政府役人に対するインタビューも実施された。

II. Research Activity

1. Introduction

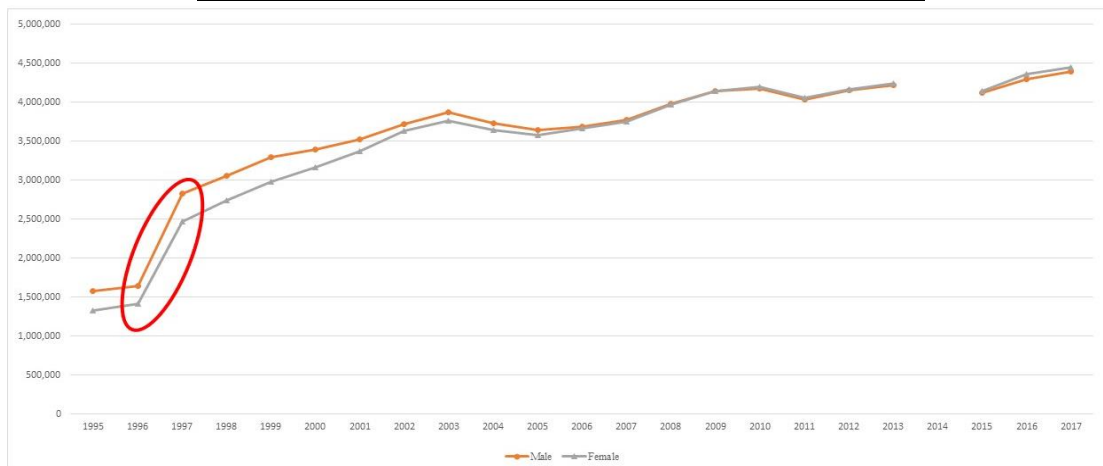
(1) Background and Problem Statement

Decentralized education policy is considered to be one of the special characteristics in Ugandan primary education. The decentralization policy allows the local government to implement educational services towards the children. Moreover, the Ugandan Education Act launched in 2008, has claimed on giving citizens a stronger voice in education service delivery to enhance the community and parental participation in school education (MoES 2008; World Bank 2013).

The decentralization policy implemented in Uganda is based on the School Based Management (SBM) theory. According to Caldwell, the definition of SBM would be the decentralization of school authority from central governments to the school level (Caldwell 2005). This approach aims to allow citizens to increase their choice and participation in education, and give their voice in service delivery. Therefore, community and parental participation in school education would be an important factor to enhance educational quality and efficiency (World Bank 2007).

In addition, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy is another important education policy implemented by the Ugandan government. The objective of the UPE policy was to increase access, equity and quality of primary education in Uganda. Because of the abolition of tuition fees due to the introduction of UPE policy, the enrollment of children has rapidly increased (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Trends in Primary Education Enrollment Growth by Gender



Source: Created by author, based on UNESCO UIS Stats (2019)

Regarding the financing of education, direct costs of education heavily depended on private resources, which were paid more than 80% from students' families prior the UPE policy (Byamugisha & Nishimura 2015). However, after the UPE policy, tuition fees and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) charges for primary education were abolished (ODI 2005).

There are mainly two organizations that deeply engage in the promotion of community and parental participation in Ugandan primary school education. Firstly, is the School Management Committee (SMC). The SMC mainly has the regarding four roles which are; 1) financial management, 2) infrastructure development and maintenance, 3) ensuring the discipline of learners and 4) school-level conflict resolution (MoES 2008). The SMCs are obligated to contribute on establishing a linkage with parents and

communities to ensure that all stakeholders work in harmonious good relationships with the whole community (Oloka 2017 & World Bank 2013).

Secondly, is the Parental-Teacher Association (PTA). Prior the Universal Primary Education policy, the PTAs solicited money from parents of children. The PTA had an important role in school financing because of the lack of funds from governments. This meant that the government-run schools were predominantly funded by the PTAs (Ssekamwa 1997; Dauda 2004). However, after the UPE policy, the PTA charges for primary education was abolished and the 2008 Education Act had outlawed the PTA. This has happened because the government has intended to give the SMC more authority in school management.

Despite the aim to engage more parents to contribute towards children's education, prior researches indicate that there are impediments towards parental involvement. Studies have shown that the outlaw of PTAs hinders parental responsiveness to school issues. Other studies show that parents do not understand other ways to participate in school education besides financially contributing towards schools. Moreover, there are issues related to the lack of capacity of SMCs to enhance parental involvement towards school education.

Prior researches that do an in-depth investigation on the roles of PTA, are based on research before the PTAs were outlawed by the 2008 Uganda Education Act (Dauda 2004). Thus, there is no research about the PTA's role in school management and how the organization's characteristics have change before and after the 2008 Uganda Education Act. Moreover, many previous studies in Uganda on parental involvement focus on its impacts (both positive and negative) on students' academic performance (Kisembo 2014; Ocan 2017; Oloka 2017). However, little is known about the specific roles of SMCs and PTAs, and what kind of relationships they have with each other when promoting the involvement of parents.

(2) Research Questions and Research Objective

The research questions written below would be based on the problem statement above. It will mainly be consisted by two research questions, which focus on the roles of SMCs and PTAs.

RQ 1) What are the roles of SMCs and PTAs in school affairs and enhancing parental involvement in school education in Ugandan primary education?

RQ 1.1) How do the SMCs and PTAs collaborate with each other to do school management and enhance parental involvement in Ugandan primary education?

RQ 1.2) What are the parent's perception towards SMC's and PTA's role?

RQ 1.3) What are the policy expectations and assumptions for enhancing parental participation in school education by SMCs and PTAs?

RQ 2.) How do the parents who do not belong to the PTA, contribute towards the school affairs and their children's education?

RQ 2.1) How do the parents (who are not PTA members) collaborate with the SMCs and PTAs?

RQ 2.2) What are the differences between PTA executive members and non-executive members, regarding the level of participation in school operations and providing a voice in governance?

The objective of this study will examine the roles of SMCs and PTAs on how they influence the level of parental involvement in Ugandan primary education. It will try to capture how the SMCs and PTAs collaborate with each other to enhance parental involvement. In addition, the study will look at how the parents actually contribute to the school affairs.

2. Study Area

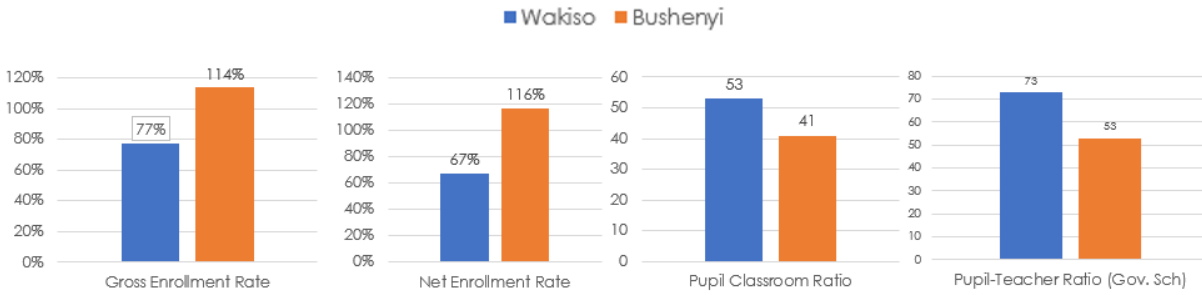
Field research was conducted in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts in Uganda from August 31st 2019 to October 3rd. Wakiso district is located in an area surrounding the capital city Kampala. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the population of Wakiso district is 1,997,418 (UBOS 2017). Bushenyi district is located in the west side of Uganda. The population of the district is 234,443 (UBOS 2017). The geographical area of each district is indicated on the map below (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Map of the Study Area (Source: Created by the author)



Regarding the educational status of each of the districts, the overall primary education level pupil enrollment in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts is 304,222 and 64,124 respectively. For the gross enrollment rate (GER) in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts, it is 77% and 114%, respectively. Regarding the pupil classroom ratio (PCR) in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts, it is 53 and 41 respectively, while the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is 73 and 53 respectively. These are data from government-aided schools (MoES 2017). (Figure 3)

Figure 3: GER, NER, PCR and PTR in Wakiso and Bushenyi District

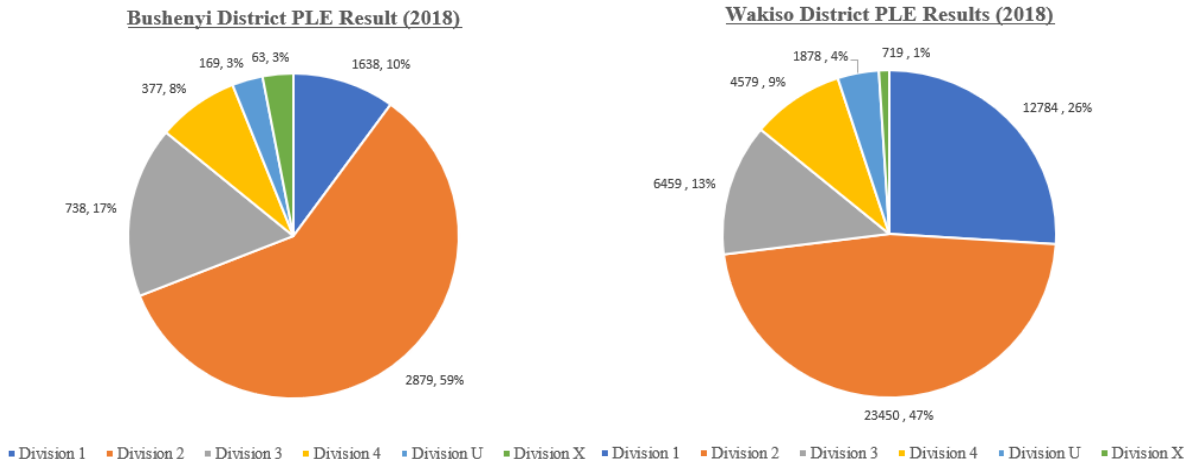


Source: Created by author, based on Ministry of Education and Sports (2017).

The total number of schools in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts is 1,392 and 217 schools respectively. In addition, the number of government schools in Wakiso and Bushenyi is 257 and 71 schools respectively, meaning that the percentage of government schools in both districts are 18% and 67% respectively (MoES 2017). This indicates that the majority of the primary schools in Wakiso district are private schools.

Regarding the education outcomes of the two districts, the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) result is an important indicator that implies the educational quality in primary schools. Regarding the pie chart, Division 1-4 indicates the level of grade in the pupil’s test, while Division 1 is the best and Division 4 is the border line for passing the PLE. Division U means that the pupils failed the test, while Division X means that the pupil was absent for the PLE (Figure 4).

Figure 4: PLE Results for Wakiso and Bushenyi District



Created by author, based on (UNEB 2018)

The pie graph indicates that both of the districts have almost the same percentage for pupils who passed the PLE (Division 1-Division 4). However, Wakiso has more Division 1 pupils out of the share of total pupils than Bushenyi, while Bushenyi has more pupils in percentage for Division 1 and Division 2 levels.

In conclusion, Wakiso and Bushenyi districts were selected to understand the similarities and differences between them, regarding how the SMC and PTA works. Regarding education, the two districts are considered as one of the model districts in Uganda. This study aims to capture how the SMCs/PTAs and parents engage towards primary school education in areas that have relevantly high education quality

in Uganda. In addition, Bushenyi district has one of the most active parents that engage towards children's education and the researcher aims to examine how and why the parents actually get involved in education. The researcher has also visited two schools each from rural and urban areas in each district, to understand the differences between the two areas.

3. Methodology

This study would be a qualitative research, meaning that it will use the triangulation method. Regarding document review, the researcher is planning to read government documents and other international organization's project documents related to primary education, that were not possible to be obtained in Japan or through the internet. Another important document that was obtained was the minutes of the SMC/PTA meetings. These minutes provide all of the records that were discussed during the meetings, and will give an in-depth understanding for the researcher. In addition, the financial statement was obtained in some schools that record the financial contribution of parents in each school. Furthermore, posters that indicate the names of the SMC/PTA members, PLE results and so on were obtained during the field research. For observation, the researcher has observed the classrooms and facilities of the school, to understand the current situation of the school. Regarding interviews, it involved in giving questionnaires toward SMC/PTA members and parents, while interviews were conducted towards the Ministry of Education and Sports officials in the central and district levels.

The research method that would be taken to answer each research question is summarized on the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Research Methods

RQ	Method	Target People
1.1	Semi-structured Interview with Questionnaires & Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Teachers • SMC members • PTA executive members • Questionnaires towards parents
1.2	Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA non-executive parents (parents whose children are going to primary school)
1.3	Semi-structured Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education & Sports government officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> →Central level →District level
2.1	Questionnaires Semi-structured Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA non-executive parents (parents who their children are going to primary school)
2.2	Questionnaires Semi-structured Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA executive members • PTA non-executive parents (parents whose children are going to primary school)

The researcher has visited 8 schools in total during this field research. In each of the districts, 4 schools (2 schools each from the rural and urban areas) were selected, that were provided from the District Education Officers (DEO) in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts. All of the 8 schools visited were government-aided schools where they receive Universal Primary Education (UPE) grants from the government. The detailed information of the number of members and parents that were interviewed are listed on the table below (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Visited Schools and Number of Interviewed People

Wakiso District		Bushenyi District	
School A	SMC Member: 4 (incl. Headteacher)	School E	SMC Member: 3 (incl. Headteacher)
	PTA Member: 2		PTA Member: 2
	Parents: 4 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 2)		Parents: 5 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 3)
School B	SMC Member: 3 (incl. Headteacher)	School F	SMC Member: 2
	PTA Member: 2		PTA Member: 2
	Parents: 5 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 3)		Parents: 6 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 4)
School C	SMC Member: 2 (incl. Headteacher)	School G	SMC Member: 3 (incl. Headteacher)
	PTA Member: 1		PTA Member: 2
	Parents: 3 (PTA Exe: 1 & Non-PTA: 2)		Parents: 3 (PTA Exe: 1 & Non-PTA: 2)
School D	SMC Member: 2	School H	SMC Member: 2 (incl. Headteacher)
	PTA Member: 2		PTA Member: 2
	Parents: 4 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 2)		Parents: 4 (PTA Exe: 2 & Non-PTA: 2)

Regarding the interview with the Ministry of Education and Sports government officials, the researcher has interviewed the senior education officer of the basic education department at the central level. For Wakiso district, the researcher interviewed the District Inspector of Schools (DIS) and for Bushenyi district, the District Education Officer (DEO) was interviewed. The DEO works as an officer appointed by the government to assist in the administration of education services, while the DIS works under the DEO to be in charge of quality control in education services (MoES 2008). The questions were based on asking the roles of SMCs/PTAs and their relationship with each other. In addition, the researcher asked how the parents are involved in the government official's point of view.

The researcher has conducted research by first obtaining the introduction letter that was provided by the supervisor at Makerere University. Afterwards, the researcher visited each district office and used the introduction letter to receive permission for field research from the District Education Officer (DEO). Phone numbers of headteachers were received in that process, which allowed the researcher to mobilize SMC/PTA members and parents to participate in the questionnaire and interview. The interviewed people participated voluntarily for the researcher's questionnaire and interview. Regarding the interview towards government officials, the researcher used the letter of introduction to make appointments to meet them. Each interview was conducted for around 30-45 minutes.

4. Research Findings

Throughout the field research, the researcher has clarified the roles of SMCs/PTAs and parents in Uganda primary education, and the issues that have occurred in that process. Preliminary findings of the field research are listed below.

- *The roles of SMCs*

The questionnaires towards the SMC members, asked their roles in school management based on the Education Act 2008. The majority of the members understood about their roles properly. This was a finding that contrasts with the reports that indicate the lack of understanding about their roles in school management (World Bank 2013; Oloka 2017). In addition, the SMCs were trying their best to sensitize parents that were not really interested in their children's education.

One SMC member said:

We encourage the parents. For example, especially for the very weak parents, who do not do their work. Some members of the SMC support them. We do one-on-one visit and directly talk with the parents who are not supportive. We see them and find a way to help the children (Male member of SMC, interviewed by the researcher on 9/20/2019).

Another important role for the SMC was to mobilize more money by lobbying towards NGOs and receiving support from them, such as constructing school facilities (Photo 1). Many of the members insisted that the UPE grants from the government are not enough and they need to receive support from other donors too.

However, there are issues that SMCs are stretching the meaning of their roles. During the interview, one of the parents insisted that SMCs sent pupils away from school because their parents did not pay the school fees. This role is not stated in the Education Act, meaning that this action taken by the SMC is unofficial.

Photo 1: Water tank provided by NGO



- The roles of PTAs

The main role of the PTAs was to represent the parents’ opinion and financially contribute to school affairs. Regarding the representation of parent’s opinion, most of the schools had a system that the PTA first gathers to discuss about the issues and plans for the school. Afterwards, they hand in the proposal to the SMCs. Regarding the financial contribution of the PTAs, all of the PTAs in Wakiso and Bushenyi, gathered funds from parents in the school by explaining to them why the money is necessary and hold PTA general meetings to negotiate with parents about how much they should actually pay. This financial role is extremely important for the school because the PTA compensate the lack of money of the school budget. Regardless of the UPE policy, the UPE grants provided by the government are not sufficient. Therefore, the PTA has a major influence on the school affairs. For instance, in one school, the PTA funds were more than 3 times the UPE grants they receive from the government (Table 3).

Table 3: Total UPE grants and PTA funds for School H in term 3 on 2018

UPE Grant (Released)	PTA Fund (Collected)
1,534,000 UGX	5,556,200 UGX

Note: UGX: Uganda Shillings

- The relationship between SMCs and PTAs

In both Wakiso and Bushenyi districts, many of the school’s SMCs and PTAs work hand in hand and have a good relationship with each other. For most of the schools, the PTA proposes an issue as a representative of parents and hand it to the SMC. Meetings are held between the SMC and PTA, and if the proposal was accepted, it is the SMC’s role to actually implement a certain project. The research indicated that if the PTA is more active, the parents give further advise towards the school to improve the quality of school education.

However, there are issues in the relationship between the SMCs and PTAs. According to government officials, some schools have conflicts between the two organizations, when the PTA has too much power against the school management affairs. As indicated above, the PTAs are the main contributors for the financial affairs of UPE primary school. This allows the PTA to have a say towards school education even though they are not the legalized body of the education service delivery.

- *The roles of parents*

The researcher has found out that most of the parents that were interviewed are trying their best to get involved in school education. Especially the parents who were inside the PTA organization, were obviously more active than parents who did not belong to the PTA. The active parents were trying to engage other parents by sensitizing them. The parents' main role in being involved in school education was to participate in school

meetings that were informed by the SMCs and PTAs. Another major role of the parents was to financially contribute towards school education, by compensating the lack of UPE funds in the school. The parents pay the money through the PTA. Furthermore, some parents volunteered to make additional school buildings to compensate the lack of classrooms (Photo 2). This building has allowed more pupils to enroll in the school.

However, according to the interview from parents, the majority of the parents still have passive attitudes towards school education. The main reasons were the poverty of the family, lack of understanding from parents and illiteracy of parents.

One PTA member has said

*Due to the status of education, there is a lack of participation from parents. Especially the woman feels the difficulty. They cannot produce enough which can generate enough incomes to get involved in education for their children
(Male member of PTA Committee, interviewed by the researcher on 9/24/2019).*

In addition, many of the parents think that because of the UPE policy, school education is completely free. This consideration by parents makes them think that paying the school fees is unnecessary. However, the reality is that there is not enough money to maintain school affairs and it is essential for them to pay those fees.

Photo 2: Classroom built by parents



5. Discussions

The research findings written above mainly revealed the roles of SMCs, PTAs, and parents in Ugandan primary education. One of the important findings is that the PTA has a major influence on the school management affairs and the SMC organization itself. Without the PTA, the Ugandan primary school would not work out financially, and they are also the main actors of engaging parents to the school. While the Education Act 2008 outlawed the PTA and mandated the SMC as the legal body of education service delivery, it is obvious that the PTA has the power to manage the schools. It may be important for the government to take into account this fact and officially state the roles of SMCs and PTAs in the education law. This is because of some of the roles of SMC and PTA overlap, which may cause confusion and conflicts between the two organizations. In addition, it is also important to keep in mind about the socio-economic status of the parents in the area. The interview towards parents revealed that families who are vulnerable have difficulty in being involved in school education. Furthermore, parents who themselves did not receive education, have a tendency to undervalue the importance of education for their children. It is vital for the SMCs and PTAs to try to sensitize these parents and also support them financially to allow the children to go to school.

6. Conclusions

From the perspective from SDGs, this research contributes to Goal #4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and Goal #16, “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. Regarding both of the goals, it is important to first have comprehensive involvement towards the whole community in the school. The parents who are actively involved in school education are usually members of the School Management Committees and PTA meaning that they have higher socio-economic status than normal parents. It would be important for those people to try to sensitize the other parents to get more engaged in school education. Throughout the field research, many of the respondents insisted that the PTA has a major role in attracting parents. It might be important to empower the PTA in all of the schools in Uganda to compensate the SMC’s legal role to manage school affairs. Furthermore, it would be vital to collect the opinions from weaker families to take into account about their considerations and reflect it towards the school level policy in each primary school.

In addition, engaging more parents to school has a possibility of increasing children to go to school. In some schools, parents have volunteered to build new classrooms to accommodate more children around the community. During the interview, many parents implied that they would like to send their children to a school that has good infrastructure and high-quality education. The parents could become an important stakeholder to contribute to this and it would be necessary for them to get involved more in school education.

In conclusion, this research has revealed the roles of SMCs, PTAs, and parents towards school education in primary schools at Wakiso and Bushenyi districts. Throughout the field research, the researcher has found out the contribution of these actors and the issues inside them. However, this report itself has only presented the preliminary findings from the field research. The researcher is planning to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the data that was collected by reviewing the minutes of the SMC and PTA meetings, and doing furthermore literature review to have a thorough understanding of the situation of parental involvement towards primary education.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Osamu Saito, Dr. Natsuko Imai, and Ms. Rieko Sato who have organized this excellent Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa. I really appreciate the United Nations University for giving me the opportunity to conduct my field research in Uganda. Without their thorough support, it would have been very difficult to accomplish it. I would also like to express gratitude towards my supervisor at Makerere University, Dr. James Wokadala, for his generous support and valuable advice throughout the whole period of the programme. Furthermore, my appreciation goes to Mr. John Tumwine, and Mr. Nicholas for supporting me during my field research at the primary schools. Lastly my appreciation goes to my academic advisor in Kobe University, Prof. Keiichi Ogawa for his kind and continuous support.

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III. Reflection to the GLTP in Africa

One of the reasons that I have gone on to master's program is because I am pursuing to work in the development area and contribute towards the improvement of developing country's education in the future. To achieve this goal, I truly think that it would be important to understand about the local people's point of view. As a researcher, I would like to solve the educational issues in developing countries by not relying only on secondary data, but collecting information at the field and have a sense of ownership to solve the issues. For these reasons, I have applied for the GLTP, because I thought this program would give me the opportunity to achieve my future goal. The program was very attractive since I could receive academic and financial support throughout my field research in Uganda.

During my field research in Uganda, I was able to visit 8 government-aided primary schools in Wakiso and Bushenyi districts. In order to visit and conduct my research at those schools, I had to visit the district education office to receive permission from them. This experience was also valuable for me because I could have hands-on experience on how to make appointments in Uganda and understand what I should be careful when making appointments. At the end of my stay in Uganda, I was able to go to the office and negotiate by myself with the government officers who work at the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Conducting interviews with the local people was also a valuable experience for me because I have realized what I should be careful when asking for translation and also how I should ask the questions so the people can understand what I was asking for. It is very important to listen to them carefully and keep eye contact with them so they can feel comfortable when answering to my questions. In addition, I was able to visit two areas in Uganda and understand the differences between them, because of support from Dr. James Wokodala and his research assistants. This has allowed me to broaden my understanding of Uganda by looking at many types of primary schools.

I was also able to interview government officials which were a great experience too, because I have gained an understanding about how they implement the policies at the national level and district level. By reviewing the National Development Plan and the Education Act 2008, I have gained a comprehensive view of how the education service is delivered in Uganda.

The challenges I have felt during my field research in Uganda was unexpected troubles I had during the research. One of the troubles I had was revising my questionnaires after I have already visited some schools in Wakiso district. At first, I felt really anxious about it, but I tried to think positively about what I can do in the remaining time. As a master's student that has just started doing field research, there were many difficulties and limitation related to my knowledge and experience, but this field research experience gave me the opportunity to think calmly and consider what I should do to improve the situation when some kind of problem happens. This experience has helped me in Japan too, whenever I face difficulties in managing my course work and thesis out of the busy schedule.

Furthermore, networking and coordination skills were difficult to obtain because there were cultural barriers that were hard for me to accept, especially at the beginning of my research. The way of getting appointments, their perceptions towards time or contacting them were totally different from Japan, so I had some trouble at first. However, I always focused on communicating with them deeply so I wouldn't feel too stressed out about it. It is always important to understand the local people's culture and try to adapt to the environment.

Based on the experiences that I have written, I would like to use this field research experience to first enhance my thesis's quality. It is important for me to organize the valuable data I have obtained in the field research and conduct an in-depth analysis of it. I am planning to present my findings in academic conferences, and I am hoping that my research can contribute towards the improvement of primary

education in Uganda. In addition, I would like to share my data and analysis with my supervisor in Uganda and also disseminate my findings to the local Ugandan people too if possible. One of my goals is to become an education specialist in the developing field, so I assume that these research skills are very important for my future career.

Furthermore, my goal is to work for developing countries, so I would like to use this experience as a basis to accomplish that. I believe that hands-on experience in developing countries would be a key to obtain a job in those areas. Thus, I would like to emphasize the experience that I acquired as a participant in the GLTP. Based on the things that I have learned during the GLTP, I would like to challenge myself to more difficult opportunities such as applying for international organizations in the near future.

Lastly, I would like to send a message towards the students who may go to Africa for field research, **“Research helps people”**. This is a message that I have received from my research assistant in Uganda. I felt that this message is really important and that you have to think about this when you study about international cooperation. I am just a beginner in research, but in my humble opinion, I think that you have to always keep in mind about the people who you are trying to help. That is why I recommend anyone who is interesting in doing research in Africa, to actually go to the field to have an in-depth understanding of the area.



Photo 3: Interview at primary school with head teacher and SMC member



Photo 4: Interview towards SMC members



Photo 5: Photo with my assistant



Photo 6: Having dinner with my assistant