

Research Article

Influence of System of Education on Cross-Border Secondary Education: A Case of Kenya and Uganda

V. O. Makanda*, J. N. Kindiki, J. O. Jowi

Department of Education, Moi University, Kenya

*Corresponding author's e-mail: makanda@yahoo.com

Abstract

In East Africa, students have been crossing over to Uganda for secondary education in recent years at an alarming rate making Kenya lose billions of shilling in terms of costs. This is particularly evidenced in Busia border where there has been cross border secondary education going on with, mostly, Kenyan students crossing over to Ugandan side to access education. This has been going on despite government attempts to restructure the 8-4-4 curriculum by reducing the subjects from 35 to 7 examinable ones from 2003 at Form Four level. Equally, the government has attempted to increase access by introducing free secondary education and improved financing through CDF, infrastructure, pockets of poverty, laboratory funds, CBF among others but still, Kenyan students are crossing over to Uganda at Busia Border for Secondary education with very few Ugandans crossing to Kenya. Globally, Cross-border education has been known to be taking place at higher education levels between countries and ones but not to a comparable extent at primary and secondary school levels. The developing countries have broad acceptance that Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) can provide much-needed quality education in professional disciplines and emerging specialization and to an extent address, in some countries, the problem of access. Therefore, there was an urgent need to establish the socio-economic determining factors which had in effect promoted cross-border secondary education particularly from Kenya to Uganda and why this was so. In this study, systems of education have been considered.

Keywords: Influence; Kenya; Education System; Uganda; Cross-Border.

Introduction

There are different education systems in the world. In England, as it is in Wales and Scotland. British children are required by law to have an education until they are 16 years old [1]. The act that makes education compulsory is section 7 of the 1996 Act that states: "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable" to his, age ability and aptitude and to any special education needs e may have either by regular attendance of school or otherwise. "The structure is that primary education takes 5-11 years, secondary 12-16, where GCSE exams are done and 2 years for 'A' level. India and USA do have more or less the same system where in India, education structured into 4 levels: Primary Education, Secondary Education, Senior Secondary Education (Equivalent to A level in Britain) and higher education while in United States, though education system varies from one state to another, basically, it is divided into 3

levels: Elementary school, middle school (sometimes called Junior High School), and high school (sometimes referred to as senior Secondary Education). After the three levels, there is post-secondary level better known as "college" in the USA [2].

In 1981, a decision was made in Kenya [3] to move from the 7-4-2-3 nomenclature to the 8-4-4 school system, as a result of proposal made in the report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University of Kenya [4]. It recommended the restricting of the whole education system from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4, that is, 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary and minimum 4 years for university education. There were various reasons that were cited as rationale for the implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education. The main one was the challenge to national development and participation of the youth in that development. It was realized that the previous system of education, which was an inheritance from colonial time did not respond adequately to the

needs of the country and its people- the previous curriculum was not practically oriented, it was theoretical and as a result school leavers would be qualified only to take white collar jobs [5] and [6]. Could it be because of 8-4-4 failures that students and parents are opting for cross-border secondary education?

In [7] in their study on planning and economics of education noted that system of education was one of the important but neglected aspect when considering cross border education. They note that attractive systems of education were those that presented a way to attain education smoothly in a manner that is well structured and builds on the quality of education [8]. However, while the study noted that the Uganda system of education was considered superior [9], the study did not consider whether such a system was a social determinant to cross border education, especially from Kenya to Uganda [10].

Research methodology

Research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of the data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purposes with the economy, [12]. In this study, two research designs were adopted; descriptive survey research design and correlation research design. Descriptive Survey Design is defined by [13] as a research method that involves asking a large group of people questions about a particular issue at hand. In this design, the researcher attempted to study the respondents in their natural setting.

In [1] they define this design as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population in respect to one or more variables. This design was appropriate in this study in that it promoted objectivity and reduced biasness in the study. It enabled the researcher to collect data from a wide population using questionnaires and allows research to use a sample from the population and make generalizations to the entire population with respect to the problem of the study. It also aided quick data collection in a relatively short time, and was also cheap.

Correlational Research Design is highly recommended for research in education. It is considered suitable for studies where random assignments of subjects to treatment and manipulative control of the independent

variables are not possible. It was appropriate as it was used to establish the degree of relationship between socio-economic determinants and cross border education. So while descriptive survey was used describe the events involved in socio-economic determinants to cross border education from Kenya to Uganda correlational research design was used to establish the degree of relationship between socio-economic determinants and cross border education.

Results and discussion

The system of education has been argued by [7] to have an influence on whether students will cross the border to study. As a result, the second objective of this study was to establish the effect of system of education on cross-border secondary education. The result is shown in figure 1 and table 1 from the questionnaires and narrative from the interview schedule with the DEOs.

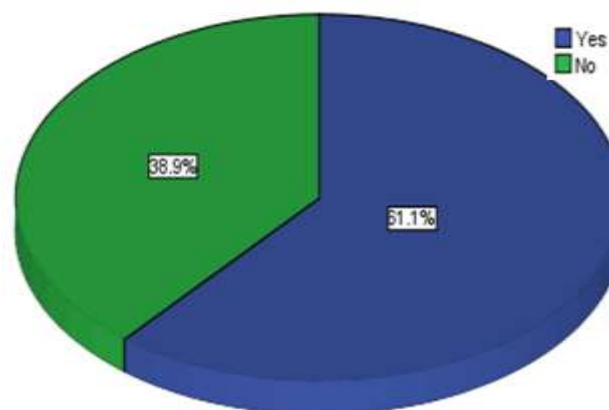


Figure 1. Whether Guardian Attended Ugandan Education System

From Figure 1 majority of guardians at 61.1% said yes to whether the guardian had attended the Ugandan education system. This gives an implication that majority of guardians who took their charges to secondary schools across border had attended the same system themselves. According to [5], change of education system from seven years of primary schooling, 6 years of secondary before proceeding to the University to 8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary then one would proceed to university was not welcomed by some Kenyan parents who had gone through the former education system which they believe is far much better. Such parents opt to take their children to Uganda for education instead since Uganda has not changed her education system.

It is clear from table 1 that majority of parents and students at 63.1% agreed that the Ugandan system of education was more attractive to them than the Kenyan system. Only, 31.2% disagreed and 5.7% were undecided. This is an indication that the respondents preferred the Ugandan system of education more than the Kenyan one and could be the reason for popularity of cross-border education migration to Uganda secondary schools. Despite the good intensions for the Kenyan system of education

(8-4-4) has been dogged by a number of problems right from start. The major one is that of cost. The government spent 3,000 million Kenya shilling for provision of extra standard eight class rooms, equipments were lacking and people associated vocational education to colonial education that spread agriculture alongside vocational training viewed by many as inferior [7]. The Ugandan System on the other hand has shown a consistency in its efficacy that it has become more attractive [4].

Table 1. Influence of System of Education on Cross-Border Secondary Education

| | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Total | |
|---|-------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| The Ugandan system of education is more attractive to me than the Kenyan system | 188 | 63.1% | 17 | 5.7% | 93 | 31.2% | 298 | 100% |
| The Ugandan system allows for proper progressive education than the Kenyan system | 186 | 62.4% | 19 | 6.4% | 93 | 31.2% | 298 | 100% |
| In my opinion, the Ugandan system is attractive because I used it | 185 | 62.1% | 19 | 6.4% | 94 | 31.5% | 298 | 100% |
| The Ugandan system allows for suitable and efficient full-time education suitable for age, ability and aptitude | 193 | 64.8% | 17 | 5.7% | 88 | 29.5% | 298 | 100% |
| The Ugandan system is therefore a major determinant for cross-border education from Kenya to Uganda | 193 | 64.8% | 20 | 6.7% | 84 | 28.2% | 298 | 100% |

When asked if the Ugandan system allowed for proper progressive education than the Kenyan system, 62.4% said yes, 31.2% said no and 6.4% said not sure. This implies a favorable consistency and efficacy of the Ugandan system of education. In [11] he argues that notwithstanding the challenges of Ugandan system, secondary education in Uganda is the best compared to other countries especially in East Africa where there is no A level education like Kenya because it emphasizes talent and comprehensive, albeit unique student capabilities than the Kenyan system that is more examination oriented.

On whether in the respondents opinion, the Ugandan system was attractive because the

guardians used it 62.1% agreed, 31.5% disagreed and 6.4% were neutral. This gives the indication that the popularity of cross border education was also determined by the guardians' former interaction with the same system of education. This connection was spoken of by [6] who when arguing on cross-border education at the tertiary level said that most of the students attending foreign schools got attracted to them partly because a mentor, parent or guardian had a former interaction with the said foreign schools. When asked if the Ugandan system allowed for suitable and efficient full-time education suitable for age, ability and aptitude, 64.8% agreed, 29.5% disagreed and 5.7% were undecided. This gives an implication of an appreciation of the quality of education in a Ugandan system. There

were various reasons that were cited as rationale for the implementation of the 8-4-4 system of Kenyan education. The main one was the challenge to national development and participation of the youth in that development. It was realized that the previous system of education, which was an inheritance from colonial time did not respond adequately to the needs of the country and its people- the previous curriculum was not practically oriented, it was theoretical and as a result school leavers would be qualified only to take white collar jobs [3]. However, [8] argues that the Ugandan system also seeks to bring out all rounded individuals something that the Kenyan system has been unable to do and that's why there is effort to change the Kenyan system.

Lastly, when asked if the Ugandan system was therefore a major determinant for cross-border education from Kenya to Uganda, 64.8% agreed, 28.2% disagreed and 6.7% were undecided. This implies that an education system of education plays a pivotal role in determining and promoting cross-border education. This is agreed to in literature [7] that argues that a system of education drives the need to have an efficient, quality and promotion of an all rounded individual.

Conclusions

Majority of guardians of students who have crossed the border for education had attended the Ugandan education system. They were of the opinion that the Ugandan system of education was more attractive to them than the Kenyan system and that the Ugandan system allowed for proper progressive education than the Kenyan system. The respondents opined that, the Ugandan system was attractive because the guardians used it. The Ugandan system allowed for suitable and efficient full-time education suitable for age, ability and aptitude, and lastly, Ugandan system was therefore a major determinant for cross-border education from Kenya to Uganda. This result is consistent with among other literature that argues that the fact that the Ugandan system is similar to most in the rest of the world makes it pretty attractive. It can therefore be concluded that system of education is a significant socio-economic determinant to cross-border secondary education.

Conflicts of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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