

A Primary Analysis of the Questionnaire Survey on Capitation Grant in Cape Coast, Ghana¹

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1. Background

Universalization of basic education with equity is one of urgent priority issues in Africa. The use of capitation grant as a financial means is expected to be effective in advancing this policy objective. The present research focuses on the capitation grant and analyzes its effects on education quality with particular reference to perceptions of teachers and head teachers who are primarily involved with the scheme.

The capitation grant in Ghana under this research has been distributed to primary schools as their operating budget and is allocated based on the number of enrolled pupils. The government of Ghana abolished all school-related fees in 2004, and the Ministry of Education introduced the capitation grant to compensate for the financial loss of schools due to the fee abolition and to mitigate the possible damage on the school management.

This research discusses the effects of policy intents of the capitation grant at the school level, building on the preliminary analysis (Okamura and Yoshida 2010). It targets the school as a main stage of education reform by examining how the teachers and head teachers perceive the policy intents of the grant scheme, how they react on it, and what challenges they face on the ground. Listening to these real voices in the field, the research expects to identify the gap between the policy intents and the reality on the ground in the case of reform-oriented education development and to offer some policy implications.

The author visited Ghana twice in November 2009 and in May 2010, each for five days, and in cooperation with the Center for Research in Primary Education Quality (CRIPEQ), University of Cape Coast, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Target schools were selected by using as criteria the local peculiarity and school performance (based on Basic Education Certificate Examination). In total, 40 schools were selected, of which 19 are located in the city, 21 in rural areas while 18 schools have relatively high educational performance, and 22 schools have performance difficulties. The questionnaire forms were administered to 40 head teachers and 80 teachers (2 in each school), totaling 120 during May – July in 2010. The forms were developed by the core research members² making adjustments by incorporating the pre-test

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results, and the CRIPEQ staff members visited each target school and filled the form. It covers the questions on the effects that the capitation grant and School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) have on school education quality, as perceptions of teachers and head teachers.

In this survey the quality of education was examined from the two aspects: school learning environment and school management, as these two factors interact each other and are hypothetically contribute to academic achievement of pupils (see Fleisch 2007, Marzano 2007, Mingat 2007, and Spinks 2007). The two factors were subdivided and were included in question items. Sub-items of the former “school learning environment” includes teaching and learning materials, repair of school facilities (physical inputs), learning instructions and lessons (contents inputs), whereas the latter “school management” includes interpersonal relationship inside and outside school, leadership of head teacher, and school autonomy.

About three-quarters of the targeted teachers had not receive any training on the Capitation Grant or SPIP by Ghana Education Service which is the scheme implementing agency (Table 1), while most of the head teachers under the survey had received certain training (Table 2).

Table 1. Training Status of Teachers

Have you received any of the following training?		
	Yes	No
Leadership skills	24	76
Financial management	21	79
Record keeping	26	74

(Numbers are percentage of responses, where n=80)

Table 2. Training Status of Head Teachers

Have you received any of the following training?		
	Yes	No
Leadership skills	90	10
Financial management	85	15
Record keeping	90	10

(Numbers are percentage of responses, where n=40)

2. Perception of Teachers Concerning the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP on Each Factor

2.1 School Learning Environment

Teachers generally appreciate positive effects of the capitation grant and SPIP on learning environment (Table 3). For the effects, they attribute to the overall increase in school resources and resulting allocation to specific items.

Table 3. Teachers Perception on the Spending Purpose of the Capitation Grant

Q1T. Has Capitation Grant been used for the following? If yes, to what extent?

	No	Yes	
		Very much	But not much
(a) Minor repair	3	59	39
(b) Stationary	4	73	24
(c) Health and sanitation	4	50	46
(d) Teaching materials for teachers	0	68	33
(e) Learning materials for pupils	10	43	48
(f) Supplementary books for pupils	31	21	48
(g) Terminal examination costs	1	65	34
(h) School based INSET for teachers	13	48	40
(i) Sports	0	75	25
(j) Culture	13	54	34
(k) Increased actual teaching hours	68	14	19
(l) Increased motivation to teach	56	19	25
(m) More homework given by teacher	24	51	25
(n) Increasing enrollment	5	79	16
(o) Improving pupils attendance	6	65	29

(Figures are percentage of responses)

Note. Figures do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 4. Reasons for Teachers Responses on the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP

Q2T. If spending amount of some items in Q1T has increased, what do you think is the main reason that has made it possible? (percentage of responses)

Increased overall amount of money	53
Change of priority due to SPIP	38
Others	6
Do not know	4

The physical inputs for the school learning environment including teaching and learning materials, minor repairs and stationary, but excluding supplementary books for pupils have received a significant amount of budget by the capitation grant (items a, b, d, e, f of Table 3). In particular, all the respondents recognized the significant spending on teaching materials for teachers (item d), of whom 68 percent of teachers marked “yes, very much”. The positive perception is somewhat lower for learning materials for pupils (item e), while more than 30 percent of teachers found no effect on the spending for supplementary books for pupils (item f).

The capitation grant has been used for costs to which parents were contributing earlier, such as terminal examination costs (item g), sports and cultural activities (items i and j). Significant proportion of teachers perceive (79 percent response for “very much”) that the capitation grant is being used for increasing enrollment (item n) and improving attendance (item o), these coinciding with the primary policy objectives of introducing the grant.

However, sub-items concerning teachers perception and behavior for classroom instruction have not been much influenced by the capitation grant. As much as 68 percent of teachers

responded that the grant had no effect on increasing actual teaching hours (item k) and similarly 56 percent of teachers did not experience increased motivation to teach (item l). It is implied that an increased school budget under its own discretion does not automatically lead to teachers' behavioral or perception changes that are related directly to teaching.

Meanwhile, head teachers were asked about the use of capitation grant. Usually, the purposes of the grant use are first discussed between head teacher and teachers of the school concerned before they consult School Management Committee for its approval. Therefore, if the opinion of the head teacher on the use of the grant agrees with the perception of teachers on its utility, they will reach consensus fully satisfied. If on the other hand there is a disagreement between them, the gap between the expectation on the side of the head teacher and the utility perceived by the teachers will need to be filled somehow.

Tables 5 and 6 show that in fact their opinions are fairly consistent with each other. For school learning environment, just as the case for teachers, over 90 percent of the head teachers responded that the capitation grant was used for material inputs such as teaching and learning materials for teachers and for pupils, except for supplementary books for pupils (Table 5, a, b, d, e and f). It has become apparent that the expenses for teachers (stationeries =item b and teaching materials for teachers=item d) are primary purposes for using the grant fund – the prevalence rate of “yes, very much” is much higher than for learning materials for students (item e) or supplementary books for pupils (item e).

As for expenses for the terminal examination (item g) and school events (sports and culture = items i and j), more than 90 percent of the head teachers report that the grant has been used for these purposes, exhibiting a similar pattern as was the case with the perception of teachers. The perception rate is also similarly high for enrollment and participation (items n and o).

A slight difference is observed between the responses of teachers and of head teachers for items concerning perceptions and attitudinal changes of teachers. For instance, while 97 percent of head teachers consider that the capitation grant was used for in-service teacher training, 13 percent of teachers feel that it was not used for this purpose (item h of Tables 3 and 5). Meantime, more teachers (56 percent) than head teachers (43 percent) consider that the grant has not been used for motivating teachers (item l). On the other hand, as much as 40 percent of head teachers report that the grant has not been used by teachers for increasing homework, 76 percent of teachers admit that the grant has been used for this purpose, showing a non-negligible variation between them.

The perception of head teachers also implies that the increase in school discretion in the use of resources does not necessarily facilitate the activities that will promote attitudinal or perceptual changes of teachers concerning their classroom instructions. Further investigation is warranted to find out the background from which different perceptions emerge between teachers and head teachers. Such concrete cases are exhibited by the present study.

Table 5. Head Teachers Perception on the Spending Purpose of the Capitation Grant

Q1HT. Has Capitation Grant been used for the following? If yes, to what extent?

	No	Yes	
		Very much	But not much
(a) Minor repair	3	63	35
(b) Stationary	0	70	30
(c) Health and sanitation	3	58	40
(d) Teaching materials for teachers	0	83	18
(e) Learning materials for pupils	8	60	33
(f) Supplementary books for pupils	33	18	50
(g) Terminal examination costs	5	60	35
(h) School based INSET for teachers	3	45	53
(i) Sports	3	80	18
(j) Culture	8	63	30
(k) Increased actual teaching hours	63	8	25
(l) Increased motivation to teach	43	20	38
(m) More homework given by teacher	40	25	35
(n) Increasing enrollment	10	65	25
(o) Improving pupils attendance	8	53	40

(Figures are percentage of responses)

Note. Figures do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6. Reasons for Head Teachers Responses on the Effects of the Capitation Grant

Q2HT. If spending amount of some items in Q1HT has increased, what do you think is the main reason that has made it possible? (percentage of responses)

Increased overall amount of money	40
Change of priority due to SPIP	45
Others	15
Do not know	4

2.2 School Management

The present questionnaire survey touches upon a number of factors concerning school management. These include personal relationships within school and between school and the outside, the leadership of head teacher, and school autonomy.

The personal relationships within school surrounding teachers and head teachers are one of critical factors that influence success or failure of school management. According to the teachers under the present survey, the capitation grant and SPIP have been instrumental in promoting communications within the school. More than 60 percent of teachers perceive that the number has increased of the meetings of School Management Committee that plays a major role in producing the SPIP (Table 7, item B8), and as much as 89 percent of teachers feel that their involvement in decision making and planning for school management has increased (items B10-11). They also perceive that communication between teachers and head teacher has improved as responded by 79 percent of teachers, and 74 teachers also consider that communication between teachers has improved (items B5 and B6, Table 9). A similar pattern is

observed from responses by head teachers: 65 percent of head teachers agree that the number of SMC meetings has increased (item B18, Table 8), and 95 percent of head teachers report that participation of teachers in decision-making concerning school management has increased (item B20-III, Table 8), admitting the effects of the capitation grant and SPIP more strongly than teachers. The surveyed head teachers consider that the communication between teachers has improved (75 percent of the head teachers) and the vertical communication between head teachers and teachers has improved as responded by 81 head teachers. Thus, somewhat more of the positive perceptions by head teachers than by teachers have been reported on the role of capitation grant on school management.

Turning to communication outside the school, responses from teachers are generally favorable: 79 percent of teachers consider that the participation of parents and the community has increased in planning and making decisions on school management (Table 7, item B10-III), 55 percent feel that the number of meetings with PTA has increased (item B9), and 60 percent perceive that the attitude of parents to school has favorably changed the attitude of children (item B11). At the same time, a significant proportion of teachers consider that these have not changed: falling on this group are 40 percent of teachers on the number of meetings between PTA and teachers, and 40 percent on the parental attitude changing children's attitude favorably. Similarly, 83 percent of head teachers consider that the participation of parents and the community in planning and decision-making on school management has increased (Table 8, item B20-III), 53 percent feel the number of meeting between PTA and teachers has increased (item 19), and 66 percent think that the attitude of parents has favorably influenced the attitude of children (item B21, Table 8).

The foregoing arguments suggest that the capitation grant and SPIP have more strongly improved communication within school than communication between school and outside stakeholders.

Regarding the impacts on the leadership of head teachers, perceptions of both head teachers and teachers show a similar pattern: 49 percent of teachers reported that the capitation grant and SPIP made major positive effects, while 48 percent of head teachers shared their perception (Table 7, item 10-I and Table 8, item 20-I). By including those who feel moderate effects, over 80 percent of both head teachers and teachers respectively acknowledge the positive effects of the capitation grant on the head teachers' leadership.

Table 7. Teachers Perceptions on the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP on School Management

Has the introduction of Capitation Grant and SPIP influenced on the following? (percentage)				
	Yes, very much	Yes, but not much	No change	Don't know
B.8: The number of meetings of SMC	25	36	34	5
B.9: The number of meetings with PTA	24	31	44	1
B.10-I: Increased head teacher leadership in planning and decision-making	49	38	13	1
B.10-II: More involvement of teachers in planning and decision-making	59	30	11	0
B.10-III: More involvement of parents and community in planning and decision-making	24	55	19	3
B.11: Positively changed parents' attitude to their children's school	26	34	40	0

Table 8. Head Teachers Perceptions on the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP on School Management

Has the introduction of Capitation Grant and SPIP influenced on the following? (percentage)				
	Yes, very much	Yes, but not much	No change	Don't know
B.18: The number of meetings of SMC	40	25	35	0
B.19: The number of meetings with PTA	30	23	48	0
B.20-I: Increased head teacher leadership in planning and decision-making	48	38	15	0
B.20-II: More involvement of teachers in planning and decision-making	80	15	5	0
B.20-III: More involvement of parents and community in planning and decision-making	45	38	18	0
B.21: Positively changed parents' attitude to their children's school	38	28	35	0

With regard to the school autonomy, the questionnaire inquired whether the capitation grant and SPIP have helped strengthen school autonomy – discretion in the use of funds available to school. A similar proportion of teachers and head teachers responded that they helped very much (37.5 percent of teachers and 40 percent of head teachers), but a visible difference is observed for those who did not see any change – 15 percent of teachers versus 32.5 percent of head teachers (item B4, Table 9 and item B14, Table 10). The school autonomy seems to have different meanings to teachers and head teachers.

Table 9. Teachers Perceptions on the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP on School Learning Environment and Outcomes

Has the introduction of Capitation Grant and SPIP influenced on the following? (percentage)				
	Yes, very much	Yes, but not much	No change	Yes, but not by CG or SPIP
B.3: Teaching and learning conditions	36.3	50.0	8.8	5.0
B.4: School autonomy (use of funds)	37.5	45.0	15.0	2.5
B.5: Communication among classroom teachers	40.0	33.8	21.3	5.0
B.6: Communication between head teacher and classroom teachers	50.0	28.8	16.3	5.0
B.7: Pupils' learning achievement	18.8	63.8	8.8	8.8

Table 10. Head Teachers Perceptions on the Effects of the Capitation Grant and SPIP on School Learning Environment and Outcomes

Has the introduction of Capitation Grant and SPIP influenced on the following? (percentage)				
	Yes, very much	Yes, but not much	No change	Yes, but not by CG or SPIP
B.13: Teaching and learning conditions	52.5	42.5	2.5	2.5
B.14: School autonomy (use of funds)	40.0	27.5	32.5	0.0
B.15: Communication between head teacher and classroom teachers	52.5	27.5	17.5	2.5
B.16: Communication among classroom teachers	50.0	25.0	17.5	7.5
B.17: Pupils' learning achievement	50.0	40.0	7.5	2.5

2.3 Learning Achievement

Next we examine the learning achievement that is the outcome of preceding arguments on learning environment and school management. First we asked the basis on which teachers and head teachers consider the learning achievement (Tables 11 and 12). Results of test and examination were taken up by 29 percent of teachers, classroom interactions by 35 percent, and other teachers raised others as measurement of learning achievement. These are listed in Table 13. These 'others' range from changed pupil behavior (more regular attendance:3), improved learning environment (2 and 5), factors related to teachers (their involvement in decision making:1, hard working:7, better use of instructional time:8), and the roles of community and parents (6, 9). It would be interesting to examine by further perusal the concept of learning achievement in Ghana, as this variation possibly reflects the fact that teachers do not have established common understanding on its meaning.

The same question received somewhat different responses from head teachers: 40 percent of them raised test and examination results (as compared to 29 percent by teachers), 34 percent attributed to classroom interaction, followed by reports from teachers (26 percent). Their basis of judgment is thus not uniform and different factors seem to affect their perception.

Table 11. The Basis of Teachers' Judgment of Learning Achievement (B7-2)

Test and examination results	29
Classroom interaction	35
Others	36

Table 12. The Basis of Head Teachers' Judgment of Learning Achievement (B17-2)

Test and examination results	40
Classroom interaction	34
Report from teachers	26

Table 13. The Other Bases of Teachers' Judgment of Learning Achievement

1. Involvement in school planning and the use of capitation grant (1)
2. Sports (1)
3. Improvement of pupils' attendance (2)
4. Personal experiences (1)
5. Increase in the available teaching and learning materials (1)
6. Some parents urged their wards to work very hard in school and at home (1)
7. Hardworking of teachers (1)
8. Better use of instructional time (1)
9. Intervention of PTA (1)

The extent to which learning achievement has improved as a result of introducing the capitation grant and SPIP is reported in items B7, Table 9 and B17, Table 10. Over 80 percent of teachers, although to a different extent, perceive that positive effects are found on learning achievement, of which one-third felt much improvement (19 percent of all the teachers), the other two-thirds rated that the improvement was not significant and 9 percent of teachers did not find any improvement. On the other hand, positive responses (90 percent) are somewhat higher than those by teachers, but interestingly, as much as 50 percent of head teachers consider that the improvement was significant (as against 19 percent of teachers). Meantime, on factors other than the capitation grant and SPIP that have contributed to improved learning achievement, 9 percent of teachers raised better availability of teaching and learning materials (without attributing it to the capitation grant or SPIP), hard working of teachers and school feeding program.

Although confirming the direct effect of the capitation grant and SPIP on learning achievement is beyond the scope of the analysis of this questionnaire survey, most teachers and head teachers feel their positive effects, and head teachers positive perception is stronger.

Both teachers and head teachers consider test and examination results as well as classroom interactions are important factors for learning achievement. A cross-tabulation analysis exhibits this point more clearly as presented in Table 14. This demonstrates that teachers consider changes in classroom environment, other than improvement in test and exam results, is equally an important measure of learning achievement. This pattern may come from the perception of teachers that affective aspects of pupils (interest, motivation, attitude, interactions with other pupils/friends) are of important concern in determining learning achievement. As discussed in section 2.1, participation of teachers in making decisions on the use of the capitation grant

may not have a strong influence on their motivation or commitment, but Table 14 does suggest, according to perception of teachers, that the capitation grant and SPIP can make positive effects on classroom environment or test/examination results, eventually leading to learning achievement.

Table 14. A Cross-Tabulation of Teachers Perceptions on Learning Achievement and Their Basis of Judgment

B.7-2 The Basis of Teachers' Judgment of Learning Achievement	B7. After the introduction of Capitation Grant and SPIP, pupils' <i>learning achievement</i> in general has improved		
	Yes	No	Not change
Test and examination results	87%	9%	4%
Classroom interaction	78%	14%	8%

3. Effects of the Capitation Grant on Quality of Education

The present survey inquired teachers and head teachers of their perceived meaning of the quality of education, whether the capitation grant has had any effects or not, and if so what kind of effect, as an open question.

The question was posed to teachers and head teachers: “In what areas do you think the introduction of Capitation Grant has *improved quality* of education in your school?” On this, 35 percent of teachers and head teachers (put together) raised improved availability of teaching and learning materials – consistent with their responses to the usefulness of the grant as seen in Table 3. Next they raised the increase in enrollment (14 percent), and improvement in attendance (10 percent). These are followed by responses concerning school management and educational activities – improvement of school management (8 percent), burden from examination eased (7 percent), and improved learning process (5 percent). These can be grouped in 11 categories (Table 15). As discussed in the section 2.3, they consider test and examination results and classroom interactions as important determinants of their judgment of learning achievement. From responses to this question also it is observed that their concept of education quality comprises, the interactions between teachers and pupils and other inputs that will enable this – availability of teaching and learning materials and improved school environment, as well as the school management that makes efficient use of them possible.

Their responses also signify that head teachers and teachers clearly understood the objective of introducing the capitation grant – to increase enrollment and strengthen school management (capacity building), and they consider that the grand did have positive effects on these objectives.

On the other hand, there are aspects that the capitation grant did not make impacts on and that also constitute quality of education (Table 16). It is noteworthy that institutional and operational issues of the capitation grant are raised by them. The most frequently cited example

on which the capitation grant has not made an effect is parental understanding, cooperation and contribution (14 %), purchase of educational materials (13 percent), expansion of school facilities and inadequate capacity of teachers to handle a large class that have emerged in response to increased enrollment (13 percent). Their answers to this question also indicate a diverse set of issues that teacher face at the school, including behavior and discipline of pupils, and concrete aspects of school management. In particular, the fact that the lack or weakening of parental understanding and cooperation ranks the top of their concerns implies that this is an essential factor for good quality of education.

Table 15. Areas of Quality of Education that the Capitation Grant Has Improved

Rank	Details	Total responses
1	Purchase of learning materials and equipment, their variety and quantity	96 (35%)
2	Increase in enrollment	39 (14%)
3	Improvement in participation (improved attendance, decreased dropouts, decreased late arrival)	27 (10%)
4, 5	School management (including participation of parents and teachers in decision-making)	23 (8%)
	Minor repairs and school supplies increased	23 (8%)
6	Costs of examination reduced (for pupils and parents)	19 (7%)
7	Improvement in instruction, teaching-learning process	13(5%)
8, 9	Improvement in health and sanitary conditions	11 (4%)
	Changes of pupils (knowledge, learning ability, motivation)	11 (4%)
10	Implementation of in-service teacher training	7 (3%)
11	Purchase of stationary	6 (2%)

Table 16. Areas of Quality of Education that the Capitation Grant Has Not Improved

Rank	Details	Total responses
1	Parental understanding, cooperation and contribution lacking or reduced	27 (14%)
2	Purchase of educational materials (including supplementary materials, library books, sports kit, science laboratory equipment, PC)	25 (13%)
3	Increase in enrollment, and corresponding school expansion and teachers ability not catching up	24 (12%)
4, 5	Minor repairs, improved school supplies (science laboratory)	22 (11%)
	Insufficient amount of the capitation grant, late delivery	21 (11%)
6, 7	School management (parental and teacher involvement in decision-making, head teacher-teacher relations, slow implementation of SPIP, confused management)	18 (9%)
	Increased burden on teachers	17 (9%)
8	Motivation of teachers	15 (8%)
9	Instruction, pupils guidance, teaching and learning process (contents of subject, culture and sports, examination results, discipline and behavior of pupils)	13 (7%)
10-14	INSET and other teacher training	4 (2%)
	Health and sanitary conditions	3 (2%)
	Purchase of stationary	3 (2%)
	Grant can be used for only one of three annual exams, for other two exams parents continue to bear costs	3 (2%)
	Welfare of teachers	3 (2%)

4. Further Analysis of Effects of Capitation Grant and SPIP on Quality of Education

As for the perception of teachers and head teachers concerning the effects of the capitation grant on the quality of education, about a half of items that are positively influenced concern visible aspects such as increased educational materials, increased enrollment and improved attendance. Teaching and learning process and teachers' motivation that probably will have strong influence on pupils learning achievement are relatively less recognized - only the former received 5% of their responses (Table 15), while the latter does not even appear on the table. The first area of quality of education that have not been addressed by the capitation grant is the lack of or insufficient parental understanding and cooperation (14%, Table 16), followed by the purchase of educational materials, insufficient expansion of school capacity or inadequacy of teacher capacity to cope with increased enrollment, and school facilities, these together taking a half of the responses. The trend that emerges from these responses reveals that the amount of the grant has not been sufficient to adequately develop learning environment, and require additional financial inputs so as to meet the demand by teachers for desirable learning environment. Moreover, reference to the role of parental understanding and support is most frequently made, and this is perceived by teachers and head teachers as the most important element of quality of education that is missing at the moment.

This point validates the finding from the interviews with head teachers conducted in the preliminary survey that pointed out weakening roles of community and parents as the negative effect of the capitation grant (Okamura and Yoshida, 2010). Support by the parents at home, such as looking after children's homework and psychological support were emphasized. Economic conditions of the household may compel children to work and earn income. The absence, in the community, of a role model for pupils was also raised. The present study has also revealed a point that the severity of socio-economic environment surrounding school and pupils influence parental attitudes toward pupils learning, and subsequently affects learning environment for pupils unfavorably.

In the preliminary interview survey, the appropriateness of teaching and learning process was first referred to by head teachers as aspects of quality of education. They mentioned sufficient educational materials, instructional time and study hours at home as concrete contents of the process, and they explained that the capitation grant had been used for these purposes. These findings have been reconfirmed by the present questionnaire survey. As the second aspect, they raised the importance of teachers who could perform well with improved inputs made available by the grant. This requires opportunities for training to improve the instructional capacity of teachers, but the extent of using the grand for this purpose differed depending on the level of commitment of head teachers. This point is also observed from the present survey results. Only 7 responses were given on the increase in INSET as a result of the capitation grant (Table 15), while only 4 respondents indicated their concern to it by making reference to it as not influenced by the capitation grant (Table 16). This signifies that head teachers and teachers

give priority to improving physical learning environment such as educational materials and school supplies and other material inputs as means for improving quality of education.

The study of Darko *et al.* (2009) found that the capitation grant did not have direct effects on learning improvement (as measured by the pass rate of Basic Education Completion Certificate), and the use of the grant for teacher training, textbook and learning materials for pupils have certain contribution to improved pupil learning. This study did not address subject teaching or instruction to pupils by teachers that are deemed important for improving learning ability, and accordingly the effect of the capitation grant on these aspects remains target for a further research. Our survey has found that the capitation grant has not been directly influencing comprehensive motivation of teachers as could be seen by better attitude of teachers to teaching or improved teaching skills (section 2.1). But if, as perceived by teachers, financial support to school via the capitation grant has led to improved examination results and classroom environment, and ultimately contributes to improved learning achievement, improving the learning environment physically to start with would enhance teacher motivation to teach and pupils' sense of joy in learning, and thus could strengthen the function of school and help improve learning achievement. Since the capacity of teachers cannot be strengthened overnight, it would be a reasonable policy direction to give a priority to developing learning environment as indirect measures. However, it is easily observed that the present level of financial inputs is inadequate, as demonstrated by the perception that more education materials made available by using the capitation grant are still not sufficient (Tables 15 and 16).

5. Remaining Issues – Concluding Note

The system of capitation grant is to provide an operational budget support to school, not a direct input to pupils or teachers. How it could be useful is a question that hinges on the perception and actions of head teachers, teachers, parents and the community who are key stakeholders in determining the contents of SPIP. Therefore, in order to enhance the effectiveness of financial support through the capitation grant on the quality of education, capacity development of those who use it is essential. The users should involve not only head teachers and teachers, but importantly also parents who have direct responsibility for educating their children. Despite this point being repeatedly raised, the training that has been provided is limited to issues concerning school leadership, financial management, accounting and other matters that concern financial accountability for the use of the grant (Tables 1 and 2).

This survey has shown that perceptions of parents on their role for education are still low, and may even be weakening. To examine why this is so or why head teachers and teachers perceive so must be issues for further study in deepening the discussion on quality of education, considering the significant roles parents have to play.

As to an issue concerning the research method, some responses did not appropriately correspond to the question, although the questionnaire survey was administered face-to-face. Additional perusal of examining question items and use of terms will be required in future. The

authors thank respondents who took time for this survey during their busy work time. Further efforts have to be made not to ask for their lengthy cooperation. A questionnaire form could be more concise and items for multiple-choice need to be carefully considered so that information obtained corresponds to planned analytical methods. A larger sample size would have allowed more in-depth quantitative analysis, resources permitting. These remain major challenges for the authors in pursuing future studies.

Endnote

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