Mixed evidence on low-cost private schools’ impact and an evolving policy landscape: Observations through an equity lens from Kenya

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Photo: GPE
Two RQs today:
1) Why did parents choose LCPS schools over public schools?
2) Did LCPS have bigger impacts on learning than public schools?

Background
- Kenya’s LCPS market
- Tusome’s 1500 LCPS
- Growing focus on LCPS
Poll 1: Why Do Parents Choose LCPS over Public Schools

Why did parents choose LCPS schools over public schools?

– Geographic proximity
– Teaching quality
– School leadership quality
– Teacher helps with learning
– Fees are affordable
– There were no other schools nearby
Parental Perceptions

- My child's teacher is absent
- The school fees are zero
- My child's teacher misses class
- My child's teacher is lazy
- The school fees are low
- This school has corruption
- My child's teacher is well-trained
- Teacher does well preparing lessons
- My child's teacher is a good teacher
- I would put my first born in this school
- I would put my last born in this school
- The teacher is observed in class
- The school has many learning materials
- My child's teacher teaches consistently
- My child learns a lot in school
- My child's teacher is hard-working
- Teacher is interested in my child
- My child is doing their best in school
- The school is a high quality school
- Teacher prepares lessons
- My child is doing their best in school
- The school is a high quality school
- Teacher does well preparing lessons
- My child's teacher is a good teacher
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- The school has many learning materials
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- The school fees are low
- My child's teacher is lazy
- My child's teacher misses class
- The school fees are zero
- My child's teacher is absent

Statement is more like LCPS Statement is more like Public Schools
Yearly Costs of LCPS vs. Public Schools

- Tuition: 1434
- Extra Fees: 940
- Meals: 870

Public:
- 1000
- 2000
- 3000
- 4000
- 5000
- 6000
- 7000
- 8000
- 9000

LCPS:
- 5373
- 1962
- 650
Income Levels of Parents at LCPS vs Public

- Public parents are poorer
- LCPS parents spend up to 30% income per child
- Are LCPS worth it?

LCPS in Kenya
Poll 2: Do LCPS have bigger impacts on learning?

- Do LCPS have bigger impacts on learning than public schools?
  - Yes, otherwise parents wouldn’t spend their money
  - Yes, but it’s a selection effect
  - No, there’s no difference
  - No, low cost private schools are worse
PRIMR Longitudinal Research Design

- Most LCPS research depends on cross-sectional data
- Kenya Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative
- Longitudinal research design with 326 students
  - Baseline – January 2011
  - Midline – October 2011
  - Endline – October 2012
- Longitudinal data allows us to estimate gain scores
- Includes control variables
- Does not deal with the selection effect problem
- Bridge impact study uses a lottery – better design than this PRIMR study
Learning Gains by School Type

Treatment LCPS increased gains significantly.

LCPS did not increase gains.

- Nonword fluency (cwpm): Treatment LCPS increased gains significantly.
- Oral reading fluency (cwpm): Treatment LCPS increased gains significantly.
- Reading comprehension (% correct): Treatment LCPS increased gains significantly.
Findings

- No difference in gains between public and LCPS (.05 level)
- Interaction between LCPS and the PRIMR treatment
- Gains were larger for treatment LCPS
- LCPS treatment gains were larger than poverty effects
Poverty Effect and PRIMR Effect in Kenya

Oral reading fluency (WCPM)

Poverty Effect  PRIMR Effect

Grade 1  Grade 2  Grade 1  Grade 2  Grade 1  Grade 2  Grade 1  Grade 2
Public  LCPS  Public  LCPS  Public  LCPS
English  Kiswahili  English  Kiswahili  English  Kiswahili  English  Kiswahili

Poverty Effect

PRIMR Effect
Teacher Qualifications by School Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Public Teachers</th>
<th>LCPS Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma/S1</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>23.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's of Education</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Public Teachers** refer to teachers employed by the government.
- **LCPS Teachers** refer to teachers employed by the LCPS (Local Curriculum and Primary System).
Implications

- LCPS gains no larger than public schools
- LCPS are more sensitive to effective interventions
- LCPS are more effective for the poor
- Lower trained LCPS teachers may be more open to interventions
- Quality perceptions inform parental choice
- Experiment with market choice?
- Improve LCPS impact research designs


Thank you

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