ADDIS ABABA CITY GOVERNMENT EDUCATION BUREAU

A Study on the Causes of Grade Repetition in Government Primary Schools of Addis Ababa

Educational Research Assessment and Test Development Core Process

By: HAILU DINKA

May, 2017

Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
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Akronyms

EMIS: Education Management Information System.

ESDP V: Education Sector Development program 5.

OOSVC: Out of School and Vulnerable Children.


IIEP: International Institute of Educational Planning.

PASEC

WB: World Bank.

WASH: Water Sanitation and Hygiene.

SPSS: Statistical Program for Social Scientists.

UNDP HDI: United Nations Development Program- Human Development Index.

TV: Television

ANOVA
CHAPTER ONE

Background
The provision of quality education has become an issue of paramount importance in creating the human capital necessary for the social and economic development of Ethiopia. The quality of human capital is an essential determinant to accelerate the economic development of the nation. It is the quality of education that can produce the human capital that can enhance the social and economic transformation of the nation to middle income level.

Since Ethiopia introduced the new education system (1994) aiming at fixing the age long bottlenecks in education provision, the Addis Ababa city Government Education Bureau has made huge strides in increasing access to education for the dwellers in the capital. Net enrollment has increased at the primary level over the decades of less than 60% to over 90% (EMIS:1995, 2015). The success in provision of education to the needy has been achieved through sustained investments in education: bringing schools closer to children through availing at least one primary school in each Woreda, introducing alternative basic education for the hard to reach groups through the formal delivery system, and expanding adult education for the elderly.

The budget allocation for the education sector has been growing and has reached more than double in 2015 (2.65% in 2003 to 7.26 in 2015). This indicates a commitment by the education bureau to providing quality education by way of availing the necessary resources and infrastructure to all school establishments in the city. At present the focus centers on providing quality education to all citizens in the capital.

In today’s technological age, Education is no more a privilege for the few but it is becoming the right for all. It has shown a quantitative increase more than ever before. However, this quantitative expansion has brought about serious challenges to its quality. Quality does not mean only what goes into schools and input materials, but also what goes in the mental, behavioral or physical change of children. It is important to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits of students in addition to giving emphasis to input factors. Irrespective of the prevalence of relevant policy environment for the expansion of access, quality, relevance and equity in
education, grade retention/repetition has not shown an improvement in Addis Ababa primary schools.

**Statement of the problem**

Currently the rate of school failure has been followed by grade repetition which has become a distinctive characteristic of many primary schools in Addis Ababa (EMIS, 2016). Studies indicate that grade repetition is considered ineffective and inefficient in terms of academic and socio emotional development of students. According to Jameson (2001b) it is not likely to be effective in remediating academic failure/and or behavioral difficulties; rather it is essential to focus on instructional strategies and specific interventions to facilitate the education of children at risk of academic failure. It is further argued that repeaters tend to drop out from school earlier and may end up with behavior problems and low self-esteem (Yamamoto and Byrnes, 1987; Anderson, Jameson, and Whipple, 2005).

According to Brophy (2006) schooling is most efficient if every student moves up a grade every year. Each student who repeats a grade has the economic effect of adding a new student (at that grade and subsequent grades). These results in extra use of resources for educating the same students for more than a year in the same grade, while those who would be promoted to that same grade may lack enough space to be fully accommodated (Jameson, 2001; Shepard and Smith, 1989).

ESDP V (2015/16-2020) provided the framework for education for the next five years. It makes provision for quality education at all levels, while at the same time, stresses serious concerns about repetition and dropout rates in schools. A survey study conducted on out of school and vulnerable children (OOSVC) in Addis Ababa revealed that the repetition rates of primary (5-8) and secondary schools (grades 9 and 11) in 2013/14 was 8.8% and 4.28% respectively (2016). It was estimated that in 2015/16, the rate of repetition was 5.8% for grades 1-7 and 29.3% for grade 8; indicating that 29,302 primary school age children retained in grade 8 causing additional time, human and material resources and others to attend the same grade level again for the coming year.

This is a huge cost that both the City government education bureau and the parents should bear every year to re-educate and re-accommodate repeating children in primary grades. Furthermore,
this, when seen in relation to the demand for quality education and transforming the city to the level of middle income countries, can create an obstacle with scares resources. It is therefore, a high time to investigate the causes of grade retention in primary schools of Addis Ababa; and come up with implementable policy options. The study was guided by the following basic questions.

1. What are the major causes of grade repetition in Addis Ababa primary schools?
2. What is the status of grade repetition across the sub cities?
3. How do learners, teachers, and parents perceive grade repetition?
4. What should be done to minimize grade repetition in primary grades?

**Objectives of the study**
The general objective of the study was to assess the status of grade repetition in Addis Ababa primary schools and suggest remedial actions that could help to reduce grade retention, and thereby enhance education quality. More specifically, the study had the following specific objectives:

   a. To describe the different causes of grade repetition in Addis Ababa schools;
   b. To compare the rate of repetition as per socio economic conditions.
   c. To investigate how teachers, students and parents view grade retention;
   d. To suggest remedial measures to be taken for minimizing grade repetition in government primary schools in Addis Ababa.

**Significance of the Study**
Since the last 15 years, substantial attempts have been made to expand primary and secondary education, and improve access, equity and efficiency in Ethiopia (EMIS, 2016). Now, the emphasis has shifted towards improving quality in all areas and in particular improving efficiency in the system. Therefore, this study provides an indication or feedback of where the efficiency in education stands in relation to the efforts being made so far and the stated targets of the sector plans as indicated by sector development and transformation plans.
**Scope of the study:**
The scope of this study is limited to identifying the causes of repetition in Addis Ababa Primary schools with special emphasis on grades 5-8 government schools. In addition, short and long term intervention plans with an accompanying implementation plan will be proposed to improve the situation.

**Conceptual Framework**
The framework of this study is based on the relationships of the independent variables (school related factors, family related factors and student related factors) and the dependent variable which is outcome variable (grade repetition) in government primary schools of Addis Ababa. These constructs and relationships are presented in Figure 1 would serve as a theoretical framework in order to serve as model of the present study.

![Conceptual Framework Diagram]

**Figure 1**: Conceptual framework of relationship between independent and outcome variables.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Meaning and forms of Grade repetition

Grade repetition became an issue of concern some 100 years back (Jameson, 2001a). According to UNESCO (2006), grade repetition occurs when students begin a new school year in the same grade as the previous year, instead of moving to a higher grade. On the other hand, social or automatic promotion is the act of allowing these same children to continue to the next year of study with the rest of their peer group despite not having met the minimum required standards. In this case, most Anglophone countries, including countries in the Caribbean are more likely to follow patterns of automatic promotion except in very specific circumstances where children have missed a lot of the school year due to illness or other reasons. (UNESCO, 2002, Brophy J. 2006). The authors argue that repetition takes five major forms, depending on the source and reasons for the decision to repeat.

In the first form, decision to repeat a grade may be initiated by the family or the students themselves. In such a case grade retention would be usually voluntary – undertaken willingly because it is viewed as serving the students’ best interests. Another form of grade repetition which is also voluntary occurs when students want to continue schooling but fail to access a school that offers the next grade. As indicated by Brophy (Ibid), this type of grade retention has been practiced by some developing countries.

The second type of grade retention is family driven, in that; it is the family who decides whether or not his child should repeat a grade. When the family perceives that his child spends much of his/her time working rather than attending school, and therefore, did not learn much the previous year, then the school would be asked if the child can repeat the class. It is most common in developing countries in areas where attendance is sporadic because schooling itself is sporadic or because of parents perceptions that the student did not learn much the previous year and therefore ought to repeat the grade.

Repetition due to issues related to language is the third form of retention. When the mother tongue is different from the medium of instruction, that is, where the language used at school differs from the language that many students speak at home it is assumed that repeating early
grades may enable these students to gain fluency in the language of instruction so that they can begin to learn efficiently. Grade repetition for this reason is often family-initiated in developing countries but school-imposed in developed countries (Brophy, 2008).

Repetition can result from academic failure, unsatisfactory progress, insufficient examination marks to advance to the next level of instruction, age, poor attendance or, simply, from lack of local educational opportunities. It may be obligatory or, in the case of some more developed countries, it may require the agreement of the student and/or Parents (UNESCO/IIEP, 1997).

In countries that require the student to pass a standard examination to join the next cycle of the education system, a fourth type of repetition is exercised. It requires students to pass examinations to qualify for secondary or post-secondary education. Students who fail to qualify must drop out of school and enter the workforce, pursue vocational training, or prepare to retake the examination. The latter students might work with tutors, take test preparation classes, or voluntarily repeat the previous grade as is the case in Ethiopian to qualify for secondary education after passing grade 8 regional examinations, where, if otherwise, the student is obliged to repeat in grade 8.

The fifth form of repetition, as mentioned by Brophy (2001) is primarily involuntary, initiated by the school itself rather than students or their families. It is most common in developed countries where school attendance is mandatory until some point in the adolescent years. This type of repetition is also practiced in Ethiopia in which case the student is not allowed to continue his learning but repeat in the same grade the next year if he would be absent from school for more than 20 days in one academic year. Hence, schools sometimes require or at least strongly advise failing students to repeat a grade.

**Trends in Grade repetition**

Grade repetitions have been practical all over the world since the last hundred years (Jameson, 2001a). All nations in the world have promotion and detention policies depending upon their philosophy of education and historical traditions relating, in particular, to the colonial periods in history; where countries which liberated themselves from colonizers either adopted the
promotion policies of their masters or instituted their own policies regarding promotion from one grade to the other or detention in the same class.

According to Vaniscotte (1996), the four general types of European education systems reflect different practices. For example, repetition is not common in Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon systems, while it is practiced in Latin and Mediterranean countries and to a lesser extent in Germanic education systems. As a result of colonial history, these four European approaches have often been used as models for education systems in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Former French colonies in Africa, for example, tend to follow the French tradition whereby repetition is applied to students who fail to make the grade. In North America, education systems also use repetition (Labe, 2010, PASEC, 2010).

According to UNESCO, the rate of repetition has been high in the last decade. In 2010, 32.2 million pupils repeated a grade in primary education globally compared to 34.7 million in 2000. But, over the past decade the number of repeaters decreased by 7%, even though enrolment in primary education increased by 6%. Sub-Saharan Africa still has the highest share – 35% – of the global population of primary education repeaters, but the region has been making steady progress over the last decade (UNESCO, 2012).

It has been reported that Latin America and the Caribbean were the regions with the highest rates of repetition and dropout in the world in that around 29% of all primary school children were repeating where 42% of them were repeaters in the first grade (Psacharopolous, 1992, Schiefelbein, 1992, in Ndaruhutse, Susy2008).

In South and West Asia, the percentage of repeaters across the region remained the same between 2000 and 2010 at about 5%, even though the number of primary education pupils increased with rising enrolment. The situation has been improving in the Latin America and Caribbean region, which accounts for 17% of the world’s primary education repeaters. The regional percentage of repeaters fell from 12% to 8% between 2000 and 2010. In the Arab States, the number of repeaters fell by 14%, while enrolment increased by 18% between 2000 and 2010 (Crahay, 2007; Labe, 2010, Schiefelbein and Wolff, 1992, ).. .
The two most commonly used indicators for measuring repetition are the repetition rate and the percentage of repeaters. The repetition rate represents the proportion of students from a cohort enrolled in a given grade for the reference academic year that will be in the same grade in the following academic year. It is calculated at the end of the academic year and is usually based on administrative data. This indicator can be used to evaluate the internal efficiency of education systems and to project student flows from grade to grade within the education cycle.

The percentage of repeaters measures the extent and pattern of repetition by grade. It is defined as the share of repeaters among the total number of students enrolled in a given grade for a reference academic year. For academic year Y+1, total enrolment in grade X+1 is comprised of new entrants to that grade (students promoted from grade X at the end of academic year Y) and repeaters that exist in grade X+1 (i.e. students enrolled in grade X+1 for a second year or more). The percentage of repeaters is usually calculated at the beginning of the academic year.

**Is Grade Repetition worthwhile?**

Many authors stand against grade repetition while a large number still support it. Studies conducted on the impact of grade repetition on student dropout have demonstrated that students who repeat in a grade are more likely to drop out of school prior to graduation than those who are not (Masson, 1991; Rum Berger, 1987; Tuck, 1989, Shepard & Smith, 1989, Fine, 1989, 1991). In a similar vein, Shepard and Smith (1990) reported that “Dropouts are five times more likely to have repeated a grade than are high school graduates” (p. 86).

Elaborating the shortcomings of grade retention, Trouncing (2006) argues that repetition is the easiest and most visible response to the learning difficulties of certain pupils, but that it is a ‘false thermometer’ of school failure, since a repeating pupil who has encountered learning difficulties is more susceptible to ongoing difficulties, thus stigmatizing these difficulties by making the pupil repeat the year in the same way rather than providing supplementary support to assist the pupil ( in Ndaruhutse, Suzy (2008).

Economically, grade repetition is very expensive for the state and households alike since both private and public costs of schooling increase with the duration of schooling (Andre, p.2010). In Ethiopia, 17% of public resources were wasted in 2001/02 due to repetition (World Bank, 2005b,
p. 33). In Kenya in 1997 education was consuming 55% of the government’s recurrent expenditure. In Lesotho, nearly 30% of all public resources were wasted due to the 21% repetition rate. In Malawi, 60% of public resources were wasted in 2000 at primary level meaning that the government was financing 20 school((Abaci and Odipo, 1997, p. 24, (World Bank, 2005f, pp. 42–43, 3).(World Bank, 2004, pp. 7, 56–7).

Whether or not grade repetition improves the learning achievement of students in the subsequent years of schooling is not yet established. To this effect, various studies indicate that the net effect of grade repetition on the acquisition of knowledge is ambiguous. The psychologists and the pedagogical profession share a widespread view that grade repetition does not improve learning achievement (McCoy and Reynolds, 1999; Holmes, 1989). Eventually, Holmes (1989,) concludes: ‘Average, retained children are worse off than their promoted Counterparts on both personal adjustment and academic outcomes’27’.

Ndaruhuts (2008) summarizes the negative effects of grade repetition as follows. 1) It affects their self-esteem and motivation and can give them the perspective that they are failures or bad students 2) Children repeat the same materials that they have already studied, usually with the same teacher, which can decrease motivation. 3) It does not address the reasons behind low performance so may not improve the performance of children significantly.

On the other hand, there are other researchers who acknowledge the role of grade repetition as it gives another chance for the child to pursue his potential. Repetition is seen by some protagonists as being important and its practice is seen as beneficial under certain conditions: a) where students are falling behind and do not have the expected knowledge of their peers and the necessary knowledge to be promoted to the next cycle; b) if they would benefit from going over the material another time to bring them up to the necessary level where students are immature or very young for their year; c) when an additional year in the same class is viewed as giving them the option to feel more secure and settled; d) where there is a wide variety of ability in a class, e) if believed that it benefits the teacher and the remaining students if the weaker pupils are made to repeat, thus creating a more homogenous year group(UNESCO, 1998a).
On the whole, repetition has negative effects on children’s’ achievement, attendance record, personal adjustment in school, and attitude toward school as they went on to the next grade. Repetition causes children to be older than their same grade peers, which will affect their self-esteem negatively (Kamal, 2009). Eventually, the application of grade repetition brings extra costs and long-term negative academic and social consequences.

**Causes of Grade Repetition**

Many children do not attend primary school on a regular basis for a number of reasons, may be due to the amount of schooling they have missed and consequently repeat a grade. In Zanzibar (1998) 6.1% of all primary grades 6 students had repeated twice and 1.4% had repeated three times or more (Nassir and Mohammed, 1998, p. 22). In Namibia, these figures were even higher at 16.9% and 6.4% respectively (Vogt’s, 1998, p. 28). Twenty per cent of Swazi grade 6 students had repeated two years of primary school (World Bank, 2006b, p. 22) leaving them vulnerable to having to repeat – often more than once.

The cost of schooling, as expressed by direct(school fees) or indirect costs such as uniform, transport, materials, opportunity cost) are significant to many poorer families, influencing a family’s decision making. High direct costs—for example, for buying uniforms, writing materials, textbooks, and the like—and sensitivity to the opportunity costs of attending school are more likely to strike the children from impoverished backgrounds. Other authors also identify malnutrition, which is clearly related to social and economic status, as one of the causes of repetition (Nebula, 2001, pp. 3–4).

According to Pragya, distance between the home of the child and the school is mentioned as a factor for grade repetition. A study on children’s access to schooling in the Indian Himalayas found that enrolled children only completed an average of 70% of school days due to road blockages caused by bad weather conditions (Pragya, 2006, p. 8). Similarly, Tinsel (1997, p. 843) found that living in a rural and suburban area implies a lower probability of primary school attendance and lower attainment for girls in Ghana and children in the Ivory Coast. (WB, 2005c).

A study made by Kamal (2009) on the factors for grade repetition explained that grade repetition is associated with the health status of the child and the presence of chronic diseases like asthma,
epilepsy, kidney diseases, diabetes, visual problems, and etc. In the case of HIV/AIDS, the child may be well but obliged to stay at home to look after ailing parents or siblings, and there may be associated issues of stigma in the community which prevent a child from functioning fully in society/school (Ndaruhuts, 2008).

Another contributory factor identified to grade repetition was the absence of adequate water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and blocks especially situated at a separate and safe corner in the school. This is a particular problem for girls as they reach puberty and then drop out of school for a week/month (UNESCO, 2001, p. 18).

In developing countries (especially rural areas), many children miss many days of school because of more serious health or nutrition problems or because their families require them to assume child care or work responsibilities (Gomes-Neto and Handshake, 1994). Children are engaged in either household, paid work or both. Particularly girls, in rural areas who are usually expected to help with daily chores such as collecting water and firewood cooking, look after younger siblings while their parents or careers are working, or tending animals. It also occurs in urban areas, where children may be involved in begging, shop and factory work, hawking or prostitution and house hold chores. In this regard, a study conducted by Bowman and Goldblatt (1984) cited in (Ndaruhuts (2008). found in Mexico that the demand for household labor is strongly linked to overage children in school and to the proportion of children who do not complete four years of primary schooling but repeat a grade or dropout.

A study on educating children in the Himalayas found that 48% of parents did not believe that educating their children would help them to find jobs, so were not interested in sending their children to school (Pragya, 2006, p. 10). Parents may question the relevance, value and quality of schooling especially when some teachers are unqualified and not teaching to the required level, the schools lack textbooks and other materials, there are very large class sizes and many children still return to working in agriculture when they leave school therefore gaining very little economic benefit from their schooling. The educational content may be too academic, leaving students without the necessary knowledge and skills to be marketable in the local economy; and the pedagogical methods in the school may not promote the critical thinking necessary for entrepreneurship, efficiency and effectiveness.
Families who are illiterate may not value education and after having tried it out for a while, might conclude that it is not worth their children attending regularly. In connection with this, Batista, J. (1994) stressed that Student background should directly affect repetition probabilities. Students in families with, for example, better-educated parents are expected to be less likely to re-peat a school year than those whose parents have less education or are illiterate. Various researchers argue that Within any given school, students from the poorest families are more at risk for repetition because their home backgrounds leave them less well prepared to succeed and because they are likely to miss more school days (Corman, 2003; Jimerson, Carlson, Rotert, Egeland, and Sroufe, 1997; Karweit, 1999). Eide and Showalter’s 2001)

Others report developmental delays and learning disabilities as features increasing the likelihood of retention (Zill et al., 1997). Students who display more maladaptive behaviors and are less confident, self-assured, engaging, socially competent, and popular with peers are also more likely to be retained (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Lambert, Bower, &Hart sough, 1979; Jameson et al., 1997; Sandoval, 1984).

School factors are systematically related to grade scores in the school. Good scores can be earned if teachers teach and support students from time to time by providing constructive feedback to the learners, and if students work hard and focus on their studies every time. This can result in scoring better results and subsequently lead to promotion to the next grade level. On the other hand, lower test scores consistently lead to greater repetition probabilities (Batista, J. 1994). This suggests that promotion has a basis in merit.

Schools with satisfactory facilities and equipment serving a larger number of students, coupled with well planned and executed continuous assessment strategies are more likely to provide a complete score structure and a lower probability of grade retention. Eventually, Lockheed, Verspoor and Associates (1991, p. 183) conclude that the causes of repetition...in developing countries can be categorized under three main headings: a) Family-related factors (illiteracy or low education of parents, income of family); b) Student characteristics (poor motivation, low ability, insufficient grasp of the lesson); School-related factors (physical remoteness ineffective teaching, insufficient qualification of teachers and absence of textbooks, defective evaluation of students and promotion criteria that are too demanding and others).
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Design
This study is a descriptive survey and employed mixed methods approach to establish institutional and individual factors that have been causing grade repetition in the public primary schools in Addis Ababa. Mixed methods study is concerned with finding out who, what, where, and how of the variables which are the concern of this study (Cooper & scheduler, 2001, Kothari, 2004). Descriptive research is concerned with specific predictions, with narration of facts and characteristics concerning individual, group or situation. In this study, grade repetition was the situation under investigation. The design was preferred since it is carefully designed to ensure complete description of the situation, making sure that there is minimum bias in the collection of data and reduce errors in interpreting the data collected.

Population
The target population of this study was students in the government primary schools in Addis Ababa. The list which contains all the numbers of repeaters per Sub city in Addis Ababa schools was secured from Study and plan support sub process in the education bureau (EMIS, 2016/). Therefore, EMIS data formed the census inquiry to determine the sample size.

Sample and Sampling Technique
The study adopted a census approach in which case the total number of grade repeaters in the year 2016 (26,388) from grades 5-8 were secured as a start up from the EMIS. Grades 1-3 were excluded since automatic promotion has been practiced in the first cycle of the primary education system in Addis Ababa. Of the 10 Sub cities, five sub cities with the highest number of repeaters were randomly selected. Schools in these 5 sub cities were clustered on the basis of the largeness of repeaters (grade 5, grade 6, grade 7, and grade 8). Then, schools with the largest repeaters in grade 5-8, were randomly selected from each cluster. Thus, four schools were sampled from each sub city where the total sample schools became 20. (Four schools each from each sub city).

To determine the total number of repeated students Yamane’s (1967) probability sampling formula, where \( n \) represents the sample size, \( N \) denotes the total number of primary school students.
repeating students in the second cycle (26,388) and $\alpha$ represents the level of desired precision ($\alpha = 0.05$) was utilized. The sample size was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+\frac{N\alpha^2}{2}} = \frac{26388}{1+26388(.05^2)} \approx 400$$

As the number of pupils can only be expressed in whole numbers, 400 repeaters were determined as samples to generate the required information for the study. Once the total sample size was known the next step was to estimate the number of students to be drawn from each grade level. In order to do so, it was decide to take samples proportional to total repeaters population from each clustered grade (5-8). The result presented in the following table shows the proportion of sample students drown from each grade.

**Table 1: Sample frame**

<table>
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<th>School name</th>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
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<td>Bulbula&gt;&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AtseTewodros</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Galan Gura</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulele Sub City</td>
<td>Hamle 19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belay Zeleke</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qosquwam</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addis Zemen</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Sub City</td>
<td>Megabit 28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngas Lafto</td>
<td>Lafto</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hibir</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Repeaters in these four grade levels in each five sub city responded to a structured questionnaire). In addition, focus group discussions were conducted with parents of repeaters in each of the schools. Interviews were made with school principals and head teachers.

**Data collection**

Primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires which contained both closed and open ended items, focus group discussions, and interviews. This was expected to facilitate collection of accurate information and clarifying them appropriately. On the other hand, secondary data was collected using reviews from both national and international documents as well as research literature. The literature and related documents were collected from various sources such as library references, journals, and articles, and any other relevant data bases. The questionnaire were developed and circulated to respondents by the curriculum core processes heads of sub-city. The questionnaire was preferred because of its ability to collect data from a large group within a short time period.
Data Analysis and presentation

The quantitative data collected was coded using computer software called Statistical package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The coded data was generated in table form and cleaned and systematically organized in tabular form according to emerging patterns that facilitated analysis using the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data was operationalized by categorizing, tabulating, and recombining evidences to address the research questions. Quantitative analysis was presented through tables and graphs and inferences made from them. T-tests were applied to determine relationships among the dependent and independent variables. The qualitative data collected from parents and school heads was classified under appropriate themes/tables depending on the nature of the information responded and was presented by use of prose.
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion
In this chapter, three major types of analysis were presented. The first part pays a bird’s eye view of repetition in the last five years. Quantitative analysis of data secured from field observation was presented next. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative information obtained from interviews and focus group discussions preceded the quantitative analysis.

Overview of Repetition in the last five years
Drastic improvements in the development of education have been achieved in Addis Ababa since the last decade that enhanced access to education and also introduced alternative modalities for the hard to reach groups in the city. In spite of this, the quality and efficiency of the system is still at a stake.

![Figure 2: Repetition: grades 1-7, EMIS: 2015/16](image)

Taking 2004 E.C (2012) as the base year, repetition in primary grades showed a slight decrease for male students in 2005 and 2006, while it showed a modest increase for female students (Figure 1). The largest repetition rate was at 2007 E.C. where it reached a peak for both sexes showing 158% increase in 5 years. Yet, the rate of female repeaters remained to be large (211%). In 2008, a modest decrease in the number of repeaters was observed. The rate of repetition
showed a slight decrease until 2006 for grades one to seven, but slowly escalated until the year 2008 E.C.

Across the sub-cities, similar scenarios can be observed as repetition is persistent throughout all schools in 2008 E.C. Lideta Sub city is seen to be the least in having the lowest number of repeaters (figure 2). The trend in repetition appears to be modest for Addis Ketema, Akaki, Arada, and Kirkos, while it becomes worse for Yeka, Bole and, and, in fact reaches the highest for Kolfkeraneo Sub city. In total 23,322 students repeated grade in 2008 in Addis Ababa.

![Figure 3: Repeaters 1-8, EMIS: 2015/16](image)

When it comes to grade 8, the situation becomes embarrassing (Figure 3).

![Figure 4: Repetition in grade 8; EMIS: 2015/16](image)
During the last five years, the severity of repetition in grade 8 has been maintained consistently, and it seems that no measures have been taken to reverse the situation. Total numbers of repeaters have remained more or less similar (19,918 and 18991 for 2004 and 2008 respectively), but the number of repeated female students has remained high above those of their male counterparts, and in most of the cases, appears to be by far greater than male repeaters. Consequently, about 65% of grade 8 repeaters were found to be females.

**Analysis of field data**

Of the 400 questionnaires administered to repeating students, 389 have been completely filled out (97%). 51% female and 49% male repeaters responded to the questionnaire.

The largest numbers of respondents were from Gulele and Kolfe Sub cities-sub cities with the highest number of repeaters (33% respectively). With regard to the nationalities of repeaters,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Amaras</th>
<th>Oromo</th>
<th>GU rage</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66 (51.0)</td>
<td>20 (40.4)</td>
<td>52 (56.0)</td>
<td>46 (45.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64 (49.0)</td>
<td>35 (34.2)</td>
<td>40 (44.0)</td>
<td>56 (55.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131 (34.0)</td>
<td>55 (14.0)</td>
<td>92 (24.0)</td>
<td>102 (26.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Below 15 years</th>
<th>15 years</th>
<th>Above 15 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

larger proportion goes to Amara and Garage(34% and 24% respectively), followed by Oromo (14%) and Others (26%) of the total. Thus, repeaters comprised of all nations and nationalities.

Concerning the age of respondents 30% of them were in the age proper for all grade levels, while the age of 34% of the respondents was higher above the normative age (grade 6, 7 and 8). 16% of the repeaters did not indicate their age and 36% were below the standard enrollment age for grade 5. As a whole the age of the repeaters showed variations across the grade levels in Addis Ababa.
The education background of the parents/guardians was such that the overwhelming majority
could read and write (61%), while a few have secondary education (13.9%). 5% were reported
to hold degrees. However, 20% of the parents indicated that they were illiterates.

On the item that referred to “with whom the student lived” (table 3) there was reported a divided

Table 3: With whom the student lived

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With whom were you living?</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Both parents</th>
<th>Single parent</th>
<th>A relative</th>
<th>Live alone</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

living situation among repeaters. Majority of them (75%) reported they lived with both parents
while a few (13%) said they lived with single parent. A partly (9%) of them said they lived with
relatives while very few (1.8%) lived alone, and the majority of these were female (71%).

Studies indicate that a variety of problems could cause grade repetition, among which the socio-
economic status of the child such as family income could be mentioned (Hallman et.al, 2006, p.
9). In this respect, a cross tabulation of the monthly income of parents (Table 4) reveals that 38%
of the guardians of children earned minimum wages or less (=<727 birr)and of these, 56% were
parents of female repeaters.

As shown in table 3 above, there are some who earned more than 1000 birr (20%), while, few
also earned more than 2000birr (15%). This stance, when seen in relation to the current per capita income of the nation ($700: UNDP HDI 2006) appears by far below the minimum annual income to sustain the family and pay for the education of children. Accordingly, 75% of the parents of repeating children monthly earned below 1225 birr bread line. If we consider the severity of the standard of living in the metropolitan at present, the
Table 4: Parent’s monthly income-Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your parent’s monthly income in birr?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 727</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>727 to 1000</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 to 1500.00</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501 to 2000.00</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 2000.00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>62</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>33</th>
<th>183(49.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>186(50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>370(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

family income of the repeaters could not be judged as sufficient to support the education of their children, and parents could tend to utilize child labor for additional income to sustain the family and this can force students to be absent from schools and subsequently repeat a grade.

Concerning repetition factors that could be caused by parents, children responded to (Table 5)

Table 5: Parental factors that can cause repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students repeat due to:</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support at home</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy household chores</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of study time</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of follow up at school</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less value for education</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Package of items indicated in table 5 above. As can be seen, 59.7 % of the students indicated that they had no support at home, but 21.3% disagreed to this statement, while larger proportion of repeaters said heavy household chores was the major problem (65%) that contributed to their academic failure. However, 20.1% of the students were discontent with this assertion. Further, absence of parental follow ups and lack of study time (59.7% and 49.2% respectively) were reported as other obstacles to work hard and pass exams, while the rest disagreed to these responses (22% and 16.7% respectively). Still further, although 15.2% disagreed, the majority of
the students indicated that their parents gave lesser values to their education (61.8%). The 12% were undecided.

One of the questions posed to repeaters referred to why the students repeated. As shown in

Table 6: Why the student repeated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Failure to work hard</th>
<th>Absent from class</th>
<th>Lack of support from parents</th>
<th>Caught cheating</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding why they repeated, the students posed a divided opinion. The highest percentage (81.5%) said they repeated due to failure to work hard. Of these, 82.7% were male students while 79.8 were female. A further 9.2% said they repeated due to absence from class while 7.9% indicated they failed due to lack of support from parents. Very few (1.6%) said they repeated because they were caught cheating. 10 students (2.6%) did not respond to the question.

Whether or not there existed a significant difference on the views of male and female students’ regarding why they repeated, a t-test was conducted on the basis of the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between the views of both sexes regarding why they repeated.

H1: there existed a significant difference between the views of both sexes regarding why they repeated.
As can be seen from table 7, the result indicated that there is no significant difference between both sexes (p<0.05) regarding why they repeated (95% confidence interval). The implication is that, the reasons for grade repetition equally applied for both male and female students.

Proper use of one’s own time for studying and completing tasks assigned is very important for academic success. In this regard, the data displayed in table 8 shows that 26% of repeaters spared their time watching TVs, while majority of them (52%) used their time to work and/or to play. Only a few proportion of repeaters (22%) reported they studied during their leisure time. It is to
be noted that the highest percentage (78%) of students’ leisure time has been used for non-academic purposes.

As per the framework developed for this study (Figure 1), repeaters responded to items relating to the constructs under school factors, parental factors, and psychological factors. A t-test was performed to check if there was a significant difference between male and female responses as in table 9.

Table 9: Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental factors that induced repetition</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School related factors for student repetition</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>24.04</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>24.73</td>
<td>9.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological factors for student repetition</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.05

As the data in table 9 indicates, the mean scores of male and female students were not statistically significant for parental and school related factors as well as for psychological problems characterizing students’ repetition. This implies that male and female students were not differently affected by parentally induced factors, school related factors and psychological factors.

Group means were compared to identify which of the factors (parental factors, school factors, and student factors) caused greater impact on students to repeat a grade. The results of ANOVA analysis was presented below.

Table 10 presents the outputs of ANOVA for the three factors inducing repetition. Consequently, with an F value of 3.570, there exist a statistically significant difference between school factors
Table 10: ANOVA of factors inducing grade repetition in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental factors that induced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>repetition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>26.229</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.115</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9100.901</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>28.529</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9127.130</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School factors that induced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>repetition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>528.523</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>264.262</td>
<td>3.570</td>
<td>.029*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23685.427</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>74.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24213.950</td>
<td>322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological factors that induced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>repetition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>45.711</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.855</td>
<td>.863</td>
<td>.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8451.892</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>26.495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8497.602</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p<0.05) and parental and student factors. This implies that school related factors had more effect in inducing students to repeat a grade in primary schools.

Students show better achievement when teachers take into account students’ varied learning styles to the required level, provide support and motivate for high expectations (Kavas, 1994, Thomas et al. (2000)). If otherwise, students may fail to attend to the teaching, and may even
be disappointed with the subjects and in extreme cases, hate the teachers who teach these subjects. In this connection, students were asked to rate the subjects they disliked.

As shown above (figure 5) 277 students rated five of the subjects as difficult to them. The majority (27%) rated Physics as uneasy for them, followed by chemistry and English (25% and 21% respectively), and culminated with Mathematics and biology (18% and 09% respectively).
In all the cases, except biology, it appears that the core subjects have been difficult for repeaters.

Finally repeaters ranked (Figure 6) the major factors that forced them to retain in the same grade. Consequently, factors related to the school environment were rated as the 1st to cause grade repetition, while student factors were ranked as the second. Further, parental and health factors were rated as 3rd and fourth respectively. With regard to health situation of repeaters, the majority reported that they did not have any health problem (61%). But, 28.1% indicated that they had kidney infection while 2.1% of them said they had problems relating to heart failure, while the 2% had either diabetics or epilepsy.

Retention is often considered more of a poison than a cure (Alexander, 2002); and it does not help the achievement of children; it negatively affects self-esteem, and increase their risk in dropping out (Stone & Engel, 2004). In connection with this, students from both sexes indicated that they still felt guilty (49% and 44% respectively) and angry(42% and 44%). A small proportion of them were either happy or felt nothing (5% and 9% for female and 4% and 6% for male respectively). Such a negative emotional stance on the part of repeaters could keep them out of task for the rest of the time and result in dropping out of schools.

**Table 11: Repeaters feelings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Guilty</th>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Qualitative Data**

To supplement the results of the quantitative data, qualitative information was secured from teachers and school directors, and parents through focus group discussions. Following are analysis qualitative data.
Leadership and key teachers qualitative responses

In response to the question “what is the status of repetition in your school?” both teachers and the leadership said that a number of students repeat a grade every year, but that of grade 4, 7, and grade 8 are devastating. They further witnessed that male students repeat more in grade 7 and below while female students repeat in large number than their male counter parts in grade 8. For example, in 2008 E.C alone, 250 students retained in grade 8 after sitting for the regional examination at Filipos primary school, while the number of repeaters at Addis Zemen primary school was 160. This conforms to the data in figure 4. On the other hand, the number of repeaters in grade 7 at Taitu Bitul primary school was also considerable (107 students) the same year. It is to be noted that female repeaters were the highest in grade 8 regional examinations (58%) while the proportion of male repeaters was less than those of female students (42%).

Reacting to the question why students repeated more in grades 4 and 7, the discussants gave two major reasons. The first reason was that in grades 1-3, due to the self-contained classroom organization, students lacked good preparation to sit for examinations and writing answers to questions as they have been freely promoted from one grade level to the other. Besides, as confirmed by the participants, children lacked the necessary literacy skills in reading and understanding written questions and writing answers. Teachers’ poor assessment skills did not help children cope up with their smart peers in academic work. Thus, social promotion and teachers misconceptions of free promotion appear to be the causes of grade repetition in grade 4.

With regard to repetition in grade 7, the discussants strongly argued that when children join grade 7, they face a new scenario where the medium of instruction for core subjects becomes English as opposed to Amharic in the previous years. A sudden change of the medium of instruction from Amharic (grade 6) to English in grade seven embarrassed students where some become frustrated and fail to cope up with the academic requirements in grade 7 and 8. Therefore, language barrier was considered as one of the factors that caused repetition in primary grades.

Other reasons for grade repetition, as explained by the leadership and key teachers, included: poor family income (table 4), lack of parental support at home due to illiteracy, failure to capitalize on the value of education since the returns of education are not immediate like child
labor which supports and helps to sustain the family (table 5), carelessness on the part of students themselves to work hard for good achievement (table 6), poor academic and pedagogical skills of some teachers’ and lack of fairness to support all students equally, failure to use school resources like the library, laboratory, and school pedagogical centers, and failure on the part of students themselves to have long range vision but focus on short term objectives like attaining grade 8 certificate to get driving license for immediate employment in the city. Thus, more than ten and one causes of grade repetition were sighted by the discussants.

Regarding the measures taken to help at risk students (potential repeaters), all the discussants said that special support programs were organized for at risk students and also, they discuss the issue with parents and students themselves, assign separate classes for repeaters and assign best teachers for assistance and follow up their progress. Further, they confirmed that schools closely work with parent-teacher-committees to help repeating children in schools. Eventually, when asked to explain their feelings regarding student failure, all the discussants unanimously stressed that they are unhappy, their heart breaks when they fail to collect the fruit of their yearlong efforts in teaching and leading the learning of children. A principal said, I sometimes doubt my presence as a leader in this school when such a large number of students were kept in the same grade for another extra year, but I could not help it; after all, I am a single individual.

Parents qualitative response

Responding to the question “why their child repeated a grade”, parents showed a divided opinion. Some of them indicated that the child retained in the same grade because he/she, unlike his smart peers, did not focus on his study and worked hard to score good marks, failed to be programmed to study and complete home take assignments but spared his extra time on watching films and foot ball matches, and due to lack of follow up from the parent. Some of the parents stressed that students were not motivated to learn because some teachers do not teach to the level expected and, as a result children hate some of the subjects and give no attention. Besides, children model their neighborhood peers who had completed schooling but remained without any employment. On the other hand, some parents supported the retention of their children because he/she did not meet the minimum requirements to transit to the next grade level as he had been absent many times to support the family. They also stressed that they could not support their
children by hiring a tutor because they were financially incapable. They said that they were unhappy as they incur additional material and financial cost (direct and indirect, time and energy) and sometimes depressed because of the negative feelings of their children. Regarding the feelings of the child after retention, parents confirmed that retained children were very angry, and even now feel guilty as they attend the same class with their juniors, and sometimes negatively viewed by teachers. Because of this, said a parent, my child was in grade 7 last year and he repeated but refused to enroll at the same school. I then transferred him to another school, but he still has a problem to choose a friend and is being frustrated. Thus, one can imagine the negative effect of grade retention on children’s emotional setup.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary
This study was initiated as a response to the current increase of grade repetition in primary grades in Addis Ababa. With the major purpose to find out the causes of grade retention in government primary schools, the study was intended to find answers to the following basic questions:

1. What are the major causes of grade repetition in Addis Ababa government primary schools?
2. What is the status of grade repetition across the sub cities?
3. How do learners, teachers, and parents perceive grade repetition?
4. What should be done to minimize grade repetition in primary grades?

The literature part of the study presented various research investigations and reviews that helped to set the framework of the study that guided data sources and frame of analysis. It showed the diversity of causes for grade retention, and most importantly, provided numerous suggestions of how to reduce academic failure.

Chapter three laid out the research design and methodology of the study. It showed that the study employed descriptive (quantitative and qualitative) research design (Best and Kahn, 2006, page 24). 40 primary schools with the largest number of repeaters for the academic year 2008 E.C (all government) were randomly sampled using the school data obtained from each sub city. Using Slovene’s formula 400 repeaters from the total of 26,388 repeaters were sampled to participate in the study. Data sources were: a) 400 students represented from grades 5, 6, 7, and 8, b) Primary school principals, key teachers, and c) Parents’ of retained students in each of the sample schools. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data.

In chapter 4, three types of analysis were presented. The first part presented a bird’s eye view of repetition in the last 5 years, followed by part two where quantitative data were analyzed using
tables, figures, and statistical packages as required. Analysis of qualitative data was presented in part three.

**Results**

The following results were obtained in the present study.

1. During the last five years, the largest repetition rate was at 2007 E.C. where it reached a peak for both sexes showing 158% increase in 5 years. Yet, the rate of female repeaters remained to be the highest (211%).
2. In 2008, similar trends in repetition were maintained, but the number of repeated female students has remained high above those of their male counterparts.
3. The status of grade retention was similar across the sub cities.
4. Repetition comprised of all nations and nationalities in Addis Ababa.
5. School factors, student factors and parental factors were found to be the major causes of retention in primary grades in Addis Ababa.
6. School factors were found to have greater effect in inducing grade retention (P<.05), followed by student factors (78%).
7. No significant difference was found regarding the effect of factors causing grade retention among male and female students (Table 9).
8. Retained students were found hating the core subjects and teachers teaching them.
9. The immediate shift of the medium of instruction from Amharic in grade 6 to English in grade seven was found to be one of the factors that held back students in grade 7.
10. Teachers’ misconceptions of Social promotion (Self-contained classes) and failure to uplift students’ performance through continuous assessment was found to be a potential cause for students’ retention in grade 4.
11. The school leadership, teachers, and parents viewed grade retention as a setback to their efforts in terms of time and resources and felt guilty of what they should have done to reverse the situation of grade retention in Addis Ababa.
12. Retained students have been emotionally affected and appear to be at risk of dropping out of school.
Conclusion

Despite limitations, if any, which could be attached to this study in terms of the sample population, time, instruments, and others, the study did reveal interesting findings relating to the causes of grade repetition in Addis Ababa primary schools.

Repetition in primary schools have been caused by the interplay between a range of factors where: school factors like teachers’ poor repertoire of teaching (academic and pedagogical, the utilization of school resources, shortage of child friendly environments), students failure to work hard and inability to manage the use of extra time for productive academic work, and parents failure to provide the necessary support for the education of their children (academic and non-academic) can be underlined. The study revealed that primary school repeating students in Addis Ababa put main emphasis on short term objectives of schooling (prompt employment) than setting long term vision to achieve their potential by working energetically to meet high expectations. Stakeholders, including parents and students themselves, appear to be disappointed as the effort made couldn’t match the results obtained in the education of children in primary schools in Addis Ababa.

Recommendation

Studies on Curriculum and Instruction have found out that there are many alternatives to help children and limit grade retention. Several school-based supports have been found to be effective in assisting children with educational difficulties (Anderson, Jameson, and Whipple, 2002). In view of these research results, the following strategic options are recommended.

1. Teachers need to vary instructional skills. Offering children different ways of learning is critical in addressing unique learning styles and needs. Reduced class size, individualized instruction, supplement the rigid 1 - 5 grouping with creative grouping, scheduling modifications like: tutoring and after-school programs, continuous assessment and use of immediate feedback for prompt action followed by strict monitoring, and use of volunteer aides that can be given due consideration are just a few strategies that can provide instructional variety.
2. Parents know their children well and can interact with the teacher, there are many things that parents can do to help. For instance, parents may emphasize the importance of education and provide a designated space at home for completing assignments. Parental monitoring of activities may be valuable in helping students focus on their school work. Thus, they should be encouraged to communicate and be involved regularly with the school. Programs need be developed to educate and involve parents in their child’s academic program. Encourage parents to be involved in their children’s education is very important for parents, teachers, and other educational professionals for working together. Teachers and parents can be collaborative allies in educating children.

3. Providing students at risk of failing with one-on-one guidance can be an intervention. The relationship between a student and a counselor, teacher, or other mentor can offer individualized attention many students need to succeed. Together they can design a personal education plan that will help the student set learning goals, break tasks down into manageable chunks, and make him or her accountable for academic achievement. Clearly, grade retention is not a solution to the problem of ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. What is needed are policies and practices that stress addressing barriers to learning and teaching as an essential and high level focus in every school’s performance.

4. Pre-school intervention programs are the first steps in possibly solving the retention problem. These programs strengthen basic skills necessary for subsequent academic success. "Head Start” is an example of early childhood intervention programs that provide comprehensive educational and family support services to children from economically disadvantaged families to increase school readiness. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen Pre-primary education programs attached to government primary schools.

5. In order to promote educational success, it is essential to move beyond the use of retention and social promotion since children in elementary school do not haphazardly fail to meet academic standards. Rather, their lack of academic success often reflects the
failure of adults to provide appropriate support and scaffolding to facilitate their early developmental and academic trajectories. Thus, Educational professionals, policymakers, and families must collaborate together in order to maintain a focus on promoting the social and cognitive competence of all children.
References:


