

Factor Analysis of the Quality of Lower Secondary Education in Cambodia

Ai Shoraku
Kobe University

Although Cambodia is able to provide most primary-school-age children opportunities for learning at school, the country is still far from achieving secondary-level schooling for all children. Nearly 80% of pupils who graduate from primary education go on to lower secondary education, but less than half of them go on to the final year of lower secondary education (i.e., the ninth grade). This means more than half the students are leaving schools before completing their lower secondary education. This paper examines where this reduction of enrolment happens, how it happens, and what the associated factors are.

A questionnaire was conducted by the author in March 2016 at two public lower secondary schools in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. The population for this research was all the students at the schools, i.e., 682 students: 429 for WK School and 253 for PP School.

The findings of this study are ten-fold. 1) With each grade promotion at the schools, the number of students decreases, especially between the eighth and ninth grades. 2) The decrease between the eighth and the ninth grades is more evident at PP School. 3) Many students come to school by motor bike, and this is more common at WK School. 4) At PP School, the percentage of students who come to school by motor bike dramatically decreases in the ninth grade. 5) For both schools, there may be a correlation between the student decrease from the eighth to the ninth grades and the decrease in students who come to school by motor bike. 6) Many parents of PP School students engage in agricultural work, while those of WK School students do various kinds of work. 7) For each grade level, the number of fathers and mothers who are doing agricultural work decreases as their children are promoted. 8) More students attend extra classes at WK School, while more students receive private tutoring at PP School. 9) Attending extra classes or receiving private tutoring may not correlate to grade promotion. 10) A reason the percentage of students attending extra classes is lower at PP School may be that at this school, a free after-school study club is available. Extra classes and private tutoring require payment.