

The Pupil Premium grant and educational achievements of Black girls of African and Caribbean descents. A critical analysis using Capability Approach.

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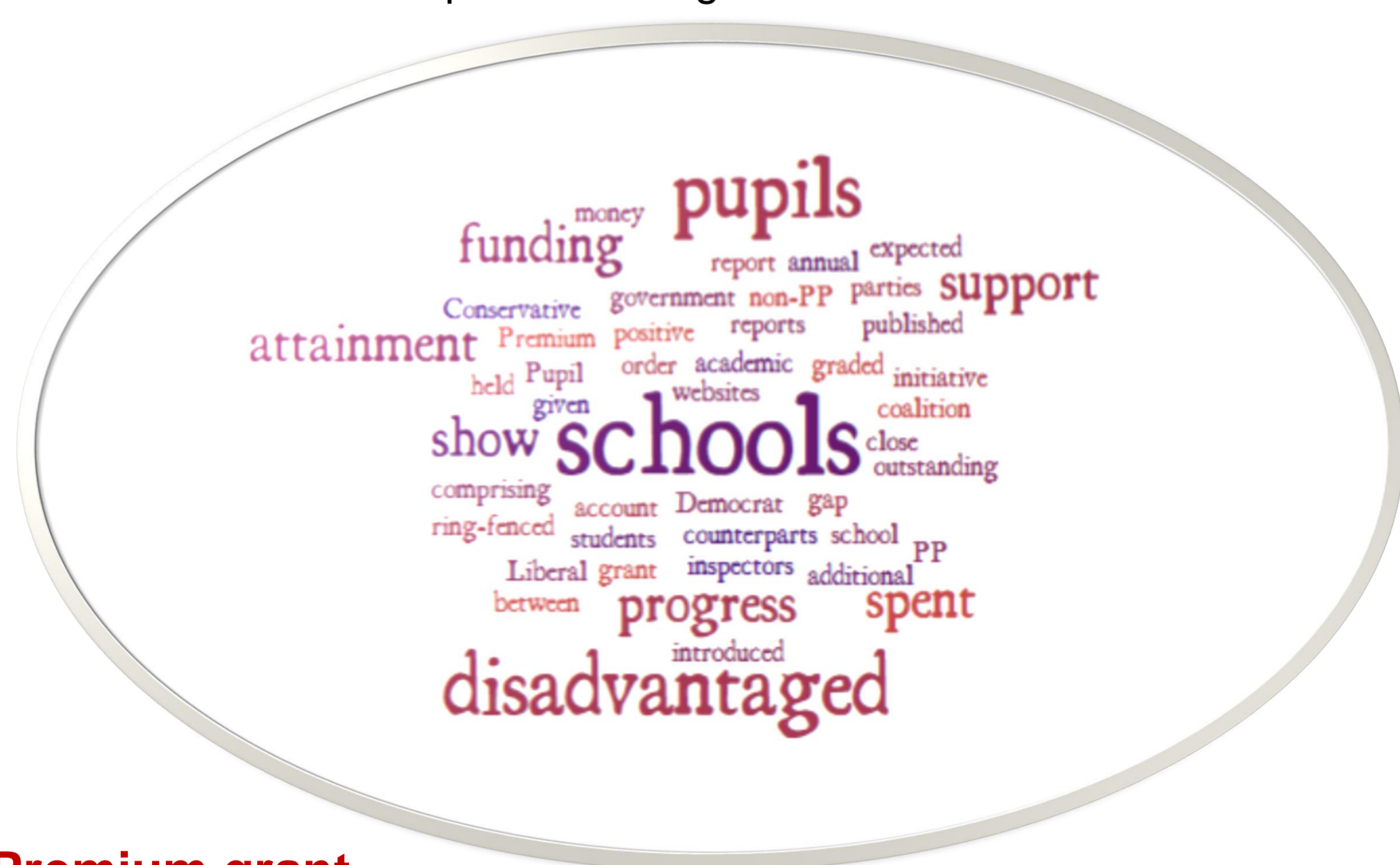


Background

The Black Minority Ethnic (BME) educational underachievement is widely recognised and irrefutable (Runnymede, 2010). This is due to various factors, e.g.

- ❑ **Poverty** - The majority of Black pupils hail from deprived areas with “low income households (38%) compared with White students (18%)”,
- ❑ **Inadequate number of teachers from ethnic minority groups** - “in England as a whole 9% of teachers are from a minority ethnic group; in London 31%” (Ball, 2008:166)
- ❑ **Behaviour and exclusion** – Black pupils are more likely to be excluded due to conscious and unconscious prejudice from teachers (Runnymede, 2012). Studies have mostly focused on the exclusion of Black boys, while girls are twice as likely to be permanently excluded from school compared with total school population and their White female peers (Rollock, 2007). Excluded pupils are more likely to complete their education without academic qualifications, therefore, having limited chances to further their education and to access employment (Cf. Runnymede, 2012).

All of the issues highlighted have had adverse effects on Black pupils’ educational achievements and motivation (Ball, 2008). There have been various government initiatives to close the educational achievement gap between Black pupils and their peers, one of which is the Pupil Premium grant.



Pupil Premium grant

- ❑ The Pupil Premium (PP) grant is the UK government initiative, introduced in 2011.
- ❑ It is an additional funding, outside the dedicated school grant, paid to publicly-funded schools in England.
- ❑ It enables them to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers by raising the attainment of pupils from low-income families who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or who had been ‘looked after’ continuously for more than six years (Jarret et al., 2016:4).
- ❑ Many studies in the UK have highlighted the underachievement of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) group, which is a consequence of disadvantaged background amongst other factors. This study, therefore, aims to consider:
 - ✓ the impact of the Pupil Premium grant on the educational achievement of black girls of African and Caribbean descents in secondary schools in London;
 - ✓ the Black girls’ experiences and perceptions of the educational interventions provided as a result of the Pupil Premium funding.
 - ✓ analyse the impact of PP grant, pupils’ experiences and perceptions using Capability Approach (CA) framework.



Why Capability Approach?

- ❑ The literature reveals that the situation of PP Black girl pupils is more complex compared to other students. In general, PP black girl pupils face numerous challenges as highlighted above.
- ❑ Due to the complexity of PP Black girl pupils’ experiences, and their perceptions of educational provisions, their analysis requires a multidimensional theoretical framework.
- ❑ There are many different approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of schooling systems, and how well society is served by what schools are doing:
 - ✓ progress made and attainments achieved by pupils over time;
 - ✓ progression to higher education;
 - ✓ employability; social mobility;
 - ✓ what people say they would like to gain from schooling;
 - ✓ resources, including how much money is spent on a child;
 - ✓ outcome in the form of examination results, etc. (Unterhalter et al., 2007).
- ❑ These utilitarian approaches to evaluating education fail to capture the capabilities and functionings of individuals, that is, a person’s real freedoms or opportunities to achieve functionings (Robeyns, 2011). Due to these limitations, I propose to use CA.

Methodology

- ❑ The project utilises qualitative research methodology to collect data through interviews and document analysis (Bryman, 2012). It aims to answer two research questions:
 - How does the Pupil Premium grant impact upon the educational achievements of Black girls of African and Caribbean descents in secondary schools in south London?*
 - What are the perceptions of black girls of African and Caribbean descents and their experiences of the use of the UK government’s Pupil Premium grant in a secondary school in south London?*
- ❑ In order to answer the research questions, the study uses social constructionist/interpretivist approaches within relativist ontology. The focus of this study is on individuals rather than a group, it is concerned with how individual PP students construct, interpret or make sense of the interventions they receive.
- ❑ The study will focus on five girl schools in south London. The schools have been chosen due to their accessibility and convenience as they have significant number of Black girl pupils of African and Caribbean descents. The sample will comprise 55 participants, 50 pupils (aged 15-17 years) and 5 teachers responsible for evaluation of the impact of PP grant.
- ❑ The research will analyse the educational outcome documents of the PP Black girl pupils of African and Caribbean descents, and the data collected during conversations (interviews) with participants, drawing on the qualitative research paradigm.

What contributions will this research make?

- ❑ The findings will add to the sparse literature available in PP grant evaluation by including the voices of the PP recipients.
- ❑ It will add CA as an additional evaluation tool which captures most of the issues contributing to the underachievement of PP Black girl students.

References

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