



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence of the Amount of Funds Allocated through Capitation Grants on the Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources in Public Primary Schools in Sengerema District

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of the amount of funds allocated through capitation grants on the availability of teaching and learning resources in public primary schools in Sengerema District, Mwanza, Tanzania. Guided by the Resource Dependence Theory, the study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design that integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 172 respondents, including the 01 District Pre and Primary Education Officer, 03 Ward Education Officers, 11 Head teachers, and 156 Teachers, using questionnaires, interviews, and documentary reviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The findings revealed that although increased funding enhances access to essential teaching and learning resources, the adequacy and timeliness of capitation grant disbursement remain major challenges. Insufficient and delayed funding led to persistent shortages of classroom materials, compelling schools to prioritize only the most basic needs while leaving out vital teaching aids. Schools with low enrolments were particularly disadvantaged due to the per-pupil funding formula, which failed to address inflation and mid-year enrolment changes. From the perspective of Resource Dependence Theory, the study highlights how dependence on external funding creates vulnerability, forcing schools to adopt coping strategies such as reallocating funds, borrowing from suppliers, or relying on parental contributions. The study concludes that effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved without timely, sufficient, and well-managed financial support. It recommends that the government should increase capitation grant amounts, ensure timely disbursement, revise the per-pupil funding formula, strengthen financial management capacity at the school level, and enhance accountability mechanisms. Schools are further encouraged to diversify resource mobilization to reduce over-dependence on government funding.

Keywords: Capitation grants; teaching and learning resources; enrollments; funds

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone for human development and economic growth. It empowers individuals with knowledge, skills, and competencies that enable them to contribute meaningfully to social and national development.

Globally, education has been positioned as a driver of sustainable development, equity, and poverty reduction. In line with this vision, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

(UNESCO, 2017). Achieving this goal requires not only universal access but also adequate and equitable financing mechanisms that support the provision of quality teaching and learning resources.

Many countries have restructured their education financing systems to ensure efficient and equitable allocation of resources to schools. Nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, India, and Chile, have adopted capitation grant models to allocate funds based on student enrolment. In the United Kingdom, for example, school funding reforms emphasize a per-pupil allocation formula that promotes equity and transparency in resource distribution (OECD, 2021). Similarly, Australia applies a student resource standard that determines funding according to the number of enrolled students and their learning needs (Sinclair, 2025). In Asia, India uses a similar approach through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program, which provides funds per student to ensure inclusive access to basic education (World Bank, 2021). These global experiences demonstrate that per-student financing models can promote fairness and accountability when properly implemented. However, challenges such as delayed disbursements, inflation, and disparities in resource management often undermine their effectiveness, particularly in low- and middle-income economies (UNESCO, 2022).

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have also adopted capitation grant systems to strengthen education financing and improve transparency in resource management. Following the introduction of free or universal primary education policies in the early 2000s, many African governments such as Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, implemented direct school funding approaches to support growing enrolment and enhance school autonomy (Ahinsah-Wobil, 2021; Gamba, 2019). In Kenya and Uganda, for instance, the introduction of free primary education led to an increase in student numbers, necessitating direct financial transfers to schools based on pupil enrolment. Although these initiatives improved access, studies reveal that the amount of funds allocated per pupil has remained insufficient to meet operational needs, especially for teaching and learning materials (Gaspar et al., 2022; World Bank, 2021). Furthermore, irregular fund releases and inadequate monitoring mechanisms have reduced the intended impact of these policies. These challenges indicate that while the capitation grant model is conceptually sound, its implementation requires consistent government commitment and

effective accountability systems.

In Tanzania, education financing reforms have similarly evolved to promote equitable and efficient allocation of resources at the school level. The government introduced the Capitation Grant in the early 2000s under the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) as part of the broader Direct School Financing (DSF) strategy. The policy aimed to operationalize free primary education by transferring funds directly to school accounts to support teaching and learning processes. The grant covers expenditures such as instructional materials, school maintenance, examinations, and administrative costs, and allocations are determined by pupil enrolment (Msabila, 2024). The initiative was designed to improve school autonomy, promote accountability, and ensure that financial resources directly support learning outcomes.

Despite these efforts, implementation challenges have persisted. Studies indicated that delays in fund disbursement, inconsistencies between budgeted and actual allocations, and inadequate amounts have limited the effectiveness of the capitation grant system (Ndaula, 2024; Zacharia, Gwambene, & Chaula, 2024). Moreover, the introduction of the fee-free education policy in 2016 led to a significant increase in enrolment across the country, thereby intensifying the demand for teaching and learning materials. However, the amount of capitation funds allocated per pupil has not been adjusted to match this growth (World Bank, 2021). Consequently, many schools struggle to procure adequate teaching and learning resources. This funding shortfall has contributed to overcrowded classrooms, teacher overload, and reduced learning quality, particularly in rural and low-income areas.

In Sengerema District, Mwanza Region, public primary schools face similar challenges associated with capitation grant allocations. While the policy has enhanced transparency and direct access to funds, schools often receive insufficient amounts and experience delays that disrupt planned educational activities. Increased enrolment, coupled with limited financial allocations, has led to shortages of key teaching and learning materials. School heads and education officers in the district have reported that the available funds are inadequate to support daily instructional needs and school operations. This situation threatens the quality of education and undermines the objectives of the capitation grant policy. Therefore, it is crucial to examine how the amount of funds allocated through the capitation grant influences

the availability of teaching and learning resources in public primary schools in Sengerema District. Understanding this relationship will provide insights into the effectiveness of Tanzania's education financing framework and contribute to the ongoing discourse on equitable resource allocation. The findings from this study will not only inform local and national education policy reforms but also offer lessons applicable to other Sub-Saharan African countries striving to strengthen school financing systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) developed by Pfeffer & Salancik in 1978, which explains that organizations rely on resources from outside, especially in uncertain situations. Such dependence creates mutual reliance and differences in power, requiring careful management. RDT also shows that limited resources cause uncertainty, power is unevenly shared, and organizations use strategies such as safeguarding or bridging to manage risks. In this study, RDT is used to examine how amount of fund allocated affect the availability of teaching and learning resources in public primary schools in Sengerema District, Mwanza, Tanzania. These schools depend mainly on government funds provided through the Education Sector Development Plan (URT, 2016). Delays or insufficient funding increase dependence, especially in rural areas with few alternatives. Timely and adequate grants help reduce uncertainty and improve the availability of teaching and learning resources, while shortages deepen dependence and reduce resource availability. Therefore, RDT helps explain how amount of funding affects resources and supports the view that providing sufficient and timely capitation grants improves access to teaching and learning materials.

Empirical Review

Financial support for educational resources in public primary schools is essential for ensuring quality education. Adequate funding enables the acquisition of necessary materials, technologies, and facilities, which leads to positively impacting student involvement and academic performance. Disparities in funding between schools with different enrolments, as well as challenges in accessing quality educational materials, must be addressed to promote equity and enhance the learning environment for all students (Santiago et al., 2019). Understanding these funding allocations is critical for

advocating policies that support equal opportunities in education.

In Brazil, Silva and Alves (2024) researched on the financing of public basic education, drawing insights from international literature to highlight the critical role of adequate financial resources, efficient management processes, and social accountability in enhancing educational outcomes. They emphasize that while low socioeconomic status (SES) significantly impacts educational results, its adverse effects can be mitigated through strategic actions both within and beyond the school environment, such as targeted interventions and community engagement. However, a critical examination of their methodology reveals potential limitations, including a reliance on secondary data sources that did not fully capture the nuances of local contexts or the dynamic nature of educational financing. To bridge the gap, this study employed a mixed-methods approach that incorporated qualitative insights from educators and stakeholders, ensuring a more thorough comprehension of the intricacies surrounding education financing.

In Ukraine, Malyshko et al. (2018) carried out research on education financing, utilizing various scientific research methods such as generalization, comparative analysis, and statistical techniques to assess the current state of the educational financing system. The study identifies significant flaws in normative-legal support, hindering the effective distribution and use of funds, and stresses the prevailing issue of insufficient budget allocation jeopardizing the sustainability and quality of education. The study's time frame raises concerns about the relevance of data amidst ongoing educational reforms and economic changes. Alalwan et al. (2024) studied the impact of government funding on primary education effectiveness in Malaysia. The research employs a case study design and a qualitative methodology. The findings indicate that inadequate financial resources hinder the availability of instructional resources, affecting education quality. However, the study's methodology has limitations, such as relying on a case study design that may limit generalizability. To address this gap, this research combined qualitative and quantitative data using a mixed-methods approach to analyze the relationship between funding allocation and teaching resources in Sengerema district.

The World Bank (2019) observed that capitation grants for public secondary education in Bangladesh are relatively low compared to those in other developing countries, limiting their capacity to ensure quality

education. Although such grants have the potential to improve educational outcomes, their effectiveness is contingent upon proper allocation, adequate funding, and efficient management. Similarly, Khatun et al., (2024) examined the impact of capitation grants on teaching and learning resources in rural public schools in Bangladesh. Their study found that while capitation grants contributed to improved access to textbooks and learning materials, delays in disbursement and the limited size of allocations hindered their full potential. They recommended increasing the grant amounts, ensuring timely release of funds, and introducing stronger oversight mechanisms to optimize their impact. These findings underscore the need for well-structured and adequately funded grant systems that prioritize timely allocation and context-specific needs, a perspective that is relevant for investigating funding frameworks in rural districts such as Sengerema.

In a study conducted in Badagry, In Nigeria, Ige and Abiodun (2024) found that resource allocation significantly influenced student achievement, retention, and equity, but noted challenges including inadequate funding, lack of transparency, and limited stakeholder involvement. They recommended increased government funding, improved transparency, effective monitoring, and

greater stakeholder participation. In Ghana, Mohammed and Apiung (2025). observed that capitation grants improved classroom infrastructure, provision of teaching materials, and learning environments, although delays in fund disbursement, insufficient allocations, and weak oversight constrained their impact. They advised timely disbursement, adequate funding, and stronger monitoring mechanisms. Together, these studies highlight that while targeted funding can improve resource availability, its effectiveness depends on adequate amounts, timeliness, transparency, and responsiveness to contextual needs. However, these findings do not fully address the specific funding priorities and structures in rural districts such as Sengerema, underscoring the need for context-specific research into how the amount of funds allocated influences the availability of teaching and learning resources.

Empirical studies in Kenya provide valuable insights into the effects of capitation grants on teaching and learning resources. Wachohi (2019) found that the Free Primary Education policy improved student-to-textbook ratios and assessment frequency but also increased student-to-teacher ratios and teacher workloads, which

negatively affected instructional quality, recommending increased teacher recruitment. Similarly, Wario (2022) reported that capitation grants enhanced access to instructional materials and improved infrastructure, but delays in disbursement and inadequate funding limited their impact, suggesting that allocations should consider inflation and enrolment variations. These studies collectively indicate that while capitation grants can enhance resource availability, their effectiveness depends on timely disbursement, adequacy of funding, and responsiveness to contextual needs. However, they do not fully address the unique funding priorities and structures in rural districts such as Sengerema, underscoring the need for context-specific investigation into how the amount of funds allocated influences teaching and learning resources.

In Tanzania, Mwhanga (2024) assessed the effects of fee-free primary education funding on education institutions. The study involved a qualitative approach and found that the capitation grants were insufficient to meet teaching and learning material needs. Similarly, Chao et al. (2022) evaluated capitation grants in secondary schools and found that while they help with resource purchases, they are not enough to fully meet needs. This study reports lack of understanding of the role of capitation grants in primary schools' financial management. The goal of the study is to evaluate how the funds allocated affect the accessibility of resources for teaching and learning. Furthermore, Issa et al. (2023) carried out a qualitative case study examining the challenges that primary schools encounter when procuring materials in Dar es Salaam. They identify funding constraints, bureaucratic processes, and lack of stakeholder involvement as major obstacles. This research sheds light on systemic issues affecting resource availability in Dar es Salaam and emphasizes the need to address these challenges for better educational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed research approach, which involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or multiphase program inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Moreover, the study used an explanatory sequential mixed design whereby quantitative data were collected in the first phase and qualitative data were collected in the second phase. The sample size of the study was 172 respondents which included: 1 District Pre and Primary Education Officer (DPPEO), 3

Ward Education Officers (WEOs), 11 head teachers and 156 teachers. The respondents were selected through purposive and stratified sampling in order to take care of the representation in various categories within the educational sector. Data collection instruments consisted of a questionnaire for teachers, interview guides for DPPEO, WEO, and head teachers and documentary review. The use of varied data collection instruments enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive information about capitation grants allocation and its influence on the availability of teaching and learning resources. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were employed in the study, whereas, SPSS 26st version was used for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis was used for qualitative analysis. The researcher, through a valid and reliable focus of data collection, did a pilot study to refine the instruments before the main study. Thus, the reliability of instrument was 0.780. Also, ethical considerations were adhered, permission for data collection was ensured, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality for participants was guaranteed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how the amount of funds allocated through capitation grants influences the availability of teaching and learning resources in public primary schools in Sengerema District.

Teachers’ Awareness of Funding Allocation

The researcher asked the participants to indicate their awareness with the funding allocation and the findings are presented in Figure 1

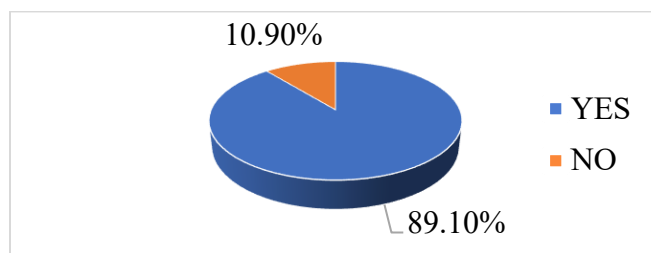


Figure 1.

Figure 1 indicates that a substantial majority of teachers (89.1%) are aware of the fund allocated in their schools, while a minority (10.9%) reported a lack of awareness. This high level of awareness reflects positively on transparency and accountability within school financial management, as informed teachers are better

positioned to engage in planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes that affect teaching and learning (Ndaula, 2024). Nonetheless, the presence of even a small proportion of teachers who lack awareness underscores the need for strengthened communication and information dissemination within schools. Studies have shown that inadequate communication of funding processes can undermine collective engagement and limit effective resource utilization (Mwihanga, 2024; Waweru et al., 2024). Such gaps hinder participatory financial planning and equitable resource distribution, thereby affecting the efficiency of instructional delivery. Consequently, school leadership should prioritize inclusive communication strategies and capacity-building initiatives to ensure that all staff members are fully informed about funding allocations.

Amount of Fund Allocated on The Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources

In order to examine the influence of amount of fund allocated through capitation grants on the availability of teaching and learning resources, questionnaires and interview were used to collect data. Table 1 presents the questionnaire findings on this.

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of responses concerning the influence of amount of fund allocated through capitation grants on the availability of teaching and learning materials in primary schools. The data reflects opinions from respondents on whether the amount of fund allocated has any influence on the availability of teaching and learning materials.

Increased Fund has Improved the Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

Respondents shared their views on the effect of increased funding on the availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools. As shown in Table 1, 26.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 43.6% of respondents agreed that increasing funds by the government to public primary schools significantly contributes to the availability of teaching and learning materials. This suggests that when schools receive adequate financial resources through capitation grants, they are better able to procure essential instructional materials, thereby improving the teaching and learning environment. Through interviews it was discovered that, the increasing funds to schools help to purchase teaching and learning materials for schools. The findings corresponding with the data is recorded from one interviewee that was quoted saying:

In our school we get teaching and learning

materials timely because our school is big making us receive enough amount of money which helps in purchasing teaching materials like scheme of work, lesson plans and teaching aids which help us during teaching and learning process. (Interview A, June 2025).

The quotation above implies that, increasing funds is very important as it helps schools to purchase a variety of teaching and learning materials hence helps in managing teaching and learning process effectively. These findings support the study conducted by Msabila (2024) which emphasizes that increased capitation

grants in Sub-Saharan African countries have direct positive impact on the procurement of essential teaching resources. Similarly, Hassan et al., (2022) found that adequate school financing is a key determinant in improving education quality, especially in low-income settings as it enables schools to meet operational and instructional needs. These studies align with the present findings suggesting that increasing funds to schools from the government play a crucial role in ensuring the availability of teaching and learning materials.

Table 1. Teacher’s response on the influence of the amount of funds allocated through capitation grants on the availability of teaching and learning materials (n=156)

No	ITEMS	RESPONSES								TOTALS	
		1		2		3		4		F	P
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P		
i	Increased funding has improved the availability of learning materials.	23	14.7	23	14.7	68	43.6	42	26.9	156	100
ii	Insufficient funding in school leads to shortages of essential resources.	16	10.3	22	14.1	79	50.6	39	25.0	156	100
iii	Sufficient supply of classroom material.	36	23.1	71	45.5	33	21.2	16	10.3	156	100
iv	The prioritization of material is influenced by the amount of funding received.	26	16.7	16	10.3	38	24.4	76	48.7	156	100

Key 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly Agree, F=Frequency and P=Percentage
Source: Field Data (2025)

Insufficient Funding in School Leads to Shortages of Essential Resources

Respondents were asked whether inadequate funding in schools leads to shortage of essential resources. The findings reveal that 25.0% strongly agreed and 50.6 agreed with the statement. This result suggests a strong perception among the majority of respondents that limited funding negatively affects the availability of critical teaching and learning materials. This shortage in turn, undermines the effective management of teaching and learning process in schools. The disparity in funding is often linked to student enrollment number, where schools with fewer students receive proportionately lower capitation grants. This makes it difficult for such schools to procure adequate educational resources compared to larger schools with higher enrollments and greater funding allocations.

Complementing the above discussion, the participant who were interviewed, responded that insufficient funding in schools leads to shortages of essential resources. One head teacher was asked on how he

manage the teaching and learning process despite having small school with low enrolment which makes his school to receive a small amount of fund. The interviewee had the following to elaborate:

The allocation of funds is determined based on student enrollment by January 31st. However, as the school year progresses, additional students are admitted affecting the increase in budget which however does not guarantee the addition of funds. Furthermore, fluctuations in commodity prices and the general rise in the cost of living are not reflected in the adjustments of capitation grants. Consequently, these limitations pose substantial challenges for head teachers in ensuring the effective management of the teaching and learning process. (Interview, O June 2025).

This implies that the current funding model does not adequately accommodate changes in student enrollment and economic conditions. As a result, head teachers are compelled to operate with limited and often

insufficient resources, which may compromise the quality of teaching and learning, hinder school development plans, and place additional administrative and financial pressure on school leaders. These findings corresponding with a study by Zacharia (2024) who support that the funding model fails to adapt well to the real operational costs, especially when schools are remote or when external cost factors rise. In the same line one interviewee said,

Our school receives very little funding because we have few pupils. It is a real struggle to run the school effectively with such limited resources. Due to the delay and insufficiency of funds, we have to buy materials on credit from local suppliers. Now we are left with debts we can't settle and suppliers are no longer willing to provide materials unless we pay upfront. This has disrupted the teaching process. (Interview, E, June 2025).

The response above highlights the serious impact of delayed and insufficient funds, especially in schools with low enrolment. Limited funding forces schools to buy materials on credit, leading to debts that they are unable to pay. As a result, local suppliers refuse to provide further materials without upfront payment, disrupting the teaching process. This situation shows the need for timely fund disbursement, a review of per capital funding model, and minimum funding guarantees to ensure that all schools can operate effectively and avoid financial instability. The findings correspond with a study by Lavalley (2018) who notes that pupil funding models often disadvantage small and rural schools, leading to inequalities in access to quality education. Likewise, Uwezo (2020) emphasizes that insufficient school financing remains a key factor behind the shortage of essential learning materials particularly in underserved communities

Documentary findings show that limited amount of funds often result in shortage of teaching and learning materials. Budget reports and meeting minutes in the visited schools reveal that schools struggle to provide adequate teaching and learning materials. To address this, headteachers re allocate funds within permitted limits. Additionally, some schools use alternative sources of income from school projects to supplement their budgets and purchase necessary materials. These strategies reflect efforts to ensure continuity in teaching despite financial constraints. Therefore, it is evident that financial support compromises resource availability and affects the overall quality of educational services

delivery, especially in schools with low enrollment and limited capacity to supplement government funding.

Sufficient Supply of Classroom Materials

Respondents expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of classroom materials in their schools. Results in table 1 show that 23.1% strongly disagreed and 45.5% disagreed indicating that the majority of respondents do not receive adequate teaching and learning materials on time. This shortfall is largely attributed to inadequate government funding allocated to schools for the purchase of such materials. This shows that most schools still struggle to access enough materials even with the provision of capitation grants. Besides, during the interview, one of the interviewees explained:

We do not get enough materials when we need them. Most times, we have to wait for the next round of funding and even then, it's not enough to cover what the school really needs. Sometimes, we have to ask parents help, or buy materials on credit. (Interview C, June 2025).

This suggests that delays and inadequacy in funding force schools to operate in a cycle of shortages, where essential teaching and learning materials are not available when required. As a result, teaching quality and lesson delivery are disrupted, school plans are stalled, and head teachers are compelled to seek alternative coping strategies such as requesting financial contributions from parents or purchasing materials on credit. Moreover, one of the interviewees, also expressed his concern over the funding gap

The capitation grants are disbursed late and are insufficient. This affects lesson preparation, especially purchasing chalks and teaching aids. We see this problem across many schools in the ward. (Interview L, June 2025).

These responses reflect a critical gap between the intended role of capitation grants and their actual impact in schools. While schools with larger enrolment may afford some stability in resource procurement, majority of schools, especially smaller ones, face serious shortages. The findings concur with that of Mwhanga (2024) who found that despite the government's effort in funding free primary education, the actual disbursement is often delayed and below required levels, making it difficult for schools to maintain adequate teaching and learning materials. Similarly, Waweru et al. (2024) report that budget shortages and irregularities directly affect schools' ability to purchase

teaching and learning resources. In Kenya, Mutegi (2019) found that over 80% of teachers cited insufficient funds as the primary reason for the shortage of materials, especially in public schools in rural areas. Both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that, insufficient and inconsistent funding significantly hinders the timely and adequate supply of classroom materials. This continues to be a major barrier to effective teaching and learning process in many public primary schools.

The Prioritization of Material is Influenced by the Amount of Funding Received

Respondents provided their opinions on how the amount of funding received influences the prioritization of teaching and learning materials in schools. The findings from table 1 shows that 24.4% agreed and 48.7% strongly agreed that financial allocation significantly shape which materials are prioritized in schools. These findings suggest that in the context of limited financial resources, school management is often forced to make difficult decisions prioritizing only the most basic or urgent materials while neglecting others. Schools are not necessarily guided by curriculum demands, but rather by the financial limitations imposed by insufficient or delayed funding. Qualitative data collected through interviews support these observations as one of the interviewees was quoted saying:

Due to the small amount of fund, we meet with staff each term to decide what we can afford to purchase. Often, we have to leave out important items like teaching aids and visual charts because the funds are not enough. When funds are delayed or too little, we focus only on basic necessities such as chalk, attendance books, and occasionally exercise books leaving out essential teaching and learning materials despite their importance in delivering quality education. (Interview, D June 2025).

This situation implies that limited and delayed funding forces schools to adopt survival-oriented decision-making, where resource allocation prioritizes only the most basic necessities at the expense of essential teaching and learning materials. As a result, the quality of instruction is compromised, classroom engagement tools are neglected, and long-term development goals are undermined. In line with Resource Dependence Theory, the scenario reflects how schools, being highly dependent on government capitation grants, are vulnerable when external resources are scarce or

unpredictable. To cope, head teachers and staff are compelled to make trade-offs, concentrating on immediate needs while sacrificing resources that are critical for effective learning. This not only constrains teaching quality but also perpetuates inequalities, as schools with more supportive parents or communities may fare better than those without such alternatives. In addition to school level, another interviewee shared a broader view of the issue:

In most schools, the capitation grants are not only delayed but also too small to meet all the needs. As a result, head teachers are forced to prioritize basic supplies like chalks and attendance books while important teaching aids are left out. This affects the quality of teaching and learning. We always advise schools to plan carefully and involve staff in making decisions, but the truth is that without adequate and timely fund, it is difficult to improve the learning environment. (Interview, L June 2025)

These findings show clear patterns of inadequacy in funding which limits schools' ability to access essential teaching and learning materials. This limited and delayed disbursement of funds forces school leaders to make difficult choices, often prioritizing basic items over more pedagogically valuable materials. This situation highlights the need for more responsive and equitable funding structure that considers schools needs in both amount and timing. These findings concur with the findings of Msabila (2024) who reports that schools under the free education policy in Tanzania often face serious delays and shortfalls in capitation grants, leading to compromised planning and prioritization of education resources. Through documentary review it was discovered that the procurement of materials is guided by the amount of available funds and the immediate necessity of those materials at the time. This means that procurement decisions are not solely guided by long term plans but are also influenced by the urgency and importance of specific materials at a given time.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that, the amount of funds allocated through capitation grant have a significant influence on the availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools in Sengerema District. The findings reveal that while increased funding improves access to essential resources, the adequacy and

timeliness of disbursement remain major challenges. Insufficient and delayed grants lead to persistent shortages of classroom materials, forcing schools to prioritize only the most basic necessities such as chalk and attendance books, while leaving out vital instructional aids. This reactive approach to resource prioritization compromises teaching quality and undermines effective curriculum delivery. Moreover, schools with smaller enrolments are disproportionately disadvantaged due to the per-capita funding formula, which does not account for rising costs of materials, inflation, or mid-year changes in enrollment. From the perspective of Resource Dependence Theory, the study demonstrates how high dependence on external financial resources creates uncertainty and vulnerability, compelling schools to adopt survival strategies such as reallocating funds, borrowing from local suppliers, or seeking parental contributions. Therefore, effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved without timely, sufficient, and well-managed financial support through capitation grants.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that, the government should increase the amount of capitation grants and ensure their timely disbursement to enable schools to procure essential teaching and learning materials without disruption. The current per-pupil funding formula should be revised to include a minimum grant guarantee for schools with low enrolments, while also taking into account inflation and changing economic conditions. Furthermore, schools should actively involve parents, communities, and other stakeholders in decision-making processes to promote transparency and supplement government funding. Finally, schools are encouraged to diversify resource mobilization through income-generating projects and partnerships with development actors to reduce over-dependence on capitation grants.

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