



REPOA

P.O. Box 33223, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

157 Mgombani Street, Regent Estate

Tel: +255 (0) 22 2700083 / 2772556

Fax: +255 (0) 22 2775738

Email: repoa@repoa.or.tz

Website: www.repoa.or.tz

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The Governance of the Capitation Grant in Primary Education in Tanzania:

Why Civic Engagement and School Autonomy Matter

Kenny Manara and Stephen Mwombela



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The Governance of the Capitation Grant in Primary Education in Tanzania: Why Civic Engagement and School Autonomy Matter

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Tel: +255 (0) 22 2700083 / 2772556
Fax: +255 (0) 22 2775738
Email: repa@repa.or.tz
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Abstract

This study examines the governance of the capitation grant in 48 primary schools in six local councils of Tanzania, a recurrent expenditure mechanism introduced to compensate for the abolition of school fees in public schools in 2002. The study focuses on whether civic engagement (demand-side) and/or school autonomy (supply-side) variables affect the governance of this grant at the school level. The aspects of governance studied are effectiveness, rule of law, accountability and participation. The research applied quantitative and qualitative methods; a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was administered to a total of 144 respondents complemented by data drawn from focus group discussions and key informant interviews involving an additional 130 participants.

Statistical evidence indicates that effectiveness is the most observed aspect of the governance of the capitation grant in the schools surveyed, while the rule of law is the least observed aspect of governance. Both civic engagement and school autonomy variables were found to be associated with the governance of the capitation grant in schools. In particular, results from a multiple regression analysis show that the exercise of agency by parents, for example, through attending meetings and openly discussing issues of community importance, is a significant predictor of better governance of the capitation grant in schools.

The assessment suggests that strengthening the governance of funds disbursed at the school level is critically important in improving the quality of primary education sub-sector in Tanzania. Based on the evidence gathered the study recommends the collaboration of local government authorities with civil society organisations (CSOs) to strengthen the capacity of school committees; the introduction of school community dialogues for the head teachers and school committee chairpersons on a quarterly basis to submit school financial reports; and the implementation of political mobilisation projects by CSOs to raise awareness among parents and communities of their rights and responsibilities in monitoring public service delivery.

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List of Abbreviations

AGRI	African Governance Report Indicators
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEST	Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania
CSO	Civil society organisation
DCC	District Consultative Committees
DC	District Council
D-by-D	Decentralisation by Devolution
DPEO	District Primary Education Officer
DT	District Treasurer
EFA	Education for All
ESDP	Education Sector Development Programme
ETP	Education Training Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoT	Government of Tanzania
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
IIAG	Indexes of African Governance
LGA	Local government authority
LGB	Local Governance Barometer
LGRP	Local Government Reform Programme
MC	Municipal Council
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEO	Mtaa Executive Officer
MVC	Most vulnerable children
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PLWA	People living with HIV and AIDS
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RCC	Regional Consultative Committees
REDET	Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania
SAP	Structural adjustment programmes
SBM	School-based management
SLO	Statistics and Logistics Officer
SMS	Short message service
SNV	Dutch Development Organisation

TLM	Teaching and learning materials
TPR	Teacher-pupil ratio
Tshs	Tanzanian shillings
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
USD	United States dollar
VA	Village Assembly
VEO	Village Executive Officer
WDC	Ward Development Committees
WGA	World Governance Assessments
WEC	Ward Education Coordinators
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

Introduction

The Government of Tanzania (GoT) introduced the capitation grant in primary schools in 2002 in order to directly fund school-level recurrent expenditures (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2001). This created a simple mechanism to have funds reach the school level for quality improvements (Carlitz, 2007; Policy Forum, 2009). In short, “money follows pupils”. The primary aim of the grant was to replace revenue lost to schools because of the abolition of fees in 2002 (Uwazi, 2010).

The capitation grant’s formula-based structure was designed to avoid disparities in fund disbursements which, historically, have been extremely large in Tanzania (Rajani, 2009). Starting from 2002, each public primary school in Tanzania was to receive Tshs 16,000 (about USD 10 at the current exchange rate) for every enrolled child every year as a capitation grant until 2007 when the first Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) ended. PEDP II (2007-2011) continued to recognise the importance of the capitation grant, although it reduced the grant to Tshs 10,000 (about USD 7 at the current exchange rate) per enrolled child.

The capitation grant aims to ensure the availability of teaching and learning and materials (TLM) in schools, but this outcome may not be realised if effective and well-regulated structures are not in place to allocate, disburse, expend and monitor grant monies. In full devolution of financial responsibilities to schools, the allocation of funds must be published and accessible for public scrutiny. In addition, the school budgets and financial outlays must be able to be examined by parents and any community member interested in school affairs. If the proper systems of checks and balances are not in place, governance principles in the management of funds may not be observed by school managers.

One could also argue that the introduction of formula-based funding and the delegation of spending decisions to teachers and parents can increase the possibility of fraud, as many more people have direct access to the funds (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Thus, fraud may occur at school level where money intended for school use is diverted for the personal benefit of individuals, either in cash or in kind (Levacic & Downes, 2004). In Tanzania, for example, corruption is one of the factors that have been identified to weaken the direct support to schools (Mushi, 2006).

1.1 Problem Statement

While the capitation grant is disbursed to public primary schools to improve the quality of primary education,¹ its governance by school-level structures is constrained by low civic engagement (demand-side factors) and limited school autonomy (supply-side factors). Inappropriate use of the capitation grant in some primary schools was mentioned by the *Joint Education Sector Review 2007* as among the major challenges facing the primary education sub-sector (URT, 2007). It was reported that collusion between school committee chairpersons and head teachers, and between head teachers and District Primary Education Officers (DPEOs), undermined the implied transparency and efficiency of direct support to schools (Mushi, 2006).

There are some indications that there may be a problem of leakage of funds at school level rather than at district level, i.e., grants were not properly used by the school (Sundet, 2004). Even when the capitation funds are available at the school level, the ability of the capitation grant to empower pupils from poor households and marginalised schools would depend on how efficiently the funds are used by school managers (Fiszbein, Ringold, & Rogers, 2009). Therefore, the governance of the

1 In particular, the capitation grant was meant to finance the purchase of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, as well as to fund repairs, administration materials and examination expenses.

capitation grant in primary schools is influenced by both civic engagement (demand-side factors) and school autonomy (supply-side factors).

1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of the study was to investigate the state of governance of the capitation grant in primary schools from the perspectives of civic engagement and school autonomy. Specifically, the study aims to: (i) examine the governance of the capitation grant in primary schools, and (ii) assess the influence of civic engagement and school autonomy on the governance of capitation grants in primary schools.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Literature on the capitation grant in primary education has principally focused on the problems of grant disbursements from central government to local government authorities (LGAs) and schools (REPOA & Ministry of Finance, 2004; HakiElimu, 2007; Policy Forum, 2009; Uwazi, 2010; Claussen & Assad, 2010; HakiElimu, 2011a) Nevertheless, studying the usage of the funds that reach schools is equally important. This study seeks to shed light on the governance of the capitation grant in primary schools notwithstanding the chronic delays and cuts in disbursements from the central and local governments to schools.

In addition, a recent study has highlighted the dwindling value of the capitation grant in Tanzania.² This has led to calls for an increment of capitation grant allocation from the current Tshs 10,000 per pupil because the current amount is too small to cover the cost of learning materials (Uwazi, 2010). This study also seeks to inform the ongoing debate on whether or not to increase the capitation grant allocation threshold from the current Tshs 10,000 per pupil per annum through the examination of the governance dimension at school level.

² PEDP I protected the capitation grant against depreciation of the shilling as it was expressed in US dollars. In 2002, the USD10 grant was worth the equivalent of Tshs 9,666. In 2009, the Tshs 10,000 grant was worth only Tshs 6,078 (expressed in 2002 shillings), a 37% decline in value (Uwazi, 2010).

2

Devolution of Primary School Management in Tanzania

In response to challenges facing basic education, the Tanzanian government in 1995 formulated the Education and Training Policy (ETP). The policy's broad aims included enhancing partnerships in the delivery of education, expanding the financial base and the cost effectiveness of education, and streamlining education management structures through the devolution of authority to schools, communities and LGAs (URT, 2001). Following the ETP, a sector-wide approach to education development was initiated two years later through the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) to enhance collaboration among key stakeholders.

The localisation of education reforms was done through the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which became operational in 2000. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2000-2003 signalled a change. It identified seven 'priority sectors', of which education and health were the most critical (Rajani, 2009). The stage was set for government support to schools with funds and overall policy guidelines through PEDP. Aligned with the ESDP, the PEDP drew upon the broader international framework, which includes several international declarations such as Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The PEDP emphasises community involvement through democratically elected school committees, which have the responsibility for planning, implementation and supervision of all school development activities (Makongo & Rajani, 2003). In addition, PEDP calls for the shifting of control over educational resources and basic decision-making to the district, community and school levels, which are supported by the LGRP (Makongo & Mbilinyi, 2003). By implication, PEDP introduced two new grants to make funds available at the school level: the development grant to cover infrastructure costs, and the capitation grant to contribute to quality improvements (Mmari, 2005).

Under PEDP, the roles and responsibilities of school committees were revised to allow them to supervise development projects and manage the capitation grant at the school level (Tidemand & Msami, 2010). In this respect, the school committee is recognised as a focal point for the promotion and transformation of primary education delivery (Makongo & Rajani, 2003). Therefore, the school committee for every public primary school is responsible for the management of two accounts, namely the capitation grant account and development grant account.

The expenditure of grant monies has to comply fully with the *PEDP Financial Management and Accounting Manual* (Mmari, 2005). The head teacher is responsible for keeping records of all financial transactions at school level and is accountable for all funds entrusted to him/her. While the school committee provides oversight to school management, the head teacher is the secretary of the committee and keeps records and minutes of the committee meetings.

Reports on the utilisation of bank accounts are prepared by the head teacher and subsequently authorised by the school committee chairperson, the village/*mtaa* chairperson and by the Ward Education Coordinator (WEC). The school reports are submitted to the council. The school-level data are then compiled by the council to produce a council-level PEDP quarterly report. These reports contain information on:

- Programme performance and constraints;
- PEDP account bank balances with bank statements;
- Progress reviews and action plans for the development budget;
- School enrolment; and the
- Capitation grant (Tidemand, Olsen, & Sola, 2007).

The council-level reports are in turn submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office – Regional and Local Government (PMO-RALG) via the regional secretariats which compile them to produce a PEDP Annual Review Report. School committees and teachers, however, do not receive feedback,³ This indicates that PEDP progress reporting is linear from the bottom to the top; i.e., an extractive reporting style. This lack of feedback undermines school autonomy as well as disenfranchising community members involved in school management. Yet, very few studies have attempted to investigate the governance of the capitation grant in primary schools from the civic engagement (demand-side factors) and school autonomy (supply-side factors) perspectives. This is a gap in the current debate on the efficacy of the capitation grant in primary schools which this research aims to fill.

2.1 Concepts and Measurement

Best practice in education financing is comprehensive, i.e., all costs incurred at school level are covered (Galabawa, 2007). Funding should also be cost based; allocations should be derived from the analysis of the costs involved in providing education across a variety of contexts addressing differentiated problems. Allocations also act as incentives; they are meant to encourage schools and individuals to act in line with agreed upon educational policies. In this regard, the capitation grant for primary education in Tanzania is meant to provide money for teaching and learning materials for pupils enrolled in public schools (URT, 2001 & 2006). The allocation of Tshs 10,000 per pupil per annum is to be used according to the breakdown in Table 1.

Table 1: Capitation Grant Breakdown

No.	Capitation Items	Allocations
1	Textbooks, teaching guides, supplementary reading materials	4,000
2	Chalk, exercise books, pens, pencils	2,000
3	Facility repairs	2,000
4	Examination paper, purchase and printing	1,000
5	Administration materials	1,000
Capitation grant per pupil		10,000

Source: Adapted from HakiElimu (2011b)

Although increasing resource flows and other support to the education sector is necessary to give poor people greater access to quality education, in no way is that sufficient (Arcia, Macdonald, Patrinos, & Porta, 2011). On the supply side, schools should be given some autonomy over the use of their funding and be held accountable to their clients for employing these inputs efficiently. On the demand side, control over the use of resources shifts from local governments to citizens and voters, who are the ultimate users of goods and services. Governance of the capitation grant is therefore critical in improving the quality of primary education delivery.

2.1.1 Defining Capitation Grant Governance

The National Framework on Good Governance defines “good governance” as “the exercise of official powers in the management of the country’s resources in an effort to increase and utilise such resources for the betterment of life” (URT, 1999:2). This definition calls for a system of public

³ This anomaly has often been discussed in Joint Education Sector Review (JESR).

management which is transparent, responsive to popular interests, responsible and accountable, and one in which public officials are capable, efficient, ethical and professional in serving the interests of the public. Good governance in education is about school and local leaders being responsive and accountable to the school community (supply-side), and about creating a conducive environment for community members to engage effectively on school management (demand-side).

Good governance encompasses informed participation and consensus-orientation, open and accountable institutions, the rule of law, and concrete actions to address equity, inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency (Makongo & Mbilinyi, 2003). Thus, successful capitation grant governance in primary schools requires that resources reach schools, that bureaucrats dutifully follow their orders, that programme goals are regularly measured and monitored, and that there are consequences—both positive and negative—for actions (Crouch & Winkler, 2009). This conceptualisation serves as an operational guide to measure the governance of the capitation grant in primary schools.

2.1.2 Governance Dimensions and Indicators

Mainstream good governance indicators include the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) Project, the Overseas Development Institute’s World Governance Assessments (WGAs), Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Indexes of African Governance (IIAGs), and the African Governance Report Indicators (AGRIs) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. However, the WGIs, WGAs, IIAGs and AGRIs are not citizen-based evaluations (Ivanyna & Shah, 2010). One of their important limitations is that they fail to capture how citizens perceive the governance environment and outcomes in their own countries.⁴

In decentralised settings, the Local Governance Barometer (LGB) developed by the Impact Alliance – which includes the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), and Pact of the United States – fits the bill very well. The LGB is a holistic model that generates a collective opinion about the state of governance in a certain locality (Memela, Mautjane, Nzo, & van Hoof, 2008). The criteria of the LGB in measuring good governance are effectiveness, the rule of law, accountability, participation and equity (Pact & Impact Alliance, 2006). In the context of the capitation grant, the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) indicators that are part of the Performance Measurement Framework can be employed to build further on the measurement of governance.

Thus, this study combined the LGB and PEFA indicators to construct the Primary Education Capitation Grant Governance Index. This Index encompasses four dimensions of governance: i) effectiveness; ii) rule of law; iii) accountability; and iv) participation (see Table 2). The study’s focus on observable variables for each dimension provides an indication of the governance of capitation grants in primary schools.

⁴ Ivanyna and Shah (2010) argue that the foremost concerns for such measurement should be citizens’ evaluation of the governance environment and outcomes in their own countries supplemented by objective indicators of the same.

Table 2: Governance Dimensions, Indicators and Proxy Variables

Governance Dimension	Indicators	Proxy Variables
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of clear plans for capitation spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of capitation items in school plans Preparation of procurement summary for capitation spending at school level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good management of capitation funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with PEDP financial and procurement guidelines Capitation transactions record keeping at schools
Rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of clear rules on capitation disbursements and spending (PEFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of PEDP financial and procurement guidelines Awareness of capitation funds that reach schools as per formulae
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures taken against misuse of capitation funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases of fraud in capitation spending reported to authorities Suspension of teachers/school committee members accused of misusing capitation funds
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitation expenditures reporting (PEFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of capitation spending reports to ward authorities Presentation of capitation expenditure reports in parents' meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency in capitation funds management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting of capitation disbursements and expenditures on notice boards Access to capitation spending records by CSOs
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of institutional framework for participatory planning and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The involvement of parents in planning for capitation items Submission of procurement summary to School Committee for approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders' monitoring of capitation disbursements and spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of monitoring visits conducted by CSOs Number of CSOs monitoring reports on capitation spending

Source: Adapted from LGB and PEFA indicators

As shown in Figure 1, the study's conceptual model assumes that the level of civic engagement (demand-side factors) explains a substantial part of the cross-jurisdiction differences in the governance of the capitation grant in public primary schools. Demand-side factors include:

- Exercising agency, for example, attending meetings and openly discussing matters of community importance;⁵
- Volunteerism, such as making labour and financial contributions to community service;⁶ and
- Political awareness, for example, voting in civic polls, attending campaign rallies, and listening to and/or reading news from the mass media.⁷

On the supply-side, the study's model predicts that the degree of school autonomy also explains a part of the cross-district differences of capitation grant governance in schools. Aspects of school autonomy include:

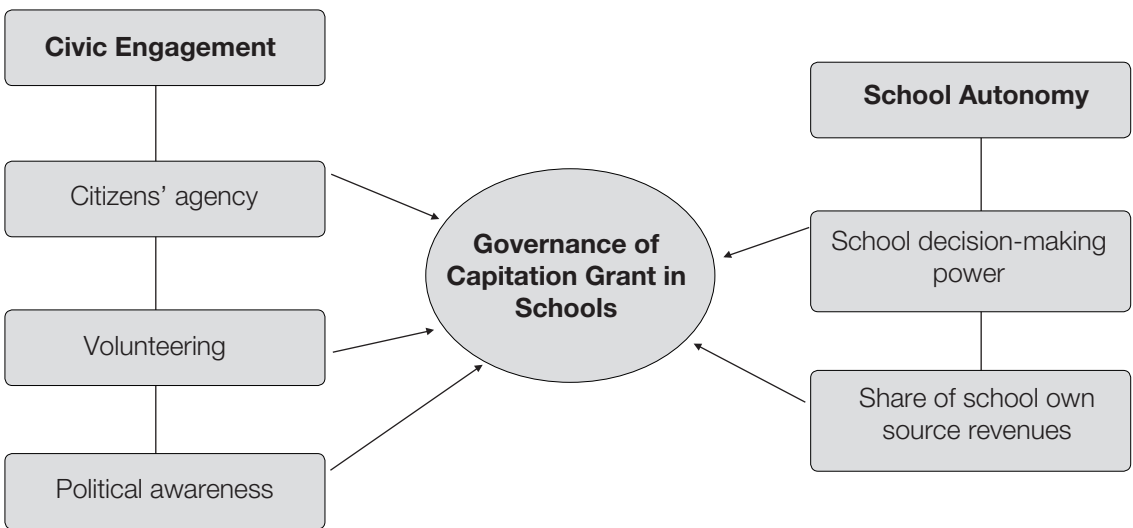
5 See Siraj, 2006; Narayan & Petesch, 2007

6 See United Nations Development Program, 2003; Cohen, 2009

7 Lowndes, Pratchett, & Stoker, 2006

- School decision-making power, for example, planning, budgeting, and spending capabilities;⁸ and
- Share of school own source revenues, such as financial contributions from parents and donations from private sector.⁹

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Capitation Grant Governance in Schools



2.2 Civic Engagement in Tanzania

Civic engagement refers to citizens' interaction with a particular field of interest, for example, public finance policy, with a view to obtaining a favourable outcome from such interaction (World Bank, 2001). Thus, aspects of social accountability such as citizens' agency, volunteerism and political awareness are all forms of civic engagement in Tanzania. For instance, budget advocacy through villagers' participation in Village Assemblies (VA), civil society participation in Ward Development Committees (WDCs), District Consultative Committees (DCCs) and Regional Consultative Committees (RCCs) as well as public expenditure tracking systems/surveys (PETS) have become some of the most popular forms of exercising citizens' agency in Tanzania.

2.2.1 Citizens' Agency

Exercising agency refers to changes in the capabilities of individuals or groups to take purposeful actions (Narayan & Petesch, 2007). This concept assumes that ongoing contact between the public and their leaders provides the citizenry with the opportunity to draw attention to weaknesses in service delivery, and, as a result, the leaders would take appropriate measures in line with user preferences (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005). Civic initiative, or exercising agency, is thus considered to be the most important characteristic of, and a prerequisite for, good governance (Siraj, 2006).

⁸ See King & Ozler, 1998; Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009

⁹ See Arcia et al., 2011

In Tanzania, the quality of exchanges between community members and government at different levels has reached a higher platform recently as each side appreciates the attitude and effort of the other (Kessy, Mashindano, Rweyemamu, & Charle, 2006). In their study of democracy and poverty in Ruvuma region in Tanzania, the authors found that community members are starting to appreciate local government efforts in widening the participatory process in generating plans and programmes so as to make them more effective.

2.2.2 Volunteerism

Volunteering is working, the putting in of time and energy, which one person does for another or for the public, of their free will, and with no material compensation similar in quantity or quality to the market value for these services (Cohen, 2009). The participatory aspect of volunteerism can contribute to a heightened understanding of the forces which shape governments and societies, leading to greater transparency, accountability and improved governance (United Nations Development Programme, 2003). Traditionally, most tribes in Tanzania work through volunteerism guided by clear regulations.

A recent study of social capital in Kwizu village in Same District found the community doing road and school maintenance in their village every Monday, a practice they termed as *msaragambo*.¹⁰ However, district authorities in some regions have been coercing residents to participate in *msaragambo*. In Tanga city, for example, authorities have ordered the closure of all businesses for the first six hours of every Saturday for city dwellers to engage in an involuntary operation to clean the city's environment.¹¹

Lisaga, a mutual help system whereby a person who needs help for ploughing his land or for weeding asks his neighbours to join in and help on a specific day, is common in cotton growing areas of the Lake Zone (Shao, 2002). The host has to prepare meals and drinks for his *lisaga* team.¹² The study noted that the food and drinks for *lisaga* may be even more expensive than direct hire for ox ploughing or casual labour. In addition, *lisaga* often conflicts with the interests of the individual farmers who may want to plough or weed their own farms at the same time as they are requested to help out their neighbours.¹³

In the civil society realm, home-based care to people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWAs) and provision of psychosocial support (PSS) to most vulnerable children (MVC) is largely done by volunteers. For example, under the Mama Mkubwa project in Makete District, volunteers visit the affected families and children regularly or weekly.

2.2.3 Political Awareness

In Tanzania, political awareness manifests itself through voter turnout, attendance in political rallies, and listening to and/or reading news from the mass media. People are more active today in terms of participation in elections despite the fact that attempts to influence the results through both legal and illegal means are common (Kessy et al., 2006). However, the inadequate presence of opposition parties in the civic polls means electoral platforms are monolithic and, hence, issues are overshadowed by preference for personalities, ethnicity and religion (Mmuya & Lemoyan, 2008).

10 Through Msaragambo, the community of Kwizu is glued together and work from morning to afternoon.

11 Newspapers reported that those who would defy the directive would face an instant fine of 50,000/-

12 You can get lisaga help with ox ploughing only if you have ox ploughs yourself. If you are a hoe cultivator then you must seek help from fellow hoe cultivators.

13 This study explored problems of cotton production and marketing in Bunda district.

Mass media is by far the most important means by which people access information. Of the three main types of mass media, radio continues to be the most accessible, followed by newspapers and then television (HakiElimu & REDET, 2006). A radio is the most commonly owned item within households, most likely due to its affordability, portability and low maintenance costs. Currently, internet may be limited in access, affordability and utility, but it is gaining in influence. Information via the internet travels faster, especially with the current wave of providing internet services through mobile phones and short message services (SMS).

2.3 School Autonomy in Tanzania

School autonomy is a form of school management in which schools are given decision-making authority over their operations (Arcia et al., 2011). Some authors have suggested using “de facto” autonomy – as opposed to “de jure” autonomy – as the relevant measure of autonomy. While “de jure” autonomy refers to whether the school has been appointed as autonomous or not, “de facto” autonomy is related to the level of autonomy the school is actually enjoying or exercising as measured by the number (or the percentage) of decisions the school makes (Gertler, Patrinos, & Rubio-Codina, 2007:8).

Public primary schools in Tanzania derive their autonomy from their local councils. Thus, current school autonomy in Tanzania should be viewed in the context of the Decentralisation-by-Devolution Policy of 1998. School autonomy includes freedom to determine own school needs, set priorities and budgets on the basis of the total resource envelope available at school level including subventions from the government (Mushi, 2006). Thus, Arcia et al. (2011) presented two sets of indicators for school autonomy; one for authority over the use of the school budget (school decision-making power) and authority to seek additional funds from non-government sources (share of school own source revenues).

2.3.1 School Decision-Making Power

The progression in school autonomy in the last two decades has led to the conceptualisation of school-based management (SBM) as a form of decentralisation in which the school is in charge of most managerial decisions but with the participation of parents through school committees (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibáñez, 2009). School autonomy fosters governance by making the school committee in charge of school management (Arcia et al., 2011).

Although PEDP has increased school autonomy, the role of local governments at district, ward and village levels in the delivery of primary education remained unclear. Interference by the District Primary Education Office (DPEO), Ward Education Coordinators (WECs) and village government officials have been creating tensions among the school committee members and teachers. The school committee is the lynchpin of the success of the PEDP at the community level (Tanzania Education Network, 2003), but members do not have full mandate on school management.

2.3.2 Share of Own Source Revenues Versus Grants

Public schools are fiscally decentralised if they are allowed to mobilise own resources for school operations and development expenditures (Eskeland & Filmer, 2002). Innovative local sources of education development finance can easily be tapped where there are effective community-based school committees running the relevant school (Lwaitama, 2004). In Tanzania, there are two sources of own school revenues, namely donations from the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and contributions from parents and the wider community (URT, 2001 & 2006).

Public primary schools also generate own revenues from gardening, selling tree seedlings, small restaurants and milling machines. Other schools, especially those in urban centres, rent out their premises and charge those who operate petty businesses within their compounds. A recent government-commissioned PETS found that private contributions to schools, including parents' contributions, constituted 28.4% of total non-wage resources (Claussen & Assad, 2010).



Methodology

This current research is a cross-sectional survey using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Survey tools included structured questionnaires, semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The main aim of adopting quantitative and qualitative methodologies was to enable the triangulation of data (Kress, 2011). Data derived from questionnaire respondents (n=144) were triangulated with the narratives of research participants who were engaged in interviews and FGDs (n=130).

3.1 Area of the Study

The survey was conducted in six councils: Singida Municipal Council, Morogoro Municipal Council, Songea Municipal Council, Mvomero District Council, Mbeya District Council and Kondoa District Council. The selection of these case councils was based on the criterion of the expenditure performance ratio of the Primary Education Block Grant - Other Charges (whose main component is the capitation grant).¹⁴ Applying this criterion, two high-spending, two average-spending and two low-spending councils were purposively selected for the study. According to the 2009/2010 Budget Performance Report, Mvomero DC and Singida MC were at the higher end with respect to the expenditure performance ratio; Morogoro MC and Kondoa DC were around average; while Songea MC and Mbeya DC were at the lower end.¹⁵

3.2 Sampling and Sample Size

Measurement of governance can occur not only at the level of systems but also at the local provider level (Fiszbein, Ringold, & Rogers, 2009). The research population for this study was all public primary schools in the case councils. In each district, two wards were first purposely selected to participate in the study on the basis of distance from the Council headquarters (the most remote ward and the closest ward). In each ward, two lists of best-performing schools and poor-performing schools in terms of accountability (record keeping at schools and timely submission of capitation spending reports to relevant authorities) were developed as sample frames. From each list, 2 schools were randomly selected, making a total of 8 schools per district and 48 schools for the study.

In each school, the questionnaires were administered to the school committee chairperson, one parents' representative in the school committee, and a teacher responsible for taking care of the learning and teaching materials (who is also a member of the school committee), making a total of 24 respondents in each district and 144 for the study. Data from the questionnaire were supplemented by focus group discussions with the parents (between 6-10 participants) in each ward as well as key-informant interviews with the head teachers, two Ward Education Coordinators (WECs) and one member of a CSO involved in monitoring primary education delivery in each district.

3.3 Research Tools

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The governance criteria measured by this research tool are: (i) effectiveness, (ii) rule of law, (iii) accountability and (iv) participation. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert response scale; participants' were asked to give their opinions on selected indicators under each criteria

¹⁴ Expenditure performance ratio is a ratio of actual expenditure over budgeted expenditure

¹⁵ See Comparisons of Primary Education Sector Finances: Performance Ratios, available online at www.logintanzania.net

(see Table 2 in Section 2.1.2 above) along a scale of 1 to 5, whereby 5=very good governance; 4=good governance; 3=satisfactory governance; 2=bad governance; and 1=very bad governance. In total, the questionnaire was administered to 144 school agents.

Part VI of the questionnaire collected data related to civic engagement and school autonomy. As shown in the conceptual model (Figure 1), questions on civic engagement focused on citizens' agency, volunteering and political awareness, and questions on school autonomy examined decision-making power and share of own source revenues in the surveyed schools.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussions

The perceptions of parents on governance of the capitation grant were gathered through focus group discussions. Focus groups provided a safe environment in which all participants were encouraged to contribute. Since individual perceptions and attitudes are shaped by their social context and are often best expressed in response to the opinions of others, FGDs allow for the interplay of ideas and comments that build upon one another (Waters, 2010). One FGD session was conducted in each ward.

3.3.3 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted in order to shed further light on governance of the capitation grant in schools from the civic engagement and school autonomy perspectives. Informants included head teachers, WECs and civil society actors involved in monitoring capitation spending in schools. These information sources were selected based on their knowledge of the research topic by virtue of their position or occupation (Waters, 2010).

3.4 Data Analysis

Respondents' perceptions were analysed based on the four criteria of governance adopted by the study index. The average score for each criteria was calculated based on participants' responses along the Likert scale to produce a numerical measure of the governance of the capitation grant. Each criteria was given the same weight in the Capitation Grant Governance Index. For this Index, the assumption is that governance is better when individual and overall scores are higher.

Multiple regression analysis was then applied to identify the strongest variables of capitation grant governance observed within the index. Standardized coefficients, popularly known as beta coefficients, were used to assess which of the independent variables have a greater effect on capitation grant governance.

With respect to the qualitative tools applied, excerpts from the FGDs and key informant interviews were translated into English from the Swahili audio tapes, which were supplemented by field notes. The transcripts were developed by using a three-stage coding procedure as suggested by Waters (2010). First, open coding was used to identify concepts and their properties and dimensions. Second, axial coding was used to relate the categories developed in the previous stage, to further refine emerging categories, and to link categories on the basis of underlying properties and dimensions. Finally, selective coding was employed to integrate and refine major themes and relationships in the data.

4

Analysis and Findings

4.1 Governance Scores by Main Criteria

The mean scores for the four governance dimensions (effectiveness, rule of law, accountability and participation) are presented in Table 3. Effectiveness (mean 4.5) was found to be the most obeyed aspect of governance and the rule of law (mean 1.70) was the least conformed to.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Capitation Grant Governance Criteria

Capitation Grant Governance Criteria	Mean
Effectiveness	4.5
Rule of law	1.7
Accountability	4.3
Participation	3.9

Source: Field data

As shown in Table 2, schools' **effectiveness** in governance was assessed via four proxy variables – i) incorporation of capitation items in the school plans, ii) preparation of the procurement summary for capitation spending at schools, iii) compliance with PEDP financial and procurement guidelines, and iv) capitation transactions record keeping at schools. The high mean score for effectiveness seems to indicate that these proxy variables represent 'a must-do list of activities' for head teachers and school committee members.

The poor performance of the **rule of law** was not surprising. Given the nature of the four proxy variables – i) knowledge of PEDP financial and procurement guidelines, ii) awareness of capitation funds that reach schools as per formulae, iii) cases of fraud in capitation spending reported to authorities, and iv) suspension of teachers/school committee members accused of misusing capitation funds – conforming to the rule of law with respect to the capitation grant is more complicated. According to the PEDP Financial Procedures and Guidelines, overseeing school-based financial management is the responsibility of parents through school committees. But the findings suggest that these committees cannot effectively enforce the compliance of these procedures and guidelines, implying that unscrupulous teachers may be allowed to escape without any form of disciplinary action.

The findings in Table 3 are supported by the analysis of qualitative data. Despite the abolition of user fees in public primary schools in 2002, parents still contribute financial resources to schools before their children are enrolled in Standard I. In Utengule Usonge Ward, Mbeya DC, a participant in the FGD revealed that:

“This year we paid Tshs 11,000 for each pupil enrolled in Standard I. We paid Tshs 10,000 for a desk and the remaining Tshs 1,000 as a contribution to the salary of the security guard.”

A similar trend was observed in Singida MC, where a participant said, “We contribute Tshs 2,400 per year for payment of the school security guards.” Such contributions are against the law because PEDP guidelines disallow any charges during enrolment.

Accountability was the second most observed dimension of capitation grant governance in the schools assessed. In Mvomero DC, the quarterly capitation reports are prepared collectively in one location in each ward. The qualitative evidence shows that head teachers and their WECs sit down together after every quarter. Head teachers submit their bank statements and WECs help them in

writing their reports. One copy of each school report is submitted to DPEO and one copy remains at the WEC office. Village Executive Officers (VEOs) sign the reports together with the chairpersons of the school committees and the head teachers.

Furthermore, the data from FGDs across case councils show that information dissemination from the schools to the community is poorly designed, for example, financial reports are kept in files or posted on the walls inside school offices, leading to inadequate access to this information for interested parents and citizens. Since the head teachers are the main source of information, such disempowering practices further sideline parents from the chain of school accountability. Nevertheless, head teachers complain that outdoor notice boards are abused by community members, including instances where papers containing information have been torn up or pulled down.

With respect to the **participation** dimension of capitation grant governance in schools, findings from FGDs indicate that during parents' meetings, head teachers in some schools simply read out what the school intends to achieve during the following year. Since school plans are often not known to parents beforehand, parents are often unable to provide any meaningful input during the meetings. This implies that the involvement of parents in school planning is largely cosmetic.

4.2 Comparison of Capitation Governance Scores Across Councils

Table 4 compares the governance scores across case councils. Based on their overall mean scores, capitation grant governance in schools is marginally higher in Morogoro MC, Kondoa DC and Songea MC (3.7), followed by Mvomero DC (3.6) and lastly Singida MC and Mbeya DC (3.4). Since Singida MC and Mvomero DC are high-performing councils in terms of capitation grant expenditure, the findings from Table 4 suggest that capitation grant governance scores are not consistent with the capitation grant expenditure ratio.

Table 4: Overall Scores of Capitation Grant Governance by Council

Council	Expenditure Performance Ratio	No. of Schools	Mean
Singida MC	High	24	3.4
Mvomero DC	High	24	3.6
Morogoro MC	Average	24	3.7
Kondoa DC	Average	24	3.7
Songea MC	Low	24	3.7
Mbeya DC	Low	24	3.4

Source: Field data

Table 5 presents the governance scores by main criteria across the categories of high performers, average performers and low performers. Based on the mean scores, capitation grant governance in schools is marginally higher in Morogoro MC and Kondoa DC (average performers) and lower in Singida MC and Mvomero DC (high performers). This indicates that schools in Morogoro MC and Kondoa DC adhere most to capitation grant governance despite being average performers in terms of capitation grant expenditures.

Table 5: Scores of Capitation Grant Governance by Category

Indicator	Ranking	Council	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effectiveness	High performers	Singida MC	24	4.3	0.90
		Mvomero DC	24	4.5	0.82
	Average performers	Morogoro MC	24	4.3	0.99
		Kondoa DC	24	4.7	0.48
	Low performers	Songea MC	24	4.6	0.81
		Mbeya DC	24	4.3	1.13
Rule of law	High performers	Singida MC	24	1.6	0.93
		Mvomero DC	24	1.7	1.12
	Average performers	Morogoro MC	24	1.9	1.23
		Kondoa DC	24	2.0	0.89
	Low performers	Songea MC	24	1.8	0.82
		Mbeya DC	24	1.5	0.78
Accountability	High performers	Singida MC	24	4.1	1.28
		Mvomero DC	24	4.5	0.84
	Average performers	Morogoro MC	24	4.4	1.19
		Kondoa DC	24	4.2	1.43
	Low performers	Songea MC	24	4.4	1.09
		Mbeya DC	24	4.2	1.21
Participation	High performers	Singida MC	24	3.6	1.10
		Mvomero DC	24	3.9	1.33
	Average performers	Morogoro MC	24	4.1	1.15
		Kondoa DC	24	3.9	1.19
	Low performers	Songea MC	24	4.1	0.99
		Mbeya DC	24	3.8	1.58

Source: Field data

Results from *F* statistic tests show that there are significant differences between the high, average and low-performing councils in the **effectiveness** of their governance of the capitation grant (sig .044) as well as in the **rule of law** (sig .043). However, no significant differences were found with respect to schools' **accountability** (sig.469) and **participation** (sig .199) with respect to their governance of the capitation grant.

Since *F*-tests verify the significance level, then, two of the study's hypotheses are accepted:

- 1) There is a significant difference between high performers, average performers, low performers in the **effectiveness** of their governance of the capitation grant; and
- 2) There is a significant difference between high performers, average performers, low performers in the **rule of law** dimension of capitation grant governance.

However, the other two hypotheses are rejected:

- 3) There is significant difference between high performers, average performers, low performers in the **accountability** dimension of capitation grant governance; and
- 4) There is significant difference between high performers, average performers, low performers in the **participation** dimension of capitation grant governance.

Similarly, the qualitative analysis shows that schools in Morogoro MC and Kondoa DC are relatively better in conforming to governance ideals. A participant in the Mafiga Ward FGD in Morogoro revealed that planning for capitation funds is done after the funds are released. Head teachers call meetings of the school committee to discuss what to buy after receiving the funds. In Kondoa, it was observed that a procurement summary is prepared by the school administration and tabled in the school committee meeting for approval.

Despite their high performance status, evidence from FGDs and interviews show that schools in Singida MC and Mvomero DC do not conform as highly to aspects of capitation grant governance

when compared to Morogoro MC and Kondo DC (average performers). One head teacher in Mvomero, for example, admitted that he knows nothing about book-keeping and financial management and that he and his colleagues had just attended a one-hour orientation provided jointly by the DPEO and District Treasurer.

NGOs were found to be active in following up on capitation grant disbursements and spending in schools. In Mvomero, however, a key informant complained about NGOs that incite parents not to pay financial contributions. He charged that:

“They conducted school dialogues and moderators told parents that schools receive the capitation grant in full. Some of parents believed them and condemned the head teachers for secrecy. Even worse, the discussions were recorded and aired by a local television station.”

4.3. The importance of Civic Engagement and School Autonomy

The underlying question is whether civic engagement and school autonomy explain the observed dynamics of capitation grant governance in schools. The regression results in Table 6 suggest that the civic engagement and school autonomy variables explain the variation in governance of the capitation grant in primary schools. In the high performers category, exercising agency (Sig. 0,000) and political awareness (Sig. 0,000) are strong predictors at .087, and share of school own source revenues (Sig. 0,000) is a weak predictor at .069. In addition, exercising agency is the stronger predictor in the average performers category at .046 (Sig. 0,001), and share of school own source revenues a weaker predictor at .029 (Sig. 0,031). School decision-making power is a strong predictor in the low performers category at .021 (Sig. 0,152), and exercising agency is weak at .006 (Sig. 0,301).

Table 6: Factors Affecting Capitation Grant Governance in Schools

	Beta Values (standardized coefficients)				
	Exercising agency	Volunteerism	Political awareness	School decision-making power	Own source revenues versus grants
High performers	.087	.081	.087	.086	.069
Average performers	.046	.039	.035	.038	.029
Low performers	.006	.008	.019	.021	.011

Source: Field data

These data show that the level of governance is high in average-performing councils, where the exercising agency variable showed relative strength. This indicates that a change in exercising agency has a greater relative effect on capitation grant governance in schools. Correlation analysis confirms this pattern of findings: The range in the level of significance is $.03 < p < .08$.

Exercising agency is one measure of civic engagement. Perhaps a more interesting test would be to assess whether the overall contribution of civic engagement was significant. Information regarding civic engagement is also contained in the political awareness and volunteerism variables. The data show that political awareness is a strong predictor of capitation grant governance in the top spenders' category while volunteerism is not among the weak predictors. Thus, civic engagement is an important determinant of capitation governance in schools. In other words, demand-side efforts matter for improving capitation grant governance in schools.

The qualitative analysis shows that school autonomy is constrained by interference in school management affairs by higher authorities (from the village, ward and district). In Mbeya, for example, a participant in Inyala Ward FGD revealed:

“In our school, there was a letter from the Council which ordered the school administration to buy materials from a particular shop in town. When new members of school committee assumed power in November last year (2010), they questioned the validity of the standing order because buying materials in town involves unnecessary transportation costs. The query helped them because the DPEO allowed the school to decide where to purchase their school needs.”

In some councils, village and *mtaa* leaders are invited to attend the school committee meetings and parents’ meetings. In Mbeya, for example, a head teacher reported that the VEO attended school committee meetings. The VEO, in turn, briefed village authorities about the deliberations of the meetings. This suggests that the members of school committees are not free in determining capitation grant expenditures. Overall, the relative importance of citizens’ agency permeates the study findings.

In addition, the analysis shows that parents contribute resources in order to offset the insufficiency of the capitation grant, especially in the purchasing of chalk. A participant in Inyala Ward FGD revealed:

“One school last month (August 2011) sent all pupils home because of the absence of chalk. Village leaders intervened and ordered the head teacher to call a parents’ meeting and mobilise financial contributions to resolve the situation. Parents heeded the call and contributed money which was used to buy cartons of chalk.”

This suggests that erratic capitation grant disbursements to schools constrain the funding of school-level recurrent expenditures. As a coping strategy, teachers have been borrowing teaching guides and learning materials from vendors against the projected capitation disbursements. However, this has recently proven to have set a precarious precedent as many schools failed to settle their bills due to chronic delays and insufficiency of the disbursed capitation funds. A key informant in Mvomero revealed that this practice has been prohibited effectively from this year (2011). He pointed out, for example, that the allocation for April-June 2011 was never disbursed. Schools received funds in August 2011, which is another financial year (2011-2012) altogether.

Discussion

Both the statistical analysis and qualitative assessments consistently showed that the level of governance of the capitation grant in schools in average-performing councils is higher than in high-performing councils and low-performing councils. Specifically, **effectiveness** is the aspect of capitation grant governance most adhered to in the case councils. The survey data indicate that although incorporation of capitation items in the school plans is constrained by the unpredictability of disbursements, almost all of the schools surveyed developed a procurement summary and tabled it with their school committees for approval.

Despite the prominence of effectiveness as a measure of capitation grant governance, most capitation grant expenditures in primary schools are not in line with capitation spending earmarks. As one head teacher in Songea MC argued, “it is difficult to comply with capitation guidelines because the money received is very little and released very late.” This implies that certain capitation items may no longer be needed when the money is deposited in the school account late and/or not disbursed in its entirety, which prompts the school administration to alter the capitation grant conditions in order to meet the current school needs.

The degree to which the **rule of law** aspect of governance is adhered to varies across the case councils. The survey data show that the mean score for rule of law is highest in Kondo DC (2.0) and lowest in Mbeya DC (1.5). The analysis found that knowledge of PEDP financial and procurement guidelines by head teachers is declining, which was attributed to the abolition of capacity-building initiatives during PEDP II. The situation is worse for members of school committees, since sensitisation about their roles and responsibilities has virtually ceased. The capacity issue also undermines the observance of capitation grant governance principles among the head teachers and members of school committees.

In addition, the analysis shows that many cases of fraud in capitation spending may not be reported to the relevant authorities. With the exception of Mvomero Ward, the participants in the FGDs across the case councils indicated that they have never heard any case of fraud in their schools but some of them admitted to hearing that the head teachers were transferred to other schools after being found guilty of embezzlement of funds. This finding is consistent with Kessy et al. (2006) who found a head teacher reported to the district council by the school committee for embezzlement of the PEDP funds was not held accountable.¹⁶

Accountability as an aspect of capitation grant governance is highest in Mvomero DC (4.5) and lowest in Singida MC (4.1). However, the difference among the categories of high performing, average performing and low performing councils is insignificant. The analysis shows that schools comply with requirement of upward accountability to ward officials more than downward accountability to parents and the community at large. In Mvomero, the head teachers are gathered in one location and are assisted by WECs in preparing the school quarterly financial reports. On the supply-side, this may compromise the power of ward authorities to hold the head teachers accountable when anomalies in the capitation grant expenditures are found. On the demand-side, this also compromises citizens' incentive and willingness to actively engage in monitoring capitation grant spending.

Regardless of the stated reasons for their choices of information dissemination methods, the practice of plastering capitation grant information on the walls within the head teachers' offices makes it difficult for parents to scrutinise the capitation grant transactions. The analysis suggests that where information is available to parents, measures have been taken to hold unscrupulous teachers and committee members to account. Conversely, lack of information on capitation grant

¹⁶ He was instead transferred to a nearby primary school in the same position.

management on the part of parents in conjunction with the bias of head teachers towards upward accountability implies that parents have limited or no means to initiate actions in the case of misuse or embezzlement of capitation funds.

The degree of **participation** in capitation planning, procurement and monitoring also varied across the case councils but the difference among the categories of high performing councils, average performing councils and low performing councils is insignificant.. In Songea, for example, parents tend to visit the head teachers' offices to ask questions as well as attending parents' meetings. On the contrary, parents in Mbeya demonstrated poor attendance in school forums, including the parents' meetings. Since schools increase downward accountability through parents' participation, the study's observation of inadequate parental involvement in the case councils is likely to have undermined the governance of the capitation grant.

No matter how efficiently the capitation grant can be disbursed to schools, there is no guarantee that the funds will be spent as intended and will reach the intended pupils if the instrumental participation of the parents in school management is missing (the demand-side factor). As Kessy et al. (2006) found in their study of democracy and poverty in Ruvuma, a poorly instituted administration of the PEDP finances permitted some head teachers to forcefully dominate the show, thus, the PEDP resources were embezzled openly while the voices of the people through school committees were suppressed.

The discussion of the four aspects of capitation grant governance in schools suggests that enabling parents to **exercise their agency** is imperative. For example, school financial reports are read by the head teachers in parents' meetings but in many schools the majority of the parents do not attend these meetings even if they receive invitation letters. As Sundet (2004) argued, there is a need to capacitate the 'demand-side' of service delivery, through ensuring that the users of social services are informed of their rights and obligations and are enabled to exercise their rights through holding the government and service providers accountable.

The significance of **political awareness** for high-spending councils may imply that the vibrancy of local politics can be associated with increased public funding to schools. The evidence shows that if parents feel their vote will help in holding councillors and village/*mtaa* chairpersons to account, most of them may turn up during civic polls. Given the volatility of their positions, such elected leaders often do whatever is in their power to please their voters, particularly resolving the capitation grant question.

Apart from demonstrating more awareness by way of listening to radio, watching television and reading newspapers, parents in Singida MC and Mvomero DC are not in a position to follow-up on the use of capitation funds. This result was unexpected because parents who spent more time following up political news and talking with friends and family about politics were more likely to participate in school management and question school expenditures. One explanation is that some parents may be politically aware but not informed about school issues. Findings show that schools often keep financial reports in files or post them on the walls inside school offices, making it difficult for parents to know what is going on inside the schools.

Decision-making power in schools was found to be undermined by the interference of higher authorities. In almost all case councils, village and ward officials attended school committee meetings

and discussed the procurement summary presented by the head teacher. Although they attend as invitees, their presence may intimidate the members and hence interfere with the decision-making processes. This strongly suggests that school committee decisions are influenced by local leaders and executives. Supply-side measures may therefore not help as much in improving capitation grant governance in schools due to the interference by authorities.

Real power depends upon the capacity to make major decisions and to sanction inappropriate behaviour (Makongo & Mbilinyi, 2003). In the context of the capitation grant, however, the use of funds has been pre-determined by the government. In cases of misuse of the capitation grant by the head teacher, the school committee can only report to the WEC or DPEO but they have no direct influence or power to take disciplinary action. Thus, top-down bureaucratic practices continue to hold sway in the implementation of PEDP at the local level.

The common complaints across the case councils were chronic delays and frequent cuts of capitation disbursements to schools. The analysis shows that the amount of capitation disbursements cuts in some councils was more than half of the total capitation funds budgeted. In Morogoro MC, for example, the disaggregated data shows that Tshs 274 million was budgeted for the capitation grant in FY 2010/2011 but only Tshs 92 million was disbursed from the Ministry of Finance (Key informant interview, Morogoro MC).

The budget guidelines suggest that councils should allocate a minimum threshold per student enrolled to schools, but this is not implemented by the councils.¹⁷ School committees are expected to offset revenue shortfall with **school own source revenues**. However, attempts by the schools to collect financial contributions is often met with resistance from parents who claim that the government is disbursing enough funds (Morogoro MC and Kondo DC), parental inability to pay (Singida MC and Mvomero DC) and lack of civic culture (Songea MC and Mbeya DC).

Even with the collection of financial contributions from parents, these contributions do not compensate for the low level of transfers from councils (Claussen & Assad, 2010). The analysis shows that some teachers in the case councils use part of their wages to buy essential teaching materials such as chalk due to the erratic capitation disbursements. This means despite having some degree of fiscal autonomy, schools are struggling to offset shortfalls in capitation grant disbursements.

¹⁷ Government commissioned Education PETS 2010 revealed that several schools face significant delays in receiving the grants and many receive the first grant allocation several months into the next school year.



Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Both the statistical analysis and qualitative assessments conducted by this study show that the level of capitation grant governance in schools in average-spending councils (Morogoro MC and Kondo DC) is higher than in high-spending councils (Singida MC and Mvomero DC) and low-spending councils (Songea MC and Mbeya DC). This suggests that increasing public expenditures is not a panacea for solving quality problems currently haunting the primary education sub-sector in Tanzania. Improving governance of disbursed funds at the school level is equally important.

The evidence across case councils has shown that frequent cuts and chronic delays of capitation disbursements are just one part of the story. More often than not, the untold story is how school committees and school administrations manage the funds that do reach the schools. This study found that demand-side factors matter most for the governance of the capitation grant in schools. In particular, parental monitoring of school revenues and expenditures can play a critical role in improving the governance of the capitation grant in schools.

Expectedly, the study found that capitation grant governance is undermined by erratic disbursements. Coping strategies include collection of financial contributions from parents. However, when schools fail to fill this financing gap from parents' cash contributions, teachers tended to borrow textbooks and chalks from vendors, a practice which is now prohibited in some wards. As a result, schools continue to face acute shortages of textbooks and basic supplies such as chalk.

Access to quality education by the poor is among the most important pathways out of poverty. And the quality of education relies on schools' access to adequate teaching and learning materials which the introduction of the capitation grant was intended to secure. Yet, this study found that schools in almost all case districts do not receive capitation disbursement in time and in full. Given that most of the pupils in these schools are from disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable households, the Government of Tanzania may never realise its poverty reduction targets if governance challenges facing the capitation grant in primary schools are not overcome.

An intermediate negative outcome is creation of "classes" and a divide between wealthier households who enrol their children in private and international schools and poorer families whose children depend on public schooling. Children from most vulnerable households are likely to be increasingly marginalised from economic opportunities. This will further widen the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" in Tanzania which could engender a fragile political state in the country. In other words, the capitation grant governance challenges run counter to the aspirations of Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, which aims to achieve "a high quality livelihood for all Tanzanians through the realisation of universal primary education, the eradication of illiteracy and the attainment of a level of tertiary education and training commensurate with a critical mass of high quality human resources required to effectively respond to the developmental challenges at all levels."

The current research does not contend that the capitation grant modality has failed to ensure resources are available in public primary schools and to improve equity in primary education delivery. Rather, the study results clearly show how good education policy instruments, such as the capitation grant, can be introduced but never be implemented as intended.

Based on the findings, several important policy implications emerge from the study:

- Head teachers and school committees are responsible for managing and overseeing capitation grant expenditures, respectively. Thus, there should be a systematic way of nurturing the financial management skills of head teachers and developing the monitoring capabilities of school

committee members. LGAs should collaborate with CSOs implementing social accountability programmes in the education sector to strengthen the capacity of school committees in planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of school management and performance.

- Many schools display capitation disbursements but not expenditures. In addition, the majority of the schools surveyed posted this information on the walls inside the head teachers' offices. Hence, parents often had limited or no access to the information needed to monitor school finances. Thus, PEDP reform should introduce quarterly school community dialogues for the head teachers and school committee chairpersons to submit school financial reports to parents and community members for discussion to establish their authenticity.
- Many parents are unaware of their rights and responsibility with regard to the governance of the capitation grant in schools. Yet, civic engagement is a key determinant of improved governance of the capitation grant in schools. Therefore, CSOs should undertake political mobilisation projects to raise parents' and communities' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in monitoring public service delivery.

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