

The Roles of School Management Committees in Implementing Universal Primary Education in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The roles of School Management Committees (SMCs) in the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) highlighted the fundamental tools for evaluating the success in school management. Guided by Social Exchange Theory, this study reflects the roles of SMCs in monitoring UPE implementation in Singida Municipality, Tanzania. A pragmatism research philosophy, mixed-methods approach, and descriptive research design were employed. Data were collected from 165 respondents through questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed that majority of SMCs do ensure increase on pupils' enrolment and enhance access to education every year in schools. Likewise, the SMCs showed their approval on their roles in ensuring attendance of pupils and teachers in schools, as one their key roles in implementing UPE. The over-all findings indicated that school management committees play their roles on planning, resource mobilisation and utilisation in school activities. School Management Committees are central to the realization of UPE goals, acting as the link between government policies and grassroots implementation at the school level.

Keywords: School Committee, Universal Primary Education, Monitoring Roles.

1. Introduction

Despite the government of Tanzania have taken the initiative to achieve UPE through involving the community by school management committees (SMCs), the use of school committees accordingly as the representative of the community to take the role in order to excel the participation and governance of school activities to realise UPE endowed with some setbacks. However, the government as vigorous in regards school committees to supervise schools through the mobilization and monitoring of school resources to ensure that there is effective implementation of quality UPE, manifested some initiatives. Tanzania's Education Act No. 25 of 1978; CAP 353. R.E. of 2002, Education, and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 and 2014 make compulsory that every school must have a SMC. The committee shall advise the head teacher or other head of the school, and local authority on matters relating to the management and conduct of the school in fulfilling UPE requirements. Following this mandatory of the school committee role over the management of the school, the expected outcome was to make positive result to the school to achieve quality UPE. Masue (2004) argues that through the school committees, local communities play an important role in decision making over various issues pertaining to development and day-to-day responsibilities in the schools. In addition, Kipromo *et al.* (2010) pointed out that resources mobilization

from the community for school infrastructure is very vital aspect in making a school a comfortable place for learning, so SMCs mandated to monitor school activities and to ensure that all activities at school are effectively undertaken, facilitated, well monitored and protected. In addition, Komba and Kiyungi (2022) observed that SMC is a governance model that motivates parents' involvement in operations of the school. Mugabe (2018) conducted a study on how SMCs monitor the implementation of UPE in Uganda. His study indicate that the SMCs did not have the full mandate to take any decisions that affect the operations of schools. This acts as a demotivating factor to SMCs in undertaking their roles to realise that the UPE goal achieved. The study findings further reveal that there was no clear monitoring framework used by SMCs that guides them on what to monitor and how to monitor based on set measurable indicators. This gap left the committees in each school to undertake their duties differently, yet they monitor the same programme.

The study aimed at exploring roles of SMCs in monitoring the implementation of UPE in Tanzania in an effort to find out whether the government's objective of UPE and EFA, school-going children based on access, equity and quality is being achieved or otherwise. It is thought that without understanding SMCs roles, the deficiency of constant monitoring of the process of UPE implementation in the school level is likely to lead to policy failure and wastage of government resources owing to lack of counteractive engagements that are dynamic for the UPE implementation development.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SMCs' Roles and Implementation of UPE

Studies have been conducted on the range of roles played by School Management Committees (SMCs) in monitoring the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE). One of the key roles of SMCs, as stipulated by URT (2001, 2018) following Tanzania's Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) 2000–2006, was to broaden democratic participation and accountability at all levels by increasing the involvement of men, women, and children from local communities.

Matete (2016) examined the roles and challenges facing primary education under the decentralization of school management in Tanzania. The study found that SMCs were given the responsibility of opening bank accounts and managing funds received for implementation efficiently and transparently. This included making income and expenditure records publicly available. SMCs were also mandated to prepare school budgets, monitor expenditures, and develop and approve school development plans. In addition, they participated in the procurement of teaching and learning materials and oversaw the construction of classroom blocks, school latrines, and teachers' houses. Matete's findings are relevant to this study because they align with its focus and highlight the monitoring role of SMCs in UPE implementation. Similarly, Dwivedi and Naithani (2015) conducted a study in India on the roles and responsibilities of SMCs in primary education. They found that SMCs were mandated to monitor school operations, prepare development plans, and oversee the use of capitation grants and other resources. Their findings support this study's assertion that SMCs in Tanzania play a crucial role in approving budgets within the primary education system.

Masue (2004) further observed that Tanzania's Education Act underscores the importance of partnerships between teachers, schools, and communities in strengthening school management. At the school level, SMCs are required to present income and expenditure reports quarterly to the Village Council in rural districts and to the Mtaa Committee in urban authorities. Through the provision of financial and human resources, the government empowers SMCs to take responsibility for the management and development

of schools. Masue's study is relevant to the present research because it illustrates how community participation through SMCs shapes school governance and management, a critical aspect of achieving UPE objectives. The study employed questionnaires and interviews for data collection, methods that were also applied in this study. Ayeni and Adelabu (2011), in their study on a conceptual model for school-based management and quality assurance, found that SMCs are mandated to monitor school activities, ensure effective implementation, and oversee the use and maintenance of facilities. Their findings, presented through descriptive analysis, support this study's arguments. Likewise, Ndungu et al. (2016) highlighted the role of SMCs as governance structures that encourage parental involvement in school operations. Since SMCs comprise parents, teachers, head teachers, and community representatives, their participation enhances accountability in resource utilization and promotes the demand for quality education. Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) also emphasized the responsibility of SMCs to collaborate with head teachers and staff in preparing Whole School Development Plans (WSDPs), which include procurement plans. Their findings, consistent with the present study, underscore the importance of school-based management in strengthening relationships between schools and communities, promoting stakeholder participation, and ensuring the efficient use of resources to achieve quality education. These studies collectively highlight the importance of parental engagement, a vital factor for the success of SMCs, particularly in rural-urban contexts such as Singida Municipality.

Wedgewood (2005) investigated how decentralization in education governance has shaped the role of school committees in Tanzania. The study found that decentralization empowered committees to manage resources at the local level, but performance varied due to disparities in resource distribution and capacity gaps. Responsibilities included monitoring teacher attendance, preparing and implementing budgets, overseeing procurement, and maintaining school discipline. Committees in better-resourced areas performed well in areas such as enrolment, attendance, and reducing truancy, whereas committees in remote regions struggled to fulfil their mandates. This study is important for understanding the wider implications of decentralization in Tanzania's education system and its effect on the performance of SMCs in implementing UPE.

In strengthening UPE several studies show that in some schools, the governing body committee members have less power in the decision-making process on issues concerning the management of the school while in other schools' committee members have power and influence in the way the school is managed (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007; Heystek, 2011). Professional control and decision-making on instructional matters are in the hands of the teachers while the community or parents control decision-making on issues of school governance (Barrera-Osorio, et al, 2009). This is because the ability of the community members to make decisions differs in different school contexts. In some cases, decision-making and control over school management and governance are in the hands of head teachers (see, Wedgewood, 2005).

Reviews by the World Bank (2007, 2008, 2008a, 2016) provide empirical evidence from both developed and developing countries, showing that SMC members must be empowered to advocate, advise, and make corrective adjustments to school programs. These findings reinforce this study's argument that decentralization of primary school management in Tanzania is widely perceived as empowering communities to make decisions about school operations, thereby fostering a sense of ownership of schools within the communities.

Towards Theoretical Integration

This study integrates theories of participatory governance (Fung & Wright, 2003), decentralization in education (Bray, 1996), and social capital (Coleman, 1988) to explain the roles of School Management

Committees (SMCs) in the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Tanzania. First, the participatory governance theory emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. In the context of schools, this theory explains how SMCs, as representatives of parents and community members, can promote accountability, transparency, and shared responsibility in managing school academic activities and primary education in general. Their role in financial oversight, planning, and monitoring reflects the principles of participatory governance.

Second, the decentralization theory in education highlights the delegation of authority from central government to local institutions. Tanzania’s education policy positions SMCs as key decentralized organs at the school level, responsible for managing resources, mobilizing communities, and ensuring the effective delivery of UPE. This theory helps explain why SMCs are entrusted with critical managerial roles that directly influence school performance and educational access.

Third, social capital theory provides an additional lens by focusing on networks, trust, and community cooperation. SMCs rely heavily on community participation, parent engagement, and local partnerships to improve school infrastructure, encourage enrolment, and reduce dropout. The effectiveness of UPE implementation, therefore, is linked to the level of social capital that SMCs can harness within their communities.

By integrating these theories, the study establishes that the effectiveness of SMCs in implementing UPE depends not only on the formal decentralization of responsibilities but also, on the extent of participatory governance and the strength of community social capital. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of how SMCs function as intermediaries between government policy and grassroots educational outcomes.

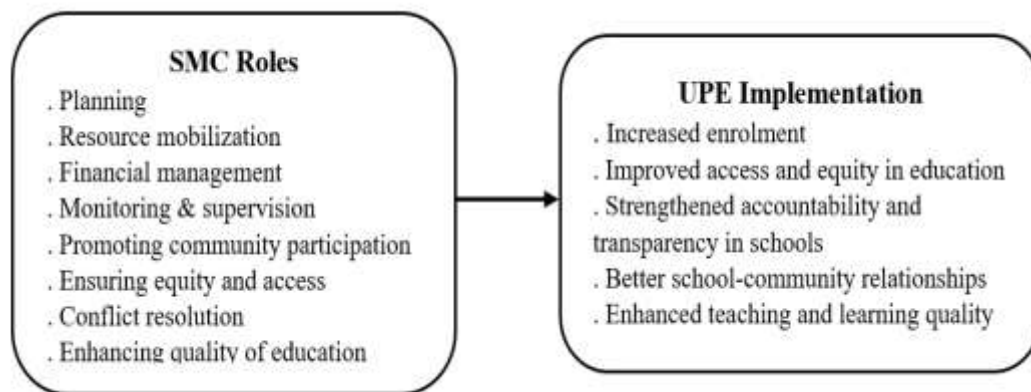


Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Source: Participatory Governance Theory and Social Capital Theory

The framework assumes that effective execution of SMC roles positively influences the successful implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE). When, these roles are well-performed and adequately supported, schools are more likely to achieve improved access, equity, quality, and accountability in primary education delivery. In inspiring the SMCs’ role, the conceptual framework above realises the governance model that motivates parents’ involvement in operations of the school with other partners. In connection, the theory says that humans base their behaviours or rational calculations designed to maximize individual profit. That is why the classical formulation, thus, predicts that parents send their children to well managed school if they believe the future lifetime benefits from attendance outweigh the

(direct and indirect) costs of attendance. It is straightforward to see that the basic prediction, based on this framework, is that parents send their children to school if the perceived benefits are higher, or if the costs associated with attendance are lower, holding all other factors fixed (Glewwe, 2002). The theory says most people value acceptance, loyalty, financial support, affection, and companionship and so people might find it rewarding to be in a relationship with a person who enhances social status. This is classified as a reward. On the other hand, social exchange theory stipulate that costs arise whenever there is a negative value for an individual. For instance, relationship that cost people time, money and effort or all the adjustments make to coordinate with another person. Empirically, to identify the causal effect of investments in education on the amount of associated benefits, educational, health or economic activity, we would require an exogenous change in the household schooling function that would either increase the benefits of education or lower the costs thereof. That the next outcome is equal to rewards take away cost.

3 METHODS

This study approached descriptive research design in order to find out appropriate function attributed by SMCs' roles in implementing UPE in Tanzania. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches based on the data collection and analysis used at a given time. Though qualitative and quantitative research methods lay on separate continuum, they all aimed at identifying educational problems using different approach. This study critically examined the usefulness of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in researching the roles of SMCs in implementing UPE in Tanzania. Descriptive design has been used in the research because some advocates of the descriptive plan give guidance and views on when to priorities the use of descriptive studies (see Baxter, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009).

Population is the universe unity from which the sample is to be selected (Bryman, 2008). The area where the population was drawn (Singida municipality) had 63 school management committees from 63 government primary schools available in 2020 academic year (Singida Municipal Profile, 2020). In each school, there were 10 members of school management committees, which included chairperson, the secretary of the SMCs (head teacher), four teachers, and four parents that made the of 650. The sample size in this study consisted 165 respondents, where included chairman/chairperson (n=40), head teachers (n=40), teacher members (n=40) and committee members (n=40) in 40 primary schools. Also included who answered the interviews; the ward education officers (n=3), education officers (n=1), school quality assurance officers (n=1) and (n=20) members among the committee members. Therefore, the target sample for this study consisted 165 participants. However, the sample as proposed of other members of the committees was collected in each schools. The reason is that the researcher proposed and accepted to have a sample of around 25% of the whole population to where the study was conducted. Another reason was, the researcher believed that these category members of the committee have in-depth and valued information needed. The sampling procedures used to collect the data were purposive and random sampling. According to Cohen *et al.* (2008), purposive sampling is a technique, which enables the researcher to pick the case to be included in the sample based on their possession of particular characteristics being sought. Random sampling, or probability sampling, is a sampling method that allows for the randomization of sample selection, i.e., each sample has the same probability as other samples selected to serve as a representation of an entire population.

Primary and secondary methods of data collection include data collected in the field through questionnaires, interviews, and from documentary review. The method chosen depends on the subject matter of your research (Cohen *et al.*, 2008). Questionnaires were defined by Mqulwana (2010) as a list

of questions that a researcher uses to collect data. To ensure a high response rate and that the right participants was targeted, the researcher administered the questionnaire himself. The sample of 160 participants responded to the questionnaires, which have closed-ended questions, which were easy to mark or fill in and, at the same time, easy to analyse. The time used to fill a questionnaire range from 15 to 30 minutes. It took five days to reach all the respondents. Interview as considered by Cohen *et al.* (2008) is a procedure where participants' life experiences are gathered, helps to enrich the study. The interview was conducted to 5 education officers purposely because of their post but for the 20 committee members were selected randomly, from twenty schools. Anonymity was also difficult to ensure with interviews but the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the research so that the participants were forthcoming in providing information. The time used to interview a participant varied from 15 minutes up to 45 minutes. The documentary analysis as a secondary method of data collection includes the use of the existing secondary information documented or collected for similar or related purposes to the issue in this study. The documents reviewed include Singida Municipal Profile of 2020, School Management Committees Minutes from 2017 to 2021, Government Circular Number 6 for Fee Free Primary School Education of 2015, Government Circular Number 12 for Capitation Grants of 2002 and Government Circular Number 3 for Fee Free Primary School Education of 2016. Others were Government Circular Number 1 for School Committees and School Board in Primary and Secondary Education in Tanzania and Education Act (CAP 353 RE 2002) Subsidiary Legislation.

The validity of the instruments for data collection was subjected to the expert judgment of the researcher who assessed the level of content validity of the instruments, in terms of the extent to which they are able to measure what they are intended to measure. The reliability of the instruments was enhanced through the process of pilot study, which have been conducted to ensure that confusions and ambiguities would be not allowed to distort the participants' views on the issues investigated in the study. Cronbach alpha was used to test accuracy of the instruments. Alpha was developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951 to provide a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale; it is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct and hence it is connected to the inter-relatedness of the items within the test. Internal consistency should be determined before a test can be employed for research or examination purposes to ensure validity. In addition, reliability estimates show the amount of measurement error in a test. In testing the accuracy, the coefficient alpha, sometimes referred to as Cronbach's alpha, was employed in this research to evaluate the questionnaire's accuracy as reliability analysis table presented below.

Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis of Roles

Cronbach's α	Coefficient alpha based on standardised items	Number of items
0.84	0.84	10

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the attributed roles used by SMCs in implementing UPE in Tanzania. The assumption was that school management committees' play their roles well, and that they involve key stakeholders in schools' activities. Such involvement ensures ownership of the management of schools for the efficient and effective monitoring of school resources as a way of promoting effective teaching and learning. To achieve the objective respondents (N=160) were provided with a questionnaire of ten items

e.g. “The school is run according to approved development plans”, looking at the extent to which attributed roles do SMCs’ play in monitoring the implementation of UPE. The questionnaire involves five points Likert scales with options (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly agree. See findings presented in Table 4.2b.

The scale (i.e. roles of SMCs scale) consisted of 10 items e.g. “SMC member must participate fully in monitoring and management of the school to achieve quality UPE” & “School management committee monitor and manage the school voluntarily so they are not paid or financially supported” (see, Table 4.2b). The items focused on learning how SMCs perceive their roles in monitoring the implementation of UPE. All scales were rated via a 5-point Likert’s scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree. In fulfilling this objective, the data were also collected through interviews. Each interview started with the general questions: “what do you understand by the concept of UPE?” the answer to this question was followed by explanations about their roles played in monitoring the implementation of UPE in schools. The data (from interview sessions) were analysed on daily bases to allow the researcher to identify information gaps and so construct new probing questions for the next sessions. The longest interview session took about 45 minutes while the shortest session 15 minutes. The data were processed and one category and two interrelated themes (Table 4.2c) were established on the roles played by school management committee in implementing UPE.

Table 4.2a Descriptive Statistics on the Roles of School Management Committee in Monitoring UPE’s Implementation

SN	Scale (Variable)	No of items	Cronbach alpha	Min	Max	Mean	Std
	Attributed roles that school management committees play in monitoring implementation of UPE	10	0.84	3.55	4.81	4.13	0.33

Source: Field Data (2024).

The general quantitative findings (Table 4.2a) indicated a grand mean index of above 4. The mean index score of 4 and above but less than 5 implies *very high mean score* and that majority of respondents agreed with the information/opinions within the scale items. The grand mean score of the scale was 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.33. This would signpost that majority of SMCs do understand and were attached to their roles as majority of respondent agreed with different roles as presented in the scale. The distribution of responses under this scale revealed a minimum mean of 3.55 and maximum mean of 4.81, (Table 4.2a). The specific results are presented in Table 4.2b hereunder.

Table 4.2b: The Roles of School Management Committees in Implementing UPE

SN	Items	Ratings (%)					Total %	Mean	Remarks
		5	4	3	2	1			

1.	The school is run according to approved development plans.	48	35	13	4	0	100	4.26	High
2.	The school is run according to approved budgets.	33	49	12	6	0	100	4.10	High
3.	The school is run according to its' income and expenditure.	33	48	13	5	1	100	4.06	High
4.	The school use properly procurement plan on its expenditure.	25	25	35	9	6	100	3.55	High
5.	The schools have enough and quality infrastructure.	42	35	1	13	9	100	3.88	High
6.	The school has enough and quality teaching and learning materials.	25	41	34	0	0	100	3.91	High
7.	The school ensures attendance of pupils and teachers.	54	24	22	0	0	100	4.32	Very High
8.	The school ensures pupils enrolment every year.	81	19	0	0	0	100	4.81	Very High
9.	The school monitor and combat truancy and dropout of pupils.	43	37	20	0	0	100	4.23	High
10.	The school ensures provision of quality basic education for better academic performance.	44	50	0	0	0	100	4.20	High
Grand Mean								4.13	

Note: 1-1.8 (Very Weak), 1.9-2.6 (Low), 2.7-3.4 (Average), 3.5-4.2 (High) & 4.3-5 (Very High) (Nassar *et al.*, 2021).

Key: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 =Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

SD= Standard Deviations.

Source: Field Data (2024).

The findings presented in Table 4.2b revealed specific results. It was indicated that majority of SMC members do ensure pupils enrolment every year in schools as most of the members agreed strongly with a very high mean score of 4.81. Likewise, the school management committee members showed their approval on their role in ensuring attendance of pupils and teachers in schools, as one their key roles in implementing UPE. However, the school committee members showed almost uncertainty (i.e., 35% responded 3= neutral) on the statement that *the schools use properly procurement plan on their expenditure* (see mean score of 3.55). This might be understood as may be not very much involved in the school head's office and his managerial reports on whether the procurement plans are followed well in expenditures. This can be a ground of analyses of important management skills to be included in the in-service training programs for SMC members, for their effectiveness in the school governance. Interesting and contradictory findings were revealed. There were some of SMC's members (i.e. 9% and 13% who responded on *strongly disagree* and *disagree* respectively while no member was uncertain, on the item: *(the schools have enough and quality infrastructure)*. Majority of respondents agreed (i.e. 42% & 35%) with the statement. The findings indicated that the management committee members know about the quantity and quality of school resources e.g. infrastructure. However, they could not assess and come out with the same response.

The findings from quantitative data were complimented by those revealed from the documentary review and interview sessions with twenty SMC members (n= 20) the Municipal Primary Education Officers (n= 03), School Quality Assurance Officer (n= 01) and Ward Education Officer (n= 01), Table 4.2c. SMC members were coded as (R1 up to R20) while Officers were coded as (O1 to O5) in the findings.

Table 4.2c The Roles Played by School Management Committees in Implementing

S/N	Category	Themes	Theme-Explanations
1.	<i>Roles by School Management Committees in Implementing UPE</i>	Monitoring Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring plans • Prepare & manage school budget. • Ensure infrastructure and teaching materials. • Enhance enrolment and attendance of pupils and teachers. • Ensure provision of quality education.
		UPE Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of high literacy rate. • Improved attendance • Increased pass rate • Reduced dropout

Source: Field Data (2023).

School Management Committees’ Monitoring Roles

The findings indicated that school management committees seemed to play their roles well on planning, resource mobilisation and utilisation in school activities. The interviewees designated that school management committees plan for school activities based on the development plans and school budgets. The participants’ responses specify that school management committees undertake the planning role in schools but with planning strategies that varies to some extent but aim the intended goals. Whereas some schools focus on operational plans through yearly budgets, other schools are concerned with long-term plans drawn up through development plans. The intention of the long-term plans was to give strategic direction to the schools with the aim of ensuring that pupils get quality education with the all the basic requirements in place for high academic performance. Instance of comment of participant asserted that:

The school is run according to approved budgets and according to approved development plans. We cannot run the school with resources we do not have because it will lead us to failures (R1, December 2023).

The quote above also indicated that members of the committee understood that the prepared budget was limited compared with the planned activities they had in the school including school infrastructure, teaching and learning material. This situation was realised with the quote presented below by one of the respondent.

Every school have its budget and all activities must be adhered to their budget. Sometimes the school can get funds, which have not been budgeted, but this is not an obstacle we were directed if so to write the application letter to the responsible ministry to be permitted to reallocate or to re-budget again and use due funds accordingly. (O5, December, 2023).

Generally, the findings revealed nine managerial activities of school management committees especially in implementing UPE. The managerial activities were monitoring plans, preparing and managing school

budgets, ensure availability and quality of infrastructure and teaching materials. They were also enhancing enrolment and attendance of pupils and teachers in schools and academic activities.

UPE Effectiveness

The second theme developed from qualitative findings was role played by school management committees in enhancing effective implementation of UPE. Participants were asked on the extent their roles as a member of the school management committee been effective in UPE implementation. One of school committee member responded as follows:

We improved high literacy rate in school. For example, we were able to lift literacy from around 70% to 99%, imagine! Also, as school committee members in primary schools, were able to ensure that the attendance rate rose to 99%. In reality, we are doing a great job for smooth running of school and teachers activities; promoting pupils' access to education and their wellbeing in school's environment (R11, December, 2023).

The quotation by a school committee member indicates that stakeholders' contribution is important for the success of planned in the process of implementing UPE including attendance, high literacy rate. The head teacher needs the help of all education stakeholders to attain attendance and high literacy rate. Galabawa (2005) recognizes the critical role of stakeholders in the management of schools in his literature. Seidu (2008) & Hunt (2007) indicated in their studies that maintenance of the interaction that enables stakeholders to participate in school management is equally observed to be key to effective school accountability and subsequent school quality.

The findings hence, denote and concurred by interview findings that the SMCs plays a vital role in planning for the school, and undertakes the development and monitoring of school activities. It also has the mandate in monitoring and supervision of all school employees and pupils; ensuring that the school has sufficient infrastructure; planning and approval of budgets; monitoring teacher and pupils' attendance; resolving conflicts; and ensuring that there is a favourable environment for teaching and learning. Shah (2009) and Owusu and Kwame (2012) indicated the same findings in their studies. It is also found that a SMC was a governance model that motivates parents' involvement in operations of the school. This is because SMCs' composition involves parents, teachers, head teachers, and local communities. The active participation by parents is vital for promoting better management of schools since there is an incentive of demanding accountability on the way school resources are utilised as well as demanding a better quality for their children as Komba and Kiyungi (2022) pointed out.

Generally, the findings revealed that majority of SMCs played attributed roles in monitoring the implementation of UPE. It also revealed that there is planned and structured use of funds in schools by SMCs, which has led to optimal use of resources in schools. The findings further reveal that there are funds disbursed by the central government and the responsibility shared between the government and the community in managing the schools. Additionally, the findings reveal that SMCs play a vital role in ensuring that the government policy of implementing UPE effectively implemented in schools. On the effective implementation of UPE, the study reveals that SMCs' role in monitoring has increased school enrolment as well as resource inputs that facilitate teaching and learning. However, the findings reveal that SMCs do not have the full information of the school management and full mandate to take all the decisions that affect the running of schools. This was also indicated in quantitative findings, Table 4.2b where 35% of the school committee members were uncertainty on whether *the schools use properly procurement plan on their expenditure* (see mean score of 3.55).

5 DISCUSSIONS

The findings revealed that majority of SMCs played attributed roles in monitoring the implementation of UPE. The findings also revealed that they ensured that academic programmes were run according to school-approved budgets and plans. They made sure that the school activities run according to its' income and expenditure. Furthermore, SMC members ensured the attendance of pupils and teachers. Moreover, the findings from qualitative analysis through structured interviews revealed that SMCs seemed to execute their roles such as planning, which encompasses resource mobilisation and utilisation for school activities. It indicated that SMCs plan for school activities based on the development plans and school budgets. The findings were in conventionality with that of Matete (2016) who observed that SMCs mandated to prepare the school budgets, monitor expenditures as well as preparing and approval of development plans. Matete further observed that SMCs mandated to open and operate bank accounts with school funds, which makes accountability easy in the way scarce resources of the school are utilised. SMCs also participate in procurement of teaching and learning materials as well as participating and monitoring the construction of classroom blocks, school latrines and teachers' houses.

Dwivedi and Naithani (2015) emphasises that SMCs' role involves monitoring the operations of the school, develop and prepare development plans, monitor the capitation grant from the government and other resources. They further monitor the teachers and pupils to ensure there is regular attendance. They operate within the School-Based Management (SBM) objectives and structures and accountable for funds disbursed to schools' accounts and for school property as well as for monitoring the activities of head teachers, teachers' conduct and performance, and pupils' progress (URT, 2014). The participants' responses specified that SMCs undertake the planning role in schools but with planning strategies that varies to some extent but aim the intended goals. However, some schools focus on operational plans through yearly budgets; other schools are concerned with long-term plans drawn up through development plans. On the effective implementation of UPE, the findings revealed that SMCs' role in monitoring has increased school enrolment as well as resource inputs that facilitate teaching and learning. Literatures revealed and concurred by the findings that the SMC plays a vital role in planning for the school, and undertakes the development and monitoring of school activities (see, Owusu & Kwame, 2012). It also has the mandate in monitoring and supervision of all school employees and pupils; ensuring that the school has sufficient infrastructure; planning and approval of budgets; monitoring teacher and pupils' attendance; resolving conflicts; and ensuring that there is a favourable environment for teaching and learning (Shah, 2009; Owusu & Kwame, 2012). It also found that a SMCs was a governance model that motivates parents' involvement in operations of the school. This is because SMCs' composition involves parents, teachers, head teachers, and local communities. Komba & Kiyungi (2022) pointed out that the active participation by parents is vital for promoting better management of schools since there is an incentive of demanding accountability on the way school resources are utilised as well as demanding a better quality for their children.

6 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by applying Social Exchange Theory to the context of educational management in Tanzania. It highlights how mutually beneficial roles, as well as insufficient empowerment, influence the commitment and performance of School Management Committees (SMCs) in monitoring the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE). The findings suggest that when SMC members perceive their roles as yielding tangible benefits and support,

they are more actively engaged in school governance. SMCs are motivated to execute their responsibilities through either bottom-up or top-down approaches, particularly when accompanied by adequate resources to achieve the objectives outlined in the UPE framework.

Conversely, insufficient knowledge, skills, and capacity hinder the effective performance of SMC roles, indicating that social capital mechanisms such as capacity-building, recognition, and collaboration—are critical for strengthening grassroots educational management structures. Future research can build upon these findings to explore how other social or organizational theories explain the functioning of school governance bodies in developing contexts.

The study also offers practical insights for policymakers, education administrators, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in primary education. The results underscore the urgent need to update SMC roles through structured training programs that equip members with skills in educational governance, financial management, policy enforcement, and stakeholder engagement. Strengthening the capacity of SMCs can lead to more effective monitoring and implementation of UPE, thereby improving accountability, infrastructure development, and resource utilization. Furthermore, promoting community awareness of SMC roles and powers can enhance participation, ownership, and the sustainability of education initiatives at the local level.

7 LIMITATIONS

This study was subject to several limitations. First, the sample employed may not fully capture the roles of all School Management Committees (SMCs) within the broader study population. Consequently, the findings may not provide a complete representation of SMC roles across diverse communities. Future research could address this by employing a larger and more representative sample to explore the depth and diversity of SMC responsibilities. Nevertheless, the findings of this study remain valuable, as they highlight that while SMC members generally perceive their roles positively, they lack sufficient training to strengthen their skills in school management. These insights provide a useful foundation for subsequent studies involving larger and more diverse samples. Second, the study focused on SMCs from selected schools in both urban and rural areas. While, this approach allowed for comparison across different contexts, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other schools within the region or to different regions of Tanzania. However, the inclusion of both urban and rural settings strengthens the potential applicability of these findings across varied educational environments.

The study manifested several limitations to various scopes. The executed sample may not fully represent the roles of all SMCs within the study population. As a result, the findings may not provide a comprehensive view of SMC roles across the broader community. Future research could address this limitation by investigating the depth and diversity of SMC roles using wider and more representable sample. Nevertheless, the findings of this study remain valuable, as they reveal that SMC members generally perceive their roles positively but lack adequate training to enhance their skills in school management. These insights provide a foundation for future research involving larger samples. The other limitation scope was that the study focused on SMCs from selected schools in both urban and rural areas, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other schools within the region or across different regions of Tanzania. However, the sample considered appropriate for exploring SMC roles in the context of Universal Primary Education (UPE) implementation. Furthermore, the inclusion of both urban and rural contexts strengthens the potential applicability of these findings to a variety of educational settings.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Although UPE focuses primarily on access, SMCs also play a role in improving quality by monitoring attendance, teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure development. Despite their importance, the effectiveness of SMCs is often limited by inadequate training, financial constraints, and low community awareness, which can weaken their managerial impact. In general, SMCs contribute significantly to the success of Universal Primary Education in Tanzania by ensuring that schools are inclusive, accountable, and community-supported, though their effectiveness depends on capacity building and sustained government support.

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