

Challenges Encountered by the School Management Committees in Monitoring the Implementation of Universal Primary Education in Singida Municipality, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

In realizing the objectives of Universal Primary Education (UPE), School Management Committees (SMCs) are expected to act as intermediaries between schools and local governments, advocating for resources and ensuring the proper implementation of education policies. Their role is to highlight any challenges and advocate for changes in policies or resource allocation to improve education delivery. Consequently this study is guided by social exchange theory and comparatively discussed with human capital theory particularly used descriptive method research approach and convergent parallel design to examine challenges encountered by the SMCs in monitoring the implementation of UPE. The questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect data from 165 respondents. The findings revealed challenges faced SMCs based on lack of knowledge and skills in financial management and not supported financially. Other challenges included SMC members seemed more influential in decision-making, which brought conflicts and misunderstanding in monitoring the implementing of UPE. Furthermore, findings posited challenges related to financial incentives, commitment and administrative constraints in effort to achieve quality UPE. The study concludes that the challenges contribute to impediments in the implementation of UPE in Tanzania. It recommends SMCs to be given regular training at least once per year in resource and financial management, education policy awareness, and its implementation of successful UPE.

Keywords: School Committee, Universal Primary Education, Education Policy, Challenges of Monitoring Role

1. INTRODUCTION

Universal Primary Education (UPE) is among the key issues in the national development plans of developing countries as it lays the initial firm foundation for the required knowledge and skills for the job market (see, Webster, 2000). UPE had been arbitrated as the provision of compulsory and free education to all children in the country basing on access, equity, quality regardless of gender, ethnic group either

minority or marginalised groups. Tanzania is one of the country that has committed itself for the implementation of UPE since 1970s.

School Management Committees (SMCs), as local governance structures within the education system, play a crucial role in ensuring the success of UPE in the primary schools in Tanzania. The Government Circular Number One of 2018 of Education stipulates that SMC consist of teachers and parents (not less than nine members). The head teacher acts as a secretary to the committee. Other members include deputy head teacher, academic teacher and two teachers selected by fellow teachers where the head teacher appoints one parent in together with three parents who are selected by parents' meeting (knowledgeable with minimum level of secondary education).

Available evidence indicates that, although the government has promoted community involvement through school committees and successfully increased primary school enrolment under UPE, significant challenges remain in fully achieving its intended objectives. According to Shatkin & Gershberg (2007), majority of Commonwealth Countries, SMCs is a cluster of agents representing different interest sections of the community that include teachers, head teachers, parents, children and other community members with interest and authority to manage a school. UNESCO (2016), maintain that challenges such as inadequate management, poorly trained teachers, lack of learning materials, low student nutrition, and overcrowded classrooms continued to hinder UPE goals, including the target of full enrollment and completion by 2015. Matonya (2022) observed that issues such as insufficient school facilities, high student-teacher ratios, and the socio-economic conditions of the community have affected the quality of education. Such state of affairs raises questions as to whether the school committees are fully realizing their full potential in the implementation of UPE or not. The objective of this paper is to examine the challenges encountered by the School Management Committees in monitoring the implementation of UPE.

Challenges Encountered by SMCs in Monitoring the Implementation of UPE

World Bank (2008) found out that the challenge affecting the efficient management of schools in which SMCs is part was absence of financial incentives, which caused the problem of neglect of duty, resulting in poor attendance. Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) contended that they are charged with the duty of constantly monitoring the activities of the schools, yet in the areas of their influence, the work they do is voluntary and they receive no payments in form of financial support from the government.

Van Wyk (2004) and Kiyaga-Nsubuga (2005) highlighted that some members of school governing body lack confidence regarding their duties because in some rural areas, influential members who command respect and regard themselves as superior undertake the duties and functions of the SMCs and/or the local members of the committee of which Mbena (2005) conceded. However, World Bank (2008) and Ayeni & Ibukun (2013) examine the obstacles faced by school committees, focusing on governance constraints, financial management constraints, and limited community commitment to participation. They pinpoint how insufficient training and inadequate resources limit the effectiveness of school committees in UPE implementation.

Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) maintain that school based management committee members lack knowledge and skills required to perform their roles as mandated. However, Xaba (2011) had already admitted that SMCs faced with the challenge of undertaking technical roles for which they lack expertise in areas such as budgeting, expenditure planning and infrastructure development planning as well as lack of information on the roles of head teachers and teachers in schools. Among other, Matonya (2022) observed that

insufficient training and inadequate resources limit the effectiveness of school bodies in UPE implementation. Onderi & Makori (2013) and Bray (2000) revealed that there was tension and conflict between SMCs and PTAs brought about by roles and responsibilities that tend to overlap and this has negatively affected the operations of school. These conflicts undermines members of SMCs in effectively carrying out their monitoring role of which Dunne *et al.*, (2011) revealed in their study, whereas Shemane (2010) observed that SMC’s involvement in school governance is minimal, something that has left the head teachers to assume the overall responsibility to run the school. Furthermore, Abigail, *et al.*, (2012) highlighted that; it is only through collective action by all those concerned with the monitoring exercise that monitoring activities undertaken for improved school performance.

Reviewed studies underscore the importance of understanding how school committees face challenges related to limited financial resources, as well as insufficient knowledge and skills, in influencing educational outcomes under UPE. Most reviewed studies address general challenges facing SMCs in school management, with limited focus on the specific challenges they encounter in implementing UPE. Therefore this paper aims to examine the challenges encountered by SMCs in monitoring the implementation of UPE. The guiding research question is: What challenges do SMCs experience in monitoring the implementation of UPE?

2. THEORETICAL INTEGRATION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theory, which governed this work, is social exchange theory. It is discussed in comparison with the human capital theory. Social exchange theory suggests that human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (See, Emerson, 1972b). However, human capital theory suggests the decision to invest in education by embarking monitoring and management strategy, as a function that maximizes the expected lifetime benefits in relation to the costs of attendance (see Florin et al., 2003 and Becker, 1962). Specified the emphasis of this study, the theoretical model below identify the challenges that propagating the SMCs specifically challenges encountered in monitoring the implementation of UPE in researched area. It include understanding and interpretation of mandate they recommend educators for policy implementation in their respective schools. First, their management functions, secondly; the framework within which the study is concerned to SMCs challenges in monitoring the implementation of UPE. In assuming this framework as knowledge base, the exploration of the issue of SMCs’ challenges, with specific reference to the managing and participation with teaching staff at schools to realise UPE, it gave the scope to analyse education act that has a direct impact on school management. However, it permit the appropriateness of devolution by decentralization as forms of measures of managing the school better than before.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Authors Own Construct (2023).

Nevertheless, as the framework consideration, it enabled assessment of the criteria and procedures used by government in the selection and recommendation of SMCs for applying policy towards management principles and good governance of school to achieve UPE. In spite, of the government decision of strengthening achievement of UPE by involving community through SMCs, success was far to be reached (see, Wedgewood, 2005 and Galabawa, 2005). It was assumed that SMCs understood their roles and responsibilities and would take appropriate action to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and transformation but the intended objective was not realised due to the lack of reasonable availability of management skills. Implied in this assumption, firstly, that SMCs are legally responsible to operate and make decisions without supported financial incentives, secondly that, they are obliged to implement policy even when they are in disagreement with it though they lack financial, budgetary and building skills. As pointed out by Komba & Kiyungi (2022) and long established by this study, not all policies necessarily promote greater participation, equity and representation. Equity, in particular, might be endangered if the SMCs and parties involved neglects individual rights. Not only could this cause conflicts and tension between SMCs and other parties or influential members as regards the powers and functions. If that situation occurs, SMCs would fall into bureaucratic authorized fights that undermine their effectiveness as agents of equity and representation.

3. METHODS

This study employed descriptive research design in order to find out appropriate function attributed by SMCs' challenges in implementing UPE in Tanzania. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches based on the data collection and analysis used at a given time with the sample of 165 respondents. In this study, 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 challenges encountered by SMCs in implementing UPE in Tanzania. Descriptive design has been used in the research since some advocates of the descriptive plan give guidance and views on when to priorities the use of descriptive studies (see Baxter, 2008; Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013).

3.1 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The quality of data of this study depends much on the quality of the population of 650 in which the sample have been drawn. As Bryman (2004) highlights this study regarded population as the universe unity from which the sample was selected. The area where the population was drawn (Singida municipality) had 63 SMCs from 63 government primary schools available in 2020 academic year (Singida Municipal Profile, 2020). In each school, there were 10 members of SMCs, which included chairperson, the secretary of the school management committee (head teacher), four teachers, and four parents that made the total 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; *id est* 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 the light of Cohen et al. (2007), purposive sampling was used as 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. However, random sampling, or probability sampling, was used as 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.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments, Validity, and Reliability

The study comprised with primary and secondary methods of data collection that include data collected in the field through questionnaires, interviews, and from documentary review. Cohen et al., (2017), argue that the method to be chosen depends on the research subject matter. Questionnaires as defined by Mqulwana (2010) is 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 had closed-ended questions. Interview as considered by Cohen et al., (2017) was used as a procedure where participants' life experiences are gathered. The interview was conducted to 5 education officers purposely because of their post while 20 committee members were selected randomly, from twenty schools because all committee members were expected to have equal position. Documentary analysis was employed as a secondary method of data collection. 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 research instruments was ensured through expert judgment, where the researcher and subject specialists reviewed the tools to determine the extent to which they measured the intended constructs. This process helped to enhance the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the instruments for the study objectives. Reliability was established through a pilot study conducted prior to the main data collection to identify and correct any ambiguities in the instruments. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency of the questionnaire items. This statistical measure, expressed as a value between 0 and 1, indicates the extent to which items in a scale measure the same underlying construct and helps determine the level of measurement error.

Table of Reliability Analysis of Challenges

Cronbach's α	Coefficient alpha based on standardised items	Number of items
0.71	0.70	10

Source: Field Data (2023).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented from the result of respondents (N=165) who filled the questionnaires and interview sessions who expressed their views on the challenges (consist ten items measured) experienced by SMCs 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. The items

from the questionnaire together with their responses, which scored on the five-point Likert scale, presented and analysed using percentages, mean and standard deviation. For simplicity of analysis, in this study strongly agree and agree were combined to mean agree and strongly disagree and disagree were combined to mean disagree. To make the analysis more explicit, the mean for items was calculated to aid the analysis. However, according to Nassar et al., (2021) a mean of 4.3 to 5.0 indicates that the majority of the participants had positive agreement which ranked (Very High) while a mean of 3.5 to 4.2 indicates positive agreement and ranked (High). In addition, a mean of 2.7 to 3.4 ranked as Average. The mean of 1.9 to 2.6 ranked (Low) while the mean of 1.8 and below ranked (Very Weak). The findings were moderated by the scale of challenges of SMCs’ experience in implementing monitoring framework for UPE. The question was asked to the same members in the school level and data were collected through questionnaires which the sample was the same SMCs n=160. Officers who were responded to the instruments were coded as O1, O2, O3, ... and respondents were coded as R1, R2, R3, ... in this report findings

Table 4.2: Challenges Encountered by the SMC in Monitoring the Implementation of UPE

Scale (Variable)	No of items	Cron-bach alpha	Min	Max	Mean Index	Std Dev
Examine the challenges encountered by the school management committees in monitoring the implementation of UPE	10	0.71	1.68	4.58	3.22	1.09

Source: Field Data (2023).

In the above table of challenges where the data was analysed quantitatively, indicated mean index of 3.22. The mean index score of 4 and above but less than 5 implies majority of respondents agreed with the information/opinions within the scale items.

Explicitly, the quantitative analysis on the discussion of challenges experienced in monitoring the implementation of UPE of ten items are presented in Table 4.2a and discussed below.

Table 4.2a: Experienced Challenges

SCALE 4: Examine the Challenges Encountered by the SMCs in Monitoring the Implementation of UPE								
SN	Items	Ratings (%)					Total %	Mean
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	School Management Committee members are not provided with financial incentives to support the performance of their duties in schools..	58	42	0	0	0	100	4.58
2	Some school management committee members lack knowledge and skills to perform their roles properly.	0	0	8	53	39	100	1.68
3	Some school management committee members lack enough knowledge in financial skills.	6	2	10	50	32	100	2.02

4.	Some school management committee members are more influential and overpower other members in making decision.	26	32	8	23	11	100	3.38	
5.	Some school management committee have conflicts and misunderstanding among themselves and other stakeholders.	4	3	17	47	26	100	2.07	
6.	Lack of recommended participatory approach in executing the duties of the committee.	10	13	22	29	26	100	2.52	
7.	Lack of enough financial management skills to perform their roles.	25	30	24	9	14	100	3.48	
8.	Lack of enough building and construction skills to perform their roles.	26	29	27	10	8	100	3.55	
9.	Lack of enough funds from the government to accomplish construction projects of school infrastructure.	60	25	15	0	0	100	4.45	
10.	Lack of enough funds from the government to supply needed school instructional materials.	60	25	14	1	0	100	4.44	
KEY	5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree							Scale Mean	3.22

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.

Source: Field Data (2023).

All participants (100%) agreed that SMC members are not provided with financial incentives to support the performance of their duties in schools. This provided the very high rated mean of 4.58. The findings support those of the World Bank (2008), which maintain that the absence of financial incentives is a key challenge affecting the effective management of schools by SMCs, particularly because some committee members are economically disadvantaged, especially in rural areas. This has led to neglect of duties, resulting in poor attendance among some members and ultimately undermining the intended effectiveness of their participation in school governance. However, majority of 93% participants disagreed on the measure of some members of school committee lacking knowledge and skills to perform their roles properly with rated mean of 1.68, which realised the negative agreement. Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) found out that school beside management committee members lack knowledge and skills required to perform their roles as mandated. The findings provide empirical evidence and relevance on the challenges school committees face regarding knowledge and skills, which is decisive for the implementation of UPE. However, findings indicated that the majority of 81% of participants disagreed about the measure that some members of SMC lack enough knowledge in financial skills with the low rated mean of 2.02. Obonyo (2012) provides the evidence with a study on the factors influencing the effectiveness of school management in public primary schools in Kenya established that lack of managerial and budgetary development skills has affected the SMC's role in the management of schools. The study's relevance highlighted issues such as inadequate financial resources, low levels of education among committee

members, and poor community engagement as significant barriers to effective school governance. The study recommended increased training and capacity-building initiatives to empower committees.

The measure of the item that there were some members of SMC been more influential and overpower other members in making decision indicated that majority of 58% of participants agreed with the average rated mean of 3.08. The finding was assumed inconsequential because there was a minor variation between agreed contrary to neutral and disagreed. However, the study by Van Wyk (2004) and Kiyaga-Nsubuga (2005), pointed out that some members of school governing body lack confidence regarding their roles and duties, which makes them inferior to other members. This is because in some rural areas, influential members who command respect and regard themselves as superior undertake the duties and functions of the SMCs and/or the vocal members of the committee. The study was relevant and provides empirical evidence of the challenges school committees faced, offering insights into areas that need improvement to enhance their role in UPE implementation. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the majority 75% disagreed to the measure that some SMCs were in conflicts and misunderstanding among themselves and other stakeholders. The low rated mean of 2.07 indicated negative agreement. Although it is evident that this study found that, there were no serious conflicts and misunderstanding in studied area, studies such as Dunne et al., (2011), Onderi and Makori (2013) highlighted that in many education systems in developing countries, had tensions and conflicts between the roles of PTAs and SMCs. The studies are relevant for understanding the broader context of aroused conflicts and misunderstandings in Tanzania's education system and its impact on the performance of school committees in implementing UPE.

The findings indicated that 55% of participants disagreed with the measure of item that there was lack of recommended participatory approach in executing the duties of the committee. The obtained low rated mean of 2.52 realised negative agreement. Ndawi & Peasuh (2005) pointed out that without the involvement of the members of SMC who are to use designed monitoring framework, members could part ways and the task of managing the schools would remain to head teachers. Their study examined how school committees influence governance in both rural and urban settings of Tanzania, focusing on their involvement in decision-making and resource allocation. The study is relevant because it highlights how community participation over and done with school committees influences the governance and management of schools, a serious characteristic in accomplishing UPE objectives. The measure of the challenge of lack of enough financial management skills to perform their roles as assessed indicated that 55% of participants agreed to the statement with the high rated mean of 3.48, which was the positive agreement. Wedgewood (2005) commented that since the work of monitoring the activities of schools is technical in nature, SMCs should be in possession of the types of knowledge and skills including financial skills. Her research was relevant because it examined how decentralization in education governance has affected the role of school committees in Tanzania.

Another challenge was lack of enough building and construction skills to perform their roles where the findings indicated 55% of participants agreed with the high rated mean of 3.55. Although it seems like this was a challenge, school committees showed to have the responsibility of facilitating the construction and maintenance of school buildings and classrooms, ensuring a conducive learning environment to avoid overcrowded classrooms. Mestry (2004) identifies earlier that school governing bodies had insufficient knowledge and skills in financial management and failure to work out real solutions to the real problems affecting individual schools. These challenges have promoted the misallocation of funds by school heads, which has often resulted in a shortage of critical resources such as books, equipment, and other instructional materials. The finding was relevant and provided empirical evidence of the challenges school

committees faced, offering insights into areas that need improvement to enhance their role in UPE. The measure of the challenge of lack of enough funds from the government to accomplish construction projects of school infrastructure, the findings indicated that the majority of 86% of participants agreed with the very high rated mean of 4.45. It indicated that there were limited financial resources, and uneven community engagement hinder their full potential. It was evident that primary schools face limited financial resources, improving educational and insufficient community engagement (see, Mbelle & Amon, 2008). The study was relevant because it provides a wider Tanzanian perception on the challenges facing school committees, relevant for the case in Singida.

The measure of lack of enough funds from the government to supply needed school instructional materials, the findings indicated that majority of 85% of participants agreed, with the very high rated mean of 4.40. However, the study by Mugabe (2019) who also reviewed Khuzwayo (2007) and Ngwenya (2010) found that in spite much of the main function of school governing bodies is financial management, SMCs found to be inadequate in budget preparations, financial utilisation and financial control. The study is of significance to this study because it explores the impact of decentralization on school committees as important but the government had inadequate budget to fulfil with sufficient funds to run the schools, offering insights into governance issues that affect UPE implementation.

As to reward findings, the data were collected through interviews. To accomplish the findings participants (N=25) were encompassed in the interview. The interview started with the general questions: e.g., “What are the challenges that school committees experience in implementing monitoring framework for UPE?” The answer to this question was followed by enlightenments by themes-explanation of challenges in monitoring the implementation of UPE in schools. Structured interviews reveal that the challenges experienced in monitoring the implementation of UPE were in to three groups. Challenges were financial constraint, commitment constraint and administrative constraints. Table below (5.2b) indicate the major category with themes explained to the respondents.

Table 5.2b: Challenges Encountered by the SMCs in Monitoring the Implementation of UPE

Category	Themes	Theme-Explanations
<i>School management committees' Challenges</i>	Financial Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives in performing duties in school is not supported • Lack of enough funds from the government to accomplish construction projects
	Commitment Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some members do not use knowledge and skills to perform their roles properly. • Some influential members overpower other members in making decision • Sometimes there are conflicts and misunderstanding
	Administrative Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of recommended participatory approach • Lack of enough financial management skills to perform their roles • Lack of enough building and construction skills • Lack of enough funds from the government to

	supply needed school instructional materials
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Source: Field Data (2023).

Qualitative findings regarding financial constraints, respondents noted that SMC members are not provided with financial incentives to support the performance of their duties in schools. It was realised as specifically, R20 commented below:

First, remember we are not paid, we work voluntarily. We have much of what we wanted to do to improve our school, we would like to have enough classroom, desks, offices, library, and enough pit latrines and others, but when we plan our budget it is above the ceiling the government have allocated for us. Therefore, we have to drop other projects and concentrate on the highly needed one. We have not had everything we needed or rewarded for our time, in our school we were supposed to make priorities to choose the essential and leave the other needs pending... (R20, December 2013).

The consensus is that, although SMCs have contributed to the management of schools (see Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013), they are not functioning according to their mandate. They were charged with the duty of constantly monitoring the activities of the schools, yet in the areas of their jurisdiction, the work they do is voluntary and they receive no incentives in form of financial support from the government. This has caused the problem of neglect of duty, resulting in poor attendance by some members, and this has rendered the intention of having them in schools unattainable (see Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013). Masue (2014) also found out that the challenge affecting the efficient management of schools SMCs was absence of financial incentives because some members of the committees are poor especially in rural schools. In many countries, the members of the governing bodies are unpaid volunteers (James et al., 2011). Xaba (2011) and Mncube (2009) found that in South Africa, the governing bodies are often unable to attract the right people to be members, especially in the rural communities, and that this leads to the lack of capacity to govern the schools. The situation exacerbated in some schools in disadvantaged areas, where between one-quarter and one-half of the members of governing bodies live outside the schools' immediate locality (Xaba, 2011). In this case, school governing bodies find it difficult to monitor all school activities. This makes it difficult to attract the right members, especially in rural areas. The current study holds that people are motivated to undertake the duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively when they expect to receive monetary rewards (see, Mugabe, 2018). The SMCs always find budget deficit in every year compared with the approved budget received from the central government.

In analysing the challenge of commitment constraint that members of SMC lack enough knowledge and skills to perform their roles properly, in this group recommended by members as appended below

In our school committee, we lack knowledge and skills in the following areas; engineering, accounting personnel, value analysis, programme planner, quantity surveyor and procurement personnel. If we have a need of those experts, we should call from the municipal office to have them. You cannot get them immediately they have got their schedule. They may come after one or two weeks (R9, December 2013).

The findings complied with that of Maile (2002), who asserts that school governing bodies have a challenge of illiteracy among members, which contributes to inefficiency in the way they do their work. In relation to illiteracy, Van Wyk (2004) found that many school governing bodies, especially in rural areas, did not possess the knowledge and skills needed to perform their roles effectively. That is the reason why educators have blamed the school governing bodies for failure to execute their roles and

responsibilities in schools owing to their low levels of education, which has resulted in wrong decisions being made in the governance of schools (Xaba, 2011). SMCs faced with the challenge of undertaking technical roles for which they lack expertise in areas such as budgeting, expenditure planning and infrastructure development planning as well as lack of information on the roles of head teachers and teachers in schools (see Pushpanadham, 2000). The author also pointed out that one of the great challenges facing SMCs is managing school finances resulting from lack of financial expertise. Govender (2004) conceded and observed that it is not insufficient financial resources that are a problem in providing education services but, rather, lack of the capacity to plan, budget and control the available finances; this has proved to be a serious challenge met by SMCs in effecting their mandate. Therefore, the efficiency of financial management in schools that determines the competence of school governing boards (Yau & Cheng, 2014).

The assertion that some members of SMC were more influential and overpower other members in making decision, as highlighted in various literatures that much of decision-making in schools is done through the participatory approach by involving all the stakeholders but there were members whose views dominate other members' views. This shows that decisions taken in schools by SMCs may not be democratically arrived at by all members, an indicator that inappropriate decisions are likely to be taken that may hinder development of schools. In most rural areas the influential members, who command respect and regard themselves as superior and/or the vocal members of the committee, undertake the duties and functions of the SMCs. This situation puts those members who are not influential and with low self-esteem in a position where they are unable to contribute to the decisions, which affects schools since they only remain observers when decisions are being taken (see Mbena, 2005). In supporting that, Van Wyk (2004) observes that some members of SGB lack confidence regarding their roles and duties, which makes them inferior to other members. Antonowicz et al., (2010) pointed out that better functioning school is determined by the way in which its resources are effectively and efficiently managed in a transparent and accountable way as the comment revealed.

The government through responsible ministry has produced the circular in 2018, which must be followed by school management committees to mobilize parents to participate to raise funds to support government budget to finish school projects. However, the community and some of committee members do not believe that as their mandatory duty instead, they think the government must provide all the needs they have to develop the respective school programmes (O1, December 2023).

The findings indicated that the majority of members disagreed that some SMC members have been engaged with conflicts and misunderstanding among themselves and other stakeholders. The study findings indicated that the community mind-set that UPE is free was a serious challenge, which hinders the SMCs' capacity to raise funds to complement government funding from parents, thus making schools operate without inputs that are relevant for teaching and learning. However, Ayeni and Olusola (2013) state that many SMC members have limited knowledge about how the daily activities of schools were run and coordinated, how personnel administration issues are handled and how conflict resolution is undertaken. Furthermore, in the challenge of administrative constraint, one of the participant presented the concurrent comments.

Parents and community might know about participation in developing our school, but also we always tell them that they have the responsibility to raise funds for school feeding programme, buying desks building small projects like pit latrines, extra. But they do not like to take that idea

claiming that it is the government's duty because during general election campaigns the candidates from different levels promised to remove parents' mandatory to give their money for public programmes mentioned above and so they were elected so.... (O5, December 2023).

Literatures revealed that there was lack of recommended participatory approach in executing the duties of the committee as Mugabe (2018) pointed out that much of decision-making in schools done through the participatory approach by involving all the stakeholders, although there were members whose views dominate other members. Another challenge experienced was lack of enough funds from the government to accomplish construction projects of school infrastructure. The findings from literature above concurred with Yau & Cheng (2014) that concluded that the efficiency of financial management in schools determines the competence of school governing boards. Research in central Tanzania, including Singida, indicates that many school committees are not equipped with education recommended resources to handle the growing demands of school management and resource allocation (see Komba & Kiyungi, 2022).

5. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The implication of the study as highlighted was if the findings intended to enlighten educational scholars, researchers, and body of educational institutions to recognize and understand the significant the challenges of community participation and governance in school activities through school management committees. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge through application Social Exchange and Social Capital Theory as frameworks to the context of educational management challenges in Tanzania. The two theories were applied to govern the study in the sense that while social exchange theory suggests that human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Emerson, 1972b). Particularly human capital theory suggests the decision to invest in education by embarking monitoring and management strategy, as a function that maximizes the expected lifetime benefits in relation to the costs of attendance (Florin et al., 2003). In the context of Universal Primary Education (UPE), governments provide resources and policies, while schools in collaboration with the School Management Committees (SMCs), and implement them. It highlights how perceptions of mutual benefit and the lack of empowerment influence the commitment and performance of SMCs in monitoring UPE implementation. The findings suggest that where SMC members had challenges on tangible benefits and support in school governance. Conversely, a lack of knowledge and capacity diminishes effective participation, suggesting that social capital mechanisms found in SMCs (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 committees/bodies in developing contexts. The study offers practical insights for policymakers, education administrators, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in primary education. The results highlight the urgent need for systematic training programmes to equip SMC members with skills in educational governance, financial management, policy enforcement, and stakeholder engagement. By strengthening the capacity of SMCs, schools can achieve better monitoring and implementation of UPE, thereby improving accountability, infrastructure development, and resource utilization. Furthermore, promoting community awareness about the roles and powers of SMCs can enhance participation, ownership, and sustainability of education initiatives at the local level.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the challenges of school committees in implementing Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Singida municipality. However, examination of the challenges encountered by the SMCs in monitoring the implementation of UPE in Tanzania was explicitly probed. The descriptive design used researcher generated quantitative and qualitative results. The study came up with empirical evidence of challenges faced by SMCs in monitoring the implementation of UPE in Tanzania. The challenges encountered facing SMCs included community mind-set that UPE is free, limited financial support, limited knowledge in financial management, and more influential members which sometimes brought conflicts and misunderstand in implementing the monitoring framework for UPE of which hinders the SMCs' capacity to raise funds to complement government funding to schools. The data generated were obtained from officers in the municipal and ward level together with members committees in the school level. Information related to the questions is participated in the study. The literatures reviewed comparatively reveal that there were challenges of SMCs in the implementation of UPE and members of SMC had valuable experiences in implementing the monitoring framework in spite of the challenges they face. It recommends SMCs given regular training at least once per year in resource and financial management, education policy awareness, and its implementation.

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