

Capitation Grants and its Role on Teaching and Learning Environment in Community Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study focused on capitation grants as the strategy used by the government to improve teaching and learning environment for community secondary schools. The study employed a mixed research approaches using explanatory design with a sample of 45 respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, documentary review, and observation. The questionnaires were filled in by 40 teachers, of whom eight teachers were randomly picked from each school to participate, and 5 heads of schools were interviewed concerning management of capitation grant. Findings revealed that capitation grants have not been effective to improve teaching and learning environment in Mwandiga Division. Also, there is little improvement in teaching learning process in these public secondary schools. Moreover, there is a lack of transparency, consistency, uniformity in practice and insufficient of funds have delayed to reach schools. Therefore, the study recommends the need for a new system of administration of capitation grants to improve transparency, consistency, and uniformity in practice.

Keywords: Capitation Grants, Teaching and Learning Environment, Community Secondary Schools

1.0 Introduction

Improving teaching and learning by meeting teacher's needs and students through capitation grants in community secondary schools remains an important goal for many countries in Africa including Tanzania. For that reason, financing secondary education through capitation grant has been a concern of both developed and developing countries. The capitation grant is defined differently by many authors but with the same meaning. Capitation grant is one of the simple models of educational finance used in some countries to allocate financial resources to schools aimed at replacing abolished school fees at basic education levels (Yoshioka, 2010).

Twaweza (2012) elaborates that the capitation grant is allocated to schools based on the number of students enrolled; it is a per capita allocation of financial resources to schools. Osei, Owusu, Asem and Afutu-Kotey (2009) describe that capitation grants are meant to provide money for teaching and learning materials for students' enrolled.

Capitation grants provisions have been introduced in various countries around the globe to help education projects development. For instance, according to USAID (2007), when capitation grant was introduced in Lesotho in 2000 and Cameroon in 1999, enrolment rates increased among the disadvantaged children, girls, orphans, and children in rural areas and led to widened access to education as a result of the abolition of school fees. Osei *et al.* (2009) outline that the abolition of the school fees in Uganda led to a doubling in enrolment. Ghana introduced capitation payment under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), beginning with a

pilot in the Ashanti region, in 2012 with a key objective of controlling utilization and related costs (Asante, 2011). In Ghana, for example, the scheme has been implemented in all districts since 2006/07. Owing to that, capitation grant scheme is important in motivating school teachers in respect of autonomy giving them greater control over school management and professional development in managerial skills (Tanaka, 2010). It is designed to empower the schools to effectively use financial resources to plan and carry out school quality improvement activities in the guidelines for the distribution and utilization of capitation grants to basic schools.

In Tanzania, the implementation of the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) came with a particularly important innovation called the Capitation Grant Scheme. The aims of the grants were to replace revenue lost to schools because of the abolition of fees and to improve the quality of education by making real resources available at the school level. By replacing revenues lost by schools due to the abolition of school fees and contributions, the introduction of the capitation grants allowed children from poor backgrounds to go to school. This reduces social exclusion as children from poor households could now afford to attend school. This is why the net enrolment rates rose sharply from less than 60 percent of eligible school-aged children in the year 2000 to more than 95 percent since 2006 (Uwazi, 2010). In particular, the capitation grants were meant to finance the purchase of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, as well as to fund repairs, administration materials, and examination expenses especially in the implementation of the SEDP (Uwazi, 2010).

According to Hakielimu (2009), the introduction of capitation grants and the abolition of school fees led to the rapid increase in the number of students in community secondary schools in Tanzania. Due to the increase in capitation grants, more parents are sending their children to those community secondary schools. Although, this strategy has been praised of being one of the solutions towards teaching and learning environments' improvements, literature shows that the provision of capitation grants in schools faced with many challenges which do not positively contribute to healthy teaching and learning environments (Manara & Mwombela, 2012; Mzee, 2017; Osei-Fosu, 2011; Twaweza, 2012).

In this case, it has been convincing to us to assess the impact of capitation grants in improving teaching and learning environment in Tanzanian community secondary schools in Kigoma District with a reason for being among districts in Tanzania which witnessed the big number of students' enrolment in a few years ago. To attempt this assessment, the following two main questions were designed. These are: (i) what are the needs available for teachers and students for enhancing teaching and learning environment? (ii) How do community secondary schools allocate and practice the management of capitation grants?

1.1 Theoretical Perspective

This study was guided by the Demand and Supply model as explained by Eastin and Arbogast (2013). According to them, the demand and supply model is useful in explaining how price and quantity traded are determined and how external influences affect the values of those variables. Demand and supply are

much affected by factors of production, which include the land, labour, physical capital, and materials used in production. Buyers' behaviour is captured in the demand function and its graphical equivalent, the demand curve. This curve shows both the highest price buyers are willing to pay for each quantity and the largest quantity buyers are willing and able to purchase at each price. Sellers' behaviour is captured in the supply function and its graphical equivalent, the supply curve. This curve shows simultaneously the lowest price sellers are willing to accept for each quantity and the largest quantity sellers are willing to offer at each price. If at a given quantity, the highest price that buyers are willing to pay is equal to the lowest price that sellers are willing to accept, we say the market has reached its equilibrium quantity. Alternatively, when the quantity that buyers are willing and able to purchase at a given price is just equal to the quantity that sellers are willing to offer at that same price, we say the market has discovered the equilibrium price. So equilibrium price and quantity are achieved simultaneously, and as long as neither the supply curve nor the demand curve shifts, there is no tendency for either price or quantity to vary from its equilibrium value.

In view of their assumptions, it means that the satisfaction of demand (buyers) depends on the enough supply provided by the sellers which depends much on production factors and vice versa. There is an important relationship between teaching and learning process and this perspective. Their relationship bases on the fact that teaching and learning process is a business like other businesses because it involves buyers (students/learners) and sellers (teachers) whom the quality and quantity of goods or services they offer depend on various factors, which can be

called as production factors. This means that the increase of enrolments of students in schools should go simultaneously with the required number of teachers alongside the recommended facilities and favourable environment.

Since the abolition of school fees in Tanzania, the number of students increased in schools contrary to the number of teachers and schools' available facilities. To settle this discrepancy, the Government of Tanzania introduced capitation grants provision to ensure equal demands and supply. Osei *et al.* (2009) affirm that improving the quantity and quality of education requires that policy addresses both demand-and supply-side constraints of education. The provision of more textbooks, classroom blocks, trained teachers, etc. tends to ease supply-side constraints to education. On the other hand, policies such as the Capitation Grant and School Feeding Programme seek to ease the demand-side constraints to education. To recap, this perspective is an imperative guiding of this study because it tries to show how effective teaching is much affected by diverse factors (human resources, financial resources, infrastructure, nature of environment) to satisfy the learning process.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach (both quantitative and qualitative) with an explanatory research design. This study was conducted in Mwandiga Division involving five schools which are Mungonya, Luiche, Kagongo, Bitale, and Mwandiga secondary schools. The area of study was selected because it was noted to be the leading division with high rate of enrolment of students among other divisions in the

district. The study involved 45 respondents including 5 heads of school who were purposely selected because of the virtue of their positions as managers that they have more information. It also involved 40 teachers who were randomly selected because of having the character of possessing related information as regards to the study questions. From each school, 8 teachers were sampled. The study involved questionnaires for teachers, interviews for heads of schools, as well as observation and documentary review methods for data collection. Since the study adopted a mixed approach, the collected data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Therefore, with this methodological perspective, the anticipated information was collected and they have analysed and discussed in the next part as follows.

3.0 Results and Discussion

This part present and discusses the study findings found basing on the study main questions. This part is divided into two parts. The first part presents and discusses the findings on available needs of teaching and learning environment with a focus to community secondary schools in the study area. This part is as regards to the first question of the study. The second part presents and discusses the allocation and management of capitation grants in community secondary schools in the study area. This part is as regards to the second question of the study. To maintain anonymity, the schools involved were assigned letters such as A, B, C, D, and E.

3.1 Available Needs of Teaching and Learning Environment

This part answers the first question of the study. It intended to look at some of the available needs that help teaching and learning environment in schools. The specific questions in this part were: first, does the school having sufficient teaching and learning materials? Second, does the school having a relevant teacher-student ratio? Third, does the school having favourable teaching and learning environments? As regards these questions, responses from respondents were tabulated in table 1 as follows.

Table 3.1: Teachers' Responses on the Available Needs that Support Teaching and Learning Environment

Statements	Responses	
1. Sufficient teaching and learning materials	YES (%) 13(32.5)	NO (%) 27(67.5)
2. Relevant teacher-student ratio	YES (%) 10(25)	NO (%) 30(75)
3. Favouring teaching and learning infrastructures	YES (%) 14(35)	NO (%) 26(65)

Key: % = Percent.

Source: Field Data, 2019.

Table 3.1 shows that teaching and learning materials were sufficiently at 32.5% and insufficiently at 67.5%. Undoubtedly, with these data, it gives an insight that there was the high demand for teaching and learning materials. On the point of relevant teacher-student ratio, which is an important consideration, whilst talking of successful teaching and learning process environment, it was found that the ratio was at 25%

with a high ratio need of 75%. This variation signifies the very high demand for teacher-student ratio. Whilst talking of favouring teaching and learning infrastructures, it was also found that infrastructures were favouring at 35%, which called the need for infrastructures at 65%. On the same line, through the interview held between researchers and heads of schools, it was found that there are insufficient teaching and learning materials, irrelevant teacher-student ratio as well as unfavouring teaching and learning infrastructures. For instance, one head of school had this to say:

Teachers and students' needs are not sufficient because up to now teaching and learning facilities in schools are not enough available. For example, our teachers are just teaching without prepared lesson notes, lesson plans and schemes of work because until now as a school we have not yet received capitation grants to buy stationeries. However, some teachers are trying to use their money to buy pens and other teaching materials whereby I cannot force those who have not bought them because it is the responsibility of the school to provide them such needs (Head of School C: April, 2019).

Along side these responses, in our physical observation during data collection, we noted that many students had no tables and chairs, a situation made them to share tables and chairs. This scarcity of tables and chairs was highly noted in schools A, B and C compared to the situation found in schools D and E which was more at least. These observations along with responses from respondents depict that, the enrolment surpasses the relevant required needs to favour teaching and learning

environment. This implies that still there is a crack between teaching and learning and the required environments. Always a challenge can create an opportunity and the opportunity created can also create a challenge. This is because the abolition of school fees was due to the long existed poor access to schooling among children in Tanzania.

USAID (2007) confirms that fees and other many contributions charged at schools, especially in public schools, have been noted as one of the main barriers to education access especially among the poor and disadvantaged children within societies. After the abolition of school fees, many children had good access to schooling which made the drastic increase in enrolment of children in schools. According to Human Rights Watch (2017), the government of Tanzania took a crucial step in December 2015 to increase children's enrolments in schools. It abolished all school fees and 'contributions' additional fees charged by schools to pay for the schools' running costs. This crucial step has also been adopted by other different Sub-Saharan countries like Lesotho, Mozambique, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Malawi, Uganda, just to mention few and it has significantly increased primary and secondary school enrollments (ADEA, 2007 & Osei *et al.*, 2009). However, literature shows that since the abolition of school fees, schools have been not able to meet some teaching and learning necessities although the government implemented various supporting strategies. For instance, Human Rights Watch (2017: 5) writes that:

The abolition of school fees has left significant gaps in school budgets. Schools are not able to fund basic needs they previously paid for with parents' contributions (additional fees charged by schools to pay for running costs), including school construction and renovation, the purchase of learning materials, and hiring of additional teachers. Many secondary schools suffer from a basic lack of infrastructure, educational materials, and qualified personnel.

In line to the foregoing quotation, scholars like Mkalagale (2013), Saga (2014), Mulholland and O'Connor (2016), Mzee (2017) and Hemedi (2017) have also confirmed on the presence of the same challenges facing community secondary on teaching and learning environments. The government adopted various strategies to curb the situation; capitation grants provisions being the major. This is because the availability of needs of both teachers and students for supporting teaching and learning depends on enough funds, timely distributed, and the number of students joining the school. Literature has also shown that through capitation grants and school feeding programmes the major achievement has been gross enrolment of children in both primary and secondary schools (Osei *et al.*, 2009; USAID, 2007).

However, besides the achievement made through capitation grants has curbed the problem of many children to have no access to school, there have been critics regarding capitation grants provisions that this strategy may not have the desired impact on the quality of education. This has made many researchers to undertake researches in the sub-Saharan countries implemented abolition of school fees with capitation

grants provisions to see its impact on education quality. It is argued that when classes become overcrowded and when the meager resources provided through fees to schools (usually for learning materials) are no longer available, the result can reverse hard-earned gains and de-motivate teachers, parents, and students. It should have been born in mind that, increasing enrollment of children in school is one thing, but improving teaching and learning environment is another corresponding thing that makes quality education (Osei *et al.*, 2009).

Thus, as regards to the findings of the study, it should be surmised that capitation grants provisions have not covered the challenges raised after the gross enrollment of children in schools after the abolition of school fees. This is because, although the government has been continually providing these grants, still they have left high demands of sufficient teaching and learning materials, relevant teacher-student ratio and favouring infrastructures that could help to improve teaching and learning environments in the study area.

3.2 Allocation and Management of Capitation Grants in Schools

This part intends to answer the second question of the study which aimed at describing the capitation grants provided, the way they were allocated, and managed among the schools in the study area. The specific questions in this part were: Do the capitation grants provided in time? Does the capitation grants provided realistically? Do the capitation grants provided rightly allocated and managed? As regards to these questions, responses from teachers were presented in Table 3.2 as follows.

Table 3.2: Teachers' Responses to the Allocation and Management of Capitation Grants in Schools

Statements	Responses	
1. Timely provision of capitation grants	YES (%)	NO (%)
	07(17.5)	33(82.5)
2. Realistic provision of capitation grants	YES (%)	NO (%)
	10(25)	30(75)
3. Right allocation and management of capitation grants	YES (%)	NO (%)
	15(37.5)	25(62.5)

Key: % = Percent

Source: Field Data, 2019.

The presentation of results in Table 3.2 shows that the capitation grants provided by the government do not reach to schools in time at 82.5%. This means that the grants are not provided in time regarding the planned responsibilities and activities in line to schools' terms. Alongside, the capitation grants provided was highly not realistic at 75%. It was realistic only at 25%. These results show that the grants provided were highly irrelevant comparing to schools' budgets which brings a sense of impracticability. Moreover, the capitation grants provided by the government were not rightly allocated and managed at 62.5% as regards to their budgets. The results revealed that they were rightly allocated and managed only at 37.5%. These findings are in line with the responses provided by heads of schools. For instance, one head of school had this to express:

The main two factors responsible for failures of capitation grants meeting the needs of teachers

and students are that, first, insufficient funds are released by the Central Government; secondly, school funds are channelled to school accounts indirectly through local government. This creates a loophole of misusing them. Parents and other stakeholders remain with a thought that a large amount is sent to school while the truth is vice versa (Head of School C: April, 2019).

In addition, another head of school had this to tell:

At my school I have many students, but we only receive very few copies of books, which do not satisfy the big number of students we have. As you know [that] we have a big burden of school budgets after abolition school fees and other contributions, which helped us to some extent (Head of School A: April, 2019).

In the same vein, another head of school had this to add:

These grants achieve less in improving school infrastructures and satisfying the required needs of teaching and learning facilities. This is because they are not timely delivered to school and also they are very little compare to the big number of students we have in our schools for instance at my school (Head of School B: April, 2019).

The interviews that were done with the heads of schools at school D and E relatively revealed that the capitation grant is often received in the middle, close to the end or at the end of the academic year. Through physical witness from schools' financial documentary records, we noted that there were several

months which capitation grants were not received. These findings were in line with what has been found by UNESCO (2005) which indicates that capitation grants are disbursed to the schools by considering the number of students in a school and it happens that the released fund covers a few of things in school. This is contrary to what has been insisted by HakiElimu (2009) that, appropriate channelled and sufficient funds are required for buying textbooks for teachers and students to learn with at least a ratio of 1.3. On the other hand, Twaweza (2012) reveals that there is a delay in the release of the funds and it has been a common thing because, some as late as three years, with an average misappropriation per school in a year (HakiElimu, 2009; Mzee, 2017). This implies that even such little amount claimed to be allocated by the government through its budget, it is not provided to schools in continuity.

Moreover, it was reported that the allocation and management of these grants were not smooth and transparent. According to Uwazi (2010), data about capitation grant disbursements per district council and at school level are surprisingly inaccessible. Since capitation grants are public money intended to improve the quality of learning, it is in the interest of citizens that such information is more readily available. The government would equally benefit from access to such data as monitoring is essential for appropriate planning. This calls for an urgent need for a systematic approach to monitoring and reporting the amounts in capitation grants disbursed from central government to councils and from the councils to schools. Twaweza (2012) confirmed that in Tanzania, there is a challenge in practicing the management of capitation grant usage by implementers which limit teaching and learning improvement in community

schools. There is a high level of inconsistency and transparency in the management of capitation grants and other funds disbursed in schools (Ahmed, 2018; Kessy, 2006; Uwazi, 2010).

To make a good line of transparency and accountability of these capitation grants, it would be better to provide these grants directly to school accounts and not channelling them through many patterns, i.e., from the ministry via the districts' accounts and then to school. Ghana has been a good example in proving good allocation and management of these grants. Ahmed (2018) writes that, "Head of schools were given cash, which was deposited in their school accounts by the Ghana Education Service" (p. 15). What is important is that, schools' financial expenditures should be audited by the government auditors to ensure transparency and accountability of the grants provided. For instance, in Uganda auditors were supposed to visit every school three times a year and that, schools should use their capitation grants in line with national guidelines, a process that the auditors checked upon. On the other hand, the political authorities were also required to go to schools and see what was being done. Evidence showed that misuse of funds in most schools had become increasingly rare as a result of this practice (Abadzi as cited in Ahmed, 2018).

Therefore, due to financial constraints resulted from poor allocation and management of capitation grants and other funds directed in schools which also involves district officials as disbursement officers, it is true that the classrooms and construction of other new facilities could not reach the target of classroom pupil ratio of 1:40 and textbooks could not reach the

target of 1:1. This will also affect the purchasing of examinations paper, administration materials, facility repairs, purchasing of teaching and learning materials e.g. books, chalks and supplementary reading materials. Through these deficiencies, it is obviously true that, the significant improvement of teaching and learning environment in community secondary schools in Kigoma Municipal will not be an immediate achievement.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Basing on the results of the study, it has been concluded that the strategies of the government in ensuring education for all children qualifying to enter schools should not be underestimated. Although capitation grants provided are not enough, it has something it contributes to the development of education in Tanzania. This is because something is better than nothing. However, the challenge has remained that, in comparison to the gross enrolment of children in schools as a result of abolition of school fees and other contributions indeed the present budget of capitation grants does not suffice the necessary needs of teaching and learning environments. It is at this juncture where the essence of demand and supply model as guiding theoretical perspective of this study stands. This is because of the results that, still there is insufficient teaching and learning materials, irrelevant teacher-student ratio, unfavourable school infrastructures. Moreover, it has been found that these capitation grants are not timely delivered to schools, not realistic as well as poorly allocated and managed.

With reflection on the status quo of capitation grants provisions in schools, its allocation and management, this study

recommends the following majors to be done for the betterment of teaching and learning environment in community secondary schools in Tanzania. First, the government should uplift the budget of capitation grants. Second, the government should ensure the timely delivery of these grants because every plan is bound to the right time. Third, these capitation grants should directly be sent to the specific accounts of schools. This decision will help to make transparency because it will have reduced the big number of responsible people unlike today where it takes a long process in endorsing and disbursing these grants from the ministry to the school level. This will ensure the successful monitoring and accountability of these grants. With these few recommendations, it is our expectation that capitation grants, can contribute towards fundamental improvement on teaching and learning environment in community secondary schools not only in the study area but even in other areas of the same challenges in Tanzania.

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