FACTORS THAT LIMITS AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS IN TANZANIA PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KENNETH M. KASULWA,
Dr. SALVATORY MHANDO & Dr. SIMON AMBAKISYE
University of Iringa, the Fact of Science and Education and
Department Of Education

ABSTRACT

The deficit of teaching and learning materials in Tanzania's Public Primary Schools has become a challenge. This challenge hinders the process of teaching and learning practically. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore factors that limit the availability of teaching and learning materials in Tanzania Public Primary Schools. The study was guided by the following objectives; to identify the challenges that hinder the availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools and to find out the way forward to tackle the challenges that limit the availability of Teaching and Learning Materials in Primary Schools. A sample size of ten public primary schools from a population of one hundred and fifty schools was selected for the study. The participants were district education officers, heads of schools, academic teachers, and teachers. The study used a qualitative approach and case study design. The data was gathered through an interview guide and observation. The findings showed that insufficient budget which leads to the government not allocating enough funds for teaching and learning materials equally to public primary schools due to small investments to enable the purchasing of the teaching and learning materials in these schools. The study recommends that the government should not only consider the issue of constructing classrooms and registering a huge number of pupils in the government primary schools but also think of disbursing and allocating enough funds for the teaching and learning materials as these materials are essential to improving pupils' competencies in public primary schools. Also, it is recommended that the government should as well consider providing special training to teachers on how some of the teaching and learning materials can be used, securing and constructing sports playgrounds for schools as these will eventually contribute to enhancing public schools' performance in all spheres of learning.

Keywords: Teaching Materials, Learning Materials, Public Schools, Primary Schools, Teachers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic right enshrined in various international and regional treaties ratified by Tanzania, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the African Youth Charter (OCM,

(2013). All persons have the right to get an education, which includes the completion of basic education and consolidation of the foundations for life-long learning and human development.

Education, according to Carneiro (2018), consists of two components, inputs and outputs. Inputs consist of human and material resources and outputs are the goals and outcomes of the educational process. Both the input and output form a dynamic organic whole and if one wants to explore and assess the educational system in order to improve its performance, the effects of one component on the other must be examined. Teaching and learning materials are crucial to any successful teaching and learning process worldwide.

Teaching and learning materials refers to instructional material which is used by the teacher to enhance their teaching to be comprehensive (Oni, 2014). This entails all materials that facilitate proper teaching and learning. In the context of this study, teaching and learning materials (TLM) refers to the range of resources and lesson materials that teachers can use to teach. These educational materials are used to support learning aims for all subjects as directed by the responsible ministry or curriculum. The main aim of education is to develop skills and knowledge which help to change the world from low level to high level of development in all aspects of life.

Miller (2016) subdivided literacy into three categories; Basic literacy, Comprehension and functional or practical literacy. Basic literacy means the ability to use correspondences of visual shapes to spoken sounds in order to decode written materials, and to translate them into oral language. Comprehension literacy means having ability to understand the meaning of verbal materials. Functional or practical literacy means ability to read or decode and comprehend materials needed to perform everyday vocational tasks. its definitions in most cases, excludes literacy as knowledge, competence or expertise in a specialized area as explained by Mkandawire, Simooya, and Monde (2019).

Therefore, for children to experience the developmentally meaningful learning of the literacy skills at primary school, both teachers and learners need to fully utilize the teaching and learning materials to achieve fullest results. Utilization of children`s literacy during teaching might provide a favourable foundational base and may as well be one of the solutions to the problem of low literacy achievements among most children (Mkandawire, 2018).

This is because these resources aid the teacher to effectively transfer the content to the preschool learner, Driscoll (2018). As they move to school, they need to adapt to the new environment which they must meet a conducive atmosphere right from home to school. Among the fears which tend to enhance children to like schooling are teaching and learning materials where children learn new experiences from, Rolleston (2009).

In most cases, education system in underdeveloped countries is not embryonic. Therefore, students graduate without the knowledge that is needed to make them better citizens or improve their lifestyle and morals. Because of this business-minded system of education, students are not qualified for proper jobs, and teachers are not ready to train students on practical life skills. Job seekers are being disqualified during interview processes because the education system fails to teach the basic skills and knowledge that are required in real life (UNESCO, 2015). Nowadays, education gives more importance to technology. Students are only graded based on examinations without an understanding of what has been taught. This exposes the puzzle on

whether students are tested based on their 'recall' skills or actual intelligence due to unavailability of teaching and learning materials or lack of that facilities in teaching and learning process (Admin, 2018).

Pilot studies have specifically shown that teaching in community schools is poor as these schools lack necessary teaching facilities such as furniture for staff and students, books, science equipment, games and sport equipment. Therefore, that literacy has become a major problem in many countries when students and teachers have so little to read. The physical, material, human and financial resources invested in schools influence not only the education provided to students but also aspects of teachers and students' motivation and consequently the educational outcomes. The inadequacy of physical and material resources in schools is a major factor responsible for learning outcome of students. Schools that do not have adequate facilities such as workshops, laboratories equipment, teaching learning materials are unlikely to post good results. It is therefore, this study intended to explore the Factors that limits availability of teaching and learning materials in Tanzania Public Primary Schools (Onche, 2014).

2.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study guided by the following questions.

i. What are the challenges that hinders availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools?
ii. How to tackle the challenges which limits the availability of Teaching and Learning Materials in Primary Schools?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents a description of the research methodology. It includes description of the research design, sampling procedures, description of the study location, data collection procedures and data management procedures.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach adopted for this study was qualitative. This means that the research is exploratory and aimed to achieve depth rather than breadth, based on rich and subjective findings. Creswell (2013) posits that, qualitative approach allows the researcher to go into the participants' personal realm or their natural settings so as to gain deeper and clear understanding of their knowledge, experience and feelings on how they experience, deal with and feel about the phenomenon teaching and learning materials is typically a social phenomenon which involves teachers, students and parents as well as material resources. To conceptualize it, therefore, a qualitative approach resort to, to get rich information that was a purposefully comprehensive and which was minimize subjectivity to a larger extent. Moreover, qualitative research approach helped in exploring and organizing data into different themes and sub- themes for an in-depth analysis (Bedenlier, et al, 2020).

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted Phenomenological design. Phenomenological studies examine human experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved. These experiences are called lived experiences. The goal of phenomenological studies was to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each subject. (Donalek, 2004). In phenomenological research, participants were asked to describe their experiences as they perceive them. They may write about their experiences, but information is generally obtained through interviews. The selection of the design determined by its ability to explore qualitatively the different ways in which individuals experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand phenomena in their real or natural contexts (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

Since the study intended to explore the implementation of teaching and learning materials to the quality of secondary education in Iringa municipality, the phenomenological design by using semi-structured interview and observation was appropriate to obtain the data that was needed for the study. Semi- structured interview was administered to teachers who were purposefully selected from 05 school academic teacher, 05 teachers, 2 district primary education officer (DEO) and 10 head of schools in Iringa municipality.

3.3 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Iringa District Tanzania precisely the Iringa municipal Council and Iringa District Council. The study area is chosen randomly by writing the regions on pieces of papers, put in a container and then drawing them. This is due to the fact that; the problem seems to cut across the whole country.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected from the sampled public primary schools around Iringa district. A variety of methods and sources of information was used in this study as a means for cross-checking. The main data sources were obtained from interview and observation.

3.5 Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is a process that implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data (Kothari, 2004). This study used only primary data to collect information from heads of schools and teachers, through interview and observation. Data were analysed thematically and manually. A summary and direct quotation from the participants focusing on the objectives of the study.

3.6 Statistical Treatment of Data

Data analysis is a process that involves coding, editing, classification and tabulation of data (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the data were analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns (Lusupi, 2020). Thematic used to analyse, classify and present themes that relate to the questions under the following steps as suggested by Lusupi (2020):

Familiarization: This phase involved reading and rereading the data to become deep and familiar with its content. Coding: This phase involves generating and summarizing the main

themes of the data that might be relevant to answering the research questions. Generating initial themes: This phase dealt with examining the codes and organizing data to identify significant broader pattern of meanings.

Another stage is; reviewing: This phase involved checking the candidate's themes against the questions to ensure that they tell a convincing stories and one that answers the research questions. Defining and naming themes: This phase involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme and determining the stories. Reporting: This is the final phase which involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts. It contextualized the analysis based on existing literature.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section present findings and discussed it in the light of literature. It was guided by specific research questions.

4.1 The challenges that hinders availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools

This objective is designed to identify the source of challenges which pose a threat on the usage of teaching and learning materials in primary schools. The findings from the interviews revealed that there are challenges which limit the use of teaching and learning materials in primary schools. One of the source identifies is the lack of proper support from the government and poor training on the usage of those TLM especially the ICT materials which pose as a great challenge. Here is a participant response:

> Poor government support to provide relevant learning and teaching materials is the source of inadequate teaching and learning materials in our school context. The challenges a teacher may get if he or she will not use the teaching materials, is that, he or she will not be able to achieve his or her ideal goal of teaching to a child because he/she has not used the materials. So if he/she will not use them, the knowledge that is imparted to a pupil must be very minimal contrary if he/she would use the materials.

Provided of the above challenge there was another threat identified by the participants as per the findings which was lack of innovation training. It was noted from the participants that, lack of innovation training to some teachers in relation to teaching materials according to the reality of the environment was another drawback which pose insufficient learning and teaching materials in public primary schools. It is noted that teachers are supposed to be knowledgeable, skilled and innovative. They supposed to create supportive learning materials and teaching aids but most of them the lack that skills hence, it increases the challenge of teaching and learning materials in many schools.

Besides the above challenge, there was also a challenge of insufficient budget which was reported by some of the participants in the study. Some participants said the government is not allocating enough funds for learning and teaching materials in schools. The investments said to be small to enable the purchasing of the learning and teaching materials. Lack of funds to some schools has also been identified as a big challenge. One of the participants responded:

> The main challenge of the availability of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools is the poor economy of our schools, that is, the government is not putting sufficient fund in these schools. If you see fund coming in, still is very small to the extent it can't afford to purchase the teaching and learning materials.

Basing on the objective it was also noted that there is a problem of funds allocation system. The findings showed that, despite the government bringing in the funds, yet the funds are allocated based on the specific guidelines. It was noted that sometimes the budget is insufficient to accomplish some given tasks, giving an example of renovation and rehabilitation of schools' infrastructures and buying and maintenance of the TLMs.

A participant reported that:

> The challenges we are facing through as per the availability of these materials is just a system, the government is really providing fund. But the fund is sometimes given according to specific guidelines we have been given, hence they cannot help us achieve our goals. For instance, you are given thirty percent of five hundred thousand to do rehabilitation. So you find that, the fund is not reaching even the amount of two hundred thousand. So you must make sure you complete the rehabilitation task on your own instead of considering even teaching and learning materials.

It was also reported from one participant that,

> All payment is done through a system as schools have no mandate to withdrawal fund without passing through management control system that is in place. This therefore implied that, the system is what determines if a school really needs the additional materials or not.

Moreover, one of the participants was the opinion that;

> The schools are making decision that 'we want buy this and this', but they pay through the system known as Force Account. It doesn't allow thing that is not in the budget. Also the teachers have no mandate to withdrawal fund directly without passing through us. Therefore, there is a management control system. He or she comes to us, we endorse, and we review minutes to see what they want to purchase. When we see what they want to purchase are really acceptable, we sign for them to withdrawal the fund for utilization

It was further noted from the findings that unequal distribution of teaching and learning materials is among the challenges of insufficient material in most of the public primary schools. The findings revealed that, there are certain classes which are well looked at as opposed to some classes. Students who are about to do their final exams are the ones that are more looked at and books for such classes are usually available while the base which is class 1-3 usually have fewer books. Some participants noted that, there was unequal distribution of books where pupils have to share books and this was for the high and lower standards in schools as a participant noted:

> For example, the government provides teaching materials like books. But apart from providing, I can say for some standards, the proportion is one to one, standard seven is

one to one. But the low standards, they do share, a book on a proportion of four, five, and six up to eight pupils per a book.

Unlike the other challenges there was also lack of cooperation between parents and teachers in the management of the children and cost sharing to ensure the availability of materials. It was noted from the participant that every pupil has a book for each subject, and they have the chance to go home with books. The challenge comes when parents would not to support schools to buy the required materials due to the fact of fee-free education in Tanzania. During the interview, one of the school heads said;

> It is still difficult for the parents to support schools in purchasing school materials. It is challenge because for instance children are supposed to own books and supportive learning materials, but it is a challenge for a parent to contribute money for that. If you tell them to buy a book which costs seven eight thousand shillings, it will be difficult. Most of them proclaim that education in Tanzania is free, so how can be concerned in purchasing school materials for learning and teaching?

In the light of these findings, proper learning requires the use of proper TLM even at home and that poverty may also be a challenge as most parents in the rural areas are unable to coup with the expensive TLM requirement.

It was further identified that poor handling the books was somehow a challenge. It was reported from one participant that, the task of keeping the books and other materials properly is under school's management by insisting all the pupils to carefully use the books once they have been given in groups of either three or four pupils. It was noted that, if the books and other materials has been lost, all the responsible pupils who borrowed those books shall pay it. This therefore implies that, schools lack proper storage rooms and equipment to ensure the longevity of these materials once they have them.

4.2 Ways to tackle the challenges which limits the availability of Teaching and Learning Materials in Primary Schools

On regards to these aspects, a researcher sought to collect different views from the participants on the way forward towards overcoming the challenges caused the insufficiency of teaching and learning materials.

The information provided indicates that the heads of schools should be creative and motivate their teachers into crafting self-made TLM as the major solution. Therefore, a teacher has to be motivated to prepare those materials by themselves as aid from the government is either not seen as enough or might take a long time to arrive. It was therefore noted that teachers preparing the teaching and learning materials was a solution. It was reported from few participants that, they use to prepare the teaching and learning materials by themselves. The teacher has to use his/her surroundings which sometimes do not need to incur any costs. A participant said:

> The way to solve the challenges of insufficient of teaching and learning materials, we try to educate each other to prepare teaching materials so that when we go to the class, we have the teaching tools as an easily transfer knowledge effectively to pupils.

It was further noted that there is school regulation in place that the teacher has to prepare the learning and teaching materials before getting in the class.

Another solution was the use of knowledge and creativity by teachers. According to the participants, teachers are supposed to be creative in preparing the learning and teaching materials as it is not mandatory to be provided with all the materials. The knowledge posed by the teachers have, are used to ensure the child gets what is required to get. The following quote reveals:

> But any teacher is supposed to be creative. There are certain materials that are not necessary to be provided for. Even, if the school does not have those materials, but as a teacher you cannot teach without those materials. So your creativity, the materials you have made or prepared, using your surroundings, they can help a teacher and pupil in the whole act of learning and teaching.

The above verbatim implies that, teachers a highly depended in coming up with these TLMs by themselves. Therefore, teachers have to be highly creative, motivated and constantly learning new ways of crafting TLMs on an everyday basis.

It was further reiterated in the findings that using experienced pupils may also be among the solutions. It was said by one participant that, sometime pupils use experienced to prepare the materials as sometimes they are very supportive to their teachers. A respondent noted:

> Because we are waiting for the government to provide subsidy, sometimes pupils create teaching and learning materials according to the environment. Some of them they Collect trees' branch, bring boxes' and creating supportive aids. We need to solve this challenge in that way. So, we need to use the children themselves obtained from the surroundings.

One of the participants was noted saying that by creating copies help sometimes if there is shortage of materials. As according to the participant, at least the materials can be distributed into groups. Other solutions identified were also; borrowing books from neighboring schools or sometimes using additional/supplementary books, appealing to high level for the support like taking the challenge to high level authority for instance, Ward Education Officer, then he/she takes the matter to the council level.

Moreover, the government should provide enough fund which will ensure the availability of enough teaching and learning materials. Also, the parents should work hand in hands with the teachers to solve the surrounding challenges for the betterment of the pupils' achievement.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the government should not only consider the issue of constructing class rooms and registering a huge number of pupils in the government primary schools but also think of disbursing and allocating enough funds for the teaching and learning materials as these materials are essential to improving pupils' competencies in public primary schools. Also, the government should as well consider providing special trainings to teachers on how some of the teaching and learning materials can be used, securing and constructing sports

playgrounds for schools as these will eventually contribute to enhancing innovative which help the teachers to create temporally learning and teaching materials.

REFERENCES

Admin, I. (2018). The Importance of Learning Materials for Global Learning. Canada: Cart Publishers

Bedenlier, S., Bond, M., Buntins, K., Kerres, M., & Richter, L (Eds.) (2020). Systematic Reviews in Educational Research. Methodology, Perspectives and Application. Germany: Abraham-Lincoln-Str. 46, 65189 Wiesbaden.

Carneiro, R. (2018). The big picture: understanding learning and meta-learning challenges. European Journal of Education, 42(2), 151-172.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Donalek, J. G. (2004). Phenomenology research Design. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Driscoll, M. P. (2018). Psychology of learning for instruction (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon Gogo?

Kombo, D.S & Tromp L.A. (2006), Proposal and Thesis Writing an Introduction, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.)

Kothari, C.R. (2003), Research Methodology. Methods and technique (2nd Ed), New Delhi: New Age International Limited.

Lamberton, L. H., & Minor-Evans, L. (1995). Human relations: Strategies for success. Irwin Professional Publishing.

Lusupi, Z. (2020). Determinant for effective implementation of force account in construction project in Tanzania. Unpublished dissertation. Mzumbe University: Tanzania.

Miller, P. (2016). Theories of developmental psychology (5th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Mkandawire, S. B. (2018). Literacy versus Language: Exploring their Similarities and Differences. Journal of Lexicography and Terminology, 2 (1), 37-55.

Mkandawire, S. B. (2019). Selected Common Methods and Tools for Data Collection in Research. In: M. K. Banja (Ed.). Selected Readings in Education Volume 2. (pp.143-153). Lusaka: Marvel Publishers.

OCM, (2013), Classroom Utilization report summary. Retrieved on 6th April 2015 from http://www.classroom.umn.edu/scheduling/utilization/fall01-spring02/ summary.html.

Onche, A. (2014). Meeting the Challenge of Accessibility and Utilization of Modern Instructional Materials in Rural Secondary Schools in Nigeria. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies. I, (2): 1 – 13.

Oni, J. O. (2014). Resource and Resource Utilization as Correlates of School Academic

UNESCO (2015): Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good? Paris: UNESCO.