



# **An Assessment on Government Funding for Teaching and Learning Materials: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Government funding for schools plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of education provided to students. Adequate funding ensures that schools can offer a diverse range of educational programs, extracurricular activities, and necessary resources such as textbooks and technology. It also helps address disparities in educational opportunities among different regions or socio-economic groups, promoting a more equitable education system. However, debates often arise regarding the distribution and sufficiency of these funds, with concerns about potential gaps that may hinder educational outcomes for some students. It was for this reason that the study was carried to assess government funding for teaching and learning materials in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district in Zambia. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and a descriptive survey design that sampled 50 participants purposively and conveniently. Data was obtained from the respondents by means of interviews and questionnaires. The data was analyzed by the use of software; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16). Frequency tables, graphs, figures, and pie charts were also used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that though the government of Zambia has the mandate to fund schools, the funding is not equally enough especially due to the introduction of free education policy. Findings of the study also revealed that lack of funds by the government and corruption activities are major factors that prevent the government from funding materials in schools. The study therefore recommended that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) need to be encouraged and motivated to provide essential teaching aids and materials such as educational charts, maps, atlases, etc. The Zambian government through the anti – corruption commission need to continue fighting corruption in the education sector a bring to book those who use funds meant for the procurement of teaching and learning materials for personal gain.*

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Corruption, Government Funding, School, and Teaching/Learning Materials.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Government funding for secondary schools plays a crucial role in ensuring access to quality education for students. This financial support typically covers a range of essential elements, including teacher salaries, infrastructure development, curriculum enhancement, and the provision of necessary educational resources (Antofina, 2016). Adequate funding enables schools to maintain a conducive learning environment, hire qualified educators, and offer diverse educational programs. Additionally, government funding helps address disparities among schools, promoting equity and ensuring that students from various socioeconomic backgrounds have access to similar educational opportunities. Overall, investing in secondary education is a key strategy for fostering a well-educated and skilled workforce, contributing to the overall development and progress of a nation. Adequate funding ensures that schools have access to up-to-date textbooks, teaching materials, and technology. This is essential for keeping curriculum content current and relevant, enabling students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for the rapidly changing world. Furthermore, government funding helps address disparities in educational resources between affluent and economically disadvantaged communities. Museba (2012) say that schools in low-income areas often struggle to provide basic materials, hindering students' ability to engage in effective learning. By allocating funds to schools based on need, governments can narrow the resource gap and create a more level playing field for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Investing in school materials also supports teachers in delivering high-quality education. Teachers rely on a variety of materials to create engaging lessons and cater to diverse learning styles. Adequate funding enables schools to provide teachers with the tools they need, fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment that enhances students' comprehension and retention of information. Government funding for school materials is a strategic investment in the nation's human capital (MoE, 2011). Well-equipped schools contribute to the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which is essential for economic growth and innovation. By ensuring that students have access to the necessary materials, governments are investing in the future productivity and competitiveness of their societies. Moreover, adequate funding for school materials can positively impact student motivation and engagement. When students have access to a wide range of learning resources, they are more likely to develop a genuine interest in their studies. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic performance, reduced dropout rates, and increased opportunities for future success.

Moreover, government funding for teaching materials is essential for maintaining and updating educational resources. Educational materials, such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and digital tools, need regular updates to align with advancements in knowledge and technology. MoE (1996) reports that without adequate funding, schools may struggle to provide up-to-date materials, hindering the quality of education and leaving students ill-prepared for the challenges of the modern world. In addition, government support for teaching materials enhances the overall learning experience by promoting innovation and creativity in teaching methods. With access to a variety of resources, teachers can employ diverse instructional approaches that cater to different learning styles and preferences. This flexibility contributes to a more engaging and dynamic learning environment, fostering a deeper understanding of the subjects being taught. Furthermore, government funding for teaching and learning materials strengthens the professional development of educators. Training programs, workshops, and resources provided through funding enable teachers to stay current with educational trends, improve their teaching methods, and adapt to evolving curricula. This investment in teacher development ultimately benefits students by ensuring that they receive high-quality instruction (Ndhlovu, 2015).

However, corruption on the other hand is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. It undermines good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of resources, harms the private sector and private sector development and particularly hurts the poor (Chanda, 2023). The government under the ministry of education is endowed with the responsibility of funding schools for the smooth running of their affairs. These funds help in the procurement of teaching and learning materials in a school. Antofina (2016) reported that teaching materials are the aids used by the facilitator to help them run the lesson effectively. Oxfam (2011) observed that “funding for teaching and learning materials can have an impact in the teaching and learning of in any subject of study,” civic education inclusive. Generally, the education opportunities give positive impact to society in many aspects, especially about employment in economic sectors. The education will improve skills and knowledge among labour to become as skilled labour at the future. Therefore, the education policy needed to assist increasing the number of skilled labour and decreasing the number of unskilled labours in economic sectors. This situation also will effect on the productivity of labour and production. The production of economic sectors becomes more efficient. In addition, the existence of education and training institute is assist unemployed to obtain skill which relevant in any industries in economic sectors. These skills are not only used to obtain job, and it also used to create employment opportunity for other peoples (OECD, 2017). The educations give wealth widely to community. Therefore, the education give benefit not only for individuals, it also gives benefit in society by increasing number of skilled labour (skilled labour as part of society). In other words, the education creates positive externalities to society (Chandra, 2015).

### ***1.2. Statement of the Problem***

The persistent lack of government funding for schools has far-reaching and detrimental effects on the education system. Inadequate financial support hampers the ability of schools to provide essential resources, such as modern textbooks, up-to-date technology, and well-maintained facilities (MoE, 1996). This deficiency directly impacts the quality of education, hindering students' learning experiences and limiting their exposure to new ideas and innovations. Insufficient funding also contributes to the underpayment of teachers and staff, making it challenging to attract and retain qualified educators. Additionally, extracurricular programs, which play a crucial role in holistic development, are often the first casualties of budget cuts. Ultimately, the lack of government investment in schools perpetuates educational inequality, as students in underfunded schools face greater challenges in achieving academic success and pursuing future opportunities (Mkandawire, et al, 2019). Addressing this funding gap is essential for fostering a robust and equitable education system that empowers all students for the challenges of the future. Simui, et al (2017) reported that the funding of schools for teaching and learning materials is the back bone of every effective education in way beyond imagination. The inadequacy funding to schools poses a lot of hardships in delivering the appropriate curriculum to the young learners.

### ***1.3. The Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study was to assess government funding for teaching/ learning materials in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district in Zambia.

### ***1.4. Research Objectives***

The objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the importance of government funding in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.
- Identify factors that hinder government funding for teaching/learning materials in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.

### ***1.5. Conceptual Framework***

This study was guided by a conceptual framework depicting the probabilistic causal factors (exogenous variables) sources of Zambia's education sector, such as the government, donor aid and school projects as independent variables (IV) while the financing for education was depicted the dependent variable (DV). Despite government funding being the major contributor of financing for education, the efforts from donors and school projects are too notable to be ignored.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The study on government funding for schools holds significant importance as it sheds light on a critical aspect of the education system with far-reaching implications. Understanding the allocation and distribution of funds to schools is essential for evaluating the overall effectiveness and equity of educational opportunities. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights into the disparities in funding among different schools and regions, potentially uncovering systemic inequalities. Moreover, it can inform policymakers and educators about the impact of funding on educational outcomes, allowing for evidence-based decision-making to improve the quality of education. By addressing gaps in government funding, the study contributes to fostering a fair and inclusive educational environment, ultimately influencing the future prospects of students and the overall development of society. It is further hoped that the findings of the study would be utilized to provide information to the administrators and other stake holders in the education sector on the significance of government funding for teaching/learning materials in secondary schools. The findings would also be helpful in setting priorities when it comes the allocation of resource during planning and budgeting at a district level.

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## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Study Design**

This study adopted a mixed method approach where quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The use of two methodologies was found to enhance research findings by providing a well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon under study. The mixed methods approach allowed the study to not only ensure the validity of the findings but also collect rich information from different perspectives. This mixed methods approach was used because it enabled the study to collect both quantified and personal verbatim which was of good help in furthering understanding of responses from the intended respondents.

### **2.2. Research Site**

This study was conducted in Lusaka district, the capital city of Zambia from the selected for the study were schools; A, B, C, and D.

### **2.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The population for the study comprised selected officials at District Education Board Secretary, School Head Teachers, and Teachers giving a total of one thousand five hundred (500). The sample size involved a total of 50 respondents which included two (2) officials from DEBS office, four (4) head teachers, one (1) from each selected school. Eight (8) heads of department, two (2) from each selected school, and thirty-six (36) teachers, nine (9) from each selected school. The study used both purposive and simple random sampling on different participants.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to the examining of what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. Data analysis also involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences. For the purpose of analysis in this research, the collected responses from the questionnaires and interviews were arranged thematically and coded accordingly using a coding scheme. The coding scheme helped to create codes and scales from the responses, which were then summarized and analyzed using a relevant statistical software package. Preferably the researcher made use of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSSv16) as well as through Microsoft excels.

### **2.5. Ethical Issues**

Permission from the District Education Board for Lusaka district was sought in carrying this study. Informed consent was sought from the respondents before collecting information from them and guaranteed them with security of the information they provided. Furthermore, the main objective of gathering such information was made clear to the respondents. The study avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. In this research, the study was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions, and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research, and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

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## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

### **3.1. Importance of Government Funding in Schools**

*Table 1: Showing Importance of Government Funding in Schools*

RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Infrastructure Development	20%
Qualified Teaching Staff	10%
Curriculum Enhancement	15%
National Development	25%
Safety and Security	10%
Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The study sought to determine the importance of government funding in schools. According to the findings in table 1 above, infrastructure development in schools is crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment, and government funding plays a pivotal role in ensuring its realization. Adequate funding allows educational institutions to construct and maintain essential facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sports facilities. These infrastructural elements contribute significantly to the overall educational experience, providing students with well-equipped spaces for diverse learning activities. Additionally, World Bank Group (2015) narrates that government support enables schools to invest in modern technology, ensuring that students have access to up-to-date resources, thereby enhancing the quality of education. Furthermore, well-maintained infrastructure can positively impact student attendance and engagement, as students are more likely to be motivated in a comfortable and stimulating environment. In summary, government funding for schools is indispensable in facilitating infrastructure development, fostering an enriching educational atmosphere that ultimately contributes to the overall growth and success of students. The findings also indicated that the importance of government funding for schools cannot be overstated, particularly in ensuring the availability of qualified teaching staff. Adequate financial support enables schools to attract and retain highly skilled educators, fostering a conducive learning environment (Mkandawire, 2018). Well-compensated teachers are more likely to be motivated and committed to their profession, contributing to the overall quality of education. Government funding also allows for professional development opportunities, ensuring that teaching staff stays updated with the latest educational methodologies and technologies. Additionally, sufficient resources enable schools to implement competitive salary structures, making teaching an attractive career choice. The presence of qualified teaching staff is crucial for the holistic development of students, as educators play a pivotal role in shaping young minds and preparing them for future challenges. Thus, government funding is a cornerstone in building a robust education system that empowers both teachers and students for success.

Furthermore, officials from DEBS office narrated that curriculum enhancement plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape, and the importance of government funding for schools cannot be overstated in this context. This is in line with Meki (2014) who added that adequate financial support from the government enables schools to implement and sustain innovative curriculum improvements, fostering a dynamic and relevant learning environment. This funding is instrumental in updating educational materials, incorporating cutting-edge technology, and providing professional development opportunities for teachers. Moreover, it ensures that schools can offer a well-rounded education, encompassing not only core subjects but also extracurricular activities, thereby nurturing holistic development in students. Government funding acts as a catalyst for continuous improvement, empowering schools to adapt to evolving educational needs and preparing students for the challenges of the modern world. In essence, the significance of government support in enhancing the curriculum lies in its ability to cultivate a robust and adaptable educational system that equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in a rapidly changing global landscape. Head teachers also added that government funding for schools plays a crucial role in fostering national development by laying the foundation for a well-educated and skilled workforce. Adequate financial support enables schools to maintain high-quality infrastructure, hire qualified educators, and provide essential resources such as textbooks and technology. This, in turn, ensures that students receive a comprehensive and competitive education. A well-educated population contributes significantly to the overall development of a nation by fostering innovation, productivity, and economic growth (Kattan, 2016). Moreover, government funding helps bridge socio-economic gaps in access to education, promoting inclusivity and social equity. As schools serve as the breeding ground for future leaders, professionals, and citizens, investing in education becomes a strategic imperative for nations aiming to achieve sustainable development and global competitiveness. Therefore, recognizing the importance of government funding for schools is paramount in building a strong and prosperous nation.

Moving on, the findings of this study noted that government funding for schools plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff. Adequate financial support enables schools to implement essential measures such as hiring trained security personnel, installing surveillance systems, and implementing emergency response protocols (Masdeu, 2015). These resources are vital for creating a secure learning environment that promotes student well-being and allows educators to focus on teaching without compromising safety. Additionally, funding supports the maintenance and improvement of school infrastructure, ensuring that facilities meet safety standards and are equipped to handle emergencies. Ultimately, prioritizing safety through government funding for schools not only safeguards the educational community but also contributes to a positive and conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning.

The teachers also noted that addressing socioeconomic disparities through government funding for schools is of paramount importance in fostering a more equitable and inclusive society (Brink & Jamrich, 2013). Adequate financial support enables schools in economically disadvantaged areas to bridge the resource gap, ensuring access to quality education for all students, regardless of their background. Government funding can facilitate the hiring of

skilled educators, provide up-to-date educational materials, and improve infrastructure, creating a conducive learning environment. Moreover, it helps implement targeted programs that address the unique needs of students facing socioeconomic challenges, such as access to extracurricular activities, nutrition programs, and mental health resources. By investing in education, governments can break the cycle of poverty, empower marginalized communities, and contribute to the overall development of a more just and prosperous society.

### ***3.2. Factors that Hinder Government Funding for Teaching/Learning Materials in Schools***

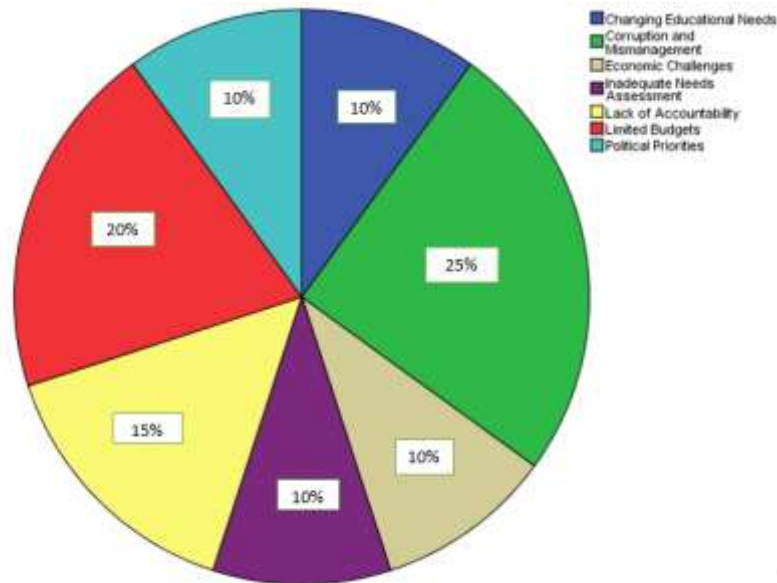
As outlined in Figure 1 below, the study found out 7 major factors that hinder government funding for teaching/learning materials in selected schools. Officials from DEBS office explained that limited budgets pose a significant hindrance to government funding for schools, adversely impacting the quality of education and overall educational outcomes. UNESCO (2015) adds that insufficient financial resources restrict the ability of educational institutions to invest in essential infrastructure, modern teaching technologies, and qualified educators. This constraint often leads to overcrowded classrooms, outdated learning materials, and a lack of extracurricular activities, all of which are crucial components of a well-rounded education. Moreover, inadequate funding may result in a diminished focus on teacher training programs and professional development, hindering the continuous improvement of teaching standards. The long-term consequences of underfunded schools extend beyond the immediate learning environment, affecting the future prospects and opportunities available to students. Addressing this challenge requires a commitment to prioritizing education in budgetary allocations, recognizing its pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of a nation's development.

Head teachers also noted that political priorities can often serve as a hindrance to sufficient government funding for schools. In some cases, policymakers may prioritize short-term political gains over long-term investments in education, diverting funds towards projects that yield more immediate political benefits. Additionally, political ideologies may influence budget allocations, with some officials advocating for reduced government spending on education as a means of advancing fiscal conservatism (Herward, 2019). This can lead to insufficient resources for schools, impacting infrastructure, teacher salaries, and educational programs. The allocation of funds may also be influenced by political pressures, favoring certain regions or constituencies over others. As a result, the educational system may struggle to meet the evolving needs of students and educators, highlighting the challenges that arise when political priorities take precedence over a comprehensive approach to funding education. They further observed that corruption and mismanagement pose formidable obstacles to government funding for schools, impeding the effective allocation and utilization of resources in the education sector. Boyl, (2012) points out that when funds earmarked for educational purposes fall prey to corruption, they are diverted away from their intended beneficiaries—students, teachers, and the overall improvement of educational facilities. Mismanagement exacerbates the problem by leading to inefficient use of resources, hindering the development of schools and educational programs. This dual challenge compromises the quality of education, perpetuates disparities, and undermines the government's ability to provide adequate financial support to schools. To address this issue, it is imperative for governments to implement robust anti-corruption measures, promote transparency in budgetary allocations, and institute effective oversight mechanisms to ensure that funds allocated for education are used efficiently and reach the intended recipients (Chanda, 2023).

Heads of department on the other hand viewed that the lack of accountability poses a significant hindrance to government funding for schools. When educational institutions are not held accountable for their performance and outcomes, there is a risk of mismanagement, inefficiency, and a lack of transparency in resource utilization. Without clear metrics to assess the effectiveness of educational programs, it becomes challenging for the government to justify allocating funds to schools. This corresponds with a study done by Ares (2014) who explains that accountability mechanisms are crucial to ensuring that taxpayer money is invested wisely and that schools are meeting predetermined educational standards. In the absence of robust accountability measures, there is a heightened likelihood of financial misappropriation, inadequate educational delivery, and an overall erosion of public trust, all of which undermine the government's willingness to allocate sufficient funds to support and improve the education system. They also said that the evolving landscape of educational needs poses a significant challenge to securing government funding for schools. As societal demands shift towards digital literacy, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, and a more holistic approach to learning, traditional educational systems may struggle to keep pace. Governments often allocate funds based on established structures and curricula, making it difficult for schools to adapt swiftly to emerging requirements. This hindrance is exacerbated by the inertia within bureaucratic processes, impeding the timely allocation of resources to address evolving educational needs. Consequently, there is a growing disconnect between the dynamic requirements of a modern education and the rigid funding mechanisms, creating a barrier to the effective provision of quality education in an ever-changing world.

Teachers equally observed that inadequate needs assessment poses a significant impediment to securing government funding for schools. A comprehensive and accurate needs assessment is crucial for identifying the specific requirements and challenges faced by educational institutions, enabling targeted resource allocation. When schools fail to conduct a thorough assessment, they risk overlooking essential aspects such as infrastructure deficiencies, faculty development needs, and curriculum gaps (EFA, 2010). This oversight undermines the credibility of funding requests, as it becomes challenging to demonstrate the precise areas where financial support is required. Consequently, without a clear understanding of the school's needs, government authorities may hesitate to allocate funds efficiently, hindering the overall improvement of educational facilities and programs. A robust needs assessment is thus a fundamental prerequisite for securing government funding and fostering educational advancement. The study further noted that economic challenges pose a significant impediment to government funding for schools, creating a cascade of adverse effects on education systems. In times of economic downturn or fiscal constraints, governments often face budgetary pressures, leading to reduced allocations for education. This limitation constrains the ability to invest adequately in infrastructure, teacher training, and educational resources. Moreover, economic challenges can result in increased demands on public finances for essential services, diverting funds away from the education sector. As a consequence, schools may grapple with outdated facilities, inadequate staffing, and insufficient learning materials, ultimately compromising the quality of education provided. This

cycle perpetuates educational inequalities and hinders the development of a skilled and competitive workforce, further exacerbating long-term economic challenges for the nation.



*Figure 1: Showing Factors that Hinder Government Funding for Teaching/Learning Materials in Schools*

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study guides that government funding for schools plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape and ensuring equal opportunities for all students. Adequate financial support from the government enables schools to provide essential resources, maintain infrastructure, and hire qualified teachers, fostering an environment conducive to effective learning. It serves as a cornerstone for addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting educational equity, allowing schools in economically disadvantaged areas to bridge the resource gap. Moreover, government funding is crucial for implementing innovative programs, technology integration, and extracurricular activities that enrich students' overall educational experience. As we recognize the integral role of education in shaping the future of a nation, continued and increased government funding for schools remains paramount for fostering a well-rounded, inclusive, and thriving society.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) need to be encouraged and motivated to provide essential teaching aids and materials such as educational charts, maps, atlases, etc.
- The Zambian government through the anti – corruption commission need to continue fighting corruption in the education sector to bring to book those who use funds meant for the procurement of teaching and learning materials for personal gain.
- The Ministry of Education engage with teachers, parents, and education experts to gather input on the most effective and relevant teaching materials, fostering a collaborative approach to educational resource development and allocation.
- The Ministry of Education invest in sustainable practices, such as encouraging the use of recyclable materials or digital resources, to reduce the environmental impact of teaching materials.
- Government should consider equipping the head teachers with financial management skills so as to effectively manage grants since the head teachers are the financial controllers in institutions unlike depending on school accountants.
- Government should provide grants or incentives for schools to experiment with innovative teaching methods and materials, fostering a culture of creativity and continuous improvement.
- Government should strengthen transparent regulatory systems in order to promote management capacities for greater accountability and enhance ownership of the management process which in turn can help to reduce mismanagement of public funds.

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