

The Extent to which Fundraising Strategy Employed by Heads of Public Secondary Schools Contributes to Meeting Financial Obligations in Katavi Region, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations in Katavi Region, Tanzania. Guided by Resource Dependence Theory and a pragmatic philosophy, used a mixed-methods approach with a convergent research design. From 841 stakeholders: District Secondary Education Officers, Heads of School, teachers, Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, and School Board Chairpersons, 293 were sampled through stratified random and criterion sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guides, validated by four experts, specialised in educational planning and administration at Mwenge Catholic University. A pilot study was conducted in 4 schools using 38 participants, yielding reliability (.882 and .794) for teachers and Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters' respectively. Trustworthiness was maintained through triangulation and peer debriefing. Analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Ethical considerations, including research permits, informed consent and confidentiality, were observed. Findings revealed that given the lack of statistically significant variations in responses, to a moderate extent, fundraising strategy contributes to meeting financial obligations on maintenance, administrative and academic operations. Yet, it is constrained by failures of fundraising events and its unreliable implementations. It is concluded that, fundraising strategy contributes moderately to meeting financial obligations. The study recommends Heads of School in collaboration with teachers, and School Boards to establish structured annual fundraising plans with diverse and innovative fundraising strategies, transparent reporting, and digital payment platforms to enhance credibility, broaden fundraising base, and improve consistency and financial returns from fundraising initiatives.

Keywords: Fundraising Strategy, Financial Obligations, Administrative Operational Costs, Mixed-Methods Approach, Public Secondary Schools, Tanzania.

Introduction

Financial sustainability remains a pressing concern for educational institutions worldwide, particularly in low-income countries (LICs), where consistent funding for institutional obligations on operational, instructional, and infrastructural needs, is limited. The UNESCO (2024a) identifies education as a transformative investment for peace, security, and

prosperity, with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) aiming to achieve inclusive, equitable, and quality education by 2030 (Vereinte Nationen, 2018). Despite these commitments, meeting financial obligations in educational institutions is still a problem. The World Bank (2023a) reports that spending per school-age child in LICs falls below the recommended US\$53. UNESCO (2024b) and World Bank (2024) estimate a global annual funding gap of US\$97 billion, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for US\$70 billion. This financial deficit, driven by population growth and rising demand, emphasises that government funding alone is insufficient to meet schools' diverse obligations (World Bank, 2023a). In response, educational institutions rely on fundraising among the strategies to complement inadequate public funding (World Bank, 2024). Although widely promoted, limited empirical evidence exists on the extent to which fundraising strategy meets schools' financial needs, especially in LICs.

Globally, fundraising strategies are increasingly emphasized to supplement secondary education funding. In Indonesia, school committees are legally authorized under *Permendikbud Nomor 75 Tahun 2016* (Article 3 and 11) to conduct community fundraising. These resources must be voluntary donations rather than mandatory levies, directly supporting infrastructure and school quality when national operational assistance is insufficient (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 2016). In Cameroon, public education expenditures averaged 14.2% between 2010 and 2016, falling below the Global Partnership for Education's 20% edge. To counter these financial constraints, the government proposed reforms to modernize governance and promote community fundraising (World Bank, 2017). Similarly, Nigeria's National Policy on Education outlines fundraising strategies to supplement state funds (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). In Kenya, School Boards of Management utilize their statutory mandate under Section 59 and the Third Schedule of the Basic Education Act, No. 14 of 2013. Collaborating with parents' associations, they legally initiate infrastructural fundraising and source community-based assistance to bridge severe state capitation funding gaps (Republic of Kenya, 2013). These international successes highlight the need to investigate fundraising's contribution to financial sustainability.

Education financing in Tanzania has undergone significant restructuring. Following 1980s cost-sharing models under Structural Adjustment Programs that shifted financial burdens to communities and caused rural-urban inequities, Tanzania introduced Capitation Grants (CGs) in 2004 and the 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP) (World Bank, 2023b; URT, 2023c). However, financial deficits persist as the Controller and Auditor General reported CG shortfalls of TZS 4.2 billion in 2020/21 and TZS 5.8 billion in 2021/22 (URT, 2022; URT, 2023a). Consequently, public secondary schools struggle to meet critical financial obligations including academic and administrative office expenses, continuous assessments, facility maintenance, and student health services (URT, 2015). Underfunding these essential services threatens educational quality (Nachinguru & Mwila, 2023; Bukuku, 2025). To bridge this gap, Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 instructed Heads of Schools to diversify funding sources by initiating fundraising initiatives (URT, 2016; URT, 2023b).

Heads of Schools can deploy targeted fundraising events like *Harambee* fundraisers, auctions, and charity walks to mobilize immediate capital (URT, 2023b). Supported by URT (2024b), which views community contributions and volunteerism as vital, the ultimate success of these fundraising strategy depends on their actual contribution to funding development plans and meeting school financial obligations.

Despite national Fee-Free education efforts, public secondary schools in Katavi region face acute, widespread underfunding. Katavi's district councils are among the country's most financially distressed, with four out of five experiencing severe funding shortfalls (URT, 2024b). A comparative analysis reveals that Katavi recorded the nation's highest cumulative funding deficit for Fee-Free Education at 21% during the 2022/2023 financial year. This far exceeds deficits in regions like Tabora (11%), Mwanza (9%), and Morogoro (6%), signaling greater vulnerability and a severe risk to effective policy implementation. Consequently, Katavi's schools lack sufficient funds for office operations, continuous assessments, health services, and infrastructure repairs. To survive, they rely heavily on fundraising strategy (Katavi Regional Education Office, 2024). While this aligns with the revised 2023 ETP advocating for diversified funding (URT, 2023c), local evidence regarding its actual contribution remains missing. In Katavi Region, a severe 21% funding deficit paired with rapid 7.1% population growth has created localized structural crises within schools (URT et al., 2024). Financially starved of capitation grants and strained by a rising youth population, public secondary schools face severe operational deficits. Empirical evidence highlights these exact points of failure: Tanganyika District suffers from overcrowded classrooms, deficient infrastructure, and compromised educational quality (Edward, 2025), while Mpimbwe District faces persistent resource limitations (Karogi & Munisi, 2026). This direct link between regional underfunding and district-level decay justifies moving beyond standard public funding. It establishes an urgent need to investigate how fundraising strategy contributes to rescuing the learning environment.

Statement of the Problem

Public secondary schools in Katavi region face persistent unmet financial obligations. During the 2022/2023 financial year, four out of five district councils experienced a 21% under-release of Fee-Free Education funds, severely undermining their capacity to finance assessments, health services, administration, academic operations, and facility maintenance (URT, 2015; URT, 2024a). To address this, the 2014 ETP (2023 edition) and Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 directed Heads of schools to diversify financing, prompting public secondary schools in Katavi region to adopt various fundraising initiatives (URT, 2016; URT, 2023b; URT, 2023c; Katavi Regional Education Office, 2024). However, overcrowded classrooms, deficit infrastructure, and inadequate resources persist (Edward, 2025; Karogi & Munisi, 2026), and local evidence regarding fundraising's actual contribution remains limited. While past studies primarily examined the general practicability of fundraising and parent-teacher platforms' fundraising strategy (Mosha et al., 2024; Kiure et al., 2023), this study expanded the focus. It specifically investigated the extent to which

fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools in Katavi region contribute to meeting diverse financial obligations.

Research Objective

The study intended to investigate the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations in Katavi region.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study

1. To what extent does fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contribute to meeting financial obligations in Katavi region?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis guided the study

H_a: There is a statistically significant difference in mean ratings on the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations based on teachers' working experience.

H_o: There is no statistically significant difference in mean ratings on the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations based on teachers' working experience.

Significance of the Study

The study's findings will inform school stakeholders including Heads of School, Board Chairpersons, District Secondary Education Officers, teachers, and Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters on the extent to which fundraising strategy contributes to meeting financial obligations. It provides empirical evidence to the body of Knowledge on the contribution of fundraising strategy within resource-constrained educational contexts. Furthermore, the findings guide policymakers on implementing the 2014 ETP (2023 Edition) regarding diversified financing mechanisms in public secondary schools. Finally, the study extends Resource Dependence Theory to educational settings, demonstrating how schools secure critical resources from external sources for survival through innovative fundraising initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), guided this study by explaining that organizations are not self-sufficient but depend on externally controlled resources for survival. RDT both explains the mobilisation mechanism and predicts the vulnerability when external actors default. The theory assumes that organizational power is determined by the degree of dependence on critical resources controlled by external actors. To reduce uncertainty and dependence, organizations

establish alliances, diversify funding sources, involve influential stakeholders, restructure governance systems, negotiate favourable agreements, and adapt their structures to strengthen external linkages (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In this study, fundraising strategy by involving various stakeholders, constitutes essential external resources for meeting school financial obligations. RDT is relevant because it emphasizes the importance of external relationships and stakeholder engagement in mobilizing resources, making it suitable for explaining fundraising strategy in public secondary schools (Njau et al., 2022a). The theory has also been widely applied in education to explain how schools manage financial dependencies, allocate resources strategically, improve sustainability, and minimize resource-related risks (Bwoma & Madanji, 2023; Njau et al., 2022b). Although RDT mainly focuses on external factors and pays limited attention to internal influences such as leadership, organizational culture, and management capability (Bwoma & Madanji, 2023), it remains appropriate for this study because it explains how Heads of School in Katavi collaborate with external stakeholders to diversify funding sources, supplement limited government resources through fundraising, and manage financial obligations.

Review of Empirical Studies

This empirical review examines the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations, including administrative, academic operations, continuous assessment, student health-related services, and maintenance costs. An integrative literature review was adopted to provide a comprehensive overview of existing studies on the extent to which fundraising strategy alleviates financial burdens and enhances resource continuity in secondary schools. The model assisted to review, critique, and synthesize representative literature on a topic in an integrated way so that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic were generated as per Torraco (2005). Using the funnel approach recommended by Saunders (2019), the review progresses from global to regional and local perspectives, situating Tanzania's context within the broader international discourse on educational finance. It examines fundraising initiatives such as events, sponsorships, and partnerships, focusing on their contribution in generating funds and addressing financial gaps to sustain school programmes, infrastructure, and essential operations across Asia, West Africa, South Africa, East Africa, and Tanzania.

The empirical literature consistently demonstrates that fundraising is an important strategy for addressing financial constraints in secondary schools, although its contribution varies across contexts and implementation approaches. In Malaysia, Ghazali et al. (2022), using a qualitative case study involving 18 participants, found that entrepreneurial leadership by school principals was crucial in securing external financial support despite persistent funding challenges. Similarly, Sebidi (2025), through a qualitative case study in rural South Africa, reported that fundraising enhanced financial sustainability for teaching resources but was constrained by limited stakeholder participation, poverty, and inadequate fundraising skills. In Nigeria, Ebri and Oben (2022) employed a descriptive survey of 286

principals and established those fundraising strategies had a low impact on school financing, recommending stronger implementation. Likewise, Okechukwu et al. (2024) found that principals should diversify fundraising by adopting approaches such as crowdfunding, corporate sponsorship, and special events to improve school financing. Collectively, these studies confirm that fundraising contributes to school sustainability but is influenced by leadership capacity, stakeholder participation, and socioeconomic conditions. However, most focused on general school improvement or resource acquisition rather than evaluating the extent to which fundraising addresses specific financial obligations, leaving a knowledge gap that justified the present study.

Evidence from Cameroon and Tanzania further indicates that fundraising supports school development, although its effectiveness differs across contexts. Wantchami (2023), using a cross-sectional survey involving students, teachers, and parents in Cameroon, found that schools located in wealthier communities generated more funds, demonstrating the influence of local socioeconomic conditions on fundraising success. In Tanzania, Mosha et al. (2024), through a convergent mixed-methods design, established that fundraising effectively mobilised physical resources and reduced resource shortages in public secondary schools. Similarly, Kiure et al. (2023) reported that parent-teacher platforms contributed to financial sustainability, although their effectiveness was constrained by inadequate utilisation of crowdfunding strategies. Methodologically, these studies employed qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches and relied mainly on questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews. Despite their contributions, they largely examined fundraising for general resource mobilisation, infrastructure, or financial sustainability rather than its contribution in meeting specific financial obligations. Furthermore, most were conducted in socioeconomic contexts different from Katavi Region or focused on limited respondent categories. The present study addressed these contextual, methodological, and knowledge gaps by adopting a convergent mixed-methods design involving multiple stakeholder groups to assess the extent to which fundraising contributes to meeting specific financial obligations in public secondary schools in Katavi Region, Tanzania.

Research Methodology

This mixed-methods study adopted a pragmatic philosophy and convergent design, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analysed separately, and integrated during interpretation as per Creswell (2022). The target population comprised 841 stakeholders from 74 public secondary schools in Katavi Region (Katavi Regional Education Office, 2024). A sample of 293 participants was obtained using stratified random sampling for 30 schools, 30 Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, and 238 teachers, while criterion purposive sampling sampled four DSEOs, 14 Heads of Schools, and seven School Board Chairpersons. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview guides validated by four education experts from Mwenge Catholic University. A pilot study involving 38 participants refined the instruments and procedures as per

Kunselman (2024). Reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha with values of .882 and .794 highlighting high internal consistent according to Taber (2018). Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, contextual descriptions, audit trails, and empirical field records (Ahmed, 2024; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017).

Data collection was conducted from May 6 to July 30, 2025, following the University applicable clearance pathway such as; research clearance from MWECAU's Vice Chancellor and permits from PO-RALG's Permanent Secretary, the Katavi Regional Administrative Secretary, and respective District Executive Directors. Consenting participants completed interviews lasting 30-45 minutes and questionnaires requiring 45-60 minutes. Quantitative data were coded, entered, cleaned, and analysed using SPSS Version 27 to ensure validity (Kotronoula et al., 2023; Epstein & Martin, 2005; Henniger et al., 2024). The return rate for questionnaires was 238/246 (98%) for teachers and 30/30 (100%) for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters. According to Luo (2020), a return rate of 70% or higher is considered acceptable for survey research, making this rate satisfactory. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and percentages) and inferential statistics (One-Way ANOVA) were employed in data analysis, with findings interpreted using established classification frameworks (Lindner & Lindner, 2024; Taherdoost, 2019). Qualitative interview data were analysed thematically using the seven-step framework of Creswell and Creswell (2023) such as organizing, transcribing and translating, coding, cleaning, sorting and categorization generating five major themes and finally developing narrative interpretations. Quantitative and qualitative data were integrated during interpretation through side-by-side triangulation. Ethical principles were observed through informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity using pseudonyms, and academic integrity by acknowledging all sources in APA 7th edition (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Results and Discussions

This study investigated the extent to which fundraising strategies employed by Heads of public secondary schools contribute to meeting financial obligations in Katavi Region, Tanzania. Data were collected from Teachers (TRs), Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters (TCFMs), Heads of School (HoS), School Board Chairpersons (SBCPs), and District Secondary Education Officers (DSEOs) using questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaire responses were measured on a five-point extent scale ranging from 1 (Very Low Extent) to 5 (Very High Extent) as proposed by Koo and Yang (2025), and analysed using mean scores, frequencies, and percentages. To ensure confidentiality, alphanumeric pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, schools, and districts. Mean scores were interpreted using Lindner and Lindner's (2024) classification, where 1.00-1.79 indicated a very low extent, 1.80-2.59 low, 2.60-3.39 moderate, 3.40-4.19 high, and 4.20-5.00 very high extent. Percentages were interpreted using Taherdoost's (2019) framework. For clarity, responses of "very high" and "high" were merged, as were "very low" and "low," while retaining the "moderate" category to preserve balanced opinions and avoid distorting

response distributions according to Lindner and Lindner (2024). The summarized responses from TRs and TCFMs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers in charge of financial matters and Teachers' Responses on the Extent to which Fundraising Strategy (FS) Employed by Heads of Public Secondary Schools Contributes in Meeting Financial Obligations (TCFMs n = 30, TRs n=238)

S/ N	Aspects of FS Contribution	R	VL		L		M		H		VH		Mea n
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
i	FS contributes in paying electricity & water bills	TCFMs	7	23.3	4	13.3	6	20	8	26.7	5	16.7	3
		TRs	60	25.2	47	19.7	70	29.4	40	16.8	21	8.8	2.64
ii	FS contribute to cover cost of assessment tools	TCFMs	8	26.7	5	16.7	8	26.7	5	16.7	4	13.3	2.73
		TRs	55	23.1	53	22.3	71	29.8	39	16.4	20	8.4	2.65
iii	FS contributes in paying salaries for part-time staff.	TCFMs	6	20	6	20	5	16.7	8	26.7	5	16.7	3
		TRs	70	29.4	59	24.8	61	25.6	39	16.4	9	3.8	2.4
iv	FS contribute to cover the costs of students' furniture	TCFMs	6	20	5	16.7	8	26.7	9	30	2	6.7	2.87
		TRs	50	21	62	26.1	69	29	40	16.8	17	7.1	2.63
v	FS contributes in covering the costs of office materials	TCFMs	5	16.7	4	13.3	10	33.3	7	23.3	4	13.3	3.03
		TRs	54	22.7	61	25.6	62	26.1	43	18.1	18	7.6	2.62
vi	FS contributes in purchases of learning materials	TCFMs	4	13.3	10	33.3	5	16.7	6	20	5	16.7	2.93
		TRs	61	25.6	55	23.1	63	26.5	40	16.8	19	8	2.58
vii	FS contributes in	TCFMs	6	20	3	10	10	33.3	9	30	2	6.7	2.93

S/ N	Aspects of FS Contribution	R	VL		L		M		H		VH		
	covering maintenance costs	TRs	55	23.1	52	21.8	74	31.1	39	16.4	18	7.6	2.63
viii	FS covers extracurricular activities expenses	TCFMs	5	16.7	2	6.7	12	40	8	26.6	3	10	3.07
		TRs	52	21.8	57	23.9	69	29	40	16.8	20	8.4	2.66
ix	FS contributes in covering the costs of school events	TCFMs	7	23.3	4	13.3	6	20	9	30	4	13.3	2.97
		TRs	51	21.4	55	23.1	70	29.4	42	17.6	20	8.4	2.68
x	FS covers the costs of school emergencies	TCFMs	9	30	4	13.3	4	13.3	9	30	4	13.3	2.97
		TRs	81	34	46	19.3	57	23.9	41	17.2	13	5.5	2.41
	Grand Mean	TCFMs											2.95
	Grand Mean	TRs											2.59
					Total Grand Mean = 2.77								

Source: Field Data (2025)

Key: 1. VLE = Very Low Extent, 2. LE = Low Extent, 3. ME = Moderate Extent, 4. HE = High Extent, 5. VHE = Very High Extent, R = Respondents, TCFMs = Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, TRs = Teachers, FS = Fundraising Strategy, F = frequency, % = percentage. Mean Scale: 1.00-1.79 = very low extent, 1.80-2.59 = low extent, 2.60-3.39 = moderate extent, 3.40-4.19 = high extent, and 4.20-5.00 = very high extent. Percentage (%): 1-20% = extremely minority; 21 - 40% = minority; 41 - 60% = moderate majority; 61 - 80% = majority; 81 - 100% = extremely majority.

Data presented in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to meeting the costs of extracurricular activities to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 3.07 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.66 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of contribution. These data are further validated by qualitative data as revealed during an interview, HoS 05B noted, *"Community fundraising through events has helped very little... we received only two footballs from TAWA, while this year we incurred losses after the Guest of Honour failed to attend"* (HoS 05B, July 29, 2025). Similarly, HoS 04D reported, *"Last year (2024), we raised TZS 200,000 through a graduation cake contribution exercise, which we used to buy maize seeds that later produced 10 bags of maize"* (HoS 04D, July 18, 2025). In contrast, HoS 01B noted, *"Fundraising during graduation ceremonies brought only computers and football goal posts, while other promised support,*

including solar panels, was never delivered" (HoS 01B, May 8, 2025). Heads of School reported that fundraising through inviting Guests of Honour and cake sales during Form One welcome and graduation ceremonies made only a limited contribution to extracurricular expenses. Funds raised were mainly used to purchase sports jerseys, footballs, and goal posts, while TZS 200,000 collected during one graduation ceremony was invested in maize farming to supplement school income-generating activities. However, weak fundraising designs, failed events, and unfulfilled pledges, such as undelivered solar panels, reduced the strategy's contribution.

Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to meeting extracurricular costs to a moderate extent. Qualitative evidence confirmed that these fundraising initiatives supported the purchase of sports equipment but were constrained by low collections and unreliable donor commitments. Overall, fundraising made a moderate contribution to financing extracurricular activities, although its contribution remained inconsistent. These findings are consistent with Wantchami (2023), who found that schools in affluent areas generated more fundraising support. However, the findings contradict the assumptions of Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), as reliance on external actors exposed schools to fundraising failures and unreliable resource flows, limiting their ability to meet financial obligations consistently. This contradiction might have stemmed from the difference in schools' location, socio-economic contexts and innovativeness of school management teams. This alerts for Heads of Schools to reduce schools' dependence on external funding by strengthening internal resource mobilization and diversifying fundraising initiatives.

Data presented in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering the costs of school events to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 2.97 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.68 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of contribution. In line with quantitative data, qualitative data corroborate by revealing how fundraising strategy supports covering the costs of school events. HoS 02D commented, *"We engage parents in fundraising through graduation cake sales and monthly contributions of TZS 1,000-1,500 for school events, although collections are often challenging"* (HoS 02D, May 29, 2025). In contrast, DSEO 03 said, *"Not every school conduct fundraising during graduation ceremonies, and some schools are more self-sufficient than others, so the impact varies"* (DSEO 03, May 21, 2025). Likewise, HoS 03E added, *"Graduation fundraising through friendly supporter competitions usually raises only small amounts, often enough to cover minor deficits from the event itself"* (HoS 03E, May 21, 2025). Heads of School and DSEOs indicated that fundraising contributes to meeting the costs of school events, although the amounts raised are generally small and inconsistent. Fundraising activities include cake sales during graduation ceremonies, monthly parental contributions of TZS 1,000-1,500 for remedial classes, and competitive appeals involving Simba and Yanga supporters during celebrations. However, not all schools conduct fundraising, and the proceeds mainly cover minor event deficits.

Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to covering school event costs to a moderate extent. Qualitative data confirmed that fundraising supports remedial classes and school events but is constrained by inconsistent participation and limited collections. Overall, fundraising contributes moderately to meeting financial obligations for school events. These findings are consistent with Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which emphasises collaboration with external stakeholders for resource mobilisation. The findings also align with Kiure et al. (2023), who found that fundraising effectiveness is limited by inadequate use of crowdfunding and influenced by school location, management creativity, and socio-economic conditions.

Data presented in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering administrative office expenses to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 3.03 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.62 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of contribution. These quantitative data are supported by qualitative data from the interview guides, as noted by HoS 05B, *"Community fundraising has brought in very little, with most funds used for office supplies and examination fees such as regional mock examinations"* (HoS 05B, May 29, 2025). Similarly, HoS 04A reported, *"During graduation ceremonies, the Guest of Honour sometimes mobilises fundraising, which has supported projects such as constructing a staff toilet block"* (HoS 04A, July 15, 2025). Similarly, DSEO 02 commented, *"Graduation ceremonies attract stakeholders such as banks, whose fundraising support is used to purchase items including computers and staff chairs"* (DSEO 02, May 15, 2025). Likewise, HoS 02D reported, *"Funds raised through graduation cake sales are mainly directed to staff-related needs, with affordable prices encouraging greater parental participation"* (HoS 02D, May 29, 2025). Views from Heads of School and District Secondary Education Officers indicated that fundraising strategy contributes to meeting administrative office expenses in public secondary schools, although the support is partial rather than sufficient. Funds raised through cake sales during school events, particularly graduation ceremonies, are used to purchase office supplies, pay regional mock examination fees, acquire computers and staff chairs, construct staff toilet blocks, and meet other minor staff-related needs. However, the small amounts raised, attributed to stakeholders' poor socio-economic conditions and limited creativity among some school management teams in designing fundraising initiatives, constrain the strategy's contribution.

Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributes to administrative office expenses to a moderate extent. Qualitative data further confirmed that fundraising mainly supplements, rather than fully finances, administrative expenditures. Overall, fundraising through graduation cake sales contributes moderately to meeting financial obligations related to administrative office expenses by supporting the purchase of office supplies, payment of mock examination fees, procurement of computers and staff chairs, and construction of minor facilities. These findings are consistent with Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which emphasises organisational dependence on external actors for critical resources. The findings also align with Okechukwu et al. (2024),

who found that diversified fundraising strategies enhance continuous funding for school operations, as do the Heads of School in this study, who mobilise resources to support administrative and operational needs.

Data presented in Table 1 indicate differing perceptions of the contribution of the fundraising strategy to covering the costs of learning materials, as reflected by mean scores of 2.93 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, indicating a moderate extent, and 2.58 for teachers, indicating a low extent of contribution. This contradiction might have stemmed from differences in roles and access to financial information, with Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters having greater involvement in budgeting than classroom teachers. The discrepancy alerts the Heads of School to strengthen transparency and participatory financial reporting to improve shared understanding of how fundraising resources are utilised. Interview data aligned with these varying perceptions from quantitative data as HoS 03A explained, *"During a graduation ceremony, our Member of Parliament raised TZS 500,000, which was used to purchase teaching materials, specifically arts textbooks"* (HoS 03A, May 19, 2025). Similarly, DSEO 05 reported, *"Fundraising has supported the purchase of teaching materials, including computers acquired through funds raised by the Member of Parliament"* (DSEO 05, July 21, 2025). In contrast, HoS 01C remarked, *"Since 2022, no graduation fundraising has produced tangible support, and items received from Vodacom were mainly business promotion rather than genuine fundraising"* (HoS 01C, May 7, 2025). Views of Heads of School and District Secondary Education Officers expressed mixed views on the contribution of fundraising strategy to covering the costs of teaching and learning materials in public secondary schools. Some schools benefited from fundraising, including TZS 500,000 raised during a graduation ceremony to purchase arts textbooks and funds mobilised by a Member of Parliament to acquire computers. However, other schools reported no tangible fundraising support, with some contributions resembling business promotions rather than genuine assistance. These variations reflect differences in socio-economic conditions and the creativity of school management teams. Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to meeting the costs of learning materials from a low extent among teachers to a moderate extent among Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matter. Qualitative data confirmed this inconsistency, as some schools acquired textbooks and computers while others received little or no meaningful support. Overall, fundraising contributes inconsistently to financing teaching and learning materials and remains insufficient to address shortages across schools. These findings are consistent with Sebidi (2025), who reported that school governing bodies struggle to generate supplementary funds because of weak stakeholder involvement, community poverty, and limited fundraising skills. Similarly, the current study identified poverty among stakeholders and limited creativity in fundraising initiatives as key constraints on securing adequate teaching and learning resources.

Data in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering the costs of maintaining school facilities to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 2.93 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.63 for teachers, both indicating a moderate

extent of contribution. Qualitative data from the interview guides align with these quantitative data, as SBCP 03E commented, *"Funds raised are used for buying sand, paying labourers, and repairing desks"* (SBCP 03E, May 21, 2025). Similarly, HoS 03A explained, *"Through a harambee, we managed to maintain damaged water infrastructure"* (HoS 03A, May 19, 2025). Likewise, HoS 02D reported, *"Fundraising secured about 1,000 blocks from parents, which were used to construct the omitted stairs in the COVID-19 infrastructure project"* (HoS 02D, May 29, 2025). In contrast, SBCP 01C said, *"Recent repairs were financed from the school budget, although earlier graduation fundraising supported repairs to doors and old buildings"* (SBCP 01C, May 7, 2025). Views from School Board Chairpersons and Heads of School indicate that fundraising strategy contributes to meeting the costs of school facility maintenance, although its effectiveness varies across schools. Funds raised have supported the purchase of sand and other maintenance materials, payment of labourers, repair of desks, maintenance of water infrastructure, and provision of blocks for repairing classroom stairs. However, misconceptions surrounding the Fee-Free Education policy, widespread community poverty, and limited creativity among some school management teams constrained fundraising efforts, forcing some schools to rely on internal budgets for repairs such as toilet renovations.

Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to facility maintenance to a moderate extent. Qualitative evidence established that fundraising supported infrastructure and furniture maintenance but was applied inconsistently across schools. Overall, fundraising contributes moderately to meeting financial obligations related to school facility maintenance by financing repair materials and labour costs, although it remains an unreliable source of funding. These findings are consistent with Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which emphasises reliance on external stakeholders for essential resources. The findings also agree with Mosha et al. (2024), who found that well-coordinated fundraising by Heads of School and teachers helps bridge resource gaps and improve school infrastructure through the purchase of maintenance materials and payment of labourers.

Data in Table 1 indicate differing perceptions of the contribution of the fundraising strategy to meeting the costs of school emergencies, as reflected by mean scores of 2.97 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, indicating a moderate extent, and 2.41 for teachers, indicating a low extent of contribution. The contradiction may result from differences in roles and access to emergency funding information, with Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters directly managing fundraising allocations while teachers experience resource shortages during emergencies. This discrepancy alerts the Heads of School to strengthen transparent and inclusive financial communication and involve teachers in emergency budgeting to improve shared understanding of fundraising contributions. The qualitative data from interview guides support these varying views from quantitative data, as DSEO 03 noted, *"Fundraising depends on each school's urgent needs, including emergencies such as health supplies, food shortages, and other immediate requirements"* (DSEO 03, May 21, 2025). In contrast, SBCP 02D explained, *"During occasional student*

emergencies, such as bereavement, students organise themselves and raise the necessary support" (SBCP 02D, May 30, 2025). Additionally, SBCP 03H replied, "A planned emergency fundraising initiative to address food shortages was not implemented because of contractual restrictions" (SBCP 03H, May 27, 2025). Views from District Secondary Education Officers and School Board Chairpersons indicate that fundraising provides only situational and limited support for school emergencies in public secondary schools. According to DSEOs, funds are mobilised to address urgent needs such as purchasing health supplies or supplementing food during shortages. In contrast, SBCPs reported that some emergencies, including student bereavement, are addressed through student contributions, while planned fundraising for vegetables and meals was hindered by contractual restrictions. These inconsistencies may reflect misunderstandings of the Fee-Free Education policy, highlighting the need for government clarification on stakeholders' responsibilities and the permissible scope of fundraising.

Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to meeting emergency costs from a low extent among teachers to a moderate extent among Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters. Qualitative data revealed that fundraising is occasionally used to meet urgent health and food needs but remains unreliable because of limited fundraising creativity among some school management teams. Consequently, some emergencies depend on student contributions or receive no support. Overall, fundraising contributes inconsistently to meeting financial obligations related to school emergencies. These findings are consistent with Ebri and Oben (2022), who found that fundraising programmes were implemented to a low extent and recommended strengthening fundraising strategies to improve schools' capacity to respond to emergency financial needs.

Data in Table 1 indicate differing perceptions of the contribution of the fundraising strategy to paying part-time staff salaries, as reflected by mean scores of 3.00 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, indicating a moderate extent, and 2.40 for teachers, indicating a low extent of contribution. The contradiction might have arisen because Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters directly manage salary payments and are aware of periodic fundraising support, while teachers mainly observe salary delays and shortages. This discrepancy highlights the need for Heads of School to strengthen transparent financial reporting and joint financial review meetings to improve teachers' understanding of the contribution of fundraising to part-time staff salary obligations. The qualitative data from interviews support these varying views from quantitative data as SBCP 03E noted, "The little money raised is sometimes used to pay replacement teachers when a subject lacks a permanent teacher" (SBCP 03E, May 21, 2025). Likewise, DSEO 03 reported, "Fundraising income is allocated according to urgent school needs, including paying volunteer teachers when necessary" (DSEO 03, May 21, 2025). Similarly, SBCP 02D confirmed, "Small amounts raised through cake sales, about TZS 20,000-40,000, help pay temporary cooks, guards, and other minor staffing needs" (SBCP 02D, May 30, 2025). In contrast, HoS 01B commented, "Fundraising to support volunteer teachers is currently constrained by Fee-Free Education policy procedures and approval requirements" (HoS 01B, May 8, 2025). Additionally, HoS 02D

said, *"Part-time staff are paid mainly from the government fee compensation fund, with negotiated token payments because available funds are inadequate"* (HoS 02D, May 29, 2025).

Perspectives from District Secondary Education Officers, School Board Chairpersons, and Heads of School reveal mixed views on the contribution of fundraising strategy to paying part-time staff salaries in public secondary schools. SBCPs and DSEOs indicated that small amounts raised through fundraising provide flexible support for urgent staffing needs, including payments to volunteer or replacement teachers, cooks, and guards. In contrast, Heads of School emphasised that Fee-Free Education restrictions and reliance on government fee compensation funds limit the use of fundraising, making it an informal source of modest allowances rather than sustainable salary support. Quantitative data showed that fundraising contributed to paying part-time staff salaries to a **low extent** among teachers and to a moderate extent among Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters. Qualitative data confirmed that occasional proceeds from cake sales during school ceremonies supplement payments for volunteer teachers, cooks, and guards but are constrained by policy restrictions and dependence on fee compensation funds from the government. Overall, fundraising contributes inconsistently to meeting part-time staff salary obligations and cannot be relied upon as a stable funding source. These findings are consistent with Ghazali et al. (2022), who reported funding challenges in secondary schools and highlighted the importance of principals seeking external fundraising opportunities to supplement existing financial resources.

Data in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering the costs of students' furniture to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 2.87 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.64 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of contribution. These data are further validated by qualitative data as revealed during an interview, DSEO 05 noted, *"Institutions like NMB Bank... often contribute desks"* (DSEO 05, July 28, 2025), while HoS 04F noted, *"In 2022, one village contributed 100 desks from their collections"* (HoS 04F, July 18, 2025). These contributions were appreciated, but since they were irregular and donor-dependent, they explain the generally moderate perceptions among both groups. Overall, fundraising strategy contributes to meeting costs of students' furniture to a moderate extent through attainment of students' desks from Banks and village funds despite its irregularities. These findings are consistent with Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which emphasises reliance on external stakeholders for essential resources. This corresponds to how Heads of Schools seek assistance for students' furniture. The limitations identified in the current study about irregularities and vulnerability to donor-dependence agree with Wanjiru et al. (2026) who found that despite the factors that harambees and local dialogues were organized, the returns were often minimal due to economic constraints.

Data in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering the costs of assessment tools to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 2.73 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.65 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of

contribution. Interviews supported this finding, as HoS 05B observed, *"Fundraising from community events has brought in very little. It mostly goes to buying chalk, office supplies, and paying exam fees such as regional Mock exams"* (HoS 05B, July 29, 2025). Yet district secondary education officers described instances where stakeholders raised funds for equipment during graduations: *"During graduations... stakeholders such as banks bought items such as computers and printers"* (DSEO 02, May 15, 2025). This indicates alignment on the generally moderate contribution of fundraising but also shows occasional contradictions, as external stakeholder support sometimes bolstered assessment preparedness. Overall fundraising strategy from community events and banks contributes to a moderate extent to cover costs of assessment tools through payment of regional mock examination fees, and equipment like computers and printers which easy preparations of such assessment tools. These findings align with Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which emphasises dependence on external actors for critical resources, corresponding to how Heads of Schools depend on community events and banks for mock examinations and equipments. The findings also agree with Okechukwu et al. (2024), who found that diversified fundraising strategies enhance continuous funding for school operations, similar to how Heads of School in this study mobilise resources through community events and consulting banks to support administrative and operational needs. Data in Table 1 indicate that the fundraising strategy contributes to covering the costs of electricity and water bills to a moderate extent, as reflected by mean scores of 3.00 for Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters and 2.64 for teachers, both indicating a moderate extent of contribution. This indicates that TCFMs perceived fundraising as more useful in supporting utilities than TRs, though both groups agreed its role remained modest. Interview data confirmed this perception, with SBCP 03E stating, *"Sometimes we usually sit down and plan how to use the fundraised income, for electricity issues; sometimes the lights break, or the water system needs fixing"* (SBCP 03E, May 21, 2025). Similarly, HoS 03A echoed this by explaining that *"Through a harambee that was initiated during a parents' meeting, we managed to establish a water supply project... we now have two wells"* (HoS 03A, May 19, 2025). These data suggest that while fundraising supported utilities and water access, the contribution was small and inconsistent, which explains why teachers rated it lower than finance staff. Overall, fundraising strategy through harambees contributes to a moderate extent in covering costs of electricity and water bills including fixings of electricity and water system damages and establishment of alternative water sources (wells) despite its inconsistency. The findings align with Kiure et al. (2023), who found that fundraising effectiveness is limited by inadequate use of crowdfunding and influenced by school location, management creativity, and socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was tested at the .05 significance level as per Sharma (2021), to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in mean scores on the extent to which fundraising strategy contributes to meeting financial obligations across four work experience groups. The researcher tested null hypothesis to determine if there was no statistically significant difference in mean score

ratings on the extent to which fundraising strategy contributes to meeting financial obligations based on teachers' working experience groups. The following assumptions for ANOVA were satisfied: More than two independent categorical groups were involved (< 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16+ years), dependent groups were on a continuous scale (mean score ratings), independent observations were made for each group. No significant outliers were assumed, out of 238 mean scores, 30 were found in excess some being too small (1.00), others were too large (5.00) while the rest 208 mean scores were between 2.00 to 3.39. To avoid violating the assumption, all the outliers (30 mean scores) were omitted from the sample for hypothesis testing as per Karch (2023). Likewise, Data were drawn from normal distributions, with normality tested at the .05 significance level; the results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Normality Test Output- Fundraising Strategy in Meeting Financial Obligations (n = 208)

Tests of Normality							
	Working Experience	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Mean scores	Less than 5 Years	.082	101	.091	.986	101	.384
	5 to 10 Years	.117	58	.045	.978	58	.372
	11 to 15 Years	.120	37	.200*	.957	37	.160
	16 + Years	.142	12	.200*	.953	12	.683

Source: Field Data (2025)

Data in Table 2 indicate that the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to evaluate normality across the four experience groups. Results indicated that the scores were normally distributed for all groups: Less than 5 years ($p = .384$), 5 to 10 years ($p = .372$), 11 to 15 years ($p = .160$), and 16+ years ($p = .683$), as all p-values were greater than .05 suggesting that normality assumption was met. This implies that data were drawn from a normally distributed population. Therefore, the researcher proceeded with hypothesis testing. Finally, the assumption of homogeneity of variances (equality of variances) was tested at the .05 significance level. The results of the assumption of equality of variances based on the mean are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Homogeneity of Variance Test Output -Fundraising Strategy in Meeting Financial Obligations (n = 208)

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Mean scores	Based on the mean	.728	3	204	.537
	Based on Median	.804	3	204	.493
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.804	3	188.646	.493

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
	Based on the trimmed mean	.751	3	204	.523

Source: Field Data (2025)

Data in Table 3, with Levene's test for equality of variances, was non-significant ($F(3, 204) = 0.73, p = .537$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. Therefore, the researcher proceeded with hypothesis testing. Given the assumptions, a One-Way ANOVA was tested at the .05 significance level to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences in mean scores on the extent to which fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools contributes to meeting financial obligations across teachers' working experience groups. The results of the hypothesis are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Output - Fundraising Strategy in Meeting Financial Obligations (n = 208)

ANOVA					
Mean scores					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.226	3	1.075	1.608	.189
Within Groups	136.392	204	.669		
Total	139.618	207			

Source: Field Data (2025)

Data in Table 4 on the One-Way ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference among the four experience groups, $F(3, 204) = 1.61, p = .189$. Since this obtained p -value exceeds the established significance level ($\alpha = .05$), the statistical decision is to fail to reject the null hypothesis. The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference across teachers' experience groups. Therefore, this empirical study concluded that teachers' career longevity does not significantly influence fundraising strategy ratings, meaning no statistically significant difference was detected.

Quantitative data with a grand mean of 2.77 indicate that fundraising strategy, to a moderate extent, contribute to meeting financial obligations on extracurricular activities, school events, school emergencies, maintenances and payment of salaries for part-time staff. The strategy contributes mostly to meeting financial obligations such as administrative operational expenses, academic operational expenses and school facility maintenance costs. The One Way ANOVA with ($F(3, 204) = 1.61, p = .189$) revealed no statistically significant difference in mean ratings on the extent to which fundraising strategy contributes to meeting financial obligations across teachers' working experience groups. This lack of statistically significant variations, implies the consistency in ratings of the strategy's moderate extent among teachers with different working experiences.

Qualitative data revealed that Heads of Schools fundraised through agreed parental monthly contributions, cake sales, competitive supporter appeals and inviting influential individuals during school events. The funds raised support academic operational costs such as teaching and learning materials including textbooks and computers, maintenance of school facilities and infrastructure, such as furniture, classroom stairs and water infrastructure. The funds also contribute to covering administrative operational costs such as payment of salaries for part-time staff, covering costs on school emergencies and expenses on extracurricular activities. The strategy is constrained by failed fundraising events, yielding small amounts, inconsistencies in its applications and Fee-Free Education policy restrictions.

Overall, the study found that given the lack of statistically significant variations in teachers' mean responses, to a moderate extent, fundraising strategy through cake sales and competitive supporter appeals in graduation ceremonies and agreed parental monthly contributions, contributes to meeting financial obligations such as administrative operation, academic operations and school facility maintenances. Yet, the strategy is constrained by failures of fundraising events caused by unfulfilled pledges and limited attendance of targeted influential individuals and small amounts yielded; unreliability of fundraising implementations and Fee-Free Education policy restrictions. This implies that the contribution of the strategy to meeting financial obligations is moderate, thus, limiting the schools' ability to rely on these funds for core obligations.

Limitations

Although this study was conducted exclusively in public secondary schools in Katavi Region, Tanzania, a newly established region with most of rural contexts, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings, the researcher enhanced transferability by selecting schools from all district councils within the region using proportionate stratified random sampling, thereby capturing diverse school contexts and socioeconomic settings. Furthermore, while the One-Way ANOVA examined only teachers' working experience groups, data were collected from multiple respondent categories, including Heads of School, Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters, School Board Chairpersons, and District Secondary Education Officers through questionnaires document analysis schedule and interview guides, enabling methodological triangulation that enriched the interpretation of findings beyond the statistical analysis. Finally, although the study relied substantially on self-reported perceptions, this limitation was mitigated through the use of a convergent design under mixed-methods approach, whereby questionnaire data were corroborated with data from interview guides and document analysis schedule. In addition, pilot testing, expert validation of instruments, and reliability testing enhanced the credibility, consistency, and trustworthiness of the findings

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is concluded that, given the lack of statistically significant variation in responses, fundraising strategy employed by Heads of public secondary schools through cake sales and competitive supporter appeals, and invitation of influential individuals during graduation events, contributes moderately to meeting financial obligations particularly on academic operations, administrative operations and school facility maintenances. Yet, the strategy is restricted by failures of fundraising events such as raising small amounts, unfulfilled pledges and unreliability of the fundraising income which limit the contribution of the strategy to meeting financial obligation. Based on the conclusion, the study recommends that Heads of School in collaboration with teachers, School Boards and Teachers-in-Charge of Financial Matters should establish structured annual fundraising plans with clear targets, diverse and innovative fundraising strategies, transparent reporting, and digital payment platforms to enhance credibility, broaden the fundraising base, and improve consistency and financial returns from fundraising initiatives.

Conflicts of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Author Contributions (CRediT)

Abel, A.: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing- Original Draft. Okendo, E.O.: Supervision and Kileo, E, J.: Supervision.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Mwenge Catholic University Library.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Manuscripts

The authors used ChatGPT-4o (OpenAI, December 2025-June 2026), Gemini 3 (December 2025-June 2026) and Grammarly August 2025-June 2026) for language editing and grammar correction of the manuscript draft. All AI-generated outputs were critically reviewed, verified, and approved by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of this article.

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