PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF BLOCK GRANT MANGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF HARARI REGIONAL STATE

MA THESIS

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We hereby certify that we have read and evaluated this thesis prepared, under our guidance, entitled **An Assessment on Practice and Challenges in Block Grant Utilization in Government Primary Schools of Harari Regional State**"by **Hiwot Desta**. We recommend that it be submitted as fulfilling the thesis requirement.

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As members of the *Board of Examiners* of the MA thesis open defence examination, we certify that we have read, and evaluated the thesis prepared by **Hiwot Desta** and examined the candidate. We recommend that the thesis be accepted as fulfilling the *thesis* requirement for the Degree of *Master of Arts in* Educational Leadership and Management.

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DEDICATION

I dedicated this thesis manuscript to my beloved husband Mr. Zerihun Tefera and all my children who encouraged and strengthened me in all my life.

STATEMENT OF THE AUTHOR

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted to any other university for a similar or any other degree award. This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced MA Degree at Haramaya University and deposited at the University Library to be made available to borrowers under the rules of the library.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born on November 11, 1979, in Kebele 10 of Shenkore Woreda, located in Harar Town, within the Harari Regional State. Upon reaching the appropriate age for education, she commenced her studies at Model 1 Primary School, where she remained until completing grade 4. Subsequently, she enrolled in Ras Mekonin Primary School for grades 5 through 8. After finishing her primary education, she transitioned to Medhani'alem Comprehensive Secondary School, where she took the Ethiopia Secondary Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) in 1990. Following this, she pursued an accounting diploma at TOP College and later enrolled at Haramaya University in 2011, ultimately graduating in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in the business and economics department. Prior to her graduation, she worked as a business teacher at Aboker Preparatory School until 2014 and was appointed vice principal in 2017. Recognizing the necessity for school leaders to receive training in effective school management, To pursue an MA program in Educational Leadership and Management, She enrolled in the postgraduate program at Haramaya University in 2021.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EO	Education Office
HREB	Harari Region Education Bureau
MoE	Minstry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
BOFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization of economically developed Countries
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
PTSA	Parent Teachers and Students Association
REB	Regional Education Bureau
RS	Regional State
WEO	Woreda Education Office
WFEDO	Woreda Finance and Economic Development Office
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
KETB	Kebele Education Training Board
SPSS	Scientific Package for Social Science

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the practices and challenges of block grant managemnt in government primary schools in Harari, regional state. This study incorporated qualitative and quantitative data. The descriptive survey research method was employed. Sources of data were principals, department heads and PTSA members, woreda education and finance office experts, and representatives from the REB. Census and random sampling was used in selecting the participants. The data was collected using a questionnaire and interview guide. The Cornbrash's alpha reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.83. The data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics tools such as frequency, Mean, combined mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test was employed. The finding indicates that a lack of clear guidelines and knowledge among school leaders regarding the block grant, absence needs assessments, scarce participation of teachers in block grant planning, inconsistency in the number of block grants received by schools and lack of transparency are identified in the practice. Regarding utilization, because the grant is inadequate for the teaching learning process, it is not utilized in alignment with school plans. Moreover, grants inadequacy in supporting teaching and learning processes and their inflexible nature contribute to their overall ineffectiveness. The lack of an accountant, cashier and auditor, significantly affects the control and monitoring of the grant. The identified challenges were delays in the delivery of materials, poor quality of goods and stationery, discrepancies between allocated grants and expenses, and inadequate training for the PTSA in financial control. It is recommended that the Harari REB should evaluate the practice of block grant utilization and develop new guidelines, create awareness of responsible bodies, change the grant transfer system to a financial disumberssement, establish a monitoring and evaluation system which makes change in decision-making system that involves PTSA.

Key words:
Block grant, General Education, Government schools, Recurrent expenditure,

1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the study presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, basic research questions and objectives of the study. It also presents significance, delimitation of the study and definition of key operational terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

There is an undeniable linkage between education and national economic performance (UNESCO, 2006) Consequently, for any society to achieve development and prosperity, education must be recognized as a fundamental element. Furthermore, education empowers its beneficiaries with skills, knowledge and potentials; these ultimately turn into tangible personal and social capitals that accumulate health and socio-economic status (Murray, 2007). It is on the basis of such evidences that investigation by Orazem (2012) led to establishing a clear link between schooling in developing countries with economic progress and autonomy. Thus, accessibility and quality of education provided to the citizens appears indispensable in the economic, social and political development of a country. It is an endeavor focusing on actualizing the potential of individuals and enhancing the natural talents and interests of citizens. Such education is not free of charges. It incurs costs, requiring considerable financial, material, human, informational, and temporal resources.

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy released in 2023, first objective stipulate that "Education and training, particularly from pre-primary to middle levels, will be free, mandatory, accessible to everyone, enhanced by suitable technology, and will foster the mental, physical, social, and spiritual development of individuals, along with instilling positive values." This indicates that the government is obligated to guarantee educational access from early childhood for all citizens of the nation. Therefore, concerning the financing and delivery of educational inputs, the government bears a substantial share of the responsibility.

Accordingly, the federal Ministry of Education (MOE 2002), in its directive for Educational Management, Organization, public participation, and finance guideline also known as “blue book”, specified that the main sources of finance for public schools would be, internal revenue generated by the school, government budget, support from community and non-governmental organizations.

The government budget for schools comprises the salary and the non-salary recurrent expenditure, capital budget and funds for incentives. The directive also states that, in principle, schools are expected to receive their salary recurrent budget based on the number of employees (teachers and administrative staff), and the running costs of the school based on the number of students enrolled and class size (MoE, 2002). This budget allocated for schools as non-salary expenditure is termed as block grant.

Globally a block grant is a form of financial assistance provided by a central government to regional or local governments, municipalities, organizations, or institutions for broadly defined purposes. Unlike specific grants, which must be used for narrowly defined activities, block grants offer recipients more flexibility in how the funds can be allocated within the general guidelines. For example, a block grant might be given to a state or city administrations for education, healthcare, or community development, and the local authorities can decide how best to use the money within those categories. Block grants are designed to give recipients more flexibility compared to specific grants. The key feature is that these funds can be used for a broad category of purposes rather than narrowly defined projects.

In Ethiopia, the federal Government allocates un-earmarked block-grant funding through regional administrations, which subsequently distribute these funds as block grants to lower-level administrative units known as woredas. This financial support enables local governments to provide decentralized services, including education. Regional authorities allocate the total annual budget to woredas in lump sums based on three primary criteria, each assigned different weights: the woreda's population, its socioeconomic indicators, and its revenue generation efforts. Schools obtain block grants from the woredas to facilitate their daily operations, with support from the kebele education and training board and parent-teacher associations (PTAs). (Laura Bolton , 2012)

In order to obtain the block grant, schools must develop annual plans at the conclusion of each academic year for the subsequent year and submit these plans to the woreda education office. This office consolidates data from all schools and forwards it to the woreda FEDO. Following the approval of the education sector budget by the woreda administrative council, the woreda FEDO allocates the block grant that schools are entitled to receive for the fiscal year.

According to a study by Hussien et al. (2014) titled "The Use and Usefulness of School Grants: Lessons from Ethiopia," one school director expressed that, "The block grant provided to our school does not align with our strategic plan. We are not involved in the decision-

making process regarding fund allocation. Instead, we are often asked to adjust our school's plan to fit the budget that has been assigned.

There exists not only a misalignment between the planned activities and the allocated block grant, but also a failure to disburse the amounts that schools are entitled to receive based on student enrollment. It is important to recognize that budget allocation is not the sole factor of significance; rather, the extent to which the allocated budget meets baseline requirements and equitable usage at this level is crucial. The effectiveness of a school's educational delivery is closely linked to the funding it receives. Consequently, financial resources obtained from various sources must be appropriately allocated and utilized for their intended purposes. Any mismanagement occurring prior to receipt or during the implementation of these funds can adversely impact the teaching and learning processes within the school.

Financial management is concerned with organization's decisions on how to source for funds, how to control financial resources through financial controls, prudent allocation of financial resources and accountability measures (Allis, 2014). Financial Management is a vital activity in any school. It is the process of planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring financial resources with a view to achieve organizational goals and objectives. It is an ideal practice for controlling the financial activities of a school such as procurement of funds, utilization of funds, accounting, payments, risk assessment and every other thing related to money (Nobanee and Abraham, 2015).

The Blue book, which is block grant guideline in Ethiopia, elaborate that the financial income of a given school consists of state provided block grant, school generated income and community provided resource in the form of grants and support. Since, the state allocated block grant takes greater proportion the school budget, it is appropriate to consider school block grant management as part of its financial management. This is true because the improper management of block grant directly affects the supply of text and reference books, equipment and furniture, as well as services including electricity and water. Thus the failure in provision of these resources impacts the quality of teaching learning process as a whole.

Therefore, to raise effectiveness financial management in general and block grant in particular, in Harari region primary and secondary school, is crucial to investigate the extent the block grant properly managed and utilized. Betterment of block grant management in region, woreda and school level contributes to the teaching learning process, the success of school improvement program and alleviating problems of resources observed in schools.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Expenditure on education has long been considered as an essential public investment that helps foster productivity and economic growth. Education is also often considered as a key to both societal and individual prosperity and progress. For this reason, although the funding mechanism may vary, education accounts for a significant part of government outlays in many countries. According to UNESCO 2023, on average, governments spend 3 to 5 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on education from pre-primary to tertiary. This represents 10 to 20 percent of their total government expenditures. (World Bank and UNESCO, 2023).

The Ethiopian government also allocates considerable resources to education as it significantly contributes to fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life within the community. Correspondingly, the Harari regional state designates about 23. 5% of its annual budget for the education sector mainly for general education, which includes both salary and non-salary recurrent budget or Block grant. The regional government's budget differs from that of other regional states in that it is significantly larger than the amount recommended by the federal block grant guidelines (blue book) and the amount of block grants determined by other regional states for schools.

As per the blue book, the amount of block grant as non-salary recurrent budget expected to be allocated for each level per student is Birr 10 for grades 1-4, Birr 15 for grades 5-8, Birr 20 for grades 9-10 and Birr 50 for grades 11-12 (MOE,2002). In spite of this, the Harari region has raised the amount of block grant fixed for schools to be Birr 200 for grades 1-4, Birr 250 for grades 5-8, Birr 300 for grades 9-10 and Birr 350 for grades 11-12. Thus, the Harari block grant budget exceeds the nationally suggested amount by 2000%. In the Harari region, secondary schools are accountable to the regional education bureau and primary schools are accountable to the Woreda education office. Unlike other regions, the block grant is owed to secondary schools by the regional education bureau and primary schools by Woreda’s economic and finance offices.

The results of a study conducted by Nebiyu Tasisa (2014) , on the Assessment of Block Grant Utilization in Government Schools in Oromia indicated that WFEDO does not publicly disclose the allocation of block grants, and the PTSA, which is the committee representing the school and parents, does not possess the authority to decide on the usage of the block grant budget. Moreover, it was found that the financial allocations of 10 and 15 birr per student to execute the schools' annual educational plan to meet the minimum standards of educational achievement were inadequate. Despite this limited budget, the supplies are not provided to

schools punctually. Additionally, a large portion of woredas either ban or entirely eliminate the minimum unit rate non-salary expenditures from government schools. Regardless of the amount of funds disbursed, the quality of goods supplied, in many instances, the process of requesting and acquiring block grants was not seamless for government schools.

In a similar study focused on school budget processes and empowerment, Hussein K.K. and others (2014) titled "The Use and Usefulness of School Grants: Lessons from Ethiopia" outlined the methodology for the allocation of block grants as follows. To secure the block grant, schools must create annual plans at the end of each academic year for the following year. These plans are collected by the woreda education office and submitted to the woreda FEDO, which consolidates them. The woreda FEDO allocates resources across sectors, including education, by evaluating the education sector plan against the woreda development plan and previous allocations and performance metrics. After this assessment, the FEDO prepares a consolidated education budget that aligns with the regional resource envelope. This budget is then reviewed and requires final approval from the woreda council. Subsequently, the woreda education office evaluates the allocation and directs each school to prioritize its activities and plans, despite limited resources to address all identified needs.

The same study revealed that the distribution of the block grant was highly inconsistent. It was noted that in various regions, the woreda retained the funds and administered them for their offices. The education office took responsibility for disbursing teachers' salaries and procuring materials for schools. Nevertheless, stakeholders at the school level expressed concerns regarding the lack of transparency in this process, which resulted in inadequate funding reaching the schools. In contrast, only the schools located in Addis Ababa were able to manage their own budgets.

A study conducted by the Harari region education bureau in collaboration with the British Council revealed that government schools in the Harari region are challenged by inadequate pedagogical resource centers, scarce lab equipment and chemicals, and impoverished classrooms and offices of leadership and departments. The availability and usability of facilities and services are not enough (kenea, 2017). Despite the high budget allocated by the state government as a block grant, schools have not been able to provide enough teaching aids, laboratory chemicals and materials, and create a comfortable school environment. Therefore, due to these problems, identified by the regional inspection directorate, the percentage of schools that meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education is only less than 23% (HREB

2022). Such problems in schools related to resources emanate from either scarcity or mismanagement of resources, including block grants.

The aforementioned studies primarily concentrated on the utilization of school block grants. In contrast, this research examines the managerial aspects of block grant administration, which includes planning, organization, allocation, implementation, fund application, and oversight. Additionally, this study aims to evaluate the situation specifically within the Harari regional state, which employs a distinct grant allocation formula that results in significantly larger allocations compared to other regions. The block grant amount designated for this region is nearly ten times greater than that of the regions analyzed in the previous studies. Given the unique financial allocation circumstances in the Harari region, several motivating factors have prompted this research. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore the fairness and equity of the allocation and distribution of block grants.

As the student researcher's 10 years of experience as a principal reveal, financial strength alone is not enough to provide quality education, but it plays a critical role in creating a supportive school environment. However, it plays an irreplaceable role in providing educational tools, creating conditions, and fulfilling human resources. Other financial assets, including block grants, can lead to improvement if properly managed. In a quite significant number of schools, their skill gaps in terms of preparing the annual budget, implementing the plan, monitoring systems; an active financial control procedure; a precise and suitable recording system; and appropriate procurement methods are lacking.

As far as the researcher is concerned, no study has been conducted on Block grant management in Harari government schools. Thus, based on the aforementioned problems and the existence of a research gap, this study focused on the practice of block grant management and its use. This study has attempted to identify challenges and their implications and produce ideas that supports decision-makers in their endeavour to enhance the proper management of block grants.

1.3. Research Questions

1. To what extent the block grant management is practised in government schools of the Harari region?
2. To what extent the allocation of block grants maintains the fair and equitable budget distribution in the region?
3. What are the major challenges that affect the utilization of block grants in government schools of the Harari region?

4. What are possible strategies to enhance the effectiveness of block grant utilization in primary schools of the region?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General objective

The general objective of this research is to assess the practice of block grant management in government primary schools of Harari region, in relation to its utilization and its challenges.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

1. To investigate the degree to which government schools in the Harari region implement block grant management practices.
2. To assess the fairness and equity of the distribution of block grants within the region.
3. To identify challenges that impacted the utilization of block grant in government schools of the Harari region.
4. To propose major possible strategies that enhances block grant utilization in government primary schools of the Harari region.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study was conducted on the school's block grant management in the Harari region, assessing the practices and factors affecting its utilization. Thus, the findings of this study offer insights for educational leadership and regional governments to recognize the weaknesses of block grant management. In addition, it may increase awareness among concerned government authorities regarding corrective measures for the utilization of block grants and re-examine its guidelines.

Moreover, the findings of this study may contribute to reshaping policies to maintain fair and equitable financial resource distribution so that accountability and transparency are effectively exercised in financial allocation and utilization procedures. The findings of this research can be used as initiation and serve as a foundation for further exploration of this area.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

The research delimited exclusively on government primary schools within the Harari regional state, which were chosen from six randomly selected woredas that qualify for block grants and were incorporated into this study.

The study focused on the basic of practice of educational block grant management (budgeting, allocation, procurement, disbursements, utilization and control) and the problems schools face in the utilization of allocated block grants. Since schools possess a variety of resources the study didn't involve all but the block grant which is subsidized by the regional government.

The boundaries of this study were strategically created to guarantee the study's easy management and to thoroughly examine the issues. For this study, a descriptive survey approach was used as the methodology. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed and survey questionnaires, and semi structured interview were used. In terms of participants, the study was restricted to Primary school principals; school PTSA members, department head teachers, supervisors, education office and finance office experts, as well as selected interviewee from Harari region education bureau were involved.

1.7. Limitation of the study

There was a fear of giving response on the financial issues from some school principals and woreda education experts. Besides this the delayed delivery of the questionnaire paper on which the participants gave their responses particularly those from the rural schools. The researcher has made a great effort by informing the respondents that their privacy will be safeguarded to the fullest extent possible and that the problem may be resolved for those respondents who failed to return their questionnaire on time by visiting their rural school to pick it up.

1.8. Operational Definition of key terms

- Block grant: indicates a non-salary recurrent expenditure allocated to government schools.
- **Government schools**: those schools financed and run by the government.
- **Management**: in this study refers to planning (budgeting), utilizing and controlling the block grant.
- **Recurrent budget** - consists of regular revenues and ongoing expenses, such as rent, software subscriptions, and employee wages.
- **Primary schools:** refers to schools with Grades 1-8 owned by the government and those who are eligible to receive a block grant budget from public finance to deliver education for citizens.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This research is structured into five distinct sections. The initial section offers an overview of the study, including the statement of the problem, research question, objectives, significance, delimitations, limitations, definitions of key terms, and the organization of the study. The second section focuses on a review of relevant literature. The third section outlines the research design and methodology employed. The fourth section presents the findings and discussions, while the final section encompasses the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part deals with topic related to Block grant in general and educational block grant in particular. The major topics discussed include: Definition and history of Block grant, Educational block grant at global level, in Africa and in Ethiopia, purpose of block grant, practices in block grant management, challenges of block grant management and strategies to improve block grant.

2.1. Definition and History of Block Grant

Block grants are fixed-sum federal grants to state and local governments that give them broad flexibility to design and implement designated programs. Federal oversight and requirements are light, and funds are allocated among recipient governments by formula. These grants do not have specific provisions on how the money is to be spent. They are issued for general areas of need. The state is endowed the block grant from the federal government. It is up to the state or local government to decide who is eligible for the specific grant. They also are responsible for distributing the funds or services to the individuals. Individuals do not directly receive the block grant.

It is presumed that block grants have been started in the United States of America. According to Robert Jay, Dilger and Eugene Boy (2014) H.R. 5686, the Public Welfare Act of 1946, introduced by representative Aime J. Forand, D-RI, as an amendment to the Social Security Act, is the first known congressional effort to enact a block grant. It would have allowed states to continue providing public welfare assistance in "the present categories of old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, and aid to the blind, or whether they preferred to provide for these groups as part of a comprehensive assistance program" with choices about program design left to the states. In 1949, the Commission on the Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, known as the Hoover Commission in honour of its chair, Herbert Hoover, further raised awareness of the block grant concept by recommending that "a system of grants be established based upon broad categories – such as highways, education, public assistance and public health – as contrasted with the present system of extensive fragmentation." However, Congress did not create the first block grant until 1966 for comprehensive health care services.

Unlike the categorical grants they would replace, the proposed special revenue sharing programs had no state matching requirements, relatively few auditing or oversight

requirements, and the funds were distributed automatically by formula without prior federal approval of plans for their use. (Robert & Eugene, 2014: 21)

According to Nebiyu T (2018) congress has a central role in shaping the scope and nature of the federal grants-in-aid system. In its deliberative, legislative role, Congress determines its objectives, decides which grant mechanism is best suited to achieve those objectives, and creates legislation to achieve its objectives, incorporating its chosen grant mechanism. It then exercises oversight to hold the administration accountable for grant implementation and to determine whether the grant is achieving its objectives. (Nebiyu, 2018)

Congressional Research Service 2024 elaborates that block grant advocates view block grants as a means to increase government efficiency and program effectiveness by redistributing power and accountability through decentralization and partial devolution of decision-making authority from the federal government to state and local governments. They also view them as a means to reduce government expenditures without sacrificing government services.

Block grant advocates also assert that block grants promote long-term planning. Unlike project categorical grants that require state and local government officials to compete for funding, block grants use formulas to distribute funds. They argue that the use of formulas provides recipients greater assurance that funding will be continued, which makes it easier for them to predict the amount of their grant and to create long-range plans for the funds' use.

Block grant advocates also claim that block grants help to address what they believe is unnecessary and wasteful duplication among existing categorical grant programs. They believe that block grants eliminate this duplication and waste by consolidating categorical grant activities, and by providing states and localities the ability to set their priorities and allocate funds accordingly. They also argue that block grants will generate cost savings by reducing federal administrative costs related to state and local government paperwork requirements. (Carl Stenberg, 2007)

Block grants are designed to offer increased flexibility to states in providing benefits or services. While they have their advantages, such as allowing states to tailor programs to their specific needs, block grants also have several weaknesses that can affect government efficiency and program effectiveness

Block grant critics argue that block grants can undermine the achievement of national objectives and can be used as a "backdoor" means to reduce government spending on

domestic issues. They also claim that block grants' decentralized nature makes it difficult to measure their performance and to hold state and local government officials accountable for their decisions.

Furthermore, critics of block grants argue that providing state and local government officials increased flexibility concerning the use of the program's funds reduces the ability of federal administrators and Congress to provide effective program oversight. Because block grants possessively minimize administrative requirements, there are often no federal requirements for uniform data collection, making it difficult to compare data across states and, in the view of some, rendering whatever data are available unusable for effective federal agency and congressional oversight of program performance. To address this deficiency, Congress has added reporting requirements to some block grants and performance incentives that reward states for documented improvements to others. (Finegold et al., 2014)

2.2 Education Block Grant

2.2.1 Educational Block grant at Global level

There may be funding allocated with the condition that it is spent on a certain type of expenditure, that is, current expenditure or capital expenditure. A block grant consists of funds that lower-level authorities are required to use for current expenditure in pre-school or school education at their own discretion. This, therefore, leaves a high degree of discretion over the proportion of the grant that will be allocated to different categories of current expenditure, such as salaries, operational costs, and also over the amount allocated to each school (in the case that the local authority is responsible for more than one school).

Iceland

In Iceland, block grants for general education are primarily allocated to municipalities, which are responsible for running primary and lower secondary schools. These grants are used to cover operational costs, including teacher salaries, school maintenance, and educational materials. The funding is distributed based on factors such as the number of students and the specific needs of schools in different regions.

In Iceland, block grants for general education are part of the funding system that supports primary and lower secondary schools. The national government allocates these grants to municipalities, which are then responsible for managing the schools in their area. The distribution of funds considers various factors, such as the number of students in each municipality, the specific needs of schools—like support for students with disabilities or

language learning requirements—and geographical challenges, as remote schools may require extra resources. These grants primarily cover operational costs, including teacher and staff salaries, school infrastructure maintenance, learning materials, and extracurricular activities. Municipalities are given flexibility in how they allocate the funds, allowing them to address local priorities and challenges effectively. This decentralized approach ensures that the education system is tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities across Iceland.

The national government allocates block grants to municipalities. These local governments are responsible for managing schools within their jurisdiction. The distribution considers various factors, including, the number of students enrolled in each municipality, specific needs of the schools, such as support for students with disabilities or language learning requirements, and Geographical aspects, as schools in remote areas may need additional resources to ensure access to quality education.

The Municipalities also have flexibility in how they allocate funds, allowing them to address local priorities and challenges. This decentralized approach aims to create a tailored education system that meets the needs of diverse communities across Iceland.

Slovak Republic

The history of education funding in Slovakia reflects the country's evolving political and social landscape. During the communist era, education was centrally controlled, with standardized curricula and funding managed by the state. This system emphasized universal access to primary education and heavily subsidized higher education. However, the centralized approach limited flexibility and innovation within the education system.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Slovakia transitioned to a more democratic and decentralized model. Municipalities became responsible for funding primary and secondary education, while higher education institutions began receiving block grants based on performance indicators such as student enrollment and research output.

In the Slovak Republic, block grants for education are primarily allocated to support various levels of the education system, including primary, secondary, and higher education. These grants are distributed by the government, with funding coming from the state budget. For higher education, public institutions receive subsidies based on factors such as the number of students, graduates, and the costs associated with specific study programs. The funding also considers the quality of education and the employment outcomes of graduates. Additionally, municipalities play a significant role in managing funds for primary and secondary education,

ensuring that operational costs, teacher salaries, and school maintenance are covered. This system aims to provide equitable access to education while allowing flexibility for institutions and local governments to address specific needs and priorities.

In Slovakia, block grants are used to finance various aspects of the education system, ensuring institutions have the resources they need to operate effectively. These grants primarily cover operational costs such as teacher and staff salaries, utilities, and general school maintenance. For primary and secondary education, municipalities manage these funds to support local schools, including the purchase of educational materials and resources. In higher education, block grants provided to universities cover academic programs, research initiatives, infrastructure development, and administrative costs. Additionally, special provisions are often made within the funding system to address the specific needs of disadvantaged students, such as those requiring extra support or resources. This comprehensive approach ensures that the education system remains accessible and functional while accommodating the diverse needs of students and institutions. Let me know if you'd like more details!

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, block grants for education are a key funding mechanism used to support various levels of the education system. These grants are primarily allocated to public schools and universities to cover operational costs, including teacher salaries, school maintenance, utilities, and educational materials. For higher education institutions, block grants also fund research activities, infrastructure development, and administrative expenses. The distribution of these grants is managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, which considers factors such as student enrollment numbers, the type of educational institution, and performance indicators like research output and graduate employment rates. This system ensures that resources are allocated efficiently while allowing institutions some flexibility to address their specific needs and priorities.

The Czech Republic’s block grant system for education has some distinctive features compared to others, such as Iceland or Slovakia. While many countries use block grants to fund education, the Czech Republic emphasizes autonomy and performance-based funding, especially in higher education. Here's how it stands out:

In the Czech Republic, block grants to universities heavily factor in research output and academic performance. This aligns with the country’s aim to strengthen its research and

innovation sector. Other countries, like Iceland, often emphasize student enrollment or specific program costs more prominently.

Similar to Slovakia, municipalities in the Czech Republic manage block grants for primary and secondary schools. However, in the Czech system, there is a stronger emphasis on aligning funding with regional education plans and development goals.

While performance-based funding is becoming common worldwide, the Czech Republic integrates it uniquely by considering employment outcomes of graduates and success rates in international research collaboration, especially in higher education. In contrast, other nations might focus more on inputs like the number of students or historical funding levels.

Czech municipalities and institutions are granted significant flexibility to allocate resources based on local needs, such as upgrading infrastructure or supporting disadvantaged students. This approach is not as strongly emphasized in every country's block grant system.

Lithuania

In Lithuania, block grants serve as a fundamental financial resource for the education sector, encompassing primary, secondary, and higher education levels. These grants are allocated to cover vital operational expenses, including salaries for teachers, maintenance of school facilities, utility costs, and the acquisition of educational resources. Additionally, for institutions of higher education, block grants provide funding for research and development initiatives, enhancements to infrastructure, and administrative costs.

The management of these grants is overseen by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, which allocates funds based on factors like student enrollment, institutional performance, and specific program needs. Municipalities play a significant role in managing funds for primary and secondary education, ensuring that local schools receive the resources they need.

A unique feature of Lithuania's block grant system is its emphasis on fostering research and innovation. The Research Council of Lithuania plays a pivotal role in funding research projects and encouraging international collaboration, particularly in higher education. This focus on research excellence sets Lithuania apart, as it aims to strengthen its academic and scientific contributions on a global scale

2.2.2. Block Grant in Africa Countries

Several block grants programs have been implemented in developing countries with the goal of improving educational outcomes. Among African countries using block grant for funding their education Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa , and Uganda are presented as followes.

Kenya

In Kenya, block grants for education play a significant role in supporting various levels of the education system. These grants primarily cover operational costs such as teacher salaries, school maintenance, utilities, and the provision of learning materials. For primary and secondary education, the funds are managed by the Ministry of Education and distributed to schools based on factors like student enrollment and specific regional needs. This ensures that schools across the country have the resources to function effectively.

A unique feature of Kenya's block grant system is its focus on equity and inclusivity. The government uses these grants to address disparities in education by targeting underserved regions and vulnerable populations. For instance, additional funding is often allocated to schools in marginalized areas to improve infrastructure and access to quality education. Moreover, Kenya has implemented programs to support girls' education and retain students from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring that the education system promotes equal opportunities for all.

Block grants in Kenya face several challenges that can impact their effectiveness in supporting education. One major issue is inequitable distribution of funds, as some regions, particularly marginalized and rural areas, may not receive adequate resources to meet their unique needs. This can exacerbate existing disparities in access to quality education. Additionally, mismanagement of funds is a concern, with instances of corruption or inefficient allocation reducing the impact of the grants.

Another challenge is insufficient funding, as the allocated amounts may not be enough to cover all operational costs, especially in rapidly growing regions with increasing student populations. Furthermore, the lack of accountability and transparency in how funds are utilized can hinder efforts to ensure that resources are used effectively. Finally, limited capacity at the local level to manage and allocate funds appropriately can lead to inefficiencies and missed opportunities to address specific educational needs.

These challenges highlight the need for stronger oversight, better planning, and targeted interventions to ensure that block grants achieve their intended goals in Kenya's education system.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, block grants for education are a crucial funding mechanism aimed at supporting various levels of the education system. These grants primarily cover operational costs such as teacher salaries, school maintenance, utilities, and the provision of learning materials. They also fund specific programs like the Universal Basic Education (UBE) initiative, which focuses on improving access to primary and junior secondary education. The management of these grants is overseen by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) at the federal level, which allocates funds to state governments. States are then responsible for distributing the funds to schools based on enrollment numbers and specific needs.

A unique feature of Nigeria's block grant system is its emphasis on addressing regional disparities in education. Additional funding is often allocated to underserved areas, particularly in the northern regions, to improve infrastructure and access to quality education. This approach aims to reduce the educational gap between different parts of the country.

However, the system faces several challenges. These include issues of mismanagement and corruption, which can lead to the diversion of funds away from their intended purposes. Additionally, insufficient funding remains a significant problem, as the allocated amounts often fall short of what is needed to address the growing demands of the education sector. There is also a lack of accountability and transparency in how funds are utilized, which hinders efforts to ensure effective resource allocation.

South Africa

In South Africa, block grants for education are a significant part of the funding system, supporting both basic and higher education. These grants cover essential operational costs such as teacher salaries, school maintenance, utilities, and the provision of learning materials. For higher education, block grants also fund research activities, infrastructure development, and administrative expenses. The management of these grants is overseen by the Department of Basic Education for schools and the Department of Higher Education and Training for universities. Funds are allocated to provinces and institutions based on factors like student enrollment, institutional performance, and specific program needs.

A unique feature of South Africa's block grant system is its focus on addressing historical inequalities in education. Additional funding is often directed toward schools and universities in previously disadvantaged areas to improve infrastructure and access to quality education. This approach aims to bridge the gap between urban and rural institutions and promote equity in the education system.

However, the system faces several challenges. These include issues of mismanagement and corruption, which can lead to the diversion of funds away from their intended purposes. Insufficient funding is another significant problem, as the growing student population and rising costs often outpace the available resources. Additionally, disparities in resource allocation between provinces can exacerbate inequalities, and a lack of accountability and transparency in fund utilization further hinders the system's effectiveness.

Uganda

In Uganda, block grants for education are a vital funding mechanism that supports various levels of the education system, including primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. These grants cover essential operational costs such as teacher salaries, school maintenance, utilities, and the provision of learning materials. Additionally, they fund specific programs aimed at improving access to education, such as initiatives for disadvantaged communities and infrastructure development in underserved areas.

The management of these grants is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Sports, which allocates funds to local governments. These local authorities are responsible for distributing the funds to schools based on factors like student enrollment and regional needs. The system is designed to ensure that resources are allocated equitably and efficiently, with a focus on addressing disparities in access to quality education.

A unique feature of Uganda's block grant system is its emphasis on decentralization. By empowering local governments to manage and allocate funds, the system aims to address the specific needs of communities and promote accountability at the grassroots level. This approach allows for greater flexibility in addressing local challenges and priorities.

However, the system faces several challenges. These include issues of mismanagement and corruption, which can lead to the diversion of funds away from their intended purposes. Insufficient funding is another significant problem, as the growing student population and rising costs often outpace the available resources. Additionally, disparities in resource

allocation between regions can exacerbate inequalities, and a lack of transparency in fund utilization further hinders the system's effectiveness.

In Uganda, the allocation formula for education block grants typically considers a variety of factors to ensure equitable distribution of resources. While the specifics may vary depending on government policies and programs, here are the common components that influence the allocation:

- Student Enrollment Numbers: The number of students in a given school or region is a key determinant. Schools with larger enrollments generally receive more funding to cover operational costs.
- Regional Needs: Special consideration is given to underserved or marginalized areas. This includes accounting for factors such as poverty levels, accessibility, and the availability of infrastructure.
- Level of Education: Different levels of education (e.g., primary, secondary) may have varied funding needs. For instance, primary schools might receive more focus as part of universal primary education initiatives.
- Special Needs and Vulnerabilities: Additional funding is allocated for schools catering to disadvantaged groups, such as children with disabilities or those in conflict-affected regions.
- Performance-Based Adjustments: Some grants may include performance indicators, rewarding schools or regions that achieve certain educational outcomes, such as higher completion rates or improved literacy levels.

This formula is intended to balance efficiency and equity, ensuring that resources reach areas where they are needed most. However, the effectiveness of the formula depends on accurate data collection and transparent implementation.

2.2.3. Block Grant in Ethiopia

Decentralization in Ethiopia proceeded in two stages. First, during the transition period from 1991 to 1994, the central government devolved state powers to ethnolinguistic regions and created woreda (district) councils, to promote participation and efficiency (Terfassa 1994). New regional governments were granted a range of executive, legislative, and judicial powers over social and economic development. Regions and woredas were given responsibility for ensuring basic service delivery. The federal government retained authority over setting policies and standards in education, health, water and sanitation, and other social services.

Regional governments' revenue sources include: their own tax revenues, fiscal transfers from the center, domestic borrowing, and other sources of income. But due to capacity constraints few such revenues are mobilized, and regions remain highly dependent on central grants to finance their expenditures, especially in the social sectors. While regional councils are in principle accountable to citizens and the central government's Council of Representatives, in practice only the latter is binding (Assefa, 2010; Dom et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2017).

Ethiopia's second round of reform occurred in 2002. Decentralization was extended to woreda governments, which took on the bulk of service delivery responsibilities and began receiving block grants from regional governments. These are determined by formulas set by regional governments, which are broadly similar in variables and weightings to the ones central government uses (World Bank, 2011).

The Ethiopian budget system reflects the fiscal decentralization structure of the government. The budget is processed at federal, regional, zonal (in some regions), woreda, and municipality levels. The federal budgeting process usually starts by issuing the budget preparation note to the budgetary institutions. Based on the budget manual, the budgetary institutions prepare their budgets in line with the budget ceilings and submit these to the MoFED within six weeks following the budget call. The budgets are first reviewed by the MoFED and then by the Council of Ministers. The final recommended draft federal budget is sent to parliament in early June and is expected to be approved by the House of Peoples' Representatives at the end of the Ethiopian fiscal year.

Regional governments receive funds for national projects along with the government's portion as block grant subsidies. Block grant subsidies are allocations by the federal government to regions to be appropriated in regions' budgets. Regional governments in turn allocate these to woredas along with their resources. The regional governments have their budget calendars that align with the federal and local budget calendars. The regional governments expect the federal government to determine the final block grant subsidy ceiling. The regional sector bureaus prepare their annual budget estimates based on last year's performance and adjust their budget based on the final ceiling received from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation. Woredas do the same.

The financial strategy is designed so that the federal and regional governments share both the revenues and costs in order to boost the capacity of regions to develop themselves through self-initiatives (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). Resources and finances are also further

devolved to lower levels. The amount of government funding for social services is determined by identifying community contributions - cash, material and labor. Regions transfer funding in block grants to woredas that are then to reach the sub-woredas and their institutions. The block grant is intergovernmental transfer of funds from region to woredas according to a predetermined formula and with minimum conditionality (Gebre-Egziabher and Berhanu, 2007,).

Block Grants are transfers from Regional to the woreda governments, according to a predetermined formula and with minimal conditionality. The Grants allow the woreda governments to implement their own administrative and development plans without undue interference from higher tiers. Locally raised internal "own resources" are now retained by the woredas to complement the Block Grants.

The block grant policy was developed by the MoE and introduced together with the process of decentralization. The policy was then communicated to the various levels of the education system through the block grant guidelines developed in 2002. The woreda and the school-level actors, such as school principals, PTA chairpersons, treasurers, students, and parents did not appear to be involved in the process of policy formulation of the block grant.

Copies of the block grant guideline of 2002 were distributed to all schools. The distribution of the guidelines seemed to be a mechanism for disseminating the policy and its mode of implementation. The MoE indeed planned to distribute copies of the guidelines to the various levels of the system through the workshops organized at the different levels. However, later on regional education bureaus have adapted the federal copy of the blue book (block grant guide line) to their respective regional condition with major changes like the size of the grant.

2.3. Purpose of Block Grant

Block grant allocation in Ethiopia is strongly linked with declaration of Fee-free general education officially introduced in Ethiopia in 1994 for Grades 1 to 10, with the purpose of creating equal access to education for all, as stipulated by the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (MoE, 1994a). While this policy assures the provision of free general education for all citizens, it also ensures the implementation of fiscal decentralization, creating conditions for schools to generate their own income, providing special support for the disadvantaged regions and girls' education (MoE, 1994a).

The woreda administrative councils or sub city councils have become responsible for allocating the budget of all sectors, including education. The Organization of Educational Management, Community Participation and Finance directive (MoE, 2002) – also known as the 'Blue Book', developed by the MoE – states that, in principle, schools are expected to receive their recurrent budget based on the number of employees (teachers and administrative staff), and the running costs of the school based on the number of students enrolled and class size (MoE, 2002). The aim of the policy is to provide schools with a small, but regular and predictable income which they can use flexibly to cover operating costs based on their priorities. In practice, however, part of the block grant amount (the running costs) that reaches school level has been reported to be exceedingly low (MoE, 2006), as will be explained later in this report.

Block grants in Ethiopia play a significant role in decentralizing governance and funding essential services across the country. Here's a more detailed look at their purposes:

- **Promoting Regional Autonomy:-**Ethiopia's federal system is organized around ethnically defined regional states, each with its own constitution and governing structures. Block grants enable these regions to exercise their autonomy by providing financial resources for implementing region-specific policies and programs. This aligns with the principles of self-determination and governance enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution.
- **Ensuring Fair Distribution of Resources:-**Not all regions in Ethiopia have equal economic capacities. Some regions, such as Oromia and Addis Ababa, generate more revenue, while others, like Somali and Afar, may struggle. Block grants aim to level the playing field by distributing funds based on criteria like population, poverty levels, and fiscal need. This helps to bridge the gap between wealthier and less-developed regions.
- **Financing Basic Public Services:-**A substantial portion of block grants is earmarked for critical sectors such as: Education: Supporting schools, teacher salaries, and learning materials.
- Strengthening Decentralization Efforts:- Decentralization involves empowering local governments to make decisions and allocate resources in ways that address their unique needs. Block grants are the financial backbone of this effort, enabling localized decision-making at regional and district levels.

2.4. Criteria for Allocation of Block Grant

As indicated in the Blue Book, this allocation should be based on the size of the student population, the number of teachers, and class size (MoE, 2002). The student population is the most crucial factor when allocating the block grant (MoE, 2002). The school director and the finance unit workers are relatively familiar with the details of the block grant, much more so than other school-level actors, such as parents, teachers, and students.

Since the government is primarily responsible for the education, each school should ensure that it receives at least the minimum amount of money required to carry out the education. Therefore, the following issues should be understood.

- How much money is needed at the minimum level?
- What is the number of students and human resources?
- How much should be allocated from the government? It requires answering these questions.

In this way, certain schools benefit more and others become victims, so that fairness is broken and society should be encouraged to generate income. In addition to this, the budget allocated for each level of education should be separated from the budget allocated to the district level and allocated to schools. It is necessary to ensure that the allocation for each level of education is balanced.

2.5. Practices in Block Grant Management

Financial planning may be regarded as a cycle that includes policy formulation, the determination of short- and long-term priorities, planning, the delivery of services, reflecting such plans in the financial allocation and the monitoring of the results (Makrwede 2012:16). Thus, financial planning is an important component of sound financial management because it provides a school, as an organization, with a clear view of how to utilize its resources (Naidu et al. 2008:173). Planning leads to budgeting which is a statement usually expressed in financial terms, of the desired performance of an organization in this case a school. A budget is an action plan for the immediate future, representing the operational and tactical end of the corporate planning chain.

In this regards, a budget has an education plan with an estimate of the amount of money to be received and the amount of money to be spent in order to achieve the educational objective. A budget plan is made for a given period, usually one year. A well formulated school budget should consist of an education plan, an expenditure plan and revenue plan (Heather, 2004). A

budget enables an education organization to have a comprehensive view of all its services regardless of their magnitude. By analytical looking at all the services equally, the budget thus enables an equitable allocation of financial resources in all services of an education organization.

According to the Blue book, the regional level allocates the block grant directly to woreda finance and economic development office (MoE, 2002). This administrative level is then tasked with managing the distribution between schools.

To receive the block grant, schools are required to prepare annual plans at the end of each school year for the following year and have them approved by their respective KETBs. The plans are collected from each woreda school and a woreda level education plan is prepared by integrating the data from those schools according to their own plans, and then submitted to the woreda, which consolidates the plans. The woreda FEDO determines the resources to be allocated (the block grant from the region in addition to their own revenues) to each sector, including education. It analyses the education sector plan based on the woreda development plan (aligned to the regional development plan), the woreda education development plan, and the previous year's allocation and performance. The FEDO then prepares a consolidated budget (including education), which has to fit within the resource envelope indicated by the region. The budget is examined and the final budget is approved by the woreda council; each sector is informed of its final allocation. The WEO considers its allocation and requests each school to set priorities for its activities/plan even though resources are lacking to cover all the needs.(Hussien Kedir, 2014)

According to data obtained from the budget section head of the sub-city finance office from Addis abeba city administration, Hussien (2014, p25) 'Schools should prepare their respective plan. We give them cash flows each month according to their plan'. According to one school director, the actual provision of the block grant to the school has never followed the 2002 government guidelines for the block grant budget.

In Harari region the planning and allocation of block grant is divided into two parts. Woreda education office is responsible in requesting the government primary school to set priorities and present their resource demand for the coming academic year according to their demand. However, it is the Harari region education bureau that receives the demands of the government secondary schools of the region.

Table 1. The level at which the block grant is managed (Hussien,2014)

Regions	**Block grant management**
Addis Ababa	• Both salaries and the running costs (non-salary expenditures) reach the school level.
Oromia	• Schools get the block grant (running costs) in kind (not in cash) Salaries are paid at the woreda level.
Somalia	• The block grants (running costs) do not reach the school level Salaries are paid at the woreda level.
Harari	• The block grant in kind (not in cash) ,Salaries are paid at the woreda level.

2.6. The Decision-Making Process of School Grants at the School Level

In accordance with the MoE guidelines (2002), schools in Ethiopia are expected to be managed through a shared leadership process by the directors, deputy directors, and PTAs/PSTAs, who represent the wishes of their respective community members. School directors carry out the day-to-day administration and are responsible for coordination and efficient management. The deputy directors, department heads, and unit leaders help the directors in academic and administrative decision-making.

In the case of the block grant, the school directors required to prepare annual plans at the end of each school year for the following year with PTAs/PSTAs and have them approved by their respective KETBs, which are then submitted to the woreda FEDO through the WEO. Schools are required to develop their school plan by setting their own priorities, such as new teachers and for infrastructure development, textbooks, and the school's day-to-day functioning.

2.7. Control

Financial control is a vital component of an organization's financial management. An effective internal control structure includes a school's plan of organization and all the policies, procedures and actions taken by the school to provide reasonable assurance that the school will achieve its objectives in the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, accuracy of operating data, reliability of program reporting, protection of funds against improper use and compliance with organizational policies and applicable laws and regulations (Hough,1993).

In general, internal control of schools was observed to be carried out by various people such as the school directors, the chairpersons of PSTAs/PTAs and SMCs, as well as by school finance workers (treasurers and cashers).

The same study conducted in Addis Ababa city administration, confirmed that block grants are primarily managed and controlled by the school directors, school finance office workers, and the chairpersons of the SMCs. PSTAs are also part of the internal control through their chairperson who is a member of the SMC. The SMC is involved in controlling every aspect of the school finances.

In Oromia RS, as the block grant reaches the school level only in kind, there is little monitoring which can be carried out. After materials are purchased and delivered to schools, the internal controls are usually conducted by the school directors, chairpersons of PTAs, school treasurers and cashers.

2.8. Challenges of Block Grant Management

Block grants are a well-liked method by which the federal government provides funding to states for a range of initiatives, including education. Block grants do, however, have certain drawbacks and restrictions that may reduce their efficacy despite their many benefits. Some of Block grant challenges are the following.

- Policy Formulation and Dissemination: The process of formulating and disseminating policies related to block grants can be complex and may not always effectively reach all stakeholders. In Ethiopia it was formulated and communicated before almost 20 years. The lack of awareness, clear communication and understanding of grant policies are among the challenges of the grant.
- Inadequacy of the block grant: Study conducted on use and usefulness of school grant (Hussen,2014) indicated that the meagerness of the block grants in Oromia and their complete absence in some schools in Somali region have eroded endeavors to advance the provision of quality education. Some school-level actors are concerned that grant amounts are too low in relation to school needs (teaching materials and supplies, facilities, repairs, etc.). They suggest an increase in the State grant to cope with greater pupil enrolment as a result of free schooling.
- Criteria and Mechanisms for Grant Distribution: Determining fair and transparent criteria for distributing block grants can be challenging. Ensuring that funds reach the intended schools and are allocated based on need and impact is essential.
- Block grants of schools are managed by woreda education office: Therefore, only the budget of non-salary expenditures should reach the school, the rest is kept and

managed at the woreda level. In spite of the entitlement schools have to manage the grant, they receive inputes procured by the WEO.

- Control Mechanisms: Establishing effective control mechanisms to prevent misuse or misallocation of funds is essential. Lack of proper oversight can lead to inefficiencies and hinder the intended impact of block grants. There is no internal and external auditing system laid down to control block grant utilization.
- Difference between allocated and disbursed amount of grant: According to the 2022 Harari region primary school report the amount of school grant allocated for their schools based up on the population of student and the amount they have received are very different.
- Block grants can also be subject to political influence and manipulation, particularly when it comes to deciding how the funds are allocated and used. This can lead to decisions that prioritize political agendas over the needs of students and schools.
- Inequality of grant distributed among schools and woreda: Since block grants provide a fixed amount of funding to states or districts, schools with greater needs may not receive adequate resources to address those needs. This can result in disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes. (Hassen, 2020).
- Late and irregular disbursement of the grant was cited as another challenge by the schools This delay and irregularity in the release of the grant by the woreda education office made it difficult for managers at the school level.

2.10 Strategies of Improving Block grant management

Improving block grant management requires a multifaceted approach that balances flexibility with accountability; ensuring funds are used effectively to meet community needs. Here are key strategies:

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning: Effective management begins with a thorough needs assessment to identify priority areas; ensuring funds address the most critical issues. Engaging stakeholders—community members, local organizations, and experts—facilitates inclusive planning. Clear objectives and timelines should be established, aligning with broader goals like public Education. Strategic plans must outline resource allocation, roles, and metrics for success, preventing ad-hoc spending.

- Capacity Building and Training: Equipping staff with skills in grant management, financial reporting, and regulatory compliance is essential. Training programs and workshops can address gaps, while hiring specialists or consultants enhances expertise. Partnerships with academic institutions or professional organizations can further bolster institutional capacity, ensuring efficient grant administration.
- Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms: Building trust requires transparency in fund allocation and usage. Publicly accessible dashboards and regular financial reports enhance visibility. Implementing robust monitoring systems, including audits and third-party evaluations, ensures compliance and deters misuse. Real-time digital tracking tools can provide stakeholders with updates, fostering accountability while simplifying compliance with federal requirements.
- Collaborative Partnerships: Engaging nonprofits, private entities, and community groups leverages external resources and expertise. Clear agreements delineating roles prevent duplication and enhance coordination. Such partnerships can also amplify community engagement, ensuring projects reflect local priorities and foster collective ownership.
- Adaptive Management with Accountability: While block grants offer flexibility, adaptive management frameworks allow adjustments based on evolving needs without compromising oversight. Periodic reviews enable mid-course corrections, ensuring responsiveness while maintaining fiscal responsibility through predefined accountability checkpoints.
- Public Engagement and Participatory Processes: Involving communities via town halls, surveys, or participatory budgeting ensures alignment with grassroots needs. Transparent communication about grant objectives and outcomes builds public trust and encourages civic participation, enhancing project relevance and sustainability.

By integrating these strategies, block grant management becomes a dynamic process that maximizes resource efficiency, fosters community trust, and achieves measurable, sustainable outcomes.

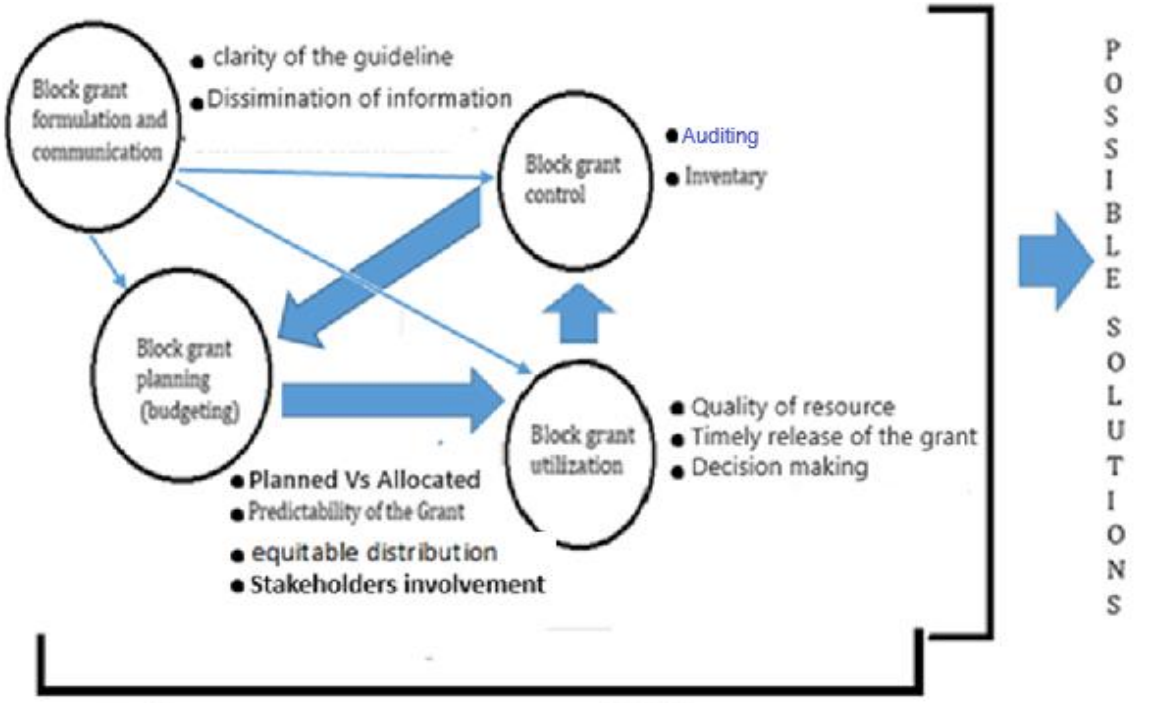
2.11 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework in research is a written or visual representation that outlines the key concepts, variables, and their relationships within a study, guiding research questions,

methods, and analysis. It's essentially a roadmap for your research, informed by literature reviews and existing theories.

According to Shields & Rangarajan (2013), a conceptual framework is an analytical instrument with some variations and contexts used to make distinctions and organize ideas in a meaningful, yet simplified way. Hence, the conceptual framework describes the aspects of researcher selected from the theoretical framework to become on the basis of the questions.

In the following conceptual framework, the structure of block grant management practice is outlined, encompassing planning or budgeting, utilization, and control, with each element distinctly identified. Additionally, this framework has assisted the researcher in concentrating on the fundamental questions of the study and in situating the research within the context of financial management theories.



Block grant Management Practices and Challenges

Adopted from UNESCO 2018

In this research block, grant management is considered a part of school financial management. Financial management is a vital activity in any school. It is the process of planning organizing controlling, and monitoring financial resources with a view to achieve organizational goals and objectives. It is an ideal practice for controlling the financial activities of a school, such as the procurement of funds, use of funds, accounting, payments, risk assessment, and everything

related to money (Nobanee and Abraham, 2015). In Ethiopia, block grants are a source of funding for schools.

The research focused on block grants that are transferred from the regional state education bureau to the district education office and regional education bureau and then assigned to primary and secondary schools, respectively. The allocation of block grants depends on clear policy objectives that are formulated with the aim of making general education fee-free and accessible to all citizens of the country. Therefore, on the first place the formulation of the grant rules was assessed, from the viewpoint of clarity, participatory nature, and communication. Some key points, such as the criteria of allocation and its communication to the actors who allocate and implement the grant, are also dealt with here.

The second area of focus in this research was the planning and budgeting of block grants. Planning is a vital and essential element of effective financial management in schools (Campher, 2003:19). Planning leads to budgeting, which is a statement usually expressed in financial terms, of the desired performance of the school. This research aims to analyze the coherence of planned versus allocated block grants. It attempts to answer questions such as how the block grant is predictable? Does the actual implementation of the grant allow them to fulfil their objectives? In addition, the practice of budgeting at the education authority at REB, Woreda education office, and school level has been examined.

The use of block grants is another area of attention given in this study. The use of a fund depends on its timely release. Therefore, the alignment of grant disbursement with the academic schedule of schools, the quality of materials procured by this grant, and whether it is used for inputs and activities demanded by the school will be studied. In addition, during the planning and use of the grant, the decision-making bodies and degree of stalk holder involvement will be studied.

The examination of control mechanisms pertaining to the utilization of block grants reveals several critical components. The implementation of control mechanisms, alongside the engagement of human resources such as cashiers, accountants, and auditors, as well as the establishment of an inventory system, were thoroughly analyzed. These activities play a significant role in ensuring the appropriate use of resources while simultaneously mitigating the risks of fraud and loss associated with the grants.

The study identified several challenges encountered by schools in the implementation of the block grant guidelines and the utilization of the grant. Key issues included the insufficiency of

the grant, delays in its disbursement to schools, and the quality of materials procured by the woreda education and finance offices for distribution to the schools. The research assessed these critical factors to elucidate the management practices and challenges associated with block grant funding in primary and secondary schools within the Harari region. Furthermore, the potential solutions proposed by respondents were carefully considered.

2.12. Summary of Related Literature

Block grants are fixed-sum federal grants that allow state and local governments to design and implement designated programs with light federal oversight. They were first introduced in 1946 by the Public Welfare Act and were later created in 1966 for comprehensive healthcare services. Block grants are allocated to lower-level authorities for current expenditure in pre-school or school education, allowing them to allocate funds to different categories such as salaries and operational costs. Countries like Iceland, Slovak Republic, Chile, Estonia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Uganda, and Ethiopia have implemented block grants to address recurrent costs, provide specific funds for instructional resources, and ensure equal access to education.

Ethiopia introduced fee-free general education in 1994, promoting equal access and fiscal decentralization. In 2002, the government introduced the block grant approach, allowing regional states and city administration councils to allocate providing schools with a small, regular, and predictable income to cover operating costs. Despite some schools reporting low running costs, the policy has been adapted by regional education bureaus.

Block grants in education are allocated based on factors like student population, teacher number, and class size. Balancing the budget for each level is crucial for fairness and income generation. Financial planning involves policy formulation, priorities, planning, service delivery, reflecting plans in financial allocation, and monitoring results. Schools in the Harari region must prepare annual plans and have them approved by their respective KETBs. The woreda Education Department determines resources for each sector, including education, and prepares a consolidated budget. However, implementation of these procedures differs between regions, with some receiving very little block grants due to resource scarcity.

Ethiopia's schools are managed through a shared leadership process, with school directors handling day-to-day administration and decision-making. They prepare annual plans for the following year with PTAs/PSTAs, approved by their respective KETBs, and submitted to the woreda FEDO through the WEO. Schools set their own priorities, such as new teachers, infrastructure development, textbooks, and day-to-day functioning. Financial control is crucial

for an organization's financial management, including policies, procedures, and actions to ensure the school achieves its objectives. In Addis Abeba city administration, block grants are primarily managed and controlled by school directors, finance office workers, and SMC chairpersons. In Oromia RS, little monitoring is possible due to the block grant reaching the school level in kind.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with various issues related to the research methodology that was employed and the justification for selecting the design. The issues include research site, research design, source of data, sampling procedures, data collection procedure and instruments, method of data analysis, ethical considerations, and presentation.

3.1. Description of the Study Area

This study was carried out in the Harari regional state, which is located 525 km from Addis Ababa in the eastern direction. Harari regional state is the smallest state of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia. It has an area of about 345 sq.km, with a population of 240,000 of which 57% dwell in the urban areas while the rest live in rural Harari. The regional state is structured at regional government and woredas, missing zonal administration level, unlike other regions of the country. The socio-economic background of the region is mostly based on trade and agriculture. The agriculture sector in the region is known for the chat production and cattle fattening accompanied with the minimal proportion of cereal crops. Most of the urban population is engaged in trade and service sector. The main languages used in the region are ‘Afan Oromo', 'Amharic’ and Harari.

3.2. Research Design

The research design employed in conducting this study was descriptive mixed reaserch method, , in which quantitative is a main method of inquiry, where qualitative expressions have been used to indicate the relationship of variables and policy issues regarding block grant. The integration of qualitative and quantitative research methods has made it possible for a broader understanding of complex phenomena, thereby offering readers more assurance in research findings and conclusions. Mixed methods approach allows researchers to gain a deeper and broader understanding of a given phenomenon compared to studies that use mono-method (Creswell, 2011; Jones et al., 2015; McKim, 2017;). This is because of the belief that it helps to explore complex issues in society for a richer understanding of measures and unintentional processes leading to a better dissemination of the generated outcomes (Coyle and Williams, 2000;)

The value of mixed methods could also be seen from its usefulness as one of the approaches driving specific disciplines in research. According to Fàbregues et al. (2021), while mixed methods and approaches remain relevant in several disciplines, they are very popular in the fields of sociology, education, nursing, and psychology. Professionals in these disciplines have

also been particularly instrumental in the growth of mixed methods research as they (the disciplines) are marked by clear boundaries that make it easy for relevant comparative understanding (Ivankova and Kawamura, 2010). Thus, these disciplines are among many others driving mixed methods in academia and research.

Again, since this design involves the collection, analysis, and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multi-phased study (Hanson et al., 2005), the data collection in a mixed methods study combines both non-numerical and numerical data. Non numerical data use unstructured questionnaires while the numerical data use structured questionnaires. In this study open questions attached to the questioner and an interview conducted with education bureau officials has been used as qualitative data.

The utilization of this design enables the researcher to triangulate the findings, which means that they can use multiple sources of evidence to confirm their results. Data triangulation in a mixed-methods study is generally accepted as a strategy for validating results obtained through the individual method (Bergman, 2008). Beside these the deployment of mixed design enabled the study to integrate, and contextualize as well as enrich the findings.

3.3. Sources of Data

The primary sources of data were school directors, vice directors, department heads, PTSA members, and supervisors in their respective school. Likewise the Woreda Education Office (WEO), Woreda Finance and Economic Development (WOFEd), and Regional Education Bureau (REB) experts were selected to provide necessary information through interviews and checklists prepared on school grant utilization.

3.4. Population, Sample size and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1. Target population

Data from the Harari Region Education Bureau indicates that the region is home to 68 government primary schools, which are unevenly distributed across nine woredas. While some woredas contain as few as two schools, others have as many as 23. According to the 2024 report from the Harari Education Bureau, these 68 government schools serve a total of 58,000 students and employ 2,123 teachers.

3.4.2. Sample Size

Primary schools of the Harari region are accountable to 9 woredas. Thus, by their geographical location, the 9 woredas were clustered into the urban woredas and rural woredas. The rural woredas are three and the urban woredas are 6. Among the urban woredas, 3 of them

possess only 2 government primary schools each. Therefore, for the sake of availing more schools, 3 rural woredas and the 3 urban woredas were selected as samples. On average there were 8 primary schools in each woreda. Though the inclusion of 10% for schools from both rural and urban suffices the representativeness of these sample schools, by available sampling 5 primary schools will be selected from each woreda except Amirnure which possesses 4 schools.' Hence total of 29 primary schools are used as samples.

3.4.3. Sampling Technique

In this study census sampling technique was used for selecting school directors and vice directors (100%), department heads (2 per school), PTA members (20%), from each of the six woredas, 50% of experts from woreda education and finance office were a sample of the study. The experts from woreda education office and finance and economic development office were selected by purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental is a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers deliberately select participants based on their knowledge, relevance, or expertise concerning the research topic. They were taken based up on the knowledge they have about block grant for schools. These sample respondents were included due to the fact that they have a direct connection with the schools' work and knew how the status of financial resource management is carried out in the schools. In addition to simple random sampling technique was applied to select 2 department heads and 25% of PTSA members. The researcher employed these sampling approaches with the assumption that they allow her to swiftly reach the intended sample and obtain pertinent data.

Table 2. Summary of population and sample

Woreda	schools	Principal		PTSA		Dep. heads		WEO experts	
		P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S
Erer	5	10	10	20	5	30	5	12	8
Dire teyara	5	10	10	20	5	30	5	12	8
Sofi	5	10	10	20	5	30	5	12	8
Hakim	5	10	10	20	5	30	5	12	8
Shenkor	5	10	10	20	5	30	5	12	8
Amirnure	4	8	8	16	5	24	4	6	4
	29	58	58	116	30	174	29	66	44

Note: P=Population, S=Sample, Dep=Department

3.5. Methods of Data Collection

Questionnaires and interview analysis were used to gather vast and deep data about the issue under investigation.

3.5.1. Questionnaire

A set of questionnaires was prepared to be filled out by school directors, department heads, PTSA members, department heads, Woreda education and finance office experts. The respondents were requested to answer questions concerning financial resources, particularly Block grant management, budgeting, and expenditures, and auditing, purchasing and reporting practices. This instrument was chosen, because it enables the collection of data from a large number of respondents and makes them feel free and express themselves about their school at their speed and understanding without interrupting their institution's working time.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher has designed different data collection instruments for different respondents by carefully selecting the appropriate sample size for the study to gather participant information. Moreover, the researcher has conducted a pilot test in 2 primary schools and 2 woreda education offices that were not included in the sample population of the study. The collected data was entered into SPSS a computer software and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency and if the score was found to be 0.7 and above, then the instrument was found to be considered reliable for the study.

In doing so, the two schools were selected following the same technique and procedure as that of the major study. Based on the feedback of the pilot test, the researcher has amended the questionnaires to avoid bias.

3.5.2. Interview

In this research, structured interviews were carried out with four representatives from the Regional Education Bureau and officers from the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BOFED) to ensure the study remained manageable. Dawson (2002) indicated that in semi-structured interview the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews. To do this the same questions were used for all respondents. The interviews were made according to the schedules made by the researcher. This methodological choice was predicated on the assumption that these respondents possess extensive knowledge and documentation regarding various schools, thereby facilitating the collection of in-depth information pertinent to the research problem. Additionally, this approach proved beneficial in verifying the reliability of the data collected through questionnaires, thereby enhancing the overall robustness of the findings.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

For the sake of creating conducive conditions for the study, before data collection, the researcher has communicated with the Harari region Education bureau and sample woredas education office so that permission and cooperation at the school level were secured. The data collection schedule was set based on the location of the participants. The data from a woreda was collected once at a time, by the researcher and two assistant data collectors. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents based on the schedule, after briefing the objective of the study.

Likewise, the structured interview was conducted at a place of the respondents' choice, after briefing the objective of the research. Then the interviews were conducted and the reaction of the participants in written notes and audio recordings. Recording of interviews on tape was performed since it is convenient and obviates the necessity of writing during the interview, which may be distracting to both the interviewer and subject (Best and Kahn, 2006).

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis

In preparation for data analysis, the researcher ensured that the questionnaires were complete, then compiled, categorized, and encoded the responses. Frequency counts and percentages were employed to analyze the demographic information of the respondents. For the quantitative data related to the primary research questions, mean scores along with standard deviations were calculated, and an independent sample t-test was conducted.

In the process of data analysis two groups of responders were formed. The woreda group is in charge of assigning and distributing the block grant, while the in school group is made up of department heads, PTSA, and school principals who are recipient of the grant. The woreda group, which consists of finance officials, experts, and supervisors, are chosen from WEO and WOFED. The t-test as statistical test was utilized to determine if there were significant differences between the means of respondents from schools and woreda experts regarding the practices and challenges associated with block grant utilization. The scores of each item were statistically organized and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 2025) to obtain frequency count, percentage, and mean value.

On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed through narration. Finally, the data obtained from the interview sessions and document analysis was utilized to substantiate the data collected through the questionnaires and to validate the findings of the study.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

Prior to the commencement of data collection, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the quality of the research instruments. Specifically, 20 questionnaires were distributed to Shenkor and Goro primary schools' leaders and their respective woreda education and finance office experts. The primary objective of this pilot test was to assess the readability of the items, the allotted time for completion, as well as the consistency and content of the questions. As a result, enhancements were made to the format and sequence of the questions. Comprehensive editing was performed by the researcher. The reliability of the questionnaires was assessed using Cronbach's alpha method, facilitated by SPSS version 26. The resulting alpha value of 0.83 indicated a high level of consistency among the questions designed to measure a similar concept. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), a reliability coefficient exceeding 0.7 is generally considered to demonstrate internal consistency. Therefore, the questionnaires were then administered to the research participants for the actual data collection phase of the study.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

The researcher has been required to observe some ethics in the process of carrying out the research. The data collected was kept confidential and the information was treated with respect. Any communications with the concerned bodies were accomplished at their voluntary consent without harming and threatening personal and institutional well-being. The researcher also ensured the originality of the data collected by citing the source.

4. PRESENTATION ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter analyzes the data gathered during the research, presenting findings and discussions that relate to the study's goals. The main objective of the research was to assess how block grants are managed in government primary schools in the Harari region, focusing on their use and the challenges faced. To collect pertinent information, the study used questionnaires targeted at school leaders (principals, head teachers, and teachers involved with the Parent-Teacher Association) and experts from Woreda education and finance offices. Additionally, interviews were conducted with participants selected from regional education bureau procurement and finance and School improvement directors, as well as BOFED The collected data is displayed in tables and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics for a thorough understanding.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents was assessed concerning sex, educational qualification, service years and location of their school. Harari regional state has 9 woredas. Among these six of them, 3 from rural and 3 from urban areas were selected randomly.

Table 3 illustrates the characteristics of respondents by sex, years of service, educational qualifications, and the location they reside in, whether urban or rural. 150 samples were selected for data collection, and 159 questionnaires were distributed to the participants. However, 147, or about 92%, of these were returned. As depicted in the following table, the proportion of female principals, including vice principals, is 18.2%, while the remaining respondents are male. The second group of respondents consists of head teachers leading departments and those serving as members of the PTSA. Among these, females represent 39.2%. Additionally, approximately 40% of respondents from the Woreda Education Office and Finance Office were female. Despite advocacy efforts to increase female participation in education, particularly in primary schools, the ratio of females in school leadership roles remains below expectations.

Concerning the service years of the respondents, six categories were given to the respondents. Of the principal respondents, almost 66% of them served between 10 to 15 years, while the rest or one-third of the principals have greater than 15 years of service. This depicts, that primary schools of the Harari region are administered by young leaders with unsatisfactory work experience. Contrary to this 70% of teacher respondents have served for more than 10

years. This might be because the sample teachers selected as respondents were department heads and members of parent-teacher associations working with additional responsibility.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Items	Categories of Items	Respondents					
		Principals		PTA mem&head teachers		Woreda Education and Finance experts	
		f	%	F	%	f	%
Sex	Male	45	81.8	34	60.7	20	60
	Female	10	18.2	22	39.2	13	40
	Total	**55**	**100**	**56**	**100**	**33**	**100**
Service Years	1 to 5	19	35	7	13	6	18.00
	6 to10	17	31	10	18	9	27.00
	11 to 15	9	16	12	21	11	33.00
	16 to 20	5	9	11	20	4	12.00
	21 to 25	4	7	10	18	2	6.00
	> 25	1	2	6	11	1	3.00
	Total	**55**	**100**	**56**	**100**	**33**	**100.00**
Qualification	certificate	0	0.	7	13	0	0.00
	Diploma	34	62	28	50	2	6.00
	Degree	19	35	21	38	28	85.00
	Masters	2	4	0	0.00	3	9.00
	Total	**55**	**100.00**	**56**	**100**	**33**	**100.00**
Location	Urban	26	47.00	27	48	16	48.00
	Rural	29	53.00	29	52	17	52.00
	Total	**55**	**100.00**	**56**	**100.00**	**33**	**100.00**

Key;f-frequency,

Item 3 of Table 3 shows the educational status of the respondents. According to teachers' development program guidelines, primary school principals should at least be first-degree holders. Nevertheless, in the Harari region, primary school principals with the first degree and above educational status are only 37% while about two-thirds (62%) are diploma graduates. Of the teacher respondents, 50% have diplomas, 38% are first-degree graduates and only 13% are certificate holders. Compared to the educational status of the principals, teachers' qualifications can be considered satisfactory. Concerning woreda education and woreda finance office experts' academic qualifications, about 94% of the respondents are first-degree or second-degree graduates.

The last item about demographic character was about the location of the schools of respondents. Since the population of primary school students in Harari region in urban and

rural areas are almost equal, the author attempted to make the samples balanced. The proportion of principals, teachers and experts from rural schools were 52%, 53%, and 53%, respectively.

Respondents were requested to evaluate their level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement. To enhance clarity in the analysis, three key threshold scores were established within this range: 2.49, 3.49, and 4.49. Consequently, the analysis of the questionnaire responses was categorized as follows: a mean value of ≤1.49 indicated strong disagreement; scores from 1.5 to 2.49 reflected disagreement; scores between 2.5 and 3.49 were classified as undecided; scores from 3.50 to 4.49 indicated agreement; and scores from 4.50 to 5.00 represented strong agreement. Additionally, the data obtained from open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed to provide supplementary insights and validate the findings derived from the closed-ended items as needed.

4.2. Awareness of Block Grant

To guarantee that grants are used efficiently and maximize the beneficial effects on students, teachers, and the school environment as a whole, it is essential to comprehend and be aware of the regulations controlling grant utilization. Additionally, it ensures that resources are distributed responsibly and effectively, promoting long-term learning objectives.

In this study, 3 categories of respondents have participated. They are school principals, head teachers and PTA members named as school leaders, and the woreda education office and finance office experts are represented as WEF in Table 4.

Table 4. Awareness of a block grant.

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
Block grant guidelines (manual) are available in the school and Woreda education office	SL	105	1.54	0.772	1.59	1.231	0. 269
	WEE	42	1.69	0.604			
School leadership is well-oriented about the block grant guidelines and management.	SL	105	2.07	1.04	2.41	-4.76	0
	WEE	42	3.22	1.435			
Woreda finance office experts have a clear awareness of the regional block grant implementation.	SL	105	3.78	0.988	3.45	0.910	0.36
	WEE	42	3.74	0.828			
Criteria for block grant allocation are well communicated to the school leadership and the staff.	SL	105	3.57	0.77	3.75	0.801	0.53
	WEE	42	3.42	1.318			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finance experts, N-number, SD-Standard deviation, CM-combined mean

As it is displayed in Table 4, item 1, the respondents were asked whether the block grant guideline is availed in their respective institutions. As a result, school leaders and woreda education and finance experts' mean responses were 1.54 (SD= 0.772) and 1.69 (SD= 0.604), respectively. The combined mean value of 1.59, which falls in the range of 1-2.49, also reveals the disagreement of the respondents toward the issue. In addition, the calculated independent t-test value (t=3.19, p=0.269>0.05) showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the presence of the guideline. Despite the need for clearly established guidelines, the information gathered from respondents leads to conclusions that reflect the document is lacking.

Item 2 of Table 4 asks whether school leaders were well-oriented on block grant guidelines and management. As a result, school leaders' mean response is 2.07 (SD=1.04), but woreda education and financial experts' mean is 3.22 (SD=1.44). The two types of responders' combined mean of 2.41 falls into the uncertain range. There was a statistically significant difference between the school leaders and woreda specialists, according to the computed t-test

at t=4.76, p=0.00<0.05. This indicates that the Woreda education and finance experts thought school administrators were knowledgeable about how to manage and use block grants. About this one of the school principals briefly describes orienting school leaders:

> *"Most of the principals of our schools are new. We have no long experience of school leading and we did not train too as well. Not only to block grants management we should get sort of induction training to be school directors. There is no written school grant guideline, but I don't have an idea of the presence of a block grant. No one from Woreda has trained me about block grants but just by asking other long-serving directors I got some knowledge on how to request the grant."*

Item 3 of the table asked respondents to rate their agreement on whether Woreda finance office experts are aware of regional block grant implementation. School leaders' mean score was 3.78 (SD=0.98), and woreda experts' was 3.74 (SD=0.828), while the combined mean was 3.63, indicating agreement. An independent t-test yielded t=0.91, p=0.36, suggesting no significant difference between the two groups. Data indicates that woreda finance office experts have a good understanding of block grant implementation rules.

The fourth question of Table 4 asked the respondents to rate the degree of their agreement to the criteria for block grant allocation was well communicated to the school leaders and the staff. The mean values of school leaders were 3.57(SD=0.77) and that of woreda experts were 3.42 (SD=1.318). The combined mean of the two groups was 3.57; further, the t-value at t=0.801 p=0.53 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between school leaders and woreda experts on the issue. Based upon the combined mean, which is in the range of agreement one can conclude that school leaders were communicated on the conditions that enable the schools to get block grants from woreda.

"The criteria schools should fulfill to get a block grant" was one of the interview questions sent to the regional education bureau procurement and finance directorate. According to the interview, our schools receive a bigger block grant amount than those in other regions. However, neither the administrative organizations that distribute the funds, such as the Woreda Finance Office, nor the schools have any set guidelines. To get the funds First, the school must be a government school; second, the grant amount must be determined by the number of students from the previous academic year; and third, the school must submit a procurement demand that the woreda finance office must satisfy to receive the grant. This is because the grant is given to the schools in kind rather than cash.

4.3. The Practice of Block grant Planning and Distribution

This sub-section discusses the practices of block grant budget allocation about the sustainability and participation of concerned bodies in the planning process.

Table 5. Practice of Block grant planning

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
The school conducts need assessment in designing block grant plan.	SL	105	2.21	0.851	2.14	1.357	0.179
	WEFE	42	1.95	1.103			
Teachers participate in preparation of annual plan budget of block grant.	SL	105	1.52	0.502	1.82	-4.9	0.0016
	WEFE	42	2.57	1.208			
Schools receive block grant every year.	SL	105	4.34	0.648	3.84	4.26	0.066
	WEFE	42	4.05	1.085			
Schools are obtaining block grant annually as per amount decided by the regional government.	SL	105	2.33	1.035	2.40	-1.22	0.23
	WEFE	42	2.57	1.085			
The amount of bock grant obtained by school is predictable.	SL	105	2.36	1.729	2.43	0.954	0.343
	WEFE	42	2.60	1.36			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finanace experts,N-number, SD-Standard deviation,CM-combined mean

The study's participants were asked to rate their agreement with the statement that schools conduct need assessments when creating block grant plans, as shown in Table 5, item 1. School leaders and woreda education and finance experts had respective mean values of 2.21 (SD=0.85) and 1.95 (SD=1.103). The two groups' cumulative mean of 2.14, which falls between 1.5 and 2.49, shows that they disagreed with the question. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of responders, according to the t-test value at t=1.35, p=0.17>0.05.

Toward open-ended question, one participant replied that –

> *Once a year, the school receives a block grant in kind, and the Woreda finance office is in charge of buying and supplying the materials that are thought to be helpful. The Woreda Education Office asks us to submit our demands based on the amount of money*

we believe has been set aside for us. The majority of the items on the school's list are stationery supplies, along with the quantity we require. There is no culture in place to determine what the school requires for the academic year because this is seen as the director's job. In actuality, this is our common error.

Thus, it is possible to conclude from the interview results and the questionnaire that schools do not carry out the necessary assessments for appropriate block grant planning. No effort is made to distinguish between what is and is not absent.

The second item in the same table asks if teachers take part in creating the block grant's annual plan budget. The school leader's mean response was 1.52 (SD=0.502), the woreda experts' mean was 2.57 (SD=1.21), and the combined mean of both was 1.82, indicating their disagreement. It is plausible to infer from the mean that teachers were not granted the opportunity to participate in the grant's budget planning, even though the goods purchased through the block grant are intended to be used extensively by them. At t=-3.33, p=002<0.05, however, the calculated t-test value indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that the response of the school leaders was disagreement while that of woreda experts were undecided on the participation of teachers in block grant budgeting.

The third question in Table 5 asked about schools that receive annual block grants. The combined mean of the two groups was 3.84, which is within the range of agreement. The mean values of the woreda education and finance experts and school leaders were 4.05 (SD=1.08) and 4.34 (SD=0.64), respectively. This suggests that, regardless of grant size, schools in the Harari region receive block grants annually. Regarding this question, the calculated t-test value at t=4.26, p=0.06>0.05, shows that there is not a statistically significant difference between the school leaders and woreda experts.

The subjects were asked to rate the degree to which schools get a block grant each year by the amount determined by the regional government, as shown in item 4 of Table 5. School leaders and woreda education and finance experts had mean scores of 2.33 (SD=1.03) and 2.57 (SD=1.085), respectively. The two groups' combined mean was 2.40, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the item. As a result, block grant schools receive less money each year than what is intended for them.

Item 5 of Table 5 asks the subject of this study to express the degree of their agreement, on the amount of block grant obtained by the school is predictable. The mean score of school leaders was 2.36(SD=1.72) and woreda experts were 2.6(SD=2.36). The combined mean was 2.43

indicating that the majority of the respondents expressed their disagreement with the item. That means schools can not tell their block grant budget for the year beforehand. The p-value 0.343>0.05 shows that there is no statistically significance difference between the responses of the two groups.

As indicated in Table 6, item 1, participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement regarding whether school leadership publicly announces annual block grants to schools. The average score for school leaders was 2.34 (SD=1.15), while for woreda education and finance experts, it was 2.48 (SD=1.23). The overall mean for both groups was 2.38, suggesting that respondents were dosagreed. The calculated t-test yielded a value of t=0.603, with a p-value of 0.535, which is greater than 0.05, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two respondent groups concerning the public declaration of block grants to stakeholders. The mean scores fall within the range of disagreement, reflecting a lack of practice in informing the school community about the financial allocation of block grants or the types of materials procured at the woreda level for distribution to schools. This suggests that the oversight and monitoring of block grants by school members are insufficient.

4.4. The Decision-making Process for the use of the Block grant

Table 6. decision making on block grant

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
1. School leaders notify annual block grant publicly to school community.	SL	105	2.34	1.15	2.38	0.603	0.535
	WEFE	42	2.48	1.23			
2. The school PTSA participates in block grant management of school.	SL	105	1.90	1.091	2.05	-2.81	0.006
	WEFE	42	2.45	1.064			
3. The school committee (PSTA) is empowered to decide the priority needs of the school in spending Block grant.	SL	105	2.30	1.234	2.47	-2.58	0.011
	WEFE	42	2.88	1.194			
4. There is equitable utilization of block grant among school	SL	105	2.37	1.17	2.42	0.879	0.38
	WEFE	42	2.55	0.89			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finanace experts,N-number, SD-Standard deviation,CM-combined mean

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Some responses to the open-ended question, "How do schools know their block grant budget for the academic year?" addressed this by stating that, there is a trend at the regional level to submit the total number of students to the education office of the woreda. Additionally, each woreda's education sector receives a lump sum payment from the Regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Development. The number of students determines how the Woreda Finance Bureau distributes this grant to the institutions. The grade level also affects how much money is given to the school per student. For students in grades 1–4, the grant is 200 birr, while for those for grades 5–8 it is 250 birr. While some woredas figure out the funding that schools should receive and let them know, others do not.

The second item on the table was about schools PTSA's participation in block grant management. The mean score for school leaders was 1.9 (SD=1.09), while the mean for woreda education and finance experts was 2.45 (SD=1.06). Additionally, the overall mean for both groups was 2.05, indicating a general disagreement with the item. The p-value was 0.006, which is less than 0.05. Consequently, there exists a statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning this matter.

Item 3 of Table 6, asks the respondents whether they agree that the school PTSA committee is empowered to decide the priority needs of the school in spending the block grant. The mean score of school leaders and woreda experts was 2.3(SD=1.23) and 2.88(SD=1.119). Moreover, the combined mean of the two groups was 2.47, signifying an undecided response to the item. The computed t-test value at t= -2.58, p=0.011<0.05, hence there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups on this item. The school leaders disagreed with this item while the woreda education and finance experts' mean value is in the undecided range, the difference happened because of the distance between the school and the woreda in recognizing what PTSA does and does not. Generally, the response from items 2 and 3 implies that the school parent, teachers and students committee is not involved in block grant management.

In alignment with the guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Education in 2002, schools in Ethiopia are anticipated to operate under a collaborative leadership framework involving directors, deputy directors, and PTSA, who embody the interests of their local communities. The school directors are tasked with overseeing daily administrative functions and ensuring effective coordination and management. Meanwhile, deputy directors, department heads, and unit leaders assist the directors in making both academic and administrative decisions.

Despite the information presented, it is evident that the PTSA exhibits minimal involvement in the management of block grants overall, and specifically in the prioritization of material resources to be acquired with these funds. While the PTSA holds the responsibility for decision-making regarding the school grant budget that is directly allocated by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the planning and administration of regional block grants are predominantly executed by the school principal.

The fourth item in the same table, asks the subjects of the study to express the level of their agreement on equitable utilization of block grants among schools. The mean score of school leaders was 2.42(SD=1.17) and that of woreda experts was 2.55(SD=0.889). The two groups' combined mean was 2.34, which is within the range of disagreeing with the item's idea. Regarding the equity of block grant allocation, the computed t value at t=0.879, p=0.38>0.05 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents.

The open-ended question posed to the participants about the fairness of block grant usage in schools received a variety of responses. From the feedback of the participants, the main points noticed are the following.

> The number of students enrolled in the schools determines the current block grant allocation criterion. Regardless of other income sources, block grants provide larger budgets to schools with higher student populations. Because they usually have fewer students, smaller rural schools in particular rely heavily on block funding. They regularly have to ask children for financial contributions from their parents since the budget they receive is insufficient to buy resources and tools for the teaching and learning process. Despite this, some school administrators, especially those in metropolitan areas, said that because the block grant allocation is determined by student enrollment, it is fair.

For the open-ended question " What is the role of the woreda education office in allocation block grant" one respondent expresses their role as follows.

The Woreda Finance office plays a significant role in the allocation of block grants. It is responsible for gathering the plans submitted by schools, procuring the requested material resources and other inputs, and subsequently distributing these materials to the schools based on their assessment of appropriateness. However, the Woreda Finance Office does not record the costs of the materials on the vouchers that schools use to receive these resources. As a result, there is a lack of transparency regarding the equity of the allocation process for materials, moreover the block grants."

4.5. The Practice of Block grant Utilization

This section of the study focuses on block grant allocation, release, and utilization procedures. The block grant budget for woredas is distributed by the regional government's finance and economic development department, as was covered in the preceding section. The woreda finance office is in charge of allocating this budget to schools in accordance with the number of students enrolled in the preceding academic year.

Table 7: block grant utilization.

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
1. Allocated block grant budget is in accordance to number of students.	SL	105	2.19	1.373	2.54	2.69	0.008
	WEFE	42	2.86	1.299			
2. The block grant is released timely.	SL	105	2.26	1.309	2.35	2.03	0.023
	WEFE	42	2.74	1.289			
3. The school utilizes block grant according to it’s plan.	SL	105	2.43	1.379	2.44	0.058	0.984
	WEFE	42	2.45	1.310			
4. The block grant is adequate for teaching learning process in school.	SL	105	2.13	0.960	2.17	0.679	0.499
	WEFE	42	2.26	1.082			
5. The block grant is used to improve students learning outcome, (achievement)	SL	105	2.12	1.098	2.16	0.66	0.57
	WEFE	42	2.26	1.149			
6. Schools can use block grant in flexible way .	SL	105	2.02	0.980	2.07	0.861	0.39
	WEFE	42	2.19	1.131			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finanace experts,N-Frequency, SD-Standard deviation,CM-combined mean

As can be seen in Table 7, item 1 requested respondents to score whether the block grant budget allotted to schools corresponds with the student population. School leaders' and woreda experts' mean scores were 2.19 (SD=1.37) and 2.86 (SD=1.29), respectively. The two groups' combined mean score was 2.54, indicating that the subjects were unsure of their answers. The

woreda expert's mean value was undecided, while the school leader's 2.19 falls inside the disputed range. The difference between the school leaders and the experts on the topic is statistically significant, as indicated by the calculated t-test value of 2.69, p=0.008 <0.05. It is feasible to deduce from this data that the number of students does not correspond with the block grant allotted to schools.

Item 2 in the table addresses whether the block grant is provided promptly. The average score for school leaders was 2.26 (SD=1.39), while woreda experts reported an average of 2.74 (SD=1.28). Furthermore, the overall mean score for both groups combined was 2.35, indicating a consensus of disagreement among the respondents regarding this item. The t-test result was 0.86, with a p-value of 0.39 (p>0.05), demonstrating no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning the timing of block grants. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude from the data that the block grant, which is urgently needed by schools, is not released on time.

Item 3 of Table 6 addresses the utilization of block grants by schools by their established plans. The average scores reported by school leaders and woreda experts were 2.43 (SD=1.37) and 2.45 (SD=1.31), respectively, resulting in a combined mean of 2.44. This score falls within the range indicating disagreement among respondents regarding the item. The t-test results, with t=0.058 and p=0.98 (p>0.05), suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups. Consequently, it can be inferred that the block grants are not being utilized in alignment with the schools' plans. A primary reason for this discrepancy may be attributed to the nature of the grants, which are often provided in kind, such as supplies and sanitary materials, rather than in monetary form.

Regarding this open-ended question, "To what extent does the woreda finance office's material procurement align with school demands?" was shown to the participants. According to the replay, there are occasions when the school requests a purchase and the item is completely altered. For example, when duplicator ink is requested, it might be substituted with pens and pencils; when the paper is planned, it might be substituted with toilet paper and washing soap; and so on.

About item 4 in the table, participants were requested to evaluate their opinions regarding the adequacy of block grants for the teaching and learning processes within the school. The mean score for school leaders was 2.13 (SD = 0.96), while the mean score for woreda education and finance experts was 2.26 (SD = 1.80). The overall mean for both groups was 2.17, indicating a

general disagreement among respondents concerning this item. The calculated t-test value was 0.679, with a p-value of 0.499, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups on this matter. These data imply that the amount of block grants allocated to schools is inadequate for effectively supporting the teaching and learning processes.

Additionally, the head of the regional education bureau's procurement and finance directorate was asked to share her thoughts on whether or not block grants were sufficient for school activities. In response, the interviewee said

> *"Block grant budget of school allocated per student plays a significant part in helping schools meet their supply needs. However, many activities require money; for example, schools need to pay for extra tutorial classes aimed at improving student performance, they must carry out ongoing professional training for teachers, and they have to cover electricity and water bills, among other expenses. These costs must be funded by the income generated internally by the school. The block grant is provided to schools in a physical form, mostly based on requests made by the schools. There is no possibility of giving schools cash because regional financial rules do not permit the direct transfer of government funds designated for the budget to schools. Thus, this grant does not help cover costs for school activities that require cash payments. Furthermore, due to negligence and lack of accountability, the block grant established by the regional government is not arriving schools in full. As a result, the block grant does not adequately support all school activities."*

Item 5 in Table 6 inquires whether block grants are utilized to enhance student learning outcomes. The mean scores for school leaders and woreda education experts were recorded at 2.12 (SD = 1.09) and 2.26 (SD = 1.14), respectively. Furthermore, the overall mean for both groups was 2.16, indicating a general disagreement among respondents regarding this item. The calculated t-test value of $t = 0.66$, with a p-value of 0.57 ($p > 0.05$), implies that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Consequently, it can be inferred that block grants are not effectively employed to improve student learning achievements.

In response to the open-ended question, "How do you explain the role of block grants in improving student success?" school leaders and experts offered a variety of perspectives.

> *"The block grant is relatively modest in size and primarily serves to provide basic supplies and materials. Consequently, it is difficult to assert that it significantly contributes to positive changes in student outcomes. While block grants do play a role in student learning, they mainly provide material resources. These funds are typically not allocated for tutoring, teacher capacity building, or student motivation, which limits their impact on student improvement and overall school enhancement. However, Block grants are essential for our schools, as their absence would hinder the ability to administer examinations on printed paper. Additionally, teaching aids such as charts, posters, and materials for creating visual aids for instructional activities are procured through this grant."*

Therefore, it is reasonable to say these funds facilitate student learning, potentially leading to improvements in educational outcomes.

About item 6 of the aforementioned table, participants were requested to assess their level of agreement regarding the flexibility of block grants. The mean score for school leaders was 2.02 (SD = 0.98), while the mean score for woreda experts was 2.19 (SD = 1.13). Additionally, the combined mean for both groups was calculated to be 2.07, indicating a general disagreement with the premise of the item. This relatively low mean score suggests that block grants for schools are not being utilized flexibly by the specific needs of the institutions. Previous responses have also indicated that these grants are primarily provided in the form of material supplies, which restricts schools from converting them into financial resources that may be deemed more essential. The computed t-test value of $p = 0.39$ ($p > 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning the flexible use of the grant.

To the interview question, what is your observation on block grant utilization as compared to GEQIP-School grant fund, the interviewee replied that-

> *"The school grant operates under well-defined guidelines and incorporates a participatory decision-making process. The allocation of the grant is determined by the decisions made by the PTSA in conjunction with the school principals. The funds are disbursed in financial form rather than in kind, which distinguishes it from a block grant and allows for greater flexibility. Consequently, schools can allocate these resources according to their specific activity needs. As a result, the school grant has played a crucial role in the execution of school improvement programs and in enhancing student learning outcomes."*

4.6. The Block grant Control

In the context of financial matters such as block grants, the significance of controls cannot be overstated. Financial controls encompass the procedures, policies, and mechanisms that an organization employs to oversee and regulate the direction, allocation, and utilization of its financial resources. These controls are fundamental to effective resource management and operational efficiency within any organization. They play a crucial role in managing cash flow, facilitating budgeting processes, and safeguarding against fraud or theft.

This section of the research deals about control mechanisms employed for block grant management in schools of Harari region.

Table 8: Block grant control

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
1.The procurement of materials by woreda finance office is in line with the demands of schools.	SL	105	2.77	1.508	2.93	2.12	0.046
	WEFE	42	3.31	1.334			
2. The cost of Materials supplied to schools is equal to the amount of grant allocated to the school.	SL	105	2.33	1.107	2.37	0.63	0.53
	WEFE	42	2.48	1.92			
3. The materials purchased and supplied to schools have good quality.	SL	105	2.47	1.19	2.56	1.26	0.210
	WEFE	42	2.79	1.457			
4. There is well established monitoring system at woreda on allocation of block grant.	SL	105	2.14	1.139	2.18	0.681	498
	WEFE	42	2.29	1.154			
5. There is a system that conduct school audit including block grant.	SL	105	2.2000	1.09545	2.28	1.453	0.149
	WEFE	42	2.4762	0.89000			
6.Schools have inventory managment system	SL	105	2.0857	1.11902	2.13	1.11	0.265
	WEFE	42	2.2619	0.73450			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finanace experts,N-Frequency, SD-Standard deviation,CM-combined mean

Item 1 in Table 7 indicates that the procurement of materials by the woreda finance office aligns with the requirements of schools. The average score for school leaders was 2.77 (SD= 1.508), while the average for woreda education and finance experts was 3.31 (SD = 1.334). The combined mean for both groups was 2.93, reflecting an undecided level of agreement among respondents. The calculated t-test value of 2.12, with a p-value of 0.046 ($p < 0.05$),

suggests a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of school leaders and those of woreda education and finance experts. However, despite the p-value indicating a difference, an analysis of the mean values for each group reveals that both remain within the undecided range.

In addressing the open-ended question, "To what extent does the procurement of materials by the woreda finance office align with the needs of schools?" the participant in this study provided the following insights:

> *"There are instances when the materials requested are substituted with different items. For example, markers may be replaced with toilet supplies, and printer inks may be exchanged for photocopy ink, among other substitutions. Additionally, it is common for the quantities of requested materials to be altered by the woreda finance office, often resulting in a reduction of supplies without any apparent justification."*

About item 2 of the aforementioned table, participants in the study were requested to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that the cost of materials provided to schools corresponds to the amount of grant allocated to those schools. The average responses from school leaders and woreda experts were 2.33 (SD = 1.107) and 2.48 (SD = 1.92), respectively. Furthermore, the combined mean score for both groups was 2.37, indicating a general disagreement with the statement. The calculated t-test value of 0.63, accompanied by a p-value of 0.53 ($p > 0.05$), implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of school leaders compared to those of woreda education and finance experts. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the cost of materials is lower than the grant allocated to the school.

The third entry in Table 7 required participants to express their level of agreement with the statement that the materials procured and provided to schools are of good quality. The average score for school leaders was 2.47 (SD = 1.19), while the average for woreda education and finance experts was 2.79 (SD = 1.457). The overall mean score for both groups was 2.56, indicating that respondents were ambivalent regarding this statement. The independent t-test yielded a value of 1.26, with a p-value of 0.210 (> 0.05), suggesting that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups' responses. Although the combined mean falls within the undecided range, the mean score for school leaders indicates disagreement, leading to the inference that the materials acquired through block grants and supplied to schools may not be of satisfactory quality.

Item 4 of the aforementioned table addressed the presence of an established monitoring system at the woreda level concerning the allocation of block grants. The average ratings provided by school leaders and woreda experts were 2.14 (SD=1.139) and 2.29 (SD=1.154), respectively. Furthermore, the cumulative mean for both groups was 2.18, indicating a general disagreement among respondents regarding the statement in question. The calculated t-test value of 0.681, with a p-value of 0.490 ($p>0.05$), indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions between the two groups. This finding suggests that a well-established monitoring system does not exist at the woreda level to oversee the allocation, disbursement, and utilization of block grants. The lack of such a monitoring system not only undermines the equitable distribution of grants but also adversely affects the proper use of materials purchased for schools.

Item 5 in Table 7 addresses the presence of an audit system for monitoring block grants at the school level. The average scores reported by school leaders and woreda experts were 2.2 (SD = 1.09) and 2.478 (SD = 0.89), respectively. The overall mean score of 2.28 indicates a general disagreement among respondents regarding the existence of such an audit system. The independent t-test results, with a t-value of 1.453 and a p-value of 0.149 ($p > 0.05$), suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning the presence of auditing in schools. The findings indicate that, despite auditing being a critical component of the financial control system, it has not been effectively implemented in the primary schools of the Harari region. Furthermore, primary schools are characterized by a lack of administrative staff, including accountants, auditors, and cashiers, who are typically appointed by the government. Instead, these roles are often filled by individuals elected from among the teachers and parents, serving as members of the school Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

The final inquiry presented in Table 7 pertains to the existence of inventory systems within schools. The average score recorded was 2.08 (SD = 1.119) for responses from school leaders and 2.26 (SD = 0.73) for responses from woreda experts. Additionally, the overall mean score for both groups was 2.13, indicating a consensus of disagreement regarding this issue. The results of the t-test yielded a t-value of 1.11 and a p-value of 0.265 ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning the item in question. The findings indicate that primary schools in the region lack an effective inventory system to manage material resources, including those acquired through block grants. This

deficiency may lead to improper utilization of resources and inefficient implementation of intended objectives.

4.7 Challenges of the Block grant implementation

Table 9: challenge of Block grant utilization

Item	Res	N	Mean	SD	CM	t-test value	p-value
1.Block grants paid to schools is not sufficient to carry out the planned activities.	SL	105	3.89	1.423	3.950	0.98	0.321
	WEFE	42	4.12	0.916			
2.There is delay of delivery of materials purchased for schools by block grant.	SL	105	3.46	1.448	350	0.64	0.523
	WEFE	42	3.62	1.209			
3.The quality of Goods and stationery purchased by block grant is low.	SL	105	3.77	1.162	3.56	3.17	0.002
	WEFE	42	3.05	1.447			
4.There is mismatch between the amount of allotted block grant & the cost of materials delivered to schools.	SL	105	3.80	1.16	3.84	0.617	0.539
	WEFE	42	3.93	1.091			
5.The stakeholders (PSTA) did not get relevant training on financial control and utilization in the school.	SL	105	4.11	0.993	4.090	0.501	0.617
	WEFE	42	4.02	0.975			
6. A system of claiming block grant allocated to school is lacking.	SL	105	3.99	0.985	4.010	0.68	0.51
	WEFE	33	4.21	0.820			

Key: SL-school leaders, WEFE-Woreda education and finanace experts,N-Frequency, SD-Standard deviation,CM-combined mean

Item 1 on Table 7 requests the participants of this research to evaluate the degree of their agreement regarding whether block grants allocated to schools are insufficient to execute the intended activities. The average score of school leaders and woreda education and finance experts was 3. 89(SD=1. 423) and 4. 12(SD=0. 916) respectively. In addition to this, the overall mean value for the two groups of respondents was 3. 95, which signifies agreement among the subjects regarding the statement of the item. The calculated independent t-test value was 0. 98, and a p-value of 0. 321 (p>0. 05) suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between school leaders and woreda experts concerning the adequacy of

block grants for school activities. Therefore, this data indicates that the block grants provided, whether in cash or kind, are insufficient for the teaching and learning processes in schools. This poses the main challenge of block grant utilization.

In Item 2 of Table 7, respondents were inquired about the delays in the delivery of materials purchased for schools through block grants. The mean scores recorded for school leaders and woreda experts were 3.46 (SD = 1.448) and 3.62 (SD = 1.209), respectively. Additionally, the cumulative mean score for both groups was 350, indicating a general agreement among participants regarding the statement in question. The t-test results, with a t-value of 0.64 and a p-value of 0.523 ($p > 0.05$), demonstrate that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning this issue. This finding suggests that materials procured by the woreda finance office are often not delivered punctually, leading to frequent delays. Furthermore, an interview conducted with the director of the procurement and finance directorate at the regional education bureau substantiated this issue. The interviewee identified delays in procurement and distribution of materials as a significant challenge in the utilization of block grants. Schools require essential supplies, such as duplicating paper and ink, for continuous, mid-term, and final examinations. Such delays compel schools to resort to evaluating students with only a few questions written on the blackboard.

Item 3 of the aforementioned table asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the assertion that the quality of goods and stationery acquired through block grants is low. The average score reported by school leaders was 3.77 (SD=1.162), while woreda experts reported a mean score of 3.05 (SD=1.447). The overall mean for both groups was calculated to be 3.56, suggesting a general agreement with the statement. This data implies that the quality of goods procured through the block grant budget managed by the Woreda finance office is perceived as substandard. The calculated t-test value of $t=3.17$, $p=0.002<0.05$ indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning this item. This discrepancy may be attributed to the fact that the individuals responsible for procuring the materials are primarily the woreda experts. Notably, the mean score for woreda experts falls within the undecided range, whereas that of school leaders is situated within the agreed range. This implies that the procurement of supplies with poor quality is another challenge of block grant utilization.

Item 4 of Table 7 asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that there is a discrepancy between the allocated block grant and the expenses for materials provided to schools. The average score for school leaders was 3.80 (SD=1.16), whereas the

average for woreda education and finance experts was 3.93 (SD=1.09). Additionally, the overall mean for both groups was 3.84, suggesting a consensus on the idea of the statement. The calculated t-test value of t=0.617, p=0.539 > 0.05, indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups regarding this item. The number of pupils in the previous academic year determines how the school block grant is distributed, according to the respondents' earlier responses. Based on this, the Woreda Education Office sends out a letter at the start of the academic year informing them of the quantity of their block grant. The above data infers that there is a discrepancy between the grant amount notified to schools and the price of goods that are bought and given to schools. This is a significant challenge that prevents block grants from being used properly.

The regional education bureau school improvement directorate director supported this idea, in the interview-

> *"The block grant amount allotted to schools is 200 birr for each student in grades 1–4 and 250 birr for each student in grades 5-8. After being informed, schools anticipate receiving supplies that almost match their budget. Reports the bureau has, however, indicate that it is significantly less than the allotted sum. This occurs nearly every year, not just once or twice. There is no mechanism in place to hold the woreda's finance office responsible for lowering the block grant amount."*

As outlined in item 5 of Table 7, respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement regarding the assertion that the PTSA (Parent, Teacher, and Student Association) did not receive adequate training in financial control and resource utilization within the school context. The average scores for school leaders and woreda education and finance experts were 4.11 (SD=0.993) and 4.02 (SD=0.975), respectively. The combined mean value of the two groups was 4.09, which suggests the agreement of the respondents toward the item. The independent t-test yielded a value of t=0.501, with a p-value of 0.617, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning this issue. This data suggests that the PTSA has not been trained in the management of financial resources for the school, including the block grant. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a lack of oversight and accountability in monitoring and managing block grants in the region's primary schools as a challenge.

The final entry in Table 7 pertains to the assessment of agreement regarding the inadequacy of the system for claiming block grants allocated to schools. The mean score for school leaders

was recorded at 3.99 (SD = 0.985), while woreda experts reported a mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.82). The overall mean score for both groups combined was 4.01, suggesting a consensus among participants regarding this issue. The t-test yielded a value of t = 0.68, with a p-value of 0.51, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of school leaders and woreda experts on this matter. This item addresses the process of appealing to the relevant authorities when the grant intended for the school is either reduced or not allocated at all. The findings suggest a lack of a systematic approach for schools to request or appeal for the block grants they are entitled to receive.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the study deals with the summary of major findings, the conclusions and recommendations of the research result.

5.1. Summary

The main purpose of this study was to assess the practice of block grant management in government primary schools of the Harari region, with its utilization and its challenges. A descriptive survey was employed as a research method. To conduct this study the following questions were posed:

1) To what extent the block grant management practised in government schools of the Harari region?
2) How much the allocation of block grants maintain the fair and equitable budget distribution in the region?
3) What are the major factors that affect the utilization of block grants in government schools of the Harari region?
4) What are possible strategies to enhance the effectiveness of block grant utilization in primary schools of the region?

The research was carried out across 29 schools chosen from six woredas within the Harari regional state. The sample comprised 58 school principals, 30 members of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), 29 department heads who functioned as the management committee of the schools, and 42 experts from the woreda education and finance offices, all selected through random sampling. Additionally, two officials from the Harari Regional Education Bureau were interviewed using pre-prepared questions. This descriptive survey study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from questionnaires and interviews. The quantitative data gathered via questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted using statistical measures such as mean value, percentage, standard deviation, and t-test, all computed with SPSS version 26. The qualitative data derived from the interview guide and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed narratively, complementing the quantitative findings.

Numerous studies have explored the management of financial resources in educational settings. However, as far as I am aware, this research is the first to specifically investigate the use of block grants in government primary schools within the Harari region. The significance

of this study is further amplified by the relatively larger size of grant allocations compared to those in other regions.

This research examined the practices and challenges associated with the communication of block grant guidelines, planning (budgeting), utilization, and control of block grants, as outlined in the research framework presented in the preceding section of this document. The analysis employed various statistical measures, including Mean, Standard deviation and t-test value. Based on the results of this analysis, the following key findings have been identified and summarized as follows.

The examination of gender distribution among the participants indicates that 103 individuals (73%) identified as male, while 39 individuals (27%) identified as female. These results imply that males constituted the predominant group involved in the management of block grant activities. Regarding professional experience, a significant proportion of principals and teachers (66%) have between 10 and 15 years of service, whereas 70% of experts from the woreda education and finance offices possess over ten years of experience. This considerable professional background equips the respondents to effectively reply to the survey questions.

Regarding block grant awareness for Practice of better management

The study highlights the current status of block grant guidelines and their implementation within primary schools of Harari region. Respondents, including school leaders and woreda education and finance experts, expressed a general disagreement (Cm=1.59) regarding the availability of such guidelines, indicating a lack of clarity and documentation. Further examination revealed a disparity in perceptions of orientation on block grant management. School leaders reported uncertainty (cm=2.41) about their training on the guidelines, with many noting a lack of formal induction or support from woreda. As schools rely on block grants for essential resources, addressing these gaps through improved training and clarity in guidelines is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes in the region.

Regarding Practice of Block grant planning and budgeting

The study revealed the absence of school practice of conducting proper needs assessments (cm=2.14) when formulating block grant plans and hence there is no mechanism for identifying the supply gap sustained in the schools for better planning and utilization. Additionally, findings showed that teachers who typically utilize resources acquired through block grants were not given the chance to participate in the planning process (cm=1.82). It

was confirmed that the school principal has complete control over the block grant's overall budget.

Despite these facts, every government primary school in the area is eligible for a block grant, regardless of the grant amount. However, as indicated by the responses, the amount of block grant money that schools get annually does not match the amount prescribed by the regional government(cm=2.4). As a result, block grant schools typically receive less than what the regional block grant guidelines stipulate. Accordingly, the findings suggest a need for improved planning practices that engage all stakeholders and ensure that resources align more closely with the actual needs of schools, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

Regarding Practice of Decision-making Process for the use of the Block grant

The study on the practice of school block grant decision-making revealed a regional framework where each woreda reports total student enrollment to the education office, which allocates funds based on grade levels—200 birrs per student for grades 1-4 and 250 birrs for grades 5-8. However, the study discovered a lack of inconsistent communication of the amount of yearly block grants to the school community. Concerning the participation of stakeholders in decision-making, the PTSA has limited roles (cm=2.05) in managing and prioritizing goods and materials procured by the block grants. Moreover, the interview results also complemented the idea that the decision-making is made by the school principal alone. The woreda education office and Finance office play a vital role in allocating block grants, the collection of plans, the procurement of materials, and their subsequent distribution to schools.

The study found that the block grant distribution is not fair and equitable. Responses to an open-ended question regarding the fairness of block grant distribution highlighted several key insights. The allocation of block grants is primarily based on student enrollment numbers, favoring schools with larger populations. This criterion disproportionately affects smaller rural schools, which often struggle with inadequate funding and must solicit additional financial contributions from parents.

Regarding Practice of Block Grant Utilization

The study found that the correlation between block grant amounts provided to schools and their respective student populations is uncertain for primary schools of the Harari region. Even the amount supposed to be assigned to the schools is not delivered in time. It further points out that block grants are not being utilized according to established school plans and do not sufficiently support teaching and learning processes. Moreover, the grant primarily covers basic supplies rather than more impactful areas like tutoring or teacher training, limiting their

overall effectiveness in enhancing student outcomes. The nature of the grants, often provided in kind rather than cash, restricts flexibility in addressing varied school needs.

Regarding Practice of Block Grant Control

The study found that procurement practices conducted by block grants highlight significant disparities in aligning material with the school's needs. The disparity is caused, particularly by the possibility that the Woreda finance office may reduce the quantity of materials ordered, and the likelihood that requested materials may be replaced with different items.

The study pointed out that the absence of administrative staff such as accountants, auditors, and cashiers who should have been normally hired by the government is another characteristic of primary schools. The absence of an auditing and inventory mechanism at the woreda level and school levels and the lack of a well-established system to supervise the allocation, disbursement, and utilization of block grants and other resources of schools. This can negatively affect the fair distribution and appropriate utilization of educational materials. These findings underscore the need to improve procurement practices, enforce quality control measures, and establish comprehensive monitoring and auditing frameworks.

Regarding Block Grant management Challenges

The research identified some challenges affecting the proper utilization of block grants in primary schools in the Harari region. Among these challenges the main ones are the disbursement of inadequate amounts of block grants, delays in the delivery of materials purchased for schools through block grants, directly affecting the teaching-learning process, procurement of low-quality goods and stationary by the grant, that impacts service delivery of the good or stationary, discrepancy between the allocated block grant and the expenses for school materials reflected by delivering supplies costing less than the allocated budget of the school, and finally inadequacy of the system for claiming block grants allocated to schools, which means the absence of a system appealing to the relevant authorities when the grant intended for the school is either reduced or not allocated at all.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the pressing need for enhanced clarity and training regarding block grant guidelines in the Harari region's primary schools, as the current lack of documentation and support significantly hampers effective resource utilization. Addressing these deficiencies is essential for empowering school leaders and ensuring that block grants fulfill their intended purpose in supporting educational needs.

In conclusion, the study highlights significant deficiencies in the planning and budgeting practices surrounding block grants in schools, particularly the lack of proper needs assessments and stakeholder involvement, which ultimately leads to a misalignment of resources with actual educational needs. To enhance educational outcomes, it is imperative to adopt more inclusive and effective planning strategies that ensure equitable distribution of funds in accordance with regional guidelines.

The study reveals a consensus that the current block grant allocation system, primarily based on student enrollment, is perceived as inequitable, particularly disadvantaging smaller rural schools.

The study underlined major shortcomings in the decision-making process surrounding school block grants, particularly the lack of effective communication and limited stakeholder participation, which ultimately centralizes authority in the hands of school principals while undermining collaborative governance. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing transparency and ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to meet the needs of students.

In general, the study underscores important weaknesses in the utilization of block grants in Harari region primary schools, revealing that delays in fund delivery and misalignment with school plans hinder their effectiveness, ultimately limiting support for teaching and learning processes. The focus on basic supplies rather than more impactful educational initiatives further constrains the potential for improving student outcomes.

The study reveals critical limitations in the procurement practices associated with block grants, highlighting significant disparities in material alignment with school needs due to inadequate oversight and staffing. These findings emphasize the urgent necessity for improved procurement processes, enhanced quality control, and the establishment of robust monitoring and auditing systems to ensure equitable distribution and effective utilization of educational resources.

In conclusion, the effective utilization of block grants in primary schools in the Harari region is significantly hindered by inadequate funding, delays in material delivery, procurement of low-quality goods, discrepancies in budget allocation, and a lack of a robust claims system, all of which adversely impact the educational experience. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the overall quality of education in the region.

5.3. Recommendations

In light of the significant findings of the study and the conclusions reached, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. The Harari Regional Education Bureau, along with the Regional Finance and Economic Development Bureau, should revise block grant guideline that reflects the regional context, align with the new education and training policy. These can alleviate the lack of knowledge on block grant management observed now. Further, it enables to creation of uniform acceptable practice of block grant management that contributes to the betterment of teaching and learning processes.
2. The Harari region education bureau is required to disseminate the to be established block grant guidelines to the institutions within its jurisdiction, as well as to the Woreda finance and economic development offices, PTSAs, educators, and school leadership teams.
3. The decision-making process regarding block grant management in schools, (that involves only the principal) requires change. Similar to school grants, the PTSA should play an active role in overseeing and prioritizing the allocation of these funds. This intervention creates transparency and participatory decision-making on the practice of planning and utilization.
4. Woreda finance and economic development offices ought to publicly disclose the block grant budget allocated to each government primary school and ensure that the respective funds are transferred to the schools' accounts at the start of the budget year, before the commencement of the academic calendar. This can support schools to use their budget as per the school's need assessment, helps to avoid delays and facilitates the timely utilization of the grant.
5. The Harari education bureau in collaboration with the regional finance bureau ought to establish a monitoring and evaluation System, to safeguard available resources from fraud and corruption. It is crucial to establish a comprehensive and effective system for the ongoing monitoring, auditing, and inspection of financial management and inventory concerning materials obtained through block grants, with a specific emphasis on the school level.
6. An accountability framework must be instituted in a such a way, the regional Education bureau, Woreda Education Office, in partnership with the WoFED, could deploy audits on the internal revenue and block grant budgets across multiple tiers.

This will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the financial system and controls, while also reinforcing a reliable mechanism for ongoing support and oversight.

7. The government must address the inadequacy of block grant funding by refining the criteria that dictate their distribution, ensuring that they are tailored to the unique needs, the enrollment size and the presence of alternative funding sources available to these schools. Such adjustments could facilitate a more equitable distribution of block grants, thereby enhancing the resources available for educational inputs and teaching methodologies in smaller schools.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix I-Questionnair to be filled by principals, department heads, and teachers in PTSA

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORATE
DEEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Part I

Items to be filled by principals, department heads, and teachers in PTSA (Parent, Teachers and Students Association) members.

General Direction

Dear respondents, the purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the study which attempts to investigate the Practice and Challenges in Block Grant Utilization in Government Primary Schools of Harari Regional State, which is required for the partial fulfilment of maste rs Degree of Art in Educational Planning and Management.

A block grant is an annual budget allocated based on the number of students and given by the government to support the learning process of schools. It is believed that if the budget is properly used in the teaching and learning process, it will improve the participation and quality of education.

The success of this study depends on your genuine response and the result of this study will help to give important recommendations on schools Block grant management practices to the concerned body.

NOTE

- Any of your information or suggestions kept confidential and used for research purpose only.
- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance!

II. Personal Information

Please give short answers for items requiring completion in the space provided and put “X” in the box for the items with alternative answer or choice.

1. Sex: Male □ Female □
2. Service years

A) 1-5 □ B) 6-10 □ C) 11-15 □ D) 16-20 □

E) 21-25 □ F) 26-30 □ G) 31 or above □

3. Responsibility: A) Principal □ B) Teacher □ C) Supervisor □ D) Expert □

4. Qualification: A) Certificate □ B) Diploma □ C) Bachelor's degree □ D) Master's degree□

5. Location: Urban □ Rural □

Part II

Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the items by putting "X" mark corresponding one of the given options ***(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).***

Rno	**Description**	**Rating Scale**				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	**Block grant Communication and Awareness**					
1.1	Block grant guideline (manual) is available in the school and Woreda education office					
1.2	School leadership is well oriented about the block grant guideline and management.					
1.3	Staff is well oriented about the block grant guideline and management.					
1.4	Woreda finance office experts have clear awareness on the regional block grant implementation.					
1.5	Criteria for block grant allocation is well communicated to the school leadership and the staff.					
2	**Practice of Block grant Planning and distribution**					
2.1	The school conducts need assessments in designing block grant plan.					
2.2	Teachers participate in the preparation of the annual plan budget of block grant.					
2.3	Schools receive block grant every year.					
2.4	Schools are obtaining block grants annually as per the amount decided by the regional government.					
2.5	The amount of bock grant obtained by the school is predictable.					
2.6	The schools are receiving block grant budgets according to the number of students they have registered.					
2.7	Schools are getting block grant budgets in cash from the woreda finance office.					
2.8	Schools are getting block grant budgets in kind from the finance office.					
3	**Practice of Decision making**					
3.11	Woreda office of finance and economic cooperation (WoFED) notify annual block grant publicly.					

3.12	The school PTSA participates in block grant management of school.					
3.13	The school committee (PSTA) is empowered to decide the priority needs of the school in spending Block grant.					
3.14	There is equitable utilization of block grant among school					

3.15 How do schools plan on their block grant utilization?

_____

_____

_____

3.16 What is the role of the woreda education office in allocating the yearly block grant to schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.17 What is the amount of block grant allocated for schools per student per year?

a) For Grade 1-4_____birr
b) For Grade 5-8_____birr

3.18 How does the block grant distributed to each school?

_____

_____

_____

Part III

Please indicate your level of agreement by putting "X" mark for one of the given options ***(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= StronglyAgree).***

Rno	**Description**	**Rating Scale**				
		1	2	3	4	5
4	**Practice of utilization of Block grant**					
4.1	The school utilizes block grant according to it's plan.					
4.2	The school utilizes allocated block grant budget for its intended purpose					
4.3	The block grant is released timely.					
4.4	Allocated block grant budget is in accordance to plan.					
4.5	The block grant is adequate for teaching learning process in school.					
4.6	The block grant is used to improve students learning outcome, (achievement)					
4.7	Schools can use block grant in flexible way for the area they think more important.					
5	**For schools receiving block grant in Kind.**					
5.1	The procurement of materials by woreda finance office is in line with the demands of schools.					
5.2	The cost of Materials supplied to schools is equal to the amount of grant allocated to the school.					
5.3	The materials purchased and supplied to schools have good quality.					
5.4	There is timely delivery of materials supply to schools.					

5.5	There is well established monitoring system at woreda on allocation of block grant					
5.6	There is a system that conduct school audit including block grant.					
5.6	Schools have inventory management system					

5.5 How do you explaing the role of block grant in improving students success?

_____

_____

5.6 How far the procurement of materials by woreda finance office is in line with the demands of schools.

_____

_____

5.7 What are most frequently/commonly purchased goods by woreda using block grant distributed to government schools?

_____

_____

Part IV

Please indicate your level of agreement by putting "X" mark for one of the given options **(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).**

	Challenges of the Block grant implementation:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.1	Block grants paid to schools is not sufficient to carry out the planned activities.					
6.2	There is a delay in releasing the block grant provision from Woreda to the school.					
6.3	There is the delay of delivery of materials purchased for schools to carry out activities in schools.					
6.4	The quality of Goods and stationery purchased by block grant is low.					
6.5	There is a mismatch between the amount of allotted block grant & the cost of materials delivered to schools.					
6.6	The stakeholders (PSTA) did not get relevant training on financial control and utilization in the school.					
6.6	A system of claiming block grant allocated to school is lacking.					
	There is well established monitoring system organized by different organs on block grant budget utilization.					
6.7	The internal auditing of the school does not play its role to the required level in controlling and taking measures in the utilization of block grant .					

6.8 What other challenges do schools face while requesting, receiving and using block grant?

- From WOFEC side
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
- From WEO side
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
- From the school that uses the block grant

7.2. Appendix II- Questionnaire to be filled by Woreda Education and Woreda finance office experts

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY
POST GRADUATE ROGRAM DIRECTORAT
DEEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Part I

Items to be filled by **Woreda Education and Woreda finance office experts**,

General Direction

The block grant is an annual budget allocated based on the number of students and given by the government to support the learning process of schools. It is believed that if the budget is properly used in the teaching and learning process, it will improve the participation and quality of education.

Dear respondents, the purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the study which attempts to investigate the Practice and Challenges in Block Grant Utilization in Government Primary Schools of Harari Regional State, which is required for the partial fulfilment of maste r's Degree of Art in Educational Planning and Management.

The success of this study depends on your genuine response and the result of this study will help to give important recommendations on schools Block grant management practices to the concerned body.

NOTE

- Any of your information or suggestions kept secret and used for research purposes only.
- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance!

II. Personal Information

Please give short and brief answers for items requiring completion in the space provided and
put “X” in the box representing your choice.

1. Sex: Male □ Female □
2. Service years

   A) 1-5 □ B) 6-10 □ C) 11-15 □ D) 16-20 □
   E) 21-25 □ F) 26-30 □ G) 31 or above □
3. Responsibility: A) Principal □ B) Teacher □ C) Supervisor □ D) Expert □
4. Qualification: A) Certificate □ B) Diploma □ C) Bachelor’s degree □ D) Maste’s degree□
5. Location: Urban □ Rural □

Part II

Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the items by putting "X" mark corresponding one of the given options ***(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).***

Rno	Description	Rating Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	**Block grant Communication and Awarness**					
1.1	Block grant guideline (manual) is available in Woreda education office and finance office.					
1.2	School leadership is well oriented about the block grant guideline and management.					
1.4	Woreda finance office experts have clear awareness on the regional block grant implementation.					
1.5	Block grant allocation criteria of Harari region is well communicated to woreds finance and education office staffs.					
2	**Practice of Block grant Planning and distribution**					
2.1	The school conducts need assessment in designing block grant plan.					
2.2	Schools are receiving block grant every year.					
2.3	Schools are obtaining block grant annually as per amount decided by the regional government.					
2.4	The amount of bock grant obtained by school is predictable.					
2.5	The schools are receiving block grant budget according to number of students they have registered.					
2.6	Schools are getting block grant budget in cash modality from woreda finance office.					
2.7	Schools are getting block grant budget in kind modality from finance office.					
3	**Practice of Decision making**					
3.11	Woreda office of finance and economic cooperation (WOFEC) used to notifies annual block grant publically.					
3.13	The school committee (PSTA) is empowered to decide the priority needs to spend a Block grant.					
3.14	There is equitable utilization of block grant among school					

3.15 How do schools plan on their block grant utilization?

_____

_____

_____

3.16 What is the role of woreda education office in allocating the yearly block grant to schools?

_____

_____

_____

3.17 What is the amount of block grant allocated for schools per student per year?

c) For Grade 1-4_____birr

d) For Grade 5-8_____birr

3.18 Does block grant allocation faire and equitable?

_____

Part III

Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the items by putting "X" mark corresponding one of the given options ***(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).***

Rno	**Description**	**Rating Scale**				
		1	2	3	4	5
4	**Practice of utilization of Block grant**					
4.1	The school utilizes block grant according to their plan.					
4.1	The block grant is released timely.					
4.2	Utilizing allocated school grant budget for its intended purpose.					
4.3	Allocated block grant budget is in accordance to plan.					
4.6	The block grant is adequate for teaching and learning process in school.					
4.7	Schools can use block grant in flexible way for the area they think more important.					
5	**For schools receiving block grant in Kind.**					
5.1	The procurement of materials by woreda finance office is in line with the demands of schools.					
5.2	The cost of Materials supplied to schools is equal to the size of grant allocated to the school.					
5.3	The degree of quality of material supplied as block grant					
5.4	There is timely delivery of materials supply to schools,					

5.5 Which of the following conducts the procurement of goods by block grant?

a) Regional Education Office □

b) Woreda Finance and Economic development office □

c) The school □

5.6 How far the procurement of materials by woreda finance office is in line with the demands of schools.

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.7 What are most frequently/commonly purchased goods by woreda using block grant distributed to government schools?

_____

_____

_____

Part IV

Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the items by putting "X" mark corresponding one of the given options ***(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).***

	Challenges of the Block grant implementation:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.2	There is delaying of block grant provision from woreda to the school.					
6.3	There is delay in releasing the block grant provision from woreda to the school.					
6.4	The quality of Goods and stationery purchased by block grant is low.					
6.5	There is mismatch between the amount of allotted block grant & the cost of materials delivered to schools.					
6.6	A System of claiming block grant allocated to school is lacking.					
6.7	There is well established monitoring system organized by different organs on block grant budget utilization.					
6.8	The internal auditing of the school does not play its role to the required level in controlling and taking measures in the utilization of block grant ..					

6.8 What other challenges do schools face while requesting, receiving and using block grant?

- From WoFEC side
  _____
  _____
  _____
- From WEO side
  _____
  _____
  _____
- From the school that uses the block grant
  _____
  _____

7.3. Appendix III

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Interview Questions for Regional-Level Officials

1. How regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Development allocate a block grant budget for Woreda?
2. How does BOFED control the utilization of school block grants at the school and woreda levels?
3. What support does WEO need from REB regarding block grant budget utilization?
4. What are the major factors that have you come across; that affect the utilization of the block grant budget?
5. Does block grant allocation fair and equitable?
6. What is your opinion on block grant (non-salary recurrent expenditure), if there is difficulty and/or misunderstandings during implementation at the woreda level?
7. What is your observation on block grant utilization as compared to GEQIP-School grant fund?
8. What corrective measures should be taken to improve school block grant utilization?
9. What are the criteria for block grant allocation for schools?
10. What is your opinion with regard to the adequacy of Block grant?