

**The Effect Of Private Sector Funding On The Quality Of Education In Secondary Schools In Buyende District, Uganda.**

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**Abstract**

The study examined the effect of private sector funding on the quality of education in secondary schools in Buyende District, Uganda. A cross-sectional survey design was employed with a sample of 120 respondents including teachers, administrators, and district education officers from eight secondary schools. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between private sector funding and education quality ( $r = 0.742, p < 0.01$ ). Schools with private sector partnerships demonstrated better infrastructure (78%), improved learning materials (82%), and enhanced teacher motivation (71%). The study concluded that private sector funding significantly improved education quality in Buyende District secondary schools. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education should develop comprehensive frameworks for private sector engagement, district education authorities should actively solicit partnerships, and school management should ensure transparent utilization of private funds to sustain educational improvements.

**Keywords: Private sector funding, education quality, secondary schools, Buyende District, public-private partnerships, educational infrastructure**

**Background of the Study**

Education remains a fundamental human right and a critical driver of socio-economic development in Uganda. Despite government efforts to improve the education sector through Universal Secondary Education (USE) programs, many secondary schools in rural districts continue to face severe challenges including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of teaching materials, and limited human resources. Buyende District, located in the Busoga sub-region of Eastern Uganda, exemplified these challenges with its secondary schools struggling to provide quality education to growing student populations.

The concept of private sector participation in education gained momentum globally as governments recognized the limitations of public funding alone in meeting educational demands. According to Tooley and Dixon (2006), private sector involvement in education could address resource gaps and improve service delivery in developing countries. In Uganda, the government increasingly encouraged partnerships between public institutions and private entities to enhance educational outcomes. The Education Sector Strategic Plan emphasized the importance of diversifying funding sources and leveraging private sector resources to improve education quality.

Private sector funding in education took various forms including direct financial contributions, infrastructure development, provision of learning materials, teacher training programs, and technological innovations. Organizations such as MTN Uganda Foundation, Stanbic Bank Uganda, and various non-governmental

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organizations partnered with schools to bridge resource gaps. These partnerships aimed to improve physical facilities, enhance teaching methodologies, and create conducive learning environments that would ultimately translate into better academic performance and holistic student development.

In Buyende District, several secondary schools began exploring partnerships with private entities to supplement government funding. However, the extent to which these partnerships affected education quality remained unclear. Understanding this relationship was crucial for informing policy decisions, guiding resource allocation, and developing sustainable models for educational improvement in resource-constrained settings. This study therefore investigated how private sector funding influenced the quality of education in secondary schools within Buyende District, providing empirical evidence to guide future educational interventions.

### **Problem Statement**

Secondary schools in Buyende District faced persistent challenges in delivering quality education despite government interventions through the Universal Secondary Education program. Many schools operated with dilapidated infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and inadequately motivated teachers, resulting in poor academic performance and high dropout rates. Government funding alone proved insufficient to address these multifaceted challenges, creating a critical gap in educational service delivery.

While some secondary schools in the district began receiving support from private sector entities including corporations, foundations, and non-governmental organizations, the actual impact of such funding on education quality remained inadequately documented. There was limited empirical evidence demonstrating whether private sector investments translated into tangible improvements in teaching and learning outcomes, infrastructure development, or overall school performance. Without such evidence, education stakeholders lacked the necessary information to make informed decisions about promoting, regulating, or expanding private sector participation in education. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of private sector funding on the quality of education in secondary schools in Buyende District, providing evidence-based insights for policy formulation and educational planning.

### **Specific Objective**

To assess the effect of private sector funding on education quality in Buyende District secondary schools.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the relationship between private sector funding and education quality in secondary schools within Buyende District. The cross-sectional approach was selected because it allowed for efficient data collection at a single point in time while capturing diverse perspectives across multiple schools. The study population comprised teachers, school administrators, and district education officers from secondary schools in Buyende District that had received some form of private sector support over the previous five years.

A sample of 120 respondents was selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to identify eight secondary schools that had received private sector funding, ensuring representation of both government-aided and private schools. From these schools, simple random sampling was used to select 90 teachers, 24 school administrators, and 6 district education officers. This sampling strategy ensured adequate representation while maintaining research feasibility.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire assessed four key dimensions: the extent of private sector funding received, quality of infrastructure, availability and adequacy of learning materials, and teacher motivation and capacity. Education quality was measured using indicators including student-teacher ratios, availability of textbooks and instructional materials, condition of physical facilities, teacher qualifications and training, and academic performance trends. The instrument was pre-tested with 15 respondents from a neighboring district to ensure validity and reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84.

Data collection occurred over a four-week period with the assistance of two trained research assistants. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and coded for analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to summarize respondent characteristics and key variables. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between private sector funding and education quality. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

**Results**

The study findings revealed significant relationships between private sector funding and various dimensions of education quality in Buyende District secondary schools. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=120)**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	68	56.7
	Female	52	43.3
Age Group	25-35 years	45	37.5
	36-45 years	51	42.5
	46+ years	24	20.0
Position	Teachers	90	75.0
	Administrators	24	20.0
	District Officers	6	5.0

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Experience	1-5 years	38	31.7
	6-10 years	44	36.7
	11+ years	38	31.6

**Source: Primary Data, 2026**

The demographic data indicated a relatively balanced gender distribution with males constituting 56.7% of respondents and females 43.3%. The majority of participants (42.5%) fell within the 36-45 years age bracket, suggesting a mature and experienced respondent pool. Teachers formed the largest category at 75%, which was appropriate given their direct involvement in education delivery. The experience distribution showed that most respondents (68.4%) had served in the education sector for over five years, indicating their capacity to provide informed perspectives on changes resulting from private sector interventions.

**Table 2: Extent of Private Sector Funding in Secondary Schools**

Type of Support	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Score*
Infrastructure development	94	78.3	3.82
Learning materials provision	98	81.7	4.01
Teacher training programs	72	60.0	3.45
ICT equipment	65	54.2	3.28
Science laboratory equipment	58	48.3	3.15
Sports facilities	51	42.5	2.89

\*Scale: 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, 5=Very High

**Source: Primary Data, 2026**

Table 2 demonstrated that private sector funding in Buyende District secondary schools took multiple forms, with learning materials provision being the most prevalent (81.7%) and highly rated (Mean=4.01). Infrastructure development was the second most common area of support, affecting 78.3% of schools with a mean score of 3.82, indicating substantial contributions to physical facilities. Teacher training programs reached 60% of schools, suggesting recognition by private sector partners of the importance of human capacity development. However, support for sports facilities was comparatively limited, affecting only 42.5% of schools with the lowest mean score of 2.89. These findings indicated that private sector entities prioritized areas with direct academic impact over co-curricular facilities.

**Table 3: Impact on Education Quality Indicators**

Quality Indicator	Before Private Funding (%)	After Private Funding (%)	Change (%)
Adequate classrooms	32	78	+46
Sufficient textbooks	28	82	+54
Functional laboratories	15	61	+46

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Computer access	8	54	+46
Qualified teachers	65	71	+6
Pass rate (Div 1-3)	42	68	+26

**Source: Primary Data, 2026**

Table 3 presented a comparative analysis of education quality indicators before and after private sector funding interventions. The most dramatic improvement occurred in textbook availability, which increased from 28% to 82%, representing a 54 percentage point gain. This substantial improvement directly addressed one of the most critical challenges in Ugandan secondary education where student-to-textbook ratios were historically unfavorable. Adequate classroom availability improved from 32% to 78%, indicating significant infrastructure development that reduced overcrowding and created more conducive learning environments. Computer access, though starting from a very low base of 8%, increased substantially to 54%, demonstrating private sector commitment to integrating technology in education. The overall pass rate in divisions 1-3 improved from 42% to 68%, suggesting that the combined improvements in infrastructure, materials, and resources translated into better academic outcomes. However, the improvement in qualified teachers was modest at only 6 percentage points, indicating that teacher recruitment and retention remained challenging despite private sector interventions.

**Table 4: Correlation Between Private Sector Funding and Education Quality**

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Private sector funding & Overall education quality	0.742**	0.000	Strong positive
Funding & Infrastructure quality	0.816**	0.000	Very strong positive
Funding & Learning materials	0.789**	0.000	Strong positive
Funding & Teacher motivation	0.621**	0.001	Moderate positive
Funding & Student performance	0.698**	0.000	Moderate positive

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Primary Data, 2026**

Table 4 presented correlation analysis results showing statistically significant positive relationships between private sector funding and all measured dimensions of education quality. The overall correlation between private sector funding and education quality was strong and positive ( $r = 0.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that increased private sector investment was associated with substantial improvements in educational outcomes. The strongest relationship was observed between funding and infrastructure quality ( $r = 0.816$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), confirming that private sector contributions had their most visible impact on physical facilities. The correlation with learning materials availability was similarly

strong ( $r = 0.789$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), aligning with the high frequency of material support shown in Table 2. Teacher motivation showed a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.621$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that while private sector funding contributed to teacher morale through improved working conditions and professional development, other factors also influenced motivation levels. Student performance demonstrated a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.698$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that funding improvements translated into better academic outcomes, though the relationship was mediated by multiple intervening variables.

The comprehensive results demonstrated that private sector funding exerted significant positive effects on education quality in Buyende District secondary schools. The multidimensional nature of this impact, spanning infrastructure, materials, human capacity, and academic performance, underscored the transformative potential of well-structured public-private partnerships in education. However, the varying strength of correlations across different quality dimensions suggested that private sector interventions were more effective in addressing tangible resource gaps than in resolving complex systemic challenges such as teacher retention and motivation.

### **Conclusions**

This study concluded that private sector funding had a significant positive effect on the quality of education in secondary schools in Buyende District, Uganda. The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between private sector funding and overall education quality provided compelling evidence that private sector participation contributed substantially to educational improvement in resource-constrained settings. Private sector interventions addressed critical gaps in infrastructure, learning materials, and technological resources that government funding alone had failed to adequately provide.

The study established that private sector funding most profoundly impacted tangible educational inputs, particularly infrastructure development and learning materials provision. Schools that received private sector support experienced dramatic improvements in classroom availability (46 percentage point increase), textbook sufficiency (54 percentage point increase), and access to technology (46 percentage point increase). These improvements created more conducive learning environments, reduced student-to-resource ratios, and enabled more effective teaching and learning processes. The findings aligned with Tooley and Dixon's (2006) observations that private sector engagement could effectively address resource deficiencies in developing country education systems.

Furthermore, the study concluded that private sector funding contributed to improved academic performance, with pass rates in divisions 1-3 increasing from 42% to 68%. This 26 percentage point improvement suggested that the combined effects of better infrastructure, adequate materials, and enhanced teacher capacity translated into measurable learning outcomes. However, the moderate correlation between funding and student performance ( $r = 0.698$ ) indicated that while private sector funding was beneficial, it represented one component of a complex educational ecosystem that included student backgrounds, community support, and broader systemic factors.

The study also concluded that private sector funding had more limited impact on human resource dimensions such as teacher qualification and motivation. While teacher motivation showed positive correlation with funding ( $r =$

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0.621), the modest improvement in qualified teacher percentages suggested that teacher recruitment and retention challenges persisted despite private sector interventions. This finding highlighted that infrastructure and materials improvements, while necessary, were insufficient without parallel investments in human capital development and competitive compensation structures.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, several recommendations were proposed for different stakeholders in Uganda's education sector:

#### **For the Ministry of Education and Sports:**

The Ministry should develop comprehensive policy frameworks specifically governing private sector participation in education to ensure that partnerships were structured, transparent, and aligned with national educational objectives. Such frameworks should establish clear guidelines for engagement, define roles and responsibilities, set quality standards, and create monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability. Additionally, the Ministry should consider establishing a dedicated Private Sector Education Partnership Unit to facilitate, coordinate, and oversee private sector engagements across the country, drawing on successful models from Buyende District to scale effective practices nationally.

#### **For District Education Authorities:**

Buyende District education officials should actively solicit and cultivate partnerships with private sector entities by developing compelling proposals that demonstrated clear needs, outlined expected outcomes, and provided transparency regarding fund utilization. District authorities should also establish partnership coordination committees involving school management, private sector representatives, and community members to ensure collaborative planning, implementation, and monitoring of funded interventions. Furthermore, districts should document and share success stories and lessons learned to encourage additional private sector investment and facilitate peer learning across schools.

#### **For School Management Committees:**

School administrators and management committees should ensure transparent and accountable utilization of private sector funds by implementing robust financial management systems, conducting regular audits, and providing detailed reports to funding partners and school communities. Schools should also diversify their private sector partnerships rather than relying on single sources of funding, thereby reducing vulnerability to funding discontinuation. Moreover, schools should prioritize sustainability by developing maintenance plans for private sector-funded infrastructure and equipment, ensuring that improvements were preserved beyond the initial funding period.

#### **For Private Sector Entities:**

Corporate organizations and foundations should adopt holistic approaches to educational support that addressed not only infrastructure and materials but also teacher professional development, student welfare, and systemic capacity

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building. Private sector partners should commit to medium to long-term engagements rather than one-time interventions, recognizing that sustainable educational transformation required consistent support over extended periods. Additionally, private entities should collaborate with educational experts and researchers to design evidence-based interventions and conduct impact assessments to ensure their investments yielded desired outcomes.

**For Future Research:**

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to track the sustained effects of private sector funding over extended periods, examining whether initial improvements were maintained, enhanced, or diminished over time. Researchers should also conduct comparative studies across multiple districts with varying levels of private sector engagement to better understand contextual factors that mediated the funding-quality relationship. Furthermore, qualitative investigations should explore stakeholder perceptions, partnership dynamics, and implementation challenges to complement quantitative findings and provide nuanced understanding of public-private partnerships in education.

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