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Oil Revenue, Governance, and Rural Educational Equity in Guyana: Stakeholder Perceptions and Policy Implications

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Abstract

This article examines the governance, equity, and impact of oil-funded educational investments between 2021 and 2024 on educators of the Region 5 (Mahaica-Berbice) of Guyana. Data was gathered from 260 educators in Region 5 using a cross-sectional quantitative descriptive survey design and stratified sampling. Perceptions of governance, equity, and transparency of oil-funded education reforms were assessed using structured questionnaires, and SPSS was used for analysis. Cross-sectional survey results indicate mixed messages—half observing infrastructure upgrades and funding increases, but most worried about the inequitable distribution of resources, the absence of transparent guidelines, and being excluded from the planning process. Just 18% were part of any decision making related to the use of oil revenue in education. A heatmap analysis demonstrated there was a strong consensus that timely funding, increased teacher salaries and more stakeholder inclusion were necessary changes. Although there are visible investments, results reveal a mismatch between national oil revenue strategies and school-level realities. The research finds that without participatory governance, equity-grounded planning and alignment between fiscal inputs and pedagogical mandates, radical aspirations remain out of reach. Suggested mechanisms include stakeholder participation, transparency and equity-based budgeting with the aim of translating oil wealth into sustainable educational development.

Keywords*: Development Policy, Educational Equity, Governance, Guyana, Oil Revenue, Public Finance, Region 5, Resource Allocation, Rural Education, Stakeholder Perceptions, Teacher Participation, Transparency.*

Introduction

The course of public finances in oil-booming Guyana has brought forth both hope and concern. Guyana has stepped onto the world's stage as a nascent oil producer with the start-up of its Liza Phase 1 project, which is expected to produce 120,000-220,000 barrels of oil per day (ExxonMobil, 2019). Indeed, as we so often see in resource rich developing countries, this new resource wealth is tempered with concern over governance, transparency, and equitable distribution—issues that are often condensed in the idea of the "resource curse" [1]. But within that framework, education does not just become a developmental necessity, it also becomes an important barometer with which to gauge how oil is being managed as a resource to address the long-standing structural injustices.

Since the creation of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) in 2020, large oil inflows to the budget have provided unwonted fiscal space for public investment. Education was among the key sectors listed for priority allotments and budget considerations, with a thrust on rural/hinterland infrastructure development [2]. From 2021 to 2024, national budgets showed

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significant increases in capital spending for construction of schools, rehabilitation, expansion of dormitories and ancillary facilities towards increasing access and equity in under-served areas [3].

Region 5 (Mahaica-Berbice), a largely rural administrative region, was one of the biggest winners in this oil-powered development spree. This work included new science laboratories, classroom blocks, sanitation facilities, and infrastructure projects for indigenous and farming communities. But even as money poured in and great progress occurred on the ground, and there are mixed views. Ministry of Education and Regional Education Office reports cited repeated problems including project delays, underperformance by contractors, disruptions in the supply chain, and insufficient engagement of stakeholders in planning and monitoring [4]

This study takes place amidst these changing conditions. It looks at how primary makers - including teachers, headteachers - perceive quality, governance and equity reforms in the petroleum subsidized educational system. It aims to connect the macro-level goals of the national oil-revenue agenda with the micro-level dynamics of rural education supplies. In this way, the paper adds to broader scholarship on the governance of resources by focusing on local experiences and perceptions and provides evidence as to whether Guyana's petroleum wealth is leading to something more than infrastructure advancements but also educational transformations that are sustainable and inclusive.

Context

With the start of oil production (in 2019) and the operation of the Resource Fund (2020), Guyana has ushered in a new fiscal reality that is characterized by rapid growth of revenues and as well as unprecedented public sector transformation [5, 6]. Education-historically underfunded, especially in rural and hinterland areas-is one of the sectors being targeted for investment, In oil-financed development, education is one of the sectors being targeted for investment [7, 3]. Over 2021-2024, successive national budgets ramped up capital allocation for education, addressing school infrastructure, teacher incentives and larger outreach to sources of learning [8].

As mentioned, Region 5 (Mahaica-Berbice), with a heavy agricultural focus and coastal as well as hinterland populations, has significantly benefited from the investments in water management. But national audits, regional education offices and community consultations have reported spotty implementation. [9, 3]. Enduring challenges – including limited stakeholder participation, slow implementation of projects and a disconnect between infrastructure priorities and pedagogical needs – have resisted the transformative potential of oil-funded interventions.

At this juncture, where financial constraints are not a barrier, it is critical to understand how the incentives of educators on the ground are shaped and play out in this new generation of reforms. [1, 10]. Their views provide an important perspective to assess the effectiveness of the education sector initiatives financed by oil and the education investment regime at large. It is in this context that stakeholder experiences are both an indicator and a potential driver for enhancing transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in the Guyana education system. [11, 12].

Problem Statement

Rural communities including those in Region Five stand especially vulnerable to unequal application. Local villages do not lack education, but the application is inconsistent. Infrastructure expenditure appears to be on the rise, however, educators at the face of things claim minimal involvement in planning, delayed implementation and little transparency in who gets to make decisions. These missing links of governance and coordination have, in

turn, undercut the transformative potential of oil-sanctioned interventions in education.

Existing Solutions and Limitations

National initiatives have concentrated much attention on capital infrastructure: the building of schools, the extension of dormitories, the provision of learning spaces. These efforts helped to address some physical barriers, but they remain top-down in design and a significant lack of bottom-up community-based planning, participatory monitoring and decentralized education governance. There are limited structures that facilitate the incorporation of feedback from teachers and school administrators into investment decisions, which hampers responsiveness and long-term impact.

Best Existing Practice

Pilot initiatives such as participatory school boards and community audit approaches at certain locations appear to hold the potential for increased accountability. But these are sporadic and are not as much institutionalized or scaled. There is no established national model or mechanism that integrates financial inputs, community attitudes, and governance outcomes.

Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Examine how stakeholders perceive the strategic use of oil revenues in Region 5 for the education sector from 2021 -2024.
2. Determine the attitude and involvement of teachers in oil-funded education projects.
3. Determine governance issues and institutional blockades that are inhibiting implementation.
4. Advise on policy changes needed to make oil revenue management more equitable, transparent and sustainable.

Achievements and Contributions

This research adds empirical findings from more than 260 frontline educators to and combines data from budgets and infrastructure to provide a bottom-up perspective on Guyana's educational transformation. It connects the chasm from macro-policy aspirations to micro-level context, and offers a governance-sensitive framework analyzing the effectiveness of public spending in education.

Literature Review

Oil-rich developing countries' ability to translate natural resources into durable social development is not simply a function of the resources collected, but of the quality of governance, level of institutional coherence, and extent citizen participation underpinning the allocation of resources [13, 1]. Education is an excellent litmus test of whether oil revenues are being turned into inclusive public goods more generally. It's not just the physical infrastructure of education, it's the commitment to human capital, the system and long term societal commitment. As urged by UNESCO 2014, "Education is a basic human right and central to achieving other rights. It is essential for human development, reducing poverty, and promoting individual and collective well-being." [14]. As a policy, education has the potential both to make and to break any social structure as it influences almost every household and can potentially facilitate social and economic mobility making it an exact translation of state capacity and intentions to deliver equity through resource redistribution. Birdsall & Subramanian (2004) argue that resource-rich governments often prioritize visible infrastructure or politically expedient projects rather than systemic investments in institutions like education [15]. In resource-rich developing countries, education is also politically sensitive, reflecting investments that more closely follow elite priorities or electoral arithmetic rather than the needs of communities.

Comparative Country Cases

Cross-national experiences reveal divergent trajectories. In Norway, as cited by Mehlum, Moene, & Torvik (2006) strong institutions, forward-looking planning, and a publicly scrutinized sovereign wealth fund have resulted in oil revenues used to back inclusive investment in education, especially in disadvantaged areas [16]. Nigeria's education system, meanwhile, has long been bedeviled by its opaque budgeting, contract fraud and regional discrepancies. For instance, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in Nigeria, according to Oduro (2012) has been subjecting to numerous audits on the abuse of oil money received as education grants, resulting in inadequate classrooms, lack of qualified teachers, [17]. Another warning of the risk of lurching from expansion to contraction is Venezuela, a country where for years the flood of oil money enabled school after school to spring up under Chávez, only to see them degenerate into a blot on trust and results as the economy turned down and the curriculum became politicised according to Suleman & Ennin (2024) [18]. These two divergent cases highlight the importance of institutional capacity and policy responsibility, rather than the simple presence of resources, to turn oil wealth into structural public goods.

Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Impact

The discourse also highlights the fact that schools that are well-funded do not necessary produce success in education, and that successful reform could vary depending on the degree of participation of individuals and community in the reform process. If teachers, parents, local leaders are brought into the process of making policy then reforms gain in legitimacy, are more likely to be implemented effectively, and tend not to generate backlash. And in numerous resource-endowed nations, national policy-makers take a technocratic or centralised view of education planning, sidelining more consultative processes that can lead to ownership and relevance as noted by Kolstad & Wiig (2009) [19]. The World Bank, (2018) has empirical evidence from Ghana, Uganda, and Indonesia indicate that opaque budget allocations, lack of information sharing, and weak lines of communication erode trust in government and diminish investment and impact [20]. The lack of participatory mechanisms also speaks to more fundamental structural factors, such as in country allocation of resources in favor of cities and existing political control of appointment in educational positions and of procurement contract. If schools are constructed with no input from the teachers who work in them or the communities they're supposed to serve, they can become symbols not of social development but of public resources misplaced.

Research Gap

Despite increased international work on oil revenue governance and education policy, there are few studies that provide contextual empirical evidence on stakeholder perspectives in the newly resource-based countries such as Guyana. Most existing research focuses on a macroeconomic perspective and on national policy context, leaving an important gap in our knowledge about how sub-national actors – and educators in particular – articulate, interpret and shape the distribution and implementation of oil-financed education policies. Recent education reforms in Guyana have been characterized by ambitious capital works dictated by central government priorities. Yet there's scarce public evidence of regional consultation processes or school-level participatory planning. This is part of a larger critique of the top-down governance tendency that focuses on political visibility and infrastructure provision at the expense of long-term capacity-development and local responsiveness. Also, there is little evidence linking stakeholder perceptions to real infrastructure improvement and governance

processes in specific rural situational contexts (region 5).

This paper tries to address the gap by examining how rural educators take advantage of transparency, equity, and participation in the distribution and the use of oil money in the education sector in Guyana. Integrating quantitative statistics with budget analysis, the research adds a new dimension to the question of whether resource-led development approaches are leading to an inclusive and sustainable educational sector at the local level.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis in this work is guided by two intertwined theoretical frameworks, namely, the Resource Curse Theory and the Good Governance Framework, which are used to assess the governance mechanism and the developmental effect of oil revenue on education in Nigeria.

As Ross (2012) contends, the Resource Curse Theory argues that natural resource-rich nations do not achieve adequate societal development outcomes as a result of institutional vulnerability, elite capture and low incentives for accountability [1]. This can culminate in the politicization of budgeting in the education sector, investments in infrastructure without pedagogical underpinnings, and exclusion of local actors in planning and oversight.

In contrast, the Good Governance Framework (United Nations Development Programme, 1997: 3} and the World Bank (2001: 30) further elaborates a set of principals that are to guide public sector action, for instance as transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness and equity [11, 21]. Within the education domain, such governance pillars are necessarily necessary to guarantee oil revenue is not misspent but is also equitably allocated and geared to real education needs, especially in underserved rural locations.

The Resource Curse Theory does provide some insight into structural weaknesses in Guyana's rush to oil, but it does not provide suggestions for what we should do. This is where the Good Governance Framework comes in, providing a normative set-point for averting elite capture and enhancing institutional accountability. In blending these literatures, the paper presents both diagnostic and prescriptive implications—it highlights the dangers of resource dependency, as well as what governance reforms are needed to make educational provision inclusive and sustainable.

Methodology

A quantitative descriptive survey design was used in this study to examine the perception of educators on the governance, equity and effectiveness of using oil revenues in the education sector of Guyana in Region 5 (Mahaica-Berbice). Creswell & Creswell (2018) noted that quantitative descriptive design is ideal for documenting general, measurable patterns in the target population and for allowing for the unbiased analysis of stakeholder views in terms of standardized instruments [22].

Research Design

This study aims to measure patterns of Emotional Quotient (EQ) in a population, so researchers launched a cross-sectional, descriptive and quantitative study, based in detecting general patterns amidst the population sample that may be generalizable in scope. This design according to (Babbie, 2021) makes it possible to analyze people's attitudes and experience without interference from any variable, thus providing an objective representation of educators (stakeholders) perceived oil-financed educational reforms [23].

Target Population and Sampling

The population of interest was teachers: head teachers, senior teachers and classroom teachers—employed in public nursery, primary and secondary schools in Region 5. Proportional representation by geographic

situation (coastal versus riverine) and school level was achieved using a stratified random recommendation approach. This strategy facilitated a fair distribution of all available data between remote rural and rural coastal settings.

A total of 260 teachers completed the survey. The sample size was based on regional staffing data, and it was estimated to achieve representativeness of at least 95% confidence level with a margin of error below 5% [24].

Instruments for Data Collection and Procedure

A survey tool designed for the purpose of this study was used to collect the data through the administration of a sef-administered structured questionnaire. The measure consisted of close-ended items rated on a five-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree-5=Strongly Agree) and based on four main constructs:

1. Perceptions of transparency in the use of oil revenues
2. Perceived equity in resource distribution
3. Observed infrastructural and resource improvements
4. Participation of stakeholders in planning and delivering education

Item clarity and construct alignment were validated through piloting of the questionnaire with 10 educators from a nearby administrative area. Reliability was further validated with a Cronbach's alpha = 0.82, showing strong internal consistency [25].

Fieldwork was carried out over four weeks with both paper and digital versions of the questionnaire. Data were collected by enumerators who visited teachers in non-school instructional hours to limit disruption and preserve privacy

Unit of Analysis and Variable

The teacher was the unit of analysis for this study. The main independent variable was the geographical location of the school (coast vs. inland). The dependent variables were teachers' perceptions of transparency, equity, access to resources and participation in decision making associated with education initiatives funded by oil.

Data Analysis

For the quantitative data, SPSS Version 27 was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, percentages) were computed to describe general trends. Critical variables were broken down by school type and place of residence (coastal or interior), and cross-tabulations were used to identify patterns in educators' responses. Open ended spontaneous remarks, limited in the survey, were also organized thematically in view to provide context for their insight. Qualitative coding was not done in a traditional sense.

Ethical Considerations

The research followed the ethical considerations of voluntary consent and the right to refuse to participate, confidentiality, and anonymity. Clearance is provided from research ethics committee of Texila American University prior to starting of data collection. The respondents were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at all stages, and all answers were confidential.

Limitations of Methodology

Although the present research provides interesting quantitative information, a few limitations must be considered. The limited qualitative data restricts the ability to examine nuanced personal experiences and the context that might affect respondents' perceptions. These limitations identify gaps for mixed and more widespread geographic research.

Findings

The research findings of 260 educators in Region 5 (Mahaica—Berbice) illustrate the complex ways in which they see equity, governance and effectiveness in the question of educational investments in the period 2021 to 2024 using oil resources. Although there were a few positive signals, the great majority of

respondents were concerned about the lack of uniform implementation, minimal involvement in planning, and disparities in material and pedagogical support.

Perceived Budgetary Increases

Just over half (52%) of respondents felt that school levies had risen since Guyana incorporated oil revenues into the education sector as shown in Figure 1. These impressions were largely related to visible improvements in infrastructure (e.g., new classrooms, toilets and dormitories) and increased resources for teaching (e.g., additional teaching materials). But a full 48 percent disagreed or were not sure - suggesting that not all schools along the coast or further inland (riverine) are seen or being helped by financial improvements. On the issue of Equity in Resource Allocation, as shown in Figure 1, a similar majority (54%) disagreed with or had a neutral opinion toward resource allocation to schools being fair. Respondents from riverine areas often noted the ongoing neglect of aged schools, congested learning spaces and a slower reach of educational materials, when compared with those living along the coast. This serves to confirm that geographic isolation continues to determine access to public investment despite an increase in national education spending.

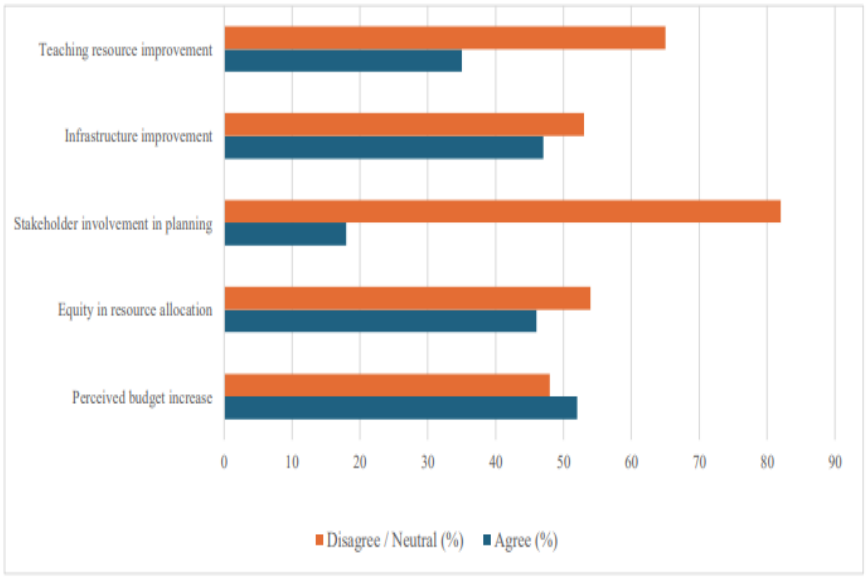

Figure 1. Field Data- Stakeholder Perceptions on Oil and Gas Revenue Perceived Budgetary Increases

Stakeholder Perceptions and Experiences

Figure 2 shows the educators' perceptions in those three most important categories (school improvement, access to education and revenue) using a 5-likert points.

School Progress - According to analysis, 8 and 17 percent of teachers also accept that oil revenue has had a positive and very positive effect on school building development and facilities. But 29 per cent sat on the fence and 12 per cent were negative; thus, reflecting a sense of cautious optimism. While some progress has been made, growing inequalities and unmet needs continue to raise concern.

Access to Education: A majority of the respondents (29%) reported they had seen no change at all, or moderate improvement (21%) and only 17% say there is broader access. Interestingly, 8% of respondents reported restricted access, with none reporting a decrease. This indicates that, while there seem to be some new opportunities (possibly related to scholarships and facility development) taking place, there is still a sense, for a good number of educators, that progress in rural communities is not uniform and/or is being delayed.

Revenue Management: Views on stewardship of the money were lukewarm. Twenty-five percent rated the practice of revenue management as "good" and 29% awarded "satisfactory, while only 8 % rated "excellent, the highest grade. A total of 21%, (19% and 2% respectively) however, were hesitant, probably having shades of doubts about the open and effective use of oil money in education.

All this suggests a tentative rather than emphatic support for oil-financed educational development, and a call to arms for more coherence, more communication and more inclusion in resource planning and distribution.

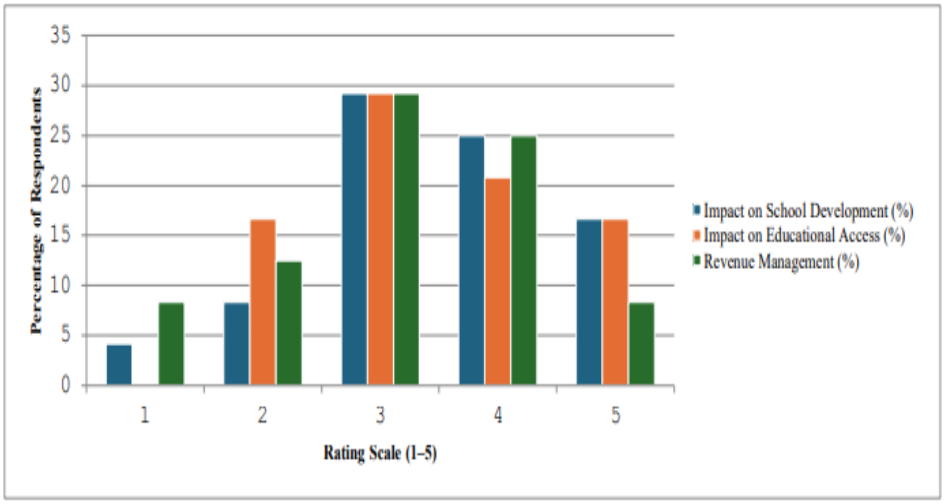

Figure 2. Field Data: Stakeholder Perceptions on Oil and Gas Revenue Allocation: This Grouped Bar Chart Compares how Respondents Rated the Impact of Oil and Gas Revenue on School Development, Educational Access, and Revenue Management

Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making

Figure 3 (Pie Chart) depicts the self-reporting of the role of educators in the decision-making process in relation to the allocation of oil revenue in the educational sector.

1. Only 10% participated in decisions.
2. 20% said they got somehow involved, mostly indirectly or passively.
3. A whopping 70% said they were not involved whatsoever.

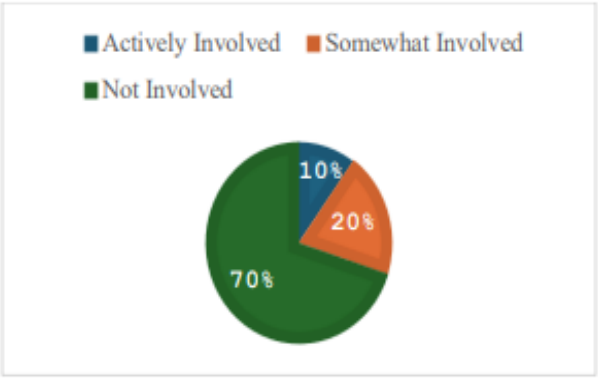

Figure 3. Field Data- Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making on Oil and Gas Revenue in Education

This symptom exposes a major deficit of participatory governance. The sidelining of key actors in the consultative and budgeting process raises questions about transparency, accountability, and policy responsiveness. For oil-driven educational reforms to be efficient

and economical, wide spread participation in the schools and communities must be institutionalized.

Stakeholder Priorities for Policy, Resourcing, and Planning

The below Heatmap (Figure 4) aggregates stakeholder perspectives to determine what were their priority policy questions and requirements for resources and government directions to serve oil-funded educational expansion.

Key Priorities: The proposal to “Increase teacher salary” was ranked the highest (260 responses) followed by finalization of funds with periodicity, more stakeholder representation (more than 200 responses each) and all stakeholder engaged on approach of action (197 responses).

Resource Gaps: Teacher training (220 responses) and student support activities (100 responses) were top, signaling interest in marrying the infrastructure gap with a capacity and welfare input.

Policy Preferences: While "transparency and accountability" (150 mentions) was considered important, the greater demand was for more direct stakeholder participation and more credible long-term planning - reflecting the perception that, if financial oversight is to occur, it is seen as needing to be based on participatory governance

The insights highlight the systemic requirement to ensure that resource governance resonates with the real life experiences and aspirations of teachers, especially those in underrepresented rural and hinterland communities.

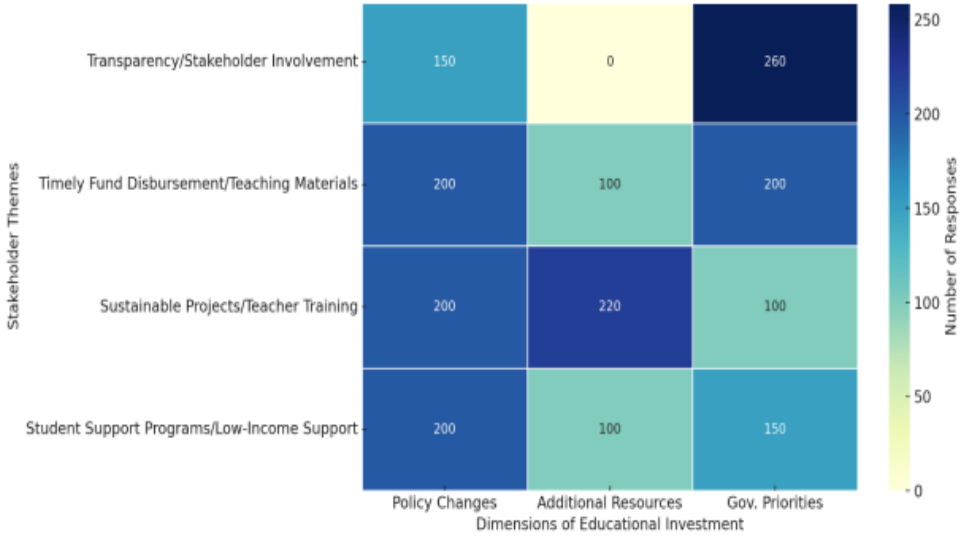

Figure 4. Field Data Heatmap of Stakeholder Responses on Policy Needs, Resource Gaps, and Funding Priorities in Rural Education

Discussion

The study findings emphasis the essential of participatory governance and equity in translating oil revenue to real educational development. Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported some strides in infrastructure and funding since the oil rush, but in a similar percentage also observed limited transparency, inadequate stakeholder participation, and imbalances in resources distribution, particularly between the coastal and interior schools.

This learning reflects larger concerns in the resource governance literature. Suleman and Ennin (2024) argue that in resource-rich conditions, top-down strategies of control marginalize those closer to the base levels of delivery, namely educators, and contribute to implementation deficits and diminished accountability. [18]. That a majority of

educators (i.e., 61% in this study) reported no participation in planning or monitoring of oil-funded projects reinforces this critique and indicates the necessity for including local voices in education policy debates.

These disaggregated results mean that only 18% of teachers had outright decision-making support Kara et al. (2022), who claim that exclusionary governance systems often undermine stakeholder confidence and the legitimacy of public investment [27]. This governance gap reflects not only a lack of understanding about how budgets are made, but also a lack of communication which results in the absence of transparency and a lack of democratic oversight.

Also, while close to half noticed infrastructure advances, 35 percent noted better teaching materials and technology. This mismatch is addressed in McGee & Gaventa's (2010) description of "hardware-heavy" interventions, in which funding is centered around physical structures rather than pedagogical capacity or community support [28]. The suggestion is that investment in capital is necessary, but not sufficiently, of improvements in human capital and teaching quality.

The heat analysis also indicates a call for better governance both across sectors and levels, with popular concerns being payment of higher teacher salaries, release of funds on time, and sustainable planning and stakeholder involvement. Remarkable, albeit transparency and accountability being favored (150 answers), even higher support was given to participatory governance—coinciding with the findings of Meier et al. (2023), who stress that involving stakeholders enhances not only project design, but also future legitimacy and fairness [26].

Lastly, the relatively neutral/ mixed ratings of Likert scale data indicate the somewhat cautiously optimistic positions of educators, with an acknowledgement of progress, but that it is not widely institutionalized. As mentioned by Birdsall and Subramanian (2004), this behavior is typical among natural resource abundant developing countries where spending increases with no corresponding increase in results, driven by institutional bottlenecks and poor governance [15].

In conclusion, this research has identified that oil receipts are contributing to the increase in capital expenditure in the education sector in Region 5, but deficits in stakeholder inclusion, incomplete and uneven application, and lack of transparency are constraining systemic change. To sidestep the education-related aspect of the "resource curse," the reforms required in Guyana pertain to the introduction of participatory governance, equity-based planning, and responsive communication in the nation's education policy framework.

Conclusion

This paper provides important perspectives on their views of oil revenues trans-positioning into education development of the frontline workers of the rural education system in Guyana. Although there was a slight majority who reported having seen increased funding and infrastructure development in the schools, the results also suggest profound misgivings about issues of transparency, of fairness, and of the lack of participation.

The marginal involvement of teachers in planning and monitoring mechanisms and the perceived inequity in the allocation of oil-funded benefits among coastal and riverain schools all suggest that long-standing governance failures persist. Although the transformative economic ability of the oil industry exists, teachers are wary—particularly in areas that continue to struggle due to infrastructure and technology deficiencies. The absence of structured consultation processes have armed a sense of consignment to the wheel, thereby, questioning the credibility and receptivity of the reformed systems.

Overall, the study indicates that the transformative potential of oil wealth in Region

5 for education has only been partly realized. Unlocking that potential will require a reset, a reset that redeems policy on education based on stakeholder engagement, underwritten by resource allocation equality frameworks and visible conversion of financial inputs to learning outputs. Failing such a governance transition, Guyana may succumb to the same inequities the oil wealth is supposed to address.

Recommendation

This work has thrown the spotlight on the sometimes confusing and fragmented views that teachers have in Region 5 about the mechanics and effect of oil-funded education programs. There is recognition that more budget is being allocated, and infrastructural improvements are being targeted, but concerns remain about the equity, transparency and long-term sustainability of these investments.

One of the key results is the gap between socioeconomic inputs and institutional facts. In spite of evidence of the flow of oil revenues into education, rural stakeholders complain about being excluded from decision-making. The continuing disparities in computer-availability, in infrastructure upkeep and teacher training also highlight the shortcomings of infrastructure-based policies. These trends suggest that there is an urgent need for governance reform which prioritize the role of participation, accountability, and the context-specificity of delivery processes.

To counter these systemic deficiencies and realize the full potential of oil revenues to enable educational transformation, the following recommendations are put forward:

Institutionalize Stakeholder Participation: Put in place formal structures to include teachers, PTAs, and district educational officers in the planning, budgeting, and appraisal of education projects. Instruments such as school-based management committees, community budget hearings, regional education councils must be institutionalized to promote transparency, local ownership and shared responsibility.

Strengthen Regional Implementation Capacity: Invest in building regional education departments technical, administrative and human resource capabilities. That includes better training on procurement, monitoring and project management in specific areas, and more power for those on the ground to tailor interventions to local conditions.

Promote transparency in the allocation of oil revenues: Require the release of disaggregated, region-specific spending reports on oil financed projects in the education sector. The reports should specify how the money gets disbursed to schools, by project category, and by geography and be publicly available in order to foster trust, minimize elite capture and bolster civic oversight.

Adopt Equity-Based Budgeting Tools: Implement equity parameters, including indices of marginalization, infrastructure shortages and teacher-student ratios, in budget formulation. This would help avoid a political allocation system that does not take teacher-student ratios requirements into account and would help redress historic imbalances and focus on underserved communities.

Associate Capital Investments with a Pedagogical Strategy: Make sure infrastructure investments come with pedagogical reform – teacher training, modernizing curricula and providing digital learning tools. In the absence of this coherence, investment in capital can become underutilized or divorced from meaningful learning.

Enhance Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms: Socialise mechanisms for participatory and independent monitoring such as community scorecards, educator perception audits and real time feedback loops. The tools should be incorporated into annual planning cycles to enhance adaptive management and responsiveness to on-the-ground conditions.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in the preparation or execution of this research.

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