

**THE PRIVATIZATION CONUNDRUM IN  
ZIMBABWE: UNCOVERING THE  
COMPLEXITIES OF EDUCATION  
PRIVATIZATION'S INFLUENCE ON  
EQUITY, QUALITY AND INCLUSION**

**Dudziro Nhengu**

Gender Institute, Midlands State University,  
Gweru Zimbabwe

[nhengud@staff.msu.ac.zw](mailto:nhengud@staff.msu.ac.zw)

**+263778580642**

**Farai Chikwature**

National Language Institute  
Midlands State University, Gweru [Zimbabwe](#)

[chikwaturef@staff.msu.ac.zw](mailto:chikwaturef@staff.msu.ac.zw)

**&**

**Mufaro Marandure**

National Language Institute  
Midlands State University, Gweru Zimbabwe

[marandurem@staff.msu.ac.zw](mailto:marandurem@staff.msu.ac.zw)

**Abstract**

We examine the efficacy of privatizing basic education in Zimbabwe, focusing on its impact on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education. Education privatization policies transfer control and ownership of educational institutions from the public to the private sector, often touted as a way to improve

efficiency, accountability, and quality (Avonture et al., 2024). However, privatization can exacerbate inequality, increasing costs and limiting access for marginalized groups (Canto-Sperber, 2021), further stratifying society by class and gender. In reality, high costs hinder students with disabilities, those from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds, and girls from accessing private education. Zimbabwe's experience after independence in the 1980s shows that governments can provide education services effectively. However, the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) led to a rapid reduction in state subsidies, affecting education provision. To ensure education is effective, inclusive, and beneficial, government must eliminate all forms of discrimination, providing equal access to quality education. This includes making provisions for free primary and secondary education. Education should be recognized as a right, not a business, enshrined in international and local legal instruments. Using decolonial, intersectionality, and gender lenses, we conducted an exploratory qualitative study, gathering data through a comprehensive literature review guided by the PRISMA framework and key informant interviews with education policymakers, lecturers, teachers, learners, and the general public. Our literature review used a scoping method to systematically gather and synthesize relevant documents, ensuring transparency and reproducibility in the search and selection process.

We argue that education privatization is a multifaceted process requiring an intersectional approach to operationalization. Prioritizing the welfare of marginalized groups who are the main recipients of educational services is crucial. An educational approach that presents barriers to access is exclusionary and colonial. A decolonial mode of education privatization should support central governments in delivering education services responsibly.

**Keywords:** social transformation, privatization of education, women, girls, intersectionality, education policies.

### **Introduction**

Southern Africa has witnessed significant reforms in its education sector, with privatization emerging as a key strategy to address challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and poor academic performance (Chikowore, n.d.). Proponents argue that privatization can attract investment, promote innovation, and increase access to quality education (Appiah-Kubi & Annan, 2020; Avonture et. al., 2024). However, critics contend that privatization exacerbates existing inequalities, leading to increased costs, limited access, and further stratification of vulnerable populations. By transferring control from the state to private entities, regulation and accountability become increasingly difficult, leaving marginalised communities vulnerable to exploitation. Critics further concern that

privatization can lead to natural monopolies, where corporations prioritize profits over public interest (Canto-Sperber, 202; Garrau, 2018). This study investigated the efficacy of private education in achieving quality and inclusive education for all in Zimbabwe. The analysis focused on how private education fulfilled the education obligations of especially people with disabilities, women and girls, as well as students from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds, students compared to the wider population. The study further sought to provide an understanding of how privatisation can be harnessed to promote inclusive and equitable benefits for all, particularly for the marginalized groups.

Privatisation entails the transfer of the ownership and service delivery rights of any process from the State to a private entity. In the case of education, privatisation entails the transfer of accountabilities, properties, management and functions of education service delivery previously mandated to the State, to private actors (Coomans & de Wolf, 2005). Transferring education accountabilities, management and functions from the State to the private sector can happen in different ways, and a few are discussed here. The first model is when a state completely fails to provide education owing to various reasons such as conflict or economic fragility, and private actors come in to fill that gap with a de-factor privatisation plan for meeting the education needs of all. The other model is the public-private

partnership, where the state collaborates with private entities to finance, build or manage schools. The third model is when the state demonstrates lack of capacity to provide sufficient education services by running under performing public schools, and private actors known as Education Management Organisations (EMOs) come in to fill the gap with a focus on efficiency and cost-cutting. None of the above three types of privatisation are common to Zimbabwe, although they would be desirable, effective and impactful in ensuring access to inclusive education for all. Rather, the common types of privatization models existing alongside the public school system include high-cost Franchise schools, low-cost franchise schools, online blended learning and private extra lessons. High cost franchise schools are run by private companies or Churches who replicate successful school models, often with standardized curricula but exorbitant fees and related costs. These private companies at the same time run low cost private schools, a form of affordable private school model targeting low income families who do not want public education but cannot afford the Franchise private schools.

The third type of private schooling is the Online and blended learning, where private providers offer online educational services, sometimes supplementing traditional schooling. Lastly, the Private extra-lessons model is where teachers from both public and private institutions offer extra-lessons to their students outside of the

prescribed school hours, for a fee. Some education actors like the World Bank have vied for economic liberalisation policies that create market competition into the education space as the means to increase privatisation of education, and a quick route to attaining the international universal education. As a result, privatization of education has gained momentum in Southern Africa, driven by the promise of improved efficiency, accountability, and quality education. However, concerns linger about the implications of this shift on marginalized groups, particularly women and girls. Merely focusing attention on private alternatives has only succeeded in increasing private spaces for quality education for a privileged few who can afford the exorbitant fees associated with private education, without extending the prospects for quality education to all.

As education is a critical tool for social mobility and empowerment, it is essential to examine the efficacy of privatization in achieving quality education for all. In particular, this study investigates the impact of education privatization on access, equity, and quality education in Southern Africa, with a focus on its effects on women, girls, students with disabilities and students from marginalised socioeconomic backgrounds. This study argued that privatization can exacerbate existing inequalities, leading to increased costs, limited access, and further stratification of vulnerable populations along class

and gender lines. While privatization may appear to increase educational opportunities for African students, it often leaves them behind in poverty and deprivation, undermining the promise of education as a tool for empowerment and social mobility. Education privatisation is increasingly being questioned by many education and research specialists, with major concerns revolving on its accessibility and affordability, quality, equality, availability of free education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the growing trend of education privatization in Southern Africa, there is limited understanding of its impact on marginalized groups, particularly women and girls. Existing literature shows that the transfer of control and ownership from public to private sector raises concerns about equity, access, and quality education. Missing from this narrative is a comparative analysis of the impacts of privatisation of education – whether positive or negative on students with disabilities, female students and students from marginalised socioeconomic backgrounds in Zimbabwe that is undertaken from a human rights perspective. This study sought to fill this lacuna. The concept of inclusive education is a key aspect of this study, as understanding the tenets of inclusive education is the only way through which the impacts of education privatisation can be measured. Inclusive education is an approach that seeks to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students

by addressing and removing systemic barriers that prevent full participation, including removing tuition fees barriers by providing free primary and secondary education, making necessary adjustments to teaching methods, materials, and school environments to ensure that all students, especially those with disabilities, female students and students from marginalised socioeconomic backgrounds can have equitable access to the same, quality education (Florian and Spratt, 2013).

The study had four specific objectives to examine the impact of education privatization on access to quality education in Southern Africa, to investigate the effects of privatization on marginalized groups, particularly women and girls, to analyse the consequences of transferring control and ownership of education from the public to the private sector and to identify policy implications for promoting inclusive and equitable education systems. The study asked four research questions which were what are the effects of education privatization on access to quality education for marginalized groups in Southern Africa? How does privatization impact the educational outcomes and opportunities for women and girls? To what extent does privatization exacerbate existing inequalities in education along class and gender lines? What policy measures can be implemented to promote inclusive and equitable education systems in the context of privatization?

### **Background to the Study**

Inclusive education is provided for in various international, continental, regional and national protocols, laws, policies, mechanisms and guidelines. Private education is similarly provided for under international and local laws and policies. These laws grant non-state entities like individuals, organizations, and companies, the freedom to establish and run educational institutions according to their own philosophies, however, on condition that they adhere to the requirements of inclusive education (Moumne & Saudemont, 2015). However, this liberty comes with the responsibility to meet minimum standards set by the state, which must align with international human rights law. These minimum standards aren't explicitly defined in international law. Instead, they're determined by each state based on each state's unique contextual realities. This aspect gives states the flexibility to create regulations that suit their specific needs, ensuring that private education providers operate within a specified human rights framework (United Nations, 2019). Overall, international law strikes a balance between allowing private entities to establish educational institutions and ensuring that these institutions operate in a way that respects human rights and provides quality education.

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) emphasises the right to inclusive education, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation. Furthermore, Article 9 provides for accessibility to

the physical education environment and to information, while Article 4 focuses on the general obligations to ensure equal rights, non-discrimination, and accessibility to education for all persons without discrimination. Furthermore, the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (Article 1), the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28), the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities (Article 4) and the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education also spell out several provisions on the right to education for all. Furthermore, Article 12 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) expresses gender rights to education, further obliging States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and guarantee equal opportunity and access in the sphere of education and training. SDG 4 on Quality Education has three key targets including Target 4.5 (Eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access to education), Target 4.a (Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools) and Target 4.b (Increase scholarships for developing countries). Additionally, the UNESCO Education for All (EFA) Framework (2000) also has three goals - Goal 1 (Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and

education), Goal 2 (Provide free and compulsory primary education) and Goal 5 (Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education).

At the continental level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) has key provisions in Article 17 (Right to Education - access to education, cultural development, and social welfare) and Article 18 (Protection of the Family - protection of vulnerable groups, including children and persons with disabilities). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) provides Article 11 (Right to Education - access to primary, secondary, and higher education) and Article 13 (Protection from Exploitation - protection from child labour, trafficking, and exploitation). The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025)'s key provisions include Pillar 1 (Relevant and Quality Education - focus on inclusive, equitable, and quality education), Pillar 2 (Equity and Inclusion - address disparities, gender, and disability) and Pillar 7 (Regional and International Cooperation - collaborate with regional and international organizations). The African Union's Education Strategy (2016-2025) has 3 goals - Goal 1 (Expand Access to Quality Education - increase access, equity, and retention), Goal 2 (Improve Quality and Relevance of Education - focus on STEM, TVET, and skills development) and Goal 3 (Harness the Capacity of ICT - leverage technology for education). Additional initiatives at the continental level include the African Union's

Disability Strategy (2018-2023), the African Union's Plan of Action on Education (2019-2025) and the African Union's Strategy for Girls' Education (2018-2025). Put together, these initiatives seek to promote human and peoples' rights, including education, protect children's rights and welfare, foster regional cooperation and integration in education and address disparities, equity, and inclusion.

At the regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty (1992) promotes regional economic integration, cooperation, and development through Article 5 (Cooperation in Education, Science, and Culture), Article 22 (Human Resources Development) and Article 23 (Social and Human Development). The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) aims to develop and implement regional education and training policies through Article 3 (Objectives - promote regional cooperation, equity, and quality education), Article 4 (Cooperation Areas - teacher training, curriculum development, and research) and Article 6 (Regional Institutions - establish regional institutions for education and training). The SADC Disability Protocol (2012) aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in the SADC region through Article 4 (Right to Education - inclusive education, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation), Article 12 (Accessibility - physical, information, and communication accessibility) and Article 15 (Social and Economic Development - promote

equal opportunities and participation). The SADC Regional Strategy on Education and Training (2015-2025) aims to improve the quality, relevance, and accessibility of education and training in the SADC region through Goal 1 (Improve Quality and Relevance of Education), Goal 2 (Increase Access and Equity in Education), Goal 3 (Develop Regional Human Resources) and Goal 4 (Enhance Regional Cooperation and Collaboration). Cross cutting themes in the SADC provisions include Equity and Inclusion, Quality and Relevance, Regional Cooperation and Collaboration, Human Resources Development and Technology and Innovation. Table 1 provides an overview of the Zimbabwean national laws and policies on education.

Zimbabwe has vibrant, laws, policies and strategies on ensuring quality, inclusive and human rights oriented secondary school education, as highlighted in Table 1.

**Table1: Zimbabwe national laws and policies on education**

| Framework                     | Provision                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Zimbabwe Constitution (2013), | Section 81(2) states that "No person may be discriminated against on the grounds of... pregnancy or marital status." |
|                               | Section 82 guarantees the right to education for all                                                                 |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   | citizens, including persons with disabilities                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Education Amendment Act (2019)                    | Emphasizes compulsory basic state-funded education. Furthermore, Section 6(1)(c) accords all benefits, privileges or opportunities offered by any educational institutions to students with disability and pregnant and married women. |
| Disabled Persons Act (1992)                       | Protects rights of persons with disabilities to education and employment                                                                                                                                                               |
| National Disability Policy (2013)                 | Promotes equal opportunities and social inclusion for persons with disabilities.                                                                                                                                                       |
| Inclusive Education Policy (2015)                 | Focuses on creating inclusive learning environments.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Zimbabwe National Disability Strategy (2019-2023) | Outlines strategies for promoting disability inclusion.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Zimbabwe's National Education                     | Aims to improve education quality and accessibility                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                               |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sector Strategic Plan (2019-2023)             |                                                             |
| Inclusive Education Strategy (2016-2020)      | Promotes inclusive education practices                      |
| Special Needs Education Policy (2012)         | Addresses education needs of children with disabilities.    |
| Disability Mainstreaming Strategy (2015-2020) | Integrates disability considerations into national policies |
| Secondary Education Assistance Module (SEAM)  | Provides financial assistance for secondary education       |
| Education Support Grant (ESG)                 | Offers financial support for education                      |
| Disability Support Grant (DSG)                | Supports persons with disabilities.                         |

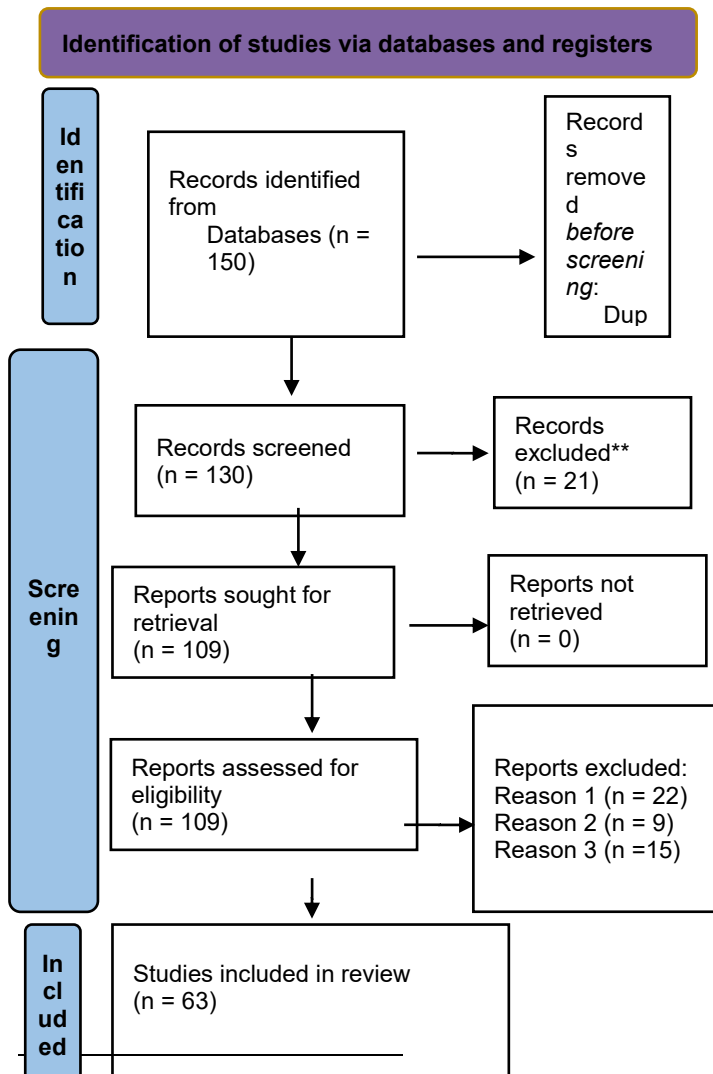
The convergence of international, regional and local laws underscores the imperative for education systems to prioritize human rights, inclusivity and quality, informing the development of policies and practices that promote social justice.

## **Methodology**

A mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted to conduct the study on uncovering the complexities of education privatization's influence on equity, quality and inclusion. By employing multiple methods, this study achieved a much more comprehensive understanding of research phenomenon, while the triangulation of data gathering methods enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings, providing nuanced and multifaceted insights to on the complexities of education privatization's influence on equity, quality and inclusion. Statistical analysis enabled a systematic examination of the available datasets to identify patterns in student characteristics as well as trends in student outcomes, access and opportunities. Quantitative data can reveal disparities in educational resources, teacher quality and student achievement across private and public schools, as well as demographic differences in access to privatized education. Qualitative research gave the research participants a voice, in addition to ensuring that the study findings were grounded in their lived experiences. Triangulating the mixed research methods added rigor and validity as well as a balanced reflection of the participants' lived experiences. The following section explains the specific data collection methods that were utilised in the study.

Firstly, a comprehensive literature review on privatisation of education was carried out in 2 phases, prior to the interviews as well as during the data analysis phase. The secondary data obtained from the initial literature provided the framework for formulating the research objectives, questions, as well as the interview tools. The second literature review focused much on validating and adding substance to the data from the key informant interviews. In the end, secondary data from the initial desk review was combined with secondary data from the final desk review to form the secondary data set for the research. The literature review employed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to systematically search, screen, and synthesize relevant studies on the intersectionality of education privatization with disability, gender, class, and geographical location. A comprehensive search strategy was conducted across multiple search engines and databases, using predefined keywords, inclusion and exclusion criteria. The PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1 documented how the study selection process ensured transparency and reproducibility, enabled a comprehensive and unbiased synthesis of existing literature, and providing a robust foundation for understanding the complex relationships between education privatization, disability, gender, class, and geographical location.

Figure 1: PRISMA flow chart<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Page, McKenzie, Bossuyt, Boutron, Hoffmann, Mulrow et al. (2020).

Secondly, quantitative data collection employed a self-administered survey with structured questions to gather students' experience-based perceptions on the efficacy of privatized versus public education. Specifically, the survey questions explored challenges in accessing privatized education due to i) physical, sensory and cognitive characteristics ii) gender and iii) socioeconomic class. The survey was distributed to 5 students in each of the 10 secondary schools. A total of 50 students responded to the survey.

Finally, qualitative data was collected from key informants through the use of a semi-structured key informant guide with in-depth interview questions. Key informants were one administrator and one lecturer in each private school, and one senior teacher and one lecturer in each public school. A total of 20 key informant interviews were carried out.

The sample of research participants was drawn from the target population of school administrators, lecturers and students from 10 secondary school, 5 private secondary schools and 5 public secondary schools in Harare. The public and private schools were anonymised for ethical reasons, following verbal agreements for anonymity. The sample included 20 (10 male and 10 female) private secondary school teachers, two from each institution, who were all purposively sampled to participate in the research. Furthermore, a self-administered questionnaire was

distributed to 50 purposively selected students, 5 from each of the 10 schools. The sampling limitation was that 10 schools were not an adequate sample in a city with over a hundred schools, and involving more participants could have deepened the findings, it is presumed that the study reached data saturation.. Firstly, the research asked questions that were based on students and teachers' lived experiences, and secondly, information power or level of expertise of the respondents is more critical in determining data saturation for each study than the sample size (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2022) further argue that based on the expertise of the respondents, it is possible to reach information saturation with 20–24 interviews. Since the research participants were expert lecturers and administrators, as well as students with lived experiences of being in either public or private secondary schools, the insights that they provided were enough to proffer reasonable and generalisable findings.

A three-stage purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample for the administrators and teachers. The first step involved sampling 10 secondary schools or colleges in Harare, including 5 public schools and 5 private secondary schools or colleges. The secondary schools or colleges were randomly picked from a list obtained from ChatGPT. The selected secondary schools or colleges were spread across the city centre and four diverse locations, purposefully stratified to

represent varying socioeconomic profiles: the city centre; an affluent suburb, a middle-income suburb, and two low-density suburbs. Four schools, two public and 2 private were selected from each location. This deliberate sampling strategy enabled an exploration of the intersectionality of education privatization with disability, gender, class, and geographical location, providing a nuanced understanding of how these factors intersect to shape educational experiences and outcomes. Informed consent to carry out the study was sought at both institutional and individual levels.

Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and MS Excel were used for quantitative data analysis. A selection of suitable descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed to analyze the data that would expose the challenges of education privatization to the achievement of quality education across disability, gender and class lines. Descriptive Statistics revealed emerging patterns in the demographic factors and other variables of the respondents, including the students' diverse backgrounds that were generalisable across Zimbabwean secondary schools. Qualitative data from the desk review and key informant interviews was combined and further coded according to emerging themes using a critical discourse analysis approach, drawing on power, cultural capital, hegemony, intersectionality, and decolonization

concepts. The data analysis procedure included applying the coding scheme to interview transcripts, policy documents, and observational data. Table 2 presents a coding table for the data analysis process:

Table 2: Coding table

| Code                                | Description                        | Example                                                               |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Power dynamics/<br>Cultural capital | Dominance/Oppression/Resistance    | Privatized schools cater to affluent communities.                     |
| Hegemony                            | Dominant ideologies                | Neoliberal policies emphasize individual responsibility               |
| Intersectionality                   | Intersections of oppression        | Female students from low-income backgrounds face significant barriers |
| Decolonization                      | Challenging Western epistemologies | Indigenous knowledge integrated into curriculum                       |

Furthermore, patterns and themes were identified across codes, and themes were identified through the lens of critical pedagogy, social reproduction theory and hegemony.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical framework

This study was grounded in three interlocked theories and two alternative theories. The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970), emphasizes the empowerment of marginalized groups through education. His concept of "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire, 1970), highlights the need for educators to challenge dominant power structures

and promote critical consciousness among students. Pierre Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory (1977) emphasises the concept of "symbolic violence," which is particularly relevant in understanding how education policy and practice perpetuate social inequality. Symbolic violence refers to the subtle, often unintentional, ways in which dominant groups maintain their power. In privatized education, symbolic violence manifests through curriculum choices, learning methods, and resource allocation, which prioritize the interests of dominant groups. This concept complements Freire's argument on how cultural capital enables dominant groups to perpetuate their advantages through exclusionary education processes, in turn producing and reproducing ideological domination. Gramsci (1971), through his postulation of hegemony also explains how processes of cultural and ideological domination in education processes and other social processes also advantage the rich and disadvantage the poor. This notion of hegemony and power extends beyond socioeconomic class, incorporating a gender analysis that reveals how societal power structures disproportionately disadvantage women and girls, favoring men and boys. In patriarchal families, for instance, boys are often prioritised for enrollment in private schools with better learning opportunities, overshadowing girls' interests.

These theories suggest that privatized education exacerbates existing social inequalities by limiting

access to quality education to the affluent, particularly in resource-constrained economic contexts where public education budgets are severely limited. In such settings, dominant groups' cultural capital is valued and reproduced through privatized education, perpetuating social inequality. Gramsci's hegemony theory helps explain how these dominant groups maintain power through cultural and ideological domination, masking the exploitative nature of education privatization. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy offers a crucial framework for challenging these dominant power structures and promoting inclusive education. This study investigates the intersectionality of education privatization, gender, and class in Zimbabwe's secondary education sector, aiming to uncover the mechanisms of social reproduction and hegemony. The application of these theories inherently fosters a compelling narrative advocating for inclusive education systems that cater to the diverse needs of all individuals. This foundational shift is crucial for equalizing power dynamics, ensuring a human rights-based education for all, and promoting social justice.

For alternative theories; feminist theory, particularly the notion of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), offers an alternative lens to examine how education privatization intersects with disability, gender, class, and geographical location. Intersectionality highlights the multiple

forms of oppression experienced by marginalized groups, including women and girls. Women and girls are born as members of an oppressed class owing to their gender, and failing to access quality education that would make their status improve is a form of oppression to them. The intersectionality perspective emphasizes the need for inclusive education policies that address the specific needs of diverse groups. Postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988) offers a critical lens, illuminating the enduring historical and contemporary impacts of colonialism on education systems. This perspective challenges the hegemony of Western epistemologies, revealing their limitations and biases, and advocates for the decolonization of education to reclaim and valorise indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Summarily, these two highlighted alternative theories complement the first three theories by highlighting the intersections of oppression and the need for inclusive, decolonized education.

Reviewed literature on education privatization shed light on both the advantages and disadvantages of education privatisation. On the positive side, the literature showed how education privatization increases the physical availability and accessibility of education by availing a viable private education infrastructure with adequate resources and technologies to support learning (Appiah-Kubi & Annan, 2020; Avonture et. al., 2024). Further scholars argued that increasing the

number of schools may have reduced the need for some students to travel long distances, thus levelling the playing field for better learning experiences for many students, including girls and students with disabilities (Boncana, 2012; Williams & Kitamura, 2012; Quaynor, 2012). However, a more qualitative analysis of this claim may reveal that a mere increase in the physical number of schools may not necessarily yield equal benefits to all students, but to some privileged students from rich socioeconomic backgrounds (James, Kenway & Boden, 2022). Furthermore, Kanyongo, (2005), Chimbunde & Moreeng (2023) and Basera & Zhou (2022) argued that while the number of schools may increase because of education privatisation, it is the communities, usually towns with the highest GDP per capita that have the highest numbers of private schools, meaning that privatisation has not automatically improved physical accessibility for rural or low-income communities. Other researchers further asserted that more private schools ensure increased accessibility of education, but only for those with the financial means to purchase educational services (Crawford, 2024; Harma, 2019). Profits generated from expensive school fees enable school administrators to ensure smaller student-teacher ratios, more state of the art and supportive technologies, qualified teachers, and infrastructure that supports the best learning outcomes. On the contrary, those from low-income households are often shut out of the private education system due

to their inability to pay school fees and associated costs.

Human rights legal and policy provisions on inclusive education supports the above arguments by supporting the idea that accessibility to education services for all encompasses more than a mere increase in schools (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, CRC); The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960, CADE). Furthermore, availability of adequate sanitation facilities, safe drinking water, trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, and teaching materials are all key determinants for achieving quality and human rights based education provision (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1999). Additional considerations for the attainment of quality education include ensuring that education will be economically accessible to suit the needs of all, that the needs of students with disability are taken into consideration, and that provisions will not be discriminatory (i.e., accessible to marginalised groups). Research by Chimbunde & Moreeng (2023); Mhandu & Dambudzo (2016) and Bennell (2022) reveals that private schools operate under a business model, stratifying tuition fees based on location. Schools in affluent suburbs charge higher fees compared to those in low-density areas.

Although touted as a means to increase accessibility for disadvantaged students, this stratification perpetuates unequal education provision. In reality, schools in low-density areas offer inferior facilities and services, resulting in lower-quality education compared to their affluent counterparts. This practice exacerbates existing gaps in access to quality education, perpetuating class differences among students. The total cost of education including tuition, internet and printing costs, learning materials, books, tutoring, transport and administrative fees may become a barrier to economic accessibility of education to most low density suburbs residents despite the fact that the tuition fees and other requirements will be lower than those from private schools in affluent suburbs. Private education school uniforms are usually more expensive than public school uniforms. Furthermore, students attending private schools are also expected to directly contribute very basic supplies such as toilet paper and sanitizers, which are always supplied for free in public schools, which increases costs for private education. Implications for this are unequal access to quality education, reinforcement of socioeconomic disparities and potential long-term consequences for students' opportunities and outcomes. This practice violates the right to equal access to quality education (UNESCO, Art. 26). Governments and educators should ensure equitable education provision, regardless of location or socioeconomic status.

In line with the tenets of human rights law, private schools may indeed charge fees but the State must prioritise the availability of free primary education for all and the introduction of progressively free secondary education (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (1966); The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960, CADE)). Policies governing privatization of education should uphold the principle of accessibility at its core, and States should be actively involved in the regulation of the operations of private education policies, especially those governing the payment of fees and the general accessibility of quality and standardised education for all.

Some of the reviewed studies revealed a perception that private schools provide a better option for quality education than public schools, arguing that the resource gap in public schools hinders teachers from delivering quality education to learners (Midzi, Sibanda & Mathwasa, 2021; Machia, Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2023; Bush, Chingarande, Glover, Muchabaiwa, Simango & Thondhlana, 2019). Furthermore, these scholars argued that disparities in remuneration and staff motivation packages between private and public schools may account for the higher staff turn-over in public schools, which in turn debilitates on the quality of education that is delivered to learners. Public

education was also depicted as lacking the level of security that is found in private education practice, especially when it comes to ethical standards for carrying out examinations. The Zimbabwe Secondary Schools Examination Board (ZimSec) for example, has experienced several public scandals of examination paper leakages. These examination leakages cause the education system to lose trust and credibility locally and internationally, posing a barrier to success for local students (Mashanyare & Chinamasa, 2013).

Ngwenya (2021) investigated teacher motivation as a crucial factor in quality education delivery, highlighting parental perceptions of private schools as offering a more transparent feedback process, a respectful environment for engaging with teachers, and instructors who demonstrate punctuality, reliability, and accountability. This perceived superiority empowers parents, inducing a consumerist mind-set where they willingly pay premium fees in exchange for superior education services. As a result, parents adopt a consumerist approach, willing to pay premium fees for perceived educational excellence. Ngwenya (2021) further found that in Zimbabwe, schools with attractive packages and good working conditions recruited, developed and retained highly qualified, experienced and effective teachers. Contrariwise, inadequate teacher compensation and lack of motivation lead to detrimental consequences, including for example attrition, job hopping, low productivity, absenteeism, moonlighting and high

turn-over rates. For example, some parents reported that they were met with rude and dismissive replies by public school teachers (Zimbabwe Situation, 2023).

Relying on the perspectives of parents and students from affluent families as the measure for concluding that education privatization offers better education options than public education is a huge misrepresentation of reality. Quality education is complex and multifaceted, and parental and student choices of a small percentage of the country's population alone can't guarantee realistic judgments. From a human rights perspective, ensuring minimum standards for private providers and holding them accountable is crucial. If public education doesn't meet state standards or respond to community needs, parents are forced to opt for private education, a choice made by only a small segment of the population. Furthermore, even those who can afford private education do not have a wider choice of private schools to select from, as almost all the schools fall into the same high-cost bracket. As a result, parents are prone to exploitation. True educational choice requires a diversity of schools with diverse cost scales, diverse teaching philosophies, curricula, technologies, and inclusive learning environments (UNESCO, 2020). Educational choice is only meaningful when all options meet minimum standards, and when parents have access to information about quality education institutions. In

essence, education privatization shouldn't be touted as the sole solution for better education. Instead, there should be more focus on strengthening public education, ensuring accountability, and promoting inclusive, equitable learning environments that respect human rights.

Zimbabwe has witnessed a significant rise in private tutoring, a phenomenon where students from both private and public schools seek additional lessons from their teachers outside regular school hours, for a fee. This shadow education system has become a supplementary, yet costly, norm. In many cases, tutoring complements classroom teaching by providing students with more opportunities to practice the curriculum content, to learn new subjects and to receive more one-on-one attention. Such private tutoring increases household costs associated with education. In many cases students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds cannot afford these extra lessons, yet practically, students that are privately tutored tend to score higher on tests on average than those who do not (Munir, Faiza & Daud, 2023; Huynh, Q., 2024). Low-income families fail to meet these private education costs, and these dynamics exacerbate existing social inequalities.

Available data on literacy indicates that women and girls with disabilities fare less well in the educational arena than their female counterparts

with different characteristics (Smith, 2010). Dube, Ncube & Mapuvire (2020), found that private education also perpetuates and deepens existing inequalities in education for students with disabilities, by failing to commit resources to the development of infrastructure that supports their specific learning needs. Private schools may prioritize students who fit traditional academic molds, neglecting those requiring individualized support (Gamage, Dehideniya & Ekanayake, 2021).

The issue of differences in resourcing of private education and mainstream education evokes the memories of colonial education policies, whereby white learners were financed and resourced four times more than their black counterparts (Bishop, 2010). This is why at early independence years, the new educational dispensation attempted to equalise spending and financing across all schools, both in terms of spending on learners as well as on teachers' salaries (Kanyongo, 2005). In Zimbabwe this included the introduction of free primary education (Kanyongo, 2005). Several efforts to develop a funding model that could redress the past imbalances can be traced back to 1998. Schools were ranked according to the socioeconomic status of the surrounding community, the physical conditions at the school and the population census of the area served by the school (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019).

Borrowing a leaf from South Africa (SA), around the year 2000, the SA Department of Education sought to analyse equity in the quality of education provided to different schools (Mestry, 2014). International programmes such as Monitoring Learning Achievements, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality were applied in conjunction with the South African internal systemic evaluation (standardised testing) (Mestry, 2014). These revealed inadequacies regarding numeracy and reading skills among most learners. As a result, in 2003 the national Department of Education concluded that the non-capital (NC) funding needed for textbooks, stationery and other supplies was inadequate. This led to more school quintile being added to account for different poverty levels in various provinces (Mestry, 2014). The fee exemption model was introduced in 2006 to ensure that poor learners would have free access to schooling (Mestry, 2014). The rural financial incentives scheme for teachers was also introduced to encourage teachers to work in rural schools (Ibid). This robust monitoring and evaluation system is a great enabler for matching needs to education planning and resourcing, and Zimbabwe can adapt the same system for positive progress in the education sector.

In summary, the reviewed literature successfully highlighted the up and down side of privatization

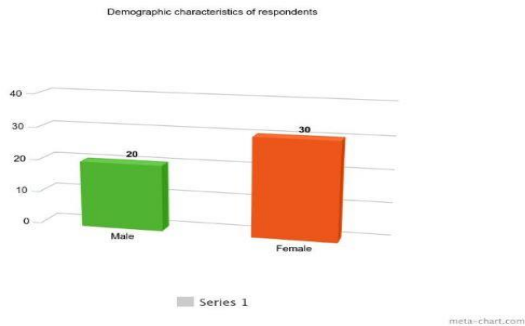
of education in Zimbabwe. Major arguments were that although private education avails good options for education, the options are beneficial to a few. This creates inequality gaps that are difficult to close up for the government, and in line with international human rights law, limiting the choices of the marginalised groups to access quality education that is accessed by a few is a violation of human rights. The literature review further demonstrated a lacuna in well theorised data to enable a comparative analysis of the impacts of privatisation of education – whether positive or negative on students with disabilities, female students and students from marginalised socioeconomic backgrounds in Zimbabwe that is undertaken from a human rights perspective. More studies of this nature could help to close this dearth of literature, as lack of reliable research findings on any subject may prevent the formulation and adoption of positive policies to correct the situation.

Moreover, a comprehensive analysis of effective regulatory frameworks that ensure accountability, quality and equity in privatized education settings is also lacking, highlighting the need for policy relevant research to inform evidence-based decision-making.

Findings

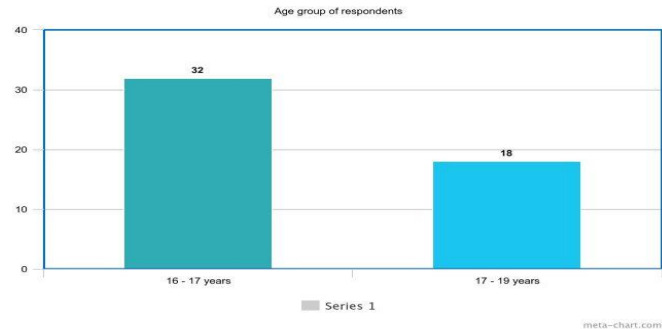
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 50 students (20 male and 30 female) responded to the survey from the ten schools.



Age of Respondents

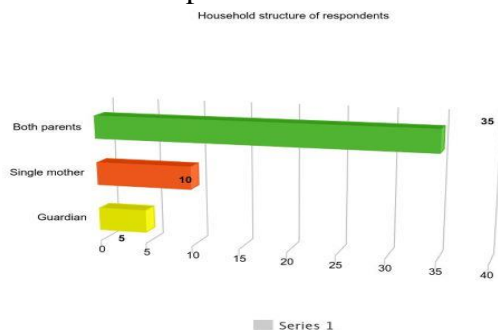
The majority of students who participated in the survey were aged 16 – 17 years (64%) with the least (36%) being those aged 17 – 19 years, as shown below in Figure 2.



Household structure of the respondents

All the 50 students responded to the question asking them to indicate their household structure.

As shown in Figure 3, (70%) of students live with both parents, (20%) live with their single biological mother and (10%) live with their paternal or maternal guardian. These different family backgrounds therefore differentiate the students in terms of their socio-economic needs, and hence the diverse needs in the face of privatized and public education services.



### Theme 1: Effects of Education Privatization on Access to Quality Education for Marginalized Groups in Southern Africa

To answer the first question which sought to establish the effects of education privatization on access to quality education for marginalised groups in Zimbabwe, all respondents concurred that education privatization has increased physical accessibility of quality education by increasing the number of schools throughout many urban and peri-urban communities in Zimbabwe. They concurred that private schools are staffed with well remunerated and better motivated teachers than those in public schools, and that private schools

have better technological equipment for ease of access to education than public schools. However, the respondents noted that the benefits of private education only accrue to a few students from affluent families whose parents can afford the exorbitant fees, while remaining a non-option to the majority of students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. The different respondents offered varied reasons to argue that the benefits of education privatization do not benefit the marginalised groups, but only those students from affluent families whose parents can afford the high costs of private education and some of their arguments are captured in quotes below. One teacher from a private college noted that,

Private schools are increasing in almost every setting, but mostly in urban and peri-urban settings. The government was failing to meet the enrollment demand and there was a crisis of hot sitting where one public school would carry the capacity of 3 schools and enroll 3 times the number of its original capacity. This made learning very difficult for students who had to undergo hot sitting classes. The burden has been reduced but it only benefits those who can afford the high costs of private education.

A public school teacher who doubled up as a parent for a student in a private secondary school remarked that,

Demands of private education range from high tuition fees to expensive school uniforms, sporting uniforms and equipment. You cannot send your kid to a private school by kombis, although some do but the demand is always to catch up with the trend and ensure that you drop off and pick up you kid after school.

Another private school teacher commented that education privatization is mostly benefitting urban-based students, arguing that, “*Private education is a pure business. Owners will only introduce a private school in a rural area that has potential to pay the exorbitant fees, but never in a farming community. This is the challenge. Only the rich benefit from the scheme.*” A student who identified as living with relatives in one low density suburb shed light on how education privatization provides unequal education services even within the private school set-up itself when he remarked that, “My cousin attends X College in CBD. I attend X college here in the location, our schools belong to the same owners. His school has a computer with state of the art machines supported with full Wi-Fi. This is something that I cannot reach, our college in the location has no computer lab and no Wi-Fi. Using my phone to research is both cumbersome and expensive, I may not always ask for data money from my uncle who is my benefactor.” Three more students from the same college, when probed to compare their school to their sister

college in town also remarked that, *“They do more and better learning and sporting activities with affluent schools and colleges, sometimes I wish I could too”* (Student A). Student B remarked that.

They do not struggle with changed time tables. Sometimes we do because some of our teachers leave for better colleges. Their teachers are always on time, because they are always paid on time too, so they don’t miss lessons.

Student C also remarked that,

It’s obvious the town college is better than ours in many respects like free WI-FI and stuff, but I feel better off now than when I was in the public school, the toilets, water and electricity things were appalling.

These findings clearly reveal that education privatization is a necessary option in terms of providing alternative learning opportunity and space in difficult contexts. However, this alternative scheme comes at a cost as it benefits only those who can afford it. This finding resonates with James, Kenway, & Boden (2022)’s argument that education privatization increases physical accessibility but benefits mainly privileged students. The fact that private schools are a preserve of mainly the urban and peri-urban areas was also revealed by the study. This aspect

reveals that much as private education seeks to benefit society by supporting government efforts in education provision, it remains a business oriented service that is concentrated where potential customers reside. Private schools are thus concentrated in affluent areas, neglecting rural or low-income communities (Kanyongo, 2005; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2023). These researchers also found that private schools offer inferior facilities and services in low-density areas while offering the best facilities and services in city centres and affluent communities. Education privatization in the end does not provide the choice that it purports to bring because people who cannot afford a certain service as a result of their socioeconomic condition cannot make choices but resort to public education which to them remains the only available option. Study by Crawford (2024) and Harma (2019) support this finding that financial barriers exclude low-income households from private education. The findings affirm foregoing findings that education privatization increases the inequality gap and stratifies students into different classes, and in line with findings by Chimbunde & Moreeng (2023), as well as by Mhandu & Dambudzo (2016), stratified tuition fees perpetuate unequal education provision.

## **Theme 2: Impact of Privatization on Educational Outcomes and Opportunities for Women and Girls**

Study findings revealed that the impact of education privatization is more on business growth in the private educations sector than on improved access to quality education for all as required by international and local legal frameworks and benchmarks for sustainable development. A teacher at one private college insinuated that the current private education infrastructure is a mockery to the concept of inclusive education, especially with a view to the rights of students with physical disabilities and those from challenged socioeconomic backgrounds. She commented that,

This college occupies three upper floors in this up stairs building. The lifts in the building have been defunct for years; there are no escalators, so we use stairs up and down the building every day. Students with physical disabilities can never enroll in this college. It's a mockery. The wheelchairs won't get off from the ground floor. This is institutionalized kind of discrimination.

When probed about the impact of education privatization based on the aspect of institutionalized discrimination that is propelled by unsuitable schooling infrastructure, one administrator in a private college responded that,

It is a sad but true reality. Operationalizing inclusive education is a real hurdle. If

government is struggling to drive inclusive infrastructural development in public schools, you cannot expect it from private business people who are as a rule of the thumb, seeking to maximize profits.

Private education does not provide an alternative to cater for the marginalised, but an alternative to cater for the rich who can afford to bridge the gap of limited provision of quality education on their own.

The study also found that while private tutoring has become a famous and trendy practice for students from both public and private schools, the practice exacerbates existing social inequalities. It was revealed that the same class of students who can afford school fees in both public and private schools are the ones who can also afford the fees for private tutoring. While affluent families can afford both tuition fees and private tutoring fees, poor families and child headed families struggle with tuition fees, uniforms, and money for basic education needs like transport, books, and food. One student commented that,

I am doing well as the private college, but my challenge is that I cannot afford the extra lessons. Those who attend extra lessons are always ahead of us in class the following day because they learn in advance during the extra lessons, what the teacher will introduce in class the following day.

The gendered dimensions of private tutoring were also revealed, as spaces for extra lessons were reported to be more detrimental to female students than to male students. Asked to explain why they do not enroll for extra lessons, four female students from different private colleges commented that,

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student A | <i>"My mother would only pay for home private tutoring or online tutoring, but it's more expensive than the ordinary extra lessons. I am not allowed to remain behind for extra lessons and then commute alone in the night afterwards, I am always reminded that I am a girl"</i> |
| Student B | <i>"My parents refuse to pay for me to stay for extra lessons after school. They do not trust the spaces, I read from home."</i>                                                                                                                                                   |
| Student C | <i>"I cannot afford extra private tutoring. My uncle who pays my school fees is overwhelmed."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Student D | <i>As a girl I feel safer in the presence of other girls. Most of our teachers who stay behind for extra lessons are male, and most girls do not stay behind too. I can only take online extra lessons when there is a teacher who offers such.</i>                                |

Summarily, findings under this objective reveal that education privatization is indeed a positive step towards attainment of quality inclusive education. However, the tenets of quality inclusive education transcend mere availability of schools to include issues of accessibility, equality, gendered security and affordability. Private owners focus more on business growth and profitability than about infrastructural development that responds to the demands of inclusive education, such as infrastructure that suits the needs of students with disabilities, a finding that concurs with Smith

(2010)'s finding that women and girls with disabilities face double and triple discrimination. Studies by Munir, Faiza & Daud (2023), as well as by Huynh, (2024), further concur that private tutoring exacerbates social inequalities, as low-income families cannot afford extra lessons. Moreover, education privatization may widen the gender gap between male and female students, as reports of girls who are raped during private extra lessons abound (Dembedza, 2023; Buwerimwe, 2023). The existing safeguarding framework and guidance for private extra lessons is not structured towards a proper assessment of how the welfare of students, especially female students, can be safeguarded (Ofsted, 2021).

### **Theme 3: Exacerbation of Existing Inequalities in Education along Class and Gender Line**

The study found that despite its positive affordances in providing more opportunities for quality education to those who can afford it, private education perpetuates and deepens existing inequalities in education, particularly along disability, gender and class lines.

I was a senior teacher in a public school for many years before I moved to a private school. Comparing the infrastructure and conditions of learning here, I agree that there are huge disparities between the rich and the poor in relation to the manner in which they access education. I however still do not

agree that it is private education perse which exacerbates disparity gaps between the rich and poor. Rather, it is the lack of effective regulatory frameworks for operationalization of private education, as well as the general lack of commitment to the financing of education initiatives in the country. Disparities between what private and public education institutions offer will always exist, as long as the differences between the rich and the poor exist. What I am saying is that these differences can be there but remaining positive if the government works hard first to ensure that all people have access to meaningful and human rights based education. Let private education be a choice for individuals but not the driving force for people to escape from an education system that does not meet requirements for sustainability. Government also has a right to regulate what the private education sector offers to the public, to ensure that there is not exploitation.

By providing exclusive access to quality education for those who can afford it, private schools reinforce socioeconomic disparities. Wealthy families, often from privileged backgrounds, can secure better educational opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of advantage. Conversely, low-income students, disproportionately from marginalized communities, are relegated to under-resourced public schools, limiting their prospects.

A male student from a public secondary school in the CBD commented that,

I can't complain about my school, the situation is fair in my view, but I know the challenges in public schools in some areas, especially the issue of unmotivated teachers, lack of books, computers, water and WIFI to support studies.

A female student in the same school noted that,

The situation is okay but we struggle with issues like transport to and from home, we do not have school buses that ferry us from home like students in some private schools, we see their buses in the location and we wish we could also be like them. By the time I get home I will be very tired because I compete for transport with many people every day.

A female student from a public secondary school in one location commented that,

I feel more confident in my local home school although I envy those who learn in private school. After school I come back to the school compound to fetch water for use at home, I am not ashamed because the teachers and ground men some of them live in the community and also fetch water like me. Learning in a private school would make me ashamed of my situation and even fail at school because of that.

For another girl who commented that, “*Private education unlocks unlimited opportunities, like studying Cambridge syllabus and getting a scholarship to study abroad.*” Another girl also commented that, “*You don’t hear about foreign language subjects like French and Portuguese in our secondary schools in the locations, yet some good jobs require knowledge of these languages.*” For another girl, the private education system offered security to students,

You never hear about Cambridge exam leakages, it gives those who study Cambridge in private school a good reputation. For us when ZimSec exams leak it’s hard to convince people that I passed.

The existing divide between private and public education exacerbates existing class inequalities, solidifying the gap between the haves and have-nots. Furthermore, private education can entrench gender-based disparities. Girls from low-income backgrounds often face compounded barriers, including limited access to education and societal expectations prioritizing domestic roles. Examination leakages likewise promote an education system that cannot be trusted internationally, posing a barrier to success for local students (Mashanyare & Chinamasa, 2013). Private education on the other hand unlocks limitless opportunities for a better future for students. These disparities perpetuates inter generational cycles of inequality between the rich

and the poor, further restricting social mobility and opportunities for marginalized groups. Ultimately, private education's emphasis on exclusivity and profit can undermine efforts to achieve equitable, inclusive education, entrenching existing inequalities along gender and class lines. These findings echo foregoing arguments that education privatization perpetuates socioeconomic disparities (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2023; Mhandu & Dambudzo, 2016), and that Stratified education systems mirror colonial-era disparities (Bishop, 2010).

Private education also perpetuates and deepens existing inequalities in education for students with disabilities (Dube, Ncube & Mapuvire, 2020). Many private schools lack adequate resources, infrastructure, assistive devices and trained staff to support students with diverse needs, effectively excluding them from accessing quality education. Even when private schools do provide suitable assistive devices, they often come at an additional cost, creating a financial barrier for families already struggling to support their child's needs. This selective approach to inclusivity further marginalizes students with disabilities, limiting their opportunities and social interactions. Furthermore, the emphasis on academic achievement and profit in private education can also exacerbate ableism, reinforcing harmful stereotypes about students with disabilities. Private schools may prioritize students who fit traditional

academic molds, neglecting those requiring individualized support (Gamage, Dehideniya & Ekanayake, 2021). This ablest mindset perpetuates stigma, low expectations, and segregation, denying students with disabilities equal access to education and social development. Furthermore, private education's lack of accountability and transparency can hide discriminatory practices, making it difficult for families to advocate for their child's rights. This perpetuates systemic inequality, restricting opportunities and social participation for students with disabilities.

#### **Theme 4: Policy Measures for Inclusive and Equitable Education Systems**

Objective 4's findings, derived from analyzing gaps between private and public education, inform the recommendations below, which aim to ensure that education privatization delivers quality education for all.

Firstly, ensuring accessibility and quality in education requires governments to regulate private education policies effectively. Governments should prioritize funding and establishment of free and good-quality public schools, as well as reviewing and terminating agreements with private providers that fail to comply with international and local laws.

Secondly, governments should increase the share of the national budget allocated to education,

restoring it to higher historical levels to avoid breaching the principle of non-retrogression. This involves allocating the maximum available resources, particularly through increasing the national budget. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) emphasize the importance of making education accessible to all.

Thirdly, effective regulation of private providers is crucial in avoiding stratification and systemic discrimination. Governments should follow international and local legal stipulations, as well as consider implementing the Abidjan Principles, to ensure that private providers comply with international and local laws.

### **Conclusions**

This study successfully demonstrated the pros and cons of privatization of education in relation to its ability to afford quality education outcomes to all, making a number of evidence-based conclusions. The first conclusion was that education privatization has increased physical accessibility of quality education by increasing the number of schools throughout many urban and peri-urban communities in Zimbabwe. They concurred that private schools are staffed with well remunerated and better motivated teachers than those in public schools, and that private schools have better technological equipment for ease of access to

education than public schools. However, the respondents noted that the benefits of private education only accrue to a few students from affluent families whose parents can afford the exorbitant fees, while remaining a non-option to the majority of students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Secondly, that the impact of education privatization is more on business growth in the private education sector than on improved access to quality education for all as required by international and local legal frameworks and benchmarks for sustainable development. Furthermore, the study concluded that private education perpetuates and deepens existing inequalities in education, particularly along disability, gender and class lines. The government of Zimbabwe should therefore exercise full oversight to educational processes, ensuring that they are aligned to international law requirements and standards for inclusive education for all.

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