

FINANCIAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated financial resource utilization for quality education in PSS in Delta State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with three research questions and two hypotheses guiding the study, 438 PSS in Delta State served as the population. A sample of 120 male principals and 99 female principals was drawn via stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected with a questionnaire entitled, "Financial Resource Utilization for Quality Education Questionnaire (FRUQE)". It contained 24 items and was properly validated. Reliability test was conducted through the test retest approach. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics a reliability index of 0.72 was established, mean scores, standard deviation and rank order were tools used to analyze the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that financial resource available to PSS in Delta State is spent on capital and recurrent items, school expenditure is prioritized according to immediate needs and there is fiscal accountability on the use of school fund by the end of every financial year. It was found that adequate budgeting, auditing, financial accounting and accurate keeping of financial records are some of the factors that enhance efficient utilization of school fund. The study also revealed emphasis on quality inputs, quality process, output, productivity of output and serenity of learning environment as indicators of quality education. Based on these findings the researchers recommended among others a periodic training and retraining of PSS administrators on financial resource utilization and quality education delivery by the state government.

Keywords: Financial Resource, Utilization, Quality, Public Secondary School and Education.

Introduction

School financial management involves the managerial activity that is concerned with planning, acquisition, allocation and control of financial resource of an institution with minimum financial discomfort and maximum benefit. It is not a gain saying that financial mismanagement has been on the increase over the years in our institutions, government parastatals and even in families. The rate of occurrence can be drastically reduced by employing the principles of effective financial management so as to guarantee quality education delivery in the school.

The term “quality education” is not easily measurable or assessed in institutions today. The rationale behind this is the dynamic nature of the phrase “quality education”. Quality could mean so many things to many people at the same time. What constitute a given level of quality to one person or school of thought may not constitute same level of quality to another person or school of thought, this is why its measurability becomes complex. However certain indicators will overtly indicate the quality of education in any level of education or given institution.

The World Declaration on Education For All (EFA) in the year (1999) perceived that the poor quality of education need to be improved and they recommended that education should be made available and more germane universally. Quality was identified as a fundamental requisite for accomplishing the basic equity goal (<http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr>).

Quality constitutes the nucleus of any education system, whatsoever that is happening in the school environment and classroom in particular remains significant to the learners and have a way of affecting their development and future well-being. The quality of education to be pursued is dependent on the budgetary allocation by the government to the education sector and the efficient utilization of financial resource available to the school administrator.

Finance is the most important resource in any organization, the school inclusive. It follows human resource in terms of importance. Without money, it will be difficult to execute school programmes. Money is vital in the provision of necessary school inputs relevant in the realization of set goals. It has become obvious that government alone can not finance education adequately. This is evidenced by the continuous dwindling fund provided to the education sector. School administrators are allowed to generate revenue from other sources to supplement allocations from the government. This scenario makes it rational for every school administrator to adopt efficient financial resource management. Efficient utilization of fund is the major determinant of the achievement of predetermined goals and objectives of the school. It ensures that financial priorities are established in accordance with the school objectives.

Demands of the school system for quality education delivery are numerous and the financial resources to satisfy these demands are scarce and limited in supply. Therefore, a deliberate and conscious effort must be made to ensure efficient utilization of the limited financial resource for quality education delivery. There is therefore need to examine how financial resource is utilized in public secondary schools (PSS) in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of the quality of education delivered in our secondary schools has generated so much concern in recent times. Looking at the students’ academic performance in external examinations, the facilities available and the poor commitment to duty by the teachers and school administrators, one will agree that all is not well with our secondary school system. Added to this, is the feeling that inadequate financial resource allocation and its manner of utilization may have aggravated these problems.

Nobody is sure that limited financial resource provided to PSS in Delta State is efficiently utilized. There are limited information and empirical literature in public domain to confirm that financial resource is efficiently utilized by PSS administrators in Delta State. This issue is of great concern to the researchers and it bothers them. Hence, the problem of this study is to investigate financial resource utilization for quality education delivery in PSS in Delta State; with particular reference to examining how financial resource is utilized, factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund and the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at investigating financial resource utilization for quality education in PSS in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. examine how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.
- ii. identify factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.
- iii. determine the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. How is financial resource expended in PSS in Delta State?
- ii. What are the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State?
- iii. What are the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State?

Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.
- ii. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the prudential theory propounded by Arthur Betz Laffer in 1980. The theory postulates that everybody including school managers must know how to handle and spend money judiciously. Being prudent according to him entails spending money wisely. It entails checks and balances in all financial matters. In other words, there should be no financial responsibility without accountability and prudential safeguard. The school administrators should be prudent in handling school funds and eliminate any form of unproductive cost because, no meaningful goal and objective can be achieved within the school without the efficient utilization of school fund. This will guarantee the attainment of set goals and objectives as well as quality education delivery in our schools.

Conceptual Framework

Finance according to Nwakudu (2014) is a resource, a discipline or an area of study. As a resource, he sees finance as one of the key factors of production that represents the life blood of any enterprise or institution. With adequate finance, schools can acquire all the necessary school inputs necessary for effective service delivery. Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006) see financial resource as physical cash allocated to the education sector and they noted that prudent management of this resource is critical to the achievement of education objectives.

Financial resource utilization cannot be isolated from financial management. This is because financial resource utilization is a key function performed by a financial manager in an organization for the realization of school goals and objectives. Chuke (2004) explains that financial management is the managerial activity concerned with planning, acquisition, allocation and control of financial resource of the school in order to achieve the desired goals. It involves spending money on school inputs. Educational expenditure is the total expenses incurred in acquiring goods or services used in the provision of the educational services in meeting the educational needs of a given society at any point in time (Ebong, 2013). School expenses come in form of recurrent and capital expenditure (Dede, 2014). School resources are scarce and in most cases insufficient because enough fund may not be made available for the acquisition of materials needed for educational service delivery. The available funds must be used prudently. According to Chimekwele (2016), the following factors are likely to enhance efficient fund utilization: budgeting, auditing and financial accountability. The budget provides the income and expenditure plan for a particular fiscal year. Auditing is used to confirm or refute mismanagement of school fund (Whawoo, 2004). While, financial accountability is the process of finding out whether the goal for which fund is allocated is achieved (Noske, 2014).

Quality education cannot be achieved without effective and efficient financial management. Quality education is sometimes difficult to measure but certain parameters are used to assess it. The indicators of quality education are classified into: input indicators, process indicators, output indicators and feedback indicators (UNICEF, 2000 and Chimekwele, 2016). The basic inputs are the human and material resources. According to Ebong (2005) to guarantee quality output in the education process there must be quality human resource input to pursue this goal. Agabi (2004) posits that quality education entails the provision and maintenance of adequate school facilities. Therefore the injection of quality human and material resources is very important in determining the quality of school outputs.

The process indicator of quality education reveals the quality of the curriculum, the teachers' methodologies and quality of learning experiences the students are exposed to during their process of training or schooling. The output or product indicator of quality education at any level is the stock or the worth of its products in relation to the attainment of specific objectives and the goals of that level of education (Haws and Stephens, 1990).

Method

The study which used descriptive survey research design was guided by three research questions and two hypotheses. 438 public secondary schools in Delta State constituted the population of the study. A sample of 120 male principals and 99 female principals was drawn via stratified random sampling technique. This represented 50% of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled, 'Financial Resource Utilization for Quality Education Questionnaire (FRUQE)'". The instrument which contained 24 items was properly validated and the reliability test using test retest method and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was 0.72. Mean scores, standard deviation and rank orders were used to analyse the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

Research Question One: How is financial resource expended in PSS in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean scores, standard deviation and rank order analysis of the opinion of male and female principals on how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.

S/ N	Items	Male N= 120		Female N = 99		Mean set	Rank order	Remarks
		\bar{x}_1	SD ₁	\bar{x}_2	SD ₂			
1.	Financial resource is spent on current (re-current items) expenditure.	2.87	1.12	2.83	1.10	2.85	2 nd	Agreed
2.	Capital expenditure constitute part of the items on school expenditure.	2.96	1.03	2.72	1.13	2.84	3 rd	Agreed
3.	The school expenditure is prioritized according to the immediate needs of the school.	3.01	1.05	3.07	1.02	3.04	1 st	Agreed
4.	The school spends part of her revenue on promotion of school community relationship.	2.69	1.16	2.79	1.11	2.74	6 th	Agreed
5.	There is fiscal accountability on the use of school fund by the end of every financial year.	2.62	1.15	2.91	1.05	2.77	5 th	Agreed
6.	Awards of scholarship to indigent students in the school is an item on secondary school expenditure.	2.26	1.09	2.83	1.08	2.32	7 th	Disagreed
7.	Repairs of damaged school facilities is an item on school expenditure.	2.76	1.11	2.85	1.08	2.81	4 th	Agreed
8.	Allocation of fund for expenditure is based on favouritism	2.30	1.01	2.24	1.04	2.27	8 th	Disagreed
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.68	1.09	2.72	1.08			

The data analysis in table 1 showed that all the items in the rank order 1st to 6th had mean scores that were above 2.50 (criterion mean) and were agreed on by the male and female principals in PSSS in Delta State as how financial resource is expended in PSSS in Delta State. Item 6 and 8 which had mean scores below 2.50

were disagreed on as how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State, therefore, financial resource expenditure in PSS in Delta State is prioritized according to the immediate needs of the school, financial resource is spent on re-current expenditure, capital expenditures, community relationship, repairs of damaged school facilities and there is fiscal accountability on the use of school financial resource.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean scores, standard deviation and rank order analysis of the opinion of male and female principals on the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.

S/N	Items	Male N= 120		Female N = 99		Mean set	Rank order	Remarks
		- x_1	SD ₁	- x_2	SD ₂			
1.	Adequate budgeting enhances efficient utilization of fund	2.96	1.07	3.00	1.03	2.98	1 st	Agreed
2.	Financial accounting enhances the utilization of school fund.	2.88	1.09	2.92	1.10	2.90	3 rd	Agreed
3.	School auditing enhances efficient utilization of school fund.	2.78	1.04	2.68	1.06	2.73	6 th	Agreed
4.	Auditing enhances the achievement of predetermined goals/objectives.	2.66	1.02	2.70	0.98	2.68	8 th	Agreed
5.	Accurate keeping of financial records.	2.80	1.06	2.84	1.08	2.82	4 th	Agreed
6.	Fund utilization tied to budget implementation.	2.94	1.12	2.92	1.14	2.93	2 nd	Agreed
7.	Following due process in the release of fund enhances efficient utilization of fund	2.76	0.96	2.78	0.94	2.77	5 th	Agreed
8.	Ensuring that quality goods/services are delivered	2.69	1.13	2.73	1.09	2.71	7 th	Agreed
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.89	1.06	2.82	1.05			

The data analysis in table 2 revealed that all the items in the rank order of 1st to 8th had mean set scores that are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. They were all agreed on or accepted as factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State. Therefore, the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State are: adequate budgeting, financial accounting, school auditing, accurate keeping of financial records, fund utilization tied to budgetary provisions, following due process in the release of fund and ensuring that quality goods/services are delivered.

Research Question Three: What are the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean scores, standard deviation and rank order analysis of the opinion of male and female principals on the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State.

S/N	Items	Male N= 120		Female N = 99		Mean set	Rank order	Remarks
		- x_1	SD ₁	- x_2	SD ₂			
1.	Quality education emphasis on quality inputs into the education system.	2.93	1.09	3.03	1.05	2.98	2 nd	Agreed
2.	Quality process is an integral aspect of quality in education.	2.97	1.08	2.94	1.09	2.96	3 rd	Agreed
3.	Output from the education system is an index of quality in education	3.03	1.06	2.86	1.09	2.95	4 th	Agreed
4.	Quality is measured by the level of productivity of the output from the educational system	2.93	1.07	3.19	0.99	3.06	1 st	Agreed
5.	The level of efficiency in producing a given level of output is an indicator of quality education.	2.84	1.07	2.92	1.09	2.98	8 th	Agreed
6.	The serene nature of the learning environment is an indicator of quality in education.	2.94	1.02	2.86	1.00	2.90	7 th	Agreed
7.	Quality in education reflects on quality content of the learning experiences provided for the learners.	3.01	0.98	2.87	0.96	2.94	5 th	Agreed
8.	The marketability of the output from the secondary level of education is an indicator of quality education.	2.90	1.01	2.94	1.03	2.92	6 th	Agreed
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.94	1.05	2.95	1.04			

Data analysis in table 3 showed that all the items in the rank order of 1st to 8th had mean set scores that are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. They are all agreed on or accepted as the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State. Therefore, the indicators of quality education in PSS in Delta State are: the level of productivity of the output from the educational system; the quality of inputs into the education system; the quality of the process; the quality of the output from the education system; the marketability of the output of the education system, the serenity of the learning environment and the level of efficiency in producing a given level of output within the limits of available resources.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.

Table 4: z – test analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female PSS principals on how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.

Category	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Male principals	120	2.68	1.09	217	0.68	1.96	Ho ₁ accepted
Female principals	99	2.72	1.08				

From table 4, the z-calculated value of 0.68 is far less than the z-critical value of 1.96 with 217 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female PSS principals on how financial resource is expended in PSS in Delta State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.

Table 5: z-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female PSS principals on the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.

Category	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Male principals	120	2.89	1.06	217	0.92	1.96	Ho ₂ accepted
Female principals	99	2.82	1.05				

From table 5, the z-calculated value of 0.92 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 with 217 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female PSS principals on the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

The response to eight (8) items on table 1 revealed that financial resource of PSS in Delta State is spent on current and capital expenditure prioritized according to the immediate needs of the school with fiscal accountability on its usage. These findings are in agreement with Dede (2014) that school funds should be used to promote the general welfare of education and all the students and to finance the normal, legitimate, co-curricular activities of the various individual student group.

The results in table 2 revealed that adequate budgeting, financial accountability and constant financial auditing were some of the factors that enhance efficient utilization of fund in PSS in Delta State. The observation agrees with Nosike (2014) who states that the school budget expresses a plan of action for the effective management of the school by implement its programmes and co-ordination of its activities for the fiscal year. A budget is a tool that guides the financial management practice of educational administrators and keeps them focused on realizing the educational needs. The finding also agrees with Asodike (2014) who sees financial accountability as to be liable to give account of what has been done or omitted to do with the school fund. It implies having responsibility for or reporting to others on how financial resource was utilized

in the school. The observation also agrees with Whawoo (2004) that auditing is an instrument for safeguarding the accounting system of the schools. This makes it necessary that the school account should be audited from time to time.

The findings of the study also revealed that quality education can be measured by the following indicators: inputs into the education system, process of the education system, the output of the education system, the serenity of the learning environment, level of productivity of the output, level of efficiency in producing a given output, the content of learning experience provided for the learners and the marketability of the outputs from the education system. These findings are in line with UNICEF (2000) that identified five dimensions of quality. They include: the learners, the environment, the content, the process and the outcome (output). The findings also agreed with Haws and Stephens (1990) who maintained that quality is interpreted in three areas: efficiency in meeting set goals, relevance to human and environmental needs and the pursuit of excellence and the betterment of human beings. It is not out of place to say that any educational system that the outputs are not productive i.e. contributing positively to solving societal problems is inefficient and of poor quality.

Conclusion

The life wire of any economic activity and the dynamism of the educational system of any nation is the financial resource. Its systematic allocation and efficient utilization is congruent to quality education delivery in any society. Effective and efficient utilization of financial resource in school is meant to improving quality education delivery. The school head is expected to play significant role in effective and efficient utilization of fund made available to the school to guarantee quality education delivery. The accomplishment of the desired financial objectives in the school is dependent on the level of the school administrator's financial budgeting, accountability, auditing and effective leadership ability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

- i. The school administrators should be more proactive and prudent in the use of school limited fund and constant effort should be employed to check their financial expenditure by the government to guarantee efficient utilization of financial resource.
- ii. The school administrator should embark on adequate budgeting, financial accountability and financial auditing to ensuring efficient and effective use of school financial resource.
- iii. There should be periodic training and retraining of PSS administrators on financial resource utilization and quality education delivery by the state government.

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