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Impact of Financial Management Practice on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

[1]S. A. MODIBBO., [2]S. M. Abdullahi, (Ph.D.)., [3]H. M. Barkindo (Ph. D.)

[1]Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe, Gombe State

[2,3]Vocational Education Department, Modibbo Adama University, Yola

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of financial management practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined the influence of money collection and budgeting practice on school functionality. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 576 staff across 144 senior secondary schools in Gombe State, from which a sample of 236 respondents from 59 schools was selected using Taro Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire validated by three experts. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings reveal the extent to which schools adhere to sound budgeting principles such as aligning expenditures with approved budgets, involving stakeholders, and ensuring transparency in financial management. The study concluded that effective financial management practices are critical determinants of the functionality, sustainability, and operational efficiency of public senior secondary schools. The study recommended that school administrators and the Ministry of Education should strengthen transparent financial systems, improve budgeting processes and enforce regular financial monitoring to enhance school functionality.

Key words: Financial Management Practice, School Functionality, Money Collection

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is an important tool for equipping individuals with knowledge and critical skills for survival and meaningful contributions to the economic, social, and political development of the society. It also inculcates in individuals the values, beliefs and character which enable them act in accordance with societal norms. Anachuna and Obi, (2021) opined that education is a tool for strengthening ones' intellectual power, building character, maintaining emotional balance as well as moral and cultural empowerment of individuals to bring about positive development in the society. These knowledge, skills and characters can be acquired at all levels of the nation's education program such as primary, secondary, and tertiary institution. The focus of this study is post-primary education.

Studies revealed that education is strongly influenced by the resources made available to support the process and by how these resources are managed effectively. The education goals and objectives can be achieved by means of using different resources as inputs. Among the resources, finance is a key issue to run the task of education at all levels in appropriate ways. This is due to the fact that among the resources (inputs), finance is more commonly used by schools through a process and mechanism of budgeting (Melaku, 2018).

Secondary school education is the intermediate between primary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. According to Nwaforand Robert-Okah, (2022), secondary school education provides an opportunity for primary school leavers to acquire more knowledge, build on already gained knowledge, develop skills and prepare to live effectively in a changing society full of opportunities. Senior secondary school education is designed to cater for differences in talents of primary school leavers and prepare them for career building in life. Ayeni, (2022) opined that, the senior secondary school education system occupies a center stage in human capital and national development by absorbing the products of primary schools and equipping them with skills and knowledge to become useful to the society and also proceed to further their studies in higher educational institutions. This can be achieved by functional performance the school and its stakeholders.

Functionality in the context of public senior secondary schools refers to the degree to which a school system is able to achieve its core objectives of teaching, learning, administrative efficiency, infrastructure maintenance, and student development. A functional school operates with adequate resources, sound management, and optimal service delivery that enhances student outcomes (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2019). Functionality is characterized by well-maintained physical infrastructure, motivated and qualified teachers, timely payment of salaries, effective curriculum delivery, and provision of student support services (Oluremi & Oyewole, 2018). In Nigeria, however, the functionality of many public senior secondary schools has been questioned due to persistent challenges such as underfunding, poor infrastructure, and mismanagement of financial resources (Onuma, 2020). These challenges are especially evident in states like Gombe, where limited resources must be judiciously managed to meet increasing educational demands.

Theoretical, the relationship has been established between financial management practices and school functionality. This relationship is theoretically explained by Rowe (2019), in his bucket theory of financial management. The bucket theory of financial management emphasizes the importance of utilizing the available resources for the top-most priority need of the institution, before diverting the remaining resources to other needs, in order of priority. As the name implies, the analogy of the bucket theory of financial management symbolizes the existence of five buckets hanging in stair step fashion, each below and a little to the right of the one above it. As water flows into the top bucket the bucket begins to fill. When it reaches its capacity, the water flows over the edge and into the second bucket. Each bucket could represent one of the basic financial priorities of the institution. The first bucket represents the basic needs, such as sanitary schooling environment, teaching materials and classroom tables and chairs. The second bucket represents other important needs such as equipment and facilities for sick bay or school clinic. The third bucket represents secondary needs such as recreational facilities. The fourth bucket represents financial security and includes an emergency fund and savings plan for the institution. The fifth bucket represents students' insurance needs, including life, health, and property protection. The water that flows from bucket to bucket represents the resources available to the secondary school principal. This process continues until all the buckets are filled.

The bucket theory of financial management is related and relevant in the present study, as it will expose the principals to the knowledge that through a common-sense approach, they can achieve proper utilization of the available resources through systematic approach to top-most priority need of the school, rather than trying to solve all the needs at a time, with same limited resource. To build a sound financial base for the school, each bucket must be filled before resources are diverted to the next one. First resources are used to provide basic needs. This bucket theory of financial management is a common-sense approach to planning an institution's financial future. It is related to the present research as its application will provide a systematic way for secondary school principals to set financial priorities and reach financial goals in order to build a sound foundation for the use of limited financial resources. Much as this theory emphasis order of priority it did not pay attention to some other salient matters of finance like issue of preferences hence the picking other theory of financial management.

Financial management practices are vital tools for ensuring the functionality of schools. These practices involve processes such as money collection, budgeting, expenditure control, financial monitoring, and fraud detection. Effective financial management ensures that available funds are efficiently allocated, properly accounted for, and used for purposes that enhance school operations (Omoregie & Egwunyenga, 2018). Where financial management is weak or corrupt, schools often experience delayed salary payments, deteriorating facilities, and lack of teaching materials, which negatively affect their functionality (Adeyemi & Ogundele, 2017; Ezeani & Oladele, 2019).School financial management is a fundamental to preparing and equipping school principals with financial competencies that will enabled them to be responsible and accountable for funds that have been received for specific school objectives. It will also equip them with managerial competencies (For instance, budgeting) that will enable them to make contribution towards the improvement of the overall productivity of the school (Bischoff & Mestry, 2020).

Budgeting is a strategy employed by school administrators to help ascertain how much money will be needed and for what purposes. Edem (2018) define an educational budget as a written plan outlining how different educational programmes scheduled for the year or another defined length of time are to be maintained. To put it another way, a budget is a plan that outlines how resources, especially money and effort, will be allocated and used over a given amount of time. Budgeting is an essential tool. The principal aim of budget administration is to guarantee that the outcomes the school attains adequately warrant the monetary investment. Ubong and Oladele (2018) state that there are three main components to the school budget. These three are the budget, the revenue plan, and the educational plan. All three add up to a working budget for the school. Written or spoken records pertaining to individuals and/or facilities in the school that are kept on file for future reference are known as school records. Accountability is impossible without record keeping, which is a vital component of the educational system.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges of financial mismanagement affect the quality of education in general and the participation of community, parent and donors in financial contribution to support schools in particular. It also affects the relationship among teachers, students, school principals and parent teachers' association (PTA). It also creates obstacle and affects the implementation of different education strategies which is formulated by the government at different levels.

In Gombe State, there are growing concerns regarding the adequacy and efficiency of financial management practices in public senior secondary schools. Issues such as insufficient funding, misallocation of resources, lack of transparency, and inadequate internal controls have been reported. To support this, (Ogun 2023), posited that mismanagement of school financial resources arising from fraudulent practices and embezzlement of funds is an indicator of financial misappropriation in public senior secondary schools in Gombe State. There appears to be cases of misuse, embezzlement of allocated funds and manipulation of financial reports in public senior secondary school schools in the State. Financial indiscipline, irregularities, errors, fraud and misallocation of resources could be explained by weak administrative control measures put in place and applied by principals of public senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

However, the problem of inadequate instructional facilities in secondary schools in Gombe State do not exclusively rest on funding as often depicted, rather the problems are most likely made complex due to poor financial management by the principals. Some of the principals are accused of lacking the necessary training required of financial managers while others are accused of imposing illegal levies on their students, neglecting budgetary plans, delaying disbursement of funds for fraudulent purposes. This situation apparently creates a turbulent atmosphere for the success of teaching-learning process.

Financial management practices of principals in Gombe State have become a sensitive issue over the years because of the growing public and government interest in the provision of funds for the implementation of school programmes. The public expects the school administrators to ensure prudent management of school funds, but on the contrary, there are speculations and accusations of financial mismanagement by principals such as lack of initiative by principals to create other sources of funding the school, neglect of budgetary plans in financing school programmers, poor disbursement of funds, lack of trained personnel such as the bursars/cashiers, lack of training in financial management by some principals, illegal levies imposed on students, incompletion of projects already approved and paid for by the government, abuse of PTA funds, poor recordkeeping as well as poor auditing and accounting system. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap of assessing the impact of financial management practices on the functionality of public senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the impact of financial management practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State. Specifically, the study sought to:

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i. Determine the impact of money collection practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

ii. Determine the impact of budgeting practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

Research Questions

In line with the purpose of this study, the following research questions were raised:

i. What is the impact of money collection practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State?

ii. What is the impact of budgeting practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance

i. H_{O1}: Money collection practice has no significant impact on the functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State.

ii. H_{O2}: Budgeting practice has no significant impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study consists of 144 senior secondary schools as well as 576 respondents. These respondents comprise of Principal, Vice Principal, Bursar and one class teacher from each secondary schools across Gombe State respectively. A sample size of 59 senior secondary schools as well as 236 respondents, comprises of Principal, Vice Principal, Bursar and one classroom teacher from each of the selected schools. These sample were selected using Taro Yamane's formula, which gave rise to 295 sampled for the study. Out of these sample 59 were senior secondary schools whereas 236 comprises of both the Principal, Vice Principal and Bursars of all the sampled schools. Furthermore, 4 people were selected from each school. To do this selection, direct approach was used for the Principals and Bursars, this is because there was only one Principal and Bursar in each of the sampled schools. This gave a total of 118 respondents among the Principals and Bursars. On the other hand, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 118 Vice Principals and classrooms teacher in each of the sampled schools. To do that, YES or NO was written on a piece of paper and reshuffled. All those that picked YES were selected while those that picked NO were not selected respectively. This was done to give everyone a chance of being selected. The questionnaire items were also distributed to the respondents in line with the sampling approach explained above. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A were used to illicit information on the bio data of the respondent while section B were used to illicit information on the questionnaire items designed for the study. The instruments were validated by two experts from the Department of Vocational Education, who were not below the rank of a senior lecturer, from Modibbo Adama University, Yola. The reliability of the instrument was established through pilot testing of the instrument at Jalingo Local Government Area (LGA) Taraba State, using 5 secondary schools out of which 30 respondents were selected. These comprised of 5 Principals, 5 Vice Principals, 5 Bursars and 15 classroom teachers respectively. The results obtained were analyzed using split-half method. And the result from the two groups were tested using PPMC, which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.75 and was adjudged reliable for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions at the benchmark of 2.50. All the mean responses that was equal to or above 2.50 were considered agreed to the research questions. While, those mean responses below 2.50 were considered disagreed to the research questions. A linear regression analysis was used to test the null

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hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All those hypotheses with a P-value of less than the Alpha value at 0.05 level of significance, were rejected. While those hypotheses with p-value above 0.05 level of significance were retained respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study were presented based on the research questions and hypotheses as follows:

Research Question One: What is the impact of money collection practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State?

Table 1: Mean Response Scores on the Impact of Money Collection Practice on The Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State

s/n	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Div	Rmks
1	Our payment receipts for all school fees are issued promptly.	3.24	0.61	Agreed
2	Our school collects PTA contributions from the students regularly.	3.11	0.78	Agreed
3	My school ensures that record-keeping of all financial collections is up to date.	3.10	0.78	Agreed
4	Our school collects school fees using official channels.	3.05	0.82	Agreed
5	Our financial collection practices comply with Ministry of Education guidelines.	3.00	0.76	Agreed
6	Our school fees collection is supervised by the school bursar or designated officer.	2.97	0.77	Agreed
7	Parents are informed about payment methods and deadlines.	2.96	0.74	Agreed
8	All our school fees collected are deposited in the school account without delay.	2.86	0.74	Agreed
9	Our school conducts auditing of all financial collections periodically.	2.85	0.78	Agreed
10	Our school follows established procedures for collecting internally generated revenue.	2.80	0.79	Agreed
	Grand mean	**2.99**	**0.76**	Agreed

Results from Table 1 show the mean rating and standard deviation for the impact of money collection practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The table revealed that all the 10 items had their mean values ranged from 2.80 to 3.24 were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50 indicating that all the items were in agreement with the research question one that money collection practice had an impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The table further revealed that the standard deviation of all the 10 items ranged from .61 to .82 which imply that there was less variability in the opinion of the respondents. The grand mean is 2.99 which is again above the cutoff point of 2.50. This also implies that money collection practice had an impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Research question Two: What is the impact of budgeting practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State?

Table 2: Mean Response Scores on the Impact of Budgeting Practice on The Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State

s/n	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Div	Rmks
1	Our school always tries to balance between estimated income and expenditure.	2.91	0.67	Agreed
2	Our school prepares budgets that reflect the priority needs of our activities.	2.90	0.75	Agreed
3	Our school expenditures are made in line with the approved budget.	2.90	0.84	Agreed
4	Our school reviews their budget conduct at the end of each academic calendar.	2.88	0.86	Agreed
5	There is a financial committee in my school that oversees the school's budgeting process.	2.79	0.73	Agreed
6	Our school stakeholders are involved in the school budgeting process.	2.78	0.90	Agreed
7	Our school budget is usually approved by the relevant education authorities.	2.72	0.98	Agreed
8	Our school often prepares annual budgets for financial activities.	2.72	0.88	Agreed
9	Our school budget implementation is monitored periodically.	2.68	0.87	Agreed
10	Our school always tries to make her budget process transparent to all staff.	2.49	0.93	Agreed
	Grand mean	**2.78**	**0.84**	Agreed

Results from Table 2 show the mean rating and standard deviation for the impact of budgeting practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The table revealed that all the 10 items had their mean values ranged from 2.49 to 2.90 were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50 indicating that all the items were in agreement with the research question two that budgeting practice had an impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The table further revealed that the standard deviation of all the 10 items ranged from .67 to .98 which imply that there was less variability in the opinion of the respondents. The grand mean is 2.78 which is again above the cutoff point of 2.50. This also implies that budgeting practice had an impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Test of Null Hypotheses

$H0_1$: Money collection practice has no significant impact on the functionality of Senior Secondary School in Gombe State, Nigeria

Table 3a: Test of Linear Regression Analysis for the Impact of Money Collection Practices on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1439.003	1	1439.003	88.902	.000[b]
	Residual	4440.069	235	16.205		

	Total	5879.072	236			
a. Dependent Variable: Functionality of senior secondary schools						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Money collection practices						

Table 3b. Model Summary for the Impact of Money Collection Practices on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.496[a]	.245	.242	4.02550
a. Predictors: (Constant), Money collection practices				

From Tables 3 above, the linear regression analysis shows that there is a significant impact of money collection practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. This is because the F = 88.902, (df 236, 235), $P < 0.05$ level of significance. Also, the computed p-value (0.000) which is less than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that money collection practices had a positive impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. with R-square value of (0.245), which indicates that, more than 25 % of the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State was attributed to the money collection practices.

H_{02}: Budgeting practice has no significant impact on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State

Table 4a: Test of Linear Regression Analysis for the Impact of Budgeting Practices on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1466.654	1	1466.654	92.076	.000[b]
	Residual	4412.418	235	16.104		
	Total	5879.072	236			
a. Dependent Variable: Functionality of senior secondary schools						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Budgeting practices						

Table 4b. for the Impact of Budgeting Practices on the Functionality of Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.499[a]	.249	.247	4.01294
a. Predictors: (Constant), Budgeting practices				

From Tables 4 above, the linear regression analysis shows that there is a significant impact of budgeting practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. This is because the F = 92.076, (df 236, 235), $P < 0.05$ level of significance. Also, the computed p-value (0.000) which is less than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that budgeting practices had a positive impact on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. with R-square value of (0.249), which indicates that, more than 25 % of the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State was attributed to the budgeting practices.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

From research question one in Table 1, the findings revealed that there a significant impact of money collection practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State. This finding also is supported by the findings from the test of null hypotheses which revealed a significant impact of money collection practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. This finding corroborated with the finding of Bitrus and Ibanga (2024) who reported that well-structured financial management practices (Money collection) lead to better infrastructure, enhanced learning resources, and overall academic improvement. Thus, the results highlight the importance of transparent and accountable financial systems in fostering operational effectiveness and sustaining educational quality in public secondary schools. Ultimately, the evidence confirms that sound money collection practices are essential for cultivating functional, resource-efficient, and performance-driven educational institutions in Gombe State. The p- value (0.001) coefficient also confirmed a strong statistical relationship between efficient revenue collection and improved school operations. This implies that schools that employ transparent, accountable, and well-coordinated collection systems perform better in resource allocation and service delivery. The finding observed that effective financial management systems directly enhance the sustainability of educational institutions. Hence, proper money collection practices are indispensable for maintaining financial discipline and ensuring operational continuity in public schools.

From research question two in Table 2, revealed that the findings had a significant impact of budgeting practice on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State. This finding also is supported by the findings from the test of null hypotheses two which revealed a significant impact of budgeting practices on the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. These findings corroborated with the findings of Abdullahi (2021), who argue that responsive budgeting to institutional needs leads to better instructional delivery and fosters accountability in education. However, the relatively high standard deviation values indicate inconsistencies in implementation across schools which then revealing disparities in financial planning capabilities and institutional discipline. Although, our school always tries to make her budget process transparent to all staff. This is because limited transparency can undermine staff trust and may stifle innovation and collaborative problem-solving, thus weakening the overall capacity for effective resource management. Transparency in financial planning is fundamental to accountability and institutional integrity, as emphasised by Agbede et al. (2024) and Iwerebor and Okafor (2024), who argue that engaging stakeholders in budgeting processes builds ownership, boosts morale, and strengthens institutional cohesion. Despite these shortcomings, the overall response pattern suggests that budgeting practices in Gombe State's public senior secondary schools contribute immensely to operational functionality, especially when aligned with policy priorities and implemented consistently. This finding aligns with the views of Obiweluozor and Ogunbiyi (2022), who assert that effective budgeting is crucial for sustainable educational administration, ensuring the efficient allocation of limited resources, enhancing transparency, and ultimately improving school performance and student outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that effective financial management practices encompassing money collection and budgetary are indispensable determinants of the functionality and sustainability of senior secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The findings empirically demonstrate that schools with structured, transparent, and accountable financial systems exhibit significantly higher levels of operational efficiency, resource utilization, and educational outcomes. Each tested hypothesis consistently revealed that financial prudence and institutional governance are closely intertwined, indicating that sound fiscal practices not only enhance administrative coordination but also strengthen the quality of teaching and learning environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to enhance the functionality of senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

i. School administrators should institutionalize transparent and accountable money collection systems supported by digital tracking tools to minimize leakages and foster stakeholder confidence in financial operations.

ii. The Ministry of Education should strengthen budget preparation and implementation processes by providing capacity-building workshops for school leaders and bursars to ensure that budgeting decisions are data-driven and aligned with institutional priorities.

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