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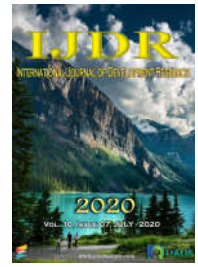
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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AVAILABILITY AND EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Financial resources are described as materials of monetary value which can be expended on expenditure items. Individuals and organizations such as public secondary schools need financial resources to carry out operation in order to achieve objectives. Availability of financial resources to public secondary schools in Ebonyi State refers to both the percentage of government expenditure allocated to the sector and the ones raised from other sources by principals. These financial resources ought to be effectively utilized to achieve goals. This paper investigated availability and extent utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State using descriptive survey approach. A questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Availability and Utilization of Financial Resources (AUFRR)" was designed, validated and tested for reliability to serve as the instrument for data collection. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Among the findings is that sufficient financial resources are not available in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. It was recommended among others that Ebonyi state government school provide sufficient financial resources to the public secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Financial resources are materials of monetary value which can be expended on expenditure items. They are one out of other resources necessary for running any organization such as schools. Indeed, effective operation of schools especially in Ebonyi State in terms of the quality of education offered is largely dependent on the provision and usage of financial resources. Financial resources are needed to facilitate the implementation of school policies and programmes; to enable activities such as educational tours and excursions to take place; to involve students in co-curricular activities such as music and sports and to develop schools as educational establishment (Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development (1993). Provision of financial resources to state secondary schools is very crucial because a dull and non stimulating school environment without adequate financial resources for its operation offer little or no educational experiences as different from a school where financial resources are available and properly utilized. Financial resources availability refers to a situation where provisions are made for requisite capital in order to carry out desired

operations by individuals or organizations. Financial resources available for Ebonyi State secondary schools is the percentage of Government Expenditure allocated to sector for its operations. It also includes financial resources from other sources such as Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA), Wealthy Individuals, Organizations, Special Grant, Rental, Farm produce, Donations, among Others. These resources should be available for utilization by the school principals that are both the head and Chief Accounting officers of the different schools. Ebonyi State owned secondary schools are located both in urban and rural areas. It is expected that what obtains in the rural secondary schools in terms of financial resources availability and utilization should equally be obtained in urban secondary schools since there is no disparity in educational objectives to be achieved at that level of educational system. It is therefore expected that there should be no disparity between urban and rural state secondary schools on the provision and utilization of financial resources. Most State secondary school principals in Ebonyi State might not be aware of the existence of some of these financial resources which ought to be harnessed for effective running of the schools. The situation makes the 143 public secondary schools in the state appear to

be lacking needed financial resources. Olatunji (2001) in Maduewesi (2011) argued that financial resources are either not available in most public secondary schools or insufficient. Consequently, Ezeocha (1985) opined that any system or project without adequate financial resources is quite an uphill task which could lead to either non-accomplishment or frustration on the job. This seems to be the situation in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Financial resources utilization is one of the major tasks of a school principal. The success of the school programme depends much on the way the financial inputs are utilized and this, in turn affects the overall performance of each Secondary School. It is as a result that Agabi (1998) stated that a greater proportion of our secondary education objectives are achieved when there is rational use of a given financial resources than when rationality is not attained. Since financial resources constitute the nerve center of schools the resources must therefore be utilized for the school to achieve its objectives. After all, proper utilization of school financial resources is an important component of good school administration. Against this background therefore, the logical basis for this study is to investigate extent of availability and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Statement of the problem: This study is being motivated by the belief that adequate financial resources are not available to state owned secondary schools in Ebonyi State and that principals of these schools do not make effective use of available financial resources, Ibiam (2010) observed that the quality of educational experiences offered in Ebonyi State owned secondary schools were poor as "a result of insufficient financial resources and inability of principals to properly utilize the available ones. The schools lack necessary instructional material, equipment and development in infrastructure thereby hampering effective teaching/learning with its serious consequences on the overall development of the State and the nation." In most of the schools, students study under mango trees for lack of sufficient classroom blocks. Teachers do not settle down because enough sitting space and material are lacking. Worst still, it has been difficult to carry out minor repairs sufficiently on the scarcely available infrastructure just as it is difficult to replace damage important school materials such as sports equipment. In fact, most of the secondary schools appear dilapidated and therefore not conducive for teaching and learning. As a result, the teachers lack motivation to ensure that effective school works go on. The present state of rural and urban public secondary schools in terms of existence of infrastructural facilities also calls for an investigation into the extent financial resources are available and utilized in the schools. It is sad that these problems exist which may be due to poor sense of priority in financial resources allocation to public secondary schools hence the "no money explanation" usually given by secondary school managers. It seems also that some principals depend only on government allocation of financial resources not being aware of other sources of financial resources and equally lack the ability to control and properly utilize financial resources. As a result of the observed setback in achieving secondary education objectives in the state, it is the problem of this study to investigate the extent of availability and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Question: The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the extent of availability of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
- What is the extent of utilization of available financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Hypotheses

To facilitate the study, the following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- The availability of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on the location of the school.
- The utilization of financial resources in public secondary school by principals in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on the location of school.

Summary of Literature Review: Several definitions of finance have been provided by authorities in the area. One of such authorities is Ozigi (1997), that referred to finance as budget, which is the expected total revenue and expenditure for each year, based on the estimates of income accruing to the government or organization. Also in trying to explain what finance means, Ezra (2009) described it as a body of facts, principles and theories dealing with the raising and using of funds by individuals, business firms, educational institutions and government. He listed some important functions of finance as including:- Supervision of each receipts and payments and safeguarding of cash balance, custody and safeguarding of securities, insurance policies and other valuable papers and record keeping and reporting. The definition included, "Prudent management. Accordingly, finance refers to the science of controlling money and not only raising of funds for the purpose of achieving an organizational objectives but it also entails the allocation -and prudent management of such funds. Finance also involves supervision of receipts and payments of money made available to an organization or institution for a project or undertaking.

Similarly, Ogonnaya (2000) classified it thus: business finance, agricultural finance, public finance and education which is described as the process by which tax revenues and other resources are derived for the establishment and operation of education institutions as well as the process by which these resources are allocated to institutions in different geographical areas. Basically, availability and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools can fall within the spectrum of "education finance which otherwise can be referred to as school finance" (Aju, Eya, Odo, Ede and Ugwu, (1997). School finance can be regarded as a means by which needed financial resources can be provided and expended in line with educational demands of a given school. To effectively determine the meaning of financial resources, the meanings of finance and resources have to be married together. Since finance from the fore-gone definitions means money and resources; materials a correlation of both brings in money-materials of monetary value which can be expended on expenditure items. Federal government of Nigeria (1998), stated that the broad goal of secondary education should be to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and also to prepare secondary school students for higher education. It is necessary to emphasis that the goal of secondary education as stated by the National policy on Education may not be attained without adequate financial resources.

Ebonyi State own secondary schools need financial resources for setting up infrastructure, procurement of school equipment, for instance sports and music equipment; and appropriate instructional materials for their educational services. It has previously been stated that the public secondary schools in Ebonyi state as well as those of any other state in Nigeria does operate effectively without financial resources. These financial resources accrue to the school from different sources. Oguntoye (1998), stated that unlike primary education, there is no specific pattern of funding public secondary schools arguing that the Federal Colleges are financed by the Federal Government while state secondary schools are financed by the state government with little or no-assistance from the Federal Government. Apart from the source stated, secondary education financial resources can be made available through the support given by parents and other private contributors. For instance and the Parent-Teachers-Associations (PTA) contributes significantly to secondary school financing, as the statement below is true especially in the southern part of Nigeria where Ebonyi State belongs.

There are state secondary schools where PTA employs teachers and shoulders the responsibilities of paying the emolument of such teachers. The Association in some instances, has also built classrooms, provide teaching materials, provide equipment and vehicles to promote good teaching-learning process. (Oguntoye 1998:22).

Similarly, the Old Students Associations are not left out in the business of contributing towards availability of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. They have in various ways contributed immensely for the rehabilitation of important school facilities such as classroom blocks, laboratory blocks, tennis courts and leading parts within the school. Similarly, Oguntoye (1998), also noted that philanthropists render invaluable assistance to different State secondary schools to promote qualitative education. From the discussion so far, it could be deduced that Ebonyi State secondary schools can utilize financial resources which may be available from or all of the following sources; budgetary allocation, PTA routine contributions levies, rentals, local fund raising and overhead cost to principals. On the extent of availability of the given financial resources, Adesina and Ogunaju (2014), observed that the present level of financial resources availability to State secondary schools is increasingly becoming inadequate to meet certain vital needs of secondary education such as acquisition of instructional materials and equipment. One of the reasons for the averred inadequacy of financial resources might be that some principals are not aware of the sources. Commenting on the insufficiency of available financial resources for public secondary schools, Idris (2015) observed that the infrastructural and academic situations for state secondary schools are extremely poor due to inadequate funding. There has been lack of sensitization of wealthy individuals, groups and associations to help in providing financial resources to state secondary schools. Williams (2012) is of the same view that most wealthy individuals and organization seem not to show interest in funding of public secondary' schools contrary to what was obtainable in the past when there was notable assistance from individuals and groups other than the governments. According to William (2012) there seems to be observable difference in the operations of rural and urban secondary schools as could be noticed in the levels of infrastructural development.

Onuma (2016) is in consensus with Williams having lamented that most state secondary schools especially in the rural areas were neglected in terms of infrastructural provision. Equally noted is that most principals in urban secondary schools do not effectively utilize financial resources and as a result fail to renovate the schools when necessary. From the above, it seems that generally, state secondary schools lack adequate financial resources. Several reasons have been adduced to this effect to include; politics, lack of interest in funding education by most individuals and organizations, inadequate revenue allocation to the secondary education level among other reasons. Every secondary school principal is therefore expected to be accountable for the school finances by ensuring that necessary records are kept on all financial transactions by designated authorities. It is on the same issue that Oguntoye (1998), asserted that "for this purpose every monthly, termly and biannual expenses ought to be clearly stated. Items are listed and cost is given.

This is a means of fund control and fund accountability".

To instill proper financial utilization into the budget of any school Ezeocha (1990), advocated what he calls the concentration of the authorization of expenditure in one hand, the principal. The principal could allow any of the officers to utilize financial resources based on authorization. For proper financial resources utilization the principal should provide necessary accounts book for the purpose of entering both the detailed amount budgeted for receipt and expenditures. By keeping such double entry record such as ledger possible errors that could occur will be detected. Financial resources utilization should therefore be in line with items on secondary school expenditure such as water supply, electricity bill, repairs and renovations and procurement of instructional materials. Diversion of fund does not help proper financial utilization. Instead, real financial resources utilization according to Ezeocha (1990) can be better ensured through what he called "Cash accounting" Cash account involves the process of finding the difference between the total expenditure up to date for a particular account and the amount budgeted for that account. On extent of utilization of financial resources, it is worthy of note that proper utilization of financial resources is an important component of good school administration. Financial resources constitute the nerve center of the school" and must therefore be managed for the school to achieve stated objectives. It is in line with this that Fumilayo (2010), observed that most principals do not judiciously utilize financial resources available in schools and called for financial discipline among the principals. Adekunle (2011) earlier on cautioned that "Principals of State secondary schools should not see themselves as money grabbers or ten per centers...."

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive survey. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study.

Research Questions

- What is the extent of availability of financial resources in state secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
- What is the extent of utilization of financial resources in public secondary in Ebonyi State.

Hypotheses

- The availability of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on location of school.
- 2. The utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on location of schools

The population of the study consists of all the 143 principals of approved public secondary schools in Ebonyi State out of which, 116 are in rural secondary schools while 27 are in Urban Secondary schools. The entire population was used for the study as no sample was drawn. The questionnaire titled "Availability and Utilization of Financial Resources (AUFR)" was the instrument used in data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Administration and planning and measurement and evaluation at Ebonyi State University. The instrument was also tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha which yielded alpha of 0.72. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the 143 respondents through the help of some research assistants. Thereafter, the instruments were collated for analysis. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance. The following decisions guided conclusions on the data analysed. 2.5 score was used to determine great extent of availability; 2.0 score for moderate extent; 1.5 for low extent and 1.0 for very low extent.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Data for research question one were collected using items I -11 of the research instrument. Data collected were analyzed on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation. Summary of result is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Perception of Respondents on availability of Financial Resources

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD
1	Allocation from Federal Govt.	1.16	.39
2	Allocation from State Govt.	3.06	.73
3	Allocation from Local Govt	1.33	.47
4	Fees paid by students (tuition)	1.02	.14
5	Donations from Charity Organizations	1.89	.45
6	Sales from farm produce	2.71	.70
7	Money realized from rental services	1.34	.69
8	Contributions from the PTA	3.32	.86
9	Donations from past students Association	2.00	.47
10	Money realized from special launching	1.52	.66
11	Money realized from special levy	1.20	.44
Total		20.55	
Grand mean		1.87	
Number of resources – 11			

Table 1. Shows that 3 items were available in great extent, 1 in moderate extent, 6 in low extent and 1 in very low extent. Since the grand mean of 1.87 is less than 2.5 and 2.0 benchmark for availability, it then means that financial resources are scarcely available in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools. Data for this research question were collected using items 12-24 of the research instrument.

Data collected were analyzed on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation. Summary of result is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Perception of Respondents on Utilization of Financial Resources

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD
12	Construction of new blocks	1.59	.64
13	Purchase of equipment	1.92	.66
14	Purchase of stationery	2.93	.66
15	General maintenance	2.93	.56
16	Electricity bill	1.53	.89
17	Workshop /seminar	1.62	.49
18	Excursion trip	1.39	.65
19	Sports	2.69	.85
20	Public Relations	2.14	.48
21	Purchase of instructional materials	2.69	.88
22	Hiring of resource persons	1.57	.75
23	Vehicle maintenance	1.08	.27
24	Payment of minor claims	1.34	.47
Total		25.42	
Grand mean		1.96	
Number of resources - 13			

Table 2. Shows that 4 items were been utilized in great extent, 1 in moderate extent, 7 in low extent and 1 in very low extent. This implies that there is low utilization of financial resources in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools. Result on table 3 shows X^2 Cal of 135.59 and X^2 sig of 0.00 under the degree of freedom of 41 with the probability level of 0.05. Since the X^2 calculated is greater than the X^2 significant, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

HO2: The utilization of financial resources in state secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on location of schools.

Table 3. Chi-square of Significance on Availability been Dependent on Location

S/NO	Location	N	X	SD	DF	X ² CAL	X ² SIG	DECISION
1.	Urban	22	20.39	0.55	41	135.59	0.00	NA
2.	Rural	121	21.38	0.52				
*P = <0.05								

Data collected was analyzed using chi-square test. Summary of result is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Chi-square of significance on utilization been dependent on location

S/NO	Location	N	X	SD	DF	X ² CAL	X ² SIG	DECISION
1.	Urban	22	27.01	0.61	41	120.32	0.00	NA
2.	Rural	121	25.27	0.63				
*P = <0.05								

Result on table 4 shows x^2 cal of 120.32 and X^2 significant of 0.00 under the degree of freedom of 41 with the probability level of 0.05. Since the X^2 calculated is greater than the X^2 significant, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Summary of Major Findings

Below are major findings of the study.

- Financial resources for running state secondary schools in Ebonyi State are insufficiently available.
- Utilization of available financial resources is low
- Availability of financial resources is significantly dependent on location of school.
- Utilization of financial resources is significantly dependent on location of school.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 provided answer to the question, from the analysis only 3 out of 11 items are available in great extent having attained the decision score of 2.5. 1 out of 11 attained the decision score of 2.0 and therefore is available in moderate extent. Similarly, 6 out of 11 items attained the decision score of 1.5 and therefore is available in low extent while 1 out of 11 attained the decision score of 1.00 thereby available in very low extent. Going by the analysis, financial resources for running state secondary schools in Ebonyi state is scarcely available. The result is quite revealing, portraying the assertion of Alu, et-al (1997) which stated that financial resources are scarcely available to principals of state secondary schools for the execution of their programmes. Research question two was posed to elicit the response of the respondents about the extent of utilization of financial resources.

Table 2 shows the perception of the respondents about the extent of utilization of available financial resources. From the analysis it was discovered that only 4 out of 13 items of financial resources reached the decision score of 2.5 for great extent of utilization. 1 out of 13 in moderate extend of utilization by reaching the decision score of 2.0, 7 out of 13 in low extent by reaching 1.5 decision score while 1 out of 13 is in very low extent of utilization by reaching the decisions score of 1.00. In effect, only 4 out of the, 13 items are areas financial resources are moderately utilized while the remaining 9 are areas where financial resources are utilized in low extent. That means, the extent of utilization of financial resources is very low. Wilfred (2001) lamented the low extent to which financial resources are utilized by the principals of state secondary schools Table 3 showcased the result of hypotheses one where it is indicated non acceptance of the null hypothesis which would now be replaced by an alternative one thus: the availability of financial resources in state secondary school in Ebonyi State is significantly dependent on location of schools. Table 4 provided answer to hypothesis 4. The result of hypothesis 4 shown in table 4 confirmed the conclusion by not accepting that the utilization of financial resources in state secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significantly dependent on location of schools. The null hypothesis is therefore replaced by an alternative type, which states thus: the utilization of financial resources in state secondary schools in Ebonyi State is significantly dependent on school location.

Conclusion

The result of discussions on the data presented and analysed indicate that financial resources are not sufficiently available in Ebonyi State public secondary schools. Worst still, the little resources available are not judiciously utilized by the principals. However," the principals in charge of urban

secondary schools seem to utilize available financial resources on areas of school needs better than the principals in rural secondary schools. Since financial resources are indispensable to schools administration, there is need to provide and make effective use of the resources to achieve educational objectives.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- Since financial resources are necessary for educational development in state owned secondary schools they should be made sufficiently available to the schools to enhance their operation.
- Principals of state owned secondary schools should effectively utilize available financial resources for the benefit of their schools.
- State secondary schools in both urban and rural areas should develop at the same pace. Financial resources should be made available to them without disparity.
- Government should come up with financial guideline to enable principals of state secondary schools have operational document with regards to the use of financial resources in their schools. This will help to check misappropriation of fund by some principals.

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