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Financial Control Practices and Accountability in the Public Sector in Nigeria

Olaoye, Samuel Adebayo[1], Ogbebor, Peter Ifeanyi[2], Elelu, Funmi Silifat[3]

[1]Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

[2]Lecturer, Department of Finance, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

[3]Masters Students, Department of Finance, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

ABSTRACT: The Nigerian government has for a long time recognized problems relating to mismanagement of public funds evidenced by lack of transparency, poor accountability, corruption, financial leakages and budgeting processes, financial excesses, poor cash management and resource allocation. This is coupled with the fact that there is a near total absence of the notion and ethics of accountability in the conduct of public activities in the country. This study investigates the effects of financial control practices on accountability in Nigeria public sector. This is due to dearth of literature in this area of study.

The cross-sectional survey research design was employed, the data were primarily sourced by means of a questionnaire (research instrument) and empirically analyzed. The target population of this study was the staff (2,125) of public/civil servants working in the Accounts and Finance departments of Lagos and Ogun States government Secretariats, Taro Yaman was adopted to arrive at 337 sample size. Data were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 version software, inferences were made at 5% significant level.

The study showed that financial control has a significant influence on accountability of public sector (*Adj.* R^2= 0.468, $F(4, 349)$ = 77.692, $P< 0.05$). Based on this finding, the concluded that there is significant effect of financial control practices on accountability in the public sector. The study also established that financial control has a significant influence on responsibility of public sector (*Adj.* R^2= 0.141, $F(4, 349)$ = 15.296, $P< 0.05$). Therefore the study concluded that there is significant effect of financial control practices on responsibility of public sector accountability.

The study therefore, concludes that there is a positive significant effect between financial control practices and accountability in public sector. Based on the findings of this study the study recommends that: The existing physical control assets should be strengthened in order to ensure effective financial control and improve on accountability thereafter due to the insignificant effect of physical control of assets has on accountability in public sector. Effective and efficient application of financial control methods and management strategies to accountability in the public sectors will compel each employee to be more serious, focused and loyal in the discharge of their responsibilities.

KEYWORDS: Accountability, Financial control practices, Practices on openness and transparency, Physical control of assets, Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

The aim of financial controls in the public sector is to provide an overall guiding framework for a sound and efficient management of resources. The goal of having a strong system of financial control is to promote the government's ability to reach its objectives, providing reliable financial data, safeguarding assets and records, evaluating operational efficiency through budgetary control and encouraging adherence to prescribed policies and regulations. Thus, financial control practices facilitate effectiveness and efficiency of operations thereby improving the reliability of internal and external financial reporting and assist in compliance with laws and regulations (Wachira, Ngahu & Wagoki, 2014).

According to Sambo and Imiete (2018), the aim of financial controls is to provide an overall guiding framework for a sound and efficient management of resources in the public sector. Mulu (2018) stated that financial control practices promote government ability to reach its objectives, safeguard assets and records, enhances operational efficiency through budget and encourage adherence to prescribed policies and regulations. Nick (2014) noted that financial control practices in developing economies focuses majorly on taxation and debt management, which influences resource allocation and income distribution. The author stated that the spending portion covers the budget cycle, including budget preparation, internal controls, accounting, internal and external audit, procurement, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Hayles (2015) opined that effective financial controls including the maintenance of proper accounting records helps to ensure that the institution is not unnecessarily exposed to financial risks and that the financial information is used only within the business. This also contributes to the safeguarding of assets, including the prevention and detection of fraud. Walters and Dunn (2014) stated that financial control activities are the policies and procedures that help ensure that management directives are carried out. Financial control systems are put in place in order to ensure that activities are carried out in compliance with the prescribed policies and processes which also ensures that the assets and resources are protected, accounting records are kept in an accurate and complete manner and financial and management information is produced in line and in a reliable manner. Hence controls of the financial decisions and transactions of the public institutions relates to the control of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities and ensuring compliance with the budget, budget item, expenditure programme and financing programme of the public sector.

In a bid to improve financial control practices in the Nigerian public sector, the federal government developed the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) in April 2007. The IPPIS creates a centralized database system for Nigerian public service with a single, accurate source of employee information that provides integration with other business applications. Akande (2019) emphasized that the idea of IPPIS is to provide a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service, facilitate manpower training, eliminate record and payroll fraud, facilitate easy documentation, ease updating and retrieval of personnel records, and speed up convenient staff remuneration payment with minimal waste and leakage. IPPIS was launched with the objectives to equally provide a centralized database to aid government manpower planning and decision making, ease automation and storage of personnel records to support monitoring manpower leakages by ensuring staff remuneration is based on correct information which thereby curbs financial leakages and embezzlement in the public service payroll system.

The Nigerian government has for a long time recognized problems relating to mismanagement of public funds evidenced by lack of transparency, poor accountability, corruption, financial leakages and budgeting processes, financial excesses, poor cash management and resource allocation. This is coupled with the fact that there is a near total absence of the notion and ethics of accountability in the conduct of public activities in the country. Zubairu (2016) noted that funds are misappropriated without the culprits being sanctioned, whereas the government has an obligation to ensure that culprit are sanctioned appropriately.

Also, Wachira, Ngahu and Wagoki, (2014) emphasized that Nigeria has witnessed poor accountability, responsibility and transparency amongst public official which has caused too many public fund mismanagement in the past with over forty-six thousand ghost worker and over one hundred and eighteen (118) billion naira lost yearly which can be traced to varied administrative, accounting and personnel problems ranging from flagrant abuse of procedures, lack of transparency in the award of public sector contracts as well as poor accountability.

Furthermore, Oyadonghan and Ogoun (2017) argued that funds embarked for projects are not well accounted for and the planning and implementation of national budget and funds are shrouded in mysteries, under compromised weak accounting infrastructure, poor accountability and transparency protocols. Akande (2019) emphasized that the public sector is characterized with the increasing mismanagement of funds and faulty internal operational mechanism within the government. The consequences of fund mismanagement have led to enormous and diverse economic disorder and social infrastructure backwardness of the nation state. It is thus in this light of the noted problems that this study investigated the effect of financial control practices accountability in the Nigeria public sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Conceptual Review

2.1 Financial Control Practices

Buger and Woods (2014) defined financial control practices as an area that focuses on the prioritization and use of scarce resources, ensuring effective utilization of public resources, and attaining value for money in meeting the objectives of government and in particular delivering services to the people. Correia (2014) holds the view that, financial control practices forms part of the total operation of the public sector and as such, it relates to the other functional disciplines in the public sector. Fung (2012) defined financial control practices as being part of the decision-making, planning and control systems of the public sector. It is considered to incorporate the treasury function; it also incorporates the evaluation, selection, management and control of new capital investment opportunities. Financial control practices deals with the allocating and use of public resources efficiently and effectively. The practices include resource generation, resource allocation, and expenditure control and resource utilization.

Financial Control Practices and Accountability in the Public Sector in Nigeria

Financial control practices are defined as the procedures designed to protect assets and ensure that all financial transactions are recorded to prevent and reduce errors and fraud. The aim of financial controls in the public sector is to provide an overall guiding framework for a sound and efficient management of resources. The goal of having a strong system of financial control is to promote the government's ability to reach its objectives, providing reliable financial data, safeguarding assets and records, evaluating operational efficiency through budgetary control and encouraging adherence to prescribed policies and regulations. Thus, financial control practices facilitate effectiveness and efficiency of operations thereby improving the reliability of internal and external financial reporting and assist in compliance with laws and regulations (Wachira, Ngahu & Wagoki, 2014).

Accountability

Accountability is an important element of fund management in the public sector. The concept of accountability refers to the legal and reporting framework, organizational structure, strategy, procedures, and actions to help ensure that any organizations that use public money and make decisions that affect people's lives can be held responsible for their actions. Adegite (2017) defined accountability as the obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards and the officer reports fairly and accurately on performance results vis-a-vis mandated roles and plans. It means doing things transparently in line with due process and the provision of feedback. Johnson (2016) noted that public accountability is an essential component for the management of public fund, as accountability means that those who are charged with drafting and carrying out policy should be obliged to give an explanation of their actions as regards to management of fund.

Okoh and Ohwoyibo (2015) argued that accountability reflects the need for government and its agencies to serve the public effectively in accordance with the laws of the land. Appah (2014) point out that the number and monetary value of public sector activities has increased substantially. This increase in activities has brought with it an increased demand for accountability of public officers who manage these activities. Public sector accountability is not led by one agency but a range of entities, agencies, and institutions. For example, accountability for overseeing how public resources are used involves members of parliament, public entities, courts and tribunals, inquiry agencies, and, often, monitoring by civil society groups and the media. The principles of public sector accountability include transparency, fairness, integrity, and trust.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study will focus on the origin of the public financial management theory was propounded by Key in 1940. This theory assumes that all aspects of financial resources such as mobilization and expenditure should be well managed in government for the benefits of the citizenry. It comprises resource mobilization, prioritization of programs, budgetary procedures, efficient management of resources and applying control to guide against threats. Public finance management theory primarily avoids misappropriation of public funds. Public finance management theory emphasizes on laws, rules and processes that are used by sovereign nations for revenue mobilization, allocation of public funds, the undertaking of public spending, accounting for such funds and auditing of the results.

In support of the theory of public fund management, Olookure and Adetoso (2017) emphasized that public financial management theory plays an important role in the governance process. The author noted that the collection of sufficient resources from the economy in an appropriate manner and the efficient use of resources constitute good public financial management. The theory also stresses that the government's revenue should be well mobilized to disallow the looting of such into private pockets (Udo & Esara, 2016). These consist of resources prioritization of programmes the budgetary process and efficient management of resources.

In relations to this study, public financial management theory shows the link between financial control practices and efficient public fund management. Thus, the theory emphasizes on the importance of fund management in the public sector so as to avoid misapplication of public funds.

2.3 Empirical Review

Avery and Ovah (2018) examined the impact of financial control on accountability in the public sector in Nigeria. The population for the study entails all the workers in the State Board of Internal Revenue in Bayelsa State. Nigeria. Out of which the sample size was selected using the Taro Yaman sampling techniques. Data for this study were primarily and secondarily sourced. linear regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected with the aid of SPSS version 16 to examine the impact of financial control characterized by internal control (Risk assessment, Control procedures and information and communication system) and internal audit on accountability in the public sector in Nigeria. The study revealed that there is insignificant positive relationship between internal control on accountability and a significant positive relationship between internal audit and accountability in Nigeria. The study therefore, recommended that; organization should pay more attention on internal audit than on internal control to ensure effective financial control and improve on accountability, Management should establish and implement periodic review of internal audit performance to ensure that its performance and value to the Institution is maximized and to ensure compliance with appropriate standards and guidance and Internal control activities, procedures and policies should be regularly revised to ensure that they are effective.

Sambo and Imiete (2018) explored the effect of internal control system on effective fund management in Bayelsa State Universities and proffers some remedies in tackling the menace of poor fund management as follows; introduction of internal auditing approaches to manage financial resources in universities for proper maintenance of school properties, adequate provision of infrastructural facilities, and proper management of school funds in order to achieve the aim and objectives of establishing such institutions.

Nwaorgu, Ezenwaka and Onuorah (2017) examined the effect of financial control practices on accountability in the Nigeria Public Sector. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study consisted of six hundred (600) staff of the four federal health tertiary institutions drawn from Account Departments and sample size of two hundred and fifty (250) Account Departments staffs were selected using the proportionate random sampling technique. A structured 25-item validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using pilot test technique, which was analyzed using Cronbach alpha method and yielded an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.85 with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) 20.0. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one regression models for the research questions and test of hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings show that adaptation of treasury single account (TSA) in the Nigeria Public Sector is capable of plugging financial loopholes, promoting transparency and accountability in Federal Health Tertiary Institutions in South-East Nigeria. The study concluded that financial control practices would go a long way in blocking the identified financial leakages in revenue generation and promote transparency and accountability in the public sectors financial system if it is fully implemented.

Oloruntoba and Gbemigun (2017) examined accountability and public sector performance in the third world country: A case study of Nigeria. The study employed the simple random sampling techniques on the bases of which a survey administration of questionnaires was done. The data collected was analysed by using chi-square statistical tool. The result revealed that there is relationship between appraisal of transparency public office holders and public sector performance using a case study of Ose Local Government Area Secretariat, Ose, Ondo State Nigeria. The findings revealed that there is relationship between appraisal of integrity of public office holders and performance output within short and long period their regime using a case study of Ose Local Government Area Secretariat, Ose, Ondo State Nigeria. The paper recommended that the issue of immunity clause as treated in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) must be revisited to improve accountability of public officeholder in Nigeria public service. Public officeholders need be made to answer for any suspected acts of funds misappropriation or mismanagement irrespective of social status.

Ofor, Omaliko and Okoli (2017) examined the effect of financial control mechanism and TSA policy on the performances of federal government MDAs in Nigeria. This study aims to empirically establish through available statistics the effect of implementing financial control mechanism on the performance of government ministries, departments and agencies in Nigeria. The study relied basically on primary data which was obtained through questionnaire designed and administered to seventy-five (75) respondents drawn from the federal government ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals (MDA) within Anambra metropolis in the eastern part of Nigeria. Analysis was based on the Wilcoxon sign test. The result of the research indicated that the institutionalization of financial control mechanism has significantly affected and improved the performance of federal government MDAs at 5% level of significance which goes further to confirm that treasury single account is capable of blocking financial loopholes in revenue generation and promoting transparency and accountability.

Okerekeoti and Okoye (2017) examined financial control in Nigeria and financial management in Nigeria. The study proposed that government should engage in massive public enlightenment about the importance of the policy at all levels. The study concluded that TSA policy will go a long way in blocking the identified financial leakages in revenue generation and promote transparency and accountability in the public financial system if it is fully implemented. It will equally pave way for the timely payment and capturing of all revenues going into the government treasury, without the intermediation of multiple banking arrangements. The policy will also enable the government at the centre to know its cash position at any given time without any hindrance. The system will likely reduce round-tripping of government deposits.

Olaoye and Adebowale (2017) evaluated the effectiveness of the policy of treasury single account (TSA) as a financial control mechanism in federal institutions in Nigeria. Specifically the study analysed the effectiveness of TSA in the selected institutions, and examined the efficacy of treasury single account in curbing corruption in the selected institutions. The study made use of survey research design of the cross sectional type, evaluating treasury single account in the context of selected federal institutions in Ekiti state. The purposive sampling technique were used to select federal institutions including Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti, Federal University, Oye and Federal Medical Centre, Ido, while random sampling was used to select representatives from each of the institution thirty (30) respondents were sampled from each of the institutions with focus on staffs working out of Audit and Bursary Departments, thus making a total number of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents sampled for the study. Data were collected using self-structured questionnaire and responses were analysed using frequency count and percentage analysis. The result showed that implementation of TSA is considerably effective among federal institutions, fostering better financial management, accountability and transparency, elimination of operational inefficiencies and consistency over time. In the same vein the study established that treasury single account is efficacious in curbing corruption among federal institutions, facilitation of cash management and reduction of incidence of public fund misappropriation, which had hither-to bolstered transparency and accountability of federal institutions in the country.

Gordon and Mohammed (2017) examined the impact of internal control variables on financial performance among five health institutions in the region using an ordered logistic regression model for a sample of fifty (50) respondents. The study found a positive relationship between internal controls and financial performance. But only three of the control variables remained significant with values less than 5%. The study recommended that the governing body of the institutions, possibly supported by the audit reports implementation committee (ARIC) should ensure that the appropriate internal control systems recommended by the auditors in health institutions are monitored periodically.

Oloba, Orenuga and Nkuma (2017) looked at the effect of financial control system on the Nigerian financial system and economic growth. Since the inception of the Buhari's Administration, TSA has been a topic of widespread discussion from all over the media and the economy at large, due to the impact, some experts, especially, those in the financial sector believe it has on the financial institutions in particular and the economy at large. However, using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), a descriptive method was used to analyse secondary data gathered from the financial reports (balance sheet and profit and loss account reports) of five (5) major deposit money banks (DMBs) in Nigeria. This study concluded that, TSA does not have so much negative impact on the Nigerian financial institutions as most of the institutions are still very stable and buoyant financially. Moreover, the financial insolvency being experienced by some deposit money banks, are as a result of factors outside the purview of Treasury Single Account system. This study therefore recommended that government should re-invest the funds taken away from the financial institutions back into the economy in the form of capital expenditure to revamp the economy from its current state of recession.

Furthermore, Omondi, Oscar Joseph, Tobias and Lucy (2016) examined the role of control systems on financial management in public secondary schools, a case of Kakamega central district**.** The target population was one hundred and ninety (190) accounting staff. The result showed that auditing was not effectively done in schools as long span of time is left before it is done external auditors are also corrupt and do not do their work objectively. Also, it was reviewed that accounting procedures are not properly followed and long span elapses before books of accounts are prepared. The study apart from coming from a different location, the sample size was low and the extent of distribution was skewed towards junior level accountants. Flavianus (2016) assessed the role of auditing in enhancing public financial accountability at local government authorities. The paper was purely based on desktop and library research methodology. The study was conducted thorough analysis on how auditing contributes to the success of financial accountability which assures proper use of public funds. Conclusively, the study has alarmed on how independence of Controller and Auditor General (CAG) need to be maintained in order to enable his office to work independently without any due influence from either part. Following this contention, the study advice policy and decision makers to rethink on the proper way of enabling National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT) to work strongly, diligently and prudently for the betterment of the National. Sahabi, Agundu (2016) addressed the need for fiscal prudence in Nigerian public institutions, with deeper emphasis on the imperatives of strategic financial efficiency. The study noted that the consolidation of revenue flow in government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) into an ultra-large kitty with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) enhances fiscal prudence in Nigerian public institutions

Rebecca and Akama (2016) examined the factors influencing financial control practices in community based organizations: A case study of CBOs in Migori County, Kenya. The study revealed the weaknesses in financial control practices in CBOs and its effect on corruption, embezzlement of funds by CBO officials and even the organizations' risk to lose funding by donors. Their study used survey research design targeting CBOs in the County. The findings revealed that technical skills of the CBO officials Auditing, Bookkeeping and Internal control systems and budgeting were positively correlated with financial control practices respectively. Multiple linear regression analysis results showed that technical skills and auditing are significant while internal control systems and budgeting and Bookkeeping are not significant. The study further found out that most CBOs in the area were audited annually although there was need to ensure compliance among all to be subjected to an audit at least once a year.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey research design approach was chosen for the study because the required data from the public sector can best be obtained through this method rather than relying on secondary data. The target population of this study was the public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments of Lagos and Ogun States government secretariats as reported by the office of the states' Civil Service Commission (2020). The staff is about 2,125 of public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments of Lagos and Ogun States government secretariats

For the purpose of this study, a total population of 2,125 staff was considered rather too large thus, the researcher adopted Taro Yaman (1964) formula to determine a sample size. According to Taro Yaman (1964), since the population of the study is a finite and the population size is known, the Taro Yaman formula for determining the sample size is given by:

n = N / (1 + Ne^2)

Where

n= corrected sample size, N = population size, and e = Margin of error (MoE), e = 0.05 based on the research condition.

Given the population size of 2, 125, at 5% MoE, the sample size would be:

2,125/(1 + 197(0.05^2)) = 336.6533 ~337.

Therefore, to ensure effective coverage of the population, the formula was applied to arrive at the sample size 337 respondents.

Model Specification

$Y_i = f(X_i)$

Y_i= vector of dependent variables while

X_i= vector of independent variables

In specific manner;

$ACC = f(SOD, PCA, FSC, AEC)$ equ. (1a)

$RES = f(SOD, PCA, FSC, AEC)$ equ. (2a)

Nevertheless, the models are specified in empirical forms as;

$ACC_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SOD_i + \alpha_2 PCA_i + \alpha_3 FSC_i + \alpha_4 AEC_i + \mu_i$ equ. (1b)

$RES_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SOD_i + \alpha_2 PCA_i + \alpha_3 FSC_i + \alpha_4 AEC_i + \mu_i$ equ. (2b)

Where;

ACC= Accountability

RES= Responsibility

SOD= Segregation of Duties

PCA= Physical control of Asset

FSC= Supervision Control

AEC= Account Control of Expenditure

μ= error term

α_0= constant

$\alpha_1 - \alpha_4$= model coefficients and the subscript i = cross-section 1-n

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 4.2: Financial Control Practices in Public Sector

S/N	Questions	SA	A	PA	PD	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Segregation of Duties ($\bar{x}$= 4.93, SD =0.777)								
1	No single individual is responsible for all aspects of a transaction in your organisation.	(63) 17.9	(234) 66.7	(22) 6.3	(6) 1.7	(22) 6.3	(3) 0.9	4.86	.999
2	Your system is designed to reduced error by allowing individuals work only at only a section of operation.	(50) 14.2	(238) 67.8	(33) 9.4	(5) 1.4	(21) 6.0	(3) 0.9	4.81	.968
3	Authorization, execution, custody and records are centred in different persons.	(47) 13.4	(263) 74.9	(33) 9.4	(2) 0.6	(2) 0.6	(3) 0.9	4.98	.664

4	You have a system to segregate duties, cross checks transactions and deliverables.	(64) 18.2	(251) 71.5	(33) 9.4	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	(1) 0.3	5.07	.575
5	The functions of ordering, receiving, accounting for, and paying for goods and services are appropriately segregated in my organisation.	(51) 14.5	(238) 67.8	(54) 15.4		(6) 1.7	(0) 0.0	4.93	.680
	Physical control of Asset ($\bar{x}$=5.168, SD=0.696**)**								
6	Only authorised staffs can access financial records in your unit.	(111) 31.6	(205) 58.4	(31) 8.8	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	(0) 0.0	5.22	.619
7	There is a well-built physical barrier that prevents people from gaining access to financial documents and resources.	(90) 25.6	(214) 61.0	(42) 12.0	(1) 0.3	(1) 0.3	(2) 0.6	5.10	.705
8	The process of gaining entrance to documents and vaults are never bypassed.	(113) 32.2	(193) 5.0	(33) 9.4	(6) 1.7	(3) 0.9	(2) 0.6	5.15	.797
9	Authorisation and approval are needed before accessing asset locations in your unit.	(101) 28.8	(216) 61.5	(25) 7.1	(4) 1.1	(1) 0.3	(3) 0.9	5.15	0.740
10	There are policies and procedures in place to adequately safeguard or protect assets from fraud, waste and abuse in your unit.	(92) 26.2	(223) 63.5	(34) 9.7	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	(0) 0.0	5.22	0.619
	Supervision Control (*$\bar{x}$=5.082, SD=0.634*)								
11	You monitor operations on a day to day basis using records.	(60) 17.1	(250) 71.2	(0) 0.0	(38) 10.8	(1) 0.3	(1) 0.3	5.16	0.589
12	There is an established procedure and an organisational structure which specifies reporting lines and allocates functions and responsibilities clearly and in a documented manner in your organisation.	(76) 21.7	(228) 65.0	(43) 12.3	(1) 0.3	(1) 0.3	(1) 0.3	5.04	0.592
13	When assigning activities experienced personnel is assigned the task as an oversight function.	(89) 25.4	(214) 61.0	(42) 12.0	(2) 0.6	(3) 0.9	(0) 0.0	5.07	0.648
14	A responsible official is assigned to supervise personnel's in delegated task.	(76) 21.7	(218) 62.1	(53) 15.1	(1) 0.3	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	5.10	0.683
15	There is a set time frame to review the activities of every supervisee in your organisation.	(64) 18.2	(231) 65.8	(51) 14.5	(3) 0.9	(0) 0.0	(1) 0.3	5.04	0.656
	Account Control of Expenditure (*$\bar{x}$=5.103, SD=2.785*)								
16	Documents are maintained to substitute transactions.	(92) 26.2	(218) 62.1	(33) 9.4	(2) 0.6	(5) 1.4	(0) 0.0	5.11	0.705
17	Controls are in place to avoid incurring expenditure in excess of allocated funds.	(64) 18.2	(241) 68.7	(35) 10.0	(5) 1.4	(4) 1.1	(1) 0.3	5.01	0.700
18	There is budgeting practices in your organization and the process is inclusive and wide consultations take place	(101) 28.8	(211) 60.1	(31) 8.8	(5) 1.4	(0) 0.0	(2) 0.6	5.15	0.711
19	In your organisation, departmental budgets are reviewed with actual expenditure and	(100) 28.5	(204) 58.1	(42) 12.0	(3) 0.9	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	5.14	0.669

	explanations are provided for the variances obtained if any.								
	Grand Mean							5.07	0.70

Scales; ≤ 1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.5 – 2.49 = Disagree, 2.5 – 3.49 =* Partially Disagreed, *3.5-4.49=* Partially Agreed, *4.5-5.49=Agree, ≥ 5.5 Strongly Agree.
=Agree, ≥ 5.5 Strongly Agree.

Table 4.2 reveals the responds of selected public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments in Lagos State and Ogun State as it regards to financial control practices. Based on the result, the selected staff in public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments agreed that there is efficiency of financial control reports ($\bar{x}$=5.07) in Nigeria public sectors
The financial control practice utilizes Segregation of Duties in public service ($\bar{x}$=4.93) physical control of assets ($\bar{x}$=5.168), supervision control ($\bar{x}$=5.082) and account control of expenditure ($\bar{x}$=5.103). The highest indicator of financial control practice in public sector was the physical control of assets, which was followed by account control of expenditure. However, segregation of duties is less practiced in the public sector with the minimum mean. Based on the physical control assets, it was generally agreed that only authorised staffs can access financial records in public sector ($\bar{x}$=5.22). It was also ascertain that there are policies and procedures in place to adequately safeguard or protect assets from fraud, waste and abuse in your unit ($\bar{x}$=5.22).

Table 4.3: Accountability of public Sector

S/N	Questions	SA	A	PA	PD	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Accountability (*$\bar{x}$=5.05, SD=0.699*)								
1	Accountability reflects the need for fund managers to serve the public effectively in accordance with all norms and standards of the Public Finance Management Act.	(109) 31.1	(212) 60.4	(27) 7.7	(0) 0.0	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	5. 22	.62 8
2	There are rules and regulations that help curb wastages and corruption in managing public finances and your unit and organisation fully works in line with them.	(85) 24.2	(219) 62.4	(40) 11. 4	(0) 0.0	(3) 0.9	(3) 0.9	5. 08	.72 4
3	There are clear regulatory frameworks that clarify how the public funds are to be utilized for better service delivery and these fully guide our conduct and practices in your unit.	(71) 20.2	(240) 68.4	(33) 9.4	(3) 0.9	(0) 0.0	(3) 0.9	5. 06	.68 3
4	There are annual audits on how public finances are utilized in your organization and it is performance based and seeks to establish whether funds are used optimally but not just establishing whether rules were followed.	(64) 18.2	(240) 68.4	(39) 11. 1	(2) 0.6	(4) 1.1	(1) 0.3	5. 01	.68 3
5	Your unit brings to notice of the stakeholders any official who is found to have misappropriated public finances or any apparent deficiency in fund management	(56) 16.0	(226) 64.4	(56) 16. 0	(6) 1.7	(3) 0.9	(3) 0.9	4. 91	.77 2
6	The projects executed and services rendered in your unit and organisation are executed in line with agreed plans and budget	(64) 18.2	(244) 69.5	(36) 10. 3	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	(4) 1.1	5. 02	.70 2
	Responsibility (*$\bar{x}$=5.02, SD=0.947*)								
7	As soon as possible, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, your unit draws up	(61) 17.4	(257) 73.2	(29) 8.3	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	(1) 0.3	5. 07	67

	annual financial reports in accordance with all norms and standards of the Public Finance Management Act.								
9	Your unit prepares cash flow position report on weekly/monthly basis.	(64) 18.2	(242) 68.9	(40) 11.4	(2) 0.6	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	5.19	2.734
10	Your unit is ultimately responsible for the drawing up of the state/organisation budget with no stakeholders' guidance and advice.	(50) 14.2	(245) 69.8	(40) 11.4	(4) 1.1	(11) 3.1	(0) 0.0	4.91	0.761
11	Your unit monitors the application of budget, verify the correctness of all payments and negotiate with relevant service providers on standard of service that has to be observed.	(62) 17.7	(236) 67.2	(42) 12.0	(5) 1.4	(5) 1.4	(0) 0.0	4.99	0.696
12	Your unit controls the use of funds, compares quotations with purchases, scrutinize the requisitions and also updates stakeholders regarding finances.	(60) 17.1	(223) 63.5	(61) 17.4	(6) 1.7	(0) 0.0	(0) 0.0	4.96	0.643
13	Your unit ensures that appropriate documentation is provided and this provides assurance that financial transactions are appropriate.	(59) 16.8	(242) 68.9	(41) 11.7	(7) 2.0	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	5.00	.627
14	All units/departments' assets are properly described and accounted for in the Financial System in your organisation.	(67) 19.1	(233) 66.4	48 13.7	(1) 0.3	(1) 0.3	(0) 0.0	5.04	.604

Table 4.2 reveals the responds of selected public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments in Lagos State and Ogun State as it regards to Fund Management. Based on the result, the selected staff in public/civil servants working in the account and finance departments agreed that there is efficiency of Fund Management ($\bar{x}$=4.957) in Nigeria public sectors. On the accountability, it was ascertain that accountability reflects the need for fund managers to serve the public effectively in accordance with all norms and standards of the Public Finance Management Act ($\bar{x}$=5.22). Also, on responsibility, it was reported that their unit prepares cash flow position report on weekly/monthly basis ($\bar{x}$=5.19).

Regression Results and test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

Table 4. 4: Estimated Result of financial control practices on accountability

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		4.501	1.743		2.582	.010
segregation of duties		.113	.050	.090	2.233	.026
Physical control of Asset		.084	.057	.068	1.464	.144
Supervision Control		.192	.065	.148	2.955	.003
Account Control of Expenditure		.625	.056	.536	11.245	.000
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio		Sig.
Regression	1550.922	4	387.730	77.692		.000b
Residual	1721.767	345	4.991			
Total	3272.689	349				
R = 0.688; Multiple R^2 = 0.474		R^2 (Adjusted) = 0.468	Standard error estimate = 2.23397			
a. Dependent Variable: Accountability						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Account Control of Expenditure, segregation of duties, Physical control of Asset, Supervision Control						

Sources: Researchers' Field Survey, 2021

*Note: *, **, & *** implies 10%, 5% & 1% significance level respectively.*

In Table 4.4, shows that financial control has a significant influence on accountability of public sector (*Adj.* R^2= 0.468, *F*(4, 349) = 77.692, *P*< 0.05). The model shows that financial control in public sector explains the variation of 46.8% (*Adj.* R^2= 0.468) of public sector accountability. These are reliable evidences that the model is moderate. This implies that the linear combination of the segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control, and account control of expenditure predicts the public sector accountability. Hence, there are sufficient evidences against the null hypotheses which state that there is no significant effect of financial control practices on accountability in Nigerian public sector. Therefore the study concluded that there is significant effect of financial control practices on accountability in Nigerian public sector.

The financial control practices was proxied by segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control and account control of expenditure.

The study showed that segregation of duties has a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector *(β = .113, t = 2.233, P<0.05)*. This showed that an increase in segregation of duties will bring about an increase of .113% in accountability in public sector fund management.

Similarly, physical control of assets have positive but not statistically significant to influence accountability of public sector *(β = 0.084, t = 1.464, P>0.05)*. This suggests that increased in physical control of assets brings about an increase of *0.084%* on accountability of public sector. However, physical control of assets is not statistically significant to influence accountability in public sector fund management.

Also, supervision control have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector *(β = 0.192, t = 2.955, P<0.05)*. This shows that an increase in supervision control will bring about an increase of *0.192%* in accountability in public sector fund management.

Lastly, account control of expenditure posits a positive and statistically significant effect on accountability in public sector *(β = 0.625, t= 11.245, P<0.05).* The study shows that a unit increase in account control of expenditure brings about an increase of *0.625* in accountability in public sector fund management.

Hypothesis Two:

Table 4. 5: Estimated Result of Financial control practice and responsibility

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	15.884	2.781		5.711	.000
segregation of duties	.249	.081	.158	3.090	.002
Physical control of Asset	-.039	.091	-.025	-.427	.670
Supervision Control	.136	.104	.084	1.312	.190
Account Control of Expenditure	.418	.089	.285	4.716	.000

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
Regression	777.512	4	194.378	15.296	$.000^b$
Residual	4384.205	345	12.708		
Total	5161.717	349			

R = .388; Multiple R^2 = 0.151 R^2 (Adjusted) =0.141 Standard error estimate = 3.564

a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility

b. Predictors: (Constant), Account Control of Expenditure, segregation of duties, Physical control of Asset, Supervision Control

Sources: Researchers' Field Survey, 2021

*Note: *, **, & *** implies 10%, 5% & 1% significance level respectively.*

In Table 4.5, shows that financial control has a significance influence on responsibility of public sector *(Adj.* R^2*= 0.141, F(4, 349) = 15.296, P< 0.05)*. The model shows that financial control in public sector explains the variation of 14.1% (*Adj.* R^2= 46.8%) public sector responsibility. These are evidences that the model is moderate. This implies that the linear combination of the segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control, and account control of expenditure predicts the public sector responsibility. Hence, there is sufficient evidences against the null hypotheses which says financial control practice does not have any significant effect on responsibility in Nigeria public sector. Therefore the study concluded that there is significant effect of financial control practices on responsibility in Nigeria public sector.

The financial control practices was proxy by segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control and account control of expenditure.

The study shows that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on responsibility in public sector *(β = 0.249, t = 3.090, P<0.05)*. This shows that an increase in segregation duties will bring about an increase of 0.1249% in responsibility of public sector.

Similarly, physical control of assets have a negative but not statistically significant to influence public sector responsibility on fund management *(β = - 0.039, t = -.427, P>0.05)*. This suggests that increased in physical control of assets brings about a decrease of -0.039% on public sector responsibility on fund management. However, physical control of assets is not statistically significant to influence public sector responsibility on fund management.

Also, supervision control have a positive but not significant effect on responsibility in public sector *(β = 0.136, t = 1.312, P>0.05)*. This shows that an increase in supervision control will bring about an increase of *1.312%* in responsibility in public sector. However, supervision control have no statistical effect on responsibility in public sector.

Lastly, account control of expenditure posits a positive and statistically significant effect on responsibility in public sector *(β = 0.418, t= 4.716, P<0.05).* The study shows that a unit increase in account control of expenditure brings about an increase of *0.418* in responsibility in public sector.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings shows that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector (*β* = .113, *t* = 2.233, *P*<0.05). Similarly, physical control of assets have positive but not statistically significant to influence accountability of public sector (*β* = 0.084, *t* = 1.464, *P*>0.05). Also, supervision control have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector (*β* = 0.192, *t* = 2.955, *P*<0.05). Lastly, account control of expenditure posits a positive and statistically significant effect on accountability in public sector (*β* = 0.625, t= 11.245, *P*<0.05). This findings was in consonance with the empirical findings of Oloruntoba and Gbemigun (2017) whose study on accountability and public sector performance revealed that there is relationship between appraisal of integrity of public office holders and performance output within short and long period their regime using a case study of Ose Local Government Area Secretariat, Ose, Ondo State Nigeria. Similarly, Okerekeoti and Okoye (2017) study concluded that TSA policy will go a long way in blocking the identified financial leakages in revenue generation and promote transparency and accountability in the public financial system if it is fully implemented. It will equally pave way for the timely payment and capturing of all revenues going into the government treasury, without the intermediation of multiple banking arrangements. The policy will also enable the government at the centre to know its cash position at any given time without any hindrance. The system will likely reduce round-tripping of government deposits. Study by Olaoye and Adebowale (2017) showed that implementation of TSA is considerably effective among federal institutions, fostering better financial management, accountability and transparency, elimination of operational inefficiencies and consistency over time. In the same vein the study established that treasury single account is efficacious in curbing corruption among federal institutions, facilitation of cash management and reduction of incidence of public fund misappropriation, which had hither-to bolstered transparency and accountability of federal institutions in the country.

Osho and Afolabi (2014) examined the effectiveness of financial control and accountability in the public sector. The findings revealed that the effective and efficient application of financial control methods and management strategies to accountability in government sectors will compel each employee to be more serious, focused and loyal in the discharge of their responsibilities since the personal data of each employee will be taken by the government and the employees will be solely held liable for every action in the sectors.

The study also attest that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on responsibility in public sector (*β* = 0.249, *t* = 3.090, *P*<0.05). Similarly, physical control of assets have a negative but not statistically significant to influence responsibility of public sector (*β* = - 0.039, *t* = -.427, *P*>0.05). More so, supervision control have a positive but not significant effect on responsibility in public sector (*β* = 0.136, *t* = 1.312, *P*>0.05). Lastly, account control of expenditure posits a positive and statistically significant effect on responsibility in public sector (*β* = 0.418, t= 4.716, *P*<0.05). the findings corroborates with the work of Odewole (2016) whose study discusses the various operational challenges facing the implementation of TSA in Nigeria and concluded that TSA as a financial tool can only achieve its desired objectives in blocking loopholes of wastages and leakages, curbing corruption and financial recklessness in ranks and file of government functionaries and enthroning transparency and probity, if government put in place enabling environment and adequate legislative supports for the smooth implementation of the policy with minimum infrastructural and technological facilities needed by the MDAs for meaningful compliance. Odewole (2016) noted that the gradual implementation of TSA policy could serve as a catalyst and a tool for effective cash management in Nigeria. Similar to Odewole (2016), Oguntodu, Alalade, Adekunle and Adegbie (2016) study also find support in the empirical findings of the study result showed that financial control mechanism through the adoption of Treasury Single Account has a positive significant impact on the country's economic growth but this impact is limited by various factors, one of them being the implementation of the policy in Nigeria which made the discovery of historical data difficult. More so, Effiong, Ogar and Iroushu (2017) results of the statistical test revealed that TSA, IPPIS, and IFMIS have positive and significant relationship with Fraud and fraud management as well as jointly impact the performances of Public Interest Entities. Based on findings of the study, it was recommended among others that IPPIS be fully implemented to address the ghost workers syndrome in Public Interest Entities and that public officers be technologically trained to effectively utilize TSA, IPPIS and IFMIS platforms.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this study reveals that financial control has a significance influence on accountability of public sector. This implies that the linear combination of the segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control, and account control of expenditure predicts the public sector accountability. The financial control practices was proxy by segregation of duties, physical control of assets, supervision control and account control of expenditure.

The study shows that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector. Similarly, physical control of assets have positive but not statistically significant to influence accountability of public sector. However, physical control of assets is not statistically significant to influence accountability in public sector. Also, supervision control have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector. This shows that an increase in supervision control will bring about an increase in accountability in public sector. Lastly, account control of expenditure posits a positive and statistically significant effect on accountability in public sector.

The findings further revealed that there is significant effect of financial control practices on responsibility in Nigeria public sector. The last model revealed that there is significant effect of financial control practices on practices on openness and transparency in Nigeria public sector.

Based on the outcome of the three hypotheses which were empirically tested and the research finding stated earlier in this chapter, the researcher therefore, concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between financial control practices and fund management in public sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the researcher recommends that:

i. The existing physical control assets should be strengthened in order to ensure effective financial control and improve on accountability thereafter due to the insignificant effect of physical control of assets has on accountability in public sector.

ii. Effective and efficient application of financial control methods and management strategies to accountability in the public sectors will compel each employee to be more serious, focused and loyal in the discharge of their responsibilities.

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