

Principal's Managerial Competencies and Utilization of Financial Resources in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated principal managerial competencies and utilisation of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was a correlational design with a population of 286 principal in all the secondary schools present in the 23 local government areas. The sample of the study comprised of 166 principals which represented 58.04% of the population. This was done using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self designed questionnaire captioned "Principal Managerial Competencies and Utilization of Financial Resources Questionnaire (PMCUFRQ), with areliability coe fficient of 0.88 and also, the Financial Resources Questionnaire (FRQ) had a reliability coe fficient of 0.74. In analyzing the data, mean score and standard deviation will be used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, using the SPSS version 25. The study discovered that to a high extent principal possess asset management competence, which includes skills in negotiation and project management, strong time-management skills, highly skilled in math and finance, confident and assertive on my decision concerning school finance, establish procedure to manage the utilization of funds. Hence it was concluded that principal must demonstrate the needed level of competencies and this recommended that The principal should advance skills financial report by demonstrating high level proficiency in excel, detail oriented and highly organized, ensure faithful accountability of financial report, communicate relevant financial needs to stakeholders and ensure that financial report and documentation is within timeline.

Keywords: Principal, Managerial, Competencies, Utilization, Financial.

Introduction

The school, especially the secondary school is very strategic in raising a crop of functional members of the society. To achieve this, there is budgetary provision to establish and equip schools to the capacity that can withstand the increasing demand for secondary education. The carrying capacity for secondary school is directly related to the availability of if not all, the basic educational resources, ranging from the human to the material resources. Among the human and material resources, none

is currently in surplus, but has over the years been battling the issue of pressure on the part of the resources and areas of utilization (Anietie & Zipamoh, 2016). Hence an effective principal has metamorphosed from someone who is heading the school to a person who is prudent and possesses the needed managerial competencies in the utilization of the available resources.

Managerial competencies are the abilities, motivations, and attitudes required for a profession, and they include traits such as communication skills, problem solving, customer focus, and the ability to work in a team (Atieno, 2012). While organizations have long been capable of assessing and exploiting financial and other "hard" assets, the human assets involved in management abilities are more difficult to include into a formula (Barrow et al., 2008). Though skills and expertise are clearly assessed aspects of a manager's competency, intangible assets such as efficient communication and teamwork, while important, are more difficult to quantify and evaluate. This competency guides the utilization of financial resources in the school when the principal is able to demonstrate these competencies on the routine basics.

A clear case scenario includes the actual supervision of the utilization of resources allocated to schools through direct or delegated supervision of the teachers and the school facilities. For the purpose of this study, emphases will be laid on financial resources. A financial resource is a monetary resource that can be used to purchase all other educational materials. Every education business relies heavily on its availability and mobilization. The financial situation of an institution has a significant impact on its long-term visibility.

Anietie and Odou (2019) stated that financial resources are the driving force to effective administration of school, which however implies that in the absence of financial resources, the capacity of the principal is grossly limited if not completely ineffective. Hence, the importance of financial resources in the administration of schools cannot be over-emphasized. Education financing is unquestionably an important element of public finance because the federal, state, and local governments are all involved in its provision and supervision. Because it involves both volunteer groups and people, it is also a significant element of private investment (Anietie & Zipamoh, 2017). Hence, proper funding secondary education cannot be neglected. Although, when there are available resources, the principal must be able to manage the available resources that compete within the spread of other pressing needs. Hence the principal must be able to play an important role in the school's financial management and budgeting (Odou & Anietie, 2019). They must participate in a wide range of operations relating to the school's budget and accounting processes, among other responsibilities including competencies in areas of leadership, problem solving, communication, analysis, interpersonal skills, mathematical proficiency, attention to detail, organization, technological skills and ability to work independently (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002).

To be able to engage with teachers or as part of the school financial team and generally bring a good basis of leading finance ideas, the principal must acquire core leadership competency as a financial manager (Education Week, 2010). They should know how to increase efficiency and production while preserving confidence in their

capacity to advance the school. As a leader, an effective principal must be able to direct people and distribute work. Principals with strong financial management skills take charge of challenges and devise effective solutions to build confidence in their school's leadership abilities (Fazekas, 2012). As successful financial managers, the principal is expected to be able to take action and solve problems. Managers have a thorough awareness of the school financial objectives and can devise effective strategies for achieving those objectives without risking the school success (Batra & Sharma, 2017). The principal must be able to explain and convey current year data to stakeholders in the context of previous patterns or future projections. This gives stakeholders a baseline of what the data means in terms of previous experience or future expectations of the school (Darrel et al., 2020). It would be more beneficial for principals to display a graph illustrating the level of spending through time, rather than merely displaying the most recent actual expenditures or the impending planned amount, if it wishes to demonstrate that actions to reduce spending in the school have been done (Bolanle, 2013). In order to also communicate the financial needs of the school, the principal must be able to analyse the expenditure flow of the school, by demonstrating logical thinking. Effective school principals are able to look at all options in order to present a comprehensive, understandable analysis of school financial one.

The main focus is on resolving financial issues with stakeholders. They may be in charge of overseeing activities or duties, as well as their capacity to work effortlessly with others under his supervision (Carmeli & Tishler, 2006). To do this, the principal must establish positive relationships with teachers and demonstrate the necessity for the school's financiers to increase financial resources, which may be accomplished through the principal's analytical abilities, efficiency, and accuracy (Ebneroumi & Rishehri, 2011). When dealing with financial issues, the principals must be precise. The principal must have the capacity to split their attention to several financial activities of a school since they monitor how and where a firm spends its money as well as how and where it earns profit (Egboka, et al., 2013). When developing or assessing the school's financial needs, the principal must be aware of the school's rules and who is accountable for supporting certain requirements. But evidence has shown that public schools that were recently established by past government administrations are in a "sorry" state and such has raised questions about the competencies of the principal as regards to their ability to manage financial resources, because principals, though have access to funds through school-community collaboration and school activities like the inter-house sports, renting out school hall for meeting and ceremonies, in fact, some of the schools are paid heavily to host evening school programmes and other trained staff hosted after school hours, have underutilized the financial resources available to them.

Statement of the Problem

There are competing demand and pressure on the little or limited resources that are allocated to the school by the stakeholders. The stakeholder on allocating these resources expects that the financial support to the school is supposed to be utilized at the most efficient way, so that the objectives of the school are achieved.

Not utilizing the financial resources at the most maximum proportion results to decline in the level of secondary educational goals attainment. Hence, School principals shoulder enormous duties. Among these is financial management, which is one of the most crucial. However, many school leaders fail to understand the nature of their accounting and financial obligations and liabilities. In reality, an observation by the researcher as an education officer for two decades shows that majority of principals and administrators lacked financial literacy and basic bookkeeping understanding. This is in support the fact that the principal do not have the capacity to manage and utilize the financial resources at their disposal. The absence of the basic competencies on the part of the principal reflects on their daily financial decisions and this goes a long way to affect the advancement of the school. Once the physical resources are situated in the school, the community through associations like the Parents Teachers Associations (PTA), philanthropists, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) etc, allocates certain amounts of their financial resources to the school, which can be utilized to maintain, renovate, and even cater for the welfare of the teachers and the students. It is based on this eye opening fact that if this continues, the school will become wasted ventures as money is thrown-in only to under-utilized, which might be due to lack of managerial competencies that is necessary for the effective and efficient management of financial resources. Hence, based on this backdrop, the study intends to investigate principal managerial competencies and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate principal managerial competencies and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. But specifically, the study will:

1. Find out the relationship between analytical competence influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Find out the relationship between mathematical proficiency skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Find out the relationship between financial problem solving skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does analytical competence influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. Find To what extent does mathematical proficiency skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does financial problem solving skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between analytical competence and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between mathematical proficiency skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between financial problem solving skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on *Barney's (1991) Resource-Based View Theory*. According to the resource-based view (RBV), organizations have resources, a subset of which allows them to gain a competitive advantage and a subset of which leads to better long-term performance. The major assumptions of the theory are that resources that are precious and scarce can be used to gain a competitive edge. The theory's central premise is that, rather of looking outside the competitive business environment for a niche in the market or an advantage over competitors and threats, the organization should instead look inside at the resources and potential it already possesses. According to RBV, it is far simpler to capitalize on new chances by using existing resources and competences, rather than learning new skills, qualities, or roles for each opportunity. The RBV model's major focus is on these resources, with advocates stating that they should be prioritized in organizational strategy creation. Hence, When there is resources in the school, the principal must develop the basic intangible skills to ensure that the resources is used to the advantage of the school. Nevertheless, when this is not done, it becomes a threat to the advancement of the school. For instance misappropriated financial resources have the potency to affect the daily running of the school negatively. Hence the theory, to utilize the resources, the school principal must have the skills to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently, and as proposed by the theory, the resources must be used competitively. By application, it therefore entails that as an organization, the school is made of varieties of resources of which the principal as the human resource must be improved upon to gain the needed competitive advantage. Thus, the skill here includes the analytical skills, mathematical skills, and financial problem solving skills competency in other to utilize financial resources available in the school.

Methodology

The design of the study is correlational design and the population of the study is all the 286 principals in the public secondary schools in the 23 local government of Rivers State. The sample of the study is 166 principal, which is 58.04% of the entire population. The sampling technique of the study was a stratified random sampling technique and sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formulae as given below

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n=Sample, N=Population, 1=Constant, e=acceptable sample error

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 286/1 + N(0.05)^2 \\
 &= 286/1 + 286(0.0025) \\
 &= 286/1 + 0.715 \\
 &= 286/1.715 \\
 &= 166
 \end{aligned}$$

The instrument for data collection was a self designed questionnaire captioned "Principal Managerial Competencies and Utilization of Financial Resources Questionnaire (PMCUFRQ). With reliability coefficient of 0.88 which was determined through Cronbach alpha and also, the Financial Resources Questionnaire (FRQ) had a reliability coefficient of 0.74. It was content and face validated by an expert in education management and one other expert in test and measurement and the reliability coefficient is 0.88 and hence, it was highly reliable. The instrument for the data collection was graded based on the Likert-4point modified scale of Strong Very High Extent (VHE)-4, High Extent (HE)-3, Low Extent (LE)-2, and Very Low Extent (VLE)-1. The instrument were directly administered to the respondent and retrieved immediately, and this ensured 100% retrieval rate. In analyzing the data, mean score and standard deviation will be used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, using the SPSS version 25.

Data Analyses

Answer to Research Questions

Research question 1: To what extent does analytical competence influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: *Mean score of analytical competence in influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.*

S/N	Items	Male Principal s(93) \bar{X}_1	Female Principal s(73) \bar{X}_2	Mean Set \bar{X}	Rank Order	Remarks
1.	I am very skilled in negotiation and project management.	2.654	2.878	2.766	3 th	HE
2.	I am able to compute and synthesize financial data.	2.979	2.567	2.773	2 nd	HE
3.	I am able to allocate funds accordingly, based on the order of school priority.	2.975	2.835	2.905	1 st	HE
4.	I am able to find solutions to various financial problems by applying logical thinking.	2.927	2.58	2.753	4 th	HE
5.	I can calculate, compare and arrive at rational solutions to school finance and spending.	2.655	2.812	2.733	5 th	HE
Grand Mean		2.838	2.734	2.786		

All the items shows that the respondents responded to a high extent on analytical competence influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This is because it has the mean rating above the mean criterion of 2.5.

Research Question 2: Find To what extent does mathematical proficiency skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean score of mathematical proficiency skills competency in fluence on utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/ N	Items	Male Principal s(93) \bar{Q}_1	Female Principal s(73) \bar{Q}_2	Mea n Set r	Ran k Orde r	Remar ks
	<i>Mathematical proficiency skills</i>					
6.	I have high level proficiency in excel.	2.462	2.544	2.503	4 th	HE
7.	I am detail oriented and highly organized.	2.980	2.549	2.764	5 th	HE
8.	I ensure faithful accountability of financial report.	2.438	2.348	2.393	3 rd	VLE
9.	I communicate relevant financial needs to stakeholders.	2.759	2.693	2.726	1 st	HE
10.	I ensure that financial report and documentation is within timeline.	2.684	2.569	2.626	2 nd	HE
	Grand Mean	2.664	2.540	2.602		

All the items in table two shows that the mean of the items were above the mean criterion of 2.5 and hence, the items indicated a high extent on the mathematical proficiency skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. However, item 8 shows a Low Extent (LE).

Research Question 3: To what extent does financial problem solving skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean score of financial problem solving skills competency in fluence on utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State

S/ N	Items	Male Principal s(93) \bar{Q}_1	Female Principal s(73) \bar{Q}_2	Mea n Set r	Ran k Orde r	Remar ks
	<i>Financial problem solving skills</i>					
11.	I am skilled in negotiation and project management.	2.654	2.878	2.609	4 th	HE
12.	I am Strong time-management skills.	2.979	2.567	2.511	5 th	HE
13.	I am Highly skilled in math and finance.	2.975	2.835	2.731	3 rd	HE
14.	I am confident and assertive on my decision concerning school finance.	2.927	2.58	2.922	1 st	HE
15.	I establish procedure to manage the utilization of funds	2.655	2.812	2.809	2 nd	HE
	Grand Mean	2.838	2.734	2.786		

All the items shows that a high extent financial problem solving skills competency influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This is upon the fact that the mean response of the respondents shows high extents as it relates to the various items demonstrating asset management competencies of principals.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 4: There is no significant relationship between analytical competence influence utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

		AC	UFR
<i>Analytical Competence</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	166	166
<i>Utilization of Financial Resources</i>	Pearson Correlation	.824**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	166	166

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2-tailed).

From Tables 4, the null hypothesis 1 is rejected because the sig. (2-tailed) value 0.000 is less than 0.01 with correlation coefficient of 0.824**. Consequently, there is significant relationship between analytical competence and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

		MPSC	UFR
<i>Mathematical Proficiency Skills Competence</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.894**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	166	166
<i>Utilization of Financial Resources</i>	Pearson Correlation	.894**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	166	166

From Tables 5, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected because the sig. (2-tailed) value 0.000 is less than 0.01 with correlation coefficient of 0.894**. Hence, there is no significant relationship between mathematical proficiency skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 6: There is no significant relationship between financial problem solving skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State

		FPSSC	UFR
<i>Financial Problem Solving Skills Competency</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	166	166
<i>Utilization of Financial Resources</i>	Pearson Correlation	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	166	166

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2-tailed).

From Tables 6, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected because the sig. (2-tailed) value 0.000 is less than 0.01 with correlation coefficient of 0.788**. However, it can be stated alternately that there is no significant relationship between financial problem solving skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Discussion of Findings

The study discovered that the principal possess analytical competence to a high extent. The competence demonstrates that the principals are skilled in negotiation and project management, compute and synthesize financial data, allocate funds accordingly, based on the order of school priority, find solutions to various financial problems by applying logical thinking, calculate, compare and arrive at rational solutions to school finance and spending, this findings find similar ground with Odou and Anietie, 20120.

On financial report competence, the study also discovered that to a extent the principals have high level proficiency in excel, detail oriented and highly organized, ensure faithful accountability of financial report, communicate relevant financial needs to stakeholders and ensure that financial report and documentation is within timeline, , and this agrees with the opinion of Bolanle (2013).

On asset management competence, the study revealed that to a high extent, they are skilled in negotiation and project management, strong time-management skills, highly skilled in math and finance, confident and assertive on my decision concerning school finance, establish procedure to manage the utilization of funds this alternatively linked to the opinion of Carnoy and Loeb (2002), Bolanle (2013) and Anietie and Zipamoh (2017). Finally, there is significant relationship between analytical competence, mathematical proficiency skills competency, between financial problem solving skills competency and utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Principal is the head of the secondary school and he has enormous responsibility that needs to be accomplished on daily basics, and this has to be done by the available resources which face competing needs. Hence the principal must demonstrate the needed level of competencies as revealed in this study, to be able to ensure that financial resources are well utilized, then the various competencies like the analytical competence/numeric, financial report competence and asset management competence which indicates a significant relationship with financial resources utilization.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. The principal's should develop higher analytical competence in other to demonstrates that the principals are skilled in negotiation and project

management, compute and synthesize financial data, allocate funds accordingly, based on the order of school priority, find solutions to various financial problems by applying logical thinking, calculate, compare and arrive at rational solutions to school finance and spending.

2. The principal's should advance skills in financial report by demonstrating high level proficiency in excel, detail oriented and highly organized, ensure faithful accountability of financial report, communicate relevant financial needs to stakeholders and ensure that financial report and documentation is within timeline.
3. The principal's should improve on mathematical competence, by ensuring that they are skilled in negotiation and project management, strong time-management skills, highly skilled in math and finance, confident and assertive on my decision concerning school finance, establish procedure to manage the utilization of funds.

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