

PRINCIPALS' BUDGET MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This article examined principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria. A quantitative research approach was employed, with 599 of the 605 selected respondents participating in the study. Data was collected using three questionnaires. Descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviation) were used to answer the three research questions. One main hypothesis and four operational hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at a 0.05 significance level. The study found that: (1) planning, monitoring, controlling, and budget record-keeping are the budget management practices employed by secondary school principals in Oyo State; (2) the level of secondary school performance in Oyo State was high; and (3) a significant relationship existed between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance ($p\text{-value} = 0.034 < 0.05$). The study concluded that principals' budget management practices, as well as the participation of account officers in school budget management, play a significant role in secondary school performance in Oyo State. Among the recommendations, the study suggested that the Oyo State government should involve school principals and teachers in budget management practices, including planning and implementation.

Keywords: Budget management, Practices, Principals, secondary Schools, Performance

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Introduction

Effective budget management, encompassing planning, allocation, and monitoring of funds, is crucial for improving academic outcomes, maintaining infrastructure, and supporting staff development. Well-managed budgets enable schools to enhance learning environments and achieve better performance, while poor financial practices can lead to resource constraints and lower educational quality. This study underscores the critical role of financial leadership in school administration, emphasizing the principal's pivotal role in ensuring the efficient use of financial resources to boost overall school performance. Effective budget management involves several key

practices, such as resource allocation, where principals must prioritize spending on areas that directly impact student learning, including instructional materials, infrastructure, and teacher development.

Principals play a central role in managing the budget, making decisions on allocating funds to various areas like infrastructure, teaching resources, and staff development. Effective budget management practices, including strategic planning, transparency, and accountability, can directly influence the quality of education provided. Conversely, inadequate or inefficient financial practices can lead to poor academic outcomes, resource shortages, and diminished school performance. Principals, as the primary managers of school resources, directly influence how effectively schools can meet their goals, support students, and ensure overall success (Olaifa et al., 2024).

Ogochukwu and Ofojebe (2020) opined that budget management practices refer to the processes and methods by which principals plan, allocate, monitor, and control financial resources. These practices are essential for ensuring that limited school funds are used effectively to support teaching, learning, and school operations. Principals must assess school needs and strategically allocate resources to areas with the greatest impact on school performance. For example, investing in updated learning materials, maintaining school infrastructure, and hiring well-trained teachers can directly improve the learning environment and student performance.

Schools often face limited budgets, requiring principals to prioritize spending. This means some areas may receive more attention and resources than others, based on urgency and expected impact. For instance, if classrooms are overcrowded or the infrastructure is in disrepair, addressing these issues may take precedence over other expenditures to create a conducive learning environment. Effective budget management requires ongoing monitoring of fund expenditure and ensuring budget adherence. Principals who foster a culture of transparency and accountability in financial matters are more likely to avoid misallocation of funds, corruption, or inefficiencies that could harm school performance. Involving key stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and the school board, can promote accountability and build trust in how funds are managed (Yasin and Mohktar, 2022).

Principals should establish clear financial reporting practices, including regularly reviewing the school's financial statements and conducting audits. This allows for better tracking of expenditures and helps ensure the budget is used as planned. In addition to managing government-allocated budgets, many principals seek alternative funding sources, such as grants from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporate sponsorships, or community donations. By leveraging external resources, schools can address budget shortfalls and enhance educational opportunities for students (Ogochukwu & Ofojebe, 2020).

Principal budget management practices are shaped by historical shifts toward decentralized financial control, increasing demands for transparency, and the need for better financial literacy among school leaders. In resource-scarce states like Oyo State, Nigeria, these practices become essential for improving secondary school performance. Principals are now viewed as key players in ensuring schools run efficiently and effectively, directly impacting student outcomes. This study, therefore, highlights the importance of sound financial leadership in achieving educational goals.

Secondary school performance presents a relatively defined criterion. It entails achievement in both curricular and extracurricular activities. Curriculum implementation in schools, through policy formulation and planned activities, is the core element of school operations, upon which stakeholders interact to achieve the common goal of educating society. Extracurricular or extra-academic activities are those performed by students outside the normal school, college, or university curriculum; these activities are generally voluntary, as opposed to mandatory.

Secondary school performance refers to students' attainment in classroom and extracurricular activities through effective teaching and learning. Campbell and Muijis (2004) defined secondary school performance as the knowledge and skills developed in school, often depicted by test scores, i.e., marks awarded by teachers.

Secondary school performance is also defined as students' accomplishment in terms of grades obtained in a given test. It is often determined by individual scores in relation to given standards or sometimes relative to the performance of other students in class tests or examinations. It varies according to individual student scores, such as high, average, or low performance. Students who place a higher premium on education are motivated to enhance their intellectual development, which fosters performance. In a success-oriented society, secondary school performance is a significant measure of success in life, providing a singular index of intellectual ability and aptitude for every student in the school system (Goldhaber, 2000). Martin, Yin, and Mayall (2006) opined that secondary schools in most countries, particularly in Africa, experience classroom congestion, low student-classroom space, and low classroom utilization rates due to poor funding of education. These situations may likely affect secondary school performance adversely. Thus, the level of secondary school performance depends largely on the adequacy and effective utilization of school facilities. It is on this premise that this study investigated principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The budget management practices of secondary school principals are crucial for the effective allocation and use of financial resources in educational development (Akanbi & Aladejana, 2018; Adekola & Nduka, 2017). In Oyo State, Nigeria, a significant gap exists in understanding the qualitative aspects of these practices, hindering the ability to address challenges and improve education quality (Salawu & Ajani, 2018). Despite their importance, little research has been conducted on specific areas such as budget planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation by secondary school principals in the region (Salami, 2018). This lack of understanding makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability of budget management, leading to suboptimal resource allocation.

Furthermore, principals' budget management practices are influenced by various contextual factors, including institutional policies, bureaucratic structures, resource availability, and stakeholder expectations, which have not been adequately studied (Babajide & Sowunmi, 2019). The absence of research on these factors limits the development of targeted strategies to improve budget management.

Therefore, a comprehensive quantitative analysis of budget management practices in Oyo State's secondary schools is urgently needed. This analysis explored decision-making processes, resource utilization, stakeholder engagement, transparency, accountability, and the challenges faced by principals. Understanding these factors will help identify strategies and interventions to enhance budget management practices in Oyo State's secondary schools. This study aims to fill the gaps left by previous research and improve school performance through better budget management.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria. Other purposes were to:

- i. Examine the level of budget management practices by the secondary school principals in Oyo State;
- ii. Determine the level of budget management practices by the account officers in Oyo State; and
- iii. Ascertain the level of secondary school performance in Oyo state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in the conduct of study:

- i. What are the principal budgeting management practices employed by the secondary school principals in Oyo State?
- ii. To what extent do account officers evaluate principals' budget management practices in Oyo State?
- iii. What is the level of secondary school performance in Oyo State secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study

Main Hypothesis

- Ho: There is no significant relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria Operational Hypotheses
- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between budget planning and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between budget monitoring and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between budget controlling and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between budget financial record keeping and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

This study is guided by Bozeman and Straussman's (1982) Budget Theory, which operates along two dimensions: normative and descriptive. The descriptive dimension, as explained by Junge, Bosrie, and Kamau (2014), focuses on participation in public sector activities, identifying patterns, case inferences, and event sequences. This dimension emphasizes setting specific service target levels and pre-calculating the costs of labor and supplies required to achieve these goals (Njoku, 2013). In educational contexts, this approach suggests that departments should request the resources necessary to fulfill particular activities (Junge, Bosrie, & Kamau, 2014).

The normative dimension, conversely, is concerned with value, advocating for broad public participation in budgeting processes and ensuring that budgets reflect the interests of the general public. Applying Bozeman and Straussman's Budget Theory to this study highlights the importance of involving secondary school stakeholders, particularly principals in Oyo State, in budget planning and management to achieve the educational system's goals.

Conceptual review

Budge Management Practices

Budget management practices in schools provide a coordinated approach to managing an institution's financial and operational segments. Ihedioha (2013) argues that these practices help align the school's various functions. Adeniji (2012) describes budget management as the process of organizing and monitoring a pre-approved financial plan to achieve specific educational objectives. Njoku (2013) further defines it as a financial statement, prepared at the start of a fiscal year, outlining expected revenues and proposed expenditures for the upcoming year.

These definitions highlight that budget management is both a planning and control mechanism, involving decisions on what needs to be done, how, when, and at what cost. This process includes compiling past financial experiences, outlining current plans, and projecting future financial needs over a set timeframe. Effective integration of these practices leads to better financial decisions, enhancing the operations and performance of secondary schools (Junge, Bosrie, & Kamau, 2014).

For principals, effective budget management requires practices such as budget planning, monitoring, control, and financial record-keeping. These practices ensure resources are allocated efficiently, supporting the achievement of educational goals.

Budget Planning:

Budget planning begins with management setting broad parameters, including the economic and environmental context and the organization's strategic directions for the upcoming year (Kung et al., 2013). The process involves identifying revenue sources and accounting for all current and future expenses to achieve a specific financial

objective. The primary goal of budget planning is to ensure savings after spending allocations, addressing how the budget is or should be constructed.

Budget Monitoring

Budget monitoring involves comparing actual income and expenditures with projections (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009). It includes determining accountability and monitoring finances to ensure alignment with educational goals (Maile, 2012; Xaba & Ngubane, 2010). Based on feedback, necessary adjustments are made to prevent unauthorized expenditures.

Budget Control

Budget control involves using budgets to regulate an organization's activities and ensure that intended goals are met (Waygandt et al., 2009; Junge, Bosrie, & Kamau, 2014). Regular reports are created to analyze any deviations from expected performance, providing the necessary data relevant to operations and performance (Kung et al., 2013). Effective budget control includes establishing standards, measuring performance, and correcting deviations, helping secondary schools meet their performance goals (Van der Westhuizen, 2012).

Budget Record Keeping

Financial record keeping involves analyzing financial situations, making decisions, setting goals, and implementing control systems to ensure progress toward educational objectives (Watson & Robinson, 2013). It includes both managerial and financial operations, ensuring that resources are obtained and used lawfully, efficiently, and effectively (McKinney, 2014).

Secondary School Performance

According to Lamas (2015), secondary school performance encompasses the overall effectiveness of a school in delivering quality education and achieving positive outcomes for students. This performance is evaluated through various indicators, including academic achievement, student engagement, graduation rates, and post-secondary transitions. Academic performance, specifically, is defined by Caballero et al. (2007) as the extent to which students meet the objectives and standards of their enrolled program or course, typically reflected in grades and examination results. Lamas (2015) emphasizes that academic success results from effective teaching and student engagement.

Impact of Budget Management on Academic Performance: Chambers and Parrish (2015) discuss how effective budget management influences students' educational outcomes. They highlight the relationship between financial resource allocation and the quality of education provided, noting that proper budget management can enhance both curricular and extracurricular activities. This includes areas such as sports, quiz competitions, debates, and musical skills, which contribute to students' overall academic performance.

Empirical Review

This study reviewed various research on budget management practices and secondary school performance. Junge, Bosire, and Kamau (2014) investigated the impact of budgetary practices on public secondary schools in Nakuru, Kenya, using a quantitative approach with structured questionnaires. Their findings indicated that effective budget practices, including planning, stakeholder involvement, allocation, and control, were linked to high school performance in Nakuru Municipality.

Similarly, Agwor and Anwumere (2020) explored the effects of budgetary practices on private educational institutions in Rivers State. Their descriptive survey research revealed a strong, positive relationship between budgetary practices and institutional performance, recommending that educational leaders adopt these practices to boost performance.

Nzekwe (2007) examined financial practices among secondary school bursars and administrators in Enugu State, finding a uniform approach to budgetary control across the zone. Maritim (2013) studied budgeting in Kenyan parastatals, identifying prevalent practices such as budget planning and involvement, and noting excellent performance among the firms.

Oboegbulem and Kalu (2013) investigated budgeting practices in secondary schools in Southeast Nigeria using qualitative methods. They found that principals adhered well to budget planning and implementation practices, with no significant differences based on qualifications or experience.

Lopez et al. (2009) examined the relationship between budget participation and job performance among South Korean managers, finding a strong correlation. Lau et al. (2005) studied the impact of budget emphasis and involvement on managerial effectiveness, noting that high engagement improves performance in complex tasks.

Finally, Miriti and Wangui (2014) assessed the training needs for financial management among public secondary school principals in Machakos County, finding that current training programs were ineffective. They recommended developing tailored training programs to improve financial management skills.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive, correlational survey design using a quantitative approach. The target population consisted of all 1,262 secondary school administrators (principals and vice principals) in Oyo State. A multi-stage sampling technique was used, stratifying schools by the three senatorial districts and then employing stratified random sampling within each district. This resulted in a sample of 605 respondents: 196 principals and vice principals from Oyo North, 175 from Oyo South, and 234 from Oyo Central.

Data were collected using three instruments: the Principals' Budget Management Practices Questionnaire (PBMPQ) (20 items), the Account Officers Questionnaire (AOQ) (10 items), and the Oyo State Secondary School Performance Template (OSSSPT) for the 2018/2019 academic year. The instruments were validated for

content and construct validity by a supervisor and three experts. Reliability was established using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.62 and 0.65, respectively. Data collection, conducted over four weeks by the researcher and trained assistants, involved distributing and retrieving the questionnaires. Of the distributed instruments, 599 were returned and used for analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations) were used to address the research questions. Mean scores of 1.50 and above were considered high, while those below were deemed low. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level to determine the relationships between variables.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the principal budgeting management practices employed by the secondary school principals in Oyo State?

Table 1: Principal Budgeting Management Practices

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Budget Planning	17.21	1.79	Accepted
2	Budget Monitoring	16.40	2.01	Accepted
3	Budget Controlling	16.87	2.23	Accepted
4	Budget Financial Record Keeping	15.34	1.74	Accepted

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of principal budget management practices employed by secondary school principals in Oyo State. The items had mean ratings of 17.21, 16.40, 16.87, and 15.34, with standard deviations of 1.79, 2.01, 2.23, and 1.74, respectively. Since all mean ratings are greater than the 1.50 benchmark, the practices are considered to be employed by secondary school principals in Oyo State.

Research Question 2: To what extent do account officers evaluate principals' budget management practices in Oyo State?

Table 2: Extent the Account Officers Evaluate Principals' Budget Management Practices

S\N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1	As an accounting officer, I do analyse the income and expenditure of school principals	1.93	.267	Accepted	5 th
2	I do review the accounting work of the school principals for accuracy by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the budget.	2.00	.000	Accepted	1 st
3	I do evaluate and examine the financial reports and other documents of school expenditure	2.00	.000	Accepted	1 st
4	I do scrutinize the invoices, receipts, ledgers and purchase order of schools	1.86	.363	Accepted	10 th
5	I do ensure that records of expenditures and revenue generated are transparent.	2.00	.000	Accepted	1 st

6	I ensure that principals' budget certifies and complies with accounting and legal requirements	1.93	.267	Accepted	5 th
7	I ensure that school principals do not misappropriate funds and ask to present financial records to management	1.93	.267	Accepted	5 th
8	I do assist school principals in formulating and monitoring the budget of the school and provides recommendations on budgetary allocation	1.93	.267	Accepted	5 th
9	I do monitor the expenditures, revenue and the resources to ensure that schools to operate within budget	1.93	.267	Accepted	5 th
10	I do ensure that school principals provide monthly or quarterly reports to management on budgetary performance and may offer guidance on necessary adjustments to stay within budget in a given year	2.00	.000	Accepted	1 st

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of the extent to which account officers evaluate principals' budget management practices in Oyo State. All mean ratings are above the 1.50 benchmark. Items 2, 3, 5, and 10 were ranked highest, items 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9 were ranked fifth, and item 4 was ranked lowest. This indicates that these questionnaire items were used by account officers to evaluate principals' budget management practices in Oyo State.

Research Question 3: What is the level of secondary school performance in Oyo State secondary schools?

Table 3: Level of School Performance in Oyo State Secondary Schools

S\N	Curriculum & Extra Curriculum Activities	Mean	SD	Decision	Ranking
Academic School team performance at competitions					
1	Mathematics competitions	4.19	.566	Accepted	8 th
2	English language competitions	4.18	.566	Accepted	9 th
3	Quiz competitions	4.17	.578	Accepted	10 th
4	Nigeria spelling Bee	3.87	.648	Accepted	16 th
5	JET Science Quiz	3.84	.670		18 th
Sports and Recreation School team performance at competitions					
6	Football competitions	3.91	.565	Accepted	14 th
7	Basketball competitions	3.87	.577	Accepted	16 th
8	Tennis competitions	3.83	.593	Accepted	20 th
9	Athletics competitions	3.88	.580		15 th
10	Volleyball competitions	3.85	.596	Accepted	19 th

Arts and Music					
School music & Arts team performance at competitions					
11	Drama	3.99	.599	Accepted	12 th
12	Cartooning	3.13	.609	Accepted	23 rd
13	Wood working	3.52	.753		22 nd
14	marching band	2.81	.762	Accepted	24 th
15	concert band	2.44	.958	Accepted	25 th
Academic Performance					
Students' performance in five subjects					
16	Mathematics	4.34	.607	Accepted	4 th
17	English language	4.37	.496	Accepted	2 nd
18	Economics	4.38	.500	Accepted	1 st
19	Biology	4.33	.512	Accepted	5 th
20	Government	4.35	.505	Accepted	3 rd
Discipline					
21	Moral uprightness	4.21	.521	Accepted	6 th
22	Obedience to school rules & regulations	4.21	.512	Accepted	6 th
23	Punctuality	4.16	.524	Accepted	11 th
24	Neatness	3.92	.592	Accepted	13 th
25	Self-caution	3.61	.634	Accepted	21 st

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table 4, indicates the mean ratings on the level of school performance in Oyo State secondary schools. The item 18 (Economics) had mean score of 4.38 and ranked 1st respectively. Item 17 (English Language) had mean score of 4.37 and ranked 2nd. Item 20 (Government) had mean score of 4.35 and ranked 3rd respectively. Items 21 and 22 (Moral uprightness and Obedience to school rules & regulations) had mean scores of 4.21 and ranked 6th respectively. Items 14 and 15 (marching band and concert band) had mean scores of 2.81 and 2.44 and ranked 24th and 25th respectively. The analysis indicates that the mean ratings of all these secondary school performance dimensions are greater than 1.50 bench mark which were all accepted. This implies the level of school performance in Oyo State secondary schools was impressive and high.

Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria

Table 5: Principals' Budget Management Practices and Secondary School Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Principals' Budget Management Practices	599	48.95	5.54				
				597	.951	.034	Ho Not Accepted
Secondary School Performance	599	109.99	13.37				

$P < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that the p-value (0.034) was less than the significant level at (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria was not accepted. This suggests that there was significant relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Operational Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between budget planning and secondary school performance in Oyo State

Table 6: Budget Planning and Secondary School Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Budget Planning	599	17.21	1.79				
				597	.283	.044	Ho ₁ Not Accepted
Secondary School Performance	599	109.99	13.37				

$P < 0.05$

Table 6, shows that the p-value (0.044) was less than the significant level at (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between budget planning and secondary school performance in Oyo State was not accepted. This suggests that there was significant relationship between budget planning and secondary school performance in Oyo State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between budget monitoring and secondary school performance in Oyo State.

Table 7: Budget Monitoring and Secondary School Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Budget Monitoring	599	16.40	2.01				
				597	.304	.042	Ho ₂ Not Accepted
Secondary School Performance	599	109.99	13.37				

P < 0.05

Table 7 shows that the p-value (0.042) was less than the significant level at (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between budget monitoring and secondary school performance in Oyo State was not accepted. This suggests that significant relationship existed between budget monitoring and secondary school performance in Oyo State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between budget controlling and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 8: Budget Controlling and Secondary School Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Budget Controlling	599	16.87	2.23				
				597	.072	.073	Ho ₃ Accepted
Secondary School Performance	599	109.99	13.37				

Note:

P > 0.05

Table 8 shows that the p-value (0.073) was greater than the significant level at (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between budget controlling and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted. This implies that there was no significant relationship between budget controlling and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between budget financial record keeping and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria

Table 9: Budget Record Keeping and Secondary School Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Budget Financial Record Keeping	599	15.34	1.74				
				597	.364	.037	Ho ₄ Not Accepted
Secondary School Performance	599	109.99	13.37				

$P < 0.05$

Table 9 shows that the p-value (0.037) was less than the significant level at (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between budget financial record keeping and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria was not accepted. This implies that significant relationship existed between budget record keeping and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that budget management practices employed by secondary school principals in Oyo State included budget planning, monitoring, controlling, and record-keeping. The application of these strategies was also found to be high. This aligns with Junge, Bosire, and Kamau's (2014) findings on the effect of budgetary practices on public secondary school performance in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya, which showed that principals managed budgets through planning and stakeholder involvement, budget allocation/implementation, and budget control. This suggests that budget management practices are used as a means of achieving performance goals in schools. This also agrees with Oboegbulem and Kalu's (2013) study exploring budgeting practices of secondary school principals in Southeast Nigeria, which revealed that principals adhere to budget practices to a great extent in budget planning and implementation.

Research question two's findings revealed that finance officers highly evaluated principal budget management. The study further showed that reviewing the principal's accounting work, evaluating and examining financial reports, transparently recording revenue and expenditure, and providing quality reports on budget performance were ranked highest among principal budget management practices in Oyo State. This corroborates Knight's (2003) view that principals' budget management practices, as a planning instrument and decision model for managing organizations or schools, need thorough examination and evaluation. This implies that auditors help school principals better manage school budgets, ensuring effective and efficient utilization of limited resources to achieve desired objectives.

The findings for research question three revealed that secondary school performance ratings in Oyo State, in terms of school team performance at competitions, sports and recreation, arts and music, student discipline, and academic performance, were very impressive and high. This suggests that stakeholders are responsibly discharging their

duties. This finding agrees with Junge, Bosire, and Kamau's (2014) finding that secondary school performance in Nakuru Municipality was high, indicating good school performance.

The findings for the main hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between principals' budget management practices and secondary school performance in Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that budget management practices (planning, controlling, monitoring, and record-keeping) enhance secondary school performance in Oyo State. This finding aligns with Agwor and Anwumere's (2020) study on the impact of corporate budgetary practices on private educational institution performance in Rivers State, which established a strong, positive relationship between budgetary practices and institutional performance. Similarly, it agrees with Junge, Bosire, and Kamau's (2014) finding of a strong relationship between budgeting practices and school performance in Nakuru Municipality.

The findings for hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between budget planning and secondary school performance in Oyo State. This relationship is crucial, as effective financial management significantly influences educational outcomes. Budget planning involves strategically allocating resources to ensure schools have the necessary funds to support quality education. Well-planned and managed budgets enable schools to invest in essential areas like infrastructure, instructional materials, teacher development, and extracurricular activities, all of which contribute to improved overall school performance. Research has consistently shown that schools with better financial management and budget planning tend to achieve higher academic performance (Afolabi, 2021; Adeyemi, 2019). These studies highlighted that well-allocated budgets, particularly in areas such as staff development and infrastructure, play a vital role in improving secondary school performance.

The findings for hypothesis two revealed a significant relationship between budget monitoring and secondary school performance in Oyo State. Budget monitoring ensures that allocated funds are used for their intended purposes, providing schools with the necessary resources for academic and infrastructural needs. When schools properly track their budgets, they are more likely to meet operational needs like staff salaries, educational materials, and facility maintenance, contributing to a better learning environment and improved overall school performance. This finding agrees with Odubela's (2020) study on the role of budgetary control and monitoring on secondary school performance in Ogun State, Nigeria, which showed a positive correlation between stringent budget monitoring practices and higher academic achievements. Similarly, Okwori & Sule (2016), in their study in Benue State, Nigeria, examining the impact of budget implementation and monitoring on secondary school education quality, found that schools with effective budget monitoring systems were more likely to utilize resources efficiently, directly influencing education quality and student performance.

The study also found no significant relationship between budget controlling and secondary school performance in Oyo State. This suggests that merely controlling the budget may not directly lead to better educational outcomes. Several possible explanations exist for this result, including ineffective use of controlled budgets, the influence of non-financial factors on academic outcomes, misalignment between budget control and academic priorities (Ajibola, 2017), lack of administrative capacity

(Umar and Yahaya, 2018), insufficient overall funding (Adeoye, 2019), rigid budgeting systems (Okon and Etim, 2018), and a focus on non-academic expenditures (Olatunde, 2017). These issues suggest that while budget control is important, it must be coupled with sound educational strategies and adequate funding to significantly impact student performance.

Finally, the findings revealed a significant relationship between budget record-keeping and secondary school performance. Proper budget record-keeping ensures efficient resource allocation, aiding in the provision of necessary facilities, materials, and services that directly impact the learning environment. Effective budget record-keeping is critical for improving overall secondary school performance, as it ensures optimal resource use, promotes transparency, and supports long-term educational planning, all of which are linked to higher student achievement. For example, Usman's (2020) study in Oyo State, Nigeria, showed that schools with good financial management systems had better classroom conditions, leading to improved student engagement and performance. According to Ofori and Attah (2019), schools with well-managed budgets tend to exhibit higher student performance, as they can maintain up-to-date resources, reduce waste, and ensure consistent delivery of quality education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective budget management is crucial for enhancing secondary school performance. Sound financial practices, such as accurate budgeting, meticulous record-keeping, and transparent resource allocation, enable schools to optimize their available funds. This optimization allows for improvements in infrastructure, timely procurement of educational materials, and investment in teacher training—all of which contribute to a conducive learning environment.

Furthermore, strong budget management promotes accountability and fosters trust among stakeholders, reducing inefficiencies and ensuring that resources are directed toward initiatives supporting student success. Ultimately, schools with robust budget management strategies are better equipped to meet their students' academic needs, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Oyo State government should actively involve school principals and teachers in all stages of budget management, from planning to implementation. This participatory approach will foster a clear understanding of budget allocations for education and encourage responsible and judicious use of financial resources.
2. The government should ensure that the education budget is carefully planned and based on the specific needs of the state's education system. This targeted approach will facilitate realistic forecasting, sound planning, and effective budgeting that addresses the requirements of students, teachers, school administrators, and the provision of necessary educational facilities.
3. The government, through the State Ministry of Education, should implement strict oversight mechanisms to monitor the allocation and utilization of

- educational funds. Effective supervision will help ensure resources are used efficiently to achieve educational goals.
4. The State Ministry of Education should require school principals and their bursars to regularly present and justify their budgets. This will strengthen financial accountability and help reduce the risk of mismanagement or embezzlement of public funds.
 5. School principals should maintain accurate financial records documenting the upkeep of school buildings, furniture, and vehicles, as well as the purchase of educational materials, such as science equipment. They should also maintain proper documentation of workshops, seminars, and other educational programs. This meticulous record-keeping will ensure checks and balances are in place to uphold financial accountability within the school system.

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