

FINANCIAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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 financial control and accountability of public owned organizations. 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 and empirically analyzed. The target population of this study was the staff (3,750) of public/civil servants working in the Accounts and Finance departments of Rivers state and Local government Secretariats, Taro Yaman was adopted to arrive at 361 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. R2= 0.468, F(3, 347) = 77.692, P< 0.05). Based on this finding, we 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. R2= 0.141, F(3, 347) = 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. Physical control of assets, Responsibility*

INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to establish a comprehensive framework to ensure effective and efficient management of resources. A robust financial control system is crucial for enabling the government to achieve its goals by providing accurate financial information, protecting assets and records, and assessing operational efficiency through budgetary oversight. It also promotes adherence to established policies and regulations. Consequently, these financial control practices bolster the reliability of both internal and external financial reporting and aid in regulatory compliance (Wachira et al., 2019). Sambo and Imiete (2023) similarly assert that financial controls aim to offer a guiding framework for the prudent and efficient management of resources within the public sector. Mulu (2023) emphasizes that these practices enhance the government's capacity to achieve its objectives, safeguard assets and records, optimize operational efficiency through budgeting, and foster adherence to regulatory policies.

In a study focused on developing economies, Nick (2019) highlights that financial control practices often center on taxation and debt management. These practices significantly influence resource

allocation and income distribution. Nick also notes that these financial controls encompass the entire budget cycle, from preparation and internal controls to accounting, audits, procurement, monitoring, and reporting. Hayles (2020) argues that effective financial controls, including proper accounting record-keeping, mitigate financial risks and ensure that financial information remains confidential within the organization. This approach also helps in safeguarding assets and detecting and preventing fraud.

Walters and Dunn (2019) describe financial control activities as the policies and procedures that ensure the execution of management directives. They emphasize that financial control systems are established to enforce compliance with prescribed policies and processes. This, in turn, protects assets and resources, maintains accurate accounting records, and produces reliable financial and management information.

To enhance financial control practices within the Nigerian public sector, the federal government introduced the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) in April 2007. The IPPIS establishes a centralized database for the Nigerian public service, serving as a reliable and unified source of employee information while integrating seamlessly with other business applications. Akande (2023) highlights that the IPPIS aims to create a dependable database for the public service. It facilitates manpower training, reduces record and payroll fraud, streamlines documentation processes, and simplifies the updating and retrieval of personnel records. Additionally, IPPIS expedites staff remuneration payments, minimizing waste and financial leakage.

The launch of IPPIS was driven by several objectives. One key objective is to provide a centralized database to support government manpower planning and decision-making. Furthermore, IPPIS aims to automate and store personnel records, aiding in monitoring manpower utilization and ensuring that staff remuneration is based on accurate information. This approach helps to mitigate financial leakages and embezzlement within the public service payroll system. Over the years, the Nigerian government has acknowledged challenges related to the mismanagement of public funds, characterized by a lack of transparency, poor accountability, corruption, financial leakages, and inefficient budgeting and cash management processes. Additionally, there has been a notable absence of a culture of accountability and ethical conduct in public affairs within the country. Zubairu (2021) observes that funds are frequently misappropriated without adequate sanctions imposed on the offenders. The government bears the responsibility to ensure that those responsible are appropriately penalized. Wachira et al. (2019) further underscore this issue, pointing out that Nigeria has experienced significant challenges in accountability, responsibility, and transparency among public officials. This has led to widespread mismanagement of public funds, with over forty-six thousand ghost workers identified and an annual loss exceeding 118 billion naira. These losses can be attributed to various administrative, accounting, and personnel issues, including the blatant abuse of procedures, lack of transparency in awarding public contracts, and poor accountability mechanisms.

Statement of the problem.

Numerous authors have explored and presented varying perspectives on the prevalent wasteful expenditure in publicly owned organizations. Oyadonghan and Ogoun (2019) contend that funds allocated for projects often lack proper accountability. They argue that the planning and execution of the national budget and funds are obscured by weak accounting infrastructure, inadequate accountability, and transparency protocols. Akande (2020) underscores that the public sector is plagued by escalating mismanagement of funds and flawed internal operational mechanisms within the government. The repercussions of such fund mismanagement have contributed to significant economic instability and hindered the nation's social infrastructure development. In light of these identified challenges, this study examines the impact of financial control on accountability within publicly owned organizations in the Nigerian public sector.

Objective of the study.

The general objective of the study is to investigate the effect of financial control practices on the accountability of public owned organizations. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the significant effect of physical control of assets on Accountability of public owned organizations in Nigeria.
2. To investigate the significant effect of segregation of duties on responsibility of public owned organizations in Nigeria.

Research Questions.

1. Does physical control of assets significantly affect Accountability of public owned organizations in Nigeria?
2. What is the significant effect of segregation of duties on responsibility of public owned organizations in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses.

H0₁: Physical control of assets does not significantly affect accountability of public owned organizations in Nigeria.

H0₂: Segregation of duties does not significantly affect responsibility of public owned organizations in Nigeria.

Review of related literature.

Conceptual Review.

Financial Control Practices.

Buger and Woods (2019) characterize financial control practices as focusing on the prioritization and optimal use of limited resources. These practices aim to ensure the effective utilization of public funds and achieve value for money, particularly in delivering government services to the public. Correia (2019) views financial control practices as integral to the overall operations of the public sector, intersecting with other functional disciplines within this sector. Meanwhile, Fung (2017) describes financial control practices as components of the decision-making, planning, and control systems within the public sector. This encompasses the treasury function and involves the evaluation, selection, management, and control of new capital investment opportunities.

Financial control practices encompass various aspects, including resource generation, allocation, expenditure control, and utilization. These practices are designed to ensure the efficient and effective allocation and use of public resources. Furthermore, financial control practices are also defined as procedures implemented to safeguard assets and ensure accurate recording of all financial transactions, thereby preventing and minimizing errors and fraud. In the public sector, the primary objective of financial controls is to establish a comprehensive framework for sound and efficient resource management. A robust system of financial control aims to enhance the government's capacity to achieve its objectives by providing accurate financial data, protecting assets and records, evaluating operational efficiency through budgetary oversight, and promoting adherence to established policies and regulations.

Consequently, financial control practices play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, improving the reliability of both internal and external financial reporting, and facilitating compliance with relevant laws and regulations (Wachira et al., 2019). 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 (2022) 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 (2022) 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 office holders need be made to answer for any suspected acts of funds misappropriation or mismanagement irrespective of social status.

Ofor et al (2022) 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 (2022) 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 (2022) 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 (2022) 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, et al (2022) 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.

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 Rivers state government secretariat and local government randomly picked among those with good knowledge of the course of study. For the purpose of this study, a total population of 3,750, 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 3750 at 5% MOE, the sample size would be:

$$3750/(1 + 3,750(0.05^2)) = 361.445 \sim 361. \quad \text{Sample size therefore is 361.}$$

However, 350 questionnaires were returned which were used for the analysis.

Model Specification

$$Y_i = f(X_i)$$

Y_i = vector of dependent variables while

X_i = vector of independent variables

In specific manner;

$$ACC = f(SOD, PCA,) \text{ equ. (1a)}$$

$$RES = f(SOD, PCA,) \text{ equ. (2a)}$$

Nevertheless, the models are specified in empirical forms as;

$$ACC_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SOD_i + \alpha_2 PCA_i + \mu_i \text{ equ. (1b)}$$

$$RES_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SOD_i + \alpha_2 PCA_i + \mu_i \text{ equ. (2b)}$$

Where;

ACC= Accountability

RES= Responsibility

SOD= Segregation of Duties

PCA= Physical control of Asset

μ = error term

α_0 = constant

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

DATA ANALYSIS,

Table 4.2: Financial Control Practices in Public Sector

S/N	Questions	SA	A	PA	PD	D	SD	Mean	St. D
	Segregation of Duties (\bar{x} = 4.93, SD =0.8015)								
1.	No single individual is responsible for all aspects of a transaction in your organisation.	(62) 17.7	(233) 66.6	(24) 6.8	(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) 68.1	(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

	Physical control of Asset (\bar{x}=5.155, SD=0.7153)								
5	Only authorised staffs can access financial records in your unit	(111) 31.8	(205) 58.7	(31) 8.8	(3) 0.7	(0) 0.0	(0) 0.0	5.22	.619
6	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
7	The process of gaining entrance to documents and vaults are never bypassed	(113) 32.2	(193) 55.0	(33) 9.4	(6) 1.7	(3) 0.9	(2) 0.6	5.15	.797
8	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
	Ground Mean							5.0425	0.7584

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.

Table 4.2 reveals the responses of selected civil servants working in the account and finance departments in Rivers State and the Local governments 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} =5.0425) 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} =5.155), The highest indicator of financial control practice in public sector was the physical control of assets. 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).

Table 4.3: Accountability of public Sector

S/ N	Questions	SA	A	PA	PD	D	SD	Mea n	St. D
	Accountability (\bar{x}=5.09, SD=0.693)								
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) 31.9	(212) 60.4	(27) 7.7	(0) 0.0	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	5.22	.682
2	There are clear regulatory frameworks that clarify how the public funds are to be utilized for better service delivery and these	(85) 24.2	(219) 62.4	(40) 11.4	(0) 0.0	(3) 0.9	(3) 0.9	5.08	.724

	fully guide our conduct and practices in your unit.								
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	.683
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	.683
	Responsibility (\bar{x}=5.02, SD=0.947)								
5	As soon as possible, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, your unit draws up annual financial reports in accordance with all norms and standards of the Public Finance Management Act.	61) 17.4	(257)) 73.2	(29) 8.3	(2) 0.6	(0) 0.0	(1) 0.3	5.07	.67
6	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
7	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
8	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

Table 4.3 reveals the responds of selected public servants working in the account and finance departments in Rivers state as it regards to Fund Management. Based on the result, the selected staff in public service working in the account and finance departments agreed that there is efficiency of Fund Management in Nigeria public sectors. On the accountability, it was ascertained 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 Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

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

Model	Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	4.501	1.743		2.582	.010
segregation of duties	0.113	0.05	.090 2	0.233	0.026
Physical control of Asset	0.084	0.057	.068 1	0.464	0.144
Sources of Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
Regression	1550.922	3	387.73	77.692	.000 ^b
Residual	1721.767	344	4.991		
Total	3272.689	347			
Multiple R2 =		R2 (Adjusted) = 0.468		Standard error estimate = 2.23397	
R = 0.688;		0.474			

a. Dependent Variable: Accountability.

b. Predictors: Segregation of duties, Physical control of assets

Sources: Researchers' Field Survey, 2024

In Table 4.4, shows that financial control has a significant influence on accountability of public sector (*Adj. R2*= 0.468, $F(3, 347) = 77.692$, $P < 0.05$). The model shows that financial control in public sector explains the variation of 46.8% (*Adj. R2*= 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 and physical control of assets. 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 were proxied by segregation of duties and physical control of assets. The study showed that segregation of duties has a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector ($\beta = .113$, $t = 2.233$, $P < 0.05$). 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 ($\beta = 0.084$, $t = 1.464$, $P > 0.05$). This suggests that increase 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.

Hypothesis Two.

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

Model	Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	15.884	2.781		5.711	0.000
segregation of duties	0.249	0.081	0.158	3.09	0.002
Physical control of Asset	-0.039	0.091	-0.025	-0.427	0.670
Sources of Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Sig.
Regression	777.512	3	194.378	15.296	.000b
Residual	4384.205	344	12.708		
Total	5161.717	347			
R = 0.388;	Multiple R2 = 0.151	R2 (Adjusted) = 0.141	Standard error estimate = 3.564		

a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility.

b. Predictors: Segregation of duties, Physical control of assets

Sources: Researchers' Field Survey, 2024

In Table 4.5, shows that financial control has a significance influence on responsibility of public sector (*Adj. R2= 0.141, F(3, 347) = 15.296, P< 0.05*). The model shows that financial control in public sector explains the variation of 14.1% (*Adj. R2= 46.8%*) public sector responsibility. These are evidences that the model is moderate. This implies that the linear combination of the segregation of duties and physical control of assets 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 and physical control of assets. The study shows that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on responsibility in public sector ($\beta = 0.249, t = 3.090, P<0.05$). This shows that an increase in segregation of 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 ($\beta = - 0.039, t = -.427, P>0.05$). 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.

Discussion of Findings

The study findings shows that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on accountability in public sector ($\beta = .113, t = 2.233, P<0.05$). Similarly, physical control of assets have positive but not statistically significant to influence accountability of public sector ($\beta = 0.084, t = 1.464, P>0.05$). This finding was in consonance with the empirical findings of Olorunfoba and Gbemigun (2022) 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 (2022) 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.

The study also attest that segregation of duties have a positive and significant effect on responsibility in public sector ($\beta = 0.249$, $t = 3.090$, $P < 0.05$). The findings corroborate with the work of Odewole (2021) 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 enthrone transparency and probity, if government put in place enabling environment and adequate legislative supports for the smooth implementation of the policy with minimum.

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 and physical control of assets predicts the public sector accountability. The financial control practices were proxied by segregation of duties and physical control of assets.

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. The findings further revealed that there is significant effect of financial control practices on responsibility in Nigeria public sector. Based on the outcome of the two hypotheses which were empirically tested and the research findings stated earlier in this work, 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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