

EXTENT OF AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study x-rayed the extent of availability and utilization of financial resources in the administration of internal examinations in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 1,519 secondary school principals and teachers in 215 public secondary schools in both urban and rural areas of the state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 principals and 500 teachers making a total of 600 respondents for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers on a four-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) response pattern weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was duly validated by three experts, two from Educational Administration and Planning and one from Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Using the test re-test procedure and applying the Pearson Product Moment Co-relation Co-efficient analysis, the reliability of the instrument was established at 0.76 using 10 secondary schools in Enugu State. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations. t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Very high extent and high extent were used when the mean scores are above 2.50 and low extent when the mean scores are below 2.50. Findings of the study indicates that financial resources for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools were available to a low extent, and that the utilization of financial resources for the procurement of examination materials for administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools were to a very low extent. Based on the findings, the researchers made the following recommendations; government should involve Non-governmental Organization (NGOs), Philanthropists, Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) and other concerned stakeholders in making financial resources available in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, Financial, Resources, Administration

1. Introduction

Globally, organizations are established to achieve a purpose. However, for any purpose to be realized, it requires the availability and utilization of financial resources. In the school system, specifically in secondary schools in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular,

the availability and utilization of financial resources are paramount for the achievement of the objectives for which these institutions are established (Ogar & Akumah, 2024). These objectives are largely measured through learning outcomes, which are determined via written objectives, subjective tests, or essays, commonly known as examinations. Examinations, whether internal or external, serve as the primary instrument for measuring student performance. As Agarwal, Finley, Rosa, and Roediger (2017) posit, an examination is a way of assessing or measuring performance, both in academic institutions and other organizations.

This study focuses specifically on internal examinations. Internal examinations are those conducted by schools, planned by teachers through an examination timetable, and executed by setting questions, invigilating students, and marking answer booklets without external input (Akpa et al., 2023). These assessments, administered mid-term, end-of-term, or end-of-session, are crucial for judging student performance and determining promotion to the next class. The administration of such examinations, however, is heavily dependent on the availability of various resources, with financial resources being the most critical. Students' internal academic motivation, while important for high achievement (Owenga, Raburu, & Aloka, 2018), cannot translate into success without the necessary infrastructural and material support facilitated by funding. Meneu (2018) asserts that resources in schools must be augmented for the efficient administration of internal examinations. Examinations, as measuring instruments, require a conducive environment and materials, all of which are contingent on financial input (Livumbaze, 2017).

Financial resources, defined as the monies available for spending including cash, liquid assets, equity funding, and loans (Koretz, 2017) are the nexus of all educational programs. Oyakan, Adeledun, and Onesajo (2020) maintain that adequate funding and the judicious utilization of available allocations are what enable an educational institution to develop. In the context of this paper, financial resources refer specifically to the monies required for administering internal examinations. These resources can come from various forms, including government grants, student contributions, and interest earnings (Baker, 2012). In Ebonyi State, the government has ostensibly introduced free education, which includes coverage for internal examinations. In practice, principals collect levies from students at the end of every term, remitting them to the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) accounts, and these funds are intended to be used for conducting examinations across all public secondary schools in the state.

Despite this policy, a significant gap exists between policy and practice. A close observation of the system reveals that while the state government claims to provide funds for school examinations, the extent of this provision remains empirically unverified. A persistent issue is that most schools complain of the non-availability of funds, leading to situations where a greater number of students share question papers in the examination hall (Okafor, 2023). This has led to widespread speculation, accusations, and counter-accusations regarding the non-availability, poor management, and ineffective utilization of financial resources by both the government and school administrators. As Nnam and Inah (2015) reported, persistent problems facing internal examinations in secondary schools include a poor number of students sitting for exams, teachers' lack of zeal, non-availability of examination materials, and a poor examination environment all of which are symptomatic of underlying financial deficiencies.

The present condition of internal examinations in Ebonyi State is, therefore, quite deplorable. It is estimated that one-third to one-half of students do not participate in termly examinations. During the collection of examination levies, most principals claim

that many students have not paid, creating a discrepancy since the amount remitted to the IGR accounts must theoretically tally with the student population. This situation suggests that the government's "free education" policy is underfunded, and the reliance on student levies persists. Current reports from educational supervisors of the Ebonyi State Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2022) confirm that factors such as poor funding and the non-availability of financial resources severely inhibit the successful administration of examinations. This, in turn, has lowered the standard of secondary education, producing graduates who are neither employable nor adequately prepared for university admission, thus defeating the core goals of secondary education as a preparation for functional individuals and higher learning.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the critical nature of this problem. The financial situation in Ebonyi State secondary schools is precarious and has attracted significant public criticism. The inadequate availability of financial resources naturally makes their utilization difficult, as one cannot utilize what is not available. This has posed a formidable challenge to the administration of internal examinations for the Ministry of Education, the Secondary Education Board, and school principals. Without empirical data on the actual extent of resource availability and utilization, efforts to remedy the situation will remain unfocused and ineffective.

Therefore, this study is set to investigate the extent of availability and utilization of financial resources in the administration of internal examinations in public secondary schools in Nigeria, with a particular focus on Ebonyi State. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of availability and utilization of financial resources in the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent of availability of financial resources for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools, and to ascertain the extent to which financial resources are utilized in the procurement of examination materials for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State.

To achieve these objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions: to what extent are financial resources available for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools, and to what extent are financial resources utilized for the procurement of examination materials in the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State.

The findings of this research are expected to provide empirical evidence that will inform policy adjustments, guide school administrators in more effective resource management, and offer a foundational reference for future academic inquiries into educational financing in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Concept of Financial Resources in Education

Financial resources are broadly described as materials of monetary value which can be expended on expenditure items (Ezeuwa & Ibiam, 2020). In the context of educational institutions, financial resources refer to the funds available to schools for carrying out their operational activities and achieving stated objectives. Koretz (2017) defined financial resources as monies available for spending, including but not limited to cash, liquid assets, equity funding, and loans. Within the school system, particularly in secondary schools, financial resources manifest in various forms, including grants from federal and state governments, students' private contributions for specific purposes, and interest earnings on short-term bank deposits (Baker, 2012).

The concept of financial resources in education is intrinsically linked to the broader notion of educational financing. Okanamiri (2002), as cited in Nwakpa (n.d.), defined education financing as a branch of knowledge that deals with important examination of the cost and expenditure in the production of education services. Individuals and organizations such as public secondary schools need financial resources to carry out operations in order to achieve objectives (Ezeuwa & Ibiam, 2020). In the context of this paper, financial resources are specifically conceptualized as the monies required for the administration of internal examinations, including funds for procuring examination materials, paying invigilators, and maintaining conducive examination environments.

2.2 Resource Based Theory

This study is anchored on the Resource-Based Theory (RBT), which posits that organizations achieve competitive advantage and operational effectiveness through the strategic acquisition and deployment of valuable resources. In the educational context, this theory suggests that the quality of internal examination administration is contingent upon the availability and effective utilization of financial and material resources. When schools possess adequate financial resources, they are better positioned to procure quality examination materials, maintain conducive examination environments, and ensure the integrity of the assessment process. Conversely, resource scarcity creates operational challenges that manifest in poor examination administration and compromised outcomes.

The application of Resource-Based Theory to educational administration is particularly relevant in developing country contexts where resource constraints are pervasive. As Ogar and Akumah (2024) observed, in the school system precisely in secondary schools in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular the availability and utilization of financial resources are paramount for the achievement of objectives for which secondary schools are established. The theory provides a lens for understanding how resource availability influences the quality of educational processes and outcomes.

2.3 Administration of Internal Examinations

Examinations constitute an integral part of the education process, serving as instruments for assessing individuals' skills and knowledge in general, specific areas of studies, and overall academic achievements (Adekale, 1993, as cited in Fasasi, 2009). An examination can be in essay or objective type, oral or written, theory or practical, and is conducted to determine the extent to which knowledge and skills have been acquired. Based on examination results, decisions can be taken regarding admission into educational institutions and employment in the labor market (Fasasi, 2009).

Internal examinations are those conducted by schools, planned by teachers through an examination timetable, and executed by setting questions, invigilating students, and marking answer booklets without external input (Akpa et al., 2023). These assessments, administered mid-term, end-of-term, or end-of-session, are crucial for judging student performance and determining promotion to the next class. The administration of such examinations requires the coordination of various resources, including human resources (teachers and invigilators), material resources (question papers, answer booklets, and examination materials), and financial resources to procure and coordinate all necessary inputs.

The significance of proper examination administration cannot be overstated, as examination outcomes serve as the basis for decision-making on students' abilities and consequently their job opportunities and educational advancement (Fasasi, 2009). When

examinations are poorly administered due to resource constraints, the validity of decisions emanating from such examinations may be compromised, potentially leading to the promotion and graduation of incompetent students who would not be able to contribute positively to national development.

2.4 Availability of Financial Resources for Examination Administration

The availability of financial resources refers to both the percentage of government expenditure allocated to the education sector and the funds raised from other sources by school principals (Ezeuwa & Ibiam, 2020). In Ebonyi State public secondary schools, financial resources for examination administration are theoretically provided through government allocations and student levies. The state government introduced free payment for administration of internal examinations, with principals collecting money from students at the end of every term and remitting same to the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) accounts (Ogar & Akumah, 2024).

However, empirical evidence suggests that sufficient financial resources are not available in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Ezeuwa and Ibiam (2020) investigated availability and extent utilization of financial resources in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State using a descriptive survey approach. Among their key findings was that sufficient financial resources are not available in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. This finding corroborates the observations of Okafor (2023) that most schools complain of non-availability of funds for examination, leading to situations where a greater number of students share question papers in the hall.

The limited availability of financial resources has been identified as a critical factor undermining the effective administration of internal examinations. As Meneu (2018) observed, inefficiency in the conduct of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools has been attributed to poor funding. Similarly, a recent study by Ogar and Akumah (2024) revealed that limited financial resources provided for the administration of internal examination in secondary schools are utilized to a high extent, suggesting that while available resources are used intensively, the overall quantum remains insufficient.

Alternative sources of financing secondary education have been identified in the literature, including Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) contributions, proceeds from school farms, donations, endowments, community involvement, fund-raising activities, and old students associations (Nwakpa, n.d.). These alternative sources could potentially supplement government allocations and enhance the availability of financial resources for examination administration in Ebonyi State secondary schools.

2.5 Utilization of Financial Resources for Examination Materials

Effective utilization of financial resources is as important as their availability. Oyakan, Adeledun, and Onesajo (2020) maintained that adequate funding of educational institutions and the well utilization of the available financial allocation make the institution to develop. In the context of examination administration, financial resources are utilized primarily for the procurement of examination materials, including question papers, answer booklets, and other stationery, as well as for providing conducive examination environments.

A systematic review by a study on the effect of financial management practices on service delivery in secondary schools revealed that budgeting ensures effective implementation of education programs, and that audits of school accounts result in good

financial management and effective control mechanisms that ensure overall operational efficiency. The review suggested that head teachers need to manage financial resources more responsively for effective performance and fulfilling institutional needs (Core.ac.uk, 2024).

Ogar and Akumah (2024) specifically investigated the utilization of financial resources for administration of internal examination in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Their findings revealed that limited financial resources provided for the administration of internal examination in secondary schools are utilized to a high extent. The implication of their study is that it will help to clear the misconception between principals and teachers on the issue of diversion of funds made available for administration of examination and other school activities.

However, challenges persist in the utilization of financial resources. The quality assurance programme in Nigerian public secondary schools faces numerous problems, including inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor supervision, corruption, weak school administrators, inadequate instructional materials, and examination malpractice (dspace.umsida.ac.id, 2023). These challenges underscore the need for improved financial resource management and accountability mechanisms in the school system.

2.6 Examination Malpractice and Resource Constraints

The relationship between resource constraints and examination malpractice has been documented in the literature. Examination malpractice refers to any misconduct or improper practice before, during, or after any examination by examinees or others with a view to obtaining good results by fraudulent means (Obe, 1998, as cited in Fasasi, 2009). Various forms of examination malpractice have been identified, including leaking questions to students, smuggling materials into examination halls, impersonation, collusion between candidates and officials, and mass cheating (Fasasi, 2009; Manafa, Ohamobi, & Osegbue, 2020).

While examination malpractice is often attributed to moral failings, resource constraints play a significant role. When schools lack adequate financial resources to procure sufficient examination materials, ensure proper invigilation, and maintain conducive examination environments, the conditions for malpractice are created. As observed by Okafor (2023), the situation where a greater number of students share question papers in the hall is directly attributable to non-availability of funds.

Furthermore, Manafa, Ohamobi, and Osegbue (2020) identified various forms of examination malpractice in Anambra State secondary schools, including impersonation, coming into examination hall with electronic devices, and receiving help from unscrupulous invigilators. They recommended that government should provide CCTV cameras in examination halls and also provide adequate thumb printing machines during examination interventions that require significant financial resources.

2.7 Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses guided the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1) There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of financial resources for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State Public Secondary schools.
- 2) There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of utilization of financial resources in the procurement of

examinations materials in the administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools.

3. Methods

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The survey research design according to AkuEzuilo and Agu (2003), is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. It was considered appropriate for this study because it is designed to extrapolate the result of the research sample to the study population. The population of the study comprised 215 principals in 215 public secondary schools in Ebonyi State and 2, 304 teachers giving a total of 1,519 people. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 principals and 500 teachers making a total of 600 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a 20 –item researchers developed questionnaire on a four-point state with Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with attached weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively responses pattern and a check list on availability. The question was validated by one expert from Educational Administration and Planning and two from Educational Measurement and Evaluation all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Using the test re-test procedure and applying the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient analysis, the reliability the instrument was established at 0.76 using 30 schools in Enugu State.

A total of 600 copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers to all the principals and sampled teachers in the 215 public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The total number of the copies of questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for the study. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were considered very high and high extent, while mean scores below 2.50 were considered very low and low extent. The two null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The acceptance or rejection of any null hypotheses depends on the t-test calculated value.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The result of the data analysis is presented according to the research questions.

Table 1. Mean rating of respondents on the extent financial resources are available for the administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State Public secondary schools.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	Student levies	2.41	2.0	LE
2.	Government impress	2.42	1.8	LE
3.	Discount Received	2.31	1.5	LE
4.	Donation from non-government organizations	2.41	1.8	LE
5.	Government Allocation	2.02	1.00	LE
6.	Revenue from school proceeds	1.98	1.11	VLE
7.	Local government intervention fund	2.12	1.01	LE
8.	Federal government grantee credit	2.11	1.02	LE
9.	Financial support from Alumni	1.97	1.10	VLE
10.	Donations from Parent Teachers' Association.	1.96	1.12	VLE
	Grand Total	2.11	1.17	LE

Result on table 1 showed that financial resources available for the administration of internal examination were to a very low extent according to the respondents. The grand

mean of the respondents which is 1.26 is below 2.50 is an indication low availability of financial resources for administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools.

Table 2. Mean response of respondents on the extent financial resources are utilized for the procurement of examination materials in the administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools:

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11.	Printing of examination questions	2.26	1.44	LE
12.	Printing of marking guide	1.84	1.20	VLE
13.	Logistics for distribution of examination materials	2.44	1.46	LE
14.	Examination recording materials	1.11	1.09	VLE
15.	Graph sheets	1.14	1.10	VLE
16.	Problem solving sheets	2.10	1.41	LE
17.	Stationaries	2.01	1.02	LE
18.	Drawing materials	1.29	1.03	VLE
19.	Answer scripts	1.16	1.04	VLE
20.	Reagents for practicals in the laboratory	1.97	1.01	VLE
	Grand Total	1.69	1.26	VLE

Result on table 2 revealed that respondents' responses were to a very low extent. This shows that with a mean of 1.69 and a standard deviation of 1.26 enough financial resources are not utilized in the procurement of examination materials for administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

Table 3. Mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of financial resources for administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

Items	Category of respondents	(mean \bar{x})	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1.	Principals	1.96	0.12	598	1.76	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.41	0.51				
2.	Principals	2.12	0.01	598	1.45	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.17	0.66				
3.	Principals	3.00	0.85	598	0.21	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.96	0.81				
4.	Principals	2.55	0.52	598	1.45	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.32	0.61				
5.	Principals	2.77	0.71	598	1.13	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.06	0.78				
6.	Principals	3.64	0.47	598	0.98	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.37	0.51				
7.	Principals	3.40	0.52	598	1.40	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.64	0.46				
8.	Principals	2.96	0.81	598	0.21	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.17	0.76				
9.	Principals	3.15	0.61	598	0.43	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.6	0.15				
10.	Principals	3.34	0.71	598	1.13	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.04	0.82				
Total					0.71	1.96	Not sig

Key \bar{X} = mean, SD = standard Deviation, DF= Degree of Freedom, t-cal= t-calculated, t-crit = t-critical, Dec= Decision, Not sig = Not significant.

Result of t-test analysis on table 3 showed that the t- calculated value is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 and df of 598. The average t-calculated value of 0.71 is also less than the average mean t-critical value of 1.96, therefore, the hypothesis is not significant, meaning that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of financial resources for administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

Table 4. Means responses of principals and teachers on the extent of utilization of financial resources in the procurement of examination materials in the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

Items	Category of respondents	Mean X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
11.	Principals	3.64	0.43	598	0.68	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.51	0.54				
12.	Principals	3.27	0.10	598	0.81	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.74	0.68				
13.	Principals	3.17	0.62	598	0.52	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.25	0.73				
14.	Principals	3.61	0.74	598	0.61	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.43	0.61				
15.	Principals	2.61	0.52	598	0.65	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.78	0.62				
16.	Principals	3.46	0.71	598	0.72	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.68	0.51				
17.	Principals	2.91	0.63	598	0.66	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.64	0.51				
18.	Principals	2.76	0.61	598	0.77	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.88	0.55				
19.	Principals	2.99	0.62	598	0.88	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	3.62	0.65				
20.	Principals	3.14	0.89	598	0.98	1.96	Not sig
	Teachers	2.77	0.92				
Total					0.81	1.96	Not sig

Result on table 4 of t-test analysis indicated that the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 and df 598. The average t-calculated value of 0.81 is also less than the average mean, t-critical value of 1.96, therefore, the hypothesis is not significant, meaning that the extent of utilization of financial resources in the procurement of examination materials for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools do not differ significantly between principals and teachers.

4.2 Discussions

Result on table one showed that financial resources for administration internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools are in short supply. These ugly situations possess danger in the administration of internal examinations as standardized results for promotion to the next class will be faulty and mediocre. This is in agreement with Menuue (2018) who lamented that the inefficiency in the conduct of internal examination in Ebonyi State public secondary schools was attributed to poor financial resources. The corresponding hypothesis is not significant because the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of financial resources in the

administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools do not differ significantly.

Result on table two revealed that the utilization of financial resources in the procurement of examination materials for the administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State public secondary schools is to a very low extent. This shows that materials for the administration of internal examinations are not fully and properly utilized and this is huge setback in secondary school management. This is in line with the view of Orodlio (2014) who opined that the ineffectiveness of administration of education system is as a result of poor provision funds and inability to utilize the available funds judiciously. In the same way the corresponding hypothesis is not significant because the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent of utilization of financial resources in the procurement of examinations materials for the administration of internal examination in Ebonyi State public secondary schools do not differ significantly.

5. Conclusion

Availability and utilization of financial resource in any form in the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools is a critical issue as inadequate and poor utilization will have a negative effect on the graduates of secondary schools. Such negative effects are that secondary school's leavers will not be employed in the labour market because they are mediocres who will not deliver and equally they will not be fit for admission into higher institution. Therefore, for the purpose of secondary school objectives to be achieved so that secondary school leavers will contribute to nation building and gain admission into higher education, there must be available financial resources in appreciable quantity and its proper utilization especially for the procurement of examination materials.

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

- 1) Government should involve non-government organizations, philanthropists, Parent Teachers' Association and other well-meaning individuals in making available financial resources for the administration of internal examinations in Ebonyi State public secondary schools so that credible results for promotion of students to the next class will be a reality.
- 2) Government should ensure that financial resources are properly utilized. This could be done by closing all the holes and gaps where monies meant for the purchase of examination materials will slip.

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