

PRINCIPALS' BUDGET PREPARATION PRACTICES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Three thousand, nine hundred and fifty (3950) staff of secondary schools in Bayelsa State; comprising of one hundred and eighty-eight (188) principals and three thousand seven hundred and sixty-two (3762) teachers in the one hundred and eighty-eight (188) government owned secondary schools in Bayelsa State constituted the target population. The simple random sampling technique through balloting with replacement was used to select five (5) education zones out of the nine (9) education zones in the state. The result yielded a reliability index of 0.8537. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The data was collected with the help of three research assistants. The mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, seven hundred and Ninety (790) respondents constituted the sample size. The result of the data analysis showed that based on the result in table 1, the t-calculated value of 2.94 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.960 ($2.94 > 1.96$). This result implies that the H_0 is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is therefore upheld; implying that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. It was recommended that principals should not prepare budgets singlehandedly but should involve their subordinate in budget making.

Keywords: Bayelsa State, Budget Preparation, Principals, Secondary Schools, Urban-Rural Differences.

Introduction

Principals in Bayelsa State secondary schools need budget preparation skills that will make them confident before the staff they advise and guide. But it has been observed by the researcher that most principals in the state seems not to have budget preparation skills which

will enable them run their schools smoothly. The aim of financial management is to ensure that the available resources to education are procured, properly disbursed and accounted for, and this can only be achieved when principals are competent and conversant with budget preparation skills, knowing the reasons for a budget and its importance. Budgeting has been considered as an integral part of the planning process. It essentially involves translating goals and objectives as well as targets into financial plans (Musaazi in Ogbonnaya, 2006). Edern (2007) is of the view that a budget is a statement which describes how to finance the various educational objectives, outlined for the year or a given stated period. Budgeting deals with how much government, ministries or individual school plans to spend and how expenditure is effected (Peretomode, 2005). Reo in Ogbonnaya (2006) defined a budget as the translation of educational needs into a financial plan which is interpreted to the public in such a way that when formally adopted it expresses the kind of educational programme, the community is willing to support financially and morally for a one-year period. It can be described as an outline of the plan for financing the school programme for a given period. What can be deduced from the above definitions is that the budget is the financial statement of the proposed expenditure and expected revenue of the government public corporation or educational institution for a particular period of time. A budget guides the financial management practices of educational administrators; it prevents waste or reckless spending of funds by school administrators, and controls the financial behaviour of administrators in a school system. Nzekwe in Kalu (2011) asserted that in the Nigerian school system, many principals had been accused of poor budgeting practices by the supervisors, teachers and parents. He stated that, it has been observed that some principals do not follow budget procedures in planning and implementation of budget nor keep and use the necessary financial account records in Nigerian schools. Onyika in Kalu (2011) observed that poor budgeting has been attributed to the seeming neglect and dilapidation of building and infrastructure in greater percentage of schools over a decade, particularly at secondary school level. The author stated that in some extreme cases, principals are called to pay back part of the misappropriated fund.

Principals therefore should be properly guided with the budget guidelines for effective administration and attainment of school objectives.

Budgeting according to Olufidipe (2003) is a process of preparing and using budgets to achieve management objectives. Budget is viewed by Ama (2001), as a plan quantified in monetary terms, prepared and approved prior to a defined period of time, usually showing planned income to be generated and expenditure to be incurred during that period. Budget according to Lee and John cited in Shaibu (2003) is a document or a collection of documents that refer to the financial position of an organization, family, corporation, government, including information on revenues, expenditures and purposes or goals. It is a programme that guides all activities relating to collection and expenditure, it is a framework of the accounts by which transactions affecting such collections and expenditures are recorded (Ugoo, 2007). A careful analysis of the conceptions of budget pointed to the fact that a budget is a financial procedures blueprint for the operation of an organization including the school system for fiscal year. It is

also a financial statement of the proposed expenditure and expected revenue of the government, public corporation or educational institution for a particular period of time.

Reasons of a budget: The school budget has been described as having purposes to serve both in defining the programmes and activities of the school system in terms of the money to be spent derived from diverse sources. Adesina (1981) listed five purposes of the school budget:

- i. Forecasts the activities, governing council has approved for a given period, usually a one year
- ii. period.
- iii. Shows what revenue is to be anticipated and from what sources this is to be derived.
- iv. Shows details, statements and estimates of expenditure for various items of the school system as a whole.
- v. Shows what other contributions and pressures on the budget that are anticipated during the financial year. Example, the pressure of inflation and how the school intends to raise more money over and above its original budget or how it intends to adjust itself to the situation.
- vi. Must be prepared in such a way that it can be executed by anyone, even from outside the school system (Ikati. 2016).

Importance of a Budget: The role of school budget in school administration is indispensable. The fundamental importance of a budget is that it controls the financial behaviour of administrators in a school system. A budget guides the financial management practices of educational administrators in secondary schools. A budget prevents waste or reckless spending of funds by school administrator. It attracts the interest and support of tax payers. This is supported by Ezeocha (2010:8) when he said that;

“Good budgeting attracts the support of tax payer whose money is being made use of, and whose children are likely to benefit from the budget. For instance, he is likely to approve a budget that is neither ambiguous nor wasteful in its allocation to educational services”.

The importance of a school budget cannot be overemphasized. Financial management practices of principals can be guided through the budget as it will streamline financial activities of administrators and they will be able to ascertain the level of achievement in a given year.

School Budget Preparation

Three major plans involved in the provision of the budget were identified by Ogbonnaya (2006), namely:

5. The educational plan, which defined the policies of the school, its programmes and activities as well as other educational services to be carried out.

6. The expenditure plans, which translates each educational programme, or services into cost.
3. The financial plans, which sets out the means of meeting the cost of educational programmes and services.

The educational plan within a school budget shows the range of educational activities of the school system during the ensuing year. It is the starting point of the entire school budget. It is on that the spending and financial plans are based. It is in the educational plan that the reader is informed about the organization of the school system, the number of students to be served, the number and kinds of personnel to be employed and the variety of services in the system that have to be served and financed in the next year. Another important aspect of the school budget is the expenditure plan. This is the most technical aspect of budget preparation. The expenditure plan must rely on past experiences and estimates of current cost. He suggested that the cost of services in the expenditure plan must be based on recognized and prevailing salary schedules, the cost of the equipment, teaching and learning materials, books and other supplies. He also pointed out that the standard of materials and equipment's purchased must be checked and be widely acceptable. Financial planning implies deciding what to spend, how to spend and how much to spend according to the funds that are available. Financial planning needs to be done by everyone from individuals to large multi-national corporations. The larger the quantum of funds that one is dealing with, the more the effort required to plan its usage appropriately.

Criticisms of Budgets Preparation Practices of Educational Administrators

The first criticism is that most educational administrators (Principals) do not involve their subordinates in budgets making. These administrators (Principals) prepare school budgets single-handedly. Only few of them allow their bursars, financial officers and assistants to participate in budget preparation. The practice of not involving other members of staff in budget preparation is obsolete, conservative and undemocratic.

The second criticism of budget preparation practices of educational administrators is that, in most cases, they do not take time to study the general needs of their schools. Some of the needs of secondary schools include, staff salaries, housing, procurement of teaching materials and equipment. The fact that educational administrators do not take time to study the general needs of their schools implies that some items of needs are at times forgotten during the preparation of the budget and there is every likelihood that such items would be missing in the budget estimate.

The third criticism is that secondary school principals do not take time to identify the problems that they are likely to encounter in procuring funds for financing the programmes and services articulated in the budget. Such problems include the delay in the release of funds by Ministry of Education or its agencies, inadequate or bureaucratic bottlenecks associated with the release of funds.

The fourth criticism is that in most cases, budgets are prepared hurriedly such that important issues are ignored. Most educational administrators (principals) are always in a hurry to prepare

and submit estimates of their proposed income and expenditure to the government and in their hurry, some important issues are ignored (Ogbonnaya 2006).

It is therefore advised that secondary school principals should allow and encourage their staff to participate in the preparation of their budget. School principals should democratize so as to allow all to participate in what happens in their schools. They should study the general needs of their schools. Principals should ask members of their staff to submit to them their needs with respect to possibly salary increase, housing as well as the procurement of teaching and learning materials. Non-academics should also submit to their principals their needs and needs of their jobs. For instance, laboratory technologist should submit the list of science equipment's and chemicals needed for their laboratories. Principals are also advised to take time to identify the problems they are likely to encounter in procuring funds for their schools. In preparing the budget, they should think about how to overcome the delays in the release of funds and how to solve the problems of inadequate funds to their schools. They should think about their own sources for generating revenue to supplement government's grants. They should always focus on important projects and leave out other ones that may not affect the achievement of the goals set out by the school. Lastly, secondary school principals should not prepare budget in a hurry but rather take time to prepare their budgets so that important issues that are supposed to reflect in it will not be forgotten.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the Principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The findings of this study will benefit the students of secondary schools as the prudential management financial resources by the principals will bring about adequate facilities and conducive learning environment.

To the general public, policy makers and education planners, the findings of this study will bring to their knowledge the financial management skills required of principals and also some of the administrative problems in the secondary school system could be addressed. Information from this study will be used in formulation of policies that will enhance administration of secondary schools in the state.

The study is mainly concerned with principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The scope of the study includes the geographical, content and subject scope. The geographical scope is Bayelsa State and the content scope was focused on the principals' budget preparation practices while the subjects are teachers and principals of secondary school in Bayelsa State.

The following research question guided the study;

In what ways do principals' prepare budget for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

The hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary school in Bayelsa State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. Otuka (2004) stated that descriptive survey research design is concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation of what is being observed. The reason for choosing this research design was that the manifestations of the variables under investigations had already taken place prior to the researchers' embarking on the study. This view agrees with those of Keringer et al., in Major (2010). Based on the characteristic of survey research design, it was considered appropriate for use in this study, since the study is concerned with collecting data from a small sample of the population without manipulation of any variable. Therefore, the study only sought principals' and teachers' view on principals' budget preparation practices in secondary schools.

The area of the study is Bayelsa State. Bayelsa is a state in south-south Nigeria in the core Niger Delta region, between Delta State and Rivers State. The state was created on October, 1996 by the military government headed by the late General Sani Abacha. Its capital is Yenagoa. The main language spoken is Ijaw with dialects such as Kolukurna, Mein, Bomu, Nembe, Epie-Atisa, and Ogbia. Like the rest of Nigeria, English is the official language. It is made up of eight (8) Local Government Areas namely: Brass,

Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw and Yenagoa Local Government Areas and nine (9) educational zones (Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama,

Silger I, Silger II and Yenagoa). Bayelsa State is bounded on the East by Rivers State, West by Atlantic Ocean, North by Delta and the South by Atlantic Ocean. Occupationally, the people are fishermen, farmers, hunters, timber businessmen, petty traders and some are civil servants. Christianity is the predominant religion of the people. The state is rich in oil mineral deposits which affected their terrestrial lives. The researcher chose Bayelsa State as the area of the study because the researcher is conversant with the state and terrain. Also, the schools in the state appear to be experiencing difficulties in financial management practices for the administration of secondary schools. Hence the study looked at principals budget preparation practices in Bayelsa State.

The population of the study was three thousand, nine hundred and fifty (3950) staff of secondary schools in Bayelsa State; comprising of one hundred and eighty-eight (188) principals and three thousand seven hundred and sixty-two (3762) teachers in the one hundred and eighty-eight (188) government owned secondary schools under the Bayelsa State Post Primary School Board (BSPPSB). (Planning, Research and Statistics Department of the Board

(PRSD- 2017). The use of teachers were because, they are also in position to provide information about the budget preparation practices adopted by their respective principals.

The sample for the study was seven hundred and Ninety (790) respondents. The sample represented twenty (20%) percent of the population. The study adopted multi-stage approach. In the first stage, the state was clustered into nine (9) clusters called education zones. Simple random sampling technique by ballot was used to select five (5) education zones out of the nine (9) education zones in the state. This is in line with the recommendation of Nwana (2008) which stated that if a population is in a few thousand, ten (10%) to fifty (50%) percent will be adequate for the study. Hence, twenty percent (20%) of the population was used for the study. In doing this, twenty percent (20%) each of principals and teachers from Bayelsa state secondary schools was used for the sample of the study.

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled “Assessment of Principals Budget Preparation Questionnaire (APBPQ)” designed by the researcher which was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire contains two parts. Part A deals with demographic data of the respondents. Part B was used to elicit information from the respondents based on the research question that was formulated to guide the study. It contains 7 items which seeks information on the principals’ budget preparation practices in secondary schools.

The instrument was validated by three experts; two were selected from the Department of Educational Foundations while one was drawn from the department of measurement and evaluation (Science Education), all in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. These experts vetted the items in terms of sentence structure and adequacy, as well as item clarity and suitability of the instrument. After validation, three (3) items were dropped out of the ten (10) items by these experts and a total of seven (7) items were used to produce the final draft of the instrument.

The researcher administered the questionnaire on a group of 10 secondary school principals and 20 secondary school teachers in Rivers State who were considered to be equivalent to the subjects to be used for the study. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach Alpha test, and yielded a reliability index of 0.7338.

Based on the results in table 1, it could be clearly seen that all the 7 items were accepted as their mean values exceeded 2.50 cut off point. The grand mean of 3.14 as contained therein is equally greater than the bench mark value of 2.50. Hence, the respondents are in agreement with the item statements on the principals’ budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the seven hundred and ninety (790) respondents in the respective sampled schools in the five sampled education zones in the state. The researcher was assisted by three researches assistant who were instructed on how to fill the instrument distributed and collected copies the questionnaire. The respondents filled the

questionnaire by ticking () on their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement items.

Research question was answered on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation. While the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level using t-test. The mean to be used for decision making was 2.5. Scores from 2.5 and above were judged as practiced while scores below 2.5 were not practiced. The responses were weighted, using four-point scale:

Strongly Agree = 4 Points

Agree = 3 Points

Disagree = 2 Points

Strongly Disagree = 1 Point

(I) Decision Rule: The decision rule is to reject the null hypotheses where $P < .05$ and retain where $P > .05$.

Results

Research Question

In what ways do principals' prepare budget for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of respondents on the principals' budget preparation practices for administration of Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State

S/N	Item	N		S.D	Decision
1	Principals provide staff with opportunities to actively participate in school budget preparation.	754	3.13	0.85	Accepted
2	School budget is executed as planned in the school.	754	3.14	0.85	Accepted
3	It is the duty of the principal to approve school budget.	754	3.11	0.82	Accepted
4	Bank statements are presented by principals in every budget year to staff.	754	3.09	0.74	Accepted
5	Principals stick to the budget period of one year.	754	3.1	0.78	Accepted
			1		
6	All funds generated within the school are included in the budget plan.	754	3.21	0.72	Accepted

7 Principals assist in preparation of school budget for their effectiveness. 754 3.19 0.83 Accepted

Grand mean 3.14

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary school in Bayelsa State.

Table 2: T-test result of respondents in Urban and Rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for Administration of Secondary School in Bayelsa State

S/N	Variable: Location	No	X	S.D	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision	Significance
1	Urban	333	3.28.	0.66	752	4.37	1.96	Reject. HO	Significant (S)
	Rural	421	3.01	0.97					
2	Urban	333	3.25	0.66	752	3.30	1.96	Reject HO	Significant (N)
	Rural	421	3.05	0.88					
3	Urban	333	3.17	0.75	752	1.82	1.96	Accept HO	Not Significant
	Rural	421	3.06	0.88					
4	Urban	333	3.18	0.63	752	3.02	1.96	Reject HO	Significant (N)
	Rural	421	3.01	0.81					
5	Urban	333	3.16	0.70	752				

				1.32	1.96	Accept HO	Not
							Significant
	Rural	421	3.08	0.84			
6	Urban	333	3.32	0.60	752		
				3.37	1.96	Reject HO	Significant (N)
	Rural	421	3.12	0.80			
7	Urban	333	3.32	0.65	752		
				3.38	1.96	Reject HO	Not
							Significant
	Rural	421	3.09	0.93			
		t-test value		2.94	1.96	Reject HO _s	Significant (S)

Based on the result in table 2, the t-calculated value of 2.94 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.960 ($2.94 > 1.96$). This result implies that H_0 is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is therefore uphold; implying that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary school in Bayelsa State.

Discussion of Findings

The study finally revealed that principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State include among others: providing staff with opportunities to actively participate in school budget preparation, executing school budget according to plan and insisting on the budget period of one year etc.

Principals' Budget Preparation Practices for Administration of Secondary Schools

Research question was formulated to ascertain the principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. Based on the findings as presented in the tablet, it could be seen that each of the seven items were accepted as their mean values exceeded 2.50 cut off point. The grand mean of 3.14 as contained therein, is equally greater than the bench mark value of 2.50. Specifically, it is seen in item of serial numbers 1 and 2, with mean scores of 3.13 and 3.14 respectively that providing staff with opportunities to actively participate in budget preparation and implementing the budget according to plans are among

the principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. These findings are in line with Musaaazi in Ogbonnaya (2006) who posited that budgeting is an integral part of the planning process. It essentially involves translating goals and objectives as well as targets into financial plans. Hence, Edem (2007) corroborate the view that a budget is a statement which describes how to finance the various educational objectives, outlined for the year or a given stated period. Budgeting deals with how much government, ministries or individual school plans to spend and how expenditure is affected. He defined a budget as the translation of educational needs into a financial plan which is interpreted to the public in such a way that when formally adopted it expresses the kind of educational programme, the community is willing to support financially and morally for a one-year period. It can be described as an outline of the plan for financing the school programme for a given period. These imply that the budget is the financial statement of the proposed expenditure and expected revenue of the government, public corporation or educational institution for a particular period of time. Thus, budget guides the financial management practices of educational administrator; it prevents waste or reckless spending of funds by school administrators, and controls the financial behaviour of administrators in a school system. Although, it was observed that some principals do not follow budget procedures in planning and implementation of budget nor keep and use the necessary financial account records in Nigerian schools, this finding revealed that most principals strive to implement the budget according to plans. Since, the aim of financial management is to ensure that the available resources to education are procured, properly disbursed and accounted for; it can only be achieved when principals are competent and conversant with budget preparation skills, knowing the reasons for a budget and its importance. On the test of significance, the hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary school in Bayelsa state. Based on the result of the analysis as seen in the table 2, the t-calculated value of 2.94 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.960 ($2.94 > 1.96$). This result implies that the H_0 is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is therefore upheld; implying that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in urban and rural areas on principals' budget preparation practices for administration of secondary school in Bayelsa State. This finding agreed with Edem (2007), who stated that the location of school, whether urban or rural influence the financial behavior of school principal in the day to day running of the school.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals that principals in Bayelsa State's secondary schools generally adhere to budget preparation practices, such as staff involvement and planned execution, but exhibit significant urban-rural differences. To enhance administrative effectiveness, principals should collaboratively involve subordinates, identify funding challenges, and strictly follow budget guidelines for optimal resource management and school objectives achievement.

Recommendations

- xiii. Secondary school principals should take time to identify the problems they are likely to encounter in procuring funds for financing the programs and services articulated in the budget.
- xiv. Principals' should be encouraged to improve on their budget preparation practices and adhere strictly to the budget estimate to reach full expectation of the general public.

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