

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDITING AS PREDICTORS
OF QUALITY EDUCATION DELIVERY IN FEDERAL
POLYTECHNICS IN SOUTH- EAST, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined financial accountability and auditing as predictors of quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses, which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population was 216 principal officers, Deans and Heads of Departments. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw 3 states from the 5 states in South-East, Nigeria. The sample size of 170 respondents was used from the three Federal Polytechnics in the three states drawn. Data was collected using researcher-developed questionnaires: Financial Accountability and Auditing Questionnaire (FAAQ) and Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (QEDQ). The two instruments were face validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistencies of the instruments. The overall reliability coefficient obtained for FAAQ was 0.90 while the reliability coefficient for QEDQ was 0.95. Data collected were analyzed using linear regression to answer research questions. Null hypotheses were tested using the t-test associated with linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that financial accountability has no significant predictive power on quality education delivery. Also, financial auditing significantly predicts quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. Recommendations were made which include among others that financial managers of the Federal Polytechnics should evaluate and monitor all those involved in managing financial resources to foster accountability and ensuring quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Keywords: Financial accountability, financial auditing, quality education delivery, Federal Polytechnics

Introduction

Quality education delivery in educational institutions cannot be overemphasised. Educational institutions such as Polytechnics have the mandate to produce technological manpower for the development of the nation. Polytechnics are higher educational institutions designed to produce high level technical manpower in technical and commercial fields for the development of national economy. National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2022) viewed polytechnic as a technical institution offering post-secondary technical education programmes leading to the award of diploma certificates such as the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND). Likewise, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in her National Policy on Education stated that polytechnics are among the tertiary institutions in Nigeria which award diploma certificates such as the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND).

Polytechnics are technical institutions established to train, impart knowledge and skills to produce technological manpower for national development. Polytechnics play important roles in high level technical manpower needs of the country. A National body known as National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) coordinates the development of polytechnics. The financial needs of Federal Polytechnics are assessed by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). Furthermore, NBTE acts as an agency which allocates and provides funds to polytechnics for their day to day running of the institutions. The NBTE receives allocation from the Federal Government and gives to the Federal Polytechnics (Ogbonnaya, 2009). These funds are essential in acquisition of resources. The provision of quality education is paramount for the socio-economic development of any nation. Quality in education could be viewed as excellence in education. Yidana and Aboagye (2017) opined that quality is features and characteristics of a product or service that is closely linked to satisfying stated or implied need. Quality education encompasses quality teacher,

quality curricula, quality equipment, facilities and quality learning outcomes (Ofojebe & Arekwe, 2016). In support of this assertion, Amos, Ephrahem and Bhoke-Africanus (2021) opined that quality education involves providing the necessary school resources to improve the quality, equity, and excellence in education delivery. In addition, high-quality infrastructure aids better instruction and leads to an improvement in students outcomes (Teixeira, Amoroso & Gresham, 2017). Quality education is one that equips learners with the capability and knowledge required to become economically productive, technically advanced, develop sustainable livelihood and contribute to the development of the nation (Uche & Nwabueze, 2013). This is necessary for quality to be assured in the educational system. Madumere-Obike and Nwabueze (2010) conceptualized quality education delivery as the systematic process of ensuring that educational programmes are delivered competently for improved productivity. Quality education delivery can be explained as the means or channels through which education meets the standards required.

However, the ability of higher educational institutions including Polytechnics to deliver and sustain quality education has been declining. Disturbing trends which include decline in academic performance, as measured by graduate employability, the problem of inadequate infrastructure and learning resources is evident. Also, not up to date as well as poorly maintained facilities, limited access to technology and insufficient libraries seems to be problems encountered. Employability rates among polytechnic graduates have been a concern, with employers often citing deficiencies in practical skills and critical thinking abilities (David, Miccah, & Gabriel, 2020). The availability and quality of infrastructure and learning resources play a crucial role in shaping the educational experience and outcomes of students. Moreover, insufficient facilities and libraries with inadequate resources hinder their ability to conduct research and enhance their knowledge base (Ogbodo, 2011; Stephen, 2016). These deficiencies not only impact the quality of education delivered but

also hinder the development of students' skills and competencies necessary for the development of the nation. This indicates a disconnection between the skills imparted by educational institutions and the demands of the labour market, highlighting the need for quality education delivery. There are evidences of inadequate facilities, poor infrastructures, underfunding among others in Federal Polytechnics (Njemanze & Onyewuchi, 2019). Subsequently, Bamiro and Adedeji (2010) stated that government funding of polytechnics has declined and negatively affected the ability of polytechnics to perform their duties effectively, especially in the areas of technology, teaching and research. These problems could hamper the quality of education delivery thereby hindering the realization of the objectives of Federal Polytechnics. Since the budgetary allocation is usually not sufficient, it is pertinent that the principal officers manage the available resources judiciously. Hence, there is need for proper financial accountability and auditing.

Financial accountability is very important in any organization. Ogbonnaya (2012) conceptualized financial accountability as liability to be called upon to answer for funds entrusted to one's care. Ogiriki and Buseri, (2022) viewed financial accountability as the passing of information on the financial situation, performance, service effort, and accomplishments of the institution. Financial accountability denotes being trustworthy of funds allocated for a particular purpose and the responsibility of giving account of appropriation of the funds. Also, financial accountability includes processes and decision that ends in the preparation of financial statement. Agbatogun (2019) highlighted that transparency, accountability, and efficiency is important in financial resource management. This implied that managers of Polytechnics are to ensure transparency and accountability in the institutions. However, Akinwumi and Akinola (2019) lamented that the level of accountability is very poor. Financial accountability is a very important tool that could help in checking the usage of funds allocated for a purpose. Abraham, Meenyinikor and Ebirim (2021) revealed

that financial accountability affects management of institution by ensuring utilization of educational resources and conformity to predetermined standards in implementing educational policies as well as convincing educational managers and administrators to accept responsibilities for performance of educational functions. When financial managers recognize the importance of accountability, they become liable for any diversion or misappropriation of funds. This study determined if financial accountability predicts quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. Financial accountability is the responsibility of giving account of appropriation of funds given for a particular purpose. To achieve this, it is important that financial auditing is carried out.

Auditing is important as it provides credibility in financial statements. Ikedigwu and Ukeji (2020) conceptualized auditing as the verification of records kept in an accounting system of an educational institution. In support of the above view, Tuovila (2022) opined that financial audit is an objective examination and evaluation of the financial statements of an organization to make sure that the financial records are fair and accurate representation of the transactions they claim to represent. Financial auditing is the evaluation of financial records to ensure its authenticity in order to avoid wastage and fraud. The purpose of auditing is to ensure that the school is recording and controlling its funds in terms of its own financial policy to detect if there are any errors or fraud (Amos, Ephrahem & Bhoke-Africanus, 2021). Auditing helps in detecting where misappropriation of funds occurs from the financial activities of the institution. When funds are misappropriated, this tends to create problems whereby achieving the goals of the institution would be hampered. Educational funding and management of such funds deserve great attention. This highlights the fact that poorly managed financial resources could have adverse effect on the quality of education delivery. Against this backdrop, the researcher examined financial accountability and auditing as predictors of quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine financial accountability and auditing as predictors of quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria;
2. find out the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Financial accountability has no significant predictive power on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The objective of producing highly trained manpower at Polytechnics is crucial for national development. Achieving this requires quality education delivery. Funding is the backbone of any institution, and managing these funds is essential for achieving goals. Effective utilization of financial resources is vital for the smooth functioning of educational institutions. It is important that managers of Federal Polytechnics evaluate and monitor financial managers to foster accountability. Thorough auditing ensures records are kept properly to

avoid misappropriation and mismanagement of resources, which could hinder quality education delivery.

The availability and quality of infrastructure and learning resources are crucial in shaping students' educational experiences and outcomes. However, the ability of Federal Polytechnics to deliver quality education has been declining. This decline may be attributed to inadequate research and teaching materials, overcrowded environments, dilapidated structures, lack of facilities and amenities, and insufficient equipment and workshop facilities. Against this worry, the researcher examined whether financial accountability and auditing predict quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East Nigeria.

Methods

This study adopted a correlational survey research design. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 216 Principal Officers, Deans and Heads of Departments in the five (5) Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. The sample for the study was 170 respondents from three Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw 3 states from the 5 states in South-East, Nigeria. In the three states drawn, there are three Federal Polytechnics and the entire population from the three states was used as the sample of the study. Two instruments for data collection were researcher-developed questionnaires namely Financial Accountability and Auditing Questionnaire (FAAQ) and "Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (QEDQ). Financial Accountability and Auditing Questionnaire (FAAQ) had two clusters of 20 items while QEDQ consist of 12 items. Respondents were required to provide responses on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with value of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The research instruments were face validated by three experts; two (2) experts from Educational Foundations Department (Administration and Planning Unit) and one (1) expert in Science

Education Department (Measurement and Evaluation Unit) all in Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistencies of the instruments. The overall reliability coefficient for FAAQ was 0.90. The reliability coefficient for Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (QEDQ) was 0.95. Out of the 170 copies of the questionnaires distributed, 163 were duly completed and returned which represented 96% retrieval rate. The data collected from these copies of questionnaires were used for analysis. Data collected were analyzed using linear regression in answering the research questions while null hypotheses were tested using t-test associated with linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. Coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the predictive power of financial accountability and auditing on quality education delivery.

Results

Research Question One: What is the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Regression analysis of the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.117 ^a	.014	.007	4.58308

a. Predictors: (Constant), Financial Accountability

Table 1 shows that the magnitude of the correlation between financial accountability and quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics is ($R = .117$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .014$). This means that there is a very low positive relationship between financial accountability and quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics. Moreover, the coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .014$) implies that 1.4% variation on quality education delivery on Federal Polytechnics is attributed to financial accountability. This means that the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria is 1.4%. Thus, 98.6%

variation on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics is attributed to other factors that are not financial accountability.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Regression analysis of the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.345 ^a	.119	.114	4.33043

a. Predictors: (Constant), Financial Auditing

Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between financial auditing and quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics is ($R = .345$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .119$). This means that there is a low positive relationship between financial auditing and quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics. Moreover, the coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .119$) implies that 11.9% variation on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics is attributed to financial auditing. This means that the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria is 11.9%. Thus, 88.1% variation on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics is attributed to other factors not financial auditing.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: Financial accountability has no significant predictive power on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.328	3.293		8.906	.000
	Financial Accountability	.164	.110	.117	1.489	.138

a. Dependent Variable: Quality Education Delivery

Table 3 reveals that there is no significant predictive power of financial accountability on the quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria, $t = 1.489$, $p = .138$. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($p > .05$). The inference drawn is that financial accountability does not predict quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics significantly.

Ho₂: There is no significant predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.466	3.599		4.853	.000
	Financial Auditing	.462	.099	.345	4.671	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Quality Education Delivery

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria, $t = 4.671$, $p = .000$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected ($p < .05$). The inference drawn is that financial auditing predicts quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East significantly.

Discussions of the findings

The predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery

Finding of this study showed that financial accountability has a predictive power of 1.4% on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East Nigeria. However, the finding also showed no significant predictive power of financial accountability on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. One probable explanation is that the effectiveness of financial accountability is contingent upon the level of implementation. Abraham, Meenyinikor and Ebirim (2021), agreed that effective utilization of

resources and conformity to predetermined standards in implementing educational standard are important in financial accountability.

The existence of financial accountability on quality education delivery may not be sufficient; their implementation and the degree of transparency are crucial. Agbatogun (2019) in his study on financial accountability, transparency and management of public sector revealed that the level of governance is very poor due to various financial scandals and misappropriation of public funds. In this perspective, the lack of significance in the predictive power of financial accountability may indicate variations in the application of financial accountability in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

The predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery

The finding showed that the predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria is 11.9%. Further finding revealed that there is significant predictive power of financial auditing on quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria. This finding emphasized the critical role of regular auditing in ensuring quality education delivery. This finding agreed with Agu, Nwafor and Diara (2019) that showed internal auditing can be used to manage funds and enhance the quality of output. A significant predictive power of financial auditing implied that institutions with good auditing practices are more likely to utilize their financial resources effectively.

The significant predictive power of financial auditing in this study indicated that the adherence to financial regulations positively predicts the quality of education delivery. Financial auditing ensures that educational institutions comply with established regulatory standards and guidelines. Subsequently, this simply showed that institutions that comply with financial standards are more likely to create an environment conducive for effective teaching and learning and success of educational institutions. The significant predictive power of financial

auditing in this study revealed its pivotal role in quality education delivery in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study highlighted that financial accountability has no significant predictive power on quality education delivery while financial auditing predicts quality education delivery significantly in Federal Polytechnics in South-East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. The management of Federal Polytechnics should use the findings of the study to understand areas that need to be improved upon to ensure quality education delivery.
2. Federal Government should provide in-service training for the educational administrators to enhance on their financial skills in order to achieve quality education delivery.
3. The financial managers of the Federal Polytechnics should evaluate and monitor all those involved in managing financial resources to foster accountability and ensuring quality education is delivered.

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