

INFLUENCE OF TREASURY SINGLE ACCOUNT (TSA) POLICY ON MONITORING FRAUDULENT PRACTICES AND BLOCKING FINANCIAL LEAKAGES ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study investigated the influence of Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy on monitoring fraudulent practices and blocking financial leakages on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design, and was carried out in North Eastern Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 547 Bursary staff of Federal Universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 231 Bursary staff obtained from the use of Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha statistic and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. The data was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Chi-Square Statistic to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that the implementation of TSA has made inflation of contract difficult and has also made fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public sector difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities. It further revealed that maintenance of Treasury Single Account helps to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks in the administration of public universities and Treasury Single Account enhances e-payment collection and this influences the administration of public universities. Based on these findings, it was recommended that; Federal government should ensure all contracts in within the university is solely monitored using TSA, as this would make inflation of contract difficult and also make fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public universities difficult to perpetuate, therefore enhancing speedy execution of projects for efficient administration of public universities. Federal government should sensitize Vice Chancellors on the constant need of institutionalizing Treasury Single Account in their respective schools, as it would help to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks via e-payment as this would make more cash available to the government to address other needs in public universities.

Keywords: Treasury Single Account, Monitoring Fraudulent Practices, and Blocking Financial Leakages.

Introduction

Before 2015, several government agencies in Nigeria were delegated to collect money on behalf of the Federal Government and they had the freedom to expend part of it to run their affairs since they only needed to remit a portion of the declared amount collected. Government agencies had been operating multiple accounts for revenue collection and spending contrary to the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 as amended which requires that all government revenue generated must be remitted into a single account. As a result of economic challenges, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was directed by the Federal Government of Nigeria to open a Consolidated Revenue Account where all government revenue, incomes and inflows are remitted into one single account maintained by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2014). This is known as Treasury Single Account (TSA). In the views of Eme and Chukwurah (2015), TSA is a process and tool for effective management of government's finances, banking and cash position. In accordance with the name TSA pools and unifies all government accounts through a single treasury account which minimizes and control fraudulent practices.

Fraudulent practice can be defined as a misrepresentation of facts in order to influence a procurement process or the execution of a contract to the detriment of the Procuring Entity, and includes collusive practices among bidders (prior to or after bid submission) designed to establish bid prices at artificial, non-competitive levels and to deprive the Procuring Entity of the benefits of free and open competition. It is common that financial reports in Nigeria at all levels, reveal flagrant disregard to rules and procedures, overthrow of financial discipline, accountability, probity and transparency, which the treasuries were set-up to establish and protect. These abuses and breaches range from duplication of contracts, over-valuation of contracts, fictitious payments of contracts, non-certification of payment vouchers by the internal auditor among others. Other frauds in treasury activities include over payment to existing staff, payment of salaries and allowances to dead or retired staff and ghost workers. These are clear manifestations of the collapse of standard policy and practices in treasury departments, and hence the inability of most government to achieve her objectives as a result of increase in cost of governance (Abdulrahman, 2016; Agu, 2013). Until the introduction of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in Nigeria, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) which generate revenue have had multiple accounts in commercial banks. The commercial banks used part of the amounts deposited with them to finance businesses and earn interest. As a result, agencies paid into government account what they deem fit as loopholes kept proliferating within the public sector. The result of this situation included leakages of funds which are due to the treasury, embezzlement of public funds, and inability of a government to know her account balances at a glimpse; budgets were prepared using unrealistic projections leading to poor implementation.

In economics, a leakage is a diversion of funds from some iterative process. In the Nigerian case, the TSA is expected to block most if not all the leakages that have been the bane of the growth of the economy. System Specs (2016) argues that Treasury Single Account helps to block most of the financial leakages that have been the bane of university financial mismanagement practices. Likewise, Okonjo-Iwela (2015) explains that the introduction of TSA had helped to reduce how government account was being overdrawn. Okonjo argues that several MDAs had hooked on to the TSA platform with substantial reduction in government's overdrawn financial position. Philip (2015) also stresses that TSA is a step in the right direction to plug all financial leakages. Philip further explains that multiple accounts by government agencies made it possible for the MDAs to conceal some accounts for ulterior motives; hence, implementation of TSA will go a long way to checkmate corruption in the country (Solanke, 2018). With the place of Treasury Single Account, it becomes pertinent to study its influence on university administration. This is premised on the fact that any policy implementation that will tamper with free flow of funds in the university system may derail and delay administration and forestall achievement of educational goals in the country. In the context of this work, administration refers to the act or process of administering or management of Federal Universities by creating and enforcing rules and regulations.

From the foregoing therefore, the maintenance of Treasury Single Account will help to ensure proper cash management in Federal Universities by eliminating unused funds usually kept with deferent commercial banks, thus ensuring effective administration of the university. In the long run, Treasury Single Account could lead to effectiveness of spending in federal universities since the accounting system places Federal Government in a better position to control and monitor cash flow within the universities. According to Oguntodu, Alalade, Adekunle and Adegbe (2016), the establishment of TSA is a key element of an efficient and effective public financial management system and an essential tool for minimizing government borrowing costs. The maintenance of a single account for public universities will enable the Minister of Finance to monitor cash flow as no Federal university is allowed to maintain any operational account outside the over sight of the Federal Ministry of Finance in Nigeria. It therefore, seems that the Treasury Single Accounting system is positioned to monitor the expenditures in Federal universities in Nigeria for ease of administration as this may help in curbing financial corruption in the university system. The Treasury Single Account, as a public accounting system, aims to ensure accountability of financial revenue, accountability of expenditures, enhance transparency and avoid misappropriation of public funds. In the university, TSA no doubt, is expected to enhance the overall effectiveness of financial management system for ease of administration.

The researcher further observes that in spite of the laudable objectives of the TSA policy, universities in Nigeria want to be in the active position in financial management of the university. From this observation, the researcher learnt from Daily Trust Editorial (2015) that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) despite the competitive advantages of adopting TSA, had criticized TSA policy. Speaking during the National Executive Council (NEC) Meeting of the union held in Owerri, on 14th October, 2015, the former ASUU National President, Dr. Nasir I. Fagge, pointed out that the Federal Government needed to ponder further on the TSA

Policy and its implementation framework if it must be workable. Universities according to Fagge cannot function without the financial autonomy that the TSA takes away.

With the observations and outcry by ASUU, one is tempted to ask whether the adoption of TSA policy could negatively affect the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate the influence of Treasury Single Account (TSA) Policy on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The problem of the study may therefore be put in a question form thus: - what is the influence of TSA policy on monitoring fraudulent practices and blocking financial leakages on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria?

Objective of the Study

This study was to investigate extent of influence of Treasury Single Account (TSA) Policy on monitoring fraudulent practices and blocking financial leakages on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. ascertain extent to which monitoring fraudulent practices influence the administration of public universities
- ii. determine extent to which blocking financial leakages influence the administration of public universities

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does monitoring of fraudulent practices influence the administration of public Universities?
- ii. To what extent does a blocking financial leakage influence the administration of public Universities in North Eastern Nigeria?

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

- i. Monitoring of fraudulent practices has no significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria
- ii. Blocking of financial leakages has no significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The area of study is North Eastern Nigeria. The population of the study is 547 Bursary staff of the six Federal Universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 231 Bursary staff as respondents. This size was determined using Taro Yamane Sample size formulae. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample at different stages. Firstly, purposive sampling was used to select all Federal Universities from all the six States that constitute North-Eastern Nigeria which are; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States. Secondly, Proportionate Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the number of Bursary staff from each Federal University. At the last stage, simple random sampling was used to select the 231 Bursary staff from the universities under study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Treasury Single Account policy and Administration of Public Universities Questionnaire (TSAAPUQ)". The questionnaire consists of 10 items in 2 Clusters, with each cluster having 5 items. The response to the questionnaire items is modeled based on the four-point rating scale with response modes of Very High Extent= (4), High Extent= (3), Low Extent= (2) and Very Low Extent= (1), respectively. Data were collated and analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Statistic. The overall co-efficient of each component of "Treasury Single Account and Administration of Public University Questionnaire (TSAAPUQ)", yielded 0.84. The quantitative data was analyzed using the descriptive statistic of Mean and Standard Deviations to answer the research questions. The boundary limit for decision making was 1.00-1.49=Very Low Extent, 1.50-2.49=Low Extent, 2.50-3.49=High Extent, 3.50-4.00=Very High Extent. The mean scores were ranked in ascending order in all the research question tables. Chi-square test of independence (χ^2) was used to test the seven hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision

was that, if the calculated (χ^2) value is greater than the critical table value, the null hypotheses would be rejected. The choice for the use of Chi-square test of independence (χ^2) is because it establishes the statistical relationship between the observed and expected cases in each category based on a given hypothesis. Chi-square (χ^2) Coefficient of Contingency was further used to measure the strength of relationship or association between the observed and expected cases in each category based on a given hypothesis.

Research Question 1: To what extent does monitoring of fraudulent practices influence the administration of public Universities in North Eastern Nigeria?

To answer this research question, responses on the extent to which monitoring of fraudulent practices influences the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria were collected and analyzed as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of respondents on the extent to which monitoring of fraudulent practices influence the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	VH E	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1	Implementation of TSA has made inflation of contract in the administration of public universities difficult	107	70	38	16	3.16	.98	High Extent	1 st
2	Implementation of TSA has made kickbacks difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities	33	59	98	41	2.36	1.03	Low Extent	5 th
3	Implementation of TSA has made budget padding difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities	91	57	61	22	2.94	1.05	High Extent	4 th
4	Implementation of TSA has made fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public sector difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities	80	87	40	24	2.97	.91	High Extent	2 nd
5	Implementation of TSA has made uncalled incidence of ghost workers difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities	78	87	43	23	2.95	1.02	High Extent	3 rd
Cluster Mean and SD						2.88	1.00	High Extent	

Analysis of data as presented in Table 1 shows the extent to which monitoring of fraudulent practices influences the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 1 revealed that all, except item 12 with a mean of 2.36, which is slightly below the benchmark show kickbacks is difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities, the respondents rated high extent on the other items (11, 13, 14 and 15) with mean scores ranging from 2.94 – 3.16 which were above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .91 – 1.05 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items as revealed was 2.88 and SD= 1.00. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that implementation of TSA

has made inflation of contract and fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public sector difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. This implies that kickbacks are difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities.

Research Question 2: To what extent does blocking financial leakage influence the administration of public Universities in North Eastern Nigeria?

To answer this research question, responses on the extent to which blocking financial leakage influences the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria were collected and analyzed as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of respondents on the extent to which blocking financial leakage influence the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	VH E	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
6	Maintenance of Treasury Single Account helps to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks in the administration of public universities	95	83	34	19	3.10	1.02	High Extent	1 st
7	Maintenance of Treasury Single Account enhances reconciliation of account and this influence the administration of public universities	84	76	35	36	2.90	.97	High Extent	3 rd
8	Treasury Single Account enhances e-payment collection and this influences the administration of public universities	101	58	42	30	3.00	1.08	High Extent	2 nd
9	TSA policy enables government to avoid borrowing with interest to finance administration of public universities	45	42	65	79	2.23	1.12	Low Extent	5 th
10	Implementation of treasury single account blocks financial loopholes and this influences the administration of public universities	73	68	38	52	2.70	1.01	High Extent	4 th
Cluster Mean and SD						2.79	1.04	High Extent	

Analysis of data as presented in Table 4 shows the extent to which blocking financial leakage influences the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 4 revealed that all, except item 19 with the mean value of 2.23, which is slightly below the bench mark shows that TSA enables government to avoid borrowing with interest to finance administration of public universities, the respondents rated high extent on the other items (16, 17, 18 and 20) with mean scores ranging from 2.70 – 3.10 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .97 – 1.08 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items as revealed was 2.79 and SD= 1.04 With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that maintenance of Treasury Single Account helps to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks and Treasury Single Account enhances e-payment collection and this influences

the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. This implies that TSA blocks financial leakages by eliminating idle funds usually left in commercial banks through unified e-payment in a consolidated account.

Hypothesis 1: Monitoring of fraudulent practices has no significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

Table 3: Chi-Square test of significance of the influence of Monitoring of fraudulent practices on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

Variables	N	Df	χ^2	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Monitoring of Fraudulent Practices	231	12	287.036	.000	.05	Significant

Administration

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2 = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 3 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 287.036, degree of freedom df =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, monitoring of fraudulent practices has significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. With a Chi-Square (χ^2) Coefficient of Contingency value of 0.74 implied that monitoring of fraudulent practices to a high extent positively influences the administration of public universities in the study area.

Hypothesis 2: Blocking of financial leakages has no significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

Table 4: Chi-Square test of significance of the influence of blocking of financial leakages on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria

Variables	N	Df	χ^2	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Blocking of Financial Leakages	231	12	337.821	.000	.05	Significant

Administration

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2 = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 4 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 337.821, degree of freedom df =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, blocking of financial leakages has significant influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. With a Chi-Square (χ^2) Coefficient of Contingency value of 0.77 implied that blocking of financial leakages to a high extent positively influences the administration of public universities in the study area.

From the data analysis, the following major findings were made:

- i. The implementation of TSA has made inflation of contract difficult and has also made fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public sector difficult to perpetuate enhancing monitoring of fraudulent practices in the administration of public universities.
- ii. Maintenance of Treasury Single Account helps to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks in the administration of public universities and Treasury Single Account enhances e-payment collection and these influences blocking of financial leakages in the administration of public universities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings arrived at in this study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

The first finding of the study revealed that to a high extent, the monitoring of fraudulent practices influence the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. It was revealed from this finding that the implementation of TSA has made inflation of contract in the administration of public universities difficult and implementation of TSA has made fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public sector difficult to perpetuate in the administration of public universities. Similarly, the test of a related hypothesis revealed that monitoring of fraudulent practices has significant positive influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The finding corroborates that by Akinleye, Fajuyagbe and Owoniya (2018) who found that the adoption of treasury single account provoked effective management of cash and sustained a considerable reduction in the level of fraudulent activities. This finding corroborates also that by Geoffrey (2016) who found that IFMIS eliminates waste and corruption in the use of public assets. Further, the finding corroborates that by Osagioduwa (2019) who found that TSA policy is effective in combating corruption in the public sector of Nigeria. By combating corruption, this means that fraudulent activities in universities can better be monitored and controlled with the adoption of TSA, thus enhancing the administration of public universities. The finding corroborates that by Akujuru and Enyioko (2017) who found that treasury single account (TSA) policy was introduced to reduce corruption and prevent mismanagement of government's revenue in public sector organisations. The implication of this is that by reducing corruption in universities through the TSA, funds can be better utilized for administrative purposes in universities. The finding by Yusuf and Mohammed (2016) that proper implementation of TSA by all stakeholders helps tremendously in reducing corruption and mismanagement of public fund and other financial irregularities in Rivers State and the country at large is in tandem with the findings of this study. The implication of the finding of the present study is that when public funds either remains unaccounted for, or fail to be accurately remitted in public universities, effective administration would be bound to suffer.

Further, it was revealed from this study that blocking of financial leakages to a high extent influence the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The finding revealed that maintenance of Treasury Single Account helps to eliminate idle funds usually left with different commercial banks in the administration of public universities and Treasury Single Account enhances e-payment collection and this influences the administration of public universities. The test of hypothesis revealed that blocking of financial leakages has significant positive influence on the administration of public universities in North Eastern Nigeria. The finding corroborates that by Ofor, Leonard and Francis (2017) who found that TSA has significantly affected and improved the performance of Federal Government MDAs and that it is capable of blocking financial loopholes in revenue generation. Similarly, Adebisi and Okike (2016), found that TSA adoption is an effective tool for curbing revenue leakage for enhancing effective administration. The finding also corroborates that by Yusuf (2016) who found that the adoption of a Treasury Single Account (TSA) is capable of plugging financial loopholes. By plugging financial loopholes in the universities with the adoption of TSA policy, administration can be influenced positively. Also, the finding corroborates that by Nwaorgu, Ezenwaka and Onuorah (2017), found that adaptation of a treasury single account and accountability (TSA) in the Nigeria public sector is capable of plugging financial loopholes in Federal Health Tertiary Institutions in South-East Nigeria. The finding corroborates that by Ajibade, Oyedekun and Doumu (2018) and Igbekoyi and Agbaje (2017) who found that Treasury Single Account has significant influence on public fund management in the area of financial leakages. The findings by Akujuru and Enyioko (2017) and Yusuf and Mohammed (2016) show that proper implementation of TSA by all stakeholders

help tremendously in blocking financial leakages and prevent mismanagement of government's revenue in public sector organisations. It can thus be said that by blocking financial leakages in universities, funds can be better utilized for administrative purposes. As TSA implementation does not only block financial leakages and loopholes, but also ensure robust financial management system, administration of public universities will be enhanced.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that institutionalization/adoption of the Single Treasury Account (TSA) as a valuable instrument facilitates monitoring of fraudulent practices and blocking financial leakages, as it has significantly influenced the administration of public universities.

Recommendations

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

- i. Federal government should ensure all contracts within the university are solely monitored using TSA to curtail fraudulent practices, as this would make inflation of contracts difficult and also make fabrication of accounts to disclose false position in public universities difficult to perpetuate, therefore enhancing speedy execution of projects for efficient administration of public universities
- ii. Federal government should sensitize Vice Chancellors on the constant need of institutionalizing Treasury Single Account in their respective schools, as it would help to block financial leakages by eliminating idle funds usually left with different commercial banks via e-payment as this would make more cash available to the government to address other needs in public universities.

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