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## Emerging Training Needs of Public Secondary School Principals on Financial Management for Job Performance in Southeast, Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the emerging financial management training needs of secondary school principals for job performance in Southeast, Nigeria. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. It was a descriptive survey research conducted in Southeast Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The population for the study was 1263 principals of public secondary schools in Southeast Geopolitical Zone. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 127 respondents, representing 10% of the population. The researchers used structured questionnaire titled Financial Management Training Needs of Secondary School's Principals Questionnaire (FMTNSSPQ), for data collection. The instrument was validated by 2 research experts in Educational Management and 1 research expert in Measurement and Evaluation. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the validated instrument was administered to 20 principals in Delta State. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach alpha method was used to compute the reliability estimate which yielded coefficient of 'r'-.72, that is considered appropriate to the study. The researchers personally administered the instrument to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while z-test was used to test the hypothesis. The result showed that secondary school principals in Southeast Nigeria need in-service training on financial management. It was therefore recommended that the Post Primary School Management Board should organize workshops on financial management since the result indicated that principals need capacity building in it and donor agencies should channel resources to capacity building of secondary school principals in financial management.*

**Keywords:** Secondary school principal, financial management, training needs.

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### INTRODUCTION

Financial management is an essential administrative function of secondary school principals. This function of administration is concerned with decisions on how to procure, expend and give accounts of funds provided for the implementation of educational programmes. Ikediugwu (2016) defined financial management as the science of management of funds. This responsibility of the school principal appears to be less effective in the recent times. The emerging digital economy and the federal government cashless policy seems to pose serious challenges to the principals in managing the

financial resources of the schools. In other words, principals as chief executive of schools may need in-service training to gain knowledge on how to source, acquire and competently utilize the schools' financial resources available to them. This competency in financial management will help them utilize the scarce resources, source for more funds, budget, plan and account for the used funds.

The ability of the principals to deliver in their responsibilities as financial managers may depend greatly on their knowledge base



and on the job experiences. Experienced principals are likely to be more efficient and effective in financial management than inexperienced principals. Comparing experienced and inexperienced principals Wolff, van den Bogert, Jarodzka, and Boshuizen (2014) noted that principals with less than ten (10) years on the job are inexperienced. Therefore, principals having over ten (10) years on the job experience are regarded as experienced. The experience of secondary school principals is chosen to find out if the number of years put in the service determines the in-service needs of experienced and less experienced principals in South-East Nigeria on financial management. It is believed that the longer these principals serve the more experience they gain in administering their schools. These experiences are, however, expected to reflect over time through in-service training. It is expected that the experienced principals would have less training needs unlike the inexperienced principals. It is the opinion of the researchers that except these data are investigated, the energy and resources put in school administration would be in futility, as the financial management training needs of the principals may not be well established. The inability to meet the financial management training needs of the principals could result in low job performance.

However, for the principals to function and improve on their job performances, they must be fully prepared and equipped. This preparation is a systematic capacity building of principals aimed at developing their knowledge base and financial management skills. It is pertinent to note that financial management skills are not innate, it can be learnt through preparation and development got from trainings like in-service training. In-service training is one of the main organizational instructions which affects the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff (Rahmati, Hosseini-fard & Alimadadi, 2014). According to Okwor (2016), in-service

training is a process for continuous updating of knowledge, skills and interests in a chosen field. For Chiemeka-unogu (2018), in-service training is the process of providing opportunities for employees to improve their knowledge, skills, performance in line with the goals and values of the organization and in relation to the interest and needs of the employees. It is a consciously designed programme aimed at improving the professional growth of employees for the achievement of organizational goals. It includes seminars, workshops, conferences and internships, where participants are involved in practical work or field trip. The successful administration of secondary schools depends on knowledge gained through in-service trainings of the principals. Therefore, principals should undergo continuous in-service trainings.

Given this reality, it is urgent to rethink the in-service training needs of school principals, to avoid a situation where they face the responsibility of financial resource management without relevant skills but, reacting only based upon good sense and results of trial-and-error (Abelha, Martins, Lopes, Nunes, & Machado, 2017). The principals prepare budgets and manage school finances which requires relevant skills and knowledge (Asuga & Eacott, 2012). Even though various recommendations for training are well-documented, many principals still lack the skills required to effectively manage financial resources ((Nyanyuki, Okionga, Ojera, Nyambwaga, & Nyamwamu, 2013; Chetambve & Sakwa, 2013). Matula, Mulwa and Kyalo (2018) reported that there is a very strong relationship between financial management training and effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools. Similarly, Mito and Enose, (2012) reported that many principals lacked basic training in financial management before they took up their posts

as school principals. Miriti (2014) believed principals do not attend financial management training courses despite their apparent need for training, subsequently, school principals still lack many skills in financial management. A few studies show that provision of training in financial management for principals can lead to improved management of financial resources in secondary schools (Chetambe & Sakwa, 2013).

In another perspective, Aliyu (2018) observed that some other factors could be responsible for the lapses observed in managing school financial resources. According to Aliyu, (2018) ghost workers and untimely disbursement of funds are the major reasons for poor financial management of finance in secondary schools in Southeast geopolitical zone. However, this issue of mismanagement of resources could also be as a result of poor skills in financial management.

In this regard, the researcher is not convinced that secondary school principals receive adequate training needed for effective financial management in secondary schools in South-East Nigeria. This could be made worse by the recent economic uncertainties and unstable financial policies of the Federal government. Ashraah, Al-Olaimatand Takash (2015) observed that having capable principals with high management and administrative skills is still a problem in the secondary school system. This is because one of the criteria for the appointment of principals is based on years of experience as a teacher. Most of the teachers were not trained as financial managers but, in their respective specialties. Hence, there is frequent conflict among teachers in the schools and allegations of fund misappropriation and embezzlement by the secondary school principals.

The researcher is worried because if the financial management training needs of secondary school principals are not properly addressed and managed, it may lead to poor job performances and hinder the smooth running of secondary schools in Southeast, Nigeria. Amah and Nkuda (2014) pointed out that a major problem with training and development is identifying the training needs of the employees. They suggested that the basic steps in identifying training needs of employees are identifying the skills needed by task analysis, selecting methods of developing the needed skills, carrying out the training and evaluation. It is through training that the principals would be able to understand and acquire financial management skills, which he employs to administer the school. It is against this background that this study investigated the financial management training needs of secondary school principals for job performance in Southeast Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In-service training is an essential ingredient for effective job performance. It brings the employees closer to the current working strategies that enhance job effectiveness. Principals need in-service training for effective job performance. In-service training for principals has become imperative in the current administrative functions of secondary school principals. This is because of the complexities in school administration orchestrated by dwindling economy and complex decision-making process which has been affected adversely by poor funding. It is, therefore, important that principals are subjected to in-service training that will equip them with the skills with which to handle administrative complexities arising from financial resource management. These trainings will enhance job performance and secondary school administration in Southeast, Nigeria. The problem of this study is, therefore, put in a question form "what are the in-service

training needs of secondary school principals for job performance in Southeast, Nigeria?

### Research Question

One research question was raised to guide the study:

1. What are the training needs of secondary school principals on financial management for their job performance?

### Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the experienced and less experienced secondary school principals on their training needs on financial management for job performance.

### Research Method

The design for this study was a descriptive survey. The study was carried out in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Southeast Geo-political zone is made up of five States namely; Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The population for this study is one thousand two hundred and sixty three (1263) public secondary school principals, comprising all secondary school principals in Southeast of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN 2021). The distribution of the population includes Abia State 160; Anambra State 259; Ebonyi State 204; Enugu State 344; and Imo State 296 principals. The population is made up of 589 experienced and 621 inexperienced principals. The sample size for the study was 127 principals. The sample comprised 61 experienced and 66 inexperienced principals. This represents 10% of the population for the study. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Proportionate sampling is a method of sampling in which

the researcher divides a finite population into subpopulations and then applies random sampling techniques to each subpopulation (Salkind and Frey, 2019). Nwana (2015), holds that, if the population is a few hundreds; a 40% or more sample will do, if many hundreds; a 20% sample will do, if a few thousand; a 10% sample will do, and if several thousands; a 5% or fewer samples will do. The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire titled Financial Management Training Needs of Secondary School's Principals Questionnaire (FMTNSSPQ). The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A deals with biodata of the respondents. Section B consists of nine (9) items focused on training needs of secondary school's principals on financial management for job performance. The instrument had response mode of 'Highly Needed', 'Needed', 'Slightly Needed' and 'Not Needed'. Two research experts in the field of Educational Management and one research expert in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Computer and Science Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology validated the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the validated instrument was administered to 20 principals (10 experienced and 10 inexperienced principals) in Delta State. Delta State is in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria, which is outside the area of the study but, share the same characteristics with those in South-East. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Crombach alpha method was used to compute the reliability estimate of the items. The computation yielded a reliability coefficient of 'r'-.72, which indicates that it is reliable and considered appropriate to the study. The researchers personally administered the instrument to the respondents. This is possible because the sample size is manageable. The researchers dedicated one week to each of the five

states, which is sufficient to cover the data collection. This method was employed to reduce the loss of instrument. The data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Mean and Standard Deviation were used in answering the research questions. For the research questions, the decision rule is as follows: below 1.50 = Not Needed; 1.50 - 2.49 = Slightly Needed; 2.50 – 3.49 = Needed; and 3.50 and above = Highly Needed. The z-test statistics at an alpha level of 0.05 was used in testing the

null hypothesis formulated for the study. This is to determine if significant difference exists between the respondents on the variable under study.

## Results

### Research Question 1:

What are the in-service training needs of secondary school principals on financial resource management for their job performance?

**Table 1: mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on in-service training needs in financial resource management for their job performance.**

n= Exp. 61; Inexp. 66.

S/N	Financial resource management for their job performance include:	Experienced			Inexperienced		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec
1.	preparing school budget	3.72	0.45	HN	3.36	0.58	N
2.	sourcing for funds to run school	3.24	0.80	N	3.32	0.24	N
3.	allocating fund on the scale of preference.	3.48	0.50	N	3.14	0.56	N
4.	ensuring that budget reflects agreed goals	3.38	0.49	N	3.45	0.53	N
5.	observing financial regulations on disbursement of fund	3.36	0.55	N	3.28	0.50	N
6.	keeping accurate financial information about the school	3.60	0.56	HN	3.45	0.49	N
7.	monitoring expenditure to avoid fraud	3.45	0.50	N	3.31	0.64	N
8.	carrying out regular auditing activities in the school	3.31	0.68	N	3.60	0.61	HN
9.	accounting based on the estimate made	3.21	0.79	N	3.52	0.64	HN
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>N</b>

The data on table 1 showed that the two groups of respondents indicated that they needed in service training on items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. While experienced principals indicated that items 1 and 6 are highly needed, the less experienced principals

indicated that they are needed. Similarly, in items 8 and 9 experienced principals indicated that they are needed, while less experienced principals pointed out that they are highly needed. The cluster mean rating of the experienced principals is 3.42 while

that of less experienced principals is 3.38. These data indicated that secondary school principals in Southeast Nigeria, need in-service training on financial resource management.

### Hypothesis

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the experienced and less experienced secondary school principals on their in-service training needs on financial resource management for job performance.

**Table 2: z-test of significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and inexperienced principals on in-service training needs of secondary school principals in Southeast, on financial resource management.**

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	t-critical	Decision
Experienced	61	3.42	0.59				
				125	0.39	$\pm 1.96$	Do not reject Ho <sub>1</sub>
Inexperienced	66	3.38	0.53				

Table 2 above presents the z-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of experienced and inexperienced principals regarding the in-service training needs of secondary school principals on financial resource management in Southeast, Nigeria. The result shows that calculated z-value (0.39) is less than the critical value ( $\pm 1.96$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore, not rejected. Hence, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and inexperienced secondary school principals in Southeast, Nigeria on in-service training needs in financial resource management for job performance.

### Discussion

The finding shows that secondary school principals in Southeast Nigeria, need in-service training on financial resource management for job performance. This agrees with the findings of Matula, Mulwa and Kyalo (2018), who noted that there is a very strong relationship between financial management training and effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools. This implies that school principals should be trained on financial management so that

they can be effective in their job performance. However, the finding opposed that of Aliyu, (2018) who reported that ghost workers and untimely disbursement of funds are the major reasons for poor financial management of finance in secondary schools in Southeast geopolitical zone. The position of Aliyu (2018), may have been informed by poor budgetary allocation for Education and the attendant corruption in the system. However, the implication of the current finding is that the principals lack the requisite skills to manage the scarce funds available for their schools.

A further analysis of difference in opinion shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the experienced and less experienced secondary school principals on their in-service training needs on financial resource management for job performance. This corroborates the assertion of Abelha, Martins, Lopes, Nunes, and Machado (2017) that "it is urgent to rethink the training of school principals, to avoid a situation where they face their responsibilities of financial management based only upon good sense and results of

trial-and-error. Supporting this finding also, Chetambve and Sakwa (2013), maintained that many principals still lack the skills required to effectively manage financial resources. Similarly, Mito and Enose, (2012) reported that many principals lacked basic training in financial management before they took up their posts as school principals. Miriti (2014) believed principals do not attend financial management training course despite their apparent need for training, subsequently, school principals still lack many skills in financial management. This finding explains the poor performance of principals in the administration of secondary schools in Southeast Nigeria, despite the huge financial resources being expended in that system. It also shows that managerial skills are as important as the resources needed to run the schools, otherwise, the scarce resources will be mismanaged.

### Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be inferred that both experienced and less experienced principals emphasized the fact that they need some trainings in order to achieve functional secondary education in Southeast, Nigeria. Hence, without competent and effective principals, who are fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in the secondary schools, Southeast geopolitical zone cannot boast of good quality education, and without good education, no one can meet the challenges of this fast changing society. As increase in unemployment rate continues to be the subject of discussion and insecurity a source of worry for everyone in Nigeria, there is every need to continually train, re-train and develop principals towards acquiring relevant skills that will enable them to approach their responsibility with creativity and innovation. Meeting principals' training needs is one of the major ways the secondary education sector can achieve its goals and objectives. The implication is that

if the financial management training need is not met, the School finances will continue to be mismanaged.

### Recommendation

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

1. The Post Primary School Management Board should organize workshop on financial management since the result indicated that principals need capacity building in it.
2. Donor agencies should channel resources to capacity building of secondary school principals in financial management.
3. ANCOPS should use their annual conference to organize training programmes for their members.

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