

## **ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Helen ChineloOnuorah (Ph.D)<sup>1</sup>, Chika NonyeEziamaka (Ph.D)<sup>2</sup>  
& Victoria Chimezie Mbonu<sup>3</sup>**

Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

E-mail:Phone: 08036123101; hc.onuorah@unizik.edu.ng

### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and the population of the study comprised 263 principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by three experts in education. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot test using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.80 for clusters B1 and B2 of the instrument respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing data collected for the study. Findings revealed among others that the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria is that it leads to infrastructural development in schools, makes teaching resources readily available, leads to reduction in cost of education and leads to the recruitment of quality teachers among others. Furthermore, findings revealed that the mechanism for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria include applying a whole system approach in the management of school resources, publicly publishing financial statement of schools regularly, engaging in proper budgetary practices in schools, reducing tolerance of corruption through data analysis and integrating proper record management systems. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that periodic audit should be done on the financial statements of secondary schools. The researchers also recommended that government at all level should ensure that they map out regulations and procedures for ensuring accountability for secondary school as well as punishments for erring officials.

**Keywords:** Accountability, Good Governance, Public, Secondary and Administrators

### **Introduction**

Secondary education in Nigeria is the pivotal level of education that is between the primary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. Secondary education is important because of its

position as the stage of education that prepares individuals for useful living and for higher education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), (2013). Due to the need to ensure the realization of the goals of secondary education it is pertinent that funds, material and human resources are made available for the management of secondary schools. These resources when made available are expected to be judiciously managed. The efficient management of human and material resources in secondary schools is integral to the achievement of school goals. Sadly, the availability of financial, human and material resources in secondary schools has been observed to be scarce in Nigeria in general and Anambra State in particular (Nwosu & Ozioko, 2020; Kalu, 2011). Onuarah and Appah (2012) noted that despite the fact that resources made available to schools are in short supply, school administrators still engage in wanton embezzlement of school funds which seem to affect the operation of secondary schools in Nigeria. Agabi (2019) stated that the rate of embezzlement and mismanagement of cash in secondary schools in Nigeria seem to reflect badly on the quality of education service delivery of most public secondary schools in Nigeria.

The rate of financial misappropriation in secondary schools in Nigeria shows a lack of transparency and lack of accountability in the secondary school system. Nwosu and Ozioko (2020) emphasized the importance of accountability in the management of school resources. Nwosu and Ozioko noted that accountability is a transparent measure of ensuring good management of funds. The authors stated that accountability also demands good record keeping. Accountability for Odunayo (2014) deals with the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility of actions within the scope of role in position encompassing the obligation to report and be answerable for resulting consequences. The mechanism through which school funding is governed, distributed and monitored depicts accountability and it is a key role in ensuring that resources are directed to where they can make the most difference. Agwor and Akani (2017) opined that accountability is a rational mechanism for ensuring responsibilities among individuals in the position of authority. Accountability can be essential for effective administration of secondary schools.

Accountability in secondary school is necessary because it helps to facilitate infrastructural development in secondary schools in Nigeria. According to Agabi (2019), Ekpo and Okoli (2012), accountability in secondary education would lead to improvement in infrastructural development, reduction of educational cost, employment of quality teachers, and improvements in teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement. However, ensuring accountability in secondary schools in Nigeria has been an almost impossible task (Nwosu & Ozioko, 2020; Kalu, 2011). This is because of some factors related to poor leadership, corruption and poor budgeting among others (Nwosu & Ozioko). It is therefore imperative to determine the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The management of secondary schools in Nigeria is a major issue that has generated a lot of reports and debates among scholars and stakeholders in education. In Nigeria, the management of education is spearheaded by the State Ministries of Education. Management of secondary schools in Nigeria is within the purview of the ministries of education, the post primary school boards, principals, teachers, Parent Teachers Association and School Based Management Committees. These groups to some extent manage the activities of the school and ensure its smooth running towards the achievement of school goals. Sadly, the management of secondary schools seem not to have been effectively carried out. This is because of issues related to allegations relating to the misappropriation of funds by individuals and group managing funds at this level of education. It has been observed that in some schools, teachers, parents and other stakeholders are not updated on the state of financial affairs of the school (Ojekudo, 2019). Furthermore, in some cases where individuals are caught engaging in fraudulent activities, little or no action is taken because they know some highly placed individuals in government. The researchers are worried that these are clear signs of bad governance in the secondary school system. It is against this background that the researchers carried out the study which ascertained the role of accountability in promoting good governance in the administration of public secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study

1. Determined the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria.
2. Examined the mechanisms for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria?
2. What are the mechanisms for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria?

### **Method**

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 263 public secondary school principals in the State. The entire population was sampled for the study because it was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the

researchers. The instrument was titled “Role of Accountability in Promoting Good Governance among Public Secondary Schools Administrators Questionnaire (RAPGGPSSAQ)”. The instrument contains 15 items on the role and mechanism for promoting accountability for good governance among secondary schools administrators. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by three experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot test on 20 principals in Enugu metropolis of Enugu State, Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability method for internal consistency. This yielded coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.80 for cluster B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.79. The researchers administered the instruments directly to the respondents in their offices. The instrument was administered and retrieved on the spot after completion. However, an appointment was booked in cases where the respondents were unable to fill the questionnaire on the spot. This process lasted for about two weeks. Out of the 263 copies of the questionnaire administered, 225 representing 86% were retrieved in good condition and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used in analyzing data collected for the study. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to determine the relatedness of the respondents mean ratings. In analyzing the research questions, any item with mean rating of 2.50 and above was regarded as Agree while mean rating below 2.50 was regarded as Disagree.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What is the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Role of Accountability in Promoting Good Governance among Public Secondary School Administrators**

S/N	Accountability:	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Promotes transparency in school management	3.22	0.73	Agree
2.	Increases trust among stakeholders in the school	3.28	0.84	Agree
3.	Leads to recruitment of quality teachers	3.58	0.79	Agree
4.	Results in infrastructural development	3.74	0.82	Agree
5.	Makes teaching resources readily available in school	3.65	0.81	Agree
6.	Leads to reduction in the cost of education.	3.60	0.95	Agree

7	Leads to improvement in quality of education service delivery	3.44	0.82	Agree
8.	Attracts investment from private sector in education	3.45	0.28	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.49</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated items 1 to 8 with mean ratings ranging between 3.22 to 3.74 as the roles of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria. The standard deviation scores ranging between 0.73 to 0.95 indicate that the respondents' opinions are close. The cluster mean of 3.49 indicate that the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria include that it leads to infrastructural development in secondary schools, makes teaching resources readily available, leads to reduction in cost of education and leads to the recruitment of quality teachers among others.

### Research Question 2

What are the mechanisms for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria?

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Mechanisms for Promoting Accountability for Good Governance among Public Secondary Schools Administrators**

S/N	Mechanisms for promoting accountability include:	Mea n	SD	Decisio n
1.	Integrating a secondary school account management system	3.36	0.81	Agree
2.	Applying a whole system approach in the management of school resources	3.47	0.78	Agree
3	Reducing tolerance of corruption through data analysis	3.38	0.84	Agree
4	Publicly publishing financial statement of schools regularly	3.43	0.77	Agree
5	Engaging in proper budgetary practices in schools	3.40	0.86	Agree
6	Engaging external auditors in auditing the financial records of schools.	3.22	0.83	Agree
7	Integrating proper record management systems	3.37	0.76	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.37</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 2 reveal that the respondents rated items 1 to 7 with mean ratings ranging between 3.22 to 3.47 as the mechanisms for promoting accountability for good governance

among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria. The standard deviation scores ranging between 0.77 to 0.86 indicate that the respondents' opinions are close. The cluster mean of 3.49 indicate that the mechanism for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria include applying a whole system approach in the management of school resources, publicly publishing financial statement of schools regularly, engaging in proper budgetary practices in schools, reducing tolerance of corruption through data analysis and integrating proper record management systems.

### **Discussion**

Findings on the study revealed that the role of accountability in promoting good governance among public secondary school administrators in Nigeria include that it leads to infrastructural development in secondary schools, makes teaching resources readily available, leads to reduction in cost of education and leads to the recruitment of quality teachers among others. This finding is in line with Agabi (2019) who stated that accountability in secondary schools would help in making funds readily available for school expenditure. Agabi further stated that with transparency in handling of school resources, school administrators would be able to provide classrooms, laboratories, libraries and instructional materials. The provision of infrastructural facilities will enable staff in secondary schools to perform at their optimal level. It also tallies with Ojekudo (2019) who stated that accountability would lead to reduction in the cost of education as well as Ekpo and Okoli (2012) who noted that financial accountability would increase the involvement of the private sector in secondary education. This would further increase the quality of secondary school administration in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Findings of the study also revealed that the mechanisms for promoting accountability for good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State, Nigeria include applying a whole system approach in the management of school resources, publicly publishing financial statement of schools regularly, engaging in proper budgetary practices in schools, reducing tolerance of corruption through data analysis and integrating proper record management systems. This is in agreement with Nwosu and Ozioko (2020) who opined that by putting in place certain mechanisms like proper planning, financial reporting, punishing fraudulent practices and utilizing technology in the management of school finances administrators of public secondary schools would ensure transparency and accountability in the management of school finances. Agabi (2019) noted that ensuring a full proof accountability system involves making sure that school finances are well recorded and made public to all stakeholders involved.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that accountability would promote good governance among public secondary school administrators in Anambra State,

Nigeria. Ensuring accountability would be paramount to the development of quality educational administration as well as improve the quality of education service delivery in secondary schools. It is therefore pertinent that measures are put in place to ensure that accountability is given top priority in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The researchers made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study:

1. Periodic audit should be done on the financial statements of secondary schools by external auditors. This would increase transparency in the system and check any form of fraudulent activities.
2. School administrators should be trained on current trends in ensuring accountability in managing school resources. This can be done through the organization of seminars, workshops and conferences on accountability for educational institutions.
3. Government at all levels should ensure that they map out regulations and procedures for ensuring accountability for secondary schools as well as punishments for erring officials.

### **References**

- Agabi, C. O.(2019). *Principles and theories in educational finance*. Davidstones Global Resources.
- Agwor, T.C. & Akani, F.N. (2017). Financial accountability and performance of local governments in River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 5(10), 620-635.
- Ekpo, O.E. & Okoli, N. J. (2012). *Rudiments of social welfare administration*. Oasis Communication and Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National policy on education*. NERDC.
- Kalu, F.A. (2011). *Budgeting practices of principals of secondary schools in south – east geo – political zone*. Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Nwosu, K.L. & Ozioko, I.D. (2020). Accountability in the management of financial resources for secondary education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 2(3), 638-652.
- Odunayo, M. G. (2014). Teacher performance pay: A review. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(4), 909–949.
- Ojekudo, B.E. (2019). Principal’s accountability in the management of internally generated revenue (IGR) in public secondary schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 1(2), 348-363.
- Onuarah, A.C. & Appah, E. (2012). Accountability and public sector financial management in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(6), 1-17.