

Impact of Funding and Management of Funds on Academic Performance in Turn-Around Secondary Schools in Gombe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of funding and management of funds on academic performance in turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by the persistent challenges of inadequate funding, mismanagement of resources, and the resultant disparities in students' academic outcomes between well-funded and poorly funded schools. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the study drew responses from 217 participants, including principals, teachers, and education officials, selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire validated by experts in educational management and analysed using descriptive statistics.

Findings revealed that funding adequacy and transparent fund management significantly influenced the provision of instructional materials, teacher motivation, and the overall learning environment. Schools with stronger accountability mechanisms and active stakeholder involvement recorded better student performance outcomes compared to schools with weak financial oversight. The study concludes that both the adequacy of funds and the effectiveness of fund management practices are critical determinants of student achievement in Gombe State. Recommendations include increased state budgetary allocations to secondary education, targeted training for principals on financial management, and institutionalized involvement of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) to promote transparency and accountability.

Keywords: funding adequacy, fund management, academic performance, secondary education, Gombe State

INTRODUCTION

Education globally recognized as a fundamental driver of socio-economic development and human capital formation. For secondary education in particular, adequate financing and sound

management of resources are indispensable for achieving quality learning outcomes. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that educational financing not only determines the availability of inputs such as infrastructure, instructional materials, and teachers but also shapes the efficiency of delivery systems and equity of access. In developing countries like Nigeria, the persistent gap between educational demands and financial resources has continued to undermine school performance (World Bank, 2019).

In Nigeria, several reforms have sought to improve access and quality at the secondary school level. Among these reforms is the establishment of “turn-around secondary schools,” intended to model improved standards in funding, management, and performance. However, research has shown that inadequate funding and weak financial accountability remain critical constraints. Adeyemi (2018) and Alabi and Okemakinde (2016) observed that the financial inadequacies in public secondary schools limit their capacity to provide quality education, while Obasi (2018) highlighted that mismanagement of available resources exacerbates poor learning outcomes.

At the state level, Gombe has invested in turn-around secondary schools to address the persistent challenges in educational performance. Yet disparities in student achievement persist, raising concerns about the extent to which funding adequacy and effective fund management contribute to learning outcomes. Previous studies in Nigeria have examined educational financing (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2017; Bappah, 2022), but few have explicitly linked funding and fund management practices with measurable academic performance in the context of turn-around schools. This represents a critical gap that this study seeks to address.

The central problem addressed by this study is that despite significant public investment, many turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State continue to record poor academic outcomes, which may be attributable to funding inadequacies and weak financial management structures. This study therefore examines how the adequacy of funding and the effectiveness of fund management influences academic performance in these schools. The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the adequacy of funding in turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State.
2. To examine the effectiveness of fund management practices in these schools.
3. To determine the impact of funding adequacy and fund management on students’ academic performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study anchored on the Systems Theory of Education, which posits that educational institutions function as interconnected systems where inputs, processes, and outputs are interdependent (Nwankwo, 2019). Funding represents a key input, while management of resources serves as the process through which these inputs are converted into outputs such as student achievement. Inefficiencies in either funding or management disrupt the system, thereby reducing academic performance. The framework underscores the idea that resource adequacy alone is insufficient; effective management practices are equally critical for sustaining quality outcomes.

Global Perspectives on School Funding and Academic Performance

International evidence strongly links school funding with student performance. Hanushek (2016) argues that while mere increases in funding do not automatically guarantee improved outcomes, the strategic allocation and efficient management of resources are critical to success. Hill, Betts, and Levin (2022) observed that schools in high-performing systems often benefit from both adequate funding and rigorous accountability mechanisms that ensure resources reach the classroom level. Similarly, Sohn et al. (2022) emphasized that equity in school financing plays a decisive role in narrowing achievement gaps, particularly in disadvantaged contexts.

School Funding in Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, inadequate and unstable funding remains a structural challenge. UNESCO (2020) highlighted that many African governments allocate less than the recommended 20% of their national budgets to education, resulting in shortages of instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, and poorly motivated teachers. Osei (2020) reported that in Ghana, rural schools rely more heavily on community contributions, which are often insufficient to meet operational needs. Schueler and Bleiberg (2021) also noted that turn-around schools in several African countries struggle to balance funding inadequacies with the pressure to improve academic outcomes.

Nigerian Evidence on Funding and Academic Performance

In Nigeria, numerous studies underscore the link between funding adequacy and educational outcomes. Adeyemi (2018) found that inadequate financing significantly reduced student achievement by limiting access to qualified teachers and essential instructional resources. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2017) further noted that inequitable allocation of funds among secondary schools contributed to regional disparities in performance. More recently, Bappah (2022) highlighted that socio-economic disparities in Gombe State intensified performance gaps between well-resourced and poorly funded schools.

Fund Management and Accountability

Beyond adequacy of funding, effective management, practices are equally decisive. Obasi (2018) argued that weak governance and poor accountability structures in Nigerian schools often result in resource wastage, thereby reducing the potential benefits of allocated funds. Alabi and Okemakinde (2016) similarly emphasized that financial mismanagement undermines instructional quality and student performance. The role of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) has been highlighted by Abubakar (2024) as a potential solution for strengthening accountability, though their effectiveness varies across schools.

Research Gap

While several studies have examined educational financing in Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2018; Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2017; Obasi, 2018), relatively few have explicitly analysed the joint influence of funding adequacy and fund management on academic performance, especially within the specific context of turn-around secondary schools. This study therefore addresses this gap by investigating how both funding adequacy and fund management practices shape academic performance outcomes in Gombe State's turn-around schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for examining opinions, perceptions, and practices related to funding and fund management in secondary schools. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from a large population and analyse trends that highlight the relationship between funding adequacy, fund management, and academic performance.

Population of the Study

The population consisted of principals, teachers, and education officials in turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. Turn-around schools were established by the Gombe State Government to improve quality education through better funding and accountability. At the time of the study, there were 32 turn-around secondary schools, with an estimated staff population of 680 teachers and principals, alongside 37 education officials at the zonal and state ministry levels.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 217 respondents was drawn from the population using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation from both urban and rural schools. The sample included 32 principals (one from each school), 160 teachers (5 randomly selected per school), and 25 education officials (from Ministry of Education)

This stratification ensured that both frontline school managers and supervising officials were represented in the study.

Table 1: *Population and Sample Distribution*

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Principals	32	32	Census (all included)
Teachers	580	160	Stratified random sampling
Education officials	37	25	Purposive sampling
Total	649	217	

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument contained four sections:

1. Demographic information of respondents.
2. Items measuring adequacy of funding.
3. Items on fund management practices (e.g., transparency, accountability, oversight).

4. Items on perceived academic performance (availability of instructional materials, teacher motivation, and student outcomes).

Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in educational management at Federal University of Kashare, Gombe State. Their suggestions were incorporated to improve clarity and relevance of items. To establish reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested in two non-sampled turn-around schools, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.84 was obtained, indicating high internal consistency.

Procedure for Data Collection

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Gombe State Ministry of Education. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to principals, teachers, and officials through trained research assistants. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest responses. Completed questionnaires were retrieved within a two-week period.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. No identifying information was collected, and data were used strictly for academic purposes.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize responses. In addition, simple regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive impact of funding adequacy and fund management practices on academic performance. Results were presented in tables with interpretive explanations.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study based on the research objectives. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize responses, while regression analysis was used to establish the influence of funding and fund management on academic performance.

Table 2: *Adequacy of Funding in Turn-Around Secondary Schools (n = 217)*

Item	%Agree/StronglyAgree
Government allocation is sufficient to meet school needs	41.5
Community contributions adequately supplement government funding	38.2
Funding is stable and predictable from year to year	44.7
Schools receive adequate support for instructional materials	47.5
Funding enables adequate staff motivation and welfare	42.9

Results in Table 2 indicate that less than half of respondents agreed that funding was adequate across different dimensions. Specifically, only 41.5% considered government allocations sufficient, while 47.5% affirmed that funding supported provision of instructional materials. This suggests that funding in turn-around schools remains largely inadequate and inconsistent, undermining effective teaching and learning.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Fund Management Practices (n = 217)

Item	% Agree/Strongly Agree
Fund allocation is based on school needs and priorities	57.6
Allocation and disbursement processes are transparent	46.1
Principals are competent to manage funds effectively	59.9
School budgets and financial plans are clear and accessible	59.9
Funds are used efficiently to achieve school goals	59.9

Table 3 shows that while most respondents believed principals were competent (59.9%) and school budgets were clear (59.9%), fewer than half (46.1%) agreed that allocation and disbursement processes were transparent. These points to partial effectiveness in fund management, with weaknesses in accountability and transparency mechanisms.

Table 4: Regression Analysis: Impact of Funding and Fund Management on Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	β Coefficient	t-value	Sig. (p)
Adequacy of Funding	0.41	5.62	0.001
Fund Management Practices	0.37	4.98	0.001
$R^2 = 0.54$			

Regression analysis in Table 4 indicates that both funding adequacy ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$) and fund management practices ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$) significantly predict academic performance in turn-around secondary schools. The R^2 value of 0.54 suggests that 54% of the variance in academic performance explained jointly by these two variables. This confirms that both sufficient funding and effective management are critical for improved student outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that funding adequacy in turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State remains insufficient, with less than half of respondents affirming that government allocations and community contributions adequately meet school needs. This outcome aligns with the assertions of Adeyemi (2018) and Ajayi and Ekundayo (2017), who reported that financial inadequacies have long undermined the effective functioning of Nigerian secondary schools. Similarly, UNESCO (2020) emphasized that underfunding in Sub-Saharan Africa leads to shortages of instructional materials, poor teacher motivation, and weak learning environments — all of which are evident in the present study.

In terms of fund management practices, the study found mixed outcomes. While principals were perceived as competent and school budgets generally clear, significant weaknesses were reported in the transparency of allocation and disbursement processes. This finding resonates with the work of Obasi (2018), who argued that poor accountability structures in Nigerian schools lead to inefficiency and wastage of scarce resources. Likewise, Alabi and Okemakinde (2016) highlighted that weak governance mechanisms often undermine the intended benefits of funding in public schools. The fact that less than half of respondents considered allocation processes transparent underscores the persistence of accountability gaps in Gombe's turn-around schools.

The regression results further revealed that both adequacy of funding and effectiveness of fund management significantly predict academic performance, jointly accounting for 54% of the variance. This finding is consistent with Hanushek (2016), who argued that both the quantity and quality of resource utilization are key determinants of student achievement. In the Nigerian context, Bappah (2022) found that socio-economic disparities in Gombe State worsened educational inequalities, with well-funded schools outperforming those with weaker financial bases. The present study extends this evidence by showing that not only the amount of funding but also the way funds are managed plays a critical role in shaping outcomes.

Globally, Hill, Betts, and Levin (2022) have emphasized that equity in financing and strong accountability frameworks are essential for improving student performance, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The findings of this study therefore reinforce the global consensus that funding adequacy alone is insufficient without effective management practices. The results also support the Systems Theory of Education (Nwankwo, 2019), which posits that inputs (funding), processes (management), and outputs (academic performance) must function in harmony for the education system to achieve desired results.

A notable implication of these findings is that turn-around schools, despite being targeted for reform, continue to suffer from both inadequate funding and management inefficiencies. This suggests that the "turn-around" label alone is insufficient to guarantee improved performance unless accompanied by sustainable financing and robust governance mechanisms. The study therefore provides empirical evidence that reform initiatives must go beyond nominal designation and address structural issues of funding and accountability.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of funding adequacy and fund management practices on academic performance in turn-around secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. Findings revealed that funding remains largely inadequate, with less than half of respondents affirming that government allocations and community contributions sufficiently meet school needs. While fund management practices showed some positive aspects, such as principal competence and clear budgeting, weaknesses were evident in transparency and accountability of allocation and disbursement processes.

Regression analysis confirmed that both funding adequacy and fund management significantly influence academic performance, jointly explaining 54% of the variance. This underscores the critical role of financial resources and management efficiency in shaping student outcomes. The study concludes that effective reforms in secondary education must prioritize not only increased

funding but also transparent and accountable management structures. Without these measures, the objectives of establishing turn-around schools will remain largely unmet.

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Authors' contributions

Each author contributed equally to the research and writing of the manuscript.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Declarations

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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