Accountability and Resource Management: Building Blocks towards National Prosperity

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a country with an abundance of human and natural resources, yet over forty percent of the population of Nigeria live in poverty. The appalling, pathetic and depressing condition of high rate of poverty in Nigeria cannot be separated from the absence of accountability and on government’s ineptitude and lack of prudence in the expenditure and management of resources. The study examined the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity. The research work adopted the use of descriptive survey research design. Primary data sourced from administering questionnaires to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in South East Nigeria was collated. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis and one sampled t-test tool were utilized in analyzing the data. The study revealed that accountability and effective resource management has a positive impact on the prosperity of a nation. The study also posited that a transition from poverty to national prosperity has higher likelihood of actualization when there are bedrocks or building blocks in place for sustainable economic growth through having good accountability and resource management. Therefore, the study recommends a consolidation of existing financial controls for improved accountability in the public sector in Nigeria and that accounting records should be prepared in line with the IPSAS.

Keywords: Accountability; corruption; national prosperity; poverty; resource management; transparency.
1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty Elimination is one of the fundamental Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. This SDG focuses both on people living in abject poverty, and also on the social policies that can impact on or stimulate poverty. Irrespective of the concerted efforts to eliminate poverty, 10 percent of the world’s population still live in poverty and can barely satisfy basic needs such as access to good food and water, sanitation, health and education [1]. A survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in the year 2019 estimated that 40.1 percent of the total populations of Nigeria (excluding the state of Borno) were poor. The alarming and pathetic rate of poverty in Nigeria is inextricably linked to the absence of accountability, government’s mismanagement of public resources and inadequate effort to serve the good of the people. Also, in recent times, the Corona Virus epidemic which rose to epic proportions in the year 2020 and caused movement restrictions, prohibition of social and public gatherings as well as shutting down of institutions and factories all led to an overall economic decline that have made eradication of poverty an even more exacting challenge. There was a collapse in economic activities due to local and regional lockdowns which eliminated or reduced sources of income and exacerbated poverty [2].

Nigeria is the leading oil producer in Africa and ranks among the first twenty largest oil producing countries in the world as of 2020, but unfortunately the average Nigerian is living in poverty and suffers hardships that are a result of an absence of an enabling environment to break out of poverty. The government does not provide adequate social amenities and the masses are forced to struggle for their economic wellbeing in the face of poor infrastructural facilities like bad roads, unstable power supply, unequipped hospitals, dilapidated schools, poor drainage systems that leads to flooding in human settlements, lack of clean portable water, etc. Poverty can more likely be surmounted to achieve prosperity when there are bedrocks or building blocks in place for sustainable economic growth. Good accountability and resource management from the government and even from business enterprises are very instrumental to achieving sustainable economic development. One of the major criteria for measuring sustainable development across the world is Economic stability. Most developed and even developing countries are conscious of their natural, manufactured, financial, intellectual or human resources and ensure their effective and efficient management and fiscal accountability. This is because accountability and resource management are control devices that build blocks towards making a country and its people prosperous. Interestingly, accountability is one of the essential norms of good governance [3].

The dual combination of accountability and effective resource management is important for confidence and trust in business and governance, and in effect sustains and strengthens the atmosphere for foreign direct investment and economic growth. Governments making efforts to strengthen the foundations for growth and development will be motivated by the knowledge that the result of increased foreign investment will provide better opportunities for improvement in public infrastructure and public services thus making a nation prosperous.

Though many policy makers and scholars have posited that fiscal accountability and resource management is essential in making the public sector more efficient and effective as well as improving performance [4], the relationship between accountability, resource management and national prosperity have not been extensively studied. In the light of above, the objective of this paper is to examine the ways in which accountability and resource management impacts on national prosperity.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Accountability

Accountability is an imperative duty to answer for the fulfillment of one’s assigned responsibilities. In the public sector, it is the requirement to provide explanations, answer enquiries, inform investigations, accept blame, and give account of public money and how it is utilized in accordance with predetermined standards. Olowu [4], describes accountability as answerability for one’s actions or behavior. He opines that accountability has some distinct components such as: a clear-cut definition of responsibility, reporting mechanisms, and a system of review, sanctions and reward.

Adegite [5] stipulates that accountability is an obligation to show that responsibilities have been
carried out in conformity with agreed standards and regulation and the officer in charge reports accurately on performance vis-a-vis the mandatory roles or plans. Adegite [5] also views accountability as a means of doing things or carrying out job functions in line with laid down process and further soliciting feedback. Accountability makes sure that government personnel entrusted with funds belonging to the public are duty-bound to report on the means or method in which such resources were given to them and the resultant achievements from the use of the resources. This train of thought goes to say that being assigned responsibilities and functions and carrying them out is not enough in itself, the people for whom those responsibilities and functions are carried out should be given feedback and reports on how those responsibilities and functions were carried out.

Okoh and Ohwoyibo (2009) states that accountability displays the necessity for government and its parastatals to render effective service to the public in line with the constitution of the land. These scholars are referring to accountability in the public sector where the constitution is the highest regarded standard of evaluation in the discharge of duties by government officials and in governance as a whole.

Kaufman [6] stated that placing emphasis on fiscal accountability by the citizens of a country is just an aspect of encouraging transparency and openness in government and eliminating corruption. In his opinion, accountability has an inversely proportional relationship with corruption.

Accountability goes beyond the duties and roles of government workers in ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) but also includes the willingness on the part of those workers to submit to inspection appropriate to the office they are holding. The public, whom these workers are in service to, should have access to information upon which the performance of these workers can be evaluated and in cases where their performance falls short of expectations, accountability also demands that the constraints and challenges that led to the poor performance be communicated to the people who they are answerable to.

2.2 Concept of Resource Management

There are various perspectives from which resource management can be viewed because, "resource" as a word could mean multiple things, for instance; natural resources, manufactured resources, financial resources, human resources, production resources, information technology resources etc. For the purpose of this paper, resource management is described as the effective, economical and efficient allocation and deployment of an organization's resources where and when required. Allocating resources to sectors of the public is one of government's most important functions but even more important, is ensuring that such resources are managed with prudence and efficiently utilized for the purpose of achieving good results. If resources are not managed effectively, it becomes a great difficulty and a near impossibility to achieve results.

The fundamental principles of effective resource management and utilization have often been neglected in Nigeria. Nigeria's woes are therefore consequences of bad governance, abuse of power, elevation of bribery and corruption, misappropriation and poor management of resources. Misappropriation induces lack of accountability; the fiscal responsibility act which provides guide against mismanagement of resources and also sees to better accountability and transparency in fiscal operations are sometimes disregarded and dismissed as bureaucratic legislations. A proper blend of human and material resources is a key element of resource management that ensures that designed programmes are both purpose-oriented and result-oriented. Ani [7] asserts that the epic proportions of waste of public funds through embezzlement, fraud, mismanagement and other corruption related practices have led to the depressing state of our economy and social service in Nigeria. Bello [8] asserted that huge amounts of funds are lost through one financial misappropriation or the other in Nigeria, which drastically drains the country resources.

2.3 Concept of National Prosperity

The concept of national prosperity has baffled many researchers of the matter. Simple reductionism shows that prosperity is mainly a matter of two factors: high intelligence and low clannishness. National prosperity is an extensive concept that encompasses the entirety of societal improvement. National prosperity is betterment in material and financial well-being of all citizens, not just the wealthy and powerful, but everyone in the society. It requires that poverty and inequality of access to the basic needs of life
be eliminated or reduced to the barest minimum. A nation’s prosperity largely depends on how fair the redistribution of wealth is across the value chain of an economy comprising consumers, employees, shareholders, government and other important stakeholders.

As a nation prospers, there tends to be fairer distribution of wealth, meaning that a large percentage of the population has a comfortable lifestyle, being able to afford the essential things in life such as food, clothing, housing, education, transportation and healthcare. There tends to be equal opportunity for people to aspire and be super rich in such a country by top-notch value-addition and providing solution to critical economic problems. The intent is not to make the wealthy poor, but to have a strong control system that checks unfair and super normal profits by one part of the value chain at the detriment of the other.

The prosperity of a nation is built when government at all levels govern and make policies in a way that stimulates trust, respects the freedom of its citizens and put the common good of the people at the core of its decisions; one feature of prosperous nations is that the government rules with the agreement of its citizens. Further, economic policies are implemented to sustain a thriving environment for meaningful employment, personal development and economic growth. Finally, the tenets of personal responsibility and freedom are in place. Citizens have the freedom to order their lives and take responsibility for the families and communities they belong to. Good health care facilities is accessible and affordable to all, people take care of their mental well-being and consciously desist from making decisions that endanger others. True prosperity means all in the society, regardless of the darkness of the days, has the opportunity and responsibility to fulfill their unique potential and play their part in strengthening their communities and nations. Prosperous nations are built on trust and respect [9].

The Legatum Institute’s (2020) Prosperity Index measures prosperity in 167 countries across the world, which constitutes 99.4% of the world’s population altogether. Different country-level indicators merged into policy-focused elements were used to holistically and comprehensively measure the present prosperity state, and how it has changed around the world since the year 2010.

As seen in Fig. 2.1, global prosperity had risen continuously. Factors that contributed to the increase include improvement in people’s lived experience and more open economies. Also contributing to the increase in global prosperity is an improvement in social capital but governance and the stagnation of personal freedom have hampered the further progress of global prosperity.

In 2020, Nigeria ranks 144th in the overall Prosperity Index rankings. Since 2010, Nigeria has moved down the rankings table by 3 places (141st to 144th). Different pillars were used to measure prosperity ranging from security, personal freedom, governance, social capital, investment environment, enterprise conditions, market access and infrastructure, economic quality, living conditions, health, education and natural environment. Nigeria ranking based on the different indicators for measuring prosperity are as follows Table 2.1.
Table 2.1. Ranking of Nigeria Prosperity based on different Pillars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillars</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety &amp; Security</td>
<td>151st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Freedom</td>
<td>104th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>129th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>93rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Environment</td>
<td>106th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Conditions</td>
<td>117th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Access &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>140th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Quality</td>
<td>156th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Conditions</td>
<td>137th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>163rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>135th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Environment</td>
<td>130th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>144th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Legatum Prosperity Index™ 2020

Nigeria performs most powerfully in Social Capital which was proxied by Personal and Family Relationships, Interpersonal Trust, Institutional Trust, Civic and Social Participation, and Social Networks but unfortunately has its weakest ranking in Health.

2.4 Accountability, Resource Management and National Prosperity

The management of resources (financial, material and otherwise) for overall societal development is one of the responsibilities of humans.

The relevance of accountability comes to fore when an agent is able to render accounts to the desired expectations of his principal by proving that he has diligently achieved the agreed objectives and exercised the power bestowed, by effectively and efficiently utilizing supplied resources [10]. In public sphere, fiscal accountability demands that governments are transparent with details of the purpose and use of public resources. Where public officials exercise fiscal accountability, the citizens are empowered to control, monitor and evaluate the utilization of public resources to ensure that wastes and misappropriation are eliminated or reduced to the barest possible minimum. Transparency is an essential prerequisite for accountability. In governmental organizations, piecemeal information is sometimes provided in an attempt to conceal fraudulent activities. Further, most of the transactions are not recorded in the books as they are incurred; they are delayed intentionally to hide some facts. Government organizations should make the people and the relevant investigative authorities privy to information about the entire chain of decisions, with supplementary set of information where necessary to aid understanding. Accounting records in the public sector should be prepared in line with IPSAS.

A system characterized by accountability and effective and efficient management of resources with transparency is a thriving environment for prosperity. In the case of Nigeria, despite an abundance of resources, her citizens suffer from poverty, hunger, unemployment etc. Despite the large sums of financial resources realized and divided in accordance with the inter-governmental relations among the three tiers of government and the revenue resources shared among the six geo-political zones (the 36 states of the federation), Nigeria is still shackled by underdevelopment and rife with repulsive situations of many months of not paying workers their monthly salaries by some states and even by the federal government.

Some of these states claim to find it difficult to sustain governance and owe employees of the state between 4-8 months’ salary arrears. These appalling situations beg the question of where exactly the huge amounts of allocated revenue go to given the equally appalling absence of basic infrastructures and facilities that are supposed to be provided by these governments. A logical answer to this question would be that due to absence of fiscal accountability in the Nigerian public sector, these revenues have been mismanaged, misappropriated and embezzled. And for this reason, national prosperity has remained an elusive aspiration.
2.5 Enabling Conditions and Necessary Measures for Accountability and Resource Management

2.5.1 Legislators to espouse the value of accountability

The law makers in Nigeria have the fundamental responsibility to ensure that the executive gives account to the people for the management, control and use of public resources. But contrary to the ideal, the legislators are part of the collapse of the system in Nigeria. However, for accountability to be achieved in Nigeria, legislators at all level of government must ensure that appropriate laws and over-sight functions are properly performed by them [11]. The legislature is an essential machinery in checking the executive arm which carries out the major financial responsibilities of the government. It can convey public concerns and opinions and audit the activity of the government and other institutions. Enhanced capacity and understanding of accountability and resource management, willingness to satisfy the will of the people and objective criticality are requisites for the legislature to be able to perform this role.

2.5.2 Change in belief and value system

Failed value system is one of the maladies that ail Nigeria. The result of this failed value system is high level of corruption and lack of accountability by public officers [12]. Nepotism, bribery, irrational ethnic and religious sentiments, greed and favoritism need to be eliminated from our value system in Nigeria for better outcomes in public accountability. Also, the populace should change the mindset that embezzlement of funds is an inherent part of the political process which makes them tolerate corrupt leaders.

2.5.3 Clearly defined institutional roles

Roles and standards should be defined in clear terms and understood by all so that the public can use it as a yardstick to evaluate and monitor government action and performance. The government will serve the common good of the people better if roles and functions of every public office are clearly defined in such a way that the public, the arms of government and bodies such as independent auditors can monitor and evaluate them and also probe those institutions that fail in their duties.

2.5.4 Investigative reporting/media attention

An active investigative media and journalism is a key tool for enhanced accountability and this keeps the leadership on their toes. A nation where civil societies, news media, religious, academic, professional and social organizations and even individuals on social media actively engage the government and question their motives and actions promotes public accountability. However, these organizations must be independent of the government and open about sources of funding and the interests they represent in order to be effective and question the activities of the government without fear or favour. The government on their part must also establish and protect the rights of these individuals, bodies and civil societies and allow them to operate in freedom and without harassment.

2.5.6 Protection of Whistleblowers

Whistleblowing” should be encouraged in public establishment whereby any government worker who comes across mismanagement or foul play in the conduct of government business may “blow the whistle” by taking the case to the public arena. The prospect that wrong, unethical or corrupt practices may be exposed can deter officials from venturing into such. Further, all those proven to engage in corrupt practices should be promptly punished in accordance to the law irrespective of their wealth or status.

2.5.7 Encouragement of due process

The culture of discipline in budget preparation and implementation should be imbibed in our system. Money should not be spent on items not budgeted for. There should be strict adherence to the guiding principles of budgetary processes especially in the aspect of implementation; violators of such rules should be met with commensurate punishment in order to serve as deterrence to others. There should be regular auditing of government accounts for evaluation of the budget implementation to determine whether objectives of the budget were achieved. Auditors should also be given the freedom and authorization to do their job appropriately.

2.5.8 Strengthening of anti-graft bodies

All anti-graft bodies such as the EFCC, ICPC and CCB should be further strengthened by way of being adequately staffed, equipped and funded.
to make them more effective institutional mechanisms for fighting corruption [13]. Furthermore, other law enforcement agencies particularly the police should be empowered with not only the authority and jurisdiction, but also with adequate funding and incorruptible personnel to enhance their capacity to detect, investigate, prosecute and prevent corruption. The judicial system should also be functional, reliable, fair and just in order to make the fight against corruption more effective.

2.5.9 Implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)

Government organizations should be able to disclose financial information where necessary and this information should be free from falsehood and ambiguity. Accounting records in the public sector should be prepared in line with the IPSAS [14]. The operations of government organizations should be subject to at least the same level of disclosure as private companies. Government organizations should exhibit transparency in their strategies and expenditures especially when public interest demands it. Critically, authorities should also publish contracts and make them readily available online. Adegite [5] says that to draw foreign direct investments to Nigeria, the financial reporting processes must be aligned with international standards.

2.6 New Public Management (NPM) Theory

This study is anchored on New Public Management (NPM) theory. The term “New Public Management” was first conceived by Christopher Hood in 1991. New Public Management or NPM is a theory that somewhat revolutionized public administration with an aim to improve public sector performance. NPM seeks to inculcate the principles of accountability, flexibility, transparency, minimum government, de-bureaucratization, decentralization, customer satisfaction, employee empowerment, the market orientation of public services, privatization and resource management into administration. NPM is defined as a process in which the liberal market principles of efficiency and economy are implemented in public sector management for making public sectors more effective [15]. The new public management theory lays emphasis on good governance, democratization and technological innovation. New public management theory is an unrelenting movement in the direction of decentralization of management authority, greater transparency in resource allocation and performance management through service quality [16].

NPM theory introduced varying concepts for performance and principles required to achieve it [17]. Fundamentally, Hood identified the principles as accountability and efficiency; improving the resources use through labour discipline; reduction of expenditure of the public sector; competition in the public sector through decentralization; flexibility in decision making and placing emphasis on result achievement and not procedure.

Jones and Thompson [18] captures new public management as the five Rs, which are: realignment by introducing activity based costing (ABC) and responsibility budgeting; restructuring to focus on core competences; re-engineering of work process; radical organization reinvention; and rethinking by reconceptualizing public sector bureaucracies or learning organizations. The NPM theory was an indirect effort to improve public sector service delivery to the populace and improve the masses confidence in the government after a long period of disillusionment. It is an avenue through which democratic administration or governance will transform or sharpen into better governance that will lead to public policies that are responsive to the needs of large sections of citizenry [3].

This theory is relevant to this study because “New Public Management theory” argues on a premise that leaders should have freedom and flexibility in the use of resources but also be held accountable for results.

3. METHODOLOGY

The design used in this study is the descriptive survey design. It was established to validate the responses of the target respondents as it concerns the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity. The study population used in this research comprises of workers of Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) in South Eastern Nigeria (Abia, Anamabra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State). A purposive sampling method was adopted to select twenty MDAs in Anamabra State. A total of two hundred and twenty workers in finance and administrative offices of the 20 selected MDAs
were consequently selected for the study. Data for the study were obtained from primary sources. The questionnaire survey was designed where respondents were asked to assess the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity using five point scale categorized as: (5) Strong Agreed (SA), (4) Agreed (A), (3) Undecided (UD), (2) Disagreed (D), (1) Strongly Disagreed (SD).

The likert five point scale was used to transform the data to scale measurement and the hypotheses was statistically tested using one sample t-test tool operated with SPSS Version 25.0 at 5% significance level. If the relationship between variables is significant (p < 0.05) the decision is to reject the null hypothesis otherwise accept. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were also used to analyze the data.

3.1 Reliability of the Instrument

The scores of the respondents were subjected to statistical analysis to determine the internal consistency of the items, this was done using Cronbach Alpha. The choice of Cronbach Alpha was in line with Howith and Cranner [17] who recommended Cronbach Alpha as a statistical tool for determining internal consistency of a research instrument. Also, Pallant [19] stressed that when a psychometric scale is used, the internal consistency could be checked using Cronbach alpha.

Table 3.1 shows the reliability result for the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity. The Cronbach’s alpha result reveals a value of .888 which is above the decision threshold of .70. Hence, the instrument is considered reliable.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Analysis of Questionnaire Distribution

Table 4.1 showed the analysis of the distributed questionnaire. The table showed that out of 220 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 193 which represents 87.73% was filled properly and returned. In conclusion, 87.73% of the entire questionnaires distributed were analyzed.

4.2 Data Presentation

4.2.1 Data presentation on accountability, resource management and national prosperity

Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics of questions concerning the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity. The summary statistics reveals a grand mean value of 4.26 which is above the cut-off threshold of 3.0. This entails that majority of the respondents agrees with the questions and thus affirms that accountability and resource management has a significant effect on national prosperity.

Test of hypothesis

H0: Accountability and Resource Management has no significant effect on National Prosperity.

Table 3.1. Reliability Statistics for the effect of accountability and resource management on national prosperity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS Ver. 25.

Table 4.1. Questionnaire distribution analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Administered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reached</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>87.73 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reached</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.27 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2020
Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics of accountability, resource management and national prosperity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of accountability in Nigeria public sector contributes to high poverty rate</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability is one of the essential norms of good governance</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal accountability is essential in making the public sector more efficient and effective as well as improving performance</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability ensures that government personnel's entrusted with public funds have a duty to report on the way in which such resources were given to them and the results achieved from the use of the resources</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability goes beyond the duties and roles of government workers in MDAs but also includes the willingness to submit to scrutiny appropriate to the office he or she is holding.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective resource management is important for business confidence and trust</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective resource management strengthens the climate for foreign direct investment and economic growth</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When resources are not well managed, achieving good result becomes difficult if not impossible.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colossal waste of public funds through mismanagement fraud, embezzlement and other white-collar crimes have led to the poor state of Nigeria economy and social service</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperity happens in an environment or a system that embrace accountability and manages its available resources effectively and efficiently with openness and transparency.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) = 193

Source: Field survey, 2021
Table 4.3. Regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.834*</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.694</td>
<td>.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Predictors: (Constant), Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>68.579</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68.579</td>
<td>435.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>30.074</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98.653</td>
<td>192</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Dependent Variable: Question 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Predictors: (Constant), Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.717</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>-3.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Dependent Variable: Question 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.4a-b: One-Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>42.5492</td>
<td>5.71447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Value = 0.05</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>103.441</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>42.54922</td>
<td>41.7379</td>
<td>43.3605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS Ver. 25.

Table 4.3 shows the regression analysis result of the hypothesis. The $R^2$ of 0.695 indicates that only 69.5 percent of the total variation in national prosperity is explained by variation in accountability and resource management. The test statistic is the F-value of 435.539. Also, the p-value for 435.539 is 0.000, so the test statistic is significant at that level, which means that the null hypothesis that accountability and resource management has no significant effect on national prosperity is rejected. The coefficient (0.117) is positive and statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance. This implies that national prosperity can significantly be affected by accountability and resource management.

Table 4.4a-b shows the test result for the hypothesis. The one sample t-test revealed a mean difference of 42.54922 on 192 degree of freedom (N-1). The analysis also reveals a t-statistics of 103.441 and a p-value less than 0.05 (0.000). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that accountability and resource management has a significant effect towards national prosperity. This finding is in line with Oluwafemi and Tolu [15] that effective management and financial accountability should be encouraged in public service to enable a country achieve a reasonable level of development. This finding is also in consonance with the submission of Onuorah and Appah [11] that one of the reasons for low level of accountability in Nigeria is the lack of accessibility, comprehensiveness, relevance, quality, reliability and timely disclosure of economic, social and political information about
government activities to the citizens for the assessment of the performance of public officers mostly the political office holders. Further, the result supports the findings of Aramide and Bashir [20] who opined that sound financial control is essential for ensuring financial accountability. Adebayo & Ilesanmi [21] also asserted that there is a need for regular review of the financial control system in order to boost the effectiveness of the public sector [22].

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Accountability is a hallmark for good governance. It is imperative for political office holders, citizens and all stakeholders in Nigeria to appreciate the importance and value of accountability and effective resource management as building blocks towards the nation’s prosperity. Accountability advocates openness, transparency, discipline and integrity all of which are values that counteract corrupt practices and eradicate waste of resources thereby resulting in better governance.

Based on this, the following recommendations are put forth: Nigeria leaders should begin to see leadership as positions of service and stewardship to the people as opposed to an avenue to lord over the citizenry. Budgets at all levels of government must reflect the needs of the people and its implementation must be subject to accountability. Prudence and discipline should guide our budget preparation and implementation. Extra budgetary expenditures should be eliminated from governance except in cases of national emergencies. The guiding principles and standards of the budget should be strictly adhered to with no tolerance for violation. There should be periodic auditing of government accounts to determine adherence to standards and to evaluate the performance of budget implementation. Auditors should be given the jurisdiction and freedom to audit government accounts when required. Lastly, accounting records in the public sector should be prepared in line with the IPSAS.

5.1 Limitation of the Study

The study covered only South East Nigeria and may not be a representative of Nigeria as a whole. Further studies should examine accountability and resource management in other regions of Nigeria and also in other developing countries.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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11. Onuorah AC, Appah E. Accountability and public sector financial management in


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