

# Principals' Financial Management Skills and Quality of Public Secondary Education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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**Abstract-** *The idea behind this study was to assess principals' financial management skills and the quality of public secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. In carrying out this research study, three objectives, research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and the survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 243 principal and vice-principals and 353 account officers and account Clerks from eighty-one (81) public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State which amounted to 596 respondents. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in selecting a sample of 413 respondents in the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's developed titled Principals' Financial Management Skills (PFMSQ), and the second instrument is a 20 item four point modified Likert scale questionnaire titled Quality of Secondary Education Questionnaire (QSEQ) which was face and construct and validated experts in the field of Education Management and Test/Measurement, and the reliability was established with Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with a coefficient which ranged from .73 to .88 and the findings revealed that; there is a significant influence of financial planning skills budgeting skills, accounting skills and auditing skills by principals have a significant influence on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership. It was recommended among others that school principals should be trained in financial management so that they can be effective in their financial management. Also, newly appointed principals should be given an orientation on budgeting, and procurement to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.*

**Indexed Terms-** *Principals', Financial, Management Skills and Quality*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human need and a key factor in development. Thus, investment in education is directly related to individuals' well-being and it will also raise their human capital and capacity to acquire means for the satisfaction of other basic needs. Education is seen as a means of reducing inequality among people and a mechanism for making other investments more productive avenues for social and political development. The quality of education in Nigeria according to the National Policy on Education (2004) is based on the need for each individual to be equipped with the right norm and values in society. This underscores the need for quality education. Poor quality education could be a result of poor investment in education.

To be part of the global world, every nation is expected to transform itself to a height to develop its economy and education to compete effectively with other nations. As the world becomes more connected, the global economy gets more competitive, and the challenges to be addressed are more complex. Education has been the most powerful tool in providing solutions to various challenges (Semela, 2015). An effective and efficient quality educational system is vital for sustainable economic development in developing countries like Nigeria. Such a system, among others, improves the education and training of future employees, harnesses future leaders, fosters an enabling learning environment, and enriches the academic and intellectual landscape.

However, the process of establishing an effective quality educational system is driven by several forces like finance, structures, school equipment, qualified teachers etc. that demand a balanced approach. For instance, there is a need to strike a balance between the provision of equal access to education and the availability of finance needed to manage the mass expansion of education, and between the pressure for increased institutional autonomy and growing public accountability. If a country fails to strike the right balance among the competing factors, then it ends up compromising the quality of education. The focus on education in developing nations like Nigeria can be productive if education is delivered by emphasizing quality over quantity.

Quality education provides students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and creativity needed to solve problems locally and globally. It also contributes to the sustainable and democratic development of societies. Thus, the aspirations for quality education must go beyond narrow learning outcomes. Education has the potential to play a major role in the future realization of a 'vision of sustainability that links economic well-being with respect for cultural diversity, the Earth to its resources'. The World Education Forum in Dakar (2000) did not only emphasize the need to achieve Education for All but did also notice the need to improve the quality of education. The Forum made the following recommendation: "Improve all aspects of the quality of education to achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes for all-especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills". (World Education Forum, 2000:21).

Many educators have tried to define the term quality and several different definitions can be found in the literature. For this study, the most classical definition is that of Coombs (2005) in his book "The World Crises in Education: "qualitative dimensions mean much more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards. Quality also pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned and to how well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances. It also refers to significant changes in the educational system

itself, like its inputs (students, teachers, facilities, equipment, and supplies); its objectives, curriculum and educational technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment. At the broadest level, education quality can be viewed as a set of elements that constitute the input, process and output of the educational system, and provide services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations.

The resources available to educational institutions impact significantly the quality of their services. Thus, many countries including Nigeria have invested heavily in the education sector. Nonetheless, effective utilization of financial resources also influences the ability to deliver and sustain quality educational services. As a result, many countries have decentralized management of financial resources to schools in attempts to improve their management (Crouch and Winkler, 2018). This implies that the primary responsibility for the management of financial resources of secondary schools remains that of the school principals. They prepare budgets, manage facilities, procure, expend and manage stores. Despite the financial management challenges they face, various recommendations for training are well-documented. Despite this, many principals still lack the skills required to effectively manage funds.

Financial management skills remain a challenge in many schools because most managers lack proper training. According to Mestry (2014), there are many principals and school governing board members who lack the necessary financial knowledge and skills and are placed under tremendous pressure because they are unable to work out practical solutions to financial problems. In many instances, it has been reported that principals and school governing board members have been subjected to forensic audits due to the mismanagement of funds through misappropriation, fraud, pilfering of cash, theft and improper control of school funds. Principals play major roles in the management of all school financial activities which involve the collection and disbursement of funds. Financial Management skills are systems which provide a framework for which the resources of an organization are directed towards the attainment of goals of an organization, United Kingdom (2014).

Effective financial management practices are essential in enhancing transparency, efficiency, accuracy and accountability which enables an organization to achieve its objectives.

To ascertain the quality of education, there is a need for effective school financial management. This is to say that the particular way in which school finance is utilized by school heads largely determines who will be educated and what type of education is given to such a person. The way finances are managed determines the availability of teaching-learning resources, infrastructures, curriculum dispensation, teachers' development and capacity building, students learning satisfaction, qualified staff and even power supply. The principal is responsible for planning, budgeting, accounting, auditing, and even allocation functions of the school finances. Finance if well used, brings good results and vice versa. Management of school finances is one of the core responsibilities of the school principal, and so school principals must have good financial management skills because school finances have to be managed properly for the school to benefit and for good quality education achieved

Principals must have good planning and financial control skills if funds must be managed to deliver good education. Control of finance has to do with all the measures that relate to the planning of financial functions. Davies (2009) stated that financial control includes drawing up criteria to ensure that the school's resources are mobilized effectively, monitoring and evaluating the school's financial progress and initiating corrective action if needed. When finances are well planned, controlled and appropriately utilized, teaching-learning resources and all other requirements for quality education will be made available when due.

Proposing and monitoring a school's budget is a continuous process that goes on throughout the year and it entails keeping a check on the difference between the planned financial status at any given time and the actual financial status at that time. It involves drawing up a projection for the revenue expenditure and identifying positive and negative variances, as well as checking if resources are mobilized effectively. The principal may not be a good financial manager if he/she lacks budgeting skills. When budgets are drawn accurately and cover the necessary

areas they are supposed to cover like staff development and instructional materials, quality education will be assured.

Accountability has become a collective responsibility which should include all stakeholders and the school principal, this means that they must responsibly deal with funds and that they are accountable to the parents, the learners, the community and the Ministry of Education. According to Onoh (2011) fundamental accounting skills are those competencies in basic accounting required by a person to function competently, confidently, and successfully in the process of carrying out one's function of recording daily business transactions. They include skills in book-keeping, purchasing and supply, bargaining, determining labour costs, simple budgeting, keeping accurate receipts, sales records skills in keeping reliable records, work-in-progress records, credit purchases, invoices, cheque payments and goods inventory. Others are skills in good credit facility practices, operating cash payment receipts, cash sales, and prudent financial and working capital management. The knowledge of fundamental accounting skills by principals will promote their good financial management, which is aimed at ensuring that there is adequate cash on hand for the infrastructural development of the school and to meet the necessary current and capital expenditures of the school in such a way that students can learn in a conducive environment and improve quality of education.

Amirizei, Ololubeii and Ajuru's (2018) study investigated fund management strategies for the effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted descriptive survey research, which sampled the opinion of principals of secondary schools in Rivers State on the role of fund management strategies, accountability, factors that hinder fund management strategies and factors that strengthen the effective administration of secondary schools. The research was carried out in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas of Rivers State. All principals in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas in Rivers State constituted the population of the study. The sample of this study comprised all the principals (36) of senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor and Port Harcourt

city local government areas of Rivers state. Purposive sampling was used because they are principals that would give answers to the questions raised based on their positions as principals in the chosen local government areas. The instrument consisted of 26 items questionnaire titled Fund Management Strategies for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (FMSEAPSSQ). The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument and a reliability estimate of .773 was obtained for the 26 items in section B of the questionnaire. Mean scores, standard deviation and percentages were used to answer the research questions while chi-square analysis was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. The study found that there are significant relationships between principals' fund management strategies, accountability, factors that hinder, and factors that strengthen an effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Ackom-Wilson (2015) study examined the financial management practices of Senior High Schools (SHS) in Techiman municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. A convenient sampling technique was used to select the schools. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data for the study. Two respondents from each of the three senior high schools were selected to obtain relevant information for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the responses obtained from the respondents. The findings of the study revealed that the procurement system of the schools is regulated by the procurement board which is mandated to ensure that the procurement of goods and services within the schools follows the laid down procedure. The study further found that the budgets of the schools represent the main financial planning framework around which incomes and expenditures are managed. The findings however revealed the major challenges confronting the effective financial management of the schools including late disbursement of funds by the central government and lack of financial management skills by headmasters to effectively manage the school's finances. The study recommends among others that,

school heads should be equipped with basic financial skills to enhance their capacity to effectively manage the finances of the schools they manage.

Matula, Mulwa and Kyalo (2018) conducted a study carried out in Kitui County on the factors influencing the effectiveness of financial management in public secondary schools. The study investigated three key characteristics of secondary school principals which influenced their financial management. Specifically, the study focused on; the influence of principals' training on the effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools, the influence of principals' experience on the effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools and the influence of principals' education level on the effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools in Kitui central District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches. It involved a census of the principals of the 25 public day secondary schools in Kitui central district Kitui County. Questionnaires were used as the main research instruments. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The mean, median, mode and percentages were used to analyze the data to meet the objectives of the study. Frequency tables were used to present the data followed by data interpretation and findings. Correlations and Analysis of variance were used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The findings show that the principals' training influences financial management to a very large extent and there is a very strong relationship between financial management training and the effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools; the experience of a principal is very necessary for the financial effectiveness of management and to a large extent the principals' education level influences effectiveness of financial management the influence of Principals' financial management on school physical facilities. The study recommended that School principals should be trained in financial management so that they can be effective in their financial management. This can be done by holding regular capacity-building workshops and seminars which will keep them updated on any emerging issues. Teachers' service commission should fix certain experience requirements for promoting teachers to be principals. Before one is appointed to be a principal, they should

have served as Head of the Department for at least two years and then as a Deputy Principal for at least one year.

A budget is a financial plan and a list of all expenses and revenues. It is a plan for saving, borrowing and spending. Most studies, Otley and Pollanen (2010) and Brownell (2011) agree that it is important for school principals to have budgeting knowledge and skills to ensure performance evaluation and effective financial management of their schools. According to Aranya (2010), to gain acceptance of budget goals and increase organizational effectiveness, having good skills in budget participation and preparation is instrumental in effective organizational strategy and job performance.

Ihuoma (2010) researched budgeting for effective control in organizations. The population was the management staff of the organization. Twenty-one (21) research questions and two (2) hypotheses were used. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to the management staff. The study was a survey design. Frequency and percentage were used to answer the research questions. The result of the findings showed that budgeting for effective control is a system that uses budget as a means of planning and controlling all aspects of production services. It is a tool for financial control. The result further showed that a budget is a systematic tool for establishing standards of performance, providing motivation, guiding results and helping management towards set objectives.

Ekwelem (2010) worked on budget and budgetary control in academic libraries: The case study of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study focused on some of the faults in the budget and budgetary control process as employed in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Library system. The descriptive survey design was used. A questionnaire was used to collect information. This was administered to sixty (60) professional staff of the libraries and some officers of the bursary department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who were involved in budgetary control. The respondents were fifty-eight (58). The Librarian in charge of each of the libraries and heads of divisions who controlled fund allocation in one way or the other were interviewed. The following findings were made:

Budgeting is very essential in setting standards and in making comparisons for actual accomplishment as against set objectives. Only very few library staff participate in policy formulation. It was revealed from the study that the organizational structures of the Libraries were not ideal for an effective budgetary control system.

Ogbonnaya (2001) carried out research work on budget-making practices of secondary school principals in the Enugu Education Zone. The design was a descriptive survey. Four (4) research questions and one (1) hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. A questionnaire was developed and administered to eighty-one (81) principals and one hundred and two (102) bursars. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions and z-test statistics were used to test the hypothesis. The result of the study showed that a budget controls the financial behaviour of educational administrators. It prevents waste and reckless spending of funds. It reported also that secondary school principals do not request their heads of department to provide information on items of their needs which shows that these principals do not encourage the participation of the other staff in budget preparations. The findings further revealed that budgets are often prepared hurriedly such that important issues are lost sight.

Financial management is the process in which principals assume that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently, in the accomplishment of the organization's objectives (Webster, 2010). Webster also suggests that financial controls are a system of related variables and a symbolic model of the firm; since it is a representation of the school that enables the school to predict, explain and interpret the outcome of the quality of education.

In a study conducted by Abdullah (2009), the overall objective of the study was to establish the accounting skills being used by those charged with the management of school resources. To achieve the above objective a census was conducted and data was collected by the use of structured questionnaires that were administered to respondents who were able and willing to fill them on their own. Factor analysis was used in data analysis. The significance of the research was to strengthen and streamline financial

management skills in educational institutions in Kenya. In particular; to provide heads of Educational institutions with a guide that will assist them in establishing systems of internal accounting and administrative controls that comply with government standards for financial management. The study established that most public secondary schools do not have a strategic plan to guide them towards the achievement of both long-term and short-term objectives. Also evident despite the directive of the government abolishing charging fees and other levies, public secondary schools continue charging fees to students. The heads of public secondary schools had received training in financial management; however, all head teachers who participated in the study were of the view that the training was not adequate. Accounting skills identified for use in public secondary schools will assist school managers in identifying areas of financial concern and weakness. These financial red flags, if identified and acted upon promptly, can enable a school to avert possible financial disaster. The study recommended that the government should be organizing more training sessions in financial management for the head teachers and makes it compulsory for teachers in training colleges to do courses in the financial accounting of schools. Also, further research should be carried out to explore the role of government, trade associations, professional associations, independent consultants or NGOs that focus on business development in assisting public secondary schools to become more self-aware, assessment oriented and fiscally viable.

Kwarteng (2013) conducted a study on assessing the quality of senior high school accounting education in Ghana to enable the stakeholders to evaluate the investments they have made to guide future decisions and actions. The study was a descriptive survey that drew from both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. This involved the use of a questionnaire, observation, vignette and documentary analysis. Only 159 accounting teachers and 2242 accounting students in public senior high schools offering accounting education in Ghana were involved in the study. These participants were drawn from Brong Ahafo, Northern, and Western Regions which were randomly selected from each of the three zones as in Southern (Central, Greater Accra, Volta and Western Regions), Middle (Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Eastern Regions) and

Northern (Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions). Descriptive and inferential statistics, content analysis, narratives and themes were used to analyse the resulting data. The study found among other things that the quality of senior high school accounting education was poor. It was accordingly recommended that accounting teachers inspire enthusiasm in the delivery of cost accounting lessons. On their part, accounting students should disabuse their minds and erase the erroneous mentality that cost accounting is not interesting. School authorities should acknowledge and make provisions for continuous professional development to capacitate accounting teachers to holistically implement the entire curriculum to avoid selective implementation. They should as well strengthen instructional monitoring and supervision should be encouraged and strengthened. Other research should focus attention on extensive studies on the teaching and learning resources for accounting lesson delivery.

Uyai and Effiong (2016) study investigated the relationship between teacher level of accounting skills on the quality of the school in senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. Four specific objectives, four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 5663 Senior Secondary two (SS 11) Financial Accounting Students from 233 public secondary schools in the three Senatorial Districts of Akwa Ibom State. The study had a sample of 566 respondents drawn from the population using a Multi-stage sampling Technique. The numbers that constituted the sample size were 286, 190 and 90 drawn from Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Senatorial Districts respectively. A structured questionnaire tagged “Teacher Quality and Student Achievement in Financial Accounting Questionnaire (TQASFAQ) was used for data collection. A trial test was conducted and analysed using Cronbach’s Alpha reliability technique to determine the reliability level of the instrument, which stood at  $r = 0.66$ . Data generated were analyzed using Pearson Products Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses at .05 alpha level. The results of the analyses rejected all the null hypotheses, implying a significant relationship between teacher application of accounting skills and the quality of school management. Based on the

findings, it is concluded that teacher quality relates directly to students' achievement in Financial Accounting. It is recommended among others that the relevant educational agencies in Akwa Ibom State-Ministry of Education (MOE) and The State Secondary Education Board (SSEB) should organize regular seminars and workshops aimed at improving teacher quality, for improved students' performance in Financial Accounting.

In another study on teacher and administrator views on school principals' accounting skills. The case study model, a qualitative research method, was adopted in the study using the holistic single-case design. The working group was composed of a total of 56 individuals, 42 teachers and 14 administrators, 11 principals and 3 assistant principals), employed in primary schools centred in the province of Bolu during the 2012-2013 academic year. They were identified via convenience sampling among volunteers. The semi-structured interview form composed of open-ended questions was used as a data collection tool. Content analysis method and digitizing qualitative data were used in data analysis. Research results show that teachers and administrators ascribe the same meaning to the concept of accountability and they believe everybody employed at schools should be held accountable. They also believe that school principals should not only be accountable to their superiors but that the first and foremost rationale for accountability comes from the requirement of principals to undertake their responsibilities properly and in line with the law. They believe that accountability develops a positive climate in schools and that school principals in the Turkish education system don't fully possess the skills of accountability. Based on the research results, it can be suggested that administrator assignments should be based on administrator characteristics and that accounting skills should be prioritized as an important criterion to ensure the employment of administrators who act with accountability in the education system.

Furthermore, Bua and Adzongo (2014) investigated the impact of financial management on secondary school administration in Zone A Senatorial District of Benue State-Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The literature was reviewed under conceptual frameworks which identified the gap to be filled by the study. It also

provides a roadmap as to the type of design to be used. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1229 teachers from 90 secondary schools. 292 teachers were used for the study. A 10-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire constructed by the researcher titled impact of financial management on secondary school administration questionnaire (IFMSSAQ) was used for the collection of data for the study. A pilot test on the instrument was conducted before being taken to the field. Data obtained from the field study were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. It was found that prompt payment of staff salaries and allowances significantly impacts the management of secondary schools. More so that school fees and other revenue generated significantly impact the provision of instructional materials in secondary schools in Zone A Senatorial District of Benue State. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate principals' finance management skills and quality of public education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

- Statement of the problem

The issue of quality education in the educational system in Nigeria has been a major concern to all and sundry. This is because quality enhances management and promotes development. Observation and personal interaction with most secondary school teachers revealed that quality has been poorly practiced in public secondary schools. Such issues as poor record keeping, lack of financial accountability and undue delay in the payment of salaries have been of great concern. These acts have strongly affected the academic setting to the extent that parents keep complaining about the poor state of our public secondary schools.

Allegations of mismanagement and embezzlement of school fees and PTA funds have been levied against school principals over the years. Oftentimes, the incompetence of some school Bursars and fraudulent practices have called for financial skills to be acquired by principals because improper use of school resources and embezzlement of school funds are

capable of leading to non-achievement of school goals. Many school principals fail in their statutory functions in the identification of sources of school finances. Methods employed in its collection the collection of fees and how the collected revenue is effectively applied to the school system are faulty. It has been observed that the conditions of secondary schools have worsened so much that teaching and learning received poor attention despite the efforts made by the government through financial contributions and other sources of funds available to schools. Most schools are in a dilapidated state because of poor management of school finances by principals, and this impacts the quality of education in secondary schools.

Despite the government's effort in enhancing principals' managerial skills by organizing numerous in-service pieces of training most principals still have a poor capacity for keeping financial records, routine budgeting and fund sourcing. It is based on these problems that the researcher wonders whether principals' financial management skills have any influence on the quality of public secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

- Purpose of the study

The overall purpose is to ascertain the influence of principals' financial management skills on quality of secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria and specifically to:

1. Assess the influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.
2. Examine the influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.
3. Determine the influence of accounting skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

- Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do planning skills by principals influence the quality of public secondary education

in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership?

2. To what extent do budgeting skills by principals influence the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership?
3. To what extent do accounting skills by principals influence the quality of public secondary education?

- Statement of hypotheses

The following null ( $H_0$ ) hypotheses guided the study.

1. There is no significant influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.
2. There is no significant influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.
3. Accounting skills by principals have no significant influence on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

- Methods and procedure

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Isangedighi, (2012) describes survey research design as one which determines the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the investigation. This design is appropriate because it focuses on people, the vital facts of people, their opinion, beliefs, attitude, motivation and behaviour. The population of the study comprised 596 Vice principals and account clerks from eighty-one (81) public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State (Cross River Secondary Education Board, Planning, Research and Statistics Department, 2018). Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed in selecting the sample for the study. The sample for this study consists of 413 principals and account supervisors including financial Clerks purposively drawn for the study based on the LGAs selected from the 41 (50%) of schools chosen for the study. This gives a total sample of 404 principals and account supervisors. The instruments for data collection were two questionnaires developed by the researcher. The first instrument is a 20-item four-point modified Likert scale questionnaire titled Principals'

Financial Management Skills (PFMSQ), and the second instrument is a 20-item four-point modified Likert scale questionnaire titled Quality of Secondary Education Questionnaire (QSEQ). The construct validity of the instrument was considered by making sure that the 30 items instruments are constructed to reflect the content of the variables under study. Two experts and professionals in the field of Education Management and Test/Masurement, the Faculty of Education will scrutinize the items to certify that the instruments have face validity and could be used for the study. The results of the validation determined what items to drop, modify or add to the questionnaire. Thereafter, it was established with the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient is 0.82 to .96 which depicts how reliable the instrument is for data collection. In order to analyse the data, the raw scores of all the items in each variable were summed together to show the result for each variable. Data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 20. The results are presented in frequencies, percentages and tables as well as inferential statistics as all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance (i.e. 95% confidence interval).

- Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

Independent Variable: Finance planning skills (High, Moderate and low)

Dependent Variable: Quality of public secondary education (adequate teaching and professional leadership).

Statistical Tool: One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

- Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

Independent Variable: Budgeting skills (High, Moderate and low)

Dependent Variable: Quality of public secondary education (adequate teaching and professional leadership).

Statistical Tool: One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

- Hypothesis three

Accounting skills by principals have no significant influence on the quality of secondary education

Independent Variable: Accounting skills (High, Moderate and low)

Dependent Variable: Quality of public secondary education (adequate teaching and professional leadership).

Statistical Tool: One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

## II. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section of the research study presents the general description of the research variables and the results of the data analyses in line with the three null hypotheses that were tested in the study. The results and discussions of findings are presented under the following sub-headings:

General description of research variables

Presentation of results

Discussion of findings

- General description of research variables

The major independent variables of this study are principals' finance management skills categorised in terms of financial planning, budgeting skills, and accounting skills, while the dependent variable in this study is the quality of public secondary education categorized based on effective teaching and professional leadership which are measured continuously. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Descriptive statistics of finance management and quality of public secondary education (N=398)

S/N	Variable	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Financial planning skills with effective teaching	21.3750	2.79717
2	Budgeting skills with effective teaching	22.9298	2.36101
3	Accounting skills with professional leadership	23.9817	2.1568
8	Quality of public secondary education	37.0220	4.01004

The result in Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the dimensions of principals' finance management skills and the quality of public secondary education. Accounting skills with effective teaching have the highest mean value of 23.9817 and a standard deviation of 2.15687, while financial planning skills have the lowest of mean 21.375 and a standard deviation of 2.79717.

• Presentation of results

The results of the data collected are presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis which was tested and the interpretation of findings including a discussion of the outstanding results of the study are presented in this section.

• Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. The major independent variable in this hypothesis is financial planning categorized in terms of high moderate and low. While the dependent variable is the quality of secondary education categorised in terms of (effective teaching and professional leadership). To test this hypothesis the one-way ANOVA was employed since the independent variable has more than two categories measured on a dependent continuous variable. The result is presented in Table 2

TABLE 2  
Result of one Way-ANOVA of the influence of financial planning skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Level of financial planning in terms of effective teaching	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	208	21.3750	7.79717	.54064	
Moderate	72	24.4861	3.56822	.42052	
Low	118	23.6780	3.57790	.32937	
Total	398	22.6206	6.28695	.31514	
Sources of variation (effective teaching)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	705.212	2	352.606	9.294	.000
Within Groups	14986.499	395	37.941		
Total	15691.711	397			
Level of financial planning in terms of professional leadership	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	120	21.4583	5.62243	.51326	

Moderate	126	23.0714	3.68821	.32857	
Low	152	23.2697	3.56950	.28952	
Total	398	22.6608	4.38603	.21985	
Sources of variation (professional leadership)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	251.119	2	125.559	6.715	.001
Within Groups	7386.090	395	18.699		
Total	7637.209	397			

\*p<.05

Table 2 revealed the analysis of the research question with descriptive statistics of the 398 respondents that were used in the final analysis for the three levels of financial planning skills in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. The result revealed that for the level of effective teaching, high has a total of 208 respondents with a mean of 21.3750 and standard deviation of 7.79717, moderate has 72 respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 24.4861 and 3.56822 while low is 118 respondents with a mean of 23.6780 and standard deviation of. Thus the moderate level of financial planning skills in terms of effective teaching dominated the study. For the level of professional development, the respondents who are of the high level of professional development are 120, with a mean of 21.4583 and standard deviation of 5.62243, moderate is 126 respondents with a mean of 23.0714 and standard deviation of 3.68821, while low is 152 respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 23.2697 and 3.56950 respectively. Thus the low level of professional development dominated the study.

The inferential statistical analysis as presented in Table 2 of the tested hypothesis revealed that the calculated p-values of .000 and 001 are all significant for the sub-components of financial planning skills on quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership) at.05 levels with 2 and 395

degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for all the sub-components of financial planning skills. This means that there is a significant influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. Given the significant F-ratio, a Post-hoc comparison was executed with Fisher’s Least Significance Difference (LSD) to determine where exactly groups (High, Moderate and Low) differ significantly. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

i) Level of financial planning skills in terms of effective teaching

There is a significant mean difference of -1.61310 (p=.004 <.05) for high and moderate and -1.81140 (p=.001 <.05) for high and low which indicates that financial planning skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching lies between the categories of high and moderate and high and low.

ii) Level of financial planning in terms of professional leadership

There is a significant mean difference of -3.11111 (p=.000 <.05) for high and moderate and -2.30297 (p=.001 <.05) for high and low which indicates that financial planning skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of professional development lies in the categories of high and moderate and high and low.

TABLE 3  
Post-hoc comparison with Fisher’s Least Significance difference of the influence of financial planning skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Financial planning skills	Effective teaching	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
High	Moderate	-1.61310*	.55157	.004
	Low	-1.81140*	.52806	.001

Financial planning skills	Professional leadership	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
Moderate	High	1.61310*	.55157	.004
	Low	-.19831	.52098	.704
Low	High	1.81140*	.52806	.001
	Moderate	.19831	.52098	.704
High	Moderate	-3.11111*	.84223	.000
	Low	-2.30297*	.70988	.001
Moderate	High	3.11111*	.84223	.000
	Low	.80815	.92113	.381
Low	High	2.30297*	.70988	.001
	Moderate	-.80815	.92113	.381

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

• Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership. The independent variable in this hypothesis is budgeting skills categorized in terms of high moderate and low, while the dependent variable is quality of secondary education which was measured

in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was employed since the independent variable has more than two categories measured on a dependent continuous variable. The result is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
Result of one-way ANOVA of the influence of budgeting skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Levels of budgeting skills with effective teaching	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	114	22.9298	8.36101	.78308	
Moderate	118	20.5169	7.89432	.72673	
Low	166	18.7771	7.10900	.55177	
Total	398	20.4824	7.88701	.39534	
Sources of variation (effective teaching)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	1165.719	2	582.860	9.785	.000
Within Groups	23529.658	395	59.569		
Total	24695.377	397			
Level of budgeting skills with professional leadership	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	130	21.8231	7.66393	.67217	
Moderate	130	19.1615	7.31019	.64115	
Low	138	20.4348	6.48407	.55196	
Total	398	20.4724	7.21934	.36187	
Sources of variation (professional leadership)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value

Between Groups	460.744	2	230.372	4.498	.012
Within Groups	20230.452	395	51.216		
Total	20691.196	397			

\*p<.05

It can be discerned from Table 4 of the analysis of the research question with descriptive statistics of the 398 respondents that were used in the final analysis for the three levels of budgeting skills in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. The result revealed that for the level of effective teaching, high has a total of 114 respondents with a mean of 22.9298 and standard deviation of 8.36101, moderate has 118 respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 20.5169 and 7.89432 while low is 166 respondents with a mean of 18.7771 and standard deviation of 7.10900. Thus high level of budgeting skills in terms of effective teaching dominated the study.

For the level of professional development, the high has 130 respondents with a mean of 21.8231 and standard deviation of 7.66393, the moderate is 130 respondents with mean a of 19.1615 and standard deviation of 7.31019, while the low is 138 respondents with mean and standard deviation of 20.4348 and 6.48407 respectively. Thus a high level of professional development dominated the study. The inferential statistical analysis in the Table revealed that the p-values of .000 and 012 are all significant for the sub-components of budgeting skills on quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership at.05 levels with 2 and 395 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for all of the budgeting skills. This means that

there is a significant influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. Given the significant F-ratio, a Post-hoc comparison was executed with Fisher's Least Significance Difference (LSD) to determine where exactly groups (High, Moderate and Low) differ significantly. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

i) Level of budgeting skills in terms of effective teaching

There is a significant mean difference of 2.41288 (p=.018 <.05) for high and moderate and 4.15272 (p=.000 <.05) for high and low which indicates that budgeting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching lies between the categories of high and moderate and high and low.

ii) Level of budgeting skills in terms of professional leadership

There is a significant mean difference of 2.66154 (p=.003 <.05) for high and moderate and 1.38829 (p=.113 >.05) for high and low which indicates that budgeting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of professional development lies in the categories of high and moderate. However, there is no statistical mean difference between high and low.

TABLE 5  
Post-hoc comparison with Fisher's Least Significance difference of the influence of budgeting skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Budgeting skills	Effective teaching	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
High	Moderate	2.41288*	1.01358	.018
	Low	4.15272*	.93882	.000
Moderate	High	-2.41288*	1.01358	.018
	Low	1.73984	.92934	.062
Low	High	-4.15272*	.93882	.000
	Moderate	-1.73984	.92934	.062

Budgeting skills	Professional development	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
High	Moderate	2.66154*	.88766	.003
	Low	1.38829	.87470	.113
Moderate	High	-2.66154*	.88766	.003
	Low	-1.27324	.87470	.146
Low	High	-1.38829	.87470	.113
	Moderate	1.27324	.87470	.146

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

• Hypothesis three

Accounting skills by principals have no significant influence on the quality of secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership. The major independent variable in this hypothesis is accounting skills categorized in terms of high moderate and low. While the dependent variable

is quality of secondary education categorised in terms of (effective teaching and professional leadership). To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was employed since the independent variable has more than one category measured on a dependent continuous variable. The result is presented in Table 6

TABLE 6

Result of one-way ANOVA of the influence of accounting skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Levels of Accounting skills with effective teaching	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	109	23.9817	6.15687	.58972	
Moderate	161	22.2919	7.17342	.56534	
Low	128	21.2656	7.55712	.66796	
Total	398	22.4246	7.10115	.35595	
Sources of variance for accounting skills (effective teaching)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	439.027	2	219.514	4.428	.013
Within Groups	19580.212	395	49.570		
Total	20019.239	397			
Level of accounting skills with professional leadership	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. Error	
High	130	18.9077	6.61036	130	
Moderate	130	18.1692	6.33452	130	
Low	138	20.5942	6.80772	138	
Total	398	19.2513	6.65427	398	
Sources of variation (professional leadership)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	416.430	2	208.215	4.792	.009
Within Groups	17162.445	395	43.449		
Total	17578.874	397			

\*p<.05

It can be discerned from Table 6 of the analysis of the research question with descriptive statistics of the 398 respondents that were used in the final analysis for the three levels of accounting skills in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. The result revealed that for the level of effective teaching, the high has a total of 109 respondents with a mean of 23.9817 and standard deviation of 6.15687, moderate has 161 respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 22.2919 and 7.17342 while the low is 128 7 respondents with a mean of 21.2656 and standard deviation of 7.55712. Thus high level of accounting skills in terms of effective teaching dominated the study. For the level of professional development, high has 130 respondents with mean of 18.9077 and standard deviation of 6.61036, moderate is 130 respondents with mean of 18.1692 and standard deviation of 6.33452, while low is 138 respondents with mean and standard deviation of 20.5942 and 6.80772 respectively. Thus the low level of professional development dominated the study.

The inferential statistical analysis in Table 6 revealed that the p-values of .013 and 000 are all significant for the sub-components of accounting skills on quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership at .05 levels with 2 and 395 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for all the sub-components of budgeting skills. This means that there is a significant influence

of accounting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching and professional leadership. Given the significant F-ratio, a Post-hoc comparison was executed with Fisher's Least Significance Difference (LSD) to determine where exactly groups (High, Moderate and Low) differ significantly. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 7.

i) Level of accounting skills in terms of effective teaching

There is no significant mean difference of 1.68973 ( $p=.054 >.05$ ) for high and moderate while there is a significant mean difference for 2.71603 ( $p=.003 <.05$ ) for high and low which indicates that the mean difference for accounting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of effective teaching lies in the categories of high and low.

ii) Level of accounting skills in terms of professional leadership

Indicates that there is no significant mean difference between high and low as .73846 ( $p=.367 >.05$ ), while there is a significant mean difference between high and low as -1.68651 ( $p=.037 <.05$ ) which indicates that the mean difference for accounting skills by principals on the quality of secondary education in terms of accounting skill lies in the categories of high and low.

TABLE 7  
Post-hoc comparison with Fisher's Least Significance difference of the influence of Accounting skills on the quality of secondary education (effective teaching and professional leadership)

Accounting skills	Effective teaching	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
High	Moderate	1.68973	.87330	.054
	Low	2.71603*	.91763	.003
Moderate	High	-1.68973	.87330	.054
	Low	1.02630	.83376	.219
Low	High	-2.71603*	.91763	.003
	Moderate	-1.02630	.83376	.219
Accounting skills	Professional development	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
High	Moderate	.73846	.81759	.367
	Low	-1.68651*	.80565	.037

Moderate	High	-0.73846	.81759	.367
	Low	-2.42497*	.80565	.003
Low	High	1.68651*	.80565	.037
	Moderate	2.42497*	.80565	.003

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

- Discussions of findings

The findings of this study are presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis as shown below

- Financial planning skills and quality of public secondary education

The findings revealed that there is a significant influence of financial planning skills on the quality of public secondary education. The principal is the executive head of a secondary school. It is the responsibility of the principal of the secondary school to have financial management skills. The principal is expected to source funds for the running of the school, he is expected to expand the sources of the school income from school magazines, school workshops, school canteens, students' arts and crafts, school poultry and farms rather than over-dependence on government grants. This implies that the extent of financial management skills displayed by any institution the better the quality of education given to the individuals in such organization. Most organizations that fail to plan financially tend to plan to fail. This is because every successful organization is determined by the extent of financial management skills. The findings agree with Justus and Moses (2014) found that many secondary school principals still lack planning skills in managing the financial resources of secondary schools and this impacts negatively the quality of education. It was concluded that the lack of motivation amongst principals and insufficient time to attend training programs hampered the provision of effective training on financial management. Also in the same vein, Amirizei, Ololubeii and Ajuru's (2008) study found that there are significant relationships between principals' fund management strategies, accountability, factors that hinder, and factors that strengthen and effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Also study by Muia, Charles and Fides (2019) established that there exists a strong influence of financial management practices on the financial

performance of public secondary schools. This study, therefore, recommends that the ministry of education and the teachers' service commission should carry out continuous training and sensitization of the school principals on financial management practices. In the same vein, Bilkisu, (2018) findings revealed that principals explore other sources of funds such as P.T.A. levies, funds from school farms, magazines, speech and prize-giving day, and canteens. Money raised from these sources is included in the school budget therefore such funds are accounted for. Budgetary plans are made in collaboration with heads of the department but are not strictly adhered to in terms of implementation. Furthermore, the findings showed that there were several factors militating against financial management such as ghost workers, untimely disbursement of funds, lack of ICT training in the bursary department and neglect of internal auditing.

To this end, financial management is a key responsibility of every principal. Without effective financial management, organizations such as schools may find it difficult, if not impossible to achieve their goals. Financial Management in education is a process of relating resources to objectives required in the organization, which explicitly exist to provide education. This is to ensure that the desired goals or outcomes are achieved. Therefore, financial management means seeing to it that the school has the funds it requires to meet its goals and that such funds are used for the purposes for which they were meant. It is the responsibility of the school managers/principals to ensure that schools have operational budgets. Once school funds have been budgeted and funds have been allocated to specific expenditures, a proper accounting system must be implemented. The ultimate accountability for the effective management of school finance lies with the office of the manager.

The present study agrees with the study of Ackom-Wilson (2015) findings of the study revealed that the

procurement system of the schools is regulated by the procurement board which is mandated to ensure that the procurement of goods and services within the schools follows the laid down procedure. The study further found that the budgets of the schools represent the main financial planning framework around which incomes and expenditures are managed. The findings however revealed the major challenges confronting the effective financial management of the schools including late disbursement of funds by the central government and lack of financial management skills by headmasters to effectively manage the schools' finances.

More so, Matula, Mulwa and Kyalo's (2018) findings show that the principals' training influences financial management to a very large extent and there is a very strong relationship between financial management training and the effectiveness of financial management in secondary schools; the experience of a principal is very necessary for the financial effectiveness of management and to a large extent the principals' education level influences effectiveness of financial management the influence of Principals' financial management on school physical facilities. This implies that efficient utilization of financial resources is key to the attainment of an institution's goals.

- Budgeting skills and quality of public secondary education

The finding revealed that there is a significant influence on budgeting skills and quality education. It is a glaring fact that public law demands accountability as a pre-requisite for the continuation of the approval programme, so every public enterprise, including educational institutions are familiar with budgeting. Budget practices are different activities carried out in institutions by financial managers about the budget process. The budget practice adopted by any enterprise or organization depends to a large extent on the set goals and aspirations. maintained that if the budget is to have any meaning, it must be put into operation.

Also, Ihuoma (2010) result of findings showed that budgeting for effective control is a system that uses budget as a means of planning and controlling all aspects of production services. It is a tool for financial control. The result further showed that a budget is a

systematic tool for establishing standards of performance, providing motivation, guiding results and helping management towards set objectives.

Again, Ekwelem (2010) found that budgeting is very essential in setting standards and in making comparisons for actual accomplishment against set objectives. Only very few library staff participate in policy formulation. It was revealed from the study that the organizational structures of the Libraries were not ideal for an effective budgetary control system.

Finally, Okeke (2017) study revealed that workers understand the importance of budgeting. The result showed that budgeting was well planned. It was also found that the business environment, impact on communication, absence of budgetary control and necessary facilities were the problems facing budgeting in Golden Guinea PLC, Umuahia. It is quite understandable that any budget is not an effective instrument for implementing an educational plan if it is filed away and referred to only at intervals. The programme must be organized, persons must be employed, supplies must be purchased and buildings must be constructed, equipped, maintained and operated. In administering the budget, the principals of secondary schools should provide themselves with school account books for entering the detailed amount budgeted, receipts and expenditure items, and provide a simple ledger where expenditures can be entered showing either weekly or monthly balance. There should be proper handling of reserve fund set-up to handle special needs as they arise. Charges may be switched from one account to other within the coverage of the fund itself without exceeding the appropriation. Such switching Ezeocha (1990), explained provides flexibility and often makes possible the complete spending of appropriation.

- Accounting skills for the quality of public secondary education

The present study found that there is a significant influence of accounting skills on the quality of public secondary education. Thus, accounting standards are necessary to promote high-quality financial reporting. The fundamental role of accounting is to communicate economic information about businesses and organizations' various stakeholders including government, investors, shareholders, suppliers,

lenders, customers and the general public. These principals use such information to take decisions and to assess the stewardship of people appointed to manage such organizations. If this information is not of a high-quality standard, then the principals would be unable to take effective decisions that will benefit them.

The present study agrees with Abdullah's (2009) study established that most public secondary schools do not have a strategic plan to guide them towards the achievement of both long-term and short-term objectives. Also evident despite the directive of the government abolishing charging fees and other levies, public secondary schools continue charging fees to students. The heads of public secondary schools had received training in financial management; however, all head teachers who participated in the study were of the view that the training was not adequate. The present study also agrees with the study by Paul, Mokgadi, and Johan (2017) findings revealed a lack of knowledge of legislation and skills, poor monitoring and control of funds, unavailability of financial policies in schools, omission to act against culprits, and lack of honesty, openness and trustworthiness. In harmony with Bua and Adzongo (2014) found that prompt payment of staff salaries and allowances significantly impacts the management of secondary schools.

Kwarteng (2013) study found among other things that the quality of senior high school accounting education was poor. Also, findings by Uyai and Effiong (2016) results of the analyses rejected all the null hypotheses, implying a significant relationship between teacher application of accounting skills and the quality of school management. Principals accounting skills and quality of education in the context of this study can be seen as the specific characteristics required for effective teaching of financial accounting by principals at the secondary school level, with regards to the recording, classifying, creating, summarizing and communicating of financial information to interested parties and interpreting to help in making specific business decisions. Principals of secondary schools keep accounting to evaluate the performance and profitability of the business organization, prevention of fraud, monitoring of the enterprise's progress and for making an economic comparison.

The accounting curriculum in secondary schools is carefully designed to suit the needs of the students and other interested learners. If it is properly inculcated into the students, many of them would be properly grounded and prepared to become professionally qualified accountants. The present finding is also in line with Nyakundi, Okioga, Ojera, Nyabwanga and Nyamwamu, (2004) study revealed that the level of Management of Funds in public secondary schools is positively correlated to the extent of use of Accounting Practices at 0.01 significance level.

### III. SUMMARY

The study sought to examine principals' finance management skills and the quality of public secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. In carrying out this research study, three objectives, research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and the survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 243 principal and vice-principals and 353 account officers and account Clerks from eighty-one (81) public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State which amounted to 596 respondents. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in selecting a sample of 413 respondents in the study. The instruments for data collection were a researcher's developed titled Principals' Financial Management Skills (PFMSQ), and the second instrument a 20 item four point modified Likert scale questionnaire titled Quality of Secondary Education Questionnaire (QSEQ) Face and construct validity were established using two experts in the field of education management and Test/Measurement, Faculty of Education. The reliability of the instrument was established with Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with a coefficient which ranged from .73 to .88 and the findings revealed that;

1. There is a significant influence of financial planning skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.
2. There is a significant influence of budgeting skills by principals on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

- Accounting skills by principals have a significant influence on the quality of public secondary education in terms of adequate teaching and professional leadership.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations:-

- School principals should be trained in financial management so that they can be effective in their financial management. Thus, the ministry of education and the teachers' service commission should carry out continuous training and sensitization of the school heads on financial management practices. The training should primarily focus on financial recording practices to improve the school's financial performance.
- Newly appointed principals should be given an orientation on budgeting, and procurement to enable them to discharge their duties effectively. The Kenyan government should allocate funds to facilitate the training of principals on budgeting, procurement procedures and financial recording practices. Teacher training programmes should also be tailored to equip trainees with basic school financial management.
- Principals of secondary schools should work hand in hand with the school accounting officers to encourage them to develop an interest in relating all accounting skills to the principals to promote the accounting department for efficient record keeping

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