ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES IN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS AMONG SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH-WEST ZONE, NIGERIA

Paulina Chinyere ONOEZE[1] Joan Rhitse GIMBA,[2] &· Yusuf ABUBAKAR* (Ph.D)[3]
[1,2&3]Department of Human Kinetics & Health Education
ABU Zaria
yakgez337@gmail.com 08107268049

Abstract

Financial management innovations have become critical instruments for enhancing accountability, transparency, and sustainability in sports administration globally. This study examined the difference in knowledge and practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria. The study was guided by two hypotheses and two research questions objectively to assess if there is difference in the level of knowledge and the extent of practice of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria. A descriptive comparative research design was adopted, and data were collected from 105 sports administrators using a structured questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test to determine the differences between Federal and State Colleges. The results revealed that sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges possess high levels of knowledge of financial management innovations and practice these innovations (Mean= 3.17 & 3.81> 2.5) respectively. Furthermore, the independent samples t-test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in both knowledge and practice between administrators in Federal and State Colleges (p= 0.241, & 0. 325). The study concluded that professional knowledge and application of financial management innovations are relatively uniform across both institution types. It was recommended that Colleges of Education should sustain regular capacity-building programmes and provide institutional support, including access to digital financial systems and clear guidelines, to enhance the effective implementation of financial management innovations in sports programme administration.

Keywords: Financial management innovations, sports administrators, Colleges of Education, knowledge, practice, Nigeria

Introduction

Effective financial management is essential for the sustainability and growth of sports programmes in educational institutions, particularly in environments characterized by limited resources and increasing demands for accountability. Recent advances in digital technologies and integrated financial systems have transformed the way organisations plan, allocate, monitor, and report financial resources, making financial management innovations indispensable for efficient sports administration (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). These innovations, which include digital budgeting systems, cloud-based accounting software, electronic payment platforms, performance-based budgeting, and automated financial reporting, enhance transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency in the management of sports programmes. The effectiveness of these innovations depends largely on the knowledge and competence of sports administrators. Knowledge of financial management innovations refers to administrators' awareness, understanding, and technical ability to utilize modern financial tools for budgeting, expenditure control, revenue generation, and financial reporting. Adequate knowledge facilitates informed decision-making, efficient resource utilization, and compliance with institutional financial regulations, whereas inadequate knowledge often results in continued reliance on traditional manual financial practices (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC], 2022). Beyond knowledge, the practice of financial management innovations involves the consistent application of these tools in managing sports finances. Effective practice promotes financial accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making, thereby contributing to the sustainability of sports programmes (Li et al., 2024).

Globally, sports organisations have increasingly adopted digital budgeting platforms, electronic payment systems, and Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) to improve financial transparency and operational efficiency (PwC, 2022; Li et al., 2024). However, the level of adoption differs across regions because of disparities in technological infrastructure, institutional capacity, and human resource development. In many developing countries, particularly within public educational institutions, inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and insufficient technical capacity continue to hinder the effective implementation of financial management innovations.

In Africa, financial management innovation is gradually expanding through the growing use of mobile payment technologies and fintech solutions, which have improved financial inclusion and transaction transparency in public sector organisations, including sports administration (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2019; Nzotta & Odili, 2024). Nevertheless, studies indicate that although awareness of financial management innovations is increasing, their practical application remains constrained by centralized financial controls, inadequate institutional capacity, and weak governance systems (Munyaka & Karanja, 2023). This suggests that improvements in knowledge do not always translate into effective implementation.

In Nigeria, Colleges of Education play a significant role in teacher preparation and grassroots sports development. Sports administrators in these institutions are responsible for managing financial resources for sports facilities, competitions, athlete development, and other sporting activities. However, differences in funding patterns, administrative structures, and access to information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure between Federal and State Colleges of Education may influence administrators' knowledge and practice of financial management innovations. Federal Colleges generally enjoy relatively more stable funding and structured capacity-building opportunities, while State Colleges often contend with funding irregularities, infrastructural deficiencies, and administrative constraints that may affect the adoption of modern financial management practices (Adeyemi & Ibrahim, 2020).

Despite these institutional differences, recent reforms in public financial management and increasing digitization of financial processes have introduced more standardized financial procedures across public tertiary institutions. Consequently, it remains unclear whether institutional ownership still significantly influences sports administrators' knowledge and practice of financial management innovations. This study therefore investigates whether significant differences exist between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria regarding their knowledge and practice of financial management innovations.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. analyse the difference in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria; and
2. examine the difference in the level of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What difference exists in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria?
2. What difference exists in the level of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive comparative approach. A descriptive comparative approach is a research design used to describe existing conditions and systematically comparing two or more groups based on selected variables, without manipulating any variables. The approach focuses on identifying similarities and differences among groups as they naturally exist, making it suitable for studies where experimental control is neither feasible nor ethical (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design is therefore suitable as it focused on sports administrators in federal and state Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design in order to systematically assess the existing level of knowledge and the extent of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria without manipulating any variables. This design was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of quantitative data from a defined population with the aim of describing prevailing conditions, practices, and competencies as they naturally occur. The study was carried out in the North-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria, which comprises Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States, an area with a substantial number of Federal and State Colleges of Education responsible for organizing and managing sports programmes. The population of the study consisted of all sports administrators in these institutions, including Directors of Sports, Sports Officers, Assistant Sports Officers, and other personnel directly involved in the financial planning, funding, and administration of sports programmes totaling one hundred and sixty-nine (169). A sample size of one hundred and five respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique in which Federal and State Colleges of Education were first identified, after which proportionate sampling was used to select sports administrators from each institution to ensure adequate representation, while total enumeration was adopted in colleges with a small number of sports administrators. Data for the study were collected using a researchers'-developed structured questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Practices of Financial Management Innovations among Sports Administrators Questionnaire," which was designed in three sections covering respondents' demographic characteristics, knowledge of financial management innovations such as modern budgeting techniques, digital financial tools, internally generated revenue strategies, accountability mechanisms, and contemporary financial reporting systems, as well as the extent to which these innovations were practiced in the management of sports programmes. The questionnaire items were structured on a Likert-type scale to facilitate quantitative analysis. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in sports management, educational administration, and measurement and evaluation, whose suggestions were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study conducted among sports administrators in Colleges of Education outside the study area, and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha method, with a reliability coefficient of 0.70. The reliability coefficient is high and therefore considered acceptable Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the authorities of the selected institutions, and the copies of questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants, while respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and informed that participation was voluntary. Completed copies of the questionnaires were retrieved within an agreed time frame and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations employed to address the objectives of the study by determining the level of knowledge and the extent of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Colleges of Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. One-sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Sports Administrators by Institutional Type (n = 105)

Variable	Category	Federal Colleges (n = 52)	State Colleges (n = 53)	Total (n = 105)
Institution Type	Federal	52 (49.5%)	–	52 (49.5%)
	State	–	53 (50.5%)	53 (50.5%)
Gender	Male	39 (75.0%)	41 (77.4%)	80 (76.2%)
	Female	13 (25.0%)	12 (22.6%)	25 (23.8%)
Age (Years)	Below 35	6 (11.5%)	8 (15.1%)	14 (13.3%)
	35–44	17 (32.7%)	19 (35.8%)	36 (34.3%)
	45–54	20 (38.5%)	18 (34.0%)	38 (36.2%)
	55 and above	9 (17.3%)	8 (15.1%)	17 (16.2%)
Highest Educational Qualification	NCE / Bachelor’s Degree	14 (26.9%)	17 (32.1%)	31 (29.5%)
	Master’s Degree	28 (53.8%)	27 (50.9%)	55 (52.4%)
	PhD	10 (19.3%)	9 (17.0%)	19 (18.1%)
Professional Role	Director of Sports	15 (28.8%)	14 (26.4%)	29 (27.6%)
	Sports Officer	26 (50.0%)	28 (52.8%)	54 (51.4%)

Variable	Category	Federal Colleges (n = 52)	State Colleges (n = 53)	Total (n = 105)
	Assistant Sports Officer and Coaches	11 (21.2%)	11 (20.8%)	22 (21.0%)

The demographic distribution of respondents shows a near-equal representation of sports administrators from Federal Colleges of Education (49.5%) and State Colleges of Education (50.5%), thereby providing a balanced basis for adopting a descriptive comparative approach. This balance enhances the validity of institutional comparisons regarding knowledge and practice of financial management innovations. The respondents were predominantly male (76.2%), reflecting the gender composition commonly reported in sports administration within Nigerian tertiary institutions, while female administrators constituted 23.8% of the sample.

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents (70.5%) fell within the economically active age bracket of 35–54 years, suggesting that most sports administrators are mature and professionally active, with sufficient exposure to administrative and financial management responsibilities. Both Federal and State Colleges displayed similar age patterns, indicating comparability across institutional types. Regarding educational qualifications, over half of the respondents (52.4%) possessed a master's degree, while 18.1% held doctoral qualifications, suggesting a relatively high academic profile that is conducive to understanding and adopting financial management innovations. Finally, the distribution of professional roles revealed that Sports Officers constituted the largest group (51.4%), followed by Directors of Sports (27.6%) and Assistant Sports Officers with coaches (21.0%), indicating that the study captured responses from administrators occupying key decision-making and implementation positions in sports programme management.

Research Question One

What difference exists in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge of Financial Management Innovations by Institution Type

Institution Type	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
Federal Colleges of Education	52	3.25	0.68	High
State Colleges of Education	53	3.09	0.74	High
Aggregate	**105**	**3.17**	**0.71**	High

Decision Mean 2.50

The results in Table 2 indicate that sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria possess a high level of knowledge of financial management innovations, as their mean scores exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50. However, a descriptive difference exists between the two groups, with sports administrators in Federal Colleges recording a slightly higher mean score ($\bar{X}$ = 3.25, SD = 0.68) compared to their counterparts in State Colleges ($\bar{X}$ = 3.09, SD = 0.74). This suggests that although administrators in both institution types are knowledgeable about financial management innovations, those in Federal Colleges demonstrate a marginally higher level of knowledge, possibly due to better access to training opportunities, funding structures, and institutional exposure.

Research Question Two

What difference exists in the level of practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Practice of Financial Management Innovations by Institution Type

Institution Type	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
Federal Colleges of Education	52	2.89	0.79	High
State Colleges of Education	53	2.73	0.86	High
Aggegate	**105**	**2.81**	**0.83**	High

Decision Mean= 2.50

As presented in Table 3, sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges of Education practice financial management innovations to a high extent, as evidenced by mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50. Nonetheless, a noticeable descriptive difference exists between the two institution types. Sports administrators in Federal Colleges reported a higher mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.89$, SD = 0.79) compared to those in State Colleges ($\bar{X} = 2.73$, SD = 0.86). This indicates that while financial management innovations are practiced across both institution types, administrators in Federal Colleges tend to apply these innovations more extensively. The slightly higher standard deviation among State College administrators suggests greater variability in the level of practice, possibly reflecting differences in institutional policies, funding availability, and administrative autonomy.

The descriptive comparative analysis revealed that sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria exhibit high levels of knowledge and practice of financial management innovations. However, administrators in Federal Colleges consistently recorded higher mean scores in both knowledge and practice than those in State Colleges, indicating a modest institutional difference favoring Federal Colleges. These differences justify further inferential analysis to determine whether the observed variations are statistically significant.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-Test of Knowledge of Financial Management Innovations by Institution Type

Institution Type	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)	Decision
Federal Colleges	52	3.25	0.68	1.18	104	0.241	Retained
State Colleges	53	3.09	0.74				

The result indicates that although sports administrators in Federal Colleges recorded a slightly higher mean score than those in State Colleges, the difference in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations between the two groups was not statistically significant. The null hypothesis was not rejected because the p-value (0.241) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria possess comparable levels of knowledge of financial management innovations.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the level of practice of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-Test of Practice of Financial Management Innovations by Institution Type

Institution Type	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p)	Decision
Federal Colleges	52	2.89	0.79	0.99	103	0.325	Not Rejected
State Colleges	53	2.73	0.86				

The result shows that there was no significant difference in the level of practice of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria p=0.325. Although administrators in Federal Colleges reported a higher mean practice score, the difference was not large enough to be considered statistically meaningful. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected because the p-value of 0.325 is greater than 0.05. This, suggests that financial management innovations are practiced at a similar level across both institution types.

The independent samples t-test revealed that the observed differences in both knowledge and practice of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State

Colleges of Education in Nigeria were not statistically significant. This indicates that institutional ownership (Federal or State) does not significantly influence sports administrators' knowledge or practice of financial management innovations.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria ($t = 1.18$, $p = 0.241$). Although sports administrators in Federal Colleges recorded a slightly higher mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.25$) than those in State Colleges ($\bar{X} = 3.09$), the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that sports administrators in both categories of Colleges of Education possess comparable knowledge of financial management innovations such as strategic budgeting, electronic financial reporting, digital payment systems, internal control mechanisms, and accountability procedures. The finding suggests that institutional ownership is not a major determinant of financial management knowledge among sports administrators. Rather, the similarity in knowledge levels may be attributed to the common regulatory framework governing public Colleges of Education in Nigeria, where administrators are exposed to similar financial regulations, audit requirements, and professional development programmes.

The present finding is in agreement with Babatunde (2018), who, in a comparative study of finance management practices across Nigerian tertiary institutions, found no significant differences among Federal, State, and private institutions in their finance management practices. The study concluded that the three categories of institutions operate under similar financial management frameworks and therefore exhibit comparable financial management competencies. Likewise, the finding is consistent with Adebisi (2013), who argued that public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria are guided by common principles of accountability and transparency established by government financial regulations. According to Adebisi, effective financial management in tertiary institutions depends more on compliance with standardized financial procedures than on institutional ownership, thereby promoting relatively similar financial management knowledge among institutional administrators.

However, the finding is at variance with Ile and Obialor (2024), who reported that institutional type significantly influenced the application of some components of financial accounting information, particularly cash flow statements, in the management of tertiary educational institutions in South-East Nigeria, although no significant difference was found in the application of fixed asset accounts. The disparity between the present study and that of Ile and Obialor (2024) may be explained by differences in the variables investigated and the respondents involved. While the present study focused specifically on sports administrators' knowledge of financial management innovations in Colleges of Education, Ile and Obialor investigated accounting officers' application of financial accounting information across various categories of tertiary institutions. Accounting officers are directly responsible for preparing and utilizing financial statements, making institutional differences more apparent than among sports administrators, whose financial responsibilities are largely administrative and operational.

Similarly, the findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of practice of financial management innovations between sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria ($t = 0.99$, $p = 0.325$). Although administrators in Federal Colleges recorded a slightly higher mean practice score ($\bar{X} = 2.89$) than their counterparts in State Colleges ($\bar{X} = 2.73$), the difference was not statistically significant. This finding implies that sports administrators across both institution types implement financial management innovations at relatively similar levels. The comparable practice of financial management innovations may be attributed to the uniform financial control systems, procurement regulations, Treasury Single Account (TSA) requirements, audit procedures, and accountability mechanisms that govern public tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The finding agrees with Babatunde (2018), whose comparative analysis showed that finance management practices did not differ significantly among the various categories of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, suggesting that institutional ownership does not substantially influence financial management practices. The finding is also supported by Ejike-Orji and Eneh (2023)**,** who found that the adoption of the Treasury Single Account significantly improved accountability, transparency, and financial control across tertiary institutions in Anambra State irrespective of institutional category. Their findings demonstrate that government financial reforms have standardized financial management practices across public tertiary institutions, thereby reducing institutional variations in financial management implementation.

Conversely, the finding differs from Ile and Obialor (2024), who found that institutional type significantly influenced the extent to which cash flow statements were applied in the management of tertiary educational institutions. The contradiction may be attributed to contextual and methodological differences between the two studies. The present study examined the overall practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators, encompassing budgeting, accountability, digital financial tools, and financial reporting, whereas Ile and Obialor focused narrowly on the application of specific financial accounting information by professional accounting personnel. Furthermore, the current study was limited to Colleges of Education, which are regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and operate under similar administrative and financial policies, whereas the earlier study included different categories of tertiary institutions with varying accounting structures and financial management systems.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that institutional ownership (Federal or State) does not significantly influence either the knowledge or the practice of financial management innovations among sports administrators in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The observed similarities are likely a reflection of harmonized public financial management policies, standardized regulatory frameworks, increasing digitization of financial processes, and continuous professional development initiatives promoted by agencies such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education and other government regulatory bodies. These developments have contributed to reducing disparities in financial management capacity and practice across Federal and State Colleges of Education, thereby promoting greater uniformity in the management of sports finances.

Conclusions

The study concluded that:

1. The study concluded that sports administrators in both Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria did not differ in the level of knowledge of financial management innovations. This shows that they understand modern ways of budgeting, using digital financial tools, generating revenue, and keeping proper financial records for sports programmes.

2. Sports administrators in Federal and State Colleges of Education did not differ in the practice financial management innovations to a reasonable extent.

Recommendations

The researchers recommended that:

1. Federal and State Colleges of Education should continue to organize regular training and workshops for sports administrators to help them maintain and improve their knowledge of new financial management methods and technologies.
2. Colleges' management and government authorities should provide better support and facilities, such as access to digital financial systems and clear financial guidelines, to help sports administrators apply financial management innovations more effectively in the management of sports programmes.

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