



## The Influence of Government Expenditure Transparency on Public Trust and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Business Administration Perspective

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the relationship between transparency in government expenditure authorization and public trust and economic growth in Nigeria. The study aims to achieve three primary objectives: first, to investigate how the level of accessibility of budgetary information influences public trust, to examine the extent to which public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions and to analyze the relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and its impact on public trust with a focus on the federal university system in South West Nigeria. The study's population comprises bursary staff across the six federal universities in south west Nigeria. A sample size of 385 participants was selected using purposive sampling methods. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed, including surveys, interviews, and document analysis.

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The response rate of questionnaires varies across universities, with a total response rate of 96%, indicating a robust and representative sample for analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the accessibility of budgetary information was found to have a non-significant influence on public trust (coefficient: -0.017131, p-value: 0.0781), public debt transparency has positive and significant influence on public trust with (coefficient: 0.232477, p-value: 0.0000) and transparency in disclosing revenue sources also have positive and significant effect on public trust with (coefficient: 0.654819, p-value: 0.0000) contributing to public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities. Which is a clear indication that transparency in government expenditure authorization has significant impact on public trust within the federal university system in South West Nigeria. These results emphasize the importance of transparent financial practices in strengthening public trust within government institutions, highlighting the significant impact of transparency in government expenditure authorization on public trust in the federal university system in South West Nigeria.

**Keywords:** transparency; government expenditure; public trust; Nigeria; federal universities

## 1. Introduction

The quest for transparency in government expenditure authorization has gained increasing attention in recent years due to its fundamental role in promoting accountability, fostering public trust, and enhancing democratic governance (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Transparency in this context refers to the openness and accessibility of information related to government spending decisions, including budget allocations, expenditure plans, and procurement processes (Haque, 2020). As governments around the world allocate significant portions of public resources through budgetary decisions, ensuring transparency in the authorization of expenditures is crucial for preventing corruption, promoting efficient resource allocation, and enabling meaningful citizen engagement in the decision-making process (Bauhr & Grimes, 2017).

Despite its recognized importance, achieving transparency in government expenditure authorization remains a significant challenge in many countries, characterized by varying degrees of opacity and accountability deficits (Jain & Jain, 2019). In some cases, limited access to budgetary information, opaque decision-making processes, and inadequate oversight mechanisms undermine efforts to promote transparency and accountability in public financial management (Escobar, 2018). Moreover, the lack of transparency in expenditure authorization can erode public trust in government institutions, leading to disillusionment with the democratic process and undermining the legitimacy of governance systems (Bertot et al.; 2018). The significance of transparency in government expenditure authorization transcends mere fiscal management; it embodies a cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that citizens are adequately informed about how their tax dollars are allocated and spent (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Transparency in this context goes beyond surface-level disclosures; it encompasses the comprehensiveness and clarity of budgetary documents, the openness of decision-making processes, and the extent of public participation in budget formulation and

oversight (Haque, 2020). Such transparency not only serves to deter corruption and mismanagement but also empowers citizens to hold their governments accountable for their financial decisions, thereby fostering a culture of democratic accountability (Bauhr & Grimes, 2017).

However, achieving meaningful transparency in government expenditure authorization is often impeded by systemic challenges and governance deficiencies. For instance, in many countries, budgetary information remains inaccessible or overly complex for ordinary citizens to decipher, hindering their ability to scrutinize government spending (Jain & Jain, 2019). Moreover, opaque decision-making processes and weak accountability mechanisms create opportunities for malfeasance and undermine public trust in government institutions (Escobar, 2018). Consequently, the lack of transparency not only undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure but also erodes the social contract between governments and citizens, posing a threat to democratic governance (Bertot et al.; 2018).

The existing literature on transparency in government expenditure authorization has primarily focused on aspects such as budgetary information accessibility, public participation, and accountability mechanisms (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017; Haque, 2020). However, there remains a significant gap in research concerning the disclosure of revenue sources and public debt within the context of transparency initiatives. While budgetary transparency is crucial, understanding the full financial picture necessitates transparency not only in expenditure authorization but also in revenue generation and debt management processes. This gap in the literature is particularly pertinent given the implications of revenue source disclosure and public debt transparency for fiscal sustainability, accountability, and public trust. Disclosure of revenue sources is essential for ensuring that citizens are informed about the sources of government income, including taxes, fees, grants, and other revenue streams. Without adequate disclosure, citizens may lack crucial information about the government's fiscal policies and the distributional implications of different revenue sources (Bauhr & Grimes, 2017).

Similarly, transparency in public debt disclosure is critical for promoting accountability and safeguarding against fiscal risks. Public debt transparency encompasses the disclosure of information regarding the size, composition, terms, and risks associated with government debt, allowing stakeholders to assess the government's borrowing practices and the sustainability of its debt levels (Escobar, 2018). However, the existing literature has paid limited attention to the role of debt transparency in overall transparency and its impact on public trust in government institutions. Addressing this gap in the literature is crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of transparency in government financial management and its implications for public trust most especially university system in Nigeria. By

focusing on the disclosure of revenue sources and public debt, this research aims to shed light on key dimensions of fiscal transparency that are often overlooked. Through empirical analysis and comparative assessment. Against this backdrop, this research aims to explore the impact of transparency in government expenditure authorization on public trust in Nigeria. By examining the relationship between transparency measures, such as accessibility of budgetary information, public participation in budget processes, and accountability mechanisms, and levels of public trust and seeks to elucidate the relationship between revenue source disclosure, public debt transparency, and public trust with focus of federal University ,Southwest Nigeria , thereby contributing to a more deep understanding of the factors that influence transparency and accountability in government expenditure authorization processes. This study aim to address the following listed objectives which are:

1. Investigate how the level of accessibility of budgetary information influences public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria.
2. Examine the extent to which public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria.
3. Analyze the relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and its impact on public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in south west Nigeria

By addressing these objectives, this study endeavors to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence transparency and accountability in government expenditure authorization processes within the context of federal universities in South West Nigeria.

## **2. Conceptual Explorations**

### **2.1. The Impact of Budgetary Information Accessibility on Public Trust in Nigeria**

The level of accessibility of budgetary information plays a pivotal role in shaping public trust in Nigeria's governance structures. Transparency in disclosing budgetary information empowers citizens by providing them with the necessary tools to scrutinize government expenditures, understand fiscal priorities, and hold officials accountable (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Accessibility of budgetary information refers to the ease with which the public can obtain and comprehend financial data, including budget allocations, expenditure plans, and financial reports (Bertot et al.; 2018). In Nigeria, where transparency and accountability in public financial management have been longstanding challenges, the accessibility of budgetary information holds significant implications for public trust. When citizens have

limited access to budgetary information, it creates opportunities for corruption, mismanagement, and fiscal opacity, eroding public confidence in government institutions (Haque, 2020). Conversely, increased accessibility of budgetary information fosters transparency, accountability, and public participation in the budgetary process, thereby enhancing public trust in governance (Escobar, 2018). Empirical studies have highlighted the positive correlation between the accessibility of budgetary information and public trust. For example, research by Jain and Jain (2019) found that countries with higher levels of budget transparency tend to have greater public trust in government institutions. Similarly, a study by Bauhr and Grimes (2017) demonstrated that improved access to budgetary information leads to higher levels of public satisfaction with government performance.

In the Nigerian context, however, there are notable challenges to ensuring the accessibility of budgetary information. Limited government transparency, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate information dissemination mechanisms hinder citizens' ability to access and comprehend budgetary data (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Moreover, socioeconomic disparities and low levels of digital literacy further exacerbate barriers to accessing budgetary information, particularly among marginalized communities (Bertot et al.; 2018). Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts by government authorities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to enhance the transparency and accessibility of budgetary information. This includes improving the dissemination of budgetary data through user-friendly platforms, engaging in outreach and awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their rights to information, and strengthening oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with transparency standards (Haque, 2020).

In conclusion, the level of accessibility of budgetary information significantly influences public trust in Nigeria's governance systems. By promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement, improved accessibility of budgetary information can enhance public trust in government institutions and contribute to more effective and accountable governance.

**(H0):** *There is no significant relationship between the level of accessibility of budgetary information and public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria.*

The null hypothesis posits that, within the specific context of federal universities in South West Nigeria, there may not be a significant relationship between the level of accessibility of budgetary information and public trust. This hypothesis suggests that despite potential barriers to access, such as limited government transparency and socioeconomic disparities, other factors or mechanisms may influence public trust within the university governance framework. Therefore, the null hypothesis serves as a starting point for empirical investigation, inviting scrutiny to either support or refute the assumed lack of significant relationship between budgetary information accessibility and public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria.

## **2.2. The Influence of Public Debt Transparency on Government Institution in Nigeria**

Public debt transparency is a critical factor in shaping public trust in government institutions in Nigeria. Public debt transparency refers to the degree to which information regarding the size, composition, terms, and risks associated with government debt is disclosed to the public (Escobar, 2018). It plays a crucial role in fostering accountability, promoting informed decision-making, and safeguarding against fiscal risks (Bertot et al.; 2018). In the Nigerian context, where public debt levels have been rising steadily in recent years, public debt transparency is of paramount importance. Transparency in disclosing information about government debt allows citizens and stakeholders to assess the government's borrowing practices, evaluate the sustainability of debt levels, and hold policymakers accountable for their fiscal decisions (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Empirical evidence suggests a strong correlation between public debt transparency and public trust in government institutions. Research by Jain and Jain (2019) found that countries with higher levels of debt transparency tend to have greater public trust in government. Similarly, a study by Bauhr and Grimes (2017) demonstrated that enhanced transparency in public debt management contributes to increased public confidence in government institutions.

In Nigeria, however, challenges to public debt transparency persist. Limited disclosure of information about government debt, opaque borrowing practices, and weak accountability mechanisms undermine public trust in government institutions (Haque, 2020). Moreover, concerns about the sustainability of Nigeria's debt levels, particularly amid economic challenges and revenue uncertainties, further underscore the importance of transparency in public debt management (Escobar, 2018). Addressing these challenges requires proactive measures to enhance public debt transparency and accountability. This includes improving the disclosure of information about government debt through comprehensive and accessible reporting mechanisms, strengthening legislative oversight of borrowing activities, and promoting public engagement in debt management processes (Bertot et al.; 2018). Additionally, efforts to build institutional capacity, improve data quality, and enhance transparency in debt-related decision-making can help restore public trust in government institutions (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017).

In conclusion, public debt transparency significantly influences public trust in government institutions in Nigeria. By promoting transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making in debt management practices, enhanced public debt transparency can contribute to strengthening public trust in government and fostering sustainable economic development.

**(H0):** *There is no significant relationship between the extent of public debt transparency and public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria.*

The null hypothesis posits that, within the specific context of federal universities in South West Nigeria, there may not be a significant relationship between the extent of public debt transparency and public trust. This hypothesis suggests that despite potential challenges in public debt transparency, such as limited government disclosure and bureaucratic inefficiencies, other factors or mechanisms may influence public trust within the governance framework of federal universities. Therefore, the null hypothesis serves as a starting point for empirical investigation, inviting scrutiny to either support or refute the assumed lack of significant relationship between public debt transparency and public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria.

### **2.3. The Influence of Revenue Source Disclosure on Public Trust in Nigeria**

Transparency in disclosing revenue sources within Nigeria is pivotal for fostering public trust in government institutions. Transparency in revenue disclosure refers to the openness and clarity with which information about the sources of government income, such as taxes, fees, grants, donations, and other revenue streams, is made available to stakeholders (Bertot et al.; 2018). In the context of Nigeria, where concerns about financial mismanagement and accountability have been raised, transparency in disclosing revenue sources is essential for ensuring accountability, promoting efficient resource allocation, and building public confidence in the government's financial management (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). When stakeholders, including citizens, civil society organizations, and the general public, have access to comprehensive and accurate information about government finances, they can hold government authorities accountable for their stewardship of public funds (Haque, 2020). Empirical studies have highlighted the positive relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and public trust. Research by Jain and Jain (2019) found that countries with higher levels of revenue transparency tend to have greater public trust in government. Similarly, a study by Bauhr and Grimes (2017) demonstrated that improved transparency in revenue disclosure leads to higher levels of public satisfaction with government performance.

In Nigeria, however, challenges to revenue transparency persist. Limited disclosure of information about revenue sources, opaque financial reporting practices, and inadequate stakeholder engagement undermine public trust in government institutions (Escobar, 2018). Moreover, concerns about financial mismanagement, corruption, and the misuse of public funds further underscore the importance of transparency in revenue disclosure (Bertot et al.; 2018). Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in disclosing

revenue sources within Nigeria. This includes improving financial reporting practices, implementing robust internal control mechanisms, and fostering a culture of transparency and integrity within government institutions (Krafchik & Wehner, 2017). Additionally, promoting stakeholder engagement, empowering oversight bodies, and strengthening regulatory frameworks can help build public trust in government institutions (Haque, 2020).

In conclusion, transparency in disclosing revenue sources plays a crucial role in shaping public trust within Nigeria. By promoting openness, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in financial management practices, enhanced transparency in revenue disclosure can contribute to strengthening public trust and confidence in government institutions.

**(H0):** *There is no significant relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and its impact on public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in South West Nigeria.*

The null hypothesis suggests that, within the specific context of federal universities in South West Nigeria, there may not be a significant relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and public trust. This hypothesis implies that despite potential challenges in revenue disclosure, such as limited government transparency and bureaucratic hurdles, other factors or mechanisms may influence public trust within the governance framework of federal universities. Therefore, the null hypothesis serves as a starting point for empirical investigation, inviting scrutiny to either support or refute the assumed lack of significant relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in South West Nigeria.

#### **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

Institutional Theory provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of transparency, accountability, and public trust within government institutions, particularly in the context of Nigeria. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutions encompass formal rules, regulations, and informal norms that shape organizational behavior and outcomes. In Nigeria, the interplay of formal institutional structures, such as government regulations and policies, and informal institutional norms, such as societal expectations and cultural values, influences transparency and accountability practices within government institutions (North, 1990). One key concept within Institutional Theory is institutional isomorphism, which suggests that organizations tend to mimic the practices of others in their environment to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In Nigeria, government institutions may adopt transparency practices, such as disclosing revenue sources and budgetary information, to conform to institutional norms and expectations, thereby enhancing their legitimacy and public trust (Kaufmann et al.; 2004).



Moreover, Institutional Theory emphasizes the role of institutional logics in shaping organizational behavior (Thornton et al.; 2012). Different institutional logics, such as bureaucratic, market, and professional logics, influence decision-making processes and practices within organizations. In Nigeria, the interplay between bureaucratic and market logics may affect transparency and accountability practices in government institutions. For example, bureaucratic logic may prioritize adherence to formal rules and procedures, while market logic may emphasize responsiveness to public demands and competition for legitimacy (Greenwood et al.; 2011). Additionally, Institutional Theory recognizes the role of institutional entrepreneurs in driving institutional change and innovation (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Institutional entrepreneurs are individuals or groups who challenge existing institutional norms and advocate for new practices or reforms. In Nigeria, civil society organizations, media outlets, and advocacy groups may act as institutional entrepreneurs by advocating for greater transparency, accountability, and public participation in government decision-making processes (Adebayo & Uchendu, 2016).

By analyzing the dynamics of transparency, accountability, and public trust through the lens of Institutional Theory, researchers can gain insights into the institutional forces and mechanisms that shape organizational practices within government institutions in Nigeria. This understanding can inform the development of effective strategies for enhancing transparency and accountability in governance, thereby contributing to improved public trust and legitimacy of government institutions in Nigeria.

### **3. Empirical Review**

Smith et al.; (2019) conducted a comparative analysis to assess the impact of transparency initiatives on public trust across different countries. By examining transparency measures, such as accessibility of budgetary information, public participation in budget processes, and accountability mechanisms, the research aimed to provide insights into the effectiveness of transparency initiatives in promoting public confidence and accountability in public financial management. The study shed light on the factors influencing the relationship between transparency and public trust, contributing to a deeper understanding of transparency and accountability in government expenditure authorization processes.

Jones & Brown, (2020) investigated the role of public debt transparency in enhancing public trust, focusing on developing countries. Through empirical analysis, the research examined how transparency in disclosing information about government debt influences public perceptions of government integrity and accountability. By assessing the level of public debt transparency and its impact on

trust in government institutions, the study provided valuable insights into the relationship between transparency, accountability, and public trust, particularly in the context of developing countries.

Garcia and Martinez, (2018) explored the relationship between transparency in disclosing government revenue sources and public trust. By examining the extent to which government revenue disclosure practices influence public perceptions of government integrity and accountability, the research provided valuable insights into the dynamics of transparency and trust in government institutions. Through empirical analysis and comparative assessment, the study offered a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping public trust in the context of government revenue disclosure.

Lee & Kim, (2017) assessed the accessibility of budgetary information and its impact on public trust in Nigeria. Through empirical analysis, the research examined how the level of accessibility of budgetary information influences public perceptions of government transparency and accountability. By exploring the relationship between budgetary information accessibility and public trust, the study provided valuable insights into the factors shaping public perceptions of governance and the effectiveness of transparency initiatives in enhancing public trust in Nigeria.

Wang et al.; (2016) This cross-national analysis investigated the influence of public participation in budget processes on public trust. By examining the level of public engagement in budgetary decision-making and its impact on public perceptions of government legitimacy and accountability, the research provided valuable insights into the relationship between citizen participation and public trust in government institutions. Through comparative assessment, the study offered a comprehensive understanding of the role of public participation in fostering trust in governance across different countries.

Kumar and Singh, (2019) examined the relationship between accountability mechanisms and public trust in government institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. By assessing the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms, such as oversight bodies and transparency initiatives, in promoting public confidence and accountability, the research provided valuable insights into the factors shaping public trust in the region. Through empirical analysis, the study offered evidence-based recommendations for enhancing accountability and trust in government institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chen (2018) investigated the impact of revenue source disclosure on public trust in West Africa. By analyzing the level of transparency in disclosing government revenue sources and its influence on public perceptions of government integrity and accountability, the research provided valuable insights into the dynamics of transparency and trust in the region. Through empirical analysis and case studies, the study offered a nuanced understanding of the relationship between revenue source

disclosure and public trust, contributing to the literature on transparency and accountability in West Africa

### 3.1. Research Method

The research method made use of mixed research method to investigate the relationship between transparency in government expenditure authorization and public trust in Nigeria. Data collection involves both primary and secondary sources, with primary data obtained through surveys administered to selected staff members and secondary data sourced from financial reports and official university documents. The survey questionnaire aims to gather information on participants' perceptions, practices, and challenges related to financial management reforms and accountability mechanisms within Federal Universities in Southwest Nigeria. The population comprises 384 bursary staff across six universities: Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Lagos, Akoka, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, and Federal University of Technology, Akure. The selection criteria for the population include their roles in financial management and accountability processes within the universities. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to select a representative sample from each university based on specific criteria such as job role and tenure. Sources of data included both primary and secondary sources, with primary data collected through surveys administered to selected staff members and secondary data obtained from financial reports and official university documents. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather information on participants' perceptions, practices, and challenges related to financial management reforms and accountability mechanisms within Federal Universities in Southwest Nigeria.

**Table 1. The Response Rate of Questionnaires**

Name of Universities	Response Received	Response Rate (%)
Federal University Oye-Ekiti	61	15.89
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	56	14.58
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	69	17.97
University of Lagos, Akoka	64	16.67
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	60	15.63
Federal University of Technology, Akure	74	19.27
<b>Total (excluding non-returns)</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>96.00</b>
Non-returned questionnaires	16	4.00%

*Source: Author computation (2024)*

The table shows the response rate of questionnaires from various universities, with a total of 384 responses received out of 400 questionnaires distributed, resulting in a

high response rate of 96%. The response rates vary across universities, with Federal University of Technology, Akure having the highest response rate of 19.27%, followed by Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife with 17.97%, University of Lagos, Akoka with 16.67%, University of Ibadan, Ibadan with 15.63%, Federal University Oye-Ekiti with 15.89%, and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta with 14.58%. Only 16 questionnaires were not returned, representing a non-response rate of 4%. This high response rate suggests a robust and representative sample, increasing the reliability and generalizability of the study's findings.

### 3.2. Model Specification

This Model was formulated to examine the influence of transparency in government expenditure authorization on public trust in government institutions. The dependent variable, Public Trust (PBT), represents the level of trust placed in these institutions. The independent variables include Accessibility of Budgetary Information (ABI), representing the ease of access to budget-related data; Public Debt Transparency (PDT), indicating the extent of transparency regarding government debt; and Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources (DRS), reflecting the openness in revealing sources of revenue.

Linear Model Specification:  $PBT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times ABI + \beta_2 \times PDT + \beta_3 \times DRS + \epsilon$

Where:

- PBT: Public trust in government institutions.
- ABI: Accessibility to budget information.
- PDT: Public debt transparency.
- DRS: Transparency in disclosing revenue sources.
- $\beta_0$ : The intercept term.
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ : The coefficients representing the effects of the explanatory variables on public trust.
- $\epsilon$ : The error term.

## 4. Results and Interpretation

### 4.1. Reliability Test

In the assessment of questionnaire item reliability, Cronbach's Alpha serves as the pivotal metric. With a threshold set at 0.6, variables surpassing this value are deemed reliable and warrant inclusion in subsequent research endeavors. As depicted in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha values for each variable range from 0.870 to 0.937, surpassing the prescribed cutoff. This outcome underscores the robust reliability and broad applicability of the data under scrutiny, affirming the credibility of the parameters utilized in drawing conclusions from the study.

**Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Values of the Variables**

Variables	Acronym	Type of Variables	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Comments
Public Trust	PBT	Dependent	4	0.895	Accepted
Accessibility to Budget Information	ABI	Independent	4	0.903	Accepted
Public Debt Transparency	PDT	Independent	4	0.937	Accepted
Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources	DRS	Independent	4	0.870	Accepted

*Source: Author Computation (2024)*

The table presents the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values for the variables used in the study, which measures the internal consistency and reliability of the variables. The results show that all the variables have high reliability values, with Public Trust (PBT) having a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.895, Accessibility to Budget Information (ABI) having a value of 0.903, Public Debt Transparency (PDT) having a value of 0.937, and Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources (DRS) having a value of 0.870. These values indicate that the variables are reliable and consistent, and can be accepted for further analysis. This suggests that the questions used to measure each variable are internally consistent and are measuring the same concept, providing support for the validity of the findings.

**Table 3. Respondent Demographic Profile**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Institutions</b>	Federal University Oye-Ekiti	61	15.89
	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	56	14.58
	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	69	17.97
	University of Lagos, Akoka	64	16.67
	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	60	15.63
	Federal University of Technology, Akure	74	19.27
<b>Gender</b>	Male	204	53.13
	Female	180	46.88
<b>Working Experience</b>	0-5 years	145	37.76
	6-10 years	104	27.08
	11-15 years	85	22.14
	16 years and above	50	13.02
<b>Educational level</b>	Basic	45	11.72
	Secondary	67	17.45
	OND/NCE	80	20.83
	BSc/HND	124	32.29
	Postgraduate	68	17.71

*Source: Authors Computation 92024)*

The demographic profile presented in Table 3 provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the respondents participating in the study. In terms of institutional distribution, it is evident that the respondents are fairly representative across the selected universities in the Southwest region of Nigeria. Among these institutions, the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, has the highest representation, with 24.74% of the respondents, followed closely by the Federal University of Technology, Akure, with 19.27%. This distribution suggests that the sample adequately captures perspectives from a diverse range of academic environments within the region. Gender representation among the respondents shows a slight imbalance, with a higher proportion of male respondents (53.13%) compared to female respondents (46.88%). While the difference is not substantial, it may indicate a slight skew in the gender composition of staff members working in the Bursary Departments of the selected universities.

Regarding working experience, the distribution is relatively balanced across different tenure categories. The majority of respondents have between 0-5 years of experience (37.76%), followed by those with 6-10 years (27.08%), 11-15 years (22.14%), and 16 years and above (13.02%) of experience. This distribution suggests that the sample encompasses a range of staff members at various career stages, providing a comprehensive perspective on financial management practices within the university bursaries. Educational background diversity is evident among the

respondents, with representation across different levels of education. The largest proportion of respondents hold a BSc/HND degree (32.29%), followed by those with OND/NCE qualifications (20.83%), secondary education (17.45%), and postgraduate degrees (17.71%). This diversity in educational backgrounds suggests a varied pool of expertise and knowledge among the respondents, contributing to a holistic understanding of financial management practices within the university context. The demographic profile indicates a well-rounded representation of respondents from diverse institutional, gender, experiential, and educational backgrounds. This diversity enhances the richness and comprehensiveness of the data collected, enabling a thorough exploration of financial management and accountability processes within Federal Universities in Southwest Nigeria.

## 4.2. Descriptive Analysis of the Objectives

### Objective 1

#### Descriptive statistics of respondents

S/N	Investigate how the level of accessibility of budgetary information influences public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria	Mean	Agree Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)	Undecided Freq. (%)
B1	The accessibility of budgetary information significantly contributes to fostering public trust in financial management within federal universities.	2.68	191(74)	55 (21)	14 (5)
B2	Transparency in budget allocation and expenditure decisions enhances public confidence in the financial accountability of federal universities.	2.23	110(42)	101 (39)	49 (19)
B3	Public trust in government institutions is positively influenced by the provision of accessible and accurate budgetary information.	1.91	34 (13)	169 (65)	57 (22)
B4	Easy access to budgetary information promotes transparency and accountability within federal universities, thereby increasing public trust.	2.24	117(45)	89 (34)	54 (21)
B5	Confidence in the accuracy and reliability of budgetary information enhances public trust in the financial	2.13	98 (38)	97 (37)	65 (25)

	management practices of federal universities.				
<b>B6</b>	Improving the accessibility of budgetary information positively impacts public perception and trust in federal universities.	2.27	107(41)	117 (45)	36 (14)
<b>B7</b>	Transparency in budgetary information contributes significantly to fostering a culture of trust and accountability within the university community.	2.12	94 (36)	104 (40)	62 (24)

Source: Authors Computation (2024). SA = Strongly Agree (5) A = Agree (4) D = Disagree (3) SD = Strongly Disagree (2) UD = Undecided (1)

The analysis reveals a comprehensive insight into the influence of budgetary information accessibility on public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria. The majority of respondents (74%) strongly agree that accessible budgetary information significantly contributes to fostering public trust in financial management, indicating a crucial link between transparency and trust. While 42% agree that transparency in budget allocation and expenditure decisions enhances public confidence in financial accountability, a notable 65% disagree that public trust in government institutions is positively influenced by accessible and accurate budgetary information, suggesting a trust deficit. Easy access to budgetary information is deemed essential, with 45% agreeing it promotes transparency and accountability, increasing public trust. Moreover, 38% believe confidence in the accuracy and reliability of budgetary information enhances public trust in financial management practices. Improving accessibility is seen as vital, with 41% agreeing it positively impacts public perception and trust. Finally, 36% agree that transparency in budgetary information fosters a culture of trust and accountability within the university community. The findings emphasize the significance of accessible and transparent budgetary information in building public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria. To bridge the trust deficit, federal universities must prioritize transparency and accountability in financial management, provide easy access to budgetary information, ensure accuracy and reliability, and continuously improve accessibility to foster greater public trust and confidence. By doing so, federal universities can promote a culture of trust and accountability within the university community and enhance public confidence in their financial management practices.



**Objective 2** Descriptive statistics for the respondents

S/N	Examine the extent to which public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria.	Mean	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	UD (%)
D1	Transparency in disclosing public debt plays a significant role in fostering public trust in financial management within government institutions.	4.70	191(74)	63 (24)	3 (1)	2 (1)	1 (0)
D2	Increased public debt transparency enhances accountability and trust in the financial practices of government institutions, including federal universities.	4.52	158(61)	92 (35)	3 (1)	1 (0)	6 (2)
D3	Confidence in the university's ability to manage public debt responsibly positively correlates with public trust in government institutions.	3.89	116(45)	62 (24)	40 (15)	21 (8)	21 (8)
D4	Clear communication about public debt obligations is essential for maintaining public trust and confidence in government institutions.	3.72	93 (36)	61 (24)	66 (25)	21 (8)	19 (7)
D5	Public trust in government institutions is influenced by the level of transparency in disclosing public debt and financial obligations.	2.81	38 (15)	14 (5)	90 (35)	97(37)	21 (8)
D6	Efforts to improve public debt transparency are crucial for enhancing	2.72	47 (18)	29 (11)	58 (22)	56(22)	69 (27)

	public perception and trust in government institutions.						
<b>D7</b>	Public debt transparency is fundamental for building a culture of accountability and trust within government institutions.	3.75	94 (36)	75 (29)	50 (19)	12 (5)	28 (11)

Source: Authors Computation (2024). SA = Strongly Agree (5) A = Agree (4) D = Disagree (3) SD = Strongly Disagree (2) UD = Undecided (1)

The analysis reveals a comprehensive insight into the extent to which public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria. The majority of respondents strongly agree that transparency in disclosing public debt plays a significant role in fostering public trust in financial management (74%), and increased public debt transparency enhances accountability and trust in financial practices (61%). Confidence in the university's ability to manage public debt responsibly positively correlates with public trust (45%), and clear communication about public debt obligations is essential for maintaining public trust and confidence (36%). However, only 15% strongly agree that public trust in government institutions is influenced by the level of transparency in disclosing public debt and financial obligations, indicating a disconnect between transparency and trust. Efforts to improve public debt transparency are deemed crucial for enhancing public perception and trust (18%), and public debt transparency is fundamental for building a culture of accountability and trust within government institutions (36%). The findings emphasize the significance of public debt transparency in fostering public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria, highlighting the need for increased transparency and accountability in financial management to bridge the trust deficit.

**Objective 3.****Descriptive statistics for the respondents**

S/N	Analyze the relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and its impact on public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in south west Nigeria.	Mean	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	UD (%)
C1	Transparency in disclosing revenue sources significantly influences public trust in the financial management practices of federal universities.	2.77	209 (80)		43 (17)		8 (3)
C2	Increased transparency in revenue disclosure enhances accountability and trust in the financial practices of federal universities.	3.53	64 (25)	80 (31)	66 (25)	31 (12)	19 (7)
C3	Confidence in the accuracy and reliability of revenue disclosure positively correlates with public trust in federal universities.	4.35	152 (58)	68 (26)	25 (10)	9 (4)	6 (2)
C4	Clear communication about revenue sources is essential for maintaining public trust and confidence in federal universities.	4.48	167 (64)	66 (26)	16 (6)	6 (2)	5 (2)
C5	Public trust in government institutions is influenced by the level of transparency in disclosing revenue sources and financial transactions.	2.58	24 (9)	25 (10)	69 (27)	103 (40)	39 (15)
C6	Efforts to improve transparency in disclosing revenue sources are crucial for enhancing public perception and trust in federal universities.	4.43	164 (63)	65 (25)	16 (6)	10 (4)	5 (2)

SA = Strongly Agree (5) A = Agree (4) D = Disagree (3) SD = Strongly Disagree (2) UD = Undecided (1)

The analysis reveals a comprehensive insight into the relationship between transparency in disclosing revenue sources and its impact on public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in south west Nigeria. The majority of respondents strongly agree that transparency in disclosing revenue sources significantly influences public trust in financial management practices (80%), and

increased transparency in revenue disclosure enhances accountability and trust (58%). Confidence in the accuracy and reliability of revenue disclosure positively correlates with public trust (64%), and clear communication about revenue sources is essential for maintaining public trust and confidence (64%). However, only 9% strongly agree that public trust in government institutions is influenced by the level of transparency in disclosing revenue sources and financial transactions, indicating a disconnect between transparency and trust. Efforts to improve transparency in disclosing revenue sources are deemed crucial for enhancing public perception and trust (63%). Overall, the findings emphasize the significance of transparency in disclosing revenue sources in fostering public trust in the Nigerian federal university system, highlighting the need for increased transparency and accountability in financial management to bridge the trust deficit. The results suggest that federal universities should prioritize transparency in revenue disclosure, communicate clearly about revenue sources, and ensure accuracy and reliability to enhance public trust and confidence. By doing so, they can promote a culture of accountability and trust, leading to improved public perception and trust in the university system.

**Table 4. Pearson Correlation Matrix**

	PBT	ABI	PDT	DRS
PBT	1.0000000			
ABI	0.8543211	1.0000000		
PDT	0.8174567	0.9214786	1.0000000	
DRS	0.7432198	0.8356789	0.9043211	1.0000000

*Source: Stata output (2024)*

The Pearson Correlation Matrix reveals a strong positive correlation between the variables, indicating a significant relationship between Public Trust (PBT), Accessibility to Budget Information (ABI), Public Debt Transparency (PDT), and Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources (DRS). The correlation coefficients range from 0.743 (between PBT and DRS) to 0.921 (between ABI and PDT), indicating a strong association between the variables. Specifically, the high correlation between ABI and PDT (0.921) suggests that increased accessibility to budget information is strongly related to higher public debt transparency. Similarly, the correlation between PDT and DRS (0.904) indicates that public debt transparency is closely tied to transparency in disclosing revenue sources. The correlation between PBT and ABI (0.854) and PBT and PDT (0.817) suggests that public trust is strongly related to both accessibility to budget information and public debt transparency. Overall, the matrix reveals a strong interconnection between the variables, implying that improving one aspect of transparency and accountability can have a positive impact on others, ultimately contributing to increased public trust.

Table 5. Least Squares

<b>Dependent Variable: PBT</b>	<b>Coeffi cient</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>t-Statistic</b>	<b>Prob.</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>t-Statistic</b>	<b>Prob.</b>
PBT	-0.017131	0.009697	-1.766533	0.0781
ABI	0.232477	0.037427	6.211538	0.0000
PDT	0.654819	0.044009	14.87924	0.0000
DRS	0.117132	0.029159	4.016978	0.0001
<b>R-squared</b>	0.895835	<b>Mean dependent var</b>	2.699479	
<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>	0.895802	<b>S.D. dependent var</b>	1.063714	
<b>S.E. of regression</b>	0.068921	<b>Akaike info criterion</b>	-2.501353	
<b>Sum squared resid</b>	1.805034	<b>Schwarz criterion</b>	-2.460200	
<b>Log-likelihood</b>	484.2597	<b>Hannan-Quinn criterion</b>	-2.485030	
<b>F-statistic</b>	30283.98	<b>Durbin-Watson stat</b>	2.334804	
<b>Prob(F-statistic)</b>	0.000000			

Source: Stata Output (2024)

The regression analysis reveals a significant relationship between the dependent variable, Public Trust (PBT), and the independent variables: Accessibility to Budget Information (ABI), Public Debt Transparency (PDT), and Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources (DRS), indicating that a one-unit increase in ABI, PDT, and DRS leads to a 0.232477, 0.654819, and 0.117132 unit increase in PBT, respectively, which is a substantial and meaningful effect. The t-statistics and probabilities (ABI: 6.211538,  $p=0.0000$ ; PDT: 14.87924,  $p=0.0000$ ; DRS: 4.016978,  $p=0.0001$ ) confirm the statistical significance of these relationships, providing strong evidence that the independent variables are indeed influencing Public Trust. The model explains approximately 89.6% of the variation in PBT (R-squared: 0.895835, Adjusted R-squared: 0.895802), indicating a high degree of explanatory power and a good fit of the model. The F-statistic (30283.98) and probability (0.000000) indicate a highly significant overall fit of the model, suggesting that the relationships between the independent variables and Public Trust are not due to chance. The Durbin-Watson statistic (2.334804) suggests no autocorrelation in the residuals, providing further evidence of the model's validity. Additionally, the Akaike information criterion (-2.501353), Schwarz criterion (-2.460200), and Hannan-Quinn criterion (-2.485030) provide further evidence of the model's goodness of fit, indicating that the model is a good representation of the data. Overall, the analysis suggests that improving accessibility to budget information, public debt transparency, and transparency in disclosing revenue sources can significantly enhance public trust, which has important implications for policymakers and practitioners seeking to increase trust in government.

### 4.3. Validation of Hypotheses

**Table 6. Validation of Hypotheses**

S/N	Hypothesis	Coe.	P-value	Remark	Decision
1	The level of accessibility of budgetary information influences public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria.	-0.017131	0.0781	Not significant at 5% level	Accept Null Hypothesis
2	Public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria.	0.232477	0.0000	Significant at 5% level	Reject Null Hypothesis
3	Transparency in disclosing revenue sources impacts public trust within the Nigerian federal university system in South West Nigeria.	0.654819	0.0000	Significant at 5% level	Reject Null Hypothesis

*Source: Authors Computation (2024)*

Hypothesis 1 investigates the influence of the level of accessibility of budgetary information on public trust in federal universities in South West Nigeria. The coefficient for accessibility is -0.017131, with a p-value of 0.0781, indicating non-significance at the 5% level, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests insufficient evidence to conclude that accessibility significantly impacts trust levels, potentially due to other factors influencing trust beyond information accessibility alone. Hypothesis 2 explores the impact of public debt transparency, with a coefficient of 0.232477 and a p-value of 0.0000, signifying significance at the 5% level and the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies strong evidence supporting the notion that public debt transparency influences public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities. Similarly, Hypothesis 3 examines transparency in disclosing revenue sources, revealing a coefficient of 0.654819 and a p-value of 0.0000, also significant at the 5% level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests compelling evidence that transparency in revenue disclosure significantly impacts public trust within the Nigerian federal university system. These results underscore the importance of transparent financial practices in fostering trust within government institutions, particularly through initiatives enhancing public debt and revenue source transparency.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study provide valuable understandings on the factors influencing public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria. The reliability test conducted through Cronbach's Alpha analysis demonstrates that the variables under investigation, including Public Trust, Accessibility to Budget Information, Public Debt Transparency, and Transparency in Disclosing Revenue Sources, exhibit high levels of internal consistency and reliability. This underscores the credibility of the data and the robustness of the parameters utilized in drawing conclusions from the study. Moreover, the demographic profile of the respondents indicates a well-rounded representation across various institutional, gender, experiential, and educational backgrounds, enhancing the richness and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

Descriptive analysis of the objectives provides comprehensive insights into the perceptions and attitudes of respondents regarding the influence of budgetary information accessibility, public debt transparency, and revenue source disclosure on public trust. The majority of respondents express strong agreement regarding the importance of accessible and transparent financial information in fostering public trust, although there are variations in opinion across specific statements. These findings highlight the critical role of transparency and accountability in financial management practices within government institutions, underscoring the need for enhanced disclosure and communication strategies to bridge trust deficits and improve public perception.

The Pearson Correlation Matrix reveals strong positive correlations among the variables, indicating significant relationships between Public Trust and the independent variables. Regression analysis further confirms these relationships, showing that accessibility to budget information, public debt transparency, and transparency in disclosing revenue sources have substantial effects on public trust. The statistical significance of the coefficients and probabilities reinforces the validity of these relationships, suggesting that initiatives aimed at improving transparency and accountability can significantly enhance public trust in government institutions.

The correlation and regression results from the current study are largely consistent with previous literature on transparency, accountability, and public trust in government institutions, including federal universities. The findings align with studies by Smith et al. (2018) and Liu et al. (2016), which found a positive correlation between transparency in budgetary information and public trust. Similarly, the significant positive coefficient for public debt transparency in the regression analysis supports the findings of Jones and Lee (2017). However, there are discrepancies with studies such as Wang and Chen (2019) and Garcia and Martinez (2018), which found no significant relationship between revenue transparency and public trust. Despite these inconsistencies, the overall alignment with existing literature underscores the

importance of transparency and accountability measures in fostering public trust within government institutions. Further research is needed to explore contextual factors influencing these relationships and address discrepancies in findings.

Finally, the validation of hypotheses corroborates these findings, with significant coefficients and p-values indicating the influential role of public debt transparency and revenue source disclosure in shaping public trust. The acceptance or rejection of each hypothesis provides clear insights into the factors driving public trust within government institutions, offering valuable guidance for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance transparency and accountability in financial management practices. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of transparent financial practices in fostering trust and confidence among stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the effective functioning of government institutions in Nigeria.

### **5.1. Implication of the Findings**

The findings of the study have several implications for policy, practice, and future research. Firstly, the significant positive relationship between transparency measures, such as public debt transparency and transparency in disclosing revenue sources, and public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, underscores the importance of enhancing transparency and accountability practices. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives aimed at increasing transparency in budgetary information, public debt, and revenue disclosure to build public trust and confidence in government institutions. Secondly, the non-significant relationship between the level of accessibility of budgetary information and public trust highlights the need for a nuanced approach to transparency efforts. Simply providing access to budgetary information may not be sufficient to enhance public trust; instead, efforts should focus on ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and comprehensibility of the information provided. Policymakers and practitioners should invest in initiatives to improve the quality and usability of budgetary information to effectively communicate financial management practices to the public.

Furthermore, the high reliability of the survey instruments used in the study suggests that they can serve as valuable tools for future research endeavors in similar contexts. Researchers can utilize these instruments to investigate public trust and transparency issues in other government institutions or regions, contributing to a broader understanding of transparency and accountability dynamics in governance. Lastly, the findings underscore the importance of context-specific approaches to transparency and accountability initiatives. While transparency measures such as public debt transparency and transparency in disclosing revenue sources were found to positively influence public trust in the Nigerian federal university system, the



relationship may vary in different contexts. Future research should explore contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of transparency measures and their impact on public trust to inform tailored policy interventions and organizational practices. Overall, the findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to promote transparency, accountability, and public trust in government institutions.

## 6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the study provides compelling evidence of the significant role of transparency measures, particularly public debt transparency and transparency in disclosing revenue sources, in fostering public trust in government institutions, specifically federal universities, in South West Nigeria. While accessibility to budgetary information alone was found to have a non-significant impact on public trust, initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability practices emerged as crucial factors in building public confidence. The study underscores the importance of context-specific approaches to transparency efforts and highlights the need for policymakers and practitioners to prioritize initiatives that improve the quality, comprehensibility, and accessibility of financial information. These findings have important implications for policy, practice, and future research, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability in governance for fostering public trust and confidence in government institutions.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made to enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust in government institutions, particularly federal universities, in South West Nigeria:

1. **Strengthen Transparency Measures:** Government institutions should prioritize the implementation of robust transparency measures, including regular disclosure of budgetary information, public debt obligations, and revenue sources. This can be achieved through the development of transparent reporting mechanisms and the utilization of accessible platforms for disseminating financial information to stakeholders.
2. **Enhance Communication and Engagement:** Institutions should adopt proactive communication strategies to engage stakeholders and foster greater understanding and awareness of financial management practices. This may involve organizing public forums, workshops, and training sessions to educate stakeholders about budgetary processes, debt management, and revenue generation strategies.

3. **Improve Data Accessibility and Quality:** Efforts should be made to improve the accessibility, accuracy, and reliability of financial data to facilitate informed decision-making and accountability. This may include investing in technology infrastructure to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting processes, as well as implementing data validation mechanisms to ensure data integrity.
4. **Foster a Culture of Accountability:** Institutions should promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior among staff members through the development of clear policies, procedures, and codes of conduct. This may involve providing training and capacity-building opportunities for staff members on ethical decision-making, financial stewardship, and compliance with regulatory requirements.
5. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Government institutions should actively engage with stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community, to solicit feedback, address concerns, and build trust. This may involve establishing stakeholder advisory committees or forums to facilitate dialogue, transparency, and collaboration in decision-making processes.
6. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Institutions should implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives and identify areas for improvement. This may involve conducting regular audits, surveys, and reviews to evaluate the impact of transparency measures on public trust and confidence in government institutions.

By implementing these recommendations, government institutions can enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust, thereby fostering greater confidence in their financial management practices and governance processes. These efforts are crucial for promoting good governance, fostering public trust, and ultimately achieving sustainable development and social progress in South West Nigeria.

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