Effect of internal audit practices on Aggregate Fiscal Discipline of Government Organizations in Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 350 staff in the five surveyed government organizations in Nigeria. The study through the use of Monkey Survey, sampled 310 staff/respondents from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC) and validly used 310 respondents representing 88.57% response rate for data analysis. Risk assessment; asset safeguard and auditor independence were used as the dimensions of internal audit practices in this study. The study used aggregate fiscal discipline, as the dependent variable. The study used a questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The study applied descriptive and inferential statistical tools to analyze the data and test the hypotheses with the help of SPSS 22.0. The study found that risk assessment has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline; asset safeguard has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline and auditor independence has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline. The study concludes that the use of internal auditing to maintain aggregate fiscal of government organizations has been very effective and it has helped in diverse ways to transform many government organizations to achieve the reasons for their existence. The study therefore recommends that government organizations' staff should update their knowledge with respect to internal audit practices and the opportunities provided by digital measurement solutions of information and communication technology orientation so as to be able to benefit from the strategic values of effective and efficient aggregate fiscal discipline.

Keywords: *Internal Audit Practices, Aggregate Fiscal Discipline, Risk Assessment, Asset Safeguard, Auditor Independence, Government Organizations*

INTRODUCTION

It is argued that the historically centralized and hierarchical structure of the public sector with its complex bureaucratic procedures tend to provide some level of comfort to those entrusted with the disbursement of public funds. Consequent upon some layers of control embedded in the public sector, those responsible do not often see the need for another institutional layer (internal audit) to strengthen public assurance of accountability (Abba& Kakanda, 2017).
Organizations' internal auditors play the role of undertaking an independent examinations and giving assurance on various operations of institutions aimed at enhancing organizational performance every day (Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA, 2010). This enables an organization to meet its operational objectives through well thought-out and dedicated approaches to evaluate and improve on how best to manage risk, institute effective controls and enhance governance. The broad view of internal audit places it more centrally as an important element

of public expenditure management that also encompasses management controls and information communication processes (Adedokun, 2014).
Internal auditing principles offer quality reporting without due interference from top management in all processes and transactions undertaken and provide responses as to whether the agent has used the resources as intended and expected by the set rules (Adeniji, 2011). Independence is promoted through established reporting structure by the organization and should be clear to all parties focusing on achieving an appropriate mind-set.
The basic functions of internal auditors are directed towards evaluating whether operations were carried out in accordance with the set rules and regulations, set governance structures as well as systems that manage information in a bid to promote preciseness in undertaking transactions (Adedokun, 2014). In addition, internal auditors evaluate issues of integrity in a firm, measure systems and information flow to attain accountability and transparency in financial reporting (IIA, 2006). The other function of internal auditors is to offer direction on the best measures to avert occurrence of chances or deficits that may arise, as well as providing certainty to institutions audit committee's and top management in ensuring objectives are well set (Muhibat, 2016).

Public institutions are required to support the internal auditor to learn effectively on all if not most issues faced by public institutions by understanding the daily risks and constraints in public organizations systems and formulating strategies that will enable the internal auditors to work as a team to identify and address all risks (Abba & Kakanda, 2017). A good internal auditor is one who undertakes his role efficiently and effectively and enables the achievement of good governance systems in any given public institution (Belay 2007). The internal auditors' functions are affected by credibility issues hindering their capability to perform their duties in promoting transparency, accountability and good governance.

This study is necessitated by the fact that over the years, the public sector organizations have been receiving large sums of money from governments for economic and social development; yet the result on ground has been extremely disappointing. Public expenditure has failed to translate into politically desired and expected goals. Hence, the need to examine the impact of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study
The study achieved the following specific objectives:

i). To determine the effect of risk assessment on aggregate fiscal discipline of public expenditure management.

ii). To investigate the effect of asset safeguard on aggregate fiscal discipline.

iii) To determine the effect of auditor's independence on aggregate fiscal discipline of public expenditure management.

Research Questions
For the purposes of proper evaluation, the effect of internal audit practices on public expenditure management in Nigeria, the following research questions were asked:

i). To what extent does risk assessment affect aggregate fiscal discipline of aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria?

ii). What is the effect of asset safeguard on aggregate fiscal discipline of public expenditure management?

iii) Does auditor's independence have any effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of public expenditure management?

Research Hypotheses

This research investigated the effect of internal audit practices on public expenditure management in Nigeria.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses relating to the purpose and problems of the study have been formulated and tested:

Ho_1: Risk assessment has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline

Ho_2: Asset safeguard has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline

Ho_3: Auditors' independence has no significant effect aggregate fiscal discipline.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

This study evaluated the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria. In carrying out the study, three dimensions of internal audit practices (independent variables or predictor variables) namely; risk assessment, asset safeguard and auditor independence were examined. These dimensions have been adopted in line with the works of Gorzen-Mitka (2015), Arnold and Artz (2015) and Su, Baird and Schoch (2015).

Also, the key dependent or criterion variable was aggregate fiscal discipline. The study adopted part of the classifications of aggregate fiscal discipline espoused by Abba and Kakanda (2017); Bedford and Malmi (2015) and Shields (2015).

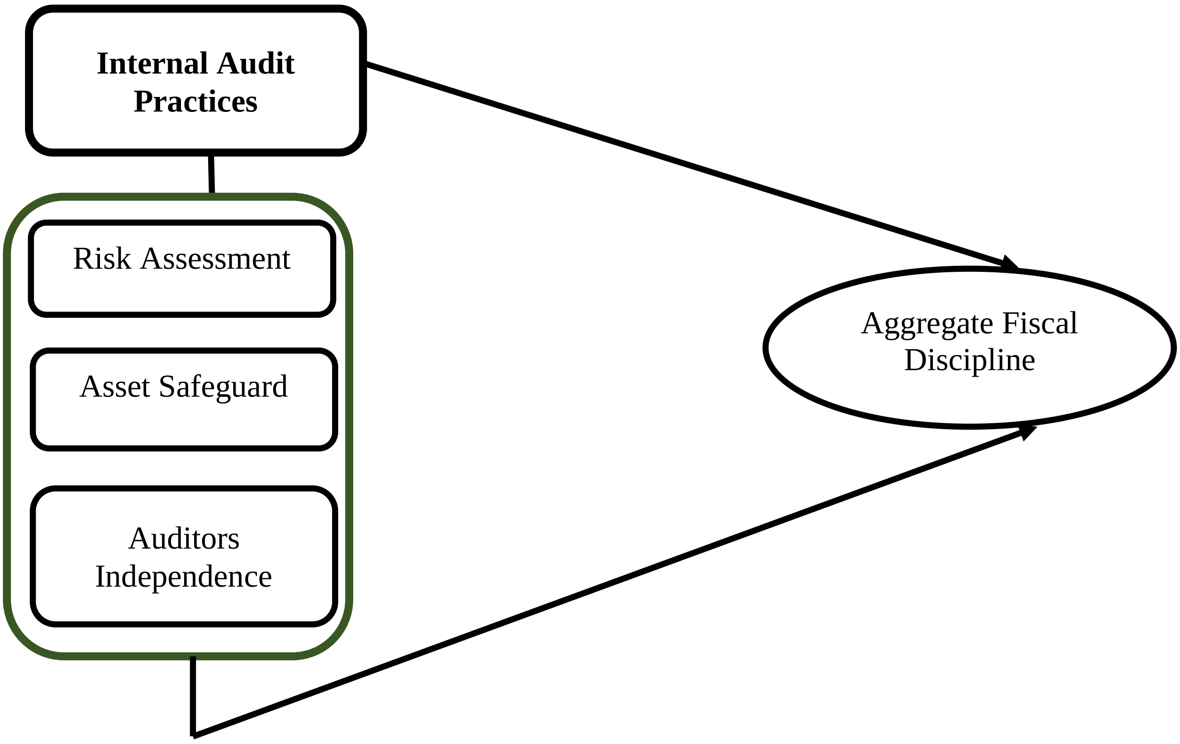

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Effect of Internal Audit Practices on Aggregate Fiscal Discipline of Government Organisations in Nigeria

Source: Sanusi, F. A., & Mustapha, M. B. (2015). The effectiveness of budgetary control system and financial accountability at local government level in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Business Management (IMPACT: IJRBM), 3* (8).

Internal Audit Practices

The objectives of internal audit are unarguably broad but governments differ in their commitment to them. This is why it is generally asserted that the effectiveness of internal audit can only be as good as the commitment of government to pursue these objectives. According to Unegbu and Obi (2012), internal audit is part of the internal control system put in place by management of an organization to ensure adherence to stipulated work procedure and as an aid to management. They believe that internal audit measures, analyses and evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of other controls established by management in order to ensure smooth administration, control cost minimization, capacity utilization and maximum benefit derivation. This implies that internal audit is an integral part of a complex system designed by the management of any organization to ensure orderly conduct of its business and prevent abuse of assets.

Deepak (2010) sees internal audit as an independent and objective assurance and consulting function designed to help an organization to achieve its objectives. He identifies the objectives to include: Effectiveness and efficiency of operations (programmes and projects), reliability of financial and operational information, safeguarding of assets, compliance with rules and regulations and prevention and detection of fraud.

Vos (1997), states that the internal auditor's main objective is to evaluate effectiveness of financial and operating control, confirm compliance with company policies, procedure, protect assets, verify the accuracy and consistency of organization's external and internal reports. While Suyono and Hariyanto (2012), believe that the objective of internal audit is to evaluate several of the organization's reports for accuracy and usefulness and also recommending improvement of the control system, Owler and Brown (2009) argue that the objective of internal auditor is to protect management against errors of principle and neglect of duty.

Adeniji (2011) states that internal audit is part of the internal control system put in place by management of an organization.

He believes it is an aid to management which ensures that the financial operations are correctly carried out according to the law and so in accordance with the wishes of the board or council. DeSmet and Mention (2011), while corroborating the views of Owler and Brown (2009), extends the objective of internal audit to include review of the operations and record of the undertaking and in course of these checks, much of the detailed work of the organization in respect of financial and other statements are effectively audited.

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) (1999) defines internal auditing as an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It assists an organization to achieve its objectives by bringing a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

DeSmet and Mention (2011) contend that the aim of internal auditing is to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness through constructive criticism. This means that identification of areas of weakness and suggestions for improvement are in themselves a thrust of internal auditing. Little wonder Sawyer (1995) state that internal auditor's job is not done until defects are corrected and remain corrected.

Rotich (2015), argues that there should be effective internal audit procedures to ensure reliability of financial statements, operational reports, safeguarding corporate assets and effective organizational controls. Ogundiya (2010) maintains that higher education not only enables a state to maintain a competitive advantage but it also stimulates scientific research that results in modernization and social transformation. On this basis, Ogundiya (2010), further

proposes that governments should financially support their institutions of higher education. The Universities are increasingly being pushed towards greater accountability and a display of greater sensitivity to the needs of its stakeholders. At the same time, as the institutions are taking on greater responsibility due to the fast rate of expansion, the level of its financial support from the government is reducing in real terms (Abbott, Parker, Peter & Raghunandan, 2013). It is therefore imperative that it makes very bold steps towards enhancing its governance structure, including increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the Internal Audit Function.
The audit function has become an integral part of government financial management and an instrument for improving performance in the public sector. Internal audit undertakes reviews of individual systems and processes and consequently makes recommendations to heads of public sector entities on how internal controls could be improved. The internal audit function is in a good position to help senior management of public institutions to identify risks, suggest risk management strategies and, ultimately, provide assurance that the risks are being appropriately managed (Ngugi, 2011).

Internal auditors are an important part of the internal control environment of entities, representing the highest level of control that measure and evaluate the effectiveness of other controls. Additionally, to the financial controls, the internal auditor's scope includes the evaluation and testing of control effectiveness, and other assurance and consulting services to the management (Alaswad & Stanišić, 2016).
The standards also state the independence and objectivity conditions for internal auditors during the performance of their work. The need of freedom from conditions, bias, and subordination of judgment, or conflict of interest that impairs their ability to perform objectively, is rigorously presented in the standards. Additionally, the competencies, knowledge, and skills that an auditor must possess are described as well as the due professional care requirement for the performance of the engagement as important elements of the IIA standards (Alaswad & Stanišić, 2016).
According to Shields (2015), Internal Auditing is the review of operations and records sometimes undertaken within the business by especially assigned staff. It is also an independent appraisal function established within an organization to examine and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of managements control system (Suyono & Hariyanto, 2012).

Risk Assessment
Broadly speaking, a risk assessment is the combined effort of: Identifying and analyzing potential events that may negatively impact individuals, assets, and/or the environment; and making judgments on the tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis while considering influencing factors (Shields, 2015). Vijayakumar and Nagaraja (2012) see risk assessment as a term used to describe the overall process or method where you: Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification). Analyze and evaluate the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis, and risk evaluation).

Put in simpler terms, a risk assessment analyzes what can go wrong, how likely it is to happen, what the potential consequences are, and how tolerable the identified risk is. As part of this process, the resulting determination of risk may be expressed in a quantitative or qualitative fashion. The risk assessment is an inherent part of an overall risk management strategy, which attempts to, after a risk assessment, introduce control measures to eliminate or reduce any potential risk-related consequences (ICAN study pack, 2006).

The internal audit function is uniquely embedded within the organization to render universal pledge to board and management on the efficacy of internal governance and uncertainty. It ensures an advocacy role in respect to improved ways of assisting management in implementing recommended processes. This framework helps internal auditing to be a key cornerstone of an organization's corporate governance (Unegbu & Kida, 2011).

Risk assessment is the determination of actions/inactions that may affect an organization's operations. It refers to the processes and approaches used by managers of an entity to determine the chances of happenings of possible risks in whichever industry they operate in and then the devising of ways to minimize or mitigate those risks (Mihret & Yismaw, 2007). Risks have got a serious bearing on public expenditure management, if not contained; it will affect the intended outcome (Monday & Aladeraji, 2015). Risk assessment has two components; first, risk identification that require a firm to conduct systematic internal evaluation, industry analysis using Michael Porter's approach. Internal risks such as strategic risk, operational risk, governance and financial risks; these are easy to mitigate since the management has a hand in their control as opposed to external risks which are beyond the control of the management. The external risks which are beyond management control include events like political risk, economic risk, legislative risk, compliance and technological risk.

Risk evaluation refers to process of analyzing the likelihood of the occurrence of the threat by categorizing them into high, medium and low chance of happening. Once risks are identified and evaluated, the management can transfer the risk by means of insurance, subcontracting or outsourcing, reduce the risk through raising staff awareness, putting security measures in place, diversification, strengthening of internal controls, good staff recruitment and training; conducting research and development and developing quality control measures over production of goods and services, accept the risk by doing nothing, hope for the best, and lastly to avoid the risk by not allowing the organization to engage in high-risk ventures (Modar & Shatha, 2015).

Asset Safeguard

Safeguarding of assets is defined as those policies and procedures that provide reasonable assurance regarding prevention or timely detection of unauthorized acquisition, use or disposal of the company's assets that could have a material consequence on the financial statements (Chenhall & Moers, 2015).

How to make internal audit effective has been an area of common interest to many. This has been responsible for the divergent views of authors on this concept. To that effect, the Institute of Internal Audit (2010) sees internal audit effectiveness as the degree (including quality) to which established objectives are achieved. Vijayakumar and Nagaraja (2012) appear to be concerned more with the outcome of effective internal audit system which they argue helps in achieving performance, profitability and prevents loss of revenues particularly in public sectors.

While Shoommuangpak and Ussahawanitchakit (2009) view audit effectiveness as achieving audit's objective by gathering of sufficient and appropriate audit evidence in order to express reasonable opinion regarding the financial statements compliance with generally acceptable accounting principles, Mizrahi and Ness-Weisman (2007) express audit effectiveness as the number and scope of deficiencies corrected following the audited process.

Alberta (2005) as cited in Mu'azu and Siti (2013) states that effective internal audit professionals should possess the following characteristics: Ability to align the structure of internal audit with the dynamics of the organizational operation; There should be strong relationship between management skills for maintaining appropriate visibility and audit committee needs and expectations; There should be strong service delivery capabilities (consistency in approach, standards, and delivery, including the abilities to maintain audit focus and alignment of resources to the plan; There should also be strong management skills which will ensure that internal audit can have appropriate skills and motivation. Besides the above, the level of training, education, experiences as well as professional qualifications of the internal auditors influence the effectiveness of internal audit. The above characteristics are essential and we see them as building blocks to effective internal audit system (Ademola, Adedoyin & Alade, 2015).

Belay (2007) and DeSmet and Mention (2011) are of the opinion that attributes of effective internal control include "organizational independence, a formal mandate(existence of approved audit charter, unrestricted access, sufficient staff, existence of audit committee, stakeholder support, professional audit standards and unlimited scope. In a related development, Mu'azu and Siti (2013) believe that effective internal audit service should aspire to understand the whole organization, its needs and objectives, understand its position with respect to the organization's other resources of assurance and plan its work accordingly; be seen as catalyst for change at the heart of the organization; and value and assist the organization in achieving its objectives; help to shape the ethics and standards of the organization, ensure the right resources are available and seek opportunities for joint working with other organizations'. A cursory look at the above reveals the holistic nature of the expectations of effective internal audit system from a professional standpoint. It is more or less like setting the universal standard against which effectiveness of internal control would be assessed.

Adeniji, (2011) argued that amongst the not so fascinating but significant attributes of an organization's actions are internal controls, which encompasses safeguarding corporate assets. Accountants are required to carry out sound assessments to safeguard assets and rationally make sure that management's goals are realized in the direction of effective operations, dependable financial reporting and legal and regulatory compliance.

Alzeban (2015) advanced that Assets management involves continuous re-appraisal of business models in the light of emerging challenges. Therefore, in recognition of corporate stakeholders' expectation, there should be deliberate efforts to be vigilant about investment risks as the cycle revolves. Control a measure relating to safeguarding of assets in opposition to unlawful acquisition use or disposal is a process, perfected by an entity's board of directors, management and other personnel, designed to give sensible assertion regarding prevention or appropriate discovery of illegal acquisition, use, or dispossession of the business entity of its assets (Ali, Gloeck, Ahmi & Sahdan, 2007).

Erlina and Muda (2018) stated that, developing policy as to who has access and control over reliable aspects of company assets is the first step in appreciating at what point a risk of loss may occur. In recent time, business needs to execute controls above traditional physical safeguarding in order to improve business performance. There is dearth of scholarly contributions on the subject area or variable under examination, assets safeguard. The implications generated from this endeavour will aid the entrenchment of accountability and viable culture of safeguarding assets will be institutionalized. The existing research reports on the variables under study from previous studies drew attention far from the Nigerian situation, especially against the obvious consequences of in-balance in trade deficits due to ailing production culture and dwindling fortunes occasioned by slow pace or weak implementation of policies put in place to fast track the re-engineering and reinvigoration of the public sector of the economy (Ewa & Udoayang, 2012).

The non-current assets are subjected to annual wear and tear normally referred to as depreciation. With the exception of land which may appreciate in the non-current category of assets, other categories undergo amortization, whereas the wasting assets are subjected to the process of depletion. The method of depreciation adopted by management should be strictly adhered to and the consistency principle should prevail to avoid unnecessary discrepancy that may arise from assets valuation. The maintenance of assets register is very crucial, just as the preparation of 'debtors ageing analysis for business organizations makes for effective and efficient management of resources (Ewa & Udoayang, 2012).

In the same view, Deepak (2010) argued that the emphasis on efficiency in the use of organizational resources and using such resources aright. Assets are safeguarded against loss, damage and misuse.

The explanation advanced by Güneş and Atılgan (2016), that Off-Line-Control consists of on-going measures and procedures designed to provide reasonable assurance, that all significant actions of a business organization, are taken in accordance with organization's policies and with due regard for efficiency and the protection or safeguard of corporate assets. The on-line control function is more of an appraisal activity designed to evaluate the capabilities of an organization, to promote more efficient and effective controls through constructive recommendations of the unit responsible for the maintenance of the assets register. In order to safeguard corporate assets, organizations' records and documentation of transactions should be crosschecked by qualified and designated personnel for the maintenance of checks and balances in the system, the job of employees should be checked against one another (Awdat, 2015).

The achievement of a favorable result at the least cost of resources possible appears to enhance business performance (Henttu-Aho & Järvinen, 2013). The contributions made by scholars emphasizing the need for organizations assets to be safeguarded, had over the passage of time resulted to goal achievement and often time, effective business performance may have been realized and sustained. Güneş and Atılgan (2016) had a different view, on the issue of assets safeguard, that irrespective of the undue pressure on the internal audit staff, the internal auditor remains accountable to management and by extension the shareholders or owners of the business organization.

Auditor Independence

Auditor independence has been defined as the ability to resist client pressure (Alau & Abdulkadir, 2009). Similarly, Ahmad, Othman and Jusoff (2009) define auditor independence as having: "... freedom from situations and relationships which make it probable that a reasonable and informed third party would conclude that objectivity either is impaired or could be impaired". Independence is traditionally regarded as being one of the fundamental principles underlying the reliability of an auditor's report.

An auditors' report would not be deemed credible and investors and creditors would have little confidence in it, if auditors were not independent in both fact and appearance (Ama, 2009); Amans, Mazars-Chapelon & Villesèque-Dubus, 2015). The independence of auditors has been a major concern for some time. In recent years, it has become even more distinctive, given the collapse of Enron, which resulted in the closure of Arthur Andersen, one of the major international accounting firms (Amudo & Inanga, 2009). Andersen's audit of Enron may have been the most notable failure of auditor independence, but it was by no means the first, the largest, or the last (ANAO, 2014). Enron was a very important client of Andersen's, and due to its long association with the company, Andersen's auditors failed to uncover the wrongdoing that went on at Enron as soon as it had occurred (Anderson, Christ, Dekker & Sedatole, 2014). People rely extensively on the advice of experts. Often, these experts face conflicts of interest between their own self-interest and their professional obligation to provide good advice. A central concern in the Enron post-mortem has been to explain why Enron's auditor, Arthur Anderson, failed to act as an independent gatekeeper of reliable and transparent financial information (Kershaw, 2006; Moore et al, 2006). To be credible, an auditor's opinion must be based on an objective and disinterested assessment of whether the financial statements are presented fairly in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). If this is complied with to the auditor's best ability, this, in turn, will mean that users will have more confidence in audited financial statements and that there will be greater certainty in the capital markets (Erlina & Muda, 2018).

According to Bourmistrov and Kaarbøe (2013) Ernst & Young became the latest auditors to come under fire after "the court appointed examiner in the Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc bankruptcy said the audit firm did not challenge accounting gimmicks that allowed Lehman to hide some $50 billion in assets in 2008, while claiming it had reduced its overall leverage levels. Also, Richard Scalzo, of PWC, was Tyco International's lead auditor for many years and has been barred from working on any part of a public company's finances as he had been overlooking material facts in his audit of Tyco. Investigators were left wondering how Tyco's auditor for eight years, could have "missed the hundreds of millions of dollars in unreported, misappropriated and misrepresented compensation doled out among Tyco higher-ups during the tenure of ex-Chairman L. Dennis Kozlowski" (Esu & Iyang, 2009). These revelations brought the accounting profession under the scrutiny of many regulators including the APB and Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA). The scrutiny increased after apparent audit failures were reported at WorldCom, Xerox, Global Crossing and more recently Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. Lawmakers believe that the accounting profession has failed to regulate itself in a manner that promotes confidence in the published financial statements of public corporations (Brinckmann & Kim, 2015).

In light of these scandals, Congress in the US passed the SOX Act to prescribe new requirements and restrictions for auditors of publicly traded companies (Chambers, 2009)). Although there have been no comparable failures, brought forward as of yet in the United Kingdom (UK) or Ireland, where the regulatory framework has been claimed to be more robust (CIPFA, 2006), public reassurance was needed. The UK Government rapidly instigated reviews of key aspects of the UK regulatory framework and a key concern was highlighted regarding the adequacy of the framework for auditor independence (Cohen & Sayag, 2010).

The concept of autonomy refers to the dimension of conflicts of interest that require the Internal Auditor to be independent on the activities of his review, and to be away from the influence of the party that performs the audit of its operations, and that means a sense of practitioners that they are able to make decisions without pressure or docility to those who are making an impact on them The objective concept relates to the quality of the estimates and decisions and judgments and quality out of the state of mind experienced by the internal auditor, in the sense that the objective is a product of independence, and that the absence of independency element for internal auditor loses the ability to add any value to the institution, that mean the audit operation lose the add value, it is that the concept of independency is absolute value and difficult to apply, the internal auditor is closely linked to the organization is contractually as an employee within the organization (Arena & Azzone, 2009).

Aggregate Fiscal Discipline through Budget

Instilling aggregate fiscal discipline is not as simple as it sounds. There is a fundamental problem that makes it difficult to achieve. That problem is what economists refer to as the "tragedy of the commons" or the common pool problem. Imagine a small fishing village with 10 families. Every day, the head of each family goes out to catch fish in the river. As far as he is concerned, the fish is free. The only costs to him are the depreciation on his boat and fishing equipment, fuel, food for the day, and perhaps some bait for the fish. Now, people have a natural tendency to get as much as they can of anything that is of value that is given for free. Hence, a fisherman will have a tendency to catch as much fish as possible until he tires out. All ten of the fishermen will thus tend to "over-fish (De Baerdemaeker & Bruggeman, 2015).

For as long as there are only 10 families, this should not pose much of a problem. But suppose now that over time the number of families increases to 100. Suppose further that they each "modernize" by adopting dynamite fishing "technology." Then quite clearly in due time the fish will disappear since the rate of fishing will far surpass the natural rate of reproduction. The village eventually becomes impoverished. The annual budget is somewhat like the common pool of fish in the river. Each claimant to the budget considers the budget as a "free" resource since his or her demand is such a small proportion of the total budget and therefore will not impose much of a loss to the total. But, of course, if every claimant behaved this way, the aggregate of their demands will far exceed what is available. Hence, absent any constraint, meeting the demands of desperate claimants to the budget is likely to result in large, unsustainable deficits that translate into an unstable macroeconomic environment — high inflation, high interest rates, burgeoning current account deficits – all of which will necessarily retard economic growth and efforts to reduce poverty (Erlina & Muda, 2018).

A common pool resource such as the fish in the river has the problematic property of being "free" though it is of some value to people. According to Agyei-Mensah (2016), the trick here is to find an institutional arrangement that introduces a cost or price to the resource that is commensurate to its value. In the case of the annual budget, what has proven effective is the imposition of a credible hard budget constraint – total spending during the year cannot exceed a pre-determined, immovable amount. What this does is it forces claimants to the budget to make trade– offs. Building a bridge costing x dollars means giving up some other project costing x dollars. That is, a hard budget constraint effectively introduces an implicit price to any program or activity (economists call this the opportunity cost of the program or project).

A claimant knows that he will not be able to get all he or she wants since anything he claims will take something away from someone else and that someone else is bound to complain and could block his or her claim, i.e. there is a price to get the things he wants. Claimants thus make trade-offs among the various programs that they want funded — they prioritize. Consequently, the resulting claims on the budget tend to be more rational or reasonable. They do not burst the budget. Sweden has an interesting arrangement that sets credible budget ceilings (Bedford & Malmi, 2015). There, the law was amended so that the legislature would have to vote on the budget in two stages. In the first stage, it decides, i.e. votes, on the aggregate level of spending and the allocations of that aggregate to different sectors, e.g. health. The resulting figures then become law: neither the legislature nor the executive can fiddle around with the aggregate and sectoral expenditure levels.

After this initial vote, the line ministries prepare the details of their budgets and each knows that they cannot exceed the level set by law for their sector. Their proposals are submitted to and discussed with the Budget agency which then submits a final overall proposal to the legislature. The legislature then proceeds with the second stage of voting on the budget. At this point, it can no longer question or change the aggregate and sectoral ceilings though it could do so for items within the proposed budgets of each agency (De Baerdemaeker & Bruggeman, 2015).

A budget is a quantitative or financial document prepared and approved for a defined period (day, month, year), for the aim of attaining a set goal of fiscal discipline (ICAN study pack, 2006). This implies that a budget is a strategic component for planning and sustenance of fiscal discipline. They help to exercise control, evaluate performance, communicate, and encourage coordination (Gachithi, 2010; Flamholtz, 2012). According to Bahrawe, Haron and Hasan (2016) budgeting helps public sector officials to set attention on operating problems quite on time for purposes of planning of fiscal discipline orientation.

Herrala and Haapasalo (2012), submit that the factors to consider in public sector budgeting for fiscal discipline are: (a) budgeting process and (b) system of budgeting.

The former deals with the mechanics, i.e. how the budget is prepared. This includes the practices, documentations, and norms that govern the preparation, approval, implementation, and also subsequent review of the budget if the need arises. The latter is the reaction of stakeholders to a budgetary system. This element requires careful input due to human activity, thus shows a strong behavioural pattern. In fact, according to Bahrawe, Haron and Hasan (2016), the success or failure of budgeting depends on how well management considers its behavioural implication. The major benefits of budgeting are: It provides defined expectations which show the best framework as a guide for appraising future performance, it formalizes managerial responsiveness for planning and compelling the early projection ahead, aids managers toward synchronizing the objectives of the organization with the objectives of its various units.

Empirical Review

Some empirical studies have been done on this subject matter in some countries of the world. It is evident from the literature that Nigeria's public expenditure management system under Obasanjo's administration was founded on the same philosophy and principles that guided that of his predecessors (Bartle & Ma, 2004; Alberta, 2005; Asaolu, Oyesanmi, Oladele & Oladoyin, 2005; Adedokun, 2014; Kiema, 2015).

For Adeniji (2011) and Sanusi and Mustapha (2015), the Nigeria's public expenditure management system evolved and operates on principles that disregarded the main objectives of public financial management. These include allocations based on the principles of need, equity, stability and national interest. On the contrary, the entire PEM system that Nigeria has practiced, are generally guided by revenue derivation principle. The Obasanjo's Due Process Public Expenditure management has been guided by and has continued to battle with the crises of fiscal federalism structured by the derivation principle. The entire PEM equally lack inbuilt adjustment process.

De Baerdemaeker and Bruggeman, W. (2015), assessed the impact of participation in strategic planning on managers' creation of budgetary slack: The mediating role of autonomous motivation and affective organizational commitment. This study used a self-scale to detect fraud, primarily related to the misappropriation of assets. The researchers conducted a survey of the process of fraud in 2014 for clients (KPMG), and it became clear from the study that the organizations that have the internal audit function better able to detect manipulation and fraud and fraud within their organizations for those that do not have that function, in addition to organizations that rely on the external auditor only less ability to detect fraud within their organizations. The study concluded that the internal audit is the added value through better control and the need for the internal auditors of all internal audit functions of the municipalities in the Gaza Strip, and to increase the commitment of internal auditors generally accepted internal auditing standards.

In another study, Davila, Foster and Jia (2014) investigated the valuation of management control systems in start-up companies: International field-based evidence on the 'relationship between elements of internal control system and internal audit effectiveness' with the use of 52 Hotels in Greek through mail survey, the results reveal positive relationship between the variables. However, they suggested that with larger samples the outcome of the study might differ significantly from their own.

Erlina and Muda (2018) examined the determinants of the implementation of risk-based internal auditing. They evidence that internal auditors' independence was positively correlated with the share performance of listed banks in the country. While using an observational study research design a he noted this was established through corporate governance which created an environment of non-interference of internal auditors' work by senior management and consequently improving the image of listed banks. He further argued that this improved image also exhibited a positive relationship with investor confidence leading to improved share value and profitability.

Further, Kaneza (2016), in a study on internal auditors' independence and their effective evaluation of risk management in banks found a positive correlation between these and the financial performance of listed banks. Using an observational study research design and a sample of 102 observations, they asserted this relationship was also exhibited in the integrity of financial reports reflected by reliable earnings quality. They demonstrated that this independence was extended to external auditors thereby reducing fees that would have been charged for the purchase of non-auditing services (NAS) by the external auditor which in-turn improved return on assets and profitability of the listed banks that attracted investors.

Scott (2016).identified the reality of the internal audit in the municipalities of the Gaza Strip, and to achieve the objectives of the study and testing of hypotheses, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to (77) of workers in the units of internal audit and control, financial accountants and managers in the municipalities of the Gaza Strip, and the study found the internal auditors tasks audit required of them, and their commitment to the internal audit generally accepted standards, and the attention of the members of the Municipal Council of the importance of the existence of the Department of Internal Audit, and follow the internal audit department in the municipalities of the Gaza Strip to the Department of Finance and not to senior management, and lack of interest by senior management to develop the internal audit department, the study concluded that the number of Recommendations of them, units in terms of the reality regulatory and independence made it clear, and the study confirmed the weakness of the independence of those units, and the lack of detailed evidence to the policies and procedures in those units, and the study showed that the units audited often do not follow the methodology of work documented and clear when carrying out the internal audit.

However, Tackie, Marfo-Yiadom and Achina (2016), examined the determinants of internal audit effectiveness in decentralized local government administrative systems. In a Lithuanian study on internal audit of listed commercial banks found no significant relation between internal auditors' independence and financial performance noting that commercial banks' auditor committees' interfered with the Chief Internal Auditors' (CIA) annual audit plans.

Similarly, De Baerdemaeker and Bruggeman (2015), in their study, the impact of participation in strategic planning on managers' creation of budgetary slack: The mediating role of autonomous motivation and affective organizational commitment, in in Ghana: Empirical evidence from local government, established a significant positive correlation between internal auditors' independence embedded in corporate governance of listed European banks and their financial performance. Using an observational study research design and a sample of 404, they further demonstrated that in those listed banks where internal auditors' independence was threatened by Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) duality through full involvement in the audit plan, interfering with audit budgets and earnings management, these banks posted low profits especially in times of high securities' markets volatility.
Likewise, Basiru and Nur Ashikin (2015) in a study focused on listed banks in Malaysia observed a significantly positive correlation between financial performance and internal auditors' independence. Making use of an observational study research design and a sample of 37 they further contend this arose from the ability of the internal auditors to effectively monitor management and in the process reduce chances of self-gain activities indicated by the profitability of these institutions.

Also, Güneş and Atılgan (2016) in a comparative study on effectiveness of audit committees in terms of independence of internal auditors found evidence that audit committees were more effective in listed banks in the U.K and upheld more internal auditors' independence than in listed Turkish banks. By employing a cross-sectional design and a sample of 20 listed banks they however noted that in listed Turkish banks, internal auditors' independence had an insignificant negative relationship with both the return on assets and return on equity and was therefore not related to their financial performance.
Additionally, Alaswad and Stanišić (2016) in a study using Return on Assets (ROA) as a performance indicator, found a significant correlation between internal auditors' independence and the financial performance of listed financial organizations. Using an observational study research design and a sample of 78 observations he demonstrated that listed financial organizations that had adopted internal auditors' independence had their shares performing better than those that had low organizational independence in the Libyan Stock Market. This they argued was because internal auditors' independence did lead to lower economic interest on the part of the internal auditors and reduced familiarity resulting to effectiveness that contributed to improved financial reporting thereby inspiring investor confidence leading to profitability.

Simnett, Zhou and Hoang (2016), studied assurance and other credibility enhancing mechanisms for integrated reporting. They found evidence that the independence of internal auditors' working for listed deposit taking banks in Singapore was key in providing a systematic, regimented approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. Adopting a correlation research design and sample size of 14 they further noted that this was important for attracting investors as it affected the return on assets (ROA) and had a significant positive relationship with the share value reflected in the financial performance of these listed banks.

In contrast, Salifu and Mahama (2015), in their study, the Evaluation of Evidence of the Audit Expectation Gap in Ghana, found evidence that internal auditors' independence established through corporate governance had a positive association with the share value of listed banks in Ghana. Additionally, making use of a cross-sectional design and a sample of 20 they established that an accommodative ownership structure that embraced audit committee independence did contribute to internal auditors' effectiveness leading to improved audit quality. It is through this they further contended that listed banks signaled to the Ghana Stock Exchange on effective internal control which in turn inspired investors leading to improved share value and profitability.

World Bank (2017) examined the difficulties in the practices of cash planning, lack of reliability and short horizon of ceilings for expenditure commitment, lack of liquidity, several outstanding bills, and lack of regular information on cash balances. World Bank (2017) emphasizes categorically that these situations ultimately impact upon the quality of the service delivery. The World Bank (2017) further found that, there remain substantial weaknesses in expenditure control, and that while the rules and procedures are generally clearly described in the regulatory framework and internal guidelines, they are often not adhered to.

Ge, Koester and McVay (2017) did a study on the benefits and costs of Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404 (b) exemption: Evidence from small firms' internal control disclosures. The main objective of the study was to determine the relationship between internal audit process and budget variance in NGOs in Nigeria. The primary data was collected using questionnaire and data analyses were done using descriptive methods. The population of this study comprised of 6,075 NGOs in Nigeria over the last five years 2007-2011. Convenient sampling was used to select 20 NGOs for this study. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect primary data and the data was analyzed by descriptive data analysis using SPSS version 17. The research found that a unit change in budget preparation will lead to a 0.722% change in budget variance; a unit change in budgetary control will lead to a 0.661% change in budget variance; a unit change in internal auditing will lead to a 0.682% change in budget variance. The study concluded that budget preparation, budgetary control and internal auditing significantly influence budget variance. The study recommends that NGOs should maintain a good internal audit process as the process contributes a lot to their budget variance.

Chang and Choy (2016) examined the effect of the Sarbanes–Oxley Act on firm productivity. The study employed in-depth interview via face-to-face and telephone modes. Using descriptive statistics, the findings showed that the internal audit function in the Indian governmental agencies had less satisfactory contribution to the effectiveness of public expenditure management due to lack of audit personnel and lack of requisite skills and competency by the audit personnel. However, there was an agreement that Sarbanes–Oxley Act on firm productivity of public sector organizations.

Agyei-Mensah (2016), evaluated the impact of Adopting IFRS in Ghana: Empirical evidence economics and political implications of international financial reporting standards. The study used factor analysis and found that there is an ample evidence of both economics and political implications of international financial reporting standards in Ghana.
Akotia and Sackey (2018) did a study towards the delivery of sustainable regeneration projects' types in the UK: an exploration of the role and level of involvement of key practitioners. They used ANOVA and found that auditing and accountability reveal the virtue of integrity in government organisations as records properly scrutinized.
Behrend and Eulerich (2019) studied the evolution of internal audit research: a bibliometric analysis of published documents (1926–2016). The study used chi-square to determine the frequency of occurrence between the evolution of internal audit research and a bibliometric analysis.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theories such as theory of accounting; theory of budgeting and theory of control that link the study of internal audit and aggregate fiscal discipline. This study reviewed control theory and adapted it to anchor internal audit and public expenditure. Control theory has been described as "an inter-disciplinary branch of engineering and mathematics that deals with the behavior of dynamical systems within puts. The external input of a system is called the reference. When one or more output variables of a system need to follow a certain reference over time, a controller manipulates the inputs to a system to obtain the desired effect on the output of the system. The objective of a control theory is to calculate solutions for the proper corrective action from the controller that result in system stability, that is, the system will hold the set point and not oscillate around it. Sanger's (2013) investigation reveals that systems have inputs and outputs to bring a product after processing and so inputs and outputs of a control system are generally related by differential equations.

Setting objectives, budgets, plans and other expectations establish criteria for control. Control itself exists to keep performance or a state of affairs within what is expected, allowed or accepted. Control built within a process is internal in nature. It takes place with a combination of interrelated components - such a social environment effecting behavior of employees, information necessary in control, and policies and procedures. Internal control structure is a plan determining how internal control consists of these elements (Sanusi & Mustapha, 2015).

Theory of Accounting

Kaplan and Norton (1996) assert that the accounting theory is aimed towards provision of a coherent set of logical principles that form the general frame of reference for the evaluation and development of sound accounting practices and policy development. Norreklit and Mitchell (2010) exemplifies that the purpose in developing a theory of accounting is to establish Standard for judging the acceptability of accounting methods. Arnold and Gillenkirch (2015) argue that the accounting methods that fail to meet the standard should be rejected. Accounting theory helps in explaining and guiding management actions in identifying and locating information necessary to be used in budget preparation.

The money measurement concept in accounting has contributed to a greater extent in providing yardstick for quantifying, conversion and translating various inputs in relation to materials, and machines required in the preparation of budget (Arnold & Gillenkirch, 2015). The accounting theory has an important normative role in the evaluation of budget and control procedures to be adopted. It has assisted in making predictions of the likely outcome of budget action in a given set of circumstance and effect of any change in circumstances. Qi (2010) argues that accounting theory view a firm as a separate entity in which its activities are distinct from its owners. This principle serves as an impetus to the general philosophy of budget itself as a tool for effective management (Qi, 2010).

Budget as a tool for standard setting and performance measurement utilize several accounting concepts to a greater extent. Accounting theory has developed models in which standard can be set. Management accounting theory also provides several yardsticks to be used for control. That is variance analysis. Since budget is an instrument of plan. It provides a framework of given feed back to the management on the implementation of budget. When implementing the accounting theory historical data is instrumental since this data serve as an input for making forecast. The cost accounting theory developed by Wedgwood in early 20th century which stress on cost identification, allocation and revenue maximization has provided a basic insight and blue print in budget and control in organization. The matching concept in accounting also plays a role as reference issue in budget analysis (Arnold & Gillenkirch, 2015).

The Theory of Budgeting

Shields and Young (1993) posit that budget acts as a detector of variances between organizational objectives and performance and vital part to the umbrella concept of an effective budgetary performance. Budgets project future financial performance which enables evaluating the financial viability of a chosen strategy. In most organizations this process is formalized by preparing annual budgets and monitoring performance against budgets (Silva & Jayamaha, 2012).

Budgets reflect the financial implication of business plans, identifying the amount, quantity and timing of resource needed (Shields and Young, 1993). They form benchmarks by comparing actual results with budgeted plans and to take corrective actions if necessary (Sharma, 2012). Budgets do influence the behavior and decisions of employees by translating business objectives, and providing a yardstick against which to assess performance. Bedford (2015) even considered such operational planning as the backbone of management. A budget allows a goal and a standard of performance to be established with subsequent comparison of actual results with the created standard. It requires those involved to be forward looking rather than looking back (Bedford, 2015). Budgets make goals explicit, code learning, facilitate control and contract with external parties (Arnold & Gillenkirch, 2015). Fisher exemplified this by "linking compensation to performance measures against the budget", thereby making goals explicit, communicating goals and thereby coding learning and clarifying performance measures for individual employees of an organization (Karadag 2015).

Theory of Control

Adequate control is very essential to every organization be it individual or government owned all over the world. This is because if there is no adequate control of resources in the organization, it will be practically impossible to monitor budgets. The theory of control specifies the obligations of government/ industries in providing social and basic amenities to the citizens. It indicates that government owned industries is a basic principle of control on those scarce resources they are meant to manage (Robinson, 2009). Shields and Young (2009) contend that government industries ought to provide both resources and employment to the citizens for meeting the laid down objectives. This implies that the government, board members and staff have joint responsibility to ensure proper accounting practices and timely budgetary implementation and appropriations by building effective management controls and directions. As per this theory, state corporations are expected to live to its responsibility of establishing standards, adequate controlling mechanism and acceptable accounting practices. Government enterprises need not to have unethical persons acting outside controls as ineffective control system in every organization can negatively affect organizational profitability and sustainability as well as companies' resources and performance.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the strategy and procedure adopted in collection and analysis of data in this study. Such issues as research design, population of the study, method of data collection and sources, method of data analysis and model specification have been treated here.

The research design applied in this study is the survey research design. The survey method emphasizes quantitative analysis whereby data is collected through questionnaire, interviews, or from existing documents. The study adopted the research philosophy of positivism that briefly dialogues on objectivism and functionalism. Positivism as the research philosophy adopted in this study relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations.

The population of the study consists of all the key management and middle administrative staff in the five major government owned organisations in Nigeria that are very knowledgeable on the study's area of interest. Therefore, the population of the study consists of 350 management and middle administrative staff from the five selected government organizations. The choice of the five government owned organizations was based on their nationalistic posture and practices.
Considering that the population of the study is not large (only 350 Managers/Officers). There is no need to involve the study in random sampling. Rather the researcher conducted a census study. Using proportionate sampling, respondents were drawn from each of the government organizations into a sample size of 350 staff as follows;

Table 1: Proportionate Sampling to Determine the Sample Size

Organization	Population of the organization	Population of the study	sample size
Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)	2196	44	44
Nigerian Port Authority	3925	78	78
Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NMASA)	1644	33	33
Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	1282	25	25
Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC)	8568	170	170
Total	17615	350	350

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

The sample elements of the study were drawn from the Directors, Operations Managers, Supervisory Officers, Managers/Accountants, Internal Auditors and senior officers. The procedure for sample selection first involved the objective selection of the workers actively participating in controlling and management of the selected organizations.

Data collection is the process of gathering data from either the primary or secondary sources for the purpose of the study analysis. The primary sources consist of first-hand information or raw data obtained by the researcher himself through the administration of research instruments. The secondary source is existing data obtained from relevant academic materials such as; books, journals, magazines and others.
The response format was based on a 5-point Likert scale structure: Very Large Extent (VLGE) = 5; Large Extent (LGE) = 4; Moderate Extent (MDE) = 3; Low Extent (LWE) = 2; and Very Low Extent (VLWE) = 1.

In this study, percentages, ratios, frequency distribution, scaling, ranking and other statistical tools were used to analyse and achieve research objectives. Nevertheless, stepwise regression was used to test the moderating variable. Regression analysis was used to test the extent of the effect individual and collective variable(s) on the other. Also, regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. All these analyses were computed through the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) IBM SPSS Statistics 22 version.

Model Specification

$Y_1 = b_o + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + e$ -------------(1) {for testing H_1, H_2, H_3}

AFD = f (RA, AS, AI)

Where;

AFD = Aggregate fiscal discipline

RA = Risk assessment
AS = Asset safeguard
AI = Auditors' independence

Statistical Model Specification

This study used caggregate fiscal discipline, allocative efficiency and operational efficiency as the dependent (criterion) variables while risk assessment, asset safeguard, auditors' independence and professional competence were used as independent (predictor) variables. The model is therefore specified thus:

$Y_1 = b_o + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + e;$

$Y_{mv} = b_o + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3z + e;$

$Y_4 = b_o + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + e$

Where;

Y_1 = Aggregate fiscal discipline
$X_{1,}$ =Risk assessment
$X_{2,}$ = Asset safeguard
$X_{3,}$ = Auditors' independence

b_o = The parameter which represents the intercept, b_1, b_2, $b_{3,}$ = the regression parameters were used in determining the significance of the effect of each of the independent variables $x_{1,}$ $x_{2,}$ x_3 on the dependent variables Y,. e = Random disturbance term. These include the variables which (although not specified) in this model may also affect internal audit practices and public expenditure management. They include government policies, political instability, corruption, environmental marketing problems etc. The effects of internal audit practices on the dependent variables were measured in interval and ratio scaling. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the rate at which the independent variable was explained by dependent variables. The a priori expectations for the coefficients are as follows: $\beta_0>0$; $\beta_1>0$; $\beta_2>0$; $\beta_3>0$

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Data Refinement

Data refinement is practically done to ensure rationality in the study and the need to show reliability of the instrument in terms of the measurement of the concepts and constructs investigated in the study. To achieve this, reliability has been ascertained relying on Cronbach alpha using the Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) threshold, alpha values for the examined constructs and items are as follows:

Table 2: Test of Reliability

Construct	No of items	Alpha(α)
Risk assessment	5	0.861
Asset safeguard	5	0.771
Auditor independence	5	0.857
Aggregate fiscal discipline	5	0.722
Total		3.211
Mean Reliability	3.211÷ 4	0.80275

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

From the alpha outcomes in Table 2, the instrument is a dependable one and identified with the topic of the study. The information gathering instrument was tried for unwavering quality utilizing Cronbach's Alpha is within the acknowledged scope of 0.70 or more as the overall reliability test of the instrument is 0.8105. This has been achieved in line with Okwandu's (2007) position that the use of the SPSS software package would practically help in testing of the reliability of instruments. Validity test was additionally done, utilizing specialists proficient in the subject matter under investigation, experts and supervisors' endorsement to determine that the instruments were significant and measured what they were designed to measure. The predictors and the criterion variables were found to be dependable as the constructs have alpha values above the Nunnally threshold of 0.7 (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2018).

Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaire

Collection of data was carried out by the researcher through Monkey Survey which involved the administration of the copies of questionnaire to the selected public organizations' email addresses. After administering the instruments, the respondents were given a time space of three months to respond to the instruments. Thereafter copies of questionnaire were retrieved through established email contacts of the government organizations by the help of Monkey Survey. A total number of 388 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents from 5 government organizations in Nigeria. A total of 340 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from them. After editing the retrieved copies of questionnaire, the copies found useful were 310. The 310 copies of questionnaire were considered as valid and suitable for data analysis in this study. The administration and retrieval of copies of the questionnaire are shown in table 4.2 below:

Table 3: Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

S/N	Organisation	Copies distributed	Copies Retrieved	Copies found useful	Response Rate
1.	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)	70	61	60	85.71%
2.	Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)	70	68	64	91.43%
3.	Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)	70	69	63	90.00%
4.	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	70	67	62	88.57%
5.	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)	70	63	61	87.14%
	Total	350	328	310	88.57%

Source: Survey Data, 2020

Table 3 shows the details of how the copies of questionnaire (survey instruments) were distributed and retrieved from the respondent government organisations' staff through the Monkey Survey. The data collection shows that 48 copies of questionnaire were administered to Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and 37 copies retrieved from the respondents while 35 copies of questionnaire representing 72.46% response rate were found useful from this segment. Also, 86 copies of questionnaire were administered to the staff of Nigerian Ports Authority and 79 copies were retrieved from them while 67 copies of questionnaire representing 77.42% were found useful. With respect to Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) 36 copies of questionnaire were administered to their staff and 31 copies retrieved from the respondents while 28 copies of questionnaire representing 75.67% were found useful in this segment. In Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), 29 copies of questionnaire were administered to their staff and 26 copies retrieved from the respondents while 23 copies of questionnaire representing 79.31%. For Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) 189 copies of questionnaire were administered to their staff and 167 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents while 157 copies of questionnaire representing 82.63% were found useful in this segment. In all, 391 copies of questionnaire were distributed to five (5) government organisations in Nigeria and 340 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from them. However, after going through them, 310 copies of questionnaire representing 79.28% response rate were found useful for data analysis.

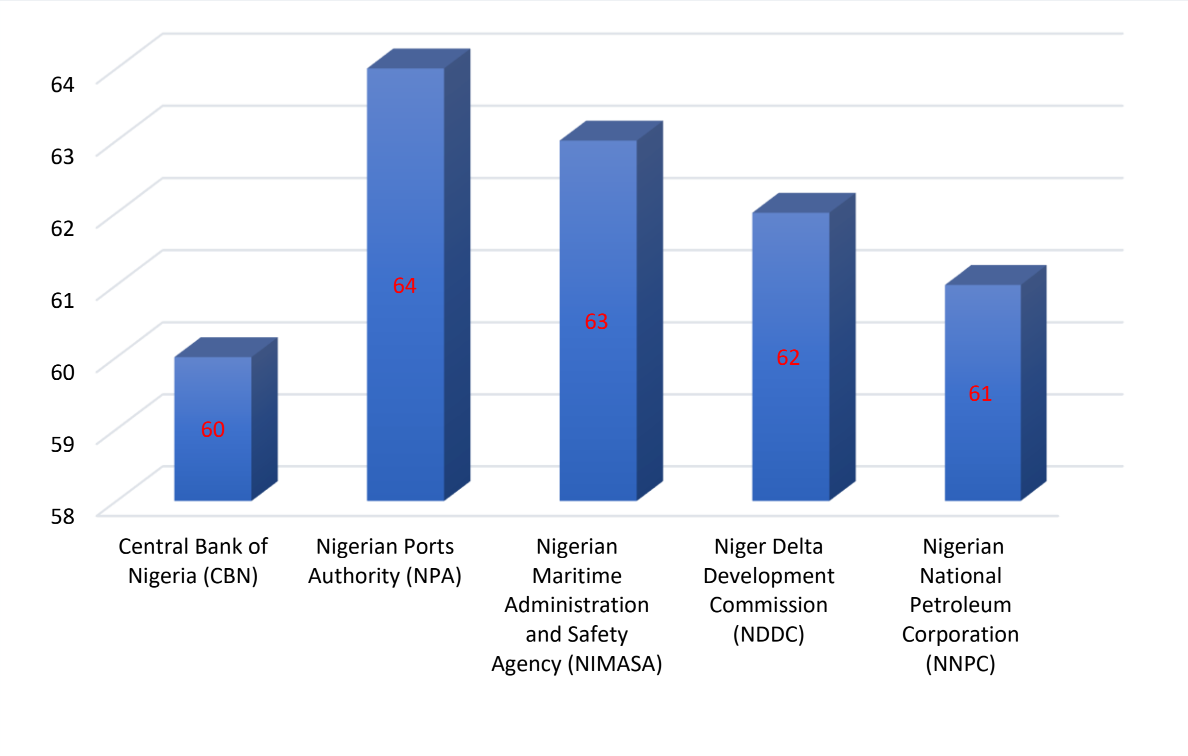

Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing the Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaire
Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Risk assessment as a Dimension of Internal audit practices

Table 4 gives the detailed analysis on how risk assessment as a dimension of internal audit practices has been examined to determine its effect on public expenditure management of government organizations and to show its descriptive statistical outcome based on the questions deposed.

Table 4: Risk assessment as a Dimension of Internal audit practices

S/N	Question Items on Risk Assessment	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	To what extent does your organization use risk assessment to achieve auditing objectives?	310	2.848	1.225
2	To what extent are staff in your organization very skillful in risk assessment activities?	310	3.271	1.128
3	To what extent does risk assessment offer veritable opportunities for achieving internal audit practices in your organisation?	310	2.819	1.647
4	To what extent does your organization introduce any controlling measures through risk assessment?	310	3.074	1.536
5	To what extent do customers talk good about your organisation's willingness to use the best risk assessment instruments for auditing activities?	310	3.377	1.098
	Grand mean and standard deviation =		**3.078**	**1.362**

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Keys: VLGE = very large extent, LGE = large extent, MDE= moderate extent, LWE = low extent, VLWE: very low extent, S.D: standard deviation.

Table 4 shows that five question items represent a dimension in the 5-point scale. The data revealed that with the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.848±1.225, the respondents disagreed that to a large extent public organization use risk assessment to achieve auditing objectives. Also, with the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.271±1.128, the respondents agreed that to a large extent staff in government organizations are very skillful in risk assessment activities. The data also revealed that the respondents disagreed that to a large extent risk assessment offer veritable opportunities for achieving internal audit practices in government organizations with the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.819±1.647. With the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.074±1.536 the respondents indicated that to a large extent government organizations introduce any controlling measures through risk assessment. Finally, the data in Table 4.9 revealed that with the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.377±1.098, the respondents agreed that to large extent customers talk good about public organizations' willingness to use the best risk assessment instruments for auditing activities.

Asset safeguard as a Dimension of Internal audit practices

In order to ascertain the extent to which asset safeguard as a dimension or component of internal audit practices affects public expenditure management of government organizations, the study used 5 question items on the 5-point scale as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Asset Safeguardas a Dimension of Internal audit practices

S/N	Question Items on Asset Safeguard	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	To what extent does asset safeguard offer veritable opportunities for internal audit practices in your organisation?	310	2.581	1.416
2	To what extent does quality of your staff inputs in auditing engender the asset safeguard of your organisation?	310	2.842	1.319
3	To what extent does passing auditing information in the Asset safeguard lead to the achievement of the expected auditing results in your organisation?	310	2.258	1.304
4	To what extent does your organisation give rooms for staff to suggest new ways or approach to asset safeguarding of your organisation?	310	2.745	1.224
5	To what extent does asset safeguard become everybody's business in your organisation?	310	2.023	1.125
	Grand mean and standard deviation =		**2.490**	**1.316**

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output
Keys: VLGE = very large extent, LGE = large extent, MDE= moderate extent, LWE = low extent, VLWE: very low extent, S.D: standard deviation.

As shown in Table 5 above, the responses of the respondents have indicated the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.581±1.416, showing that the respondents collectively disagreed that to a large extent government organisations asset safeguard offer veritable opportunities for internal audit practices. Also, with the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.842±1.319 it is quite obvious that the respondents indicated on the aggregate disagreement that to large extent quality of staff inputs in auditing engender the asset safeguard in government organizations. As to the extent to which the passing of auditing information in the asset safeguard lead to the achievement of the expected auditing results in government organizations, the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.258±1.304 indicate aggregate disagreement. The data additionally revealed that the respondents disagreed that to large extent public organization give rooms for staff to suggest new ways or approach to asset safeguarding; this is shown by mean and standard deviation scores of 2.745±1.224. Finally, the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.023±1.125 indicate that the respondents disagreed that asset safeguard become everybody's business in government organizations.

Auditor independence as a Dimension of Internal audit practices

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistical results on the effect of auditor independence as a dimension of internal audit practices on public expenditure management of government organizations. The outcomes from the five question items on the 5-point-scale show a distribution indicating that auditor independence is a veritable platform for internal audit practices and it leads to public expenditure management of government organizations.

Table 6: Auditor independence as a Dimension of Internal audit practices

S/N	Question Items on Auditor independence	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	To what extent does auditors' independence directly influence the performance of your organization?	310	2.903	1.385
2	To what extent does your organisation's auditors' independence contribute to aggregate fiscal discipline?	310	2.658	1.152
3	To what extent are there are opportunities to develop the staff to allow for the auditors' independence in your organisation?	310	3.026	1.811
4	To what extent does your organisation provide for auditors' independence that encourage efficient auditing activities?	310	3.158	1.216
5	To what extent does your organisation usually allow for the auditors' independence?	310	3.084	1.146
	Grand mean and standard deviation **=**		**2.9658**	**1.416**

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Keys: VLGE = very large extent, LGE = large extent, MDE= moderate extent, LWE = low extent, VLWE: very low extent, S.D: standard deviation.
Table 6 shows that the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.903±1.385 as indicated by the respondents imply that to a low extent auditor independence directly influence the performance in government organizations. Also, the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.658±1.152 imply that the respondents were in disagreement to the fact that public organization auditor independence contribute to aggregate fiscal discipline. The data revealed that the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.026±1.811 as indicated by the respondents show that to a moderate extent there are opportunities to develop the staff to allow for the auditor independence in government organizations. The mean and standard deviation scores of 3.158±1.216 depict moderate agreement by the respondents regarding the extent to which government organizations provide for auditor independence that encourage efficient auditing activities. The respondents were inclined to the moderate extent option as revealed in the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.084±1.146 indicating that to a moderate extent public organizations usually allow for the auditor independence.

Aggregate fiscal discipline as a Measure of Public expenditure management of government organisations

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistical results on aggregate fiscal discipline which is measured with five question items on the 5-point scale. The response distribution as shown by the results is indicative that aggregate fiscal discipline will enhance public expenditure management of government organizations.

Table 7: Aggregate fiscal discipline as a Measure of Public expenditure management of government organizations

S/N	Question Items on Aggregate Fiscal Discipline	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	To what extent do internal audit practices lead to aggregate fiscal discipline of your organization?	310	2.606	1.655
2	To what extent are you involved in important auditing activities that improve aggregate fiscal discipline of your organisation?	310	2.719	1.371
3	To what extent does your organization consider the opinion of others before making important decision that affects aggregate fiscal discipline of the organization?	310	2.577	1.302
4	To what extent do senior auditing staff discuss issues concerning aggregate fiscal discipline in your organisation?	310	3.400	1.510
5	To what extent is aggregate fiscal discipline often used as a key performance index (KPI) to review the effectiveness and efficiency in your organisation?	310	4.013	1.201
	Grand mean and standard deviation =		**3.063**	**1.522**

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output
Keys: VLGE = very large extent, LGE = large extent, MDE= moderate extent, LWE = low extent, VLWE: very low extent, S.D: standard deviation.

Table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.606±1.655 indicating that the consensus opinion of the respondents revealed a disagreement that to a large extent internal audit practices lead to aggregate fiscal discipline in government organisations. Also, the mean and standard deviation scores of 2.719±1.371 imply the respondents disagreed that to a large extent staff are involved in important auditing activities that improve aggregate fiscal discipline in government organisations. The statistical result of 2.577±1.302 (mean and standard deviation scores) show that the respondents disagreed that to a large extent government organisations consider the opinion of others before making important decision that affects aggregate fiscal discipline of the organisation. Table 4.12 also reveals the mean and standard deviation scores of 3.400±1.510 implying that the respondents agreed that to a large extent senior auditing staff discuss issues concerning aggregate fiscal discipline in your organisation. Finally, the mean and standard deviation scores of 4.013±1.2011 show that the respondents agreed that to a large extent aggregate fiscal discipline is often used as a key performance index (KPI) to review the effectiveness and efficiency in public sector.

Statistical Test of Hypotheses and their Interpretations (Multivariate Analysis)
The study has sought in chapter one to determine the effect of internal audit practices on public expenditure management of government organisations in Nigeria. As a result, five research questions and thirteen hypotheses were raised to that effect. The study analysis tested the outcomes on the examined dimensions and measures of the variables in terms of causal effect. Therefore, this section tested and interpreted the hypotheses formulated in this study.

Effect of Internal Audit Practices on Aggregate Fiscal Discipline
Three hypotheses have earlier been raised to determine the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline. In line with this objective, the study formulated the following hypotheses: $Ho_{1:}$ Risk assessment has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline
Ho_2: Asset safeguard has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline
Ho_3: Auditor independence has no significant effect aggregate fiscal discipline.
The data in Table 8 have been used to test hypotheses one, two, three and four in this study.

Table 8: Results of Internal audit practices (IAP) and Aggregate fiscal discipline (AFD)

Internal audit practices (Independent Variables)	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t - value	Significant/ Probability Value	Decision
(Constant)	-0.701	0.149		-4.690	0.000	
Risk assessment (H_1)	0.708	0.077	0.482	9.183	0.000	Significant
Asset safeguard (H_2)	0.394	0.083	0.277	4.735	0.000	Significant
Auditor independence (H_3)	-0.016	0.093	-0.010	-0.177	0.860	Insignificant

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output (Appendix I)
a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate fiscal discipline
b. Predictors: (Constant), Auditor independence, Risk assessment, Asset safeguard

$Y_1 = b_o + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + e$ -------------(1) {for testing H_1, H_2, H_3}
Y_1(Aggregate Fiscal Discipline) = -0.701+0.708RA +0.083AS - 0.016AI +e
t = (9.183) (4.735) (-0.177)

Table 8 above shows the results of the test of hypothesized statements - H_1, H_2 and H_3. The result of the hypothesis 1 tested, show positive and significant effect of risk assessment on aggregate fiscal discipline with t- value outcome of 9.183 @ p0.000< 0.05, meaning that risk assessment has positive and significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline, indicating that the alternate hypothesis 1(Hi_1) has been accepted and null hypothesis 1(H_{O1}) rejected hence – "risk assessment has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organisations". The result of hypothesis 2 (H_2) revealed strong positive and significant effect of asset safeguard on aggregate fiscal discipline with t- value outcome of t = 4.735@ p0.001<0.05. By this result the null hypothesis 2(H_{O2}) has been rejected and alternate hypothesis 2(Hi_2) accepted hence – "asset safeguard has a significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organisations". With respect to hypothesis 3 (H_3), the result in Table 4.16 revealed negative and insignificant effect of auditor independence on aggregate fiscal discipline with t-value outcome of -0.177 @ p0.860>0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis 3 (H_{O3}) has been accepted and alternate hypothesis 3(Hi_3) rejected hence – "Auditor independence has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations".

From the inferential statistical analysis so far, it can be stated that:

1. Risk assessment as a dimension of internal audit practices has positive and significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations. This simply means that risk assessment as an instrument of internal audit practices influences aggregate fiscal discipline to elicit good public expenditure management of government organizations.
2. Asset safeguard as a dimension of internal audit practices has strong positive and significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline. This simply means that asset safeguard as an organ of internal audit practices positively influences aggregate fiscal discipline of government organisations and it contributes to the success of orgaganisational performance.

3. Auditor independence as a dimension of internal audit practices has negative and insignificant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline as a measure of public expenditure management of government organisations. This simply means that auditor independence is negative and insignificant to aggregate fiscal discipline of government organisations.

Table 9: Summary of the Results on Test of the Research Hypotheses

Research Hypotheses	t-value	Significant/ Probability Value	Result	Decision
Ho_1: Risk assessment has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline	9.183	0.000	Positive and Significant Effect	Reject
Ho_2: Asset safeguard has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline	4.735	0.000	Positive and Significant Effect	Reject
Ho_3: Auditor independence has no significant effect aggregate fiscal discipline	-0.177	0.860	Negative and Insignificant Effect	Accept

Source: Research Data 2019, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Table 9 has revealed in summary that the study rejected hypotheses: Ho_1 - Risk assessment has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations; Ho_2 - Asset safeguard has significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations; Ho_3 - Auditor independence has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations

Multivariate Analysis (Multiple Regressions on the Effect of Internal Audit Practices on Measures of Public expenditure management of government organizations)

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria. In this section, the multiple regression analysis was done to determine the extent to which the variability of the dependent variables is explained by the independent variables. It has further shown the magnitude of the influence of the various dimensions in relation to the aggregate measures. This subsection was further used to critically address the key research questions raised in this study. Earlier in chapter 1 the study has raised the following research questions for investigations:

i). To what extent do internal audit practices affect aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria?

ii). To what extent do internal audit practices influence allocative efficiency of government organizations in Nigeria.

iii). To what extent do internal audit practices impact on organizational efficiency of government organizations in Nigeria.

iv). To examine the moderating effect of information communication technology on internal audit practices and aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria.

Table 10: Model Summary of Internal Audit Practices and Aggregate Fiscal Discipline of Government Organizations in Nigeria

Regression Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
Output	0.835[a]	0.698	0.689	0.20231	0.698	73.955	4	128	0.000	1.752

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output (Appendix I)

Table 10 shows the results of the regression analysis with reference to the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations. The F- statistic value is found to be 73.955 indicating that the F value is significant at the 5 percent level. The overall fit of the regression model measured by the F- statistic, is statistically significant at this level. The Durbin Watson (DW) statistic of 1.752 indicates that there is no problem of serial correlation or autocorrelation in the regression model. This is a case of positive serial correlation. Also, multi-collinearity which is often present in cross-sectional data seems to be nonexistent in the model.

The coefficient of correlation R and Coefficient of determination R^2 measure the predictor power of the multiple regression model. From the results, there is a high coefficient of correlation (83.50%) between the dependent and predictor variables. The implication is that the variables in the equation are useful for explaining the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations. There is also a highly significant coefficient of determination (69.80 %). The standard error of the estimates also known as residual standard deviation has a value of 0.20231

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were drawn from the analyses of the results in the previous section. In this section, the study discusses the findings in order to draw the conclusions appropriately. However, the study interprets and discusses the findings in four compartments according to the basic independent variable against the criterion variables (measures) and the moderator variable. This section is therefore divided into four subheadings. The first section deals with the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria, the second section centres on the influence of internal audit practices on allocative efficiency of government organizations in Nigeria**,** the third section focuses on the impact of internal audit practices on operational efficiency of government organizations in Nigeria and the fourth section deals with the effect of information communication technology on internal audit practices and aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria.

Effect of Internal Audit Practices on Aggregate Fiscal Discipline of Government Organisations in Nigeria

The findings of the study revealed that government organizations engage in internal audit practices to achieve aggregate fiscal discipline. A critical appraisal of the finding reveals that risk assessment has positive and significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline (t-value = 9.183); there is positive and significant effect of asset safeguard on aggregate fiscal discipline (t-value = 4.735); negative and insignificant effect of auditor independence as a dimension of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline (t-value = -0.177).In all, internal audit practices have strong positive and significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations. The full import of this finding is that government organizations use internal audit practices to maintain aggregate fiscal discipline of the organizations (Babatunde, 2013). Risk assessment is being extensively used by government organizations in collaboration with other internal audit practices' instruments, as they can be integrated with nearly every other tool or strategy to maintain aggregate fiscal discipline. Every public organisation with a foresight for sustainable development tries to participate in risk assessment that communicates the prevailing objectives of government organisations towards aggregate fiscal discipline. In many cases government organisations introduce risk assessment that aims at linking compensation to performance measures against the budget, thereby making goals explicit, communicating goals, coding learning and clarifying performance measures for the staff of an organization (Unegbu & Kida, 2011; Karadag 2015).

The study found that asset safeguard offers veritable opportunities to optimize internal audit practices as it helps to build aggregate fiscal discipline and allocative efficiency as well as operational efficiency in government organizations. The implication of this finding is that government organizations successfully use risk assessments, asset safeguard and auditor independence to execute internal audit practices that lead to aggregate fiscal discipline (Mu'azu & Siti, 2013). In asserting this position, Abbott, Parker, Peter and Raghunandan (2013) insist that asset safeguard now largely falls under the remit of internal auditing. So there is little disbelief that the intended overall objectives differ little from traditional policy of government organizations. Also, Adeniji (2011) observes that the goal of risk assessment is to create confidence among all the stakeholders in the organization. For the surveyed government organizations there is a key target, the aggregate fiscal discipline agendum in order to maintain optimal performance, the study has revealed.

The study also found that government organizations introduce asset safeguard of interest in the organization in order to elicit good performance outcome in government organisations' activities. Therefore, government organisations are capitalizing on this new trend to present their new internal auditing strategy through digital compliant staff who have mastery of asset safeguard intricacies for aggregate fiscal discipline. Su, Baird and Schoch (2015), in this respect argue that stuffing and prescribing of auditor independence by government organizations offer a clear picture of how government organizations seek to project the organization. For dynamic government organizations, professional competence could best be described as "look at us".

Unegbu and Obi (2012), submit that auditor independence as internal audit instrument is part of the internal control system put in place by management of an organization to ensure adherence to stipulated work procedure and as aid to management. The findings of this study agree with the works of Ewa and Udoayang (2012), who posit that the aim of internal auditing is to improve public expenditure management and effectiveness through aggregate fiscal discipline maintenance. This means that identification of areas of weakness and suggestions for improvement are the main thrust of internal auditing.

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SUMMARY

This study investigated the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria. The summary of findings made from this study based on the analysis includes:

- **i)** The study found that risk assessment has significant and positive effect on aggregate fiscal discipline. Risk assessment offers veritable opportunities for achieving internal audit practices in public expenditure management.
- **ii)** The study further discovered that risk assessment has significant effect on operational efficiency of public expenditure management.

iii) It was noticed in course of the study that a strong relationship exists between asset safeguard and aggregate fiscal discipline.

iv) It was found from the study that auditor's independence has no significant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline. A negative and insignificant relationship exists between auditor's independence and aggregate fiscal discipline.

CONCLUSION

The results from the study gave a clear indication that the low performance of government organisations cannot be attributed to inefficiencies of internal auditors but lack of requisite human resource requirements, poor remunerations coupled with lack of resources for the service. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been made:

As government organisations engage in risk assessment they achieve their aggregate fiscal discipline positively and significantly. This simply means that risk assessment as an instrument of internal audit practices influences aggregate fiscal discipline to elicit good public expenditure management of government organisations.

As government organisations safeguard their assets they positively and significantly encourage aggregate fiscal discipline. This simply means that asset safeguard as an organ of internal audit practices positively influences aggregate fiscal discipline which is a measure of public expenditure management of government organisations and it contributes to the success of organisational performance.

As government organisations encourage auditor independence it results to negative and insignificant effect on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organisations. This simply means that auditor independence is negative and insignificant to aggregate fiscal discipline as a measure of public expenditure management of government organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study empirically examined the effect of internal audit practices on aggregate fiscal discipline of government organizations in Nigeria. Based on the findings and the conclusions on the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Internal audit practice is a veritable phenomenon; it has proven to be very effective and efficient tool and should be viewed as a major actor in accounting profession. Public sector administrators should use risk assessment to their advantage by encouraging government organisations' staff and not just the accounting/auditing department to participate in internal audit practices which in turn covers more ground for the enhancement of aggregate fiscal discipline leading to proper public expenditure management of government organizations.
2. Auditor independence can also be a veritable measure for building goodwill and achieving aggregate efficiency. The study recommends that government organizations engage professionally qualified auditors who independent minded in order to achieve quality audit output in public sector organisations.
3. Government organizations' staff should update their knowledge with respect to risk assessment and allocative efficiency through the opportunities provided by information and communication technology solutions so as to be able to benefit from the strategic values of effective and efficient public expenditure management.
4. Asset safe guard is a critical issue which the internal auditor must maintain stringently in order to enhance allocative efficiency. In this respect, the internal auditor should have the clout and pedigree to query any staff whose track record is questionable when it comes to asset safe guard in government organisations.

5. Auditors independence should be non-negotiable and sacrosanct in government organizations if operational efficiency is to be achieved. On no account should auditors' independence be jettisoned in public sector organization that seeks to sustain operational efficiency.

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MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION

Risk Assessment

S/N	Items	VLGE	LGE	MDE	LWE	VLWE	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1	To what extent does your organisation use risk assessment to achieve auditing objectives?	44	60	31	155	20	310	2.848	1.225	Disagree
2	To what extent are staff in your organisation very skillful in risk assessment activities?	34	141	17	111	7	310	3.271	1.128	Agree
3	To what extent does risk assessment offer veritable opportunities for achieving internal audit practices in your organisation?	65	80	20	24	121	310	2.819	1.647	Disagree
4	To what extent does your organisation introduce any controlling measures through risk assessment?	94	44	14	107	51	310	3.074	1.536	Agree
5	To what extent do customers talk good about your organisation's willingness to use the best risk assessment instruments for auditing activities?	30	161	31	72	16	310	3.377	1.098	Agree
			Grand Mean =					**3.078**	**1.362**	

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Asset Safeguard

S/N	Items	VLGE	LGE	MDE	LWE	VLWE	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1	To what extent does asset safeguard offer veritable opportunities for internal audit practices in your organisation?	10	119	35	23	123	310	2.581	1.416	Disagree
2	To what extent does quality of your staff inputs in auditing engender the asset safe guard of your organisation?	26	111	20	94	59	310	2.842	1.319	Disagree
3	To what extent does passing auditing information in the Asset safeguard lead to the achievement of the expected auditing results in your organisation?	32	29	34	107	108	310	2.258	1.304	Disagree
4	To what extent does your organisation give rooms for staff to suggest new ways or approach the asset safeguarding of your organisation?	20	98	19	129	44	310	2.745	1.224	Disagree
5	To what extent does asset safeguard become everybody's business in your organisation?	18	22	25	129	116	310	2.023	1.125	Disagree
			Grand Mean =					**2.490**	**1.316**	

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Auditors' independence

S/N	Items	VLGE	LGE	MDE	LWE	VLWE	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1	To what extent does auditors' independence directly influence the performance of your organisation?	56	69	20	119	46	310	2.903	1.385	Disagree
2	To what extent does your organisation's auditors' independence contribute to organisation's aggregate fiscal discipline?	8	101	23	133	45	310	2.658	1.152	Disagree
3	To what extent are there opportunities to develop the staff to allow for the auditors' independence in your organisation?	118	34	19	16	123	310	3.026	1.811	Agree
4	To what extent does organisation your organisation provide for auditors' independence that encourage efficient auditing activities?	25	27	26	126	106	310	3.158	1.216	Agree
5	To what extent does your organisation usually allow for the auditors' independence?	19	25	28	129	109	310	3.084	1.146	Agree
			Grand Mean =					**2.9658**	**1.416**	

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Aggregate Fiscal Discipline

S/N	Items	VLGE	LGE	MDE	LWE	VLWE	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1	To what extent do internal audit practices lead to aggregate fiscal discipline of your organisation?	77	29	25	53	126	310	2.606	1.655	Disagree
2	To what extent are you involved in important auditing activities that improve aggregate fiscal discipline of your organisation?	61	30	26	147	46	310	2.719	1.371	Disagree
3	To what extent does your organisation consider the opinion of others before making important decision that affects aggregate fiscal discipline of the organisation?	22	78	37	93	80	310	2.577	1.302	Disagree
4	To what extent do senior auditing staff discuss issues concerning aggregate fiscal discipline in your organisation?	86	114	15	28	67	310	3.400	1.510	Agree
5	To what extent is aggregate fiscal discipline often used as a key performance index (KPI) to review the effectiveness and efficiency in your organisation?	138	107	14	33	18	310	4.013	1.201	Agree
			Grand Mean =					**3.063**	**1.522**	

Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Risk Assessment, Auditors' Independence, Asset Safeguard[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate Fiscal Discipline
b. All requested variables entered.
Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.860[a]	.739	.736	.665472

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Competence, Risk Assessment, Auditors' Independence, Asset Safeguard
Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	383.371	4	95.843	216.421	.000[b]
	Residual	135.070	305	.443		
	Total	518.441	309			

a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate Fiscal Discipline
b. Predictors: (Constant), Risk Assessment, Auditors' Independence, Asset Safeguard
Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.701	.149		-4.690	.000
	Risk Assessment	.708	.077	.482	9.183	.000
	Asset Safeguard	.394	.083	.277	4.735	.000
	Auditors' Independence	-.016	.093	-.010	-.177	.860

a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate Fiscal Discipline
Source: Survey Data, 2020, and IBM SPSS Statistics 22 Window Output