

Treasury Single Account and Government Accountability in the Public Sector, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) on government accountability within public sector organizations in South-South Nigeria. The research specifically examines how TSA influences two key indicators of accountability: tracking surveys and financial reporting quality, and further explores the moderating role of Political Will. A quantitative research design was adopted, with data collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 286 personnel across selected public organizations. A total of 261 valid responses were analyzed using SPSS version 27, with regression and multivariate analysis employed to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that TSA has a significant and positive effect on both tracking surveys ($\beta = 0.985, p < 0.001$) and financial reporting quality ($\beta = 0.982, p < 0.001$), demonstrating TSA's effectiveness in improving transparency, traceability, and timely reporting in government finance. Furthermore, the introduction of Political Will as a moderating variable significantly enhanced the relationship between TSA and government accountability ($\beta = 0.389, p < 0.001$), confirming that leadership commitment plays a vital role in the success of financial management reforms. The study concludes that TSA significantly contributes to strengthening accountability mechanisms in public sector organizations and recommends that the government sustain strong political commitment to TSA implementation and enhance monitoring mechanisms for compliance. These findings provide empirical support for the continued institutionalization of TSA as a critical tool for public financial management and reform in Nigeria.

Keywords: Treasury Single Account, Government Accountability, Tracking Surveys, Financial Reporting Quality, Political Will.

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Introduction

Government accountability is a cornerstone of effective public sector governance, particularly in developing countries where weak institutions and poor financial management often undermine service delivery and development outcomes. It entails the obligation of public officials to explain and justify their decisions, actions, and use of public resources in a transparent and responsible manner (Shah, 2007). Accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that governments act in the best interests of their citizens by adhering to laws, regulations, and ethical standards. These mechanisms empower citizens and stakeholders to hold public officials accountable for their actions, thereby promoting transparency, minimizing corruption, and enhancing efficiency in the use of public resources (Bovens et al., 2014).

Globally, there is increasing awareness of the need for stronger accountability in public finance management, particularly in developing nations where systemic corruption, misallocation of funds, and weak oversight persist (Kaufmann, 2005). In Nigeria, and more specifically in the South-South region, these challenges

are especially acute due to the complex interplay of natural resource wealth, socio-political tensions, and institutional weaknesses (Human Rights Watch, 2007). The South-South region, which comprises Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States, is rich in oil and gas resources and plays a critical role in Nigeria's economy. However, despite its economic significance, the region continues to grapple with governance challenges such as poor accountability, inefficiencies in public expenditure, and pervasive corruption (Anechiarico & Jacobs, 1996).

In response to these challenges, financial management reforms have been implemented to improve transparency and accountability in the public sector. These reforms include the adoption of frameworks such as the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and the Public Procurement Act, all aimed at enhancing fiscal discipline and curbing financial mismanagement (Simson et al., 2011; OECD, 2017; Lande, 2020). Among these,

the introduction of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) stands out as a major policy tool designed to consolidate government revenues and improve cash management (Agba et al., 2013). The TSA enhances oversight and accountability by enabling real-time monitoring of government funds and reducing revenue leakages (Ofoegbu, 2018). In the South-South region, the TSA has been adopted by various state governments as part of broader efforts to strengthen financial transparency (Olurankinse & Oladeji, 2019).

However, the actual impact of the TSA on government accountability in the region remains contested. While some states have made notable progress in implementing the TSA and other reforms, challenges such as political interference, limited institutional capacity, poor enforcement mechanisms, and a lack of transparency in oil revenue management continue to hamper accountability (Adebayo & Johnson, 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023). Additionally, civil society organizations and the media key actors in demanding accountability often face systemic barriers, including restricted access to information and threats to press freedom (Nwosu, 2015; Obasi & Ezeji, 2019). Despite the implementation of the Treasury Single Account and other financial management reforms in Nigeria's South-South region, government accountability remains a significant concern. The persistent issues of financial mismanagement, corruption, and lack of transparency suggest that these reforms have not fully achieved their intended outcomes. There is a critical need to assess the effectiveness of the TSA in promoting accountability in the public sector, particularly within the socio-politically sensitive and economically vital states of the South-South. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which the Treasury Single Account has contributed to improving government accountability in the region, and to identify the barriers that continue to undermine the reform's effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

The framework proposes that the introduction of treasury single account leads to improved tracking surveys and better financial reporting within ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in six south-souths State.

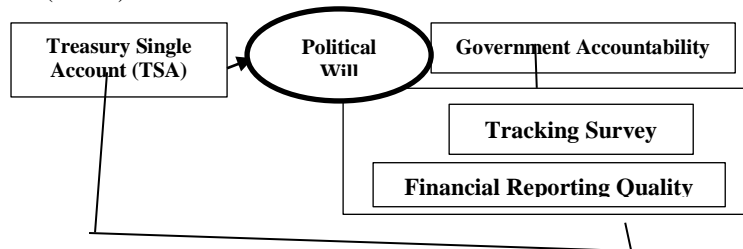


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework on Treasury single account and government accountability in Public Sector in Nigeria.

Source: Bovens, M., Goodin, R. E., & Schillemans, T. (2014). *Public accountability*. In M. Bovens, R. E. Goodin, & T. Schillemans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of public accountability* (pp. 1–20). Oxford University Press.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Treasury Single Account (TSA)

The Treasury Single Account (TSA) is a pivotal financial reform aimed at consolidating and managing government cash

resources for improved public sector governance. It establishes a unified structure of government bank accounts, facilitating real-time monitoring and efficient utilization of cash balances (Onyekpere, 2015). According to Eme et al. (2015), TSA serves as a tool for managing public funds, offering centralized oversight and enhanced transparency. In Nigeria, TSA enables Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to operate accounts in commercial banks while sweeping daily balances into a central TSA account at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (Chukwu, 2015).

TSA systems may be centralized or decentralized. In centralized models, the treasury controls all transactions, verifying and executing payments centrally (Sailendra & Israel, 2011). This ensures better expenditure control but may suffer from inefficiencies if internal control systems are weak. Conversely, decentralized models allow MDAs operational independence within TSA guidelines. These systems rely on robust communication and banking infrastructure to ensure synchronization between multiple accounts and the central TSA (Lienert & Ian, 2009). The Nigerian TSA was fully implemented in 2015 under President Buhari's administration, building on initial steps taken by Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan. The policy mandates the consolidation of all government revenues into the TSA at the CBN, reducing fragmentation and promoting transparency (Sahara Reporters, 2012). Legal backing for TSA exists in Sections 80, 81, and 162 of the 1999 Constitution, which require that public funds be consolidated and transparently managed. The TSA system comprises various accounts:

- Main Account: Central repository at the CBN.
- Sub-accounts: Used for budget tracking and agency-level operations.
- Transaction and Zero-Balance Accounts: Facilitate agency disbursements while sweeping unused balances daily into the TSA.
- Imprest, Transit, and Correspondent Accounts: Address operational needs like revenue collection, fund transfer delays, and agency-level tracking (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2010).

TSA's primary advantages include enhanced transparency and accountability. By minimizing idle and hidden funds, TSA curbs corruption and improves financial reporting (Adebisi et al., 2016; Yusuf & Chiejina, 2015). Real-time cash position visibility allows for effective planning and reduces reliance on short-term borrowing, thereby lowering debt servicing costs (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2011). Revenue collection is streamlined through the TSA, as all government receipts are funneled through a single point, minimizing leakages (Oguntodu et al., 2016). Prior to implementation, Nigeria had over 10,000 government accounts across commercial banks, making it difficult to ascertain the national cash position (Eme et al., 2015). TSA resolved this by centralizing all inflows, thereby eliminating idle balances and promoting fiscal discipline. Despite its benefits, TSA implementation in Nigeria faced challenges. These include initial resistance from MDAs reluctant to lose financial autonomy, and technical difficulties in system integration (Udo & Esara, 2016). Furthermore, TSA reduced the liquidity available to commercial banks, impacting their operations (Kanu, 2016). Nonetheless, the long-term benefits are clear. TSA has improved the government's capacity to manage resources efficiently and provided a foundation

for broader financial reforms. Bashir (2016) asserts that TSA reduces waste, supports investment planning, and ensures that public funds are consistently available for essential services.

Government Accountability

Government accountability is a core principle in democratic governance, ensuring that public officials are answerable for their actions and decisions. Mark Bovens defines accountability as a relationship where an actor must explain and justify conduct to a forum, which can question and impose consequences (Bovens, 2007). Similarly, Behn (2001) frames it as the obligation to explain actions to another party with the authority to evaluate and respond. Accountability thus combines responsibility, transparency, and enforceability. Cheruiyot et al. (2017) emphasize that accountability extends beyond financial reporting to include being answerable for all entrusted responsibilities. Makina and Mago (2015) also stress the presence of at least two parties assigning authority and receiving account while Odunayo (2014) highlights reporting performance based on agreed standards. Khan (2016) frames it as a legal and moral obligation of governments to deliver effective services using public resources responsibly.

Schedler (1999) expands this by introducing two key elements: answerability the duty to explain and enforcement the capacity to impose sanctions. O'Donnell (1998) distinguishes vertical accountability (elections, civic engagement) from horizontal accountability (oversight by internal institutions), both critical for democratic checks and balances. Transparency is closely tied to accountability. Fox (2007) argues that access to information must be matched with mechanisms that encourage responsible action. Noveck (2009) discusses how digital technology can strengthen transparency, but also brings challenges like data privacy and ethical use. Accountability, then, must evolve alongside technological and societal changes. Financial accountability specifically refers to tracking how public resources are managed and spent. Ogiriki and Buseri (2022) define it as the process of recording, evaluating, and reporting financial activities. Kaufman (2005) and Nwoke et al. (2023) advocate for accountability as a means to fight corruption, build trust, and restore citizen confidence in governance.

Nigeria's persistent issues with public sector corruption further underline the need for robust accountability systems. The country dropped from 144th in 2018 to 150th in 2022 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, signaling deep-rooted governance problems. Bina and Obah (2018) argue that strong financial control mechanisms are necessary to reverse this trend and improve governance outcomes. Trust in government is both a product and condition of accountability. Levi and Stoker (2000) suggest that public trust hinges on citizens' perception of fair procedures and the honesty of government officials. Thus, accountability not only ensures responsible conduct but also fosters civic trust and legitimacy.

Tracking Surveys

Tracking surveys are essential tools for evaluating government accountability, especially in public financial management. They monitor how reforms like the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), and the Treasury Single Account (TSA) impact transparency, © Copyright MRS Publisher. All Rights Reserved

reduce corruption, and improve resource use. In Nigeria's South-South region, these surveys assess discrepancies, budget execution, and reporting quality in ministries and agencies. They help identify gaps in reform implementation and offer insights for policy improvement. Ultimately, tracking surveys provide critical data that strengthen accountability and governance in the public sector.

Financial Reporting Quality

Financial reporting quality is vital for informed decision-making by stakeholders. Barth et al. (2001) define it as reporting that faithfully represents a firm's underlying economics. Jonas and Blanchet (2000) stress transparency and clarity, while Biddle et al. (2009) link it to decision usefulness, especially for investors assessing cash flow and risk. The International Accounting Standards Board (2018) outlines key characteristics—relevance, faithful representation, comparability, verifiability, timeliness, and understandability. Earnings quality, according to Dechow et al. (2010), adds context to numbers, improving decision relevance. Audit quality also plays a critical role; DeFond and Zhang (2014) emphasize that reliable audits enhance reporting credibility. Ball (2001) highlights the influence of regulation and market forces on reporting practices, arguing that standards alone do not ensure quality. In sum, financial reporting quality depends on accurate representation, regulatory strength, audit assurance, and ethical transparency, forming the backbone of accountability and trust in financial information.

Theoretical Framework

This study on the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and government accountability is grounded in Agency Theory as the principal framework, with complementary insights from Public Choice Theory, Institutional Theory, Stewardship Theory, and Stakeholder Theory to provide a multidimensional understanding of financial accountability in the public sector. Agency Theory, as developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), provides a foundational lens through which to examine the principal-agent relationship between citizens and government officials. The theory posits that public officials, acting as agents, may not always act in the best interests of the public (the principals) due to divergent goals and information asymmetry. In the context of public financial management, this asymmetry allows agents to potentially misuse resources for personal gain. The introduction of the TSA, which consolidates government revenue into a single account, is a mechanism aimed at reducing this asymmetry by limiting the discretion of public officials over public funds. This, in turn, enhances transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public finances (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2011; Adeolu, 2015). Public Choice Theory, as articulated by Buchanan and Tullock (1962), supports this framework by emphasizing that public officials, much like individuals in markets, act based on self-interest. This perspective suggests that without proper checks and balances, public officials may engage in rent-seeking behavior, policy manipulation, and other forms of inefficiency that undermine public trust. TSA reforms act as a deterrent to such tendencies by eliminating fragmented accounts and enabling better oversight of government financial activities (Rose-Ackerman, 1978).

Institutional Theory adds further depth by highlighting the role of formal structures, routines, and norms in shaping the behavior of public institutions (Scott, 1995). The implementation

of TSA reflects institutional efforts to establish standardized financial procedures that encourage accountability and reduce opportunities for discretionary abuse. By embedding financial discipline into the operational fabric of government institutions, TSA functions as both a policy and institutional reform aimed at reshaping public sector behavior. Stewardship Theory, proposed by Donaldson and Davis (1991), provides a more optimistic view of public sector actors, suggesting that, under the right conditions, public officials may act as stewards of public trust rather than opportunistic agents. TSA, when accompanied by adequate training, transparency, and supportive institutional cultures, can empower officials to manage public resources ethically and efficiently, aligning their motivations with broader organizational and societal goals. Finally, Stakeholder Theory underscores the importance of accountability not only to the government but to a wide range of stakeholders including taxpayers, civil society, and international partners. Effective implementation of TSA responds to these stakeholder expectations by enhancing the visibility and integrity of public financial management processes. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for examining the implementation of TSA and its impact on promoting accountability and reducing financial malpractice within the public sector.

Empirical Review

Patience (2024) conducted a study to evaluate the Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy as a critical instrument for promoting accountability in public sector financial management. The study posited that the implementation of TSA is theoretically expected to yield mutual benefits, curb economic injustices, and foster financial discipline, transparency, and accountability while facilitating a new economic and political order in Nigeria. The research focused on Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) within the Port Harcourt metropolis. A judgmental sampling method was employed to select a sample of 72 respondents. Data were analyzed using Pearson Correlation techniques to assess the relationship between the TSA policy and financial accountability outcomes. Findings from the study revealed that the adoption of TSA effectively addresses financial inefficiencies, plugs revenue leakages, and enhances transparency and accountability within the public financial system. Based on these results, the study recommended that for the policy to achieve its full potential, the government should enact additional legislation to mandate its adoption across all three tiers of government in Nigeria, thereby ensuring uniform implementation and sustained financial discipline.

Chukwudum and Joshua (2024) analysed the impact of government public sector reforms on Nigeria's economic growth from 2013 to 2022, utilizing a descriptive quasi-experimental design. Three hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level. The study found that three key public sector reform initiatives Treasury Single Account (TSA), Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), and Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) had a positive and significant effect on Nigeria's economic growth. The study recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria, as the primary monetary and fiscal policy regulator, should regularly review these reform policies to align them with international best practices. Furthermore, the government should establish and enforce regular external audit mechanisms, in addition to statutory audits, to

enhance oversight of the institutional frameworks responsible for implementing these reforms. Lastly, full implementation of the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System across all levels of government was advised to eliminate the persistence of ghost workers in public enterprises.

Goji et al. (2024) investigated the adverse effects of implementing the Treasury Single Account (TSA) on the payment of university lecturers at the Federal University of Lafia. The study is grounded in Marx's Conflict Theory, which posits that human societies are structured around class relations with conflicting interests, where the ruling class enforces its rules to the disadvantage of the working class. Utilizing both primary and secondary data alongside content analysis, the study found that the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), a component of the TSA framework, failed to account for the unique circumstances of lecturers, such as sabbatical and visiting appointments, non-payment of promotion arrears, and other allowances. Furthermore, the implementation of TSA was seen to undermine the autonomy of the university system.

Amahalu et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and accountability in Nigeria's public sector, focusing on the South-East and South-South regions. The study employed a field survey research design, targeting 1,250 staff members from the account departments of five Federal Universities Teaching Hospitals and five Federal Medical Centers in the regions. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 303 respondents was determined, with 218 valid responses collected from distributed questionnaires. The validity and reliability of the research instrument were confirmed, with Cronbach Alpha used to ensure internal consistency. The analysis, conducted using Spearman's Correlation, Paired T-Test, and SPSS version 23, revealed significant positive relationships between various TSA components Transactions Workflow Management, Chart of Accounts Management, Treasury Management, and Transactions Monitoring and accountability in the public sector. The findings underscore the effectiveness of TSA in enhancing financial transparency and accountability. The study recommended that the government enforce the adoption of TSA across all ministries, departments, agencies, and parastatals. This enforcement is necessary as TSA implementation has demonstrably improved the accountability of federal government institutions in Nigeria.

Oti et al. (2016) conducted an appraisal of the policy impact of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in Nigeria. Their study highlighted TSA as one of the Federal Government's key measures to tackle issues of accountability and corruption in public sector fiscal operations. The objective of the paper was to evaluate the policy's impact and propose solutions to identified gaps. To achieve this, the authors utilized both survey and exploratory research designs, administering questionnaires to collect opinions from individuals and institutions. Additionally, secondary data were analyzed to complement the findings. The study revealed varying perspectives on TSA. Bankers expressed concerns about its negative impact on their liquidity management plans, while the federal government highlighted the policy's success in providing an aggregate view of its cash holdings, eliminating the complexities associated with managing multiple accounts across commercial banks and MDAs. Civil society groups supported the government's stance, acknowledging TSA's role in enhancing transparency in fiscal management. However, the findings also indicated

significant challenges. Deposit money banks were negatively affected, experiencing reduced lending capacities, lower profits, and consequently diminished company income tax contributions to the federal government. The policy shock led to personnel downsizing in some banks, further underscoring its economic ripple effects. The paper concluded by emphasizing the need for proactive measures to mitigate unintended consequences, such as potential declines in GDP due to the closure of companies unable to withstand financial disruptions. It recommended that the federal government conduct sensitivity analyses to anticipate and address potential economic shocks associated with the implementation of TSA.

Methodology

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design to assess the impact of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) on government accountability in Nigeria, focusing on federal institutions within the six states of the South-South region. The design enabled the comparison of pre-TSA and post-TSA periods to determine changes in accountability practices over time. The population included individuals directly involved in implementing and managing TSA within the public sector. These included personnel from the Ministry of Finance, Office of the Accountant-General, Auditor-General's Office, Budget Offices, and those managing payroll and treasury functions such as the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure fair representation across various functional roles. The identified strata included financial management officers, payroll officers, auditors, accountants, administrative staff, and other relevant personnel. This approach minimized sampling bias and captured the perspectives of different actors engaged in TSA.

Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size. With an estimated population of 1,000 and a margin of error set at 0.05, the final sample size was calculated as 286. The sample was proportionally drawn from each subgroup according to their relative sizes. Primary data was collected through a structured

questionnaire distributed to the selected respondents. The questionnaire combined close-ended questions, using Likert scales for quantitative analysis, and open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights. Distribution was done both in print and electronically, with follow-up reminders to increase response rates. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. Expert review was conducted to ensure the questionnaire's relevance and completeness in assessing TSA and its effect on accountability. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS. Multiple regression analysis was applied to evaluate the relationship between TSA implementation and government accountability, with key outputs such as coefficients, p-values, and R-squared values used to interpret findings.

Results and Analysis

Out of 286 questionnaires distributed, 274 (96%) were retrieved, and 261 (91%) were valid after cleaning for blank or incomplete responses. These were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Questionnaire administration and retrieval spanned four weeks, supported by designated contacts within target organizations. Boxplot analysis confirmed the final dataset had no significant outliers or missing values.

Demographic Analysis

Most respondents were male (75.86%), with females accounting for 24.14%. A majority (68.58%) were aged 26–35, followed by 29.12% in the 36–45 age group. Most participants (60.92%) held bachelor's degrees, while 34.48% had diplomas and 4.60% had master's degrees. Regarding roles, administrative staff represented the highest group (30.27%), followed by auditors (22.99%), accountants (21.84%), financial officers (13.79%), and payroll officers (11.11%). In terms of tenure, most participants (54.02%) had been with their organizations for 11–20 years, while 21.84% had between 5–10 years or over 20 years. Only 2.30% had less than 5 years of service.

Bivariate Analysis

Table 1: Regression analysis for TSA and Tracking Surveys

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.257	.034	7.674	.000
	TSA	.930	.010	92.207	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tracking Surveys

The result on the significance of the effect of TSA on tracking surveys, reveals that at $\beta = 0.985$ and $P = 0.000$. The result from the analysis demonstrates that TSA has a significant effect on tracking surveys as it significantly impacts the extent of the manifestation or outcome of tracking surveys, thus TSA can be viewed as a significantly and positive predictor of the behaviour or

outcome of practices of tracking surveys within the public organizations. The evidence thus indicates that TSA practices are crucial to reinforcing and strengthening the outcome of tracking surveys within the public sector of South-South Nigeria; hence, based on the evidence presented, the previous null hypothesis of no significant relationship is therefore rejected.

Table 2: Regression analysis for TSA and Financial Reporting Quality

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.128	.038	3.338	.001
	TSA	.970	.012	83.813	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Financial Reporting Quality

The test for the significance of the influence or effect of TSA on the financial reporting quality of the public sector of South-South Nigeria reveals that at $\beta = 0.982$ and $P = 0.000$, it is affirmed that TSA significantly influences the financial reporting quality behavior and practices of the public sector of South-South Nigeria. The result indicates that the related shifts and changes in the activities and behavior of the public organizations when it comes to their financial reporting quality, can also be linked to the actions and practices of TSA expressed within the context of the

organizations. In line with the evidence generated, the related null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

In line with the outcome on the observed significance of the effect of TSA and the measures of government accountability (tracking surveys and financial reporting quality), it is the position of this study that TSA significantly contributes and impacts on government accountability within the public organizations.

Multivariate Analysis

Table 3: Result for Moderating Role of Political Will

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.180	.025		7.110	.000
	TSA	.963	.008	.992	124.861	.000
2	(Constant)	.106	.023		4.556	.000
	TSA	.591	.040	.608	14.796	.000
	Political Will	.381	.040	.389	9.454	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Government Accountability

The multivariate analysis explored the moderating effect of Political Will on the relationship between the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and Government Accountability. In the first model, which tested the direct impact of TSA alone, the result showed a very strong and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.992$, $p < .001$). This indicates that TSA independently plays a major role in improving government accountability. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.963$) implies that a unit increase in TSA implementation corresponds with a 0.963-unit increase in government accountability. The high t-value (124.861) further confirms the strength and reliability of this relationship, establishing TSA as a significant predictor of accountability in the public sector.

In the second model, Political Will was introduced to assess its moderating influence. The result revealed that while TSA remained significant ($\beta = 0.608$, $p < .001$), its effect size reduced slightly, suggesting that Political Will shares in explaining government accountability. Political Will also showed a strong and significant effect on accountability ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < .001$), with a notable t-value of 9.454. This implies that when Political Will is present, the influence of TSA on accountability becomes more effective. In essence, Political Will enhances the impact of TSA, demonstrating that commitment from political leadership is crucial in driving the success of financial reforms aimed at strengthening government accountability.

Discussion of Findings

TSA and Tracking Surveys

The finding reveals that the Treasury Single Account (TSA) has a significant and strong relationship with tracking surveys in the Nigerian public financial management system ($\beta = 0.985$; $P = 0.000$). This is an indication that the concentration of government revenue inflows into a single treasury account greatly enhances the visibility and traceability of public funds. By closing previously maintained fragmented accounts of MDAs in commercial banks, TSA enables better control and oversight of government financial transactions. Through greater traceability, real-time tracking of inflows and outflows is now feasible, hence allowing more effective monitoring, auditing, and evaluation

exercises. This is in line with Yusuf, et al (2015), who contended that TSA implementation thwarts financial leakages, supports budgetary control, and motivates anti-corruption through centralized monitoring. Ibanichuka and Ofor (2019) also listed that TSA enhances fiscal discipline by eliminating dormant balances and promoting sound cash management, thereby facilitating efficient tracking and performance assessment. The availability of timely financial information through TSA has served to enhance accountability and responsiveness to public service provision.

TSA and Financial Reporting Quality

The result further shows a positive significant effect of TSA on financial reporting quality ($\beta = 0.982$; $P = 0.000$). The inference is that centralization of public sector bank accounts through TSA enables timely, accurate, and transparent financial reporting. By virtue of automating reconciliation and providing one government cash position view, TSA eliminates delay and discrepancies in the reporting process. It enhances collation of finance data among the MDAs, thereby encouraging consistency and improving data quality for financial statements in the government. This result supports the contention of Pattanayak and Fainboim (2010) that TSA improves the credibility of public financial reports through consolidating cash balances and closing off-budget accounts. For Nigeria, Akpanuko and Asogwa (2020) reaffirmed that TSA has enhanced the quality of fiscal information, increased public confidence, and enabled accountability by offering improved financial disclosures. The system minimizes manual interventions and encourages the use of standardized financial reporting frameworks based on international best practices.

Conclusion

The study establishes that the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) significantly enhances government accountability in South-South Nigeria, particularly through improvements in tracking surveys and financial reporting quality. TSA fosters real-time visibility, traceability, and transparency in public financial management by consolidating government revenue into a single account. Additionally, the study confirms that Political Will positively moderates this relationship emphasizing

that strong leadership commitment amplifies the impact of TSA reforms. The results affirm that TSA not only strengthens fiscal discipline and curbs financial leakages but also improves the credibility and accuracy of financial reports across public institutions. The study recommends as follows:

- i. Government at all levels should prioritize and sustain high-level political will in support of TSA practices. This includes ensuring that leadership at ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) are held accountable for full compliance and are provided with the resources and training necessary to integrate TSA systems effectively.
- ii. Regulatory bodies should intensify monitoring and evaluation of TSA processes to ensure continuous improvement. This can be achieved by integrating advanced tracking technologies and analytics tools that provide real-time insights, thus enabling better enforcement, transparency, and feedback loops for decision-making in public financial management.

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