

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of Public and Community Participation on the Budget Administration Process in South Sudan

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Abstract

The study examines the effect of public and community participation on South Sudan's budget administration process from 2011 to 2021, focusing on three national ministries: Finance and Planning, General Education and Instructions, and Health. The purpose of the study was achieved through a descriptive survey and a correlational research design, which combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research involved 110 management staff members and utilized a sample size of 86 respondents, determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula. The data was collected through the self-administered questionnaires and structured interviews. For data analysis, thematic examination was used for qualitative data, while quantitative data was processed using descriptive, it was also processed using inferential statistics with SPSS Version 21. The findings indicate a significant lack of public and community participation throughout all stages of the budget administration process within the governmental agencies. It concludes that this lack of engagement has led to ineffective budgets, lacking credibility, transparency, and accountability, which in turn adversely affects the quality of basic services and the efficacy of key projects intended to address citizen needs. The study recommends that the government should enhance public and community participation in the budget administration process to bolster efficacy, transparency, and accountability. Such improvements are envisioned to facilitate better service delivery and ensure that prioritized citizen projects are addressed.

Keywords: Public, Community, Participation, Budget, Administration, South Sudan.

1. Introduction

South Sudan is a landlocked country in East-Central Africa. It borders Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the southeast, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest, and the Central African Republic to the west. It gained independence from the Republic of Sudan on July 9, 2011, making it the most recent sovereign state. Juba serves as both the capital and the largest city. South Sudan is the eleventh-largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, covering an area of

644,000 square kilometers. The government operates under a federal system comprising ten states and three administrative areas divided into counties, payams, and bomas. The ACHPR (2020) projected that South Sudan's population would reach 12,230,730 by 2023. The population is diverse, comprising 64 different ethnolinguistic groups, with about 50.6% living in poverty. It ranks among the poorest countries based on GDP per capita. Furthermore, 72% of the population is under 30, underscoring a significant reliance on the youth. Approximately 80% of the population lives in

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rural areas, and nearly four-fifths of its inhabitants depend on farming, with a small portion relying on animal husbandry for their livelihoods. South Sudan, despite its vast natural resources and oil production, is among the world's poorest and least-developed countries, characterized by a highly vulnerable and underdeveloped economy (ACHPR, 2020).

Before South Sudan's independence in 2011, the region had two major civil wars, the first (1955-1972) and the second (1983-2005). These conflicts were fueled by ethnic, cultural, and religious differences between the predominantly Christian and animist South and the Arab-Muslim North. The Sudanese Arab Muslim-led government regimes had applied marginalization policies against the Southern Region, affecting political power, economic exploitation, essential service delivery, and development growth. The second civil war ended in 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), forming the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). However, the GoSS failed to address postwar and pre-independence issues, such as a lack of essential social services and infrastructure development. In 2010, President Salva Kiir stated that "South Sudan had no development and lacked infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water, power, hospitals, and schools" (The Brendhurst Foundation, 2010). After gaining independence in 2011, the new government was expected to establish a stable budget system to address post-independence issues. However, numerous problems, including a multi-sided civil war between government and opposition forces since 2013 and 2016, threatened state performance and governance (Badmus, 2017). This fragility impacted the country's promise to good governance, poverty reduction, inclusive service delivery, and development plans (De'Nyok, 2025).

South Sudan's budget administration process is a cyclical system that involves forecasting revenue and expenditures, setting financial goals, allocating resources, implementing the budget, and monitoring it over time. This structured approach ensures efficient resource management, control over spending, and the ability to adapt to changing market conditions. Government agencies must forecast revenue, expenditures, and funding to achieve service delivery and development objectives (Anandah, 2022). An effective budgeting system should include, among other things, public and community participation in the budget process (participatory budgeting) to support proper resource allocation and funding of essential projects for service delivery, infrastructure

development, social security, and welfare (Xu et al., 2024). However, factors affecting the budget administration process can negatively impact performance and outcomes. These factors may include a lack of public and community involvement in the budget process (a lack of participatory budgeting). This study examines public and community participation in South Sudan's budget administration from 2011 to 2021, focusing on the three national ministries of Finance and Planning, General Education and Instruction, and Health.

1.1 Background of the Study

Budgets are essential financial instruments utilized globally by governments to generate, gather, and allocate funds effectively for social services. Comprising a framework of laws, procedures, and systems, budgeting facilitates the mobilization, allocation, and financial accountability of public spending while assessing outcomes (Lawson, 2015). The budgeting process includes four key components: administration, accounting, economics, and politics (Khan & Hildreth, 2002). It aims to allocate limited resources, evaluate economic growth, establish spending ceilings, and ensure adherence to budgetary constraints (Michel, 2002; Bartle and Shields, 2008). Budgeting also promotes informed decision-making for service delivery and capital management, encourages stakeholder participation, and fosters communication between officials and the community (Lapsley & Ros, 2015). The budgetary process consists of four essential stages: formulation, adoption, execution, and evaluation, which are necessary for ensuring financial stability, transparency, and public oversight (Hashem, 2014; Harchenko, 2024). In South Sudan, the national budget process is a vital financial tool for the fiscal year from July 1 to June 30, outlining strategies for revenue generation through oil, taxes, and donor grants to foster economic development. The budget is prepared, implemented, and evaluated by the Budget and Treasury Directorates of the national Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP, 2023).

Public and community participation is highlighted as a significant element in informing and involving community members in decision-making processes; this participation includes awareness-raising, outreach, and collaborative efforts (Shukor et al., 2011). Fox and Meyer (1995) establish that community involvement in development entails active participation in administrative policymaking, which encompasses budget prioritization and guiding government stakeholders on project significance for

community development. This engagement is critical for embedding public concerns, needs, and values into governance frameworks, thus fostering inclusivity (Awio & Northcott, 2007). Public participation manifests across various sectors, including budgeting and political contexts, with Kaefing (2005) emphasizing that it involves not only informing the public but also soliciting feedback and granting authority in decision-making. A notable example of public participation is seen in participatory budgeting, as highlighted by Schgurency (2011), where governments actively seek to engage citizens in collaborative public actions, deliberations, and decision-making. Gorden (2017) notes that public participation in budgeting can occur directly, enabling citizens to influence fiscal priorities, or indirectly, through elected representatives, which is essential for maintaining a responsible and transparent budgeting process.

Reshma (2021) argues that public engagement enhances budget management and equity in resource allocation, allowing communities to articulate their perspectives prior to policy decisions, while Nayak and Samanta (2014) assert that public input is critical during all phases of the budget process. Effective oversight mechanisms are necessary to prevent mismanagement and uphold transparency; thus, public hearings become crucial for educating stakeholders about budget strategies (Eising, 2013). The significance of public and community engagement is further underlined by its essential role in fostering effective governance and accountability (Shah, 2007). In South Sudan, the historical lack of citizen participation since its independence in 2011 has resulted in credibility issues within budget allocation, adversely affecting social services and creating barriers to economic growth and improved living conditions (Oyedele, 2015; De Gama, 2020). Challenges highlighted by Gashaw (2018) include misaligned budget priorities, excessive security spending, and insufficient investments in health and education, prompting calls for reform in public financial management. These reforms aim to advance participatory, transparent, and accountable budgeting that enhances service delivery, alleviates poverty, creates jobs, and supports sustainable development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public and community participation is crucial for a transparent and responsible budgeting process, allowing the public to evaluate government programs and services (Gorden, 2017). The budget plays a vital role in a central or regional government, providing

insights into potential planning problems (Pratiwi, 2014). Active participation in budgeting ensures efficient resource allocation and equitable distribution. A realistic oversight process is necessary to prevent mismanagement, combat corruption, and promote budget compliance (Nayak & Samanta, 2014). Public and community participation is crucial for a country's democratic political system, corruption elimination, and improved financial management (Eniayejun & Evcan, 2015). Budgeting participation brings the government closer to the people, improving services, such as healthcare, housing, education, transportation, and communication. This approach helps rural populations avoid relocation to cities (Sintomer et al., 2008). The South Sudan Constitution promotes accountability and transparency in public finance, but decision-making remains challenging for the general public. Greater public involvement in political processes and accountability in public finances is needed (Challigha, 2008).

Since South Sudan's independence in 2011, the country has faced governance crises and political instability, with a lack of citizen participation in the budget administration process. A lack of public and community participation in the budget administration process has resulted in insufficient budgetary allocations for programs of social sector organizations. This has led to inadequate budgetary performance and poor service delivery. In 2019, the state budget for social sectors, such as health and education, decreased from 9% to 5%, failing to meet the Incheon Declaration's target of 20% of total public expenditures for the education sector and the Abuja Declaration's target of 15% for the health sector (UNICEF South Sudan, 2019; De Gama, 2020). The study reveals that budgetary issues have negatively impacted social sector organizations, including the National Ministries of General Education and Instruction and Health, leading to poor social service delivery and significant social challenges.

The consequences of a lack of public and community involvement in the budget administration process in South Sudan have led to inadequate social service delivery, particularly in rural areas, resulting in increased internal migration to urban centers. This has led to the emergence of inner cities (often referred to as ghettos), exacerbated by issues like unemployment, vandalism, poverty, crime, and drug abuse. Understanding the budget administration process is crucial for planning and prioritizing spending on quality basic social services within budget

constraints and implementing state-level programs for future development goals. The Sudd Institute (2018) emphasized the need for structural reforms in South Sudan's public financial management system, including public and community participation in stages of the budget administration process to enhance transparency and accountability. The study examined the effect of public and community participation in South Sudan's budget administration procedures from 2011 to 2021, aiming to improve budget processes, performance, and service delivery quality.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the impact of public and community involvement on the budget administration process in South Sudan.

1.4 Significance (Justification) of the Study

The study aims to inform those in charge of budgeting in South Sudan about factors affecting the budget administration process, including a lack of public and community participation. It will also serve as a

reliable reference for NGOs, scholars, authors, and researchers. The findings and recommendations will help stakeholders in national, state, and local governments formulate policies and strategies to mitigate budgeting issues and enhance performance in line ministries and spending agencies, particularly service providers.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework facilitates an in-depth analysis of literature that encompasses various conceptual interpretations. It serves to critically link concepts, thereby enriching the existing body of knowledge and oftentimes deriving its attributes from secondary sources (Maree, 2010). The study uses a conceptual framework to analyze the problem statement, focusing on public and community participation as independent variables and the budget administration process as the dependent variable. The findings indicate that the independent variable significantly impacts the dependent variable, affecting the budget administration process.

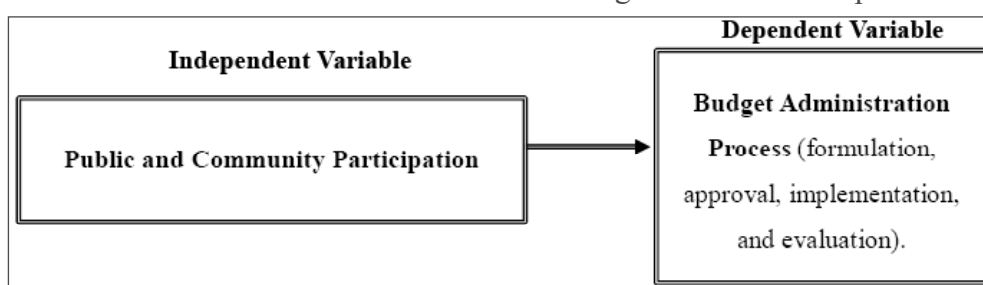


Figure 1.1 Illustrating the conceptual framework

Source: developed by the researchers (2025).

1.5.1 Public and Community Participation

Public and community participation are crucial aspects of development, covering stakeholder consultation and informed decision-making. They aim to deepen democracy, alleviate poverty, and enhance service delivery (Davids, 2005; Greenberg & Mathoho, 2010). The study indicated that public and community participation was lacking at all levels of government and throughout the budgeting stages process. This absence has led to inefficient budget administration processes, resulting in poor quality of basic service delivery provided by the government service providers.

1.5.2 Budget Administration Process

Hashem (2014) describes the budget administration process as a recurring cycle consisting of four stages: formulation, adoption, implementation, and auditing and evaluation. This process is crucial for public organizations as it requires the government to

update its goals, objectives, and strategies (Ijeoma et al., 2013). The study discovered that the dependent variable (The budget administration process) has been influenced by independent variables (Public and community participation). This has resulted in budgets that lack effectiveness, credibility, transparency, and accountability at all levels of government—national, state, and local. As a result, there has been insufficient provision of social services by government agencies, particularly service providers.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study faced limitations due to limited access to data, limited secondary sources, including a lack of books, journals, and relevant research, and institutional restrictions on government records. Primary data collection was challenging in government ministries and agencies due to fear of victimization, lack of budgeting experience, some expected compensation, or jealousy of others pursuing further studies. Directors delayed completion of questionnaires due

to busy schedules or vacation plans. Despite various factors affecting the budget administration process, this study concentrated on public and community participation only. Other limitations included a small sample size, which generalized hard, coupled with time constraints.

2. Literature Review

A literature review is a research tool that aids researchers in understanding previous studies, identifying trends, identifying gaps, and supporting the study. It reviews theoretical frameworks, the effect of public and community participation in South Sudan's budget administration process, and identifies gaps in the literature, suggesting how to fill them.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The subsection explored various theories examining the impact of public and community participation in the budget administration process, including the budgetary process, stakeholders and public participation, and the materialist political economy theory.

2.1.1 The Budgetary Process Theory

The budget process theory, developed by Otto et al. in 1966, addresses the planning, allocation, and management of financial resources in governments and organizations. It covers the rules and decision-making involved in budgets, which impact financial performance and policy outcomes. The theory posits that budgeting includes evaluating alternatives, a complex task due to technical challenges and the lack of a unified approach for assessing programs with differing preferences. Budget participants often use calculation aids, particularly the incremental method, to navigate significant financial burdens (Freeman et al., 2015). This theory serves as a framework for decision-making, from budget creation to legislative approval, essential for project execution and economic growth in both developed and developing countries. It integrates the legislative and executive branches, influenced by constitutional, political, and legal frameworks and internal structures (Posner & Park, 2007).

The budget process is governed by a defined theory where the executive branch prepares the budget, and the legislative branch analyzes, modifies, and approves it, demonstrating their shared authority (Ekeocha, 2012). The roles of key participants are crucial, as they embody behavioral expectations linked to institutional positions, contributing to a structured division of labor. Incremental budgeting relies on historical

expenditure levels, reflecting a widely accepted belief among participants that programs will operate close to current spending. This informal consensus is vital for stability. Budgeting, as noted by Khan and Hildreth (2012), is characterized by incremental changes and fragmentation, with subcommittees refining historical budgets. This fragmentation is further exacerbated by the Senate Appropriations Committee's appeals roles (Key, 2011). Such a qualitative understanding of budgeting is essential for informing the development of quantitative models, as budget decision-makers frequently consider linear relationships between choices in budget implementation (Hyde, 2013).

The budget administration process in South Sudan involves multiple public institutions and spans several months, with oversight from the Ministry of Finance and policy direction from the Cabinet or the President. Line ministries advocate for resource needs, while the legislature reviews and approves the final budget plan. The preparation phase is politically significant as it allocates limited resources to various competing demands. After legislative approval, budget execution begins, with the government tasked with resource distribution to meet policy objectives effectively. Challenges arise in achieving value for money and effective utilization of public funds, as reviews indicate that developing countries like South Sudan often excel in budget preparation but struggle with its execution. The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 provides a framework for examining the budget process, including executive drafting and legislative oversight, which aids in policy discussions, setting fiscal limits, recognizing bottlenecks, and engaging stakeholders. Understanding this theory is crucial for enhancing the performance of the budget process and improving basic social service delivery.

2.1.2 Stakeholder's Theory and Public Participation

The study was based on stakeholder's theory, whose proponent is Freeman R.E. (1984). The theory suggests that organizations have stakeholders who benefit or are harmed by their actions. These stakeholders are groups or individuals who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. The purpose of an organization is to manage their interests, needs, and viewpoints, which is fulfilled by its managers (Fontaine et al., 2006). The main stakeholders include public (customers), local communities, employees, service providers, and shareholders (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Donaldson and Preston (1995) criticized

the stakeholders' theory for its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power, and normative validity. They argued that the theory is justified in management literature due to its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power, and normative validity. Descriptive accuracy is based on its model describing the organization as a constellation of interests possessing intrinsic value. Instrumental power is based on its framework for examining the links between stakeholder management and organizational performance goals. Normative validity is based on the acceptance of the idea that stakeholders are persons or groups with legitimate interests in procedural and substantive aspects of organizational activity, regardless of whether the agency has any corresponding functional interest in them. The interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value, making stakeholder theory relevant to the budget administration process (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

South Sudan's constitution and the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011 mandate public participation in the budget administration process at all levels, including national, state, and local governments. The lack of active, effective, and lasting participation of beneficiaries is a main reason for unsuccessful development projects in the country. Community participation is crucial for social and economic development, and policy-making, public resource management, and revenue sharing are expected to become key drivers of development. Active engagement of communities is necessary for better resource distribution and a deeper consultation and information sharing process in budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation aspects of development projects. People only participate in processes that are beneficial to them, and in instances where the benefits outweigh the costs. A balance must be made to ensure community participation in governance benefits participants. Low turnout has been observed due to government failures in civil education and ignorance of the community's desire to own the budget (Barasa & Eising, 2012). Participative budgets demonstrate the importance of effective tools of participation and government duty in breaking bureaucratic barriers and forming active citizenship (Mugambi & Theuri, 2014). The constitution should clearly define values and norms for public officers, outlining the type of retribution that can be applied if these norms are not upheld, to ensure that those in leadership positions, public offices, and resources adhere to publicly agreed standards and goals (Mbai, 2003).

Public participation is a crucial aspect of democratic governance, ensuring that programs are meaningfully tied to the people. The World Bank defines participation as a process where stakeholders share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources. It creates a balance between governing for the people and governing by the people. The theory can significantly influence decision-making and improve governance processes when harnessed properly. The constitution makers emphasized the importance of public and community participation in achieving productive and sustainable change. In South Sudan, the stakeholder's theory and public participation should be a key tool against graft and poor governance. A society with a strong civic culture should be more involved in managing its affairs. It should now be legal to consult stakeholders and make development plans and services more responsive to local needs. This would increase the responsibility for the average South Sudanese, allowing them to enhance development and service delivery while fostering governance and accountability. The study reveals that public and community participation is crucial in government budget administration process, but a lack of participation at every stage negatively impacts the process and cycle for government agencies, leading to poor service delivery.

2.1.3 The Materialist Political Economy Theory

The materialist political economy theory, developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century, was further elaborated in Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867-1894) and Engels's *Anti-Dühring* (1878), focusing on historical materialism. The study was guided by this theory to explain public and community (citizens) participation in the government budget administration process. The theory points out that, the primary determinant of citizens' participation in decision making is the possession of material resources which influences the political and social status of individuals in the society. In this regard, for effective participation to be practical it is important for the citizens to have such status. The theory further argues that, material resources also play a big role in determining the nature of the policy processes. Budget process is part of the policy processes in a country, as per the introduction above there are regulations which requires public and community to participate, however, the theory points out that, regulations alone are not enough to ensure effective citizen participation in the budget process since the participation is highly influenced by the possession of the material resources (Overbeek, 2004).

It is important to understand that, citizen participation in the political processes is twofold; the ruling class and the ruled class both comprise of citizens. Since the citizens belong to the ruled class, they have limited opportunities to participate and make decisions on important political processes such as resource allocation and budgeting (Cohen, 2000). The theory states that, however strong efforts may be made in a liberal system to widen participation by raising the socio-economic level of all citizens, true citizenship can never happen ultimately if class division in society exists. The theory further argues that, citizenship in a liberal democracy is ultimately a tool used by the upper classes to maintain their privileged position and is against the interests of the proletariat class fundamentally. The theory continues to emphasize that, while the existence of a democratic state by definition abolishes differences of birth, rank, education and occupation based on the idea that, all are equal before the law and have the right to vote in elections based on the idea of universal adult franchise but the fact that the liberal democratic state allows poverty, inequality of education and incomes and thus the un-equal conditions generated by them shows that it does not support real citizenship because real citizenship is meaningless without basic needs being fulfilled and equality of opportunities (Cohen, 2000).

The theory highlights the limited participation of the public and community in the budget processes due to limited understanding of budget administration procedures and low levels of education. Education is crucial for understanding the budget process, but it is often limited by the quality of education provided by the ruling class. Access to information is also limited, which is also limited by the ruling class. The study reveals that the government in South Sudan has hindered public and community participation in budget formulation and implementation, viewing them as illiterate and unaware of their rights. It has consistently lacked transparency in allocating public resources and focused on concealing corruption and malpractices to maintain secrecy. A toolkit by OSCE (2013) emphasizes the need for municipal administration to create a favorable environment for citizen participation, including well-established channels of information dissemination, logistical support, guidance, and financial and human resources. This will help ensure effective public and community participation in the budget administration process. The toolkit emphasizes the importance of creating a favorable environment for citizen participation in decision-making at the local level.

2.2 Public Budget Process/Cycle and Stages

ODI (2004) asserts that the processes for raising, allocating, and utilizing public resources are essential for government functions and achieving policy goals. Budgets are tools for managing funds in alignment with political and economic policies, serving as blueprints for decision-making regarding resource distribution. The budget administration process is systematic and includes preparation, legislative approval, execution, monitoring, and evaluation, culminating in an official document. Ijeoma et al. (2013) underscore that this process is continuous in public organizations, as the government regularly assesses and revises its goals and strategies. Budgeting is essential for performance management, as it supports the creation of financial plans that align with future objectives, incentives, and action plans. It provides a framework for evaluating outcomes to assess their effectiveness. Furthermore, budgetary evaluations are critical for analyzing and enhancing the budgeting process, ensuring that it meets the organizational needs effectively (Jayamaha & Silva, 2012).

The budget process is crucial for government expenditures, comprising four stages: formulation, adoption, execution, and evaluation. It involves government participants in crafting and implementing budget proposals that facilitate resource mobilization, employment generation, and improved wealth distribution (Ngara & Dasat, 2020). Effective budgeting adheres to modern public governance principles, including credibility, public participation, transparency, accountability, and strategic planning (Saleh, 2020; Sambo, 2022). The annual budget cycle involves stages of formulation, adoption, implementation, and audit and evaluation, enabling governments to adapt and assess their actions based on new information (Hashem, 2014). Departmental budgets play a vital role in a nation's financial stability, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and public oversight, while encompassing legislation, macroeconomic plans, development goals, and performance management standards (Harchenko, 2024). The researcher argued that this process coordinates resources, sets standards, and evaluates performance to enhance public spending regarding national welfare.

The budgeting process, as discussed by Jayamaha and Silva (2012), emphasizes the importance of enhanced departmental communication and coordination, stakeholder involvement, and informed decision-making. Abdullah (2018) highlights a significant

relationship between budgeting interactions and goal performance at an institution's cost center. The development and approval of budgets serve as a method for translating an organization's overarching goals into actionable projects. Notably, budgeting is unique in managerial practices as it acknowledges the essential role of managers while offering a structured approach to key elements of scientific management, including management by objectives, effective communication, participative management, dynamic control, continuous feedback, responsibility accounting, management by exception, and flexibility. Babalola (2008) asserts that budgeting and the budgetary process are critical to organizational success, a sentiment echoed by Suberu (2010), who states that budgets and financial strategies are vital to both large and small organizations.

Hashem (2014) describes the annual budget process as a cyclical procedure divided into four main stages: formulation, adoption, execution, and auditing and evaluation. Each stage involves distinct participants. Initially, the chief executive collaborates with operating agencies to create a service plan to address anticipated conditions, followed by the legislative body determining a program response based on this plan. The executive administration then implements the selected program, before an external review body conducts audits and evaluations of the program's execution, reporting findings to both the legislative body and the public. The budget cycle consists of

overlapping stages, where actions in one stage impact decisions in others. As the executive drafts the new budget and chooses projects for public funding, current budgets are executed, and the Auditor General's Office reviews past expenditures. This dynamic interplay enhances the system's adaptability and responsiveness to new information, thereby supporting governmental accountability. Despite this, current budget processes may fall short in effectively guaranteeing accountability, although the cyclical nature of budgeting is perceived to contribute to the objective of a smaller government (Hashem, 2014).

Lawson (2015) stated that this annual budget cycle aims to ensure proper planning, execution, accounting, and oversight of public spending. It often revolves around the following significant stages: (i) Budget formulation: The budget is prepared with consideration for government fiscal policies, strategic goals, and appropriate macroeconomic and fiscal activities. (ii) Budget execution: The budget is carried out within a framework of effective standards, processes, and internal controls, ensuring that resources are obtained and used as intended. (iii) Accounting and reporting: accurate and reliable records are maintained, and information is produced and disseminated at suitable times to fulfill decision-making, management, and reporting needs. (iv) External scrutiny and audit: Public finances are independently reviewed and audited, and there is external oversight to ensure that the executive has implemented the reform proposals.

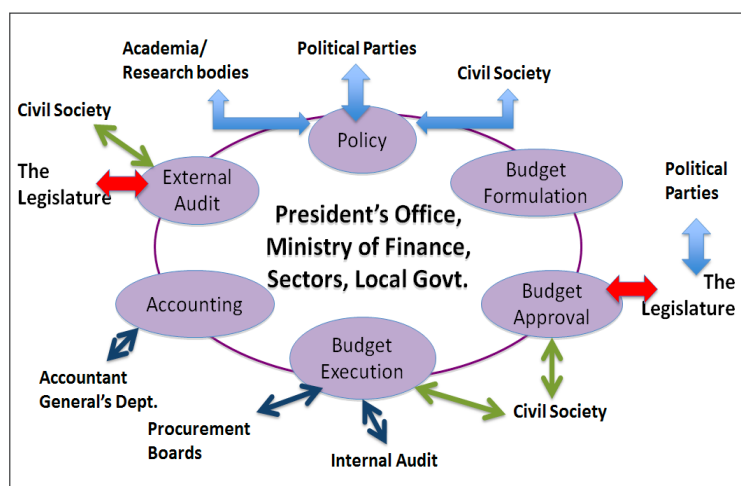


Figure 2.1 Illustrates the budget process/cycle and the key actors involved

Source: Lawson (2015)

Numerous studies have highlighted the challenges faced by governments in developing countries in establishing effective public financial management (PFM), particularly in relation to budget systems. South Sudan is no exception, grappling with various obstacles in its public financial management and budgeting process since its independence in 2011.

According to De Gama (2020), significant issues have plagued the budgeting process in South Sudan, affecting both national and agency budgets, which ultimately lack effectiveness, transparency, credibility, and accountability. The Sudd Institute (2018) stated that the South Sudanese government executed various PFM reforms, including reforms in public sector

budgeting, aimed at improving spending efficiency in the wake of the country's independence. These reforms were largely motivated by the recognition of poor performance against budgetary expectations. Despite these efforts, the budget administration process in South Sudan has not successfully achieved public policy objectives. The study indicates that, even after the introduction of reforms, the annual budget cycle and process, initiated since 2011, has shown that government spending is often inadequately planned, developed, executed, monitored, audited, and reviewed. There exists a consistent disparity between actual and projected budgets, which has severely hindered budget execution and resulted in unsatisfactory annual outcomes, including poor service delivery.

2.3 The Effect of Public and Community Participation on the Budget Administration Process in South Sudan

2.3.1 The Concept of Public and Community Participation

Governments worldwide encourage citizens to participate in policy implementation to ensure positive public relations, enhance service quality, and execute effective policies (Chowdhury & Aktaruzzaman, 2016). Public and community participation is vital for socio-legal and political processes, allowing individuals to express their opinions and contribute to sustainable change. Participation can range from formal and symbolic to close collaboration between authorities and stakeholders. There are three levels of involvement: information disclosure, consultation, and active citizen engagement (Enshassi & Kullab, 2014). Public participation is defined as a process in which ordinary members of a community exercise power over decisions related to community affairs, focusing on non-elite individuals with low educational levels and those not in formal employment (Brynard, 1996). It is rooted in the democratic system, safeguarding individual rights and the public interest (Mohammadi et al., 2010). Public and community participation enhances access to information about government operations, facilitates citizens' rights to be consulted and heard on matters directly affecting them, and ensures equal representation through fair systems of representative democracy (Aulich, 2009). Public or community participation is embedded in classical and contemporary development theories, emphasizing the significance of effective and participatory governance for sustainable change. There are two aspects to public participation: direct participation, where citizens

engage in decision-making, and indirect involvement, where citizens elect individuals to represent their needs and views (Madumo, 2014).

2.3.2 Public and Community Participation in the Budget Administration Process

Citizen participation in governance is vital for expressing citizens' rights and agency, particularly in budgetary processes (Voice to the People, 2018). It ensures transparency and accountability, allowing people to address their issues while promoting fairness, justice, and reason in the distribution and allocation of public funds. Governments are increasingly integrating public and community input into their fiscal and budget processes to enhance accountability and decision-making. This approach enhances budget management and resource allocation by allowing affected groups to express their opinions before policy decisions are made (Reshma, 2021). Budget education and citizen engagement are essential for government operations, inspiring staff to commit to the allocated budget (Mualuko et al., 2009). Participation can occur at various stages in governance, including policy-making, budget formulation, legislative procedures, and planning (Adewale, 2022). Engaging the public and community in the budget process fosters accountability and transparency, while civil society involvement is crucial for monitoring the implementation of budgets (Asomba et al., 2024). Public participation in government fiscal policy and budget processes involves citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, and other non-state actors directly engaging with public authorities about taxation, revenue collection, resource allocation, spending, and the management of public assets and liabilities (Ott & Bronić, 2015).

Public and community participation are essential for a responsible and transparent budgeting process, allowing the public to evaluate the performance and outcomes of government programs and services (Gorden, 2017). The budget plays a vital role in the performance of a central or regional government, providing insights into potential planning problems (Pratiwi, 2014). Active participation in budgeting, especially during the formulation phase, ensures efficient resource allocation and equitable distribution (Shapiro, 2010). Public and community participation is encouraged at all stages of the budget process, enabling individuals to offer comments on the topics being addressed or prioritized. A realistic and transparent oversight process is necessary to prevent mismanagement, combat corruption, and promote budget compliance (Nayak & Samanta,

2014). Public and community participation is critical for enhancing a country's democratic political system, eliminating corruption, and improving public financial management (Eniayejun & Evcan, 2015). Increased citizen participation in governance strengthens democracy and democratic institutions (Adewale, 2022). Participation in budgeting aims to bring the government closer to the people while enhancing the quality of services. It ensures that essential services, such as healthcare, housing, education, transportation, and communication, are accessible in local communities. This approach helps rural populations avoid relocating to cities by providing necessary services through community participatory budgeting (Sintomer et al., 2008).

2.3.4 Public and Community Participation in the Budget Administration Process of South Sudan

Public and community participation in South Sudan's budget administration process can enhance governance, manage fiscal stress, and improve public resource management. However, citizen participation is limited due to a lack of political will and commitment from leadership and elites (Sudd Institute 2018). The Constitution of South Sudan emphasizes accountability and openness in public finance, including public participation. Despite existing frameworks and legislation, the decision to allocate and manage funds remains challenging for the general public to access, with much relevant information and official processes being inaccessible. This highlights the need for greater public involvement in political processes and accountability in South Sudan's public finances (Challigha, 2008). A weak legal framework and oversight mechanisms limit citizen participation in decision-making and project implementation. Public participation is not defined, and no safeguards are in place to prioritize community needs (Musumba et al., 2013). Since its independence in 2011, South Sudan has faced a governance crisis and political instability, with citizen participation at its lowest level. The budgeting process is ineffective, with a cycle of activities carried out before, during, and after the budgeting period (Eme & Okeke, 2017). Unreasonable and sentimental extra-budgetary spending has become a daily habit, leading to unrealistic outcomes (Adewale, 2022). The study suggested that public and community participation in the government budget administration process promotes efficacy, transparency, accountability, and good governance. However, the lack of public and community participation in every stage of the budget process in South Sudan negatively affects essential

citizen-priority projects and the inadequate provision of basic social services.

2.4 Gaps in the Literature

The literature on budget administration processes and their impact on social service delivery in South Sudan is underexplored, with most studies focusing on foreign contexts. Previous studies by Asomba et al. (2024), María-Dolores et al. (2024), Güneş (2023), Batubara et al. (2022), Reshma (2021), Kandie (2020), and Mulikuza et al. (2019). These studies found that public and community participation in budgeting is crucial for responsible and transparent processes. It allows citizens to assess the effectiveness of public funds and government programs, promotes equity, justice, resource allocation, and effective monitoring. Education and improved service delivery are recommended to encourage participation, fostering accountability, transparency, and strengthening democracy. However, these studies have not adequately defined the effectiveness of public and community participation in the budget administration process or its connection to improving social service delivery. The methodologies used in these studies include descriptive statistical analysis, partial least squares analysis (SEM PLS), the system GMM method, cross-sectional surveys, and mixed-methods. None have applied descriptive surveys and correlational research design combining both qualitative and quantitative analysis to evaluate the effect of public and community participation in the budget administration process, leaving significant gaps in the literature regarding a holistic evaluation of these determinants. The current study aims to fill these gaps by examining how public and community involvement affect budget administration processes in South Sudan. It seeks to incorporate these findings into the budget process to enhance performance and improve the quality of social services. The subject has not been specifically explored and addressed in previous research.

2.5 Filling the Gaps in the Literature

The study used a method to fill gaps in existing literature by collecting data from three national ministries: Finance and Planning, General Education and Instruction, and Health, utilizing self-administered questionnaires and structured interviews. The analysis differentiated between qualitative and quantitative data; thematic analysis was performed on qualitative data, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques through the Statistical Package

for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analysis examined the effect of public and community participation in the budget administration process. It led to notable findings, conclusions, and offered recommendations designed to address and bridge the gaps identified in the existing literature regarding this subject matter.

3. Research Methodology

Hittleman & Simon (1997) described research methodology as “a scientific inquiry or attempt to gather information about an identified problem or question, analyze that information, and then apply the evidence derived to confirm or refute some prior predictions or statements about that problem.” This section outlines the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. It covers research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures (sampling frame, technique, and sample size), research instruments/data collection methods (questionnaire survey, structured interview questions, pilot testing, validity and reliability of the research instrument, measurement of variables), data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

A research design outlines the researcher's investigative approach, including data collection,

Table 3.1 Ministry, directorate, and target population

S/n	Ministry	Directorate	Target Population
1	Ministry of Finance and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget and Revenue - Treasury/Accounts - Sectoral Planning 	55
2	Ministry of General Education and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and Budgeting - Administration and Finance - Directors General 	33
3	Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy Planning and Budgeting - Administration and Finance - Directors General 	22
Population Size			110

Source: Department of Human Resources in the Ministries mentioned above (2025)

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

3.3.1 Sampling Frame

Kothari (2004) defines a sampling frame as "a comprehensive set of subjects from which a sample is drawn," primarily aimed at selecting individuals from a target population. In this study, the sampling frame included staff from various directorates involved in budgeting within three national ministries: Finance and Planning, General Education and Instruction, and Health. This included personnel from directorates such as budget and revenue, treasury/accounts,

analysis, and interpretation methods (McCombes, 2025). This study employed a descriptive and correlational design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. The descriptive survey design facilitated effective organization, while correlational research highlighted relationships between variables (Sassower, 2017). Primary data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and structured interviews, with secondary data sourced from various published materials. Data analysis incorporated thematic examination for qualitative data, while quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS Version 21. Results were presented in tables, charts, and graphical presentations. The chosen design successfully addressed the research purpose and yielded accurate insights into the factors affecting the budget administration process.

3.2 Target Population

Kombo and Tromp (2006) defined a target population as a group from which samples are taken for measurement. The target population of this study included 110 staff members from various directorates who are engaged in the budgeting process across three national ministries: Finance and Planning, General Education and Instruction, and Health, as outlined in Table 3.1.

sectoral planning, policy planning, and administration and finance, as detailed in Table 3.1.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

A sampling technique selects a subset from a population to accurately reflect its characteristics (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). This study utilized probability sampling, specifically stratified random sampling, as defined by Cooper and Schindler (2006), which involves selecting samples from different strata. The population was categorized into two homogeneous subgroups: top management (senior) and middle-

level management, based on grade and experience in budgeting and service delivery.

3.3.3 Sampling Size

Sample size is defined as the quantity of individuals selected from a larger population for a research study. To ascertain the appropriate sample size, a sample was taken from various strata, utilizing Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sampling table and formula. For a target population of 110, the calculated sample size amounted to 86, as indicated by the corresponding formula below:

$$s = \frac{X^2NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)} = \frac{3.841 * 110 * 0.50 * 0.50}{(0.05)^2 * (110 - 1) + (3.841 * 0.50 * 0.50)} = 86$$

Table 3.2 Ministry, population size, and sample size

S/n	Ministry	Population Size	Sample Size
1	Ministry of Finance and Planning	55/110 * 86	43
2	Ministry of General Education and Instruction	33/110 * 86	26
3	Ministry of Health	22/110 * 86	17
Total		110	86

Source: Developed by the researchers (2025).

Krejcie & Morgan (1970) emphasize that each subgroup should be considered an independent population, using a table to determine the appropriate sample size for each segment. The sample sizes for

Table 3.3 Sub-group, population size, and sample size

S/n	Sub-group	Population size	Sample size
1	Top (senior) management	29/110 * 86	23
2	Middle management	81/110 * 86	63
Total		110	86

Source: Developed by the researcher (2023).

3.4 Research Instruments (Data Collection Methods)

Kothari (2010) discusses research techniques as essential methods enabling researchers to fulfill their research responsibilities effectively. These techniques are geared towards evaluating outcomes, predicting future probabilities, and identifying trends relevant to the study. The research incorporates both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data were gathered using self-administered questionnaires and structured interviews, facilitating direct interaction with respondents. Conversely, secondary data was sourced from various materials, including books, journals, government reports, and websites.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of questions designed to collect data from a specific population to study phenomena

s - Required sample size.

X^2 - The table value of chi-square for one degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N - The population size.

P - The population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d - The degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

The sample size distribution for the three national ministries is as follows: Finance and Planning has 43, General Education and Instruction has 26, and Health has 17, as detailed in Table 3.2.

the subgroups are 23 for top (senior) management and 63 for middle management. The total sample size of the study was 86 staff members, as shown in Table 3.2.

or correlations (Jowah, 2015). A self-administered questionnaire was employed to collect data from respondents in the budgeting process at three national ministries: Finance and Planning, General Education, and Health. It featured questions with a 5-point Likert scale for rating factors, facilitating rapid quantitative analysis and yielding objective data. This method is preferred over interviews due to its affordability and shorter completion time.

3.4.2 Structured Interviews

Kothari (2010) describes structured interviews as using pre-planned questions and standardized recording methods to explore areas not addressed by questionnaires. This approach minimizes biases and context effects, contributing to the study's integrity. The research involved 12 senior managers experienced in budgeting and basic services. The

structured interviews were key for data collection, ensuring credibility, reliability, and validity, while being cost-effective.

3.4.3 Pilot Testing of the Research Instrument

A pilot study identified measurement errors and ambiguous questions in questionnaires while assessing their validity and reliability. The study involved nine staff members from the previous three mentioned ministries, selected randomly, with representation from both top and middle management. Following the collection of completed questionnaires and participant feedback, checks were performed on wording, question sequencing, and completion time, which confirmed the instrument's reliability.

3.4.4 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity is defined as the effectiveness of a test in measuring its intended purpose (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). To assess validity, the researcher employed face validity, which hinges on subjective evaluations concerning the presentation and relevance of the measuring tool. This approach focuses on whether the test items appear suitable, clear, reasonable, and unambiguous (Oluwatayo, 2012). The assessment involved consultation with nine respondents from two pilot study groups. Additionally, the questionnaires were carefully reviewed to ratify that the questions were clear, correct, respectful, and non-misleading to prevent any bias in responses.

3.4.5 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of a research tool, particularly a questionnaire, is determined by its internal consistency, ensuring accurate results across repeated trials. It indicates the degree of error-free data representation of the target population (Saunders et al., 2009). The study employed the Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) to test reliability, which is suitable for a Five-Point Likert scale data (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Constructs with alpha values of 0.7 ($\alpha = 0.7$) or greater than 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$) are considered reliable. The questionnaire achieved a reliability index of 0.834, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.7, thus confirming its reliability for further analysis.

3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

The procedure involved obtaining a permission letter from the University of Juba's School of Business and Management to collect data from three national ministries. After securing a letter of no objection, the researcher provided an introductory letter with

questionnaires outlining the research's purpose and confidentiality assurance. Trained personnel assisted in distributing the questionnaires, with responses collected over two months.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis involved sorting, inspecting, cleaning, and coding data to prepare it for analysis using software (Babbie, 2011). Questionnaires were collected and organized for accuracy, with only correctly filled out included in the analysis. The data were thoroughly edited and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data derived from respondents' opinions were thematically analyzed, coded, and categorized into major topics. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Results were displayed in tables, charts, and graphical formats. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, provided deeper insights to answer research questions. Correlation analysis evaluated linear associations between variables, while regression assessed the influences on the budget process.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Kumar (2011) defines ethics as adhering to accepted principles of conduct within a specific profession or group. The researchers received ethical clearance from University of Juba Ethics Committee. Thus, the researchers complied with South Sudan's ethical guidelines, ensuring the privacy and anonymity of respondents. The researchers avoided requesting personal information, which promoted trust and openness. The study addressed ethical concerns, including honesty, informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, harm avoidance, and objectivity.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

This section details the data analysis and findings of the study, which utilized a self-administered questionnaire and structured interviews. The developed questionnaire featured Likert-type questions, allowing respondents to rate variables on a five-point Likert scale to enhance data accuracy. The section showcases data in both quantitative and qualitative formats, providing a critical analysis of findings that are categorized into descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Findings

This sub-section presents the descriptive statistics findings collected during the organization and

collection of data, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the key results. These findings are presented as narratives reflected in tables and figures.

4.1.1 Questionnaire

Table 4.1 Response rate

S/n	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Questionnaires distributed	86	100
2	Questionnaires filled and returned	86	100
Total		86	100

Source: Field data, 2025

Eighty-six questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and all were completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate, as indicated in Table 4.1 above.

(a) Part One: Demographic information

This part presents the results obtained from

respondents' general information, which includes their gender, age range, educational level, time spent working for the government, level of management within the ministry, the ministry and directorate for which they worked, and the duration of their participation in the budget administration process.

i. The Gender of Respondents

Table 4.2 Gender distribution of the respondents

S/n	Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Male	75	87.2
2	Female	11	12.8
Total		86	100

Source: Field data, 2025

The above table 4.2 shows that most respondents were male (87.2%), while female respondents comprised 12.8%, indicating a significant gender disparity in the study's responses. This low female representation

may be due to limited education opportunities and early marriages. It is advocated that the government promote female education and improve access to employment in government roles.

ii. The Age Group of the Respondents

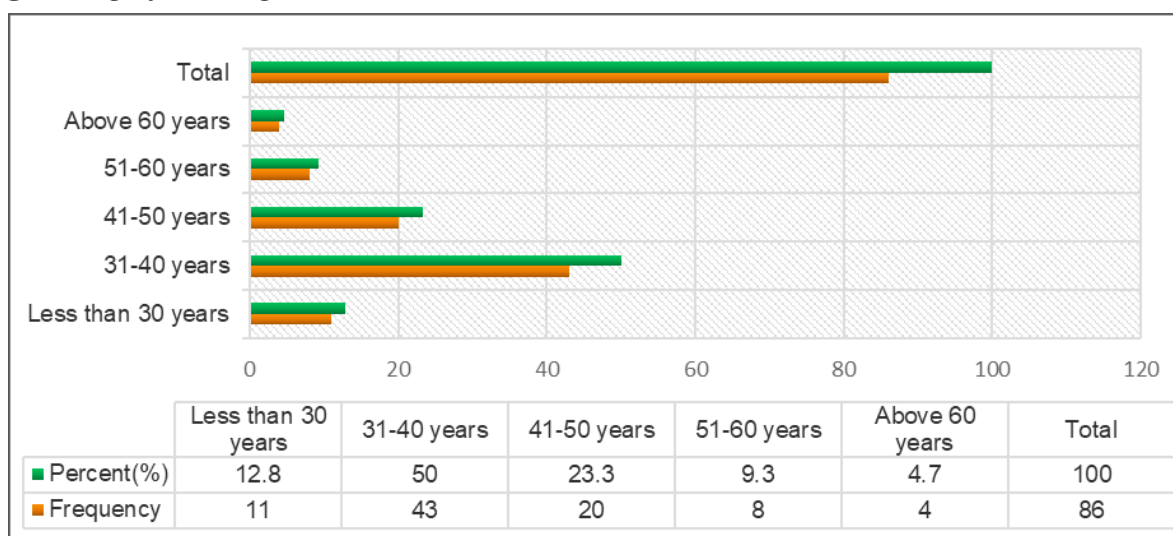


Figure 4.1 The age group of the respondents

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (50.0%) were aged 31-40, followed by 23.3% aged 41-50, and 12.8% under 30. A smaller percentage (9.3%) fell within the 51-60 age range, while only

4.7% were over 60. This demographic suggests a mature workforce; however, contrary to expectations, fewer senior managers over 60 are participating in budgeting despite the lack of pension plans.

iii. The Educational Levels of the Respondents

Table 4.3 Educational level distribution of the respondents

S/n	Educational level	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Secondary School Certificate	2	2.3
2	Bachelor Degree	43	50.0
3	Postgraduate Diploma	10	11.6
4	Master	29	33.7
5	Ph.D.	2	2.3
Total		86	100

Source: Field data, 2025

The table indicates that most respondents (50.0%) have a Bachelor's Degree, followed by 33.7% with a Master's Degree, 11.6% with a P.G. Diploma, and 2.3% each with a Secondary School Certificate

and a Ph.D. This suggests that while respondents are educated and aware of their obligations, they need further studies to enhance their knowledge and expertise.

iv. Respondent's Working Experience with the Government

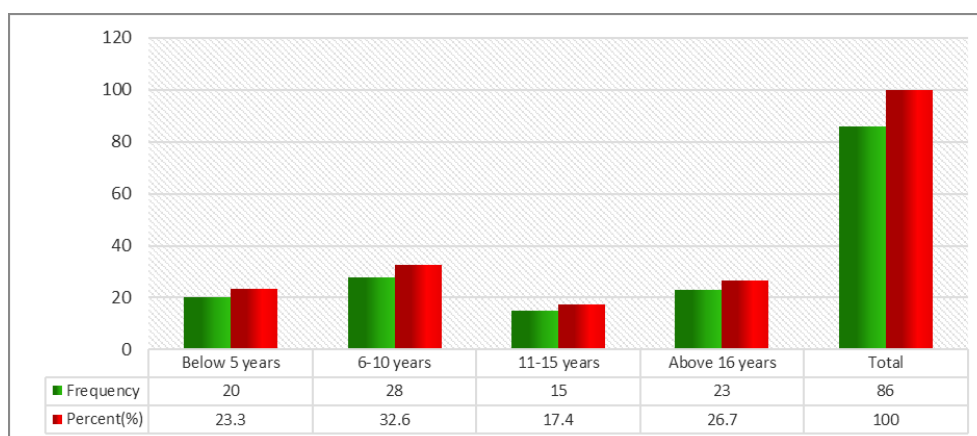


Figure 4.2. Time respondents spent working for the government

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.2 above shows that the majority of respondents worked between 6 and 10 years (32.6%), followed by those with over 16 years of experience (26.7%), those who had worked less than 5 years

(23.3%), and those who worked for 11 to 15 years (17.4%). This indicates that most staff members had extensive experience, enabling them to comprehend the budget and its procedures.

v. The Respondents' Ministries and Directorates

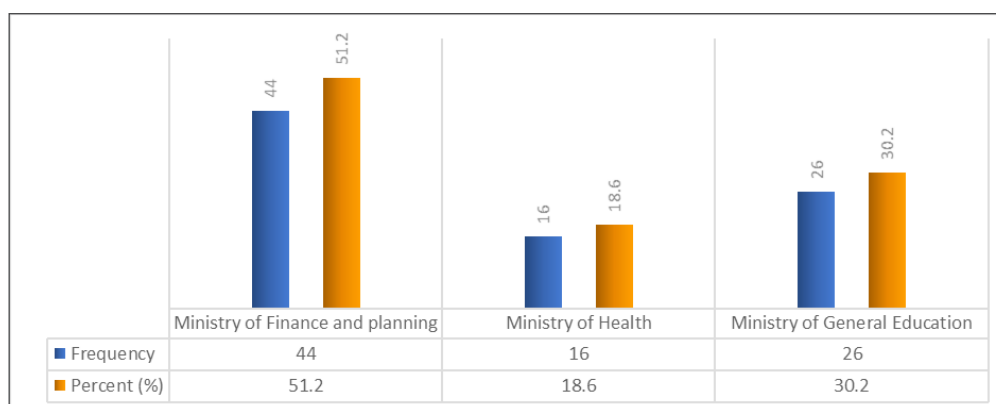


Figure 4.3 Distribution of respondents based on their ministries

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of respondents, 51.2%, were from the National Ministry of Finance and Planning, followed by 30.2% from the Ministry of General Education, and 30.2% from the Ministry of

Health. The Ministry of Finance and Planning manages all budgets for the country's agencies, explaining why most respondents were from this ministry.

vi. The Respondents' Ministries and Directorates

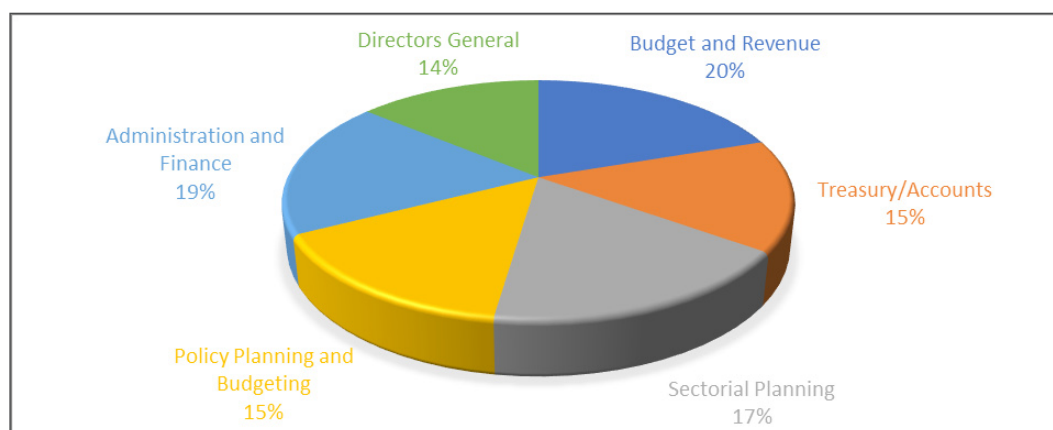


Figure 4.4. Distribution of respondents based on their directorates

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority of respondents were from budget and revenue (20%), followed by administration and finance (19%), sectorial planning (17%), treasury/accounts (15%), policy planning and budgeting (15%), and the ministries' Directors General (14%). This suggests that all respondents came from directorates engaged in budgetary processes.

vii. The Respondents' Level of Management within the three Ministries

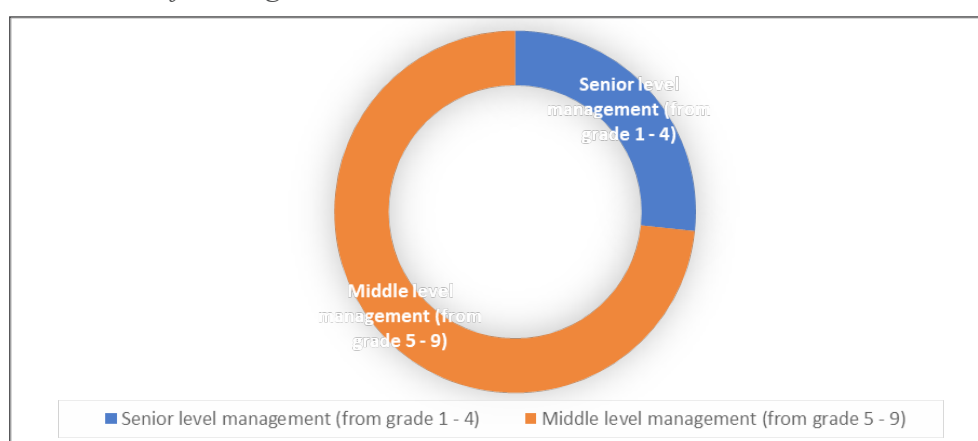


Figure 4.5. Respondents' level of management within the three ministries

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.5 indicates that 73.3% of respondents are in middle-level management, with 26.7% in senior-level roles. Many feel trapped in middle-level management due to limited promotion and recruitment opportunities. They also lack knowledge in budgeting and service delivery due to insufficient training and development.

viii. The Respondents' Duration of Involvement in the Budget Administration Process

Table 4.4 Respondents' duration of participation in the budget administration process

S/n	Period of involvement in the budget process	Frequency	Percent (100%)
1	Below 5 years	38	44.2
2	From 6 – 10 years	25	29.1
3	From 11 – 15 years	10	11.6
4	Above 16 years	13	15.1
Total		86	100

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4.4 indicates that most respondents (44.2%) have less than 5 years of budgeting experience, with 29.1% having 6 to 10 years, 15.1% over 16 years, and only 11.6% with 11 to 15 years. This illustrates the limited budgeting experience among employees and highlights the need for appropriate training and development for budgetary staff.

*(b). Part Two: Specific questions for the research**i. Public and community participation in the budget administration process***Table 4.5** Public and community participation in the budget administration process

S/n	Variable	N	Mean	SD
1	Public and community participation is essential in government budget administration processes because it promotes efficacy, transparency, accountability, and good governance.	86	4.1	1.1
2	The lack of public and community participation in every stage of the budget administration process for government agencies has negatively affected South Sudan's essential citizen-priority projects.	86	3.8	1.2

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4.5 presents respondents' ratings of public and community participation in the budget process on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 means strongly disagreed, 2 disagreed, 3 neutral, 4 agreed, and 5 strongly agreed). The findings revealed that public and community participation is crucial in public budget processes, as indicated by a mean of 4.1. The lack of public and

community participation at all stages of the budgetary process and cycle for government agencies in South Sudan negatively impacted outcomes, reflected by a mean of 3.8. The respondents' views on public and community participation in the budget administration process are as follows:

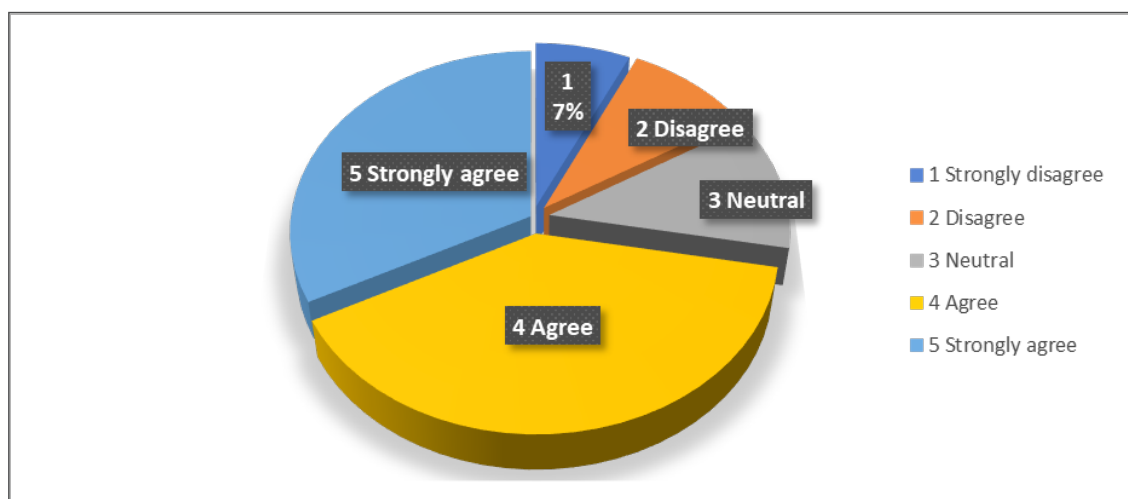
*ii. Public and community participation are crucial to the government budget process.***Table 4.6** Public and community participation is vital to the government's budgetary process

S/n	Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Strongly disagree	6	7.0
2	Disagree	3	3.5
3	Neutral	7	8.1
4	Agree	30	34.9
5	Strongly agree	40	46.5
Total		86	100

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4.6 shows the reaction to the statement: "Public and community participation is vital in government budget processes because it fosters efficacy, transparency, accountability, and good governance throughout the country." The findings indicated that at least 81.4% of respondents agreed (46.5% strongly

agreed + 34.9% agreed), while 10.5% disagreed (3.5% disagreed + 7.0% strongly disagreed), and 8.1% were neutral. The study concluded that public and community participation positively influence government budget administration processes.

iii. Lack of public and community participation in all stages of the budget process**Figure 4.6** A lack of public and community participation in all stages of the budget process

Source: Field data, 2025

Figure 4.10 illustrates the response to the following statement: *A lack of public and community participation in all stages of the budgetary process and cycle for government agencies negatively influenced vital citizen-priority projects in South Sudan. The findings indicated that at least 72.1% of respondents agreed (33% strongly agreed + 39% agreed), 16% disagreed (9% disagreed + 7% strongly disagreed), and 12% remained neutral. The study concluded that a lack of public and community participation has affected every stage of the budget administration process for all government institutions in South Sudan.*

4.1.2 Interview Structured Questions

Structured interviews of this study were conducted with 12 key informants (K1–K12) representing the Ministries of Finance (K1–K4), General Education (K5–K8), and Health (K9–K12). Each ministry contributed four key informants, who were experienced in budgeting and basic service delivery issues. The interviews, which aimed to explore topics not fully covered by earlier questionnaires, encouraged participants to express their opinions openly. Findings derived from the structured questions have provided insights relevant to the study.

Q1: *Why are the annual budget ceilings and allocations for education and health so low, while other line ministries and agencies receive more? What do you think is the cause?*

In response to this question, the majority of key informants, from K1 to K9, largely agreed on the following key points:

- The lack of citizen involvement in the budgeting process hinders the prioritization of essential projects for service delivery and development.
- The country's political instability and conflicts have led to a lack of political will and commitment among its leadership to prioritize social services over security activities.
- The National Ministry of Finance and Planning believes that these line ministries are well-funded by development partners (donors).

Q2: *What would happen in South Sudan if development partners (donors) stopped funding the health and education sectors?*

Responding to this question, all responders from K1 to K12 agreed on the following key points:

- This may lead to the total collapse of the Health and Education Sectors.

- The country's lack of education may lead to an increase in illiteracy rates and uneducated children.
- The lack of healthcare services in public hospitals and rural dispensaries could potentially increase the death rate among the poor and children.

Q3: *Why isn't public and community participation encouraged at every stage of the budget administration process by the government of South Sudan?*

In response to this question, nearly all key informants, from K1 to K11, generally agreed on the following points:

- The government did not allow the public and community to express their opinions or prioritize projects or services during the budget planning process.
- The government perceived the public and community as illiterate and unaware of their rights, including the opportunity to participate in the budgeting process.
- The government lacks transparency in allocating public resources for essential services and conceals corruption during the budget administration process to maintain secrecy.

Q4: *In your opinion, what actions should the South Sudanese government and its Ministry of Finance take to improve basic service delivery in the country?*

In response to this question, all responders from K1 to K12 agreed on the following key points:

- Prioritize infrastructure and service delivery projects.
- Increase budget ceilings and allocations for agencies that provide social services.
- encourage public and community participation in the budget administration process.
- Adhere to the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011 and budget guidelines.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for effective monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen the anti-corruption commission to combat corruption.
- Regularly train and develop staff, especially in budgeting and service delivery.

4.2 Inferential Statistics of Results

This sub-section presents the results of correlation

testing for the independent variable and the configuration of both simple and moderated regression models.

Table 4.7 Correlation of independence variables

Public and community participation	Public and community participation	
	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	86

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 4.7 indicates that the independent variable exhibited mild correlation but lacked statistical significance, with 2-tailed significance values exceeding 5%. Consequently, this variable is not statistically correlated, emphasizing the importance of assessing its independent influence on the dependent variable.

Table 4.8 The regression model coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.654	.795		4.594	.000
Public and community participation	.015	.137	.012	.108	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Budget Process

Based on Table 4.8, the findings show that public and community participation (0.012) positively influence the budget administration process. The model is statistically significant, with variable significance levels below 5% (0.05), confirming the existence of a relationship; thus, the model suffices.

$$Y = 3.654 + 0.012X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y is the budget administration process

X_1 are the external factors

ε is the error term

5. Discussion of Results

This section critically discusses the study's results, dividing them into descriptive and inferential statistical sub-sections.

5.1 Discussion of Descriptive Statistical Results (Findings)

This sub-section examines the impact of public and community participation on the budget administration process in South Sudan. Findings reveal that public and community participation is critical in government budget processes, as evidenced by (mean 4.1). A lack of public and community participation at all stages of the budget process and cycle for government agencies in South Sudan hurts the budget administration process, as indicated by a mean of 3.8.

4.2.1 Correlation of Variables

The independent variables were tested for correlations, as indicated in Table 4.9 below.

4.2.2 The Regression Models

The independent and dependent variables were analyzed through SPSS to establish a regression model. The regression model coefficients are shown in Table 4.10 below.

The study established that community and public participation in South Sudan's public budget administration process is crucial for improving efficiency, transparency, accountability, and good governance. This aligns with previous studies, such as Gorden's (2017), which maintained that responsible and transparent budgeting requires public participation. It enables the public to assess the effectiveness of public funds acquisition and allocation processes, as well as government programs and services. Reshma (2021) found that community and public participation promote equity, justice, and reasoning in the distribution and allocation of public resources, providing a voice for those affected by policy decisions before they are made. Nayak and Samanta (2014) validated the findings by emphasizing the importance of community and public participation at every stage of the budgeting process. Citizens may submit assessments of concerns they believe should be prioritized or provide feedback on topics under consideration. They may advocate for an efficient and transparent monitoring system to encourage budget compliance and prevent malpractice or corruption during budget execution. Mulikuza et al. (2019) recommended that citizens be educated and sensitized about the budgeting process, and that improved service delivery be provided to encourage their participation. The government should allocate more resources for social service projects

at the local government level. Asomba et al. (2024) stated that engaging the public and community in the budgeting process fosters accountability and transparency, while civil society involvement is vital for monitoring budget implementation. Adewale (2022) revealed that increased citizen participation in governance strengthens democracy and democratic institutions, thus enhancing efficiency, openness, and accountability.

The lack of public and community participation in every stage of the budget process/cycle for government agencies has negatively affected essential citizen-priority projects in South Sudan. This finding is consistent with those of Da Gama (2020), who found that nationwide involvement in South Sudan's budgetary process has resulted in budgets lacking efficacy, credibility, and transparency, which hindered essential service delivery. Eme and Okeke (2017) found that South Sudan has faced political instability and a governance crisis, with citizen participation at its lowest level since independence in 2011. This has resulted in ineffective budgets that could not deliver practical projects in social services. However, this finding is inconsistent with those conducted by Cabannes (2015), which found that participatory budgeting significantly improved service provision and management. This improvement was attributed to community involvement, which led to enhanced oversight and close control of services. Sintomer et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of community participatory budgeting in improving service quality and bringing the government closer to the people. This approach could prevent rural populations from relocating to cities and ensure the provision of essential services. Nayak and Samanta (2014), Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman (2016), and Rono et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of community and public participation in public budgeting. They contended that such engagement is essential for securing priority projects, preventing corruption, and ensuring transparency. Furthermore, they highlighted the vital role stakeholders have in decision-making, which influences governance and contributes to the delivery of high-quality services.

5.2 Inferential Statistics of Results

This subsection provides inferential statistical results related to the study's main findings, specifically focusing on the purpose of the study in Chapter One.

- The independent variable, despite being slightly correlated, lacked statistical significance, as evidenced by a 2-tailed significance level greater

than 5% (or 0.005). This indicated that it was not statistically correlated and required separate analysis to determine its influence on the dependent variable.

- The study found that public and community participation (0.012) positively impacts the budget administration process, with a statistically significant relationship established. The model, $Y = 3.654 + 0.012X_1 + \epsilon$, was sufficient for the analysis.

6. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The section provides a comprehensive overview of the research's findings, presents conclusions, provides recommendations, and suggests further research.

6.1 Summary of Findings

6.1.1 Summary of Descriptive Statistical Results

The summary is based on the study's purpose, which was to examine the effect of public and community participation on the budget administration process in South Sudan. *Findings reveal that public and community contributions are critical in government budget processes. However, the budget administration process in South Sudan is affected by a lack of public and community participation, resulting in budgets that lack effectiveness, credibility, transparency, and accountability.*

6.1.2 Summary of Inferential Statistical Results

The study found that public and community participation positively impacts the budget process in South Sudan, with a statistically significant relationship established. The independent variable, despite being slightly correlated, lacked statistical significance, indicating it required separate analysis to determine its influence on the dependent variable. The model, $Y = 3.654 + 0.012X_1 + \epsilon$, was sufficient for the analysis.

6.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that South Sudan's government agencies, including Finance and Planning, General Education and Instructions, and Health, lack public and community participation at all stages of the budget administration process, resulting in budgets that lack effectiveness, credibility, transparency, and accountability. This deficiency impacts the quality of basic services and the priority projects aimed at meeting citizens' needs. There is a great to involve communities in budget administration in South Sudan.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

- The South Sudan government should enhance public and community participation in the budget administration process to boost efficiency, transparency, accountability, and good governance, ensuring citizen-priority projects are executed.
- The government should implement fiscal policies that encourage citizen participation in the budget process to improve the budgeting process, create a supportive environment, mitigate fraud in public financial management, and ensure adequate oversight of public funds, both internally and externally.
- Proposed strategy to involve enhancing legislative oversight of budget execution at all government levels, ensuring peace and stability, and promoting citizen participation in the process to enhance governance and quality service delivery.

7. Suggestions for Further Study

There is an urgent need for Government of the Republic of South Sudan to identify and address issues related to budget processes, thereby improving performance and quality of social service delivery in the country.

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