Fixed Assets Inventory Management of an International Organization: Issues and Challenges Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This study was to assess the issues and challenges encountered in the physical verification of fixed assets during Covid-19 compared to the normal practices of fixed assets inventory management. It focused on discovering why fixed assets inventory management employees were experiencing these challenges and how they dealt with the difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. An organization has thousands of physical fixed assets and it's crucial to know their operating condition and location. The prolonged disruption caused due to Covid-19 has further resulted in improper verification & maintenance of records to validate the existence and ownership of assets; therefore, identifying, tracking, and controlling inventory by means of physical verification is critical for preventing the misappropriation of assets and the organization's smooth operation. Asset verification effectively keeps track of asset details, ensure control, and prevent misappropriation.

Keywords: Fixed assets · Inventory management · Physical verification of asset · Covid-19 pandemic · West Africa

1 Introduction

Fixed assets inventory management is the controller of the organization's equipment and is responsible for the management of property records. Verification of fixed assets is one of the most important tasks of fixed assets inventory management to know that the assets are physical present and shown in the balance sheet are true, genuine, and real. The verification of fixed assets is conducted regularly to ensure adequate control, accurate reporting, and accountability for International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) requirement and audit purposes. The fixed assets inventory management of an international organization in Mali-West Africa is active in the daily count of capitalized property/fixed assets. The main goals of fixed assets inventory management are to keep the fixed assets equipment record and provide potential data to internal auditors for audit purposes. With this, the verification of fixed assets is highly important. Therefore, the actual practices in the physical verification and inventory are applied to provide potential records and help the organization to a great extent as it creates Key Performance Indicator's (KPI) monitoring to improve the assets management in the organization.

Furthermore, the study aims to improve property control and analysis of property plant and equipment distributed in the organization's operation. It is also to provide complete visibility of organization actions and performances in assets management and control, thereby increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies applied to strengthen the overall management of assets. In particular, the research will enable the international organization to meet or exceed end-user expectations of the service and product availability with the amount of each item that will minimize net losses or maximize the benefits of its total inventory investment. It will also support in creating awareness for the fixed assets focal point to be agile and responsive to customer requirements within available resources. Physical verification shall be conducted regularly and deemed necessary to ensure adequate control over the property.

Since the pandemic started, the biggest challenge was the organization structure and the resistance to the change by almost all stakeholders, which resulted in a remote or virtual verification of the assets. The property with difficult access, requiring dismantling, mounted in the rack, and videowall monitor has faced the difficulty of verification. Unaccounted property identification of the potential location and lack of response from end-users is also added to the burden of physical verification. To make the remote verification of assets successful in a difficult situation, planning of verification in advance and in conjunction with technical units and offices, Identification of fixed assets inventory management inspectors, Information Technology (IT) Technicians, and Augmented Reality (AR) Technology is a must. Fixed assets inventory management inspector needs to request evidence from the end-users by sending a pictures of the item with barcodes, actual location, and additional data, if relevant. It is not easy to focus on small text/labels; advanced models can read barcodes, visible stickers, or labels for remote physical verification like containers, racks, and system networks. The creation of physical verification master file, including comments as references in the system, is used for remote physical verification. Emails are also one of the fixed assets inventory management resources as a prompt reply to possible Board of Auditor queries, statistics, and operational issues. More than anything else, this study connects the relevance of issues and challenges in the physical verification and inventory of fixed assets amidst Covid-19 pandemic. Now that the whole world is facing a global pandemic, the researcher initiative is very crucial to assist and assure that the end user of the organization's property must ensure that all equipment is used for authorized purposes, securely kept and well maintained.

Furthermore, individuals assigned such responsibilities are personally accountable for the care and security of property entrusted to them or in their custody.

The research also contains the appreciation of the hard work of the fixed assets inventory management employees during the pandemic and appreciate the importance of having them.

2   Literature Review

The pandemic coronavirus COVID-19 has caused significant disruptions in the business operations of the companies and organizations. These disruptions also pose significant accounting and auditing challenges. Amongst those challenges, one of the challenges for the companies with year-end 2020 is to conduct physical verification of fixed assets

and physical inventory count. This could be due to significant health and safety concerns, travel restrictions, and lockdown. The covid-19 outbreak creates several potential challenges for the management of a company to conduct the physical verification. Due to various restrictions imposed as part of measures to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, in certain cases, it could be difficult for the inspectors and auditors to physically attend the verification of assets organized by the organization.

However, the ongoing effects of Covid-19 and recent data show that economic impacts are worsened worldwide.

In 2019, According to U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mali West Africa, an actual count, between actual fixed assets inventory taking process including the verification that in process assigned to a location/entity/person or equipment that is available for use must be accounted for through the physical verification process. There are two components which were considered when the physical verification and inventory was taken. Items acquired by USAID and put at the project's disposal were purchased under the line item "Commodities". Items purchased by the project in the local currency were classified as "Other Costs" of the fixed assets acquired through "Other Costs", amounted to 93 per cent of all the equipment financed under this line item. The manager who fails to plan becomes victim of circumstances

On several occasions, the project's execution phase has succeeded in developing and completing deliverables. The execution phase of the project life cycle is one of the most crucial project phases since it is the one where you will construct your deliverables and present them to your customer. This is normally the most prolonged phase of the project life cycle and typically the most demanding.

The reconciliation Phase is a critical part of determining and tracking the money trails of a company. The fixed asset reconciliation statement shows a list of book value, credits, and debits to fixed asset accounts and accumulated depreciation that is vital for the company's reconciling sheet and fixed asset register. Many large organizations have many assets which need to be physically verified to carry out records reconciliation that has based on the books and the tag assets using barcode. As a verb, the Terminology Document means to make evident to explain. Documentation is material that provides proof or evidence and official information that serves as a record. Gradually, the document came increasingly to mean a text but retained a sense of proof.

Field work is the process of observing and collecting data about people, cultures, history, and natural environments. Field work is conducted in the field of our surroundings rather than in the semi-controlled environments. Field work can be conducted by groups of people as well as one individual. Participants in the filed works gain practical experience and knowledge through firsthand observation, the gathering of anthropological or sociological data through the interviewing and observation of subjects in the field. Conducting field work by visiting and documenting areas.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrate the conceptual framework utilized in the study. The independent variable is the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices that are based on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that the organization implies to improve control and inventory management and analysis of fixed assets and inventory. In essence, practices
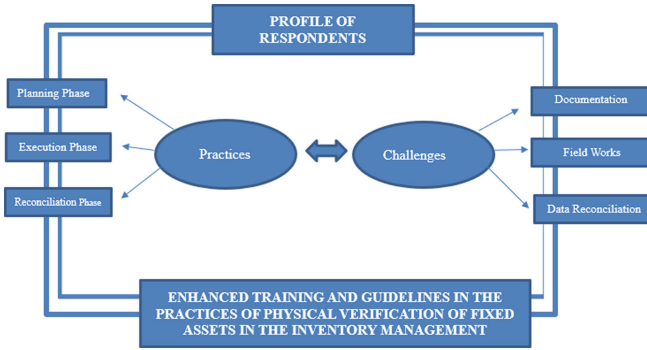
Fig. 1. Research Model

of fixed assets inventory management with the overall responsibility for the management of the organization's fixed assets will be involved in the physical verification, control of stocks, monitoring, oversight, and inventory management. It shall also be responsible for the random cross-check of other assets such as tangible and intangibles inventories where applicable relating to the functions of documentation, field works, and data reconciliation in the system, and the application of the enhanced inventory management practices is an important factor to efficiently and effectively achieve the 100% physical verification of fixed assets and inventory in the organization. The dependent variable is the of fixed assets inventory management issues and challenges encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic that affects the fixed assets inventory management employees in performing physical verification in the field resulting to perform a virtual verification of fixed assets that requires a proof of evidence via sending emails to the end-user of the assets accountabilities. It will also support in creating awareness for end-users to be agile and responsive to fixed assets inventory management requirements within available resources. Organizations fail or succeed due to Covid-19 situation depends on the response of the fixed assets end-user and status of location. Finally, the expected output of this study is attaining the goal of enhancing the training program and guidelines in the practices of physical verification and inventory of fixed assets and continuous learning to contribute to the literature of fixed assets inventory management.

3   Research Methodology

3.1   Sampling Design

The researcher utilized purposive sampling data. The respondents of the study were composed of 50 employees with at least two (2) years of experience in the physical verification of fixed assets and physical inventory within the seven geographical boundaries of Mali West Africa. The primary instrument that was used in gathering data shall be a self-administered questionnaire based on readings from related Property Management Standard Operating Procedure (PMS SOP). The questionnaire was validated and signed by statistician expert and was pilot tested to 15 non target respondents with a Cronbach's of .893.

3.2   Research Procedure

Prior to conduct of the study, the signed authorization letter, together with the attached validated questionnaires was administered to the 50 employees, they accomplished the questionnaires on paper-based and via online means or electronic copy.

4   Data Analysis

The first objective of this study is to determine the background characteristics of respondents. A total of fifty (n = 50) individuals have consented to participate in this study, in which they were purposively selected under the criteria that the individual is working with the fixed asset inventory management in an international organization and with experience in the physical verification and inventory of fixed assets.

The second objective is to identify the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices, particularly under the physical verification of fixed assets, concerning the planning phase, execution phase, and reconciliation phase.

The third objective of this study is to identify fixed assets inventory management challenges encountered during Covid-19 pandemic, particularly under the physical verification of fixed assets, concerning documentation, field works, and data reconciliation.

The fourth objective of this study is to establish if there is no or if there is a significant difference in the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices in the physical verification of assets when respondents are grouped according to profile.

The fifth objective of this study is to analyze the significant differences in fixed assets inventory management challenges encountered during Covid-19 in the physical verification of fixed assets when grouped by background characteristics.

And lastly, this study is to ascertain if there is no significant relationship between the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices and challenges encountered during the Covid-19 in the physical verification of fixed assets.

Table 1 the majority of the respondents are above forty years old, accounting for sixty-four percent. Respondents are predominantly male (i.e., sixty percent) who are at least a college education. However, most of the respondents are also with Master's degrees with a total of fifty-eight percent. There is one respondent from Sudan, Ivory Coast, and Russia, twenty-five from Mali, two each for Kosovo, Nigeria, and Ghana, and Fourteen respondents from different countries. They manifested multi-cultural staffing within the surveyed organization. Many of the respondents are categorized as either "international contractor" or "local staff," accounting for about twenty-six and forty-eight percent. Meaning that most of the employees working in the of fixed assets inventory management are international contractors and local staff since the organization's priority is to help the country when it comes to employment structures.

Table 1. Profile Distribution of Respondents

Profile	Details	Frequency (n = 50)	Percentage
Age	31–40 years old	18	36.0%
	41–50 years old	15	30.0%
	51–60 years old	17	34.0%
Sex	Male	30	60.0%
	Female	20	40.0%
Education	High School Level	4	8.0%
	With College Degree	5	10.0%
	With Masters Unit	7	14.0%
	With Masters degree	29	58.0%
	With Doctorate Degree	5	10.0%
Nationality	Mali	24	48.0%
	Sudan	1	2.0%
	Ivory Coast	1	2.0%
	Russia	1	2.0%
	Congo	3	6.0%
	Kosovo	2	4.0%
	Nigeria	2	4.0%
	Ghana	2	4.0%
	Others	14	28.0%
Length of Experience	1–2 Years	1	2.0%
	3–4 Years	2	4.0%
	5–6 Years	11	22.0%
	7–10 Years	19	38.0%
	Above 10 Years	17	34.0%
Rank in the Organization	Professional 1–3	2	4.0%
	Professional 4–5	1	2.0%
	Field Service 1–4	4	8.0%
	Field Service 5–6	4	8.0%
	International Volunteer	2	4.0%
	International Contractor	13	26.0%
	Local Staff	24	48.0%

Table 2. Fixed Assets Inventory Management practices (Planning Phase)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
P5	Identification of description, location, assigned identifier, e.g., a barcode with serial number	4.2600	.77749	Always Practiced
P9	Sending emails to end-user for physical verification of assets and follow-ups.	4.1800	.98333	Frequently Practiced
P1	Documentation and creation of a verification plan	4.1600	.81716	Frequently Practiced
P8	Communication and coordination to property focal points.	4.1600	.68094	Frequently Practiced
P10	Regular coordination with the chief of the unit for the schedule of physical verification.	4.1400	.72871	Frequently Practiced
P6	Identification of asset serial numbers to support the location and identification of the property	4.1200	.89534	Frequently Practiced
P2	Keeping of Physical Inspection Sheet (PVS) in the shared drive.	4.0400	.72731	Frequently Practiced
P7	Communication and coordination of the plan with stakeholders. i.e., end-user, warehouse staff	4.0400	.98892	Frequently Practiced
P4	Creation of a list of properties from the property database.	3.9800	.89191	Frequently Practiced
P3	Constant coordination with other Sections for physical inspection.	3.9592	1.05986	Frequently Practiced
	General Weighted	4.1039 (Frequently Practiced)		

Tables 2, 3 and 4 Rating Scale
1.00–1.79 Not Practiced
1.80–2.59 Seldomly Practiced
2.60–3.39 Sometimes Practiced
3.40–4.19 Frequently Practiced
4.20–5.00 Always Practiced

Table 2 shows the different indicators measuring the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of fixed assets concerning the planning phase, and the results are presented in the table. Respondents have rated the indicator "Identification of description, location, assigned identifier, e.g., a barcode

with the serial number was the highest weighted mean of 4.2600 (i.e., always practiced). "Sending emails to end-user for physical verification of assets and follow ups" 4.1800 (i.e. frequently practiced). The least rated indicators are "Creation of a list of property from the property database. And "Constant coordination with other sections for physical inspection" 3.9800 and 3.9592 both of which are described as "frequently practiced". Overall, the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the planning phase is rated "frequently practiced" with a general weighted mean of 4.1039.

Table 3 shows the different indicators measuring the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of fixed assets concerning the execution phase. As can be seen, the indicators that got the highest weighted mean are the following: "Conduct of physical verification of fixed assets in the field regularly and "Identification of the actual location before the actual location of inspection must be identified before proceeding with the physical/virtual verification with a weighted mean of 4.5400 and 4.3200 respectively, both of which are described (i.e. Always Practiced). This is followed by the indicator "Prioritization of Serialized and Non-serialized items in the physical verification" with a weighted mean of 4.1600 5.9667 (i.e. Frequently Practiced). The least rated indicators are "E3 Verification of barcoded assets is done in an open area and E4 "Creation of Virtual files of property records for monitoring purposes". With weighted means of 3.9200 (i.e. Frequently Practiced) and 3.9000 respectively (i.e. Frequently Practiced). Overall, the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the execution phase is rated "frequently practiced" with a general weighted mean of 4.1080.

Table 4 displays the different indicators measuring the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of assets concerning the reconciliation phase. The indicators that got the highest weighted mean are "Adjustments and updating of records on the asset register property database" 4.3800 respectively (i.e. Always Practiced). Followed by "After Physical verification, uploading of the PV sheets is required to avoid gap of inspection, Logging of any discrepancies between the property confirmed and Location/Status discrepancy are always forwarded on time to SAU focal point for updating." with both weighted means of 4.2200 (i.e. Always Practiced). The least rated indicators are "Initiate the process of repair, write-off or disposal for the property that is not in good working condition or deteriorated and After physical/virtual verification the PV sheets can process in the system no later than 5 days". With both weighted means of 4.0000 (i.e. Frequently Practiced) respectively (i.e. Frequently Practiced). Overall, the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the reconciliation phase is rated "frequently practiced" with a general weighted mean of 4.1560.

Tables 5, 6 and 7 Rating scale

1–1.74 Not A Concern

1.75–2.49 Slight Concern

2.50–3.24 Moderate Concern

3.25–5.00 Serious Concern

Table 5 reveals the different indicators measuring the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of assets

Table 3. Fixed Assets Inventory Management Practices (Execution Phase)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
E7	Conduct of physical verification of assets in the field regularly.	4.5400	.78792	Always Practiced
E1	Identification of the actual location prior to the actual location of inspection must be identified before proceeding with the physical/virtual verification.	4.3200	.65278	Always Practiced
E9	Prioritization of Serialized and Non-serialized items in the physical verification.	4.1600	.93372	Frequently Practiced
E6	Confirmation of asset should be validated	4.1200	.93982	Frequently Practiced
E8	Identification of any property that may use and no longer be functional.	4.1000	.90914	Frequently Practiced
E5	Availability of the inspection of sensitive items in a proper storage	4.0600	.93481	Frequently Practiced
E2	Responsiveness of the employees on the Verification and confirmation	4.0000	.90351	Frequently Practiced
E10	Declaration indicator of impairment is present	3.9600	.90260	Frequently Practiced
E3	Verification of barcoded assets is done in an open area	3.9200	.98644	Frequently Practiced
E4	Creation of Virtual files of property records for monitoring purposes.	3.9000	.88641	Frequently Practiced
	General Weighted Mean	4.1080 (Frequently Practiced)		

Table 4. Fixed Assets Inventory Management Practices (Reconciliation Phase)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
R1	Adjustments and updating of records on the asset register property database	4.3800	.69664	Always Practiced
R7	After Physical verification, uploading of the PV sheets is required to avoid a gap in the inspection.	4.2200	.84007	Always Practiced
R3	Logging of any discrepancies between the property confirmed.	4.2200	.91003	Always Practiced
R2	Location/Status discrepancies are always forwarded on time to SAU focal point for updating.	4.2200	.67883	Always Practiced
R5	Ensure Discrepancy should be communicated to respective Property Managers for review and appropriate action	4.1800	.84973	Frequently Practiced
R8	Ensures unity of action in the physical verification of assets among individuals,	4.1400	.78272	Frequently Practiced
R6	Reconciliation of findings in the database	4.1400	.90373	Frequently Practiced
R10	Scheduling in SAP transactions can help the inspector to do the uploading of discrepancies.	4.0600	.95640	Frequently Practiced
R4	Initiate the process of repair, write-off, or disposal of property that is not in good working condition or deteriorated	4.0000	.92582	Frequently Practiced
R9	After physical/virtual verification the PV sheets can process in the system no later than 5 days	4.0000	.98974	Frequently Practiced
	General Weighted Mean	4.1560 (Frequently Practiced)		

Table 5. Challenges Encountered during Covid-19 in the Fixed Assets Inventory Management (Documentation)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
D5	Delayed creation of case file for the not located assets	3.1200	.82413	Moderate Concern
D9	It takes 3–5 days to get the response of employees when sending email verification.	3.0800	.87691	Moderate Concern
D7	Unpreparedness on the virtual verification of assets	3.0400	.87970	Moderate Concern
D6	Lack of coordination to staff involved in the inspection	2.9600	.98892	Moderate Concern
D10	Lack of information on the email confirmation.	2.9400	.99816	Moderate Concern
D1	Limited Physical Verification sheets record.	2.9200	1.12195	Moderate Concern
D3	Irregular filling of document to share drive	2.9000	1.05463	Moderate Concern
D8	Lack of evidence in filling of email verification from the share drive	2.8776	.97110	Moderate Concern
D2	Unavailability of documents during virtual verification	2.8600	1.01035	Moderate Concern
D4	Assets Hand-over documents are electronically submitted only to the Self Accounting Unit.	2.7200	.96975	Moderate Concern
	General Weighted Mean	2.9412 Moderate Concern		

concerning field works during the Covid-19 pandemic. Respondents have rated the indicator "Delayed creation of case file for the not located assets" with the highest weighted mean of 3.1200 (i.e. moderate concern). This is followed by the indicator "It takes 3–5 days to get the response of employees when sending email verification" 3.0800 (i.e. moderate concern). "Unavailability of documents during virtual verification and "Assets Hand-over documents are electronically submitted only to the Self Accounting Unit" 2.8600 and 2.7200 respectively, both "moderate concern". Overall, the challenges in fixed assets inventory management concerning documentation during Covid-19 are rated "moderate concern" with a general weighted mean of 2.9412.

Table 6 presents the different indicators measuring the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of assets concerning field works during the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown, the indicators that got the highest weighted mean are the following: "Unresponsiveness of the employees in virtual verification, "Ineffectiveness of phone calls and sending emails for virtual verification of assets due to delayed response of employees, "Unavailability of employees

Table 6. Challenges Encountered during Covid-19 in the Fixed Assets Inventory Management (Field Works)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
F10	Unresponsiveness of the employees in virtual verification	3.2400	.79693	Moderate Concern
F8	Ineffectiveness of phone calls and emails for virtual verification of assets due to delayed response of employees.	3.2400	.91607	Moderate Concern
F7	Unavailability of employees during virtual verification	3.2400	.77090	Moderate Concern
F9	Ineffectiveness of virtual verification of assets due to poor communication.	3.2400	.84660	Moderate Concern
F6	Loss/misplaced of assets/equipment in the current location	3.2000	.83299	Moderate Concern
F4	Limited access in the warehouse for verification of stocks.	3.1600	.86567	Moderate Concern
F3	Unable to monitor and adjust the timing of virtual verification of assets.	3.1400	.83324	Moderate Concern
F2	Regular visit in different offices is not allowed	3.1200	.84853	Moderate Concern
F1	Irregular field works activity	3.0800	.87691	Moderate Concern
F5	Not enough allocation time and resources allowance for the verification of assets in the region.	3.0200	.91451	Moderate Concern
	General Weighted Mean	3.1680 (Moderate Concern)		

during virtual verification and "Ineffectiveness of virtual verification of assets due to poor communication" 3.2400 (i.e. moderate concern). Followed by "Loss/misplaced of assets/equipment in the current location" 3.2000 (i.e. moderate concern). And least rated indicator "Not enough allocation time and resources allowance for the verification of assets in the region with weighted means of 3.0200 "moderate concern". Overall, the challenges in fixed assets inventory management concerning field works during Covid-19 are rated "moderate concern" with a general weighted mean of 3.1680.

Table 7 shows the different indicators measuring the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices under the physical verification of assets concerning data reconciliation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The indicator that got the highest

Table 7. Challenges Encountered during Covid-19 in the Fixed Assets Inventory Management (Data Reconciliation)

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Narrative Description
DR10	Discrepancy on the property record in SAP versus with the actual inventory count.	3.1400	.88086	Moderate Concern
DR9	Actual end-user is different from the property data base	3.1200	.89534	Moderate Concern
DR2	Unresponsiveness of Self Accounting Unit on the correction of data in the system.	3.1200	.87225	Moderate Concern
DR8	Actual location of assets is different from the property data base	3.0600	.91272	Moderate Concern
DR3	Daily clearing of warehouse inventory in the system without physical verification.	2.9600	.92494	Moderate Concern
DR6	Incomplete list of assets in the system.	2.8600	.94782	Moderate Concern
DR7	Limited access to SAP system for updating of records.	2.8600	.96911	Moderate Concern
DR5	Failure to record (daily log-in) and monitor the discrepancy report	2.8200	.89648	Moderate Concern
DR1	Irregular uploading of Physical Verification (PV) Sheet.	2.8200	1.06311	Moderate Concern
DR4	Failure to update Physical Verification sheets based on the submitted pictures of assets.	2.7600	.87037	Moderate Concern
	General Weighted Mean	2.9520 (Moderate Concern)		

weighted mean is "Discrepancy on the property record in SAP versus with the actual inventory count system" which is not the same as an actual count with a weighted mean of 3.1400 (i.e. moderate concern). This is followed by indicators "Actual end-user is different from the property database and Unresponsiveness of Self Accounting Unit on the correction of data in the system" with both weighted means of 3.1200 and both of

which are described as "moderate concern". (i.e. moderate concern). The least rated indicator is "Failure to update Physical Verification sheets based on the submitted pictures of assets with weighted means of 2.9520 "moderate concern". Overall, the challenges in fixed assets inventory management concerning field works during Covid-19 are rated "moderate concern" with a general weighted mean of 2.9520 (Table 8).

As presented in the above table, implicated significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to execution phase (p-value = .037) when grouped by education, and with respect to reconciliation phase (p-value = .008) when grouped by nationality. On the other hand, the ANOVA implicated no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, execution, and reconciliation when grouped by age; no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, execution, and reconciliation when grouped by sex; no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, and reconciliation when grouped by education; no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, and execution when grouped by nationality; no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, execution, and reconciliation when grouped by length of service; and no significant differences on the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to planning, execution, and reconciliation when grouped by rank (Table 9).

As presented in the above table, implicated significant differences on the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to data reconciliation (p-value = .018) when grouped by education; significant differences on the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to documentation (p-value = .018) and data reconciliation (p-value = .001) when grouped by nationality; and significant differences on the challenges encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices with respect to documentation (p-value = .024) and data reconciliation (p-value = .002) when grouped by rank. On the other hand, the ANOVA implicated no significant differences on the other variables included in the study (Table 10).

The multiple regression analysis, via structural equation modelling (SEM), revealed that there are significant relationships between planning practices and field work challenges (r = −.117; p-value = .000), and significant relationships between execution practices and field work challenges (r = −.134; p-value .009). Such findings imply that better physical management practices with respect to planning phase will result to lesser challenges with respect to field work; and that better physical management practices with respect to execution phase will result to lesser challenges with respect to field work. It can be concluded than that both planning and execution phases impacts filed work challenges. As for the other variable pairing, the SEM revealed no significant relationships. Therefore, these variables does not impacts the gravity of challenges encountered.

Table 8. ANOVA Results on Significant Difference (Extent of Fixed Assets Inventory Management Practices)

Profile	Variable	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)	Conclusion
Age	Planning Phase	.950	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by age
	Execution Phase	.562	Accept Ho	Execution phase when respondents are grouped by age
	Reconciliation Phase	.321	Accept Ho	Reconciliation phase when respondents are grouped by age
Sex	Planning Phase	.551	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by sex
	Execution Phase	.576	Accept Ho	Execution phase when respondents are grouped by sex
	Reconciliation Phase	.570	Accept Ho	Reconciliation phase when respondents are grouped by sex
Education	Planning Phase	.915	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by education
	Execution Phase	.037	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the execution phase when respondents are grouped by education
	Reconciliation Phase	.099	Accept Ho	Reconciliation phase when respondents are grouped by education
Nationality	Planning Phase	.620	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by nationality
	Execution Phase	.534	Accept Ho	Execution phase when respondents are grouped by nationality
	Reconciliation Phase	.008	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the reconciliation phase according to nationality
Length of experience	Planning Phase	.386	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by length of experience
	Execution Phase	.727	Accept Ho	Execution phase when respondents are grouped by length of experience
	Reconciliation Phase	.213	Accept Ho	Reconciliation phase when respondents are grouped by length of experience
Rank	Planning Phase	.845	Accept Ho	Planning phase when respondents are grouped by rank
	Execution Phase	.234	Accept Ho	Execution phase when respondents are grouped by rank
	Reconciliation Phase	.546	Accept Ho	Reconciliation phase according to rank

Table 9. ANOVA Results on Significant Difference (Challenges Encountered in fixed assets inventory management practices during Covid-19) when grouped by Background Characteristics.

Profile	Variable	p-value	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Conclusion
Age	Documentation	.938	Accept Ho	Documentation when respondents are grouped by age
	Field Works	.900	Accept Ho	Field works when respondents are grouped by age
	Data Reconciliation	.828	Accept Ho	Data reconciliation when respondents are grouped by age
Sex	Documentation	.447	Accept Ho	Documentation when respondents are grouped by sex
	Field Works	.782	Accept Ho	Field works when respondents are grouped by sex
	Data Reconciliation	.932	Accept Ho	Data reconciliation when respondents are grouped by sex
Education	Documentation	.069	Accept Ho	Documentation when respondents are grouped by education
	Field Works	.375	Accept Ho	Challenge concerning field works according to education
	Data Reconciliation	.018	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges concerning data reconciliation when respondents are grouped by education
Nationality	Documentation	.038	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges concerning documentation when respondents are grouped by nationality
	Field Works	.170	Accept Ho	Challenge concerning field works according to nationality
	Data Reconciliation	.001	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges concerning data reconciliation according to nationality
Length of experience	Documentation	.873	Accept Ho	Documentation when respondents are grouped by length of experience
	Field Works	.851	Accept Ho	Field works when respondents are grouped by length of experience
	Data Reconciliation	.901	Accept Ho	Data reconciliation when respondents are grouped by length of experience
Rank	Documentation	.024	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges concerning documentation when respondents are grouped by rank
	Field Works	.168	Accept Ho	Field works when respondents are grouped by rank
	Data Reconciliation	.002	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges concerning data reconciliation when respondents are grouped by rank

Table 10. Multiple Regression Results on Significant Relationship Between Practices and Challenges

Variables		Coefficient of Correlation	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)	Conclusion
Practices	Challenges				
Planning	Documentation	-.074	.560	Accept Ho	planning practices and challenges encountered in documentation
	Field Work	-.117	.000	Reject Ho	There is a significant relationship between planning practices and challenges encountered in fieldwork
	Reconciliation	-.068	.591	Accept Ho	planning practices and challenges encountered in data reconciliation
Execution	Documentation	.009	.945	Accept Ho	execution practices and challenges encountered in documentation
	Field Work	-.134	.009	Reject Ho	There is a significant relationship between execution practices and challenges encountered in filed work
	Reconciliation	.001	.992	Accept Ho	execution practices and challenges encountered in data reconciliation
Reconciliation	Documentation	.050	.693	Accept Ho	T reconciliation practices and challenges encountered in documentation
	Field Work	.039	.765	Accept Ho	reconciliation practices and challenges encountered in fieldwork
	Reconciliation	-.026	.837	Accept Ho	reconciliation practices and challenges encountered in data reconciliation

5   Conclusion

The following conclusions are based on the demographic profile of respondents, the most common respondents are Male and in the age bracket of 31–40 years old with 7 years of experience in the fixed assets inventory. As expected, respondents are master's degree accounting to fifty-seven percent. It is a multi-national respondents. There are 32 respondents from Mali, 6 from other countries, and 3 respondents from Congo; two respondents each from Ghana, Nigeria, and Kosovo, and one each for Sudan, Ivory Coast, and Russia. It manifested multi-cultural staffing within the surveyed organization. It can be concluded that length of service is not the basis of the fixed assets inventory management business process; as long as staff are well-trained, they can efficiently perform physical verification of fixed assets. It is an enormous help that a fixed assets inventory management officer roams around to supervise the people who need assistance anytime. The decision of a fixed assets inventory officer when it comes to verification of inaccessible assets and an online verification can help the subordinates to perform their physical/virtual verification in different aspects of the location.

Based on the ANOVA results on significant differences in the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices in terms of planning, execution, and reconciliation phase, the researcher came up with this conclusion: The analysis of variance or ANOVA implicated significant differences in the extent of fixed assets inventory management practices concerning the execution phase when grouped by education and the aspect of the reconciliation phase when grouped by nationality. Therefore, education is not a basis for the physical verification of fixed assets; as long as your mentality focuses on your task and the applied decision-making, you can accomplish the perfect physical verification and inventory. Concerning nationality, the implication of nationality in the reconciliation phase is also an issue, simply because most of the international fixed assets inventory management employees during Covid-19 have been performed online due to covid restrictions and may face different issues on the challenges of technology or devices.

Based on the multiple regression analysis, via structural equation modeling (SEM), rejecting the null hypothesis, implicated that there are significant relationships between planning practices and fieldwork challenges and execution practices and fieldwork challenges. It can be concluded that both planning and execution phases impact fieldwork challenges. During Covid-19, planning and organizing in terms of fieldwork is not possible due to Covid-19 movement restrictions. The most affected area of responsibility of the fixed assets inventory management in the physical verification of fixed assets is fieldwork; these challenges affect the performance of the fixed assets inventory management employees to get the feedback of the employees in an online verification of the fixed assets and the difficult locations of fixed assets during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6   Recommendations

The Management may enhance the training and guidelines on the readiness for physical verification of fixed assets. So that all the fixed assets inventory management employees will be aware of it. They should strengthen their policy regarding documentation, fieldwork, and data reconciliation, and implement regular coordination with the supervisors.

And they have to make sure that they have updated database/records of all fixed assets registered in the SAP system inventory.

The employees/end-users should be accountable for fixed assets assigned to their name and they are responsible for coordinating with the fixed assets inventory management focal point about the strict compliance with the verification of fixed assets and inspection protocols. For transparency, they have to make sure that there will be no exemption for the notification of online verification, and they should provide evidence and correct information regarding the issued fixed assets to maintain the record in the database.

With Self Accounting Unit (SAU) should be accountable and responsible for providing a comprehensive updated accounting report of fixed assets inventory, and for transparency, all assets' managers must be informed through conducting physical verification. All of the employees must show eagerness to participate in sending notifications on the actual location of the fixed assets for the implementation of the correct record.

The fixed assets inventory management employees are accountable to keep the physical verification record and provide a comprehensive physical verification report. They are responsible for monitoring the movement of the fixed asset inventory and informing all the stakeholders involved in the physical verification. For transparency, they should respect all the offices notifying them before they enter the office premises and create rules and policies for this. And they should intensify the coordination of the fixed assets inventory management employees and managers, to provide specific tasks to be undertaken by them.

The Chief fixed assets inventory management should intensify the implementation of training and guidelines in the practices of fixed asset physical verification, rules, and regulations to all stakeholders, because it has a significant effect on Key Performance Indicator (KPI). This is also to motivate the employees to be concerned and protect all the organization's supplies and equipment.

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