

## PRINCIPALS' FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS CORRELATES OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

**Manafa, Fausta Uche, PhD**

Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Jabi Abuja  
+2348033572376  
fmanafa@noun.edu.ng

### Abstract

This study examined principals' financial management practices as correlates of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria, specifically examining cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing practices. The study was guided by three research questions and corresponding null hypotheses. A correlational research design was employed. The population comprised 7,248 teachers across 269 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State, from which a sample of 580 teachers was drawn through a multistage sampling procedure involving proportionate stratified and simple random techniques. Data were collected using two validated instruments: The Principals' Financial Management Practices Questionnaire (PFMPQ) and the Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PAEQ). Reliability was established through the Cronbach Alpha method, with coefficients of 0.79 for PFMPQ and 0.88 for PAEQ, confirming internal consistency. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using test of significance of Pearson. Findings revealed that principals' cash budgeting, cash control, and cash auditing practices each exhibited strong positive and statistically significant relationships with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. Specifically, these financial management practices jointly accounted for substantial proportions of the variance in administrative effectiveness, underscoring their critical role in strengthening school administration. The study concluded that sound financial management practices are vital drivers of administrative effectiveness, promoting accountability, efficient resource utilization and improved institutional performance in public secondary schools. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education should institutionalize participatory budgeting, strengthen internal financial controls and enforce periodic audits to enhance accountability, optimize resource utilization and promote sustainable administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Financial Management Practices, Administrative Effectiveness, School Leadership, Educational Accountability

### Introduction

Effective school administration is largely dependent on sound financial management practices that ensure transparency, accountability, and optimal resource utilization. In public secondary schools, principals occupy a strategic position as financial managers responsible for mobilizing, allocating, and monitoring resources to achieve institutional goals. However, in many developing contexts such as Nigeria, challenges of inadequate funding, poor accountability, and mismanagement of school finances often undermine administrative effectiveness. Examining the nexus between principals' financial management practices and administrative effectiveness is therefore critical for improving school performance, ensuring quality service delivery, and promoting sustainable educational development.

Secondary education represents a critical transitional phase, linking foundational primary education to advanced tertiary learning. It is vital not only for nurturing individuals and fostering societal advancement, but also for fulfilling the educational aspirations of the nation. While national educational objectives may be well-formulated, realizing them demands effective administration across all tiers. In essence, having competent administrators in schools is indispensable for achieving these aims (Ikegbusi, 2016).

Moreover, administrative effectiveness constitutes a cornerstone of successful educational leadership due to its extensive influence on the execution of school programs and the fulfillment of institutional goals. Ikegbusi et al. (2025) defined administrative effectiveness as the satisfaction experienced by stakeholders, which in turn shapes the internal structure and functioning of an organization. Likewise, Manafa, (2025b) regarded it as the degree to which school principals reach their institutional goals. Ikegbusi et al. (2022) characterized it as a principal's capacity to coordinate human and material resources in a systematic manner toward educational objectives. Principals' efficiency or lack thereof, can significantly affect discipline among teachers, students, and staff. Therefore, appointing principals requires careful consideration of individuals who, beyond meeting academic and

professional criteria, possess the aptitude, dedication and moral integrity essential for the role. Opatunde and Oredein (2023) emphasized that leadership in secondary schools should be entrusted to individuals who, in addition to possessing formal credentials, demonstrate the intrinsic qualities of exceptional educators.

Effective secondary school administration hinges on a principal's ability to integrate planning, coordination, structure, adaptability and evaluation. Manafa (2025a) emphasized that principals must inspire and motivate staff creativity and initiative, leveraging these as key contributions to achieving school objectives. It is in this vein that effective principals are esteemed and supported rather than feared; they engage in clear communication, show genuine care for students and administer discipline only when necessary (Ikegbusi & Iheanacho, 2016).

Within this context, administrative effectiveness is operationally understood as the strategic coordination of human and material resources toward the fulfillment of educational aims. It refers to a principal's capacity to achieve school goals and objectives. Consequently, sound financial management practices are integral to enabling principals to manage the everyday operations of secondary schools with efficiency and purpose. Secondary schools operate within diverse funding structures and financial management systems. Nkedishu and

Onyekwe (2025) explained that the financing patterns adopted, together with the management approaches employed, play a decisive role in shaping the operational landscape of public secondary schools. These institutions function within distinct financial frameworks, which are largely influenced by government policies, socio-economic realities and multiple sources of revenue. Public secondary schools rely primarily on government allocations at the local, state and federal levels. As Onaolapo and Onaolapo (2025) explained, these funds, largely drawn from taxes and other forms of public income, are directed toward ensuring equitable access to education across communities. However, the effectiveness of such funding is strongly tied to sound management practices. Principals are not only responsible for personnel management but also for the prudent and transparent use of resources. In line with these expectations, public schools are governed by strict financial accountability requirements, designed to enhance transparency, fairness and efficiency. Udeh and Ibe (2024) noted that school leaders often apply strategies such as structured budgeting, expense monitoring and internal auditing to ensure that resources are properly allocated. Similarly, Obiweluzor and Ogunbiyi (2024) emphasized that tools such as priority budgeting and cost-benefit analysis are essential for optimizing limited resources and aligning financial decisions with the needs of students.

Financial management practices within educational institutions are essential for optimizing resource use and enhancing learning outcomes. Asuma (2025) demonstrated that effective budgeting, financial reporting, internal auditing and monitoring directly improve schools' performance. In such contexts, structured financial planning supports strategic resource allocation toward educational excellence. Similarly, Obiukwu and Amaechi (2025) highlighted the role of budgeting and robust internal controls, including auditing, in ensuring that funds are allocated fairly and that service delivery is not compromised. Understanding the importance of financial systems in schools is vital for assessing institutional effectiveness. Schools must maintain accounting processes that guarantee rigorous oversight and accountability for all receipts, presenting clear, accurate and timely representations of their financial status. Madzinga et al., (2024) stressed that sound financial management practices, such as financial planning, cash regulating, cash budgeting, cash control, cash auditing, management accounting, budgeting and cost accounting, are fundamental for a school's financial performance and operational success. Additionally, these practices help to foster good governance, transparency and responsible stewardship of public funds, curbing the risk of fraud and mismanagement (Egwu, 2022b).

In practical terms, financial management in schools involves key administrative decisions on fund planning, generation, disbursement and reporting to support program execution. Core practices include budgeting, cash control, inventory oversight and auditing. Within the scope of this study, financial management practices are specifically narrowed to examine cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing practices.

Cash budgeting in schools serves as a forward-looking financial blueprint that outlines projected income sources and anticipated expenditures for a defined future period. It represents a forecasted plan of school revenues and expenses through which educational objectives are actualized. Obiukwu and Amaechi (2025) articulated that this budgeting process involves the systematic forecast of a school's financial inflows and outflows within an academic or financial year, effectively translating planned programs into monetary terms. In agreement, Udeh and Ibe (2024) described budgeting practices as the quantification of school activities, transforming programs into figures that reflect expected income and expected outlay for the fiscal year. These projections help school leaders gain clarity on expected financial capacity, steering them away from imprudent spending and prompting them to prioritize funds prudently. As part of this prudence, principals are expected to complement budgeting with effective cash control measures.

Cash control practice refers to a set of financial procedures designed to confirm the complete and accurate recording of all incoming and outgoing funds. It involves ongoing oversight, comparison of transactions, and prompt correction of any discrepancies by financial officers. Okwu and Eze (2025) stated that effective cash control mechanisms facilitate continuous monitoring and regulation of expenditure, exposing inefficiencies and losses so they can be addressed promptly. Similarly, Anigbo and Okoro (2024) defined cash control as management-established protocols that maintain optimal cash balances, manage cash flows and enable strategic investment of surplus funds. Effective implementation of these controls in schools often involves thorough cash auditing to ensure discipline and accountability.

Cash auditing practice constitutes a rigorous procedure aimed at confirming the completeness and accuracy of all cash transactions within schools. This entails a systematic examination of cash inflows and outflows, paired with the timely identification and rectification of discrepancies. In a study conducted in Kenyan secondary schools, Mohamed and Chui (2023) found that regular audit planning, stakeholder involvement and structured reporting significantly reinforce financial management. Their findings highlighted that principals who establish effective audit committees and integrate stakeholders into the process positively influence school financial accountability and transparency. In a broader analysis from Anambra State, Mbonu and Oku (2024) compared public and private schools and noted that robust financial record-keeping and consistent auditing practices are essential for ensuring integrity in school finances. These mechanisms underpin the reliability of financial statements and bolster stakeholder confidence in the institution's fiscal governance. Together, these studies underscored that cash auditing serves as a foundational element for upholding transparency and enhancing financial stewardship in educational institutions. It ensures that cash handling aligns with ethical norms and regulatory standards and enables principals to maintain fiscal discipline through corrective actions based on audit findings.

Unfortunately, the situation in some public secondary schools in Anambra State remains troubling. In several cases, school leaders fail to adequately plan for academic programs and neglect foundational financial management practices, such as cash budgeting, cash control, cash auditing, and importantly, inclusive staff involvement in financial decision-making. This omission often results in duplicated responsibilities, weak administrative direction and ultimately, misallocation or wastage of both financial and material resources. Given the potential long-term decline in educational standards, these circumstances accentuated the urgency of the present study, to investigate the extent to which principals' financial management practices correlate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Effective administration in public secondary schools depends on principals' ability to manage financial resources efficiently. In many schools in Anambra State, principals face challenges such as inadequate cash budgeting, weak cash control, irregular cash auditing and limited staff involvement in financial decisions. These shortcomings often result in misallocation of resources, operational inefficiencies and weakened administrative coordination, compromising the achievement of school goals and the quality of education. Despite the critical role of financial management in ensuring administrative effectiveness, there is insufficient empirical understanding of how principals' financial management practices relate to overall administrative performance in these schools. Consequently, there is a need to examine the extent to which principals' financial management practices correlate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate principals' financial management practices as correlates of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which principals' cash budgeting practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Determine the extent to which principals' cash control practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Examine the extent to which principals' cash auditing practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do principals' cash budgeting practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent do principals' cash control practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

3. To what extent do principals' cash auditing practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals' cash budgeting practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' cash control practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Principals' cash auditing practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Literature Review

#### Principals' Financial Management Practices

Principals' financial management practices are foundational to the smooth functioning of secondary schools, ensuring that scarce educational resources are efficiently mobilized, allocated and accounted for. In the Nigerian context, these practices are critical determinants of administrative effectiveness, as they directly influence planning, supervision and accountability functions. **Ngigi and Tanui (2019)** stressed that without financial discipline, even competent administrators struggle to achieve institutional goals. Central among these practices are **cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing**, which serve as operational tools through which financial management is translated into effective school leadership.

#### Cash Budgeting Practices

Cash budgeting practices involve preparing and implementing financial plans that guide school expenditure. By projecting income and aligning it with expenditure priorities, principals ensure that resources are used efficiently to support school programs. **John (2025)** found that well-prepared budgets significantly improve administrative planning and timely project execution, thereby linking directly to administrative effectiveness. Similarly, **Sunday et al. (2024)** observed that structured budgeting practices foster teachers' trust and cooperation, which enhances principals' supervisory capacity and overall goal attainment. In the same vein, **Manafa and Onwuchulum (2025)** emphasized that effective financial planning and resource allocation are critical for sustaining institutional goals, as they provide the strategic framework that supports school improvement initiatives. Thus, cash budgeting contributes to administrative effectiveness by providing a roadmap for financial decisions, ensuring resource alignment with educational objectives and minimizing financial disruptions that hinder effective administration.

#### Cash Control Practices

Cash control practices include measures that regulate disbursements, monitor expenditures and prevent misuse of funds. Effective control mechanisms, such as authorization protocols and spending limits, enhance accountability and ensure that funds are directed toward approved priorities. **Sunday et al., (2024)** demonstrated that strong control practices significantly predict administrative effectiveness by reducing leakages, ensuring program continuity and improving staff confidence in leadership. Likewise, **Manafa (2025c)** reported that schools where principals exercise strict financial oversight are better able to sustain teaching and infrastructural development. Therefore, **cash control practices strengthen administrative effectiveness by safeguarding resources, improving accountability and enabling consistent delivery of school services.**

#### Cash Auditing Practices

Cash auditing practices provide an evaluative framework to verify financial records and ensure compliance with financial policies. Regular audits enable principals to identify irregularities, correct inefficiencies and reinforce credibility in their administration. **Mbonu and Oku (2024)** revealed that schools with rigorous auditing practices demonstrate higher levels of accountability and transparency, which in turn enhance principals' administrative credibility. **Okpala and Ukandu (2022)** further noted that consistent auditing facilitates accurate record-keeping and strengthens policy implementation. Thus, **cash auditing links to administrative effectiveness by improving decision-making, promoting transparency and consolidating stakeholder trust in school leadership.**

#### Administrative Effectiveness

Administrative effectiveness refers to principals' ability to achieve institutional objectives through effective planning, supervision and resource management. Evidence consistently shows that financial management practices are central predictors of such effectiveness (**Egwu, 2022a**). Budgeting enhances planning, control ensures accountability and auditing provides evaluative oversight, together creating a cycle of transparency, trust and efficient goal attainment (**Ikegbusi et al., 2025**). Consequently, **principals' financial management**

**practices, operationalized through budgeting, control and auditing, function as indispensable levers for achieving administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools.**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by the **Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory** by Barney 1991, which emphasized that organizations achieve effectiveness and sustained performance by leveraging valuable, rare, inimitable and well-organized resources. Applied to education, RBV posited that principals' financial management practices, cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing, are strategic capabilities that enable schools to utilize financial resources efficiently and transparently. The theory is appropriate for this study because it directly linked financial management practices to administrative effectiveness. When principals effectively budget, control and audit school funds, they enhance planning, accountability and transparency, thereby improving supervision, resource allocation and stakeholders' confidence. Thus, RBV provided a robust explanatory framework for understanding how principals' financial practices translate into effective administration in public secondary schools.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a **correlational research design** to examine the relationship between principals' financial management practices, cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing and their administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. A correlational design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to assess the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (financial management practices) and the dependent variable (administrative effectiveness) without manipulation or experimental control (Ikegbusi, 2022). This design was also suitable for determining whether variations in financial management practices significantly relate to differences in administrative effectiveness. The population of the study comprised **7,248 teachers** (1,500 males and 5,748 females) across 269 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State. From this population, a sample of **580 teachers**, representing approximately **8% of the population**, was drawn to ensure adequate representation while maintaining manageability in data collection. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. First, proportionate stratified sampling was used to distribute the sample across the six education zones in line with their teacher populations. Thereafter, simple random sampling was applied to select respondents from each stratum. This procedure minimized sampling bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample (Obi et al., 2022).

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

Data were collected using two structured instruments developed by the researcher: **Principals' Financial Management Practices Questionnaire (PFMPQ)**: This instrument measured the extent to which principals implemented cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing practices. The PFMPQ was structured into three sections reflecting these domains, with items rated on a four-point extent scale: Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1). **Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PAEQ)**: This instrument assessed principals' effectiveness in areas such as instructional leadership, staff management, resource utilization and accountability. Like the PFMPQ, items were presented on a 4-point Likert scale to ensure consistency in response format. The instrument for data collection was subjected to **expert validation** to ensure its relevance, clarity and content adequacy. Three specialists, one in **educational administration and planning**, another in **curriculum studies** and a third in **measurement and evaluation**. Reliability was established using the **Cronbach Alpha method**. The reliability coefficients obtained were **0.79 for the PFMPQ** and **0.88 for the PAEQ**, indicating high internal consistency and suitability for field administration.

Data collection was carried out using the direct administration method. With the cooperation of school authorities, the researcher, assisted by four briefed research assistants, personally distributed the questionnaires to the sampled respondents during regular school hours. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, while detailed instructions were provided to minimize response bias. Out of the 580 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 550 were correctly completed and retrieved, representing a high return rate of 95%, which enhanced the reliability and quality of the data collected.

The collected data were coded and entered into the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26** for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were first computed to summarize respondents' views on principals' financial management practices and administrative effectiveness. For inferential analysis, the **Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC)** was employed to determine the strength and direction of relationships between principals' cash budgeting, cash control, cash auditing and administrative effectiveness. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using test of significance of Pearson. The interpretation of correlation coefficients followed Tabachnick and Fidell's (2023) guideline: negligible (0.00–0.20), low (0.21–0.40), moderate (0.41–0.60), high (0.61–0.80) and very high (0.81–1.00).

Positive coefficients indicated direct relationships, whereas negative coefficients indicated inverse relationships. Through this methodological approach, the study provided both descriptive insights and robust empirical evidence on the extent to which principals' financial management practices relate to their administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do principals' cash budgeting practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' cash budgeting practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Remarks
Principals' Cash Budgeting Practices	550			
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.612	0.374	Highly Positive

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The summary result of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation in Table 1 showed that principals' cash budgeting practices have a **high positive relationship** with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.612$ ) indicated that improved budgeting practices by principals are strongly associated with higher levels of administrative effectiveness. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.374$ ) implied that about **37% of the variation** in administrative effectiveness was explained by principals' cash budgeting practices, while the remaining percentage may be attributed to other factors not captured in this study. This finding underscored that effective cash budgeting significantly enhances principals' planning, supervisory roles and overall administrative efficiency.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent do principals' cash control practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' cash control practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Remarks
Principals' cash Control Practices	550			
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.557	0.310	Moderately Positive

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The summary result of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 2 indicated that principals' cash control practices have a **moderately positive relationship** with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.557$ ) showed that effective monitoring and regulation of school funds by principals are moderately linked with improved administrative outcomes. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.310$ ) revealed that **31% of the variance** in administrative effectiveness is explained by variations in cash control practices, while the remaining 69% could be attributed to other factors. This finding implied that when principals maintain strong internal financial control measures, administrative effectiveness is enhanced through better accountability, transparency and prudent resource management.

**Research Question Three:** To what extent do principals' cash auditing practices relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' cash auditing practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Decision
Principals' Cash Auditing Practices	550			
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.601	0.361	Moderately Positive

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient result in Table 3 revealed a **moderately positive relationship** between principals' cash auditing practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.601$ ) indicated that systematic and regular auditing of school accounts contributes moderately to enhanced administrative effectiveness. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.361$ ) showed that **36% of the variation** in administrative effectiveness is explained by principals' cash auditing practices, while 64% is influenced by other variables not captured in this study. This suggested that

consistent financial auditing promotes transparency, accountability and trust, which are essential for strengthening administrative efficiency in public secondary schools.

Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Principals' cash budgeting practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between principals' cash budgeting practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	P-value	Decision
Principals' Cash Budgeting Practices	550				
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.588	0.346	0.000	Reject H <sub>01</sub>

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The summary result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 4 indicated a significant relationship between principals' cash budgeting practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.588$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.346$ ) showed that about 34.6% of the variance in administrative effectiveness is explained by principals' cash budgeting practices. The associated p-value ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) confirmed that the relationship is statistically significant. Accordingly, the study rejected the null hypothesis that principals' cash budgeting practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness and accepted the alternative hypothesis that principals' cash budgeting practices significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Principals' cash control practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 5: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between principals' cash control practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	P-value	Decision
Principals' Cash Control Practices	550				
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.622	0.387	0.000	Reject H <sub>02</sub>

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The summary result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 5 showed a significant relationship between principals' cash control practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.622$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.387$ ) indicated that about 38.7% of the variance in administrative effectiveness is explained by principals' cash control practices. The associated p-value ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) confirmed that the relationship is statistically significant. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the study rejected the null hypothesis that principals' cash control practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness, and accepted the alternative hypothesis that principals' cash control practices significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Principals' cash auditing practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 6: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between principals' cash auditing practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	P-value	Decision
Principals' Cash Auditing Practices	550				
Administrative Effectiveness	550	0.604	0.365	0.000	Reject H <sub>03</sub>

\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The summary result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 6 indicated a significant relationship between principals' cash auditing practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.604$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.365$ ) revealed that approximately 36.5% of the variance in administrative effectiveness is explained by principals' cash auditing practices. The associated p-value ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) confirmed that this relationship is statistically significant. Accordingly, the study rejected the null hypothesis that principals' cash auditing practices do not significantly relate to administrative effectiveness and accepted the alternative hypothesis that principals' cash auditing practices significantly relate to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Discussion

### Cash Budgeting Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

The study found a **moderate positive correlation** ( $r = 0.588$ ) between principals' cash budgeting practices and administrative effectiveness, indicating that enhanced budgeting practices meaningfully improve school administration. This aligns with the findings of **Shawe (2023)**, who reported a strong linkage between financial management practices, including budgeting and administrative effectiveness in Anambra State. Similarly, **Okechukwu et al. (2025)** highlighted that strategic budgeting not only aligns resources with school goals, but also significantly boosts institutional performance. In contrast, **Obiweluozor and Ogunbiyi (2024)** found that while budgeting practices affect administrative tasks, there was **no significant difference** in the impact when comparing principals to bursars, suggesting budgeting alone may not universally drive effectiveness.

### Cash Control Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

A stronger relationship ( $r = 0.622$ ) was observed between cash control practices and administrative effectiveness, underscoring the role of stringent financial controls in improving school administration. This is supported by **Adeyemi and Ojo (2024)**, who demonstrated that sophisticated cash control mechanisms significantly enhance transparency and operational efficiency in Nigerian secondary schools. Also, **Ogbonnaya (2024)** observed that financial control systems, including monitoring and auditing are instrumental in aligning expenditures with educational objectives. However, **Chukwuogo and Obi (2023)** reported that despite the presence of financial controls, teacher performance and school outcomes did not significantly improve, implying that control practices alone may not translate into administrative gains.

### Cash Auditing Practices and Administrative Effectiveness

The correlation between cash auditing practices and administrative effectiveness ( $r = 0.604$ ) suggested that regular financial auditing significantly supports administrative performance. This is corroborated by **Wadasen (2024)**, who emphasized that internal auditing, when integrated with systematic financial reporting, facilitates accountability and effective school operations. Likewise, **Shawe (2023)** reaffirmed that auditing, alongside other financial management practices, is critical for achieving high administrative effectiveness. On the contrary, **Ejoh and Ejom (2014)** found that weak autonomy and staffing in internal audit functions rendered them ineffective in improving financial performance, thus undermining administrative effectiveness.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that principals' effective application of financial management practices, particularly cash budgeting, cash control and cash auditing, significantly enhances administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The consistent and transparent implementation of these practices promotes accountability, optimizes resource utilization and strengthens institutional performance. Consequently, when principals uphold sound financial practices, schools are better positioned to provide adequate facilities, promote staff efficiency and create an enabling environment that supports quality teaching and learning.

## Recommendations

### Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should adopt participatory budgeting approaches that involve staff and relevant stakeholders in financial planning. This would not only improve transparency but also ensure that resource allocation reflects the real needs of the school, thereby enhancing administrative effectiveness.
2. The government and education boards should strengthen internal financial control systems by deploying monitoring tools and digital record-keeping platforms in schools. Such mechanisms would minimize leakages, improve accountability and support efficient decision-making for better school administration.
3. Periodic and independent financial audits should be institutionalized in all public secondary schools. This would help to identify financial irregularities early, foster a culture of accountability and promote effective utilization of resources for sustainable school improvement.

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