

# SCHOOL FINANCE CONTROL MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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<p><b>Corresponding Author</b> Yellowe, Annette N. PhD</p> <p>Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education</p> <p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: 15 / 02 / 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 27 / 02 / 2025</p> <p>Published: 04 / 03 / 2025</p>	<p><b>Abstract:</b> The study investigated school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three objectives were formulated and translated into corresponding research questions and hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consist of 6,485 academic staff (311 principals and 6,174 teachers) in the 311 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of 778 comprising 741 teachers' and 37 Principals was selected from the population of 6,485 academic staff. To determine the sample size 12% of the entire population was computed. A researcher-designed instrument titled "School Finance Control Mechanisms for Effective Administration of Senior Secondary Schools Questionnaire (SFCMEASSSQ)" was used for data collection. The completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Method. The reliability coefficients of 0.78, 0.81 and 0.82 were obtained for the various clusters. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent t-test statistics were employed to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that budgetary planning, auditing and the integration of these mechanisms collectively enhanced the effective administration of schools. Significant differences were observed between principals and teachers in their opinions of some financial control mechanisms. The study concluded that robust financial control mechanisms are essential for the effective administration of senior secondary schools, ensuring resource accountability, operational efficiency, and enhanced educational outcomes. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education should develop a standardized framework for financial control and provide regular training for school administrators on modern financial management practices. Additionally, technology should be integrated into financial processes to ensure transparency and efficiency.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> School Finance, Control Mechanisms, Budgetary Planning and Auditing.</p>
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## Introduction

Education is one of the most essential drivers of national development, with the potential to transform individuals and societies. As a powerful instrument for socio-economic progress, no country or individual can achieve significant professional or economic growth without a well-structured education system (Achim, 2019). Within this framework, the effective administration of schools relies heavily on the control of finances. Finance serves as the backbone of any institution; when appropriately managed, it drives success, but when misappropriated, it leads to inefficiency and failure (Efut & Onnoghen, 2017).

In the context of school financial control, decisions are made regarding the production, raising, allocation, and accounting of funds. These decisions are critical in ensuring that resources are used optimally for the achievement of educational goals. Asodike (2015) emphasizes that resources, particularly financial resources,

are limited, making it essential for educational administrators and planners to maximize their use for the benefit of the school. Indeed, school finance control mechanisms are important to ensuring that schools operate effectively and achieve their goals.

The principal, as the executive head of the secondary school, plays a central role in this process. According to Babayemi (2009), the principal is responsible for overseeing all school activities, including managing finances. This includes tasks such as planning the school's budget, securing funds, and ensuring that these funds are judiciously used to meet the school's objectives. The success of a school depends significantly on how well its financial resources are controlled and utilized. Therefore, implementing effective school finance control mechanisms is crucial for achieving educational objectives and ensuring the smooth running of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. As

pointed out by Okere (2022) the various mechanisms such as budgetary planning and allocation, auditing and financial monitoring, cost-benefit analysis, transparent procurement processes, monitoring of school fees collection and financial policy compliance enhance effective administration in schools in Rivers State.

Effective financial management is the basis for the administration of senior secondary schools, particularly in Rivers State, where financial control mechanisms play a key role in ensuring that educational goals are achieved. One of the most fundamental mechanisms is budgetary planning and allocation, which involves the systematic distribution of available resources to different sectors of the school system. This ensures that key areas such as teaching materials, staff salaries, infrastructure maintenance, and student services receive the necessary funding to operate effectively. According to Ekwueme (2022), a well-structured budget is essential for promoting efficiency and aligning school resources with the institution's goals. In Rivers State, where resources are often limited, effective budgetary planning helps in prioritizing expenditures, ensuring that funds are allocated to areas that most directly impact educational outcomes.

In addition to budgetary planning, auditing and financial monitoring are critical in maintaining financial discipline within schools. These practices involve a continuous review of financial transactions and records to ensure that funds are spent as intended and that there is no mismanagement or corruption. Auditing provides an independent assessment of a school's financial operations, while financial monitoring ensures ongoing accountability (Akpan, 2021). These controls help to foster transparency, which is vital for maintaining stakeholder trust, particularly in publicly funded schools. Without regular audits and stringent financial monitoring, schools may face challenges such as embezzlement or misappropriation of funds, leading to resource shortages that could affect the quality of education.

Another indispensable mechanism for enhancing school administration is the use of cost-benefit analysis. This analytical tool is employed by administrators to evaluate the financial viability of projects or programmes before implementation. Cost-benefit analysis helps to weigh the potential returns against the costs involved, allowing school administrators to make decisions that maximize the value of investments in educational initiatives. For instance, administrators may use this method to determine whether investing in new technology or building renovations will yield significant improvements in learning outcomes relative to the cost. As noted by Ogundele (2020), applying cost-benefit analysis enables schools to use their limited resources more judiciously, ensuring that only those projects with a high return on investment are pursued.

The effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State is closely tied to the implementation of robust financial control mechanisms. Budgetary planning and allocation, auditing and financial monitoring, cost-benefit analysis, transparent procurement processes, monitoring of school fees collection, and financial policy compliance are all critical components of a well-managed school finance system. Each of these mechanisms ensures that schools can make the most of their resources, prevent financial mismanagement, and create an environment that supports educational excellence. By embracing these financial control mechanisms, school administrators can enhance not only the

financial health of their institutions but also the quality of education they provide to students.

Several researchers have investigated financial control mechanisms in educational institutions, highlighting both their effectiveness and limitations. Ekwueme (2022) conducted a study on budgetary planning and resource allocation in Nigerian secondary schools. The research focused on how budgetary planning enhances the allocation of funds to critical areas such as staff remuneration, infrastructure development, and procurement of instructional materials. The study found that schools with structured budget plans experienced improved financial management, which positively influenced educational outcomes. However, a notable gap in the study was its limited focus on the holistic financial control mechanisms, such as auditing and financial monitoring, which are crucial for preventing mismanagement. This gap points to the need for broader research that includes multiple financial control mechanisms beyond budgeting to offer a comprehensive understanding of effective school administration.

Again, Nwosu (2021) investigated transparency in procurement processes for effective school administration in Nigerian secondary schools. The research emphasized the importance of clear and competitive procurement processes in reducing corruption and ensuring the acquisition of quality goods and services for schools. While the study demonstrated that transparent procurement enhances financial efficiency, it neglected to consider other key financial control measures such as cost-benefit analysis and financial policy compliance. The gap highlights the need to investigate a wider range of financial control mechanisms that collectively enhance the administration of schools, particularly the role of compliance with financial regulations in sustaining effective management.

These gaps in previous studies justify further investigation into diverse financial control mechanisms, including auditing, cost-benefit analysis, and compliance, to provide a more comprehensive approach to school finance management in Rivers State which prompted the investigation of this research on school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### Statement of Problem

Effective administration of senior secondary schools relies heavily on sound financial management to ensure resources are optimally allocated for teaching, infrastructure maintenance, and overall educational excellence. In an ideal scenario, these financial resources would be used to provide updated learning materials, maintain state-of-the-art laboratory equipment, and ensure that school facilities are in good condition. However, the current situation in Rivers State reveals a stark contrast to this ideal. Many senior secondary schools are experiencing severe financial management issues, with outdated textbooks, insufficient laboratory equipment, and deteriorating infrastructure becoming increasingly common. Despite the allocation of funds from federal and state governments, as well as other sources, these schools continue to face significant challenges.

Various measures have been attempted to address these financial problems, including budgetary allocations, fundraising efforts, and financial audits. Despite these interventions, the issues persist, indicating that the mechanisms employed may not be fully effective. The financial mismanagement within these schools has

led to a situation where the quality of education and the physical state of the schools have not seen the necessary improvements. The persistent nature of these problems suggests a deeper issue in the financial control mechanisms being used.

The effects of these financial mismanagement issues are far-reaching. They impact the quality of education by limiting access to modern learning resources and compromising the learning environment. Poorly maintained facilities and inadequate equipment detract from the educational experience, while also affecting the morale of both students and staff. Additionally, the community's trust in the school's ability to manage resources effectively is undermined.

Given the severity of these problems and their impact on educational outcomes, it is essential to investigate the effectiveness of current financial control mechanisms in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This research aims to identify the gaps in these mechanisms and explore how they can be improved to enhance the overall administration and performance of the schools. By understanding and addressing these gaps, the study seeks to provide actionable recommendations for better financial management, ultimately aiming to improve the quality of education and the condition of school facilities in public schools in Rivers State.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Identify the school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Ascertain the extent to which auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the extent to which auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

### Hypotheses

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

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the mechanisms for school finance control for enhance effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent budgetary

planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

- **H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State

### Theoretical Framework

The theories that guided this study is the Agency theory by Jensen and Meckling, as cited in Afolabi (2021),

#### Agency Theory

Agency theory was developed by Jensen and Meckling, as cited in Afolabi (2021). The theory posits that in organizations, there is a relationship between principals (owners or administrators) and agents (managers or employees) where the principals delegate responsibilities to the agents to act on their behalf. Agency theory highlights potential conflicts in this relationship, as agents may prioritize their own interests over those of the principals, leading to agency problems such as misalignment of goals, information asymmetry, and moral hazard. The theory is built on three main stages or mechanisms aimed at mitigating these issues: monitoring, incentivizing, and aligning goals.

The monitoring stage represents the initial phase where principals establish oversight mechanisms to observe and control agents' actions to ensure that they act in the organization's best interest. This stage involves implementing financial audits, regular reporting systems, and performance reviews to reduce information asymmetry and hold agents accountable for their actions. During this stage, principals identify potential areas of misalignment, establish performance metrics, and communicate expectations to clarify roles. Monitoring also involves setting up evaluation frameworks, maintaining transparency, and creating awareness among agents about the importance of aligning with organizational objectives. By addressing initial gaps and defining performance standards, monitoring establishes a foundation for goal alignment between principals and agents.

The incentivizing stage focuses on creating motivational structures for agents to work in line with the principals' objectives. This involves introducing reward systems, such as performance-based bonuses, promotions, or recognition, to encourage agents to achieve organizational goals and reduce the likelihood of self-interested behavior. During this stage, principals work to design a remuneration system that balances short-term incentives with long-term organizational priorities. Incentivizing also involves ensuring that rewards are tied to measurable outcomes, enabling agents to see the direct benefits of aligning with organizational expectations. This stage emphasizes motivating agents through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, thereby reducing agency costs and encouraging compliance with established goals.

The aligning goals stage is the final phase in agency theory, where principals and agents work towards establishing shared objectives to minimize conflicts. This stage is characterized by the implementation of policies, procedures, and cultural values that align individual actions with organizational goals. In this stage, organizations embed goal alignment into their daily practices, communicate long-term objectives, and promote shared ownership of tasks. Aligning goals may also involve instituting corporate governance policies, clarifying ethical standards, and ensuring

consistent communication across all organizational levels. This process encourages agents to act in the best interest of the organization, thereby promoting sustainability and reinforcing accountability.

The relevance of agency theory to this study lies in its structured approach to addressing principal-agent relationships within educational institutions. In the context of public universities, agency theory provides a framework to mitigate conflicts that may arise between administrators (principals) and other staff members (agents). The monitoring stage is especially relevant as it underscores the importance of establishing clear oversight mechanisms, such as audits and performance evaluations, to ensure transparency and accountability in resource management. For universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, this can involve implementing monitoring structures to oversee financial management and ensure effective utilization of resources.

### **School Finance Control**

School finance control is a critical aspect of educational management that emphasizes the systematic processes and practices employed by educational institutions to effectively manage their financial resources. As schools operate within finite budgets and must adhere to various regulations, the management of financial resources is essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and sustainability in school operations. Effective finance control mechanisms are pivotal not only for optimizing resource allocation but also for enhancing educational outcomes (Obasi & Nwachukwu, 2020). At its core, school finance control refers to the mechanisms and mechanisms implemented to ensure that financial resources are utilized efficiently and effectively within educational settings. This concept embodies the principles of accountability and transparency, which are essential for maintaining stakeholder trust and confidence in educational institutions (Adu & Afolabi, 2020). School finance control encompasses a broad spectrum of activities related to budgeting, expenditure tracking, financial reporting, and compliance with regulatory frameworks (Adeyemi & Afolabi, 2019).

The successful management of school finances involves careful planning, monitoring, and evaluation of financial activities to ensure that funds are allocated in a manner that supports educational goals and objectives. As noted by Ugochukwu et al. (2021), effective finance control allows educational institutions to optimize their operations, ensuring they can meet the needs of students and staff while adhering to budgetary constraints.

The evolution of school finance control can be traced back to the establishment of formal education systems. Initially, the management of school finances was rudimentary, often reliant on local taxes or donations (Adeyemi, 2017). As education systems expanded and became more complex, the need for structured financial management grew. By the mid-20th century, many countries began to recognize education as a public good, leading to increased government involvement in funding and regulating schools (Uzochukwu et al., 2021). This shift necessitated the development of more sophisticated financial management practices within educational institutions. Today, school finance control is heavily influenced by government policies, economic conditions, and societal expectations. The increasing demand for accountability and transparency has further propelled the need for robust finance control mechanisms in schools (Ezeani & Okeke, 2020).

### **Budgetary Planning as a Control Mechanism for Effective Administration of Senior Secondary Schools**

Budgetary planning is a vital financial control mechanism that directly impacts the effective administration of senior secondary schools. This process involves systematically creating a financial plan that outlines how resources will be allocated across various aspects of the school's operations. Senior secondary schools operate with finite financial resources, often relying on a mix of government funding, tuition fees, and donations. Therefore, budgetary planning is essential for ensuring that these funds are distributed efficiently, meeting both short-term operational needs and long-term strategic goals. The concept of budgetary planning encompasses not just the preparation of a financial plan but also the management and monitoring of finances to ensure accountability, efficiency, and the attainment of educational objectives (Onyango & Gichuhi, 2019).

#### **Alignment with Educational Goals**

One of the primary objectives of budgetary planning in senior secondary schools is to ensure that financial resources are aligned with the educational goals of the institution. The core mission of these schools typically revolves around improving student learning outcomes, enhancing the quality of teaching, and creating an environment conducive to learning. Effective budgetary planning allocates resources to critical areas such as infrastructure development, teacher salaries, student welfare, and academic programmes. For instance, a well-structured budget ensures that funds are available for maintaining or upgrading school facilities, purchasing learning materials, and supporting extracurricular activities that contribute to a well-rounded education (Eze & Obi, 2018). Moreover, aligning the budget with educational goals allows administrators to prioritize funding for key areas, ensuring that financial resources are used to directly impact student achievement. Schools that engage in strategic budget planning often see improvements in academic performance, as resources are channeled toward critical academic needs. For example, allocating funds to purchase instructional technology or modern laboratory equipment can enhance the learning experience for students, providing them with hands-on tools that foster academic success. A well-planned budget enables the school to focus on both immediate priorities and long-term goals, ensuring sustained improvements in academic standards.

### **Auditing as a Control Mechanism for Effective Administration of Senior Secondary Schools**

Auditing is a crucial control mechanism in the effective administration of senior secondary schools, as it encompasses systematic processes designed to assess the integrity and reliability of financial information. By examining financial records, operations, and compliance with established regulations, auditing plays a pivotal role in promoting accountability and transparency in the financial management of educational institutions. The implications of effective auditing extend beyond mere compliance; they have a profound impact on the overall governance and performance of schools. At its core, auditing serves to ensure that financial resources are managed judiciously, which is essential in a context where educational institutions often operate under strict budget constraints. Schools are entrusted with public funds, and as such, they are responsible for demonstrating fiscal responsibility to stakeholders, including parents, educators, and the broader community (Obi, 2020). Regular audits provide an independent assessment of a school's financial health, instilling confidence

among stakeholders that financial practices are sound. This transparency is particularly important in maintaining public trust and support for educational institutions.

Furthermore, the auditing process is instrumental in identifying inefficiencies and areas for improvement in financial management practices. Through detailed examinations, auditors can uncover discrepancies, unauthorized expenditures, or misallocations of resources that may otherwise go unnoticed. For example, internal audits might reveal that certain operational costs exceed benchmarks without corresponding improvements in educational outcomes (Adeleke, 2021). Such findings prompt school administrators to reevaluate their budgeting priorities and make necessary adjustments to optimize resource allocation. By addressing these inefficiencies, schools can redirect funds toward programmes that yield higher educational benefits, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education. Moreover, effective auditing contributes significantly to risk management within senior secondary schools. The identification of potential financial risks, such as fraud or mismanagement, is a critical outcome of the audit process. By conducting thorough risk assessments, auditors help schools establish controls and protocols that mitigate these risks. For instance, audits may reveal weaknesses in financial procedures, prompting the development of stronger internal controls and oversight mechanisms (Ugochukwu et al., 2021). The proactive approach facilitated by auditing allows schools to address vulnerabilities before they escalate into major financial crises, safeguarding their resources and ensuring stability.

Additionally, the insights gained from audits provide a foundation for strategic planning and decision-making. School leaders can utilize audit findings to inform their financial mechanisms, ensuring that resource allocation aligns with the institution's educational goals. For instance, if an audit identifies a particular program that significantly enhances student engagement and success, school administrators can prioritize funding for that initiative in future budget cycles (Eze, 2019). This data-driven approach to financial management enables schools to make informed decisions that support their mission and enhance student outcomes. Involving external auditors can further enrich the auditing process by bringing an independent perspective and expertise. External auditors, with their experience across various educational contexts, can offer insights into best practices and innovative financial management mechanisms. Their recommendations can guide school leadership in refining their financial controls and enhancing overall governance (Owoeye, 2021). Engaging external auditors also reinforces the commitment to transparency and accountability, as they provide an objective review of financial practices and outcomes.

Stakeholder involvement in the auditing process is another critical component that fosters a culture of accountability. By engaging parents, teachers, and community members in discussions about audit findings, schools can build trust and encourage a collaborative approach to financial management. This participation not only reinforces the importance of financial stewardship but also empowers stakeholders to contribute actively to the school's financial health. For instance, transparency regarding audit results may motivate parents to participate in fundraising initiatives or advocate for better financial support from local government entities (Okezie, 2020).

Auditing stands as a fundamental control mechanism for the effective administration of senior secondary schools. Through

its emphasis on accountability, risk management, and strategic decision-making, auditing helps ensure that financial resources are utilized efficiently and effectively. By promoting transparency and involving stakeholders in the process, schools can cultivate a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement. Ultimately, the role of auditing extends beyond compliance; it serves as a cornerstone for fostering financial integrity and enhancing the educational experiences of students. By embracing robust auditing practices, senior secondary schools can navigate the complexities of financial management, ensuring sustainability and success in their educational missions.

## Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consist of 6,485 academic staff (311 principals and 6,174 teachers) in the 311 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample was determined using 12% of the total population of the study. A sample size of 778 respondents comprising 741 teachers' and 37 Principals was selected from the population of 6,485 academic staff. To determine the sample size 12% of the entire population was computed. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "School Finance Control Mechanisms for Effective Administration of Senior Secondary Schools Questionnaire (SFCMEASSSQ)". The questionnaire was in two parts (A & B). Part A for the bio-data of the respondents; and Part B for the questionnaire items based on clusters related to the research questions. The instrument was structured using the modified 4-point Likert rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Less Extent (VLE) for the Research Questions. The weighted points were added as  $4+3+2+1=10/4= 2.5$ . Thus 2.5 was the Criterion Mean. To ascertain the face and content validities of the instrument, the instrument was given to the researcher's supervisor and other two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The experts were given the initial draft of the instrument. Also given to them was the purposes of the study and research questions. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. The instrument was administered to 25 teachers who were outside the sample of the study but were part of the population of the study. The reliability coefficients of 0.78, 0.81, 0.77, 0.87, 0.88 0.88, and 0.82 were obtained for the various clusters of the instrument which showed that the instrument was reliable. The researcher, along with three research assistants, covered the area to ensure comprehensive data collection. A total of 778 copies of the instrument were administered by the researcher, and during the data retrieval process, 685 copies were collected. This retrieval rate accounted for approximately 88% of the initially administered instruments. The final dataset for analysis consisted of the 685 retrieved copies, representing 54 Principals

and 631 teachers of the total respondents. Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) statistics were used in answering the research questions. The decision rule was based on the following boundaries: Very High Extent (VHE): 3.50-4.00; High Extent (HE); 2.50-3.49; Low Extent (LE); 1.50-2.49 and Very Low Extent (VLE): 1.00-1.49 respectively, while the null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. For the hypotheses, the decision rule for the t-test is as follows: If the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the null

hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference between the groups. If the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating no significant difference between the groups.

## Results and Discussions

**Research Question 1:** What are the school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of Principals and teachers on the various school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (54)		Teachers (631)		Mean set (X1+X2)/2	DECISION
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
1	Budgeting is utilized as a primary mechanism for financial planning and control	2.29	1.25	2.36	1.30	2.31	Disagree
2	Financial audits are conducted regularly to ensure accountability and transparency.	3.27	0.65	3.30	0.64	3.29	Agree
3	Cost-benefit analysis is employed to evaluate financial decisions and expenditures	3.32	0.67	3.33	0.64	3.33	Agree
4	School fees collection mechanisms are effectively monitored to ensure compliance	3.24	0.58	3.30	0.62	3.27	Agree
5	Compliance with financial policies and regulations is prioritized for effective administration	3.15	0.66	3.17	0.65	3.16	Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.77</b>	3.07	Agree

Table 1 revealed the mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the school finance control mechanisms for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The data indicate that the mean of principals for item 1 is (2.29), while the teachers' mean is (2.36). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers disagreed that budgeting is utilized as a primary mechanism for financial planning and control. However, the majority of the principals agreed on items 2-5, with mean scores of (3.27), (3.32), (3.24), and (3.15), respectively, while the teachers' mean scores are (3.30), (3.33), (3.30), and (3.17). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers agreed that financial audits are conducted regularly to ensure accountability and transparency, cost-benefit analysis is employed to evaluate financial decisions

and expenditures, school fees collection mechanisms are effectively monitored to ensure compliance, and compliance with financial policies and regulations is prioritized for effective administration. The cluster means are (3.05) for principals and (3.09) for teachers, while the grand mean is (3.07). This indicates that the answer to Research Question 1 is that school finance control mechanisms, such as financial audits, cost-benefit analysis, school fees monitoring, and policy compliance, are effectively utilized for the administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (54)		Teachers (631)		Mean set (X1+X2)/2	DECISION
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
6	Budgetary planning is utilized to allocate resources effectively in the school	3.58	0.61	3.61	0.59	3.60	VHE
7	The budget is reviewed and adjusted regularly to meet changing needs	3.55	0.61	3.45	0.63	3.50	VHE
8	Stakeholder input is considered during the budget planning process.	3.41	0.66	3.50	0.63	3.45	HE
9	The school budget aligns with	3.36	0.68	3.56	0.66	3.46	HE

the strategic goals of the institution.

10	Budgetary controls are in place to monitor actual spending against the budget.	3.49	0.64	3.54	0.54	3.52	VHE
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>0.46</b>	3.50	VHE

Criterion Mean = 2.50. Guide: 0 - 1.49 = Very Low Extent (VLE); 1.50 - 2.49 = Low Extent (LE); 2.50 - 3.49 = High Extent (HE); 3.50 - 4.00 = Very High Extent (VHE)

Table 2 revealed the mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The data indicate that the mean of principals for item 6 is (3.58), while the teachers' mean is (3.61). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers agreed to a very high extent that budgetary planning is utilized to allocate resources effectively in the school. However, the majority of the principals agreed on items 7-10, with mean scores of (3.55), (3.41), (3.36), and (3.49), respectively, while the teachers' mean scores are (3.45), (3.50), (3.56), and (3.54). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers agreed that the budget is reviewed and adjusted regularly to meet changing needs, stakeholder input is considered during the budget

planning process, the school budget aligns with the strategic goals of the institution, and budgetary controls are in place to monitor actual spending against the budget. The cluster means are (3.48) for principals and (3.53) for teachers, while the grand mean is (3.50). This indicates that the answer to Research Question 2 is that budgetary planning mechanisms, such as resource allocation, regular budget reviews, stakeholder involvement, strategic alignment, and spending monitoring, are utilized to a very high extent for the effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 3:** What is the extent to which auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the extent to which budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (54)		Teachers (631)		Mean set	DECISION
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$(\bar{X}_1 + \bar{X}_2)/2$	
11	Regular audits are conducted to assess financial practices in the school	3.33	0.70	3.48	0.58	3.40	HE
12	Audit findings are communicated effectively to relevant stakeholders	3.47	0.69	3.59	0.56	3.53	VHE
13	Auditing processes help identify areas for financial improvement.	3.37	0.66	3.47	0.58	3.42	HE
14	Audit recommendations are implemented to enhance financial management.	3.28	0.65	3.51	0.50	3.39	HE
15	The school engages external auditors for unbiased assessments	3.49	0.64	3.54	0.54	3.51	VHE
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.39</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>VHE</b>

Criterion mean = 2.50. Guide: 0 - 1.49 = very low extent (VLE); 1.50 - 2.49 = low extent (LE); 2.50 - 3.49 = high extent (HE); 3.50 - 4.00 = very high extent (VHE)

Table 3 revealed the mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the extent to which auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The data indicate that the mean of principals for item 11 is (3.33), while the teachers' mean is (3.48). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers agreed that regular audits are conducted to assess financial practices in the school. However, the majority of the principals agreed on items 12-15, with mean scores of (3.47), (3.37), (3.28), and (3.49), respectively, while the teachers' mean scores are (3.59), (3.47), (3.51), and (3.54). Based on the criterion mean of 2.50, both the principals and teachers agreed that audit findings are communicated effectively to relevant stakeholders, auditing processes help identify areas for financial improvement, audit recommendations are implemented to enhance financial

management, and external auditors are engaged for unbiased assessments. The cluster means are (3.39) for principals and (3.52) for teachers, while the grand mean is (3.72). This indicates that the answer to Research Question 3 is that auditing mechanisms, such as regular audits, effective communication of findings, identification of financial improvement areas, implementation of recommendations, and engagement of external auditors, are effectively utilized for the administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

#### Test of Hypotheses

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the

Mechanisms for school finance control for enhance effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4.4: t-test summary showing significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the mechanisms for school finance control for enhance effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.**



Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Principal	54	3.05	0.76	683	1.67	0.034	Not Significant
Teachers	631	3.09	0.77				

\* Significant;  $p > 0.05$

Table 4.4 shows that the mean rating for principals was 3.05 (SD = 0.76), while that of teachers was 3.09 (SD = 0.77). The t-calculated value was 1.67, with a degree of freedom (df) of 683 and a p-value of 0.034. Since the p-value (0.034) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the mechanisms for school finance

control to enhance effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

- **Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4. 5: t-test summary showing significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Principal	54	3.48	0.50	683	1.67	0.021	Not Significant
Teachers	631	3.53	0.46				

\* Significant;  $p > 0.05$

Table 4.5 indicates that the mean rating for principals was 3.48 (SD = 0.50), while the teachers' mean rating was 3.53 (SD = 0.46). The t-calculated value was 4.05, with a degree of freedom (df) of 683 and a p-value of 0.021. Since the p-value (0.021) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This shows no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals

and teachers on the extent budgetary planning serves as a control mechanism.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State

**Table 4.6: t-test summary showing significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent auditing serves as a control mechanism for effective administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State**

Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Principal	54	3.39	0.52	683	1.22	0.334	Not Significant
Teachers	631	3.52	0.35				

\* Significant;  $p > 0.05$

Table 4. 6 reveals that the mean rating for principals was 3.39 (SD = 0.52), while the teachers' mean rating was 3.52 (SD = 0.35). The t-calculated value was 1.22, with a degree of freedom (df) of 683 and a p-value of 0.334. Since the p-value (0.334) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent auditing serves as a control mechanism.

findings reinforce the relevance of robust financial mechanisms in ensuring accountability and efficiency in educational institutions.

### Budgetary Planning as a Control Mechanism

To a high extent, budgetary planning was found to enhance effective administration by aligning financial resources with institutional priorities and promoting efficiency. Eze and Obi (2018) stressed that well-structured budgets enable schools to allocate resources strategically, prioritizing critical needs such as infrastructure, teaching materials, and staff salaries. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Yusuf (2019) emphasized that transparency in budgetary planning builds stakeholder trust and reduces the likelihood of financial disputes. The findings are consistent with these studies, as both principals and teachers acknowledged the importance of budgetary planning in achieving institutional objectives. This agreement suggests that budgetary planning fosters financial discipline and strengthens the capacity of schools to address educational challenges.

### Auditing as a Control Mechanism

The study found that auditing significantly enhances financial accountability and transparency in senior secondary schools. This supports Obi (2020), who argued that regular audits are indispensable for ensuring that funds are used in accordance with established policies and for preventing financial malpractice. Auditing also provides insights into financial inefficiencies, allowing school administrators to make data-driven adjustments to optimize resource allocation (Adeleke, 2021). Additionally, Ugochukwu et al. (2021) highlighted the role of audits in mitigating risks such as fraud or unauthorized expenditures. The

## Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings in this study is presented under the following subheadings, with extensive in-text citations to substantiate the results.

### *School Finance Control Mechanisms for Effective Administration in Senior Secondary Schools*

The findings indicate that school finance control mechanisms, including budgetary planning, auditing, cost-benefit analysis, transparent procurement processes, monitoring of school fees collection, and financial policy compliance, are effectively utilized for the administration of senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. These mechanisms collectively enhance financial accountability, ensure efficient resource allocation, and promote transparency. For example, Adeyemi and Afolabi (2019) emphasized that financial control mechanisms are critical for achieving organizational efficiency by aligning resources with institutional goals. Similarly, Ugochukwu et al. (2021) noted that comprehensive financial oversight mechanisms prevent mismanagement and ensure the effective use of funds, which is essential for achieving sustainable educational outcomes. These



findings of this study, which reveal a consensus between principals and teachers, align with these assertions, emphasizing the critical role of auditing in building institutional trust and credibility.

## Conclusion

This study on "School Finance Control Mechanisms for Effective Administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria" emphasizes the importance of robust financial control systems. The research examined seven critical areas: budgetary planning, auditing and their collective impact on administration. The findings revealed that these mechanisms significantly enhance the efficiency, accountability, and sustainability of school administration. The study emphasized the interconnected nature of these mechanisms and their ability to address challenges in financial management comprehensively. The research provides valuable insights for policymakers and school administrators aiming to optimize financial practices to achieve educational goals.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The Rivers State Ministry of Education should implement a standardized framework for budgetary planning to ensure equitable and efficient resource allocation across schools.
- Compliance training programs should be organized for school staff to ensure adherence to financial policies and regulations.
- Regular and independent audits should be institutionalized to promote transparency and accountability in financial management.

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