



## INTERNAL CONTROL MEASURES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS FOR REDUCING FINANCIAL MISAPPROPRIATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated internal control measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 526 respondents made up of 263 principals and 263 bursars in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. All the 526 were used for the study due to relatively manageable size of the population. A researcher-developed instrument titled “Principals’ Internal Control Measures for reducing Financial Misappropriation Questionnaire (PICMRFMQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts comprising two lecturers from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Measurement and Evaluation from Department of Education Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficients of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.77 for clusters I, II and III respectively and overall value of 0.80. The researcher together with five research assistants collected data for the study and 98% return rate was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that preventive and detective measures are adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It also found that corrective measures are not adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others Ministry of Education should develop policy to improve the adoption of corrective measures of reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools by outlining procedures for investigation and possible prosecution of suspected staff that engage in fraudulent practices.

### KEYWORDS

Internal Control, Measures, Principals, Financial Misappropriation, Preventive, Detective, Corrective.



## Introduction

Education is a veritable tool for equipping individuals with knowledge and critical skills for survival and meaningful contributions to the economic, social and political development of the society. It also inculcates in individuals the values, beliefs and character which enable them act in accordance with societal norms. Anachuna and Obi (2021) opined that education is a tool for strengthening ones' intellectual power, building character, maintaining emotional balance as well as moral and cultural empowerment of individuals to bring about positive development in the society. These knowledge, skills and characters can be acquired at all levels of the nation's education programme such as primary, secondary and tertiary. The focus of this study is secondary education.

Secondary education is the intermediate between primary and tertiary levels of Nigeria's education system. According to Nwafor and Robert-Okah (2022), secondary education provides an opportunity for primary school leavers to acquire more knowledge, build on already gained knowledge, develop skills and prepare to live effectively in a changing society full of opportunities. Secondary school education is designed to cater for differences in talents of primary school leavers and prepare them for career life. Ayeni (2022) opined that the secondary school education system occupies a centre stage in human capital and national development by absorbing the products of primary schools and equipping them with skills and knowledge to become useful to the society and also proceed to further their studies in higher educational institutions. Secondary schools are headed by Principals.

A Principal is the chief administrator of a secondary school who coordinates the activities of the school to improve instructional delivery and attain set objectives of secondary education. According to Eru, Gusa and Ayegba (2020), the Principal is the executive head of a secondary school. Furthermore, the authors stressed that the principal is responsible for coordinating all school activities ranging from students' enrolment, planning of the school activities, keeping of records, instructing staff, developing budget, sourcing fund and managing available resources to attain set educational goals and objectives. A Principal is the highest person in the hierarchy of authority in a secondary school. Umeze (2022) defined the Principal as the executive head who develops and implements the educational programmes of the school, provide facilities, keep school records including records of school funds as well as creates conducive teaching and learning atmosphere in schools. The Principals are the leaders responsible for overseeing the implementation of school curriculum and ensuring smooth running of secondary schools. Operationally, The Principals are the chief executive officers who oversee, control and ensure smooth functioning of the day-to-day activities of secondary schools.

Principals of secondary schools differ in gender, job experience and qualifications. Akpa (2021) noted that effectiveness of principals could be affected or determined by a number of demographic variables or their characteristics such as gender, qualification and job experience among others. There are diverse educational leadership stances of principals based on their characteristics. Gender is associated with social, cultural and societal roles and expectations which could affect the behaviour of males and females. Some researchers found no gender difference in educational leadership, others posited that male and female administrators differ in the ways they manage funds and the affairs of secondary schools (Enyi, Uwakwe, Chigbu, Chukwu, Agu and Ede, 2018; Onele and Aja-Okorie, 2015). Job experience is the expertise, aptitude and knowledge acquired by individual during the period of service or working in an organization. Principals with considerable years of job experience in management could accumulate skills and knowledge of ensuring smooth

running of daily affairs of secondary schools. Hazel (2023) noted that the Principals who had at least ten years or more of job experience have a plethora of professional expertise that helps them in managing the affairs of the schools. The academic qualifications of Principals are associated with different levels of education, training and skills that could enhance the management of secondary schools. Amadi and Akpa (2021) asserted that academic qualification is a major factor for administrative or managerial positions in secondary schools because upgrading qualifications enable Principals to be acquainted with modern trends of handling managerial activities. The Principals irrespective of their characteristics are responsible for procuring facilities and controlling the activities of schools using available limited funds.

Fund is one of the essential resources required by principals for smooth operation of secondary schools. Funds are required for procurement of facilities and motivating personnel who work in the school. The education sector is capital intensive which requires sufficient funds for smooth operation. Nwankwo (2022) noted that funds allocated to schools are insufficient and must be judiciously and prudently utilized for relevant educational programmes for objective attainment. The Principals collaborate with Bursars in management of funds in secondary schools.

Bursars are the leaders and heads of the bursary units in secondary schools According to Ogunbiyi and Obano (2022), Bursars are the persons who keep account books, make necessary entries as prescribed by financial guidelines, collect and collate budget items, effect payments on behalf of the principals and prepare payroll of various categories of workers among other duties. They added that in most secondary schools, bursar's roles include teaching of business studies, commerce and financial accounting, managing school account, providing regular updates to the principals and school governing body on financial performance and procurement of goods and payment. Bursars are the persons saddled with the responsibilities of assisting the principals in handling financial matters in secondary schools. Okoye and Okorji (2021) asserted that the nature of Bursars' duties makes them partners to some extent with Principals in managing funds in secondary schools. The authors added that the Principals seek the cooperation of the school bursars in preparation of the school budget, cash management, and providing relevant financial records to help in auditing in secondary schools. One of the mechanisms that could be applied by Principals and Bursars for ensuring judicious use of school funds is internal control measures. Akinleye and Kolawole (2020) posited that low level of financial allocations to the education sector necessitates management of institutions of learning to put in place various forms of internal control measures to ensure proper use of available resources.

Internal control measures are techniques applied by administrators to ensure effective management of activities of an organization. Internal control measures are mechanisms put in place to ensure adherence to laid down standards of operations in the workplace. Amakyi (2021) defined internal control measures as procedures designed by managers to prevent, detect or minimize possible deviations from operational standards. The author added that internal control measures are put in place to ensure accurate recording of transactions with supporting documents, proper safe custody procedures for assets, adequate supervision and monitoring to ensure compliance with policies and procedures in an organization. Internal control measures are applied to safeguard financial resources against frauds and irregularities in secondary schools. Atieno and Kiganda (2020) defined internal control measures as activities, policies and procedures that assist in ensuring that management directives are successfully implemented. Internal control measures prevent fraud, irregularities, waste and inefficiency in the operation of the school. Contextually, internal control measures are mechanisms or procedures developed by school managers to direct, monitor and prevent frauds, and misuse of school funds to attain predetermined education objectives.

The notion of internal control measures is to prevent and to detect frauds in financial operations of an institution. Andove, Fwamba and Singoro (2019) noted that effective internal control measures give assurance of integrity of financial reporting and safeguards institutional assets as it forestall fraud and error. Several scholars have classified internal control measures into three types namely preventive, detective, and corrective measures (Marus, Mwosi and Ogwel, 2021; Makhaya and Maniagi, 2020; Mungai, Maina and Kungu, 2021; Biegelman and Bartow cited in Amakyi, 2021; Agyapong, 2017). Uwaoma and Ordu (2015) highlighted internal control measures to include: organizational control, segregation of duties, physical assets control, accounting control, personnel control, supervision control, authorization and approval. The interest of this study is on five aggregated internal measures such as preventive, detective and corrective, control measures due to cases of fund misuse which may be associated with deficient in the internal control measures.

Preventive measure is any mechanism put in place to stop frauds or irregularities from happening in an organization. According to Amakyi (2021), the preventive internal control measure is a proactive activity carried out in an organization to discourage errors or irregularities from occurring in managing financial resources. Preventive control measure is the strategy put in place to provide an overall guiding framework for a sound and efficient management of financial resources in secondary schools. It involves financial planning and budgeting in secondary schools. Nwankwo and Uduma-Chima (2019) asserted that preventive measures also include proper authorization of transactions, proper reviewing and approval of purchase requests and adequate documentation and control of assets when purchases are made. It also involves regulating the financial activities of an organization such as income and expenditure. Frauds that are not prevented are identified through detective measure.

Detective control measure is any strategy that helps to discover problems or frauds in the workplace. Marus, Mwosi and Ogwel (2021) defined detective control measure as the strategies and procedures intended to identify and expose fraudulent practices in the management of school financial resources. Detective control measure is designed to identify financial waste on a timely basis. The detective control measure seeks to identify errors and irregularities, particularly in relation to safeguarding of funds through bank reconciliations, physical inventory counts, reconciliation of the general ledgers to the detailed subsidiary ledgers (Amakyi, 2021). Detective measure helps to provide evidence of fraudulent practices in secondary schools. It involves the maintenance of proper accounting records and auditing system to help identify financial frauds within the schools. Walker in Mungai, Maina and Kungu (2021) asserted that monthly reconciliation of bank accounts, review and verification of refunds, reconciliation of petty cash accounts, audits of payroll disbursements or conduct of physical inventory are all detective control measure. The detected frauds are prevented from reoccurring through corrective measure.

Corrective measure is any strategy mapped out to handle problem that have occurred and identified in an organization. According to Marus, Mwosi and Ogwel (2021), corrective measure is any activity that helps an organization to reduce or eliminate errors of omission, misstatements and any malicious transaction in its daily operation. Periodic reviews of financial activities and sanction of those involved in fraudulent practices in the use of school funds are internal corrective measure. A corrective measure is a remedial approach to identifying the root cause of funds mismanagement. It involves sanctioning of staff engaged in fraud to serve as deterrent to those who may wish to engage in the act. Uloko (2019) noted that sanctions for financial misappropriation could include blacklisting contractors who misuse school funds, publishing the names/identity of any staff that engages in fraudulent practices and taking the matter to court of law to seek jail term for fraudulent personnel in the school. Corrective measure helps to minimize financial misappropriation.

Financial misappropriation is the diversion of funds to areas unplanned for in an organization. Oyadonghan and Ogoun (2017) defined financial misappropriation as an intentional misuse of money. Financial misappropriation is intentional conversion of school fund into personal use. It is the allocation of funds for unintended purpose. It occurs in a situation where funds meant for infrastructural development are diverted to personal use or reward of teachers. According to Hungwe and Mpofo (2021), financial misappropriation revolves around notions of dishonesty, corrupt tendencies, recklessness, negligence, ignorance and incompetence for personal gain. Financial misappropriation is the use of disbursed funds for unintended purposes. It is the disregard of due processes in expending available funds in an organization. Contextually, financial misappropriation is the deceitful and illicit behaviour of using funds for the purpose that it is not meant for.

Financial misappropriation is exhibited through deceitful and unlawful act for the purpose of personal gain. Financial misappropriation could be exhibited through revenue generation and expenditure. Amakyi (2021) asserted that financial misappropriation through revenue fraud in schools is done through receipt book manipulations, unreceipted revenue, cash and ledger accounts entries, and banking related activities, while financial misappropriation through expenditure is usually done through fraudulent payment of funds through cheque alterations and signing of blank cheques, fictitious invoices, presentation of false claims for payment, unsupplied items, over-invoicing of goods, and manipulation of stores issue vouchers.

There are many evidences on ground which may suggest some level of financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Nwankwo (2022) reported a case, where principals embezzled millions of naira donated to secondary schools in Anambra State. Nwankwo and Uduma-Chima (2019) observed that diversion and embezzlement of funds have become the order of the day in secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. Furthermore, the authors stressed that some administrators receive gratification for the award of contract concerning the construction of science laboratories or the procurement of teaching equipment. The cases of fraud and misuse of financial resource probably leads to inefficiency in secondary schools in Anambra State. Enyi, Uwakwe, Chigbu, Chukwu, Agu and Ede (2018) noted that the prevailing cases of embezzlement, diversion of funds and abandonment of school projects could be traceable to gaps in the measures put in place by principals to manage funds in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. This background made it necessary to carry out a study on internal control measures adopted by principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mismanagement of school financial resources arising from fraudulent practices and embezzlement of funds is an indicator of financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. There appears to be cases of misuse, embezzlement of allocated funds and manipulation of financial reports in public secondary schools in the State. Financial indiscipline, irregularities, errors, fraud and misallocation of resources could be explained by weak internal control measures put in place and applied by principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Financial misuse and irregularities appear to persist in secondary schools in Anambra State possibly due to laxity and disregard of internal control measures put in place to manage school funds. There appears to be improper keeping of school books of accounts for easy detection of financial frauds in secondary schools in the State. These aforementioned issues make it imperative to

investigate the internal control measures adopted by principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to find out internal control measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine preventive measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. find out detective measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. examine corrective measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What preventive measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What detective measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What corrective measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the preventive measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the detective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the corrective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design is deemed appropriate, since the researcher formulated questions that reflect opinions and behaviours of Principals on the control measures they adopt in reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The choice of Anambra State for the study is that the inhabitants of the area attach great importance to quality education for their children but this is yet to be fully achieved probably due to misuse of limited funds available in secondary schools. The population of the study comprised 526 respondents made up of 263 principals and 263 bursars in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. There was no sampling in this study due to the relatively small size of the population of the study. Thus, the entire 526 respondents made up of 263 principals and 263 bursars were used for the study.

A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled ‘‘Principals’ Internal Control Measures for reducing Financial Misappropriation Questionnaire (PICMRFMQ)’’ was used for data collection. PICMRFMQ was developed from review of related literature and information gathered from consultation of experts. The instrument had two sections namely A and B. Section A elicited information on the position of the respondents. The Section B of instrument had Clusters I, II and III which were based on the three areas of internal control measures to be investigated. Cluster I had 11 items which focused on preventive measures for reducing financial misappropriation, Cluster II which centred on detective measures for reducing financial misappropriation had 12 items and Cluster III had 9 items which centred on corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation. The instrument contains a total of 32 items, all structured on a four-point likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted at 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The face validation of the instrument was determined. To ascertain this, the researcher presented the title, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and copies of the questionnaire to three experts who are lecturers, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. The suggestions and inputs of the experts were reflected on the final draft of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot study. Fifty copies of the data collection instrument were administered on a sample of 25 principals and 25 bursars in 25 secondary schools in Enugu State. The reliability indices obtained for the clusters I, II and III were 0.82, 0.80 and 0.77 respectively with an overall coefficient of 0.80.

The researcher and five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Anambra State administered copies of the questionnaire on the principals and bursars. A total of 526 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 263 copies for Principals and 263 for Bursars respectively, out of which 514 copies made of 257 copies from Principals and 257 copies from Bursars were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 98% percent return rate. At the end of the exercise, copies of the questionnaire that were properly completed and retrieved were used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions and t-test statistic to test the null hypotheses. The decision criteria for the research questions is that any mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered as agreement and any mean rating of below 2.50 was considered as disagreement. The decision criteria for the null hypotheses is that if the p-value is equal to or less ( $\leq$ ) than significant value of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected, but if the p-value is greater than ( $>$ ), the significant value of .05 the null hypotheses was accepted.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What preventive measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Principals and Bursars on the Preventive Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools.

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (N =257 )			Bursars (N =257 )		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	develop budget to guide financial transactions in the school	2.81	1.05	Agree	2.77	1.10	Agree

2	instruct bursars to seek approval before disbursement of school fund	2.72	1.11	Agree	2.63	1.15	Agree
3	ensure that only budgeted fund are disbursed	2.94	0.92	Agree	2.60	1.07	Agree
4	instruct bursar to prepare quarterly report of financial transactions	2.59	1.04	Agree	2.57	1.01	Agree
5	keep records of Vouchers/ Receipt of all money expended.	2.42	1.17	Disagree	2.40	1.06	Disagree
6	specify funds meant for capital expenditure	2.71	1.10	Agree	2.64	0.98	Agree
7	specify funds meant for recurrent expenditure.	2.57	1.03	Agree	2.52	1.05	Agree
8	ensure that bursary unit prepares annual financial statement of account	2.67	1.08	Agree	2.65	1.18	Agree
9	certify school projects at every stage before release of another fund.	2.44	1.00	Disagree	2.45	1.11	Disagree
10	ensure that surplus money are returned to the bursary department after expenditure.	2.51	1.04	Agree	2.48	0.95	Disagree
11	ensure submission of all receipts of transactions	2.54	1.07	Agree	2.64	1.10	Agree
12	inspect facilities procured in the school	2.61	1.13	Agree	2.59	1.12	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Results presented in table 1 showed that mean ratings of Principals and Bursars for in items 1-4, 6-8, 11 and 12 are above 2.50 and thereby indicating agreement with the statements; except for items 5 and 9 which rated below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the statements. The mean scores of 2.51 recorded by Principals for item 10 is above 2.50 showing with the statement, while Bursar recorded mean score of 2.48 which is below 2.50 indicates disagreement with the item.

The pooled standard deviation scores which stood at 1.06 and 1.07 for Principals and Bursars respectively revealed that their responses are close to the mean indicating little variation in their responses. The Cluster Mean of 2.57 for Principals and 2.63 for 2.58 for Bursars are above 2.50 indicated that preventive measures are adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the preventive measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 2:** The Summary of t-Test of Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Bursars on the Preventive Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools

Respondents	N	X	SD	p-value	∞	Df	Remark
Principals	257	2.63	1.06	0.10	0.05	512	Not Significant
Bursars	257	2.58	1.07				

As indicated in table 2, the analysis shows that the p-value of 0.10 is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 512 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the groups was not rejected. This is an indication that there is no



significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the preventive measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:** What detective measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 3:** Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Principals and Bursars on the Preventive Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools.

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (N =257 )			Bursars (N =257 )		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
13	order periodical submission of school statement of accounts for inspection	2.81	0.98	Agree	2.76	1.11	Agree
14	ensure regular auditing of school account to detect fraudulent practices.	2.67	1.07	Agree	2.69	0.99	Agree
15	instruct bursar to carryout monthly reconciliation of bank account.	2.75	1.12	Agree	2.60	1.03	Agree
16	engage in periodic review of funds expended in the school	2.54	1.11	Agree	2.58	1.08	Agree
17	ensure monthly reconciliation of petty cash accounts is done.	2.82	1.02	Agree	2.75	1.04	Agree
18	scrutinize financial reports of bursary units to detect irregularities.	2.44	1.03	Disagree	2.48	1.01	Disagree
19	recalculate transaction values to identify possible omissions.	2.47	0.96	Disagree	2.41	1.06	Disagree
20	ensure irregularities are reported as they occur in the account records.	2.45	1.06	Disagree	2.40	1.00	Disagree
21	identify weakness of accounting procedures in the school record are reported.	2.66	1.14	Agree	2.71	1.02	Agree
22	monitor the process of executing school projects detect fraudulent act.	2.71	0.97	Agree	2.72	1.00	Agree
23	reconfirm inventory purchased in the school	2.42	1.01	Disagree	2.46	1.12	Disagree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.61</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 shows that Principals and Bursars recorded mean scores of 2.50 for items 13-17 and 22 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as detective measure adopted in secondary schools for reducing financial misappropriation. The mean ratings of Principals and Bursars for items 18, 19 and 23 are below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the statements for reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools.

The pooled standard deviation scores of 1.04 for Principals and 1.04 for Bursars respectively showed that closer convergence of the mean ratings. The cluster means of 2.61 for Principals and 2.60 for Bursars are above 2.50 indicating that Principals adopt detective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the detective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 4:** The Summary of t-Test of Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Bursars on the Detective Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	p-value	$\alpha$	Df	Remark
Principals	257	2.61	1.04	0.21	0.05	512	Not Significant
Bursars	257	2.60	1.04				

The result in table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.21 is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 512 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the groups was not rejected. This is an indication that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the detective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Research Question 3:** What corrective measures do Principals adopt for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 5:** Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Principals and Bursars on the Corrective Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (N =257 )			Bursars (N =257 )		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
24	carry out contingency planning to correct misuse of funds	2.74	1.03	Agree	2.70	1.06	Agree
25	trace the root causes of financial mismanagement to correct it	2.33	1.11	Disagree	2.30	1.03	Disagree
26	handle over repeated cases of financial frauds to relevant authorities for further interrogations	2.46	1.07	Disagree	2.51	1.11	Agree
27	blacklist suppliers who misuse school funds	2.39	1.12	Disagree	2.35	1.08	Disagree
28	Ensure that all financial transactions are supported by vital receipts	2.37	1.00	Disagree	2.31	0.93	Disagree
29	keeping track of all the auditable school expenditures	2.34	1.09	Disagree	2.30	1.18	Disagree
30	Check for discrepancies between planned and expended funds in school	2.41	1.04	Disagree	2.44	1.03	Disagree
31	evaluate financial transactions for budget realignment	2.53	1.13	Agree	2.51	1.18	Agree
32	request for submission of relevant financial reports for auditing	2.55	1.10	Agree	2.53	1.02	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.46</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

Result of data analysis presented in table 5 revealed that mean ratings of Principals and Bursars for items 24, 31 and 32 which are above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as parts of corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools. On the other hand, mean ratings of Principals and Bursars for items 25 and 27-30 which are below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items as parts of corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools. The mean ratings of Principals for item 26 is 2.46 which is below 2.50 indicated disagreement with the statement, while that of Bursars for the item is 2.51 which is above 2.50

indicating agreement with the item as part of corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools.

The pooled standard deviation scores of 1.06 for Principals and 1.13 for Bursars showed that their mean ratings are fairly cluster. On other word, there is no much variation among their mean ratings of the items. Both Principals and Bursars have cluster of 2.46 and 2.44 respectively which are below 2.50 revealed that Principals do not adopt corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the corrective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 6:** The Summary of t-Test of Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Bursars on the Corrective Measures adopted for reducing Financial Misappropriation in Secondary Schools

Respondents	N	X	SD	p-value	$\alpha$	Df	Remark
Principals	257	2.46	1.06	0.25	0.05	512	Not Significant
Bursars	257	2.44	1.07				

As shown in table 6, the p-value of 0.25 is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 512 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the groups was not rejected. This is an indication that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the corrective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the study showed that preventive measures are adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in line with the finding of Ahmedin.,Gretie and Haimanot (2020) which revealed that preventive measures were adopted by management of public offices. This disagreed with the finding of Nwankwo and Uduma-Chima (2019) which showed that Principals did not use preventive measures for control fund wastages and misappropriation in secondary schools. The difference in findings could be attributed to time span as within the space of 4 years, principals might have undergone several training and acquire experience to improve the adoption of preventive measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools. The preventive measures adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State were to develop budget to guide financial transactions in the school, instruct bursars to seek approval before disbursement of school fund, ensure that only budgeted fund are disbursed, instruct bursar to prepare quarterly report of financial transactions, specify funds meant for capital and recurrent expenditure, ensure that bursary unit prepares annual financial statement of account, ensure submission of all receipts of transactions and inspect facilities procured in the school.

The possible reason for the preventive measures adopted by Principals is to discourage errors, frauds or irregularities in the use of limited financial resources in secondary schools. It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the preventive measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This affirmed the finding of Amadi, Barango-Tariah, Barieere and Nkporon (2023) which indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and school bursars on the preventive control practices for effective administration of public secondary schools. The agreement in findings could be attributed with similarity in participants and time span which might be associated with accumulation of more skills and experience of applying preventive measures to reduce financial misappropriation. The principals prevent frauds, embezzlement and misuse of available funds from occurring in secondary schools.

The result of the study showed that Principals adopt detective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This agreed with the findings of Mungai, Maina and Kungu (2021) which indicated that detective control measure was adopted to improve the financial performance of public universities. This finding is consonance with that of Nwankwo (2022) which showed that detective practices are adopted by principals for controlling fund and wastages and misappropriation in secondary schools. This similarity in participants, secondary education and geographical location of the studies might contribute to the agreement in the findings. The detective measures adopted by principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State included: to order periodical submission of school statement of accounts for inspection, ensure regular auditing of school account to detect fraudulent practices, instruct bursar to carryout monthly reconciliation of bank account, engage in periodic review of funds expended in the school, identify weakness of accounting procedures in the school record are reported and monitor the process of executing school projects detect fraudulent act.

The probably adopt detective measures to identify frauds, irregularities and other sharp practices in the use of limited financial resources in secondary schools. It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the detective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This supported the finding of Amadi, Barango-Tariah, Barieere and Nkporon (2023) which indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and school bursars on the preventive control practices for effective administration of public secondary schools. The same time span of the two studies could contribute to the agreement in the findings.

The finding of the study showed that Principals do not adopt corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding is in line with the finding of Nwankwo (2022) which revealed that corrective practices were not adopted by principals for controlling fund and wastages and misappropriation in secondary schools. This affirmed the finding of Amakyi (2021) which showed that corrective internal control practices are not applied in secondary schools. Principals do not adopt corrective measures for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State with regard to tracing the root causes of financial mismanagement to correct it, blacklisting suppliers who misuse school funds, ensure that all financial transactions are supported by vital receipts, keeping track of all the auditable school expenditures and checking for discrepancies between planned and expended funds in schools.

The finding showed that principals have inadequately handled or fixed irregularities or fraudulent activities carried out in secondary schools. This showed that that principals have failed to

apply corrective measures to effectively deal with issues concerning intentional misuse of school funds for personal gain rather than the purposes for which it is provided. It was also found that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and Bursars on the corrective measures adopted for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This supported the finding of Bessong, Ubana and Udo (2012) which revealed that there is no significant difference between opinions of secondary school principals and bursars with regard to corrective measures of managing available funds in secondary schools. The failure of principals to adopt corrective measures might encourage financial wastage and mismanagement that limit the availability of funds to handle the daily affairs of secondary schools.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that majority of internal control measures are adopted by Principals for reducing financial misappropriation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The principals adopt control measures to prevent or minimize perpetuation of fraud in revenue and expenditure in secondary schools. The financial frauds are prevented and detected through the internal control measures adopted by principals. Members of staff are controlled and prevented from exhibiting illegal and dishonest behaviour in handling financial resource in secondary schools. The internal control measures adopted by principals to reduce financial misappropriation ensure smooth operations of daily activities of schools for attainment of the objectives of secondary education.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The State Ministry of Education should develop internal preventive control manual which will serve as guideline for principals to follow to prevent financial frauds from occurring in secondary schools.
2. Officials of Internal Audit Unit in Post Primary School Service Commission should pay unannounced regular visit to schools to observe, analyze, raise alarms and make recommendations for improvement of detective measures adopted by principals for reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools.
3. Ministry of Education should develop policy to improve the adoption of corrective measures of reducing financial misappropriation in secondary schools by outlining procedures for investigation and possible prosecution of suspected staff that engage in fraudulent practices

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