

Integration of Microsoft Azure Purview and Teams Copilot in Financial and Communication Management of Public Secondary Schools in Imo State

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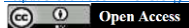
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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the integration of Microsoft Azure Purview and Microsoft Teams Copilot influences the financial and communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State. Two objectives, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 2,027 principals and 23,179 teachers drawn from the 513 approved junior and senior secondary schools in Imo State, giving a total population of 25,206 administrators. Multi-stage sampling comprising purposive, random, stratified proportionate random, and simple random sampling techniques was used to draw a sample of 371 respondents (46 principals and 325 teachers) using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire titled "Integration of Artificial Intelligence in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (IAIAPSSQ), validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and found reliable using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while an independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, against a criterion mean of 2.50. Findings showed that Microsoft Azure Purview enhanced the financial management of public secondary schools to a high extent (grand means of 2.50 and 2.53 for principals and teachers respectively), particularly in payroll administration, expenditure tracking, financial reporting, and database management, but contributed less to predictive forecasting, fee collection, and fraud detection. Conversely, Microsoft Teams Copilot enhanced communication management only to a low extent (grand means of 2.43 and 2.49), with its strongest contribution in parent-school communication and teacher collaboration. The t-test results showed no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on either variable. The study recommends that education authorities in Imo State institutionalize AI-based financial governance platforms with built-in predictive and fraud-detection capacity, while also strengthening the deployment of AI communication assistants beyond parent engagement into broader administrator-teacher and teacher-student interactions.

Introduction

The administration of public secondary schools has grown increasingly complex, driven by rising demands for financial accountability, timely and coordinated communication, efficient record management, and improved learning outcomes. In Imo State, as in many parts of Nigeria, schools are expected to meet these demands despite constraints such as limited funding, delayed subventions, large and dispersed stakeholder groups, and weak digital infrastructure. These constraints have intensified interest in technologies capable of strengthening two of the most sensitive dimensions of school administration: the stewardship of scarce financial resources and the coordination of communication among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and government agencies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, data analysis, and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Within educational management, AI-enabled platforms are increasingly deployed to automate routine operations, detect anomalies, generate real-time reports, and mediate communication across institutional hierarchies. Two such platforms with growing relevance to school administration are Microsoft Azure Purview, a unified data governance and compliance platform capable of discovering,

classifying, and protecting sensitive financial data, and Microsoft Teams Copilot, an AI assistant embedded within the Microsoft Teams environment that summarizes meetings, drafts communication, and supports multilingual interaction across a school community.

Financial management in the school context involves the systematic planning, budgeting, allocation, expenditure tracking, payroll administration, and auditing of resources to support teaching, learning, and infrastructure (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Adeyemi & Salami, 2022). Public secondary schools in Imo State continue to grapple with delayed subventions, manual bookkeeping, and the attendant risk of leakage and mismanagement, conditions that make AI-powered financial governance tools such as Azure Purview potentially transformative (Ogunode & Ahaotu, 2024). Communication management, on the other hand, concerns the systematic exchange of information among administrators, teachers, students, and parents to support coordination, transparency, and trust (O'Hair et al., 2023). In a system historically reliant on manual circulars, verbal briefings, and fragmented parent outreach, AI-enabled assistants such as Teams Copilot offer the promise of faster, more consistent, and more inclusive communication, including multilingual support for the state's linguistically diverse communities (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2023).

While the potential of these tools is widely discussed globally, empirical evidence on the extent to which they are actually being deployed, and how effectively, within Nigerian public secondary schools remains scarce. This study responds to that gap by examining, from the standpoint of both principals and teachers, the extent to which Microsoft Azure Purview and Microsoft Teams Copilot are integrated into, and enhance, the financial and communication management functions of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

Financial management in Imo State's public secondary schools remains largely manual, with principals and bursars relying on paper-based ledgers to track payroll, expenditure, and fee collection. This practice leaves schools vulnerable to delayed reporting, reconciliation errors, and, in some cases, unexplained leakage of scarce subvention funds, a challenge estimated elsewhere to account for 15–30% of financial loss in public schools due to fraud and error (Adeyemi & Salami, 2022). At the same time, communication across the school system is frequently slow and one-directional: circulars are hand-delivered, staff meetings are summarized informally if at all, and parent engagement is inconsistent, particularly across the state's linguistically diverse communities. Although global evidence suggests that AI-powered governance platforms and communication assistants can materially improve transparency, reduce administrative burden, and strengthen stakeholder trust, secondary schools in Imo State appear to have made only limited, uneven progress in adopting such tools. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the extent to which Microsoft Azure Purview enhances financial management and Microsoft Teams Copilot enhances communication management in public secondary schools in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the integration of artificial intelligence in the administration of public secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. determine the extent to which Microsoft Azure Purview integration enhances financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State.
2. determine the extent to which Microsoft Teams Copilot integration enhances communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does the integration of Microsoft Azure Purview enhance financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State?
2. To what extent does the integration of Microsoft Teams Copilot enhance communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the influence of integrating Microsoft Azure Purview in financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the influence of integrating Microsoft Teams Copilot in communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate because it allowed the researchers to obtain first-hand perceptions from principals and teachers regarding AI integration in school administration. The population comprised 2,027 principals and 23,179 teachers in the 513 approved Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary schools in Imo State, giving a total population of 25,206 administrators. Owerri zone was purposively selected for its relatively higher exposure to modern technology, after which random sampling was used to select four Local Government Areas: Owerri Municipal, Owerri North, Owerri West, and Ngor-Okpala. Stratified proportionate random sampling was applied within these LGAs to ensure balanced representation of principals and teachers, while simple random sampling was used to select individual respondents. Using Taro Yamane's formula (1967) at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample of 371 respondents was drawn, comprising 46 principals and 325 teachers.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Integration of Artificial Intelligence in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (IAIAPSSQ), made up of a demographic section and item clusters aligned with the study's objectives. Responses were rated on a four-point scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent, and Very Low Extent, weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated through face and content validation by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established through a pilot test involving 20 administrators outside the main sample and computation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, which ranged from 0.72 to 0.85 across the item clusters, exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The questionnaire was administered through direct hand delivery by trained research assistants over one week across the four sampled LGAs.

Data obtained were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, with a criterion mean of 2.50 used to classify items as agreed (≥ 2.50) or disagreed (< 2.50). The null hypotheses were tested using the independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does the integration of Microsoft Azure Purview enhance financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State?

**Table 1: Mean Responses on the Extent to which Integration of Microsoft Azure Purview Enhances Financial Management of Public Secondary Schools**

S/N	Item	Principals N = 46			Teachers N = 325		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Purview-AI is used to analyze historical financial data to predict future expenses.	2.46	1.03	Low Extent	2.48	1.06	Low Extent
2	It is used in payroll and salary administration for staff.	2.57	1.10	High Extent	2.57	1.09	High Extent
3	It is used to track and monitor school expenditures.	2.52	1.08	High Extent	2.73	1.04	High Extent
4	Purview-AI is used to generate financial reports and statements.	2.50	1.07	High Extent	2.53	1.03	High Extent
5	It is used to forecast financial needs and resource allocation.	2.43	1.04	Low Extent	2.49	1.05	Low Extent
6	It manages and updates school financial databases.	2.67	1.06	High Extent	2.63	1.12	High Extent
7	Purview-AI is integrated into fee collection.	2.35	1.04	Low Extent	2.33	0.97	Low Extent
8	It is used to flag unauthorized transactions for review.	2.48	1.07	Low Extent	2.49	1.03	Low Extent
Grand Mean		2.50		High Extent	2.53		High Extent

Table 1 shows that Microsoft Azure Purview was rated as contributing to financial management through payroll and salary administration (2.57 and 2.57), expenditure tracking and monitoring (2.52 and 2.73), generation of financial reports and statements (2.50 and 2.53), and management and updating of financial databases (2.67 and 2.63), all above the criterion mean of 2.50. However, its use in analysing historical data to predict future expenses (2.46 and 2.48), forecasting financial needs (2.43 and 2.49), integration into fee collection (2.35 and 2.33), and flagging unauthorized transactions (2.48 and 2.49) fell below the criterion mean. With overall grand means of 2.50 and 2.53 for principals and teachers respectively, the results indicate that Azure Purview enhances the financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State to a high extent, driven mainly by routine administrative and record-keeping functions, while its predictive and fraud-detection capabilities remain comparatively underutilized.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the integration of Microsoft Teams Copilot enhance communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Extent to which Integration of Microsoft Teams Copilot Enhances Communication Management of Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Item	Principals N = 46			Teachers N = 325		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
9	Copilot-AI is used to facilitate communication between school administrators and teachers.	2.22	0.93	Low Extent	2.42	1.09	Low Extent
10	Copilot-AI is integrated into communication platforms for interaction between teachers and students.	2.39	0.92	Low Extent	2.48	1.11	Low Extent
11	It is used to disseminate important information and announcements within the school.	2.41	1.01	Low Extent	2.49	1.05	Low Extent
12	Copilot-AI is used to manage communication between schools and parents/guardians.	2.59	1.13	High Extent	2.53	1.03	High Extent
13	Copilot-AI technologies are applied in handling feedback and complaints from stakeholders (government/owner) in secondary schools.	2.43	1.04	Low Extent	2.48	1.08	Low Extent
14	It is used to enhance collaboration among teachers through digital communication platforms.	2.52	1.08	High Extent	2.57	1.09	High Extent
15	Copilot-AI is used to translate and interpret communication for diverse linguistic backgrounds in the school.	2.48	1.10	Low Extent	2.44	1.06	Low Extent
16	Copilot-AI applications improved transparency and effectiveness in communication management practices in the schools.	2.46	1.03	Low Extent	2.49	1.03	Low Extent
Grand Mean		2.43		Low Extent	2.49		Low Extent

Table 2 shows that Microsoft Teams Copilot was rated highest in managing communication between schools and parents/guardians (2.59 and 2.53) and in enhancing collaboration among teachers through digital platforms (2.52 and 2.57), both above the criterion mean. All other items, including facilitating administrator–teacher communication (2.22 and 2.42), teacher–student interaction (2.39 and 2.48), dissemination of announcements (2.41 and 2.49), handling stakeholder feedback and complaints (2.43 and 2.48), translation for diverse linguistic groups (2.48 and 2.44), and overall transparency in communication management (2.46 and 2.49), fell below the criterion mean. With grand means of 2.43 and 2.49 for principals and teachers respectively, both below the criterion mean of 2.50, the results indicate that Teams Copilot integration enhances communication management in public secondary schools in Imo State only to a low extent, with its usefulness currently concentrated in parent engagement and teacher collaboration rather than broader institutional communication.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the influence of integrating Microsoft Azure Purview in financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Difference between Principals' and Teachers' Responses on Azure Purview

Variable/Status	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	SD	df	SL	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	46	2.50	1.06	369	0.05	0.19	1.96	Accepted
Teachers	325	2.53	1.05					

As shown in Table 3, the calculated t-value (0.19) is less than the critical t-value (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance with 369 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted, indicating no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent to which Microsoft Azure Purview enhances financial management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals and teachers on the influence of integrating Microsoft Teams Copilot in communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of Difference between Principals' and Teachers' Responses on Teams Copilot

Variable/Status	No. of Respondents	Mean Score	SD	df	SL	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	46	2.43	1.03	369	0.05	0.34	1.96	Accepted
Teachers	325	2.49	1.07					

As shown in Table 4, the calculated t-value (0.34) is less than the critical t-value (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance with 369 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted, indicating no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent to which Microsoft Teams Copilot enhances communication management of public secondary schools in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that Microsoft Azure Purview enhances financial management of public secondary schools to a high extent, particularly in payroll administration, expenditure tracking, financial reporting, and database management, aligns with Microsoft's (2023) description of Purview as a platform that converts fragmented financial data into secure and actionable intelligence. It also supports KPMG's (2020) observation that AI-driven financial systems tend to strengthen routine operational functions such as payroll processing and expenditure monitoring more readily than they transform strategic financial decision-making. The comparatively weaker ratings recorded for predictive forecasting, fee collection integration, and fraud flagging suggest that, as currently deployed, Azure Purview in Imo State schools functions more as a record-keeping and reporting tool than as the anomaly-detection and forecasting engine described in the wider literature (Garg et al., 2022; Ogunode & Ahaotu, 2024). This gap points to an implementation stage in which schools have adopted the platform's administrative capabilities but have yet to activate or be trained in its more advanced governance features, such as predictive budgeting and unauthorized-transaction alerts. The same shape of result was reported in Rivers State, where the utilization of artificial intelligence in school supervision for effective administration in public secondary schools strengthened the routine oversight on which supervision rests without displacing the judgement that supervisors bring to it (Nwuke & Yellowe, 2025). Part of the explanation may lie in what users know of the tools they hold, since the assessment of awareness and adoption of artificial intelligence tools among educators in Rivers State-owned universities found both awareness and actual adoption to be uneven, a condition under which a platform is readily used for the functions that resemble existing practice and left idle in those that do not (Taylor et al., 2025).

The finding that Microsoft Teams Copilot enhances communication management only to a low extent, with its clearest value in parent-school communication and teacher collaboration, is consistent with OECD's (2021) observation that AI-enabled communication tools tend to perform best in formalized, bounded exchanges rather than in the full range of dynamic, multi-stakeholder communication that characterizes daily school life. Selwyn (2022) similarly cautioned that AI communication tools often struggle with the cultural nuance, linguistic diversity, and layered hierarchy typical of institutional settings, a pattern reflected in the comparatively low ratings this study recorded for administrator-teacher communication, teacher-student interaction, translation services, and overall

communication transparency. Taken together with the finding on Azure Purview, this suggests that AI tools already yield tangible benefits in structured, transactional administrative processes, but require deliberate expansion, contextual adaptation, and staff training before their fuller governance and communication potential can be realized in Imo State's public secondary schools. It is worth noting that the parent–school channel in which Copilot performed best is also the one already carried by established structures, since school based management committees in Rivers State were found to improve governance precisely by drawing parents, community members and administrators into a shared forum (Nwanguma & Nwuke, 2024), which suggests the tool succeeds where an institutional pathway already exists for it to travel along. The training that such expansion would require has a demonstrated effect of its own, as continuous professional development programmes among senior secondary school teachers in Rivers State were found to exert a notable influence on the methods those teachers actually adopted (Wosu et al., 2024).

Across both hypotheses, the absence of significant differences between principals' and teachers' mean responses indicates a shared perception of the current strengths and limitations of these tools, suggesting that any policy or training intervention would likely be similarly received and valued by both administrative and instructional staff. Whether such an intervention endures is a further question, and the participation of the people an initiative is meant to serve was found to determine whether community development projects in Rivers State survived beyond their launch, which suggests that the shared readiness recorded here is an asset worth building on rather than assuming (Dokubo et al., 2020). The recommendation that government mandate and support these platforms has to be weighed against a long-standing Nigerian pattern in which policy intentions have repeatedly outrun the arrangements made for carrying them out, leaving sound provisions without the follow-through that would make them work (Alikor & Orlunga, 2023).

Conclusion

This study examined how the integration of Microsoft Azure Purview and Microsoft Teams Copilot influences financial and communication management in public secondary schools in Imo State. The findings show that Azure Purview substantially strengthens routine financial administration, particularly payroll processing, expenditure monitoring, and financial reporting, but has yet to be leveraged for predictive forecasting and fraud detection. Microsoft Teams Copilot, meanwhile, currently contributes only modestly to communication management overall, with its benefits concentrated in parent engagement and teacher collaboration rather than the broader web of administrator, teacher, and student interactions. Principals and teachers hold statistically similar views on both tools, underscoring a shared institutional readiness to expand their use. The study concludes that while AI-powered financial governance and communication platforms hold considerable promise for public secondary school administration in Imo State, their current impact is uneven, concentrated in operational rather than strategic or relational functions, and dependent on further investment in infrastructure, training, and policy support to unlock their fuller potential.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Ministry of Education and relevant government agencies in Imo State should support the deployment of AI-based financial governance platforms such as Microsoft Azure Purview with built-in predictive analytics and anomaly-detection features, and should mandate their use for fee collection and expenditure monitoring to curb financial leakage.
2. School authorities should organize targeted training for principals, bursars, and administrative staff on the advanced forecasting and fraud-flagging capabilities of financial AI platforms, moving usage beyond basic record-keeping toward predictive financial planning.
3. Government and school authorities should expand the use of AI communication assistants such as Microsoft Teams Copilot beyond parent engagement and teacher collaboration to cover administrator–teacher communication, teacher–student interaction, and multilingual outreach, supported by appropriate staff training and reliable internet infrastructure.

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