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Financial Management Practices and Utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses of School Heads in Panabo City Division

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between the financial management practices of school heads and the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in public secondary schools in the Panabo City Division. Specifically, it assessed the level of financial management practices in terms of planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability, as well as the level of MOOE utilization in relation to school operation and development, teachers' welfare and development, and students' welfare and development. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design involving 156 public secondary teachers selected through probability sampling. Data were gathered using adapted survey questionnaires with established reliability coefficients and were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis. Findings revealed that school heads demonstrated a high level of financial management practices, while the utilization of MOOE was rated very high. The results further showed a significant positive relationship between financial management practices and MOOE utilization, indicating that effective financial management contributes to the efficient and strategic use of school funds. Regression analysis revealed that all domains of financial management practices significantly influenced MOOE utilization, with resource allocation emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings highlight the critical role of school heads in ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of financial resources to support school operations, teacher development, and student welfare. The study concludes that strengthening the financial management competencies of school heads can further enhance the effective utilization of MOOE and contribute to improved school performance. It is recommended that school heads participate in continuous capacity-building programs focused on financial management systems, auditing procedures, and Department of Education financial policies to sustain sound fiscal governance and resource optimization.

Keywords: Financial management practices, Utilization of MOOE, School Heads, Resource Allocation, Panabo City Division

INTRODUCTION

The utilization of the MOOE ensures the effective delivery of basic education services. As a key financial resource provided by the government, MOOE supports the day-to-day operational needs of schools, including the procurement of instructional materials, maintenance of facilities, and funding of school-based programs that directly benefit learners. Its proper allocation and management are essential to sustaining school operations, enhancing the learning environment, and achieving educational goals. However, despite its significance, challenges often arise in its utilization, such as limited budgeting skills, delayed fund releases, lack of transparency, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. These issues can hinder the optimal use of MOOE, potentially affecting the quality of education and the attainment of school performance targets.

In the global concerns, some of the factors that lead to mismanagement of school funds are: delay in release of funds to schools, diversion of funds to other sectors of the economy, lack of training or inadequate training of heads of educational institutions on issues of finance management, negligence of financial clerks in school finance matters, outright appointments of unqualified personnel to manage school finances and other related issues. In Ethiopia, the financing of education must be just, efficient, and appropriate to promote equity and quality education. Furthermore, school heads have weak administrative capacity in educational finance management, limited capacity to practice finance, lack of training or inadequate training, and unqualified personnel to manage school finance, all of which contribute to such challenges. Research has been conducted on the content of financial problems by different researchers in different countries to find (Yizengaw & Agegnehu, 2021).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) Region III experienced financial management problems. These challenges included delayed release of monthly school cash advances, insufficient funds, lack of adequate experience and training, numerous bookkeeping tasks, unorganized recordkeeping, frequent policy changes, absence of a permanently stationed bookkeeper, and adherence to complex laws and policies. The findings above indicated that school leaders experienced financial management problems (Espiritu, 2020).

In Davao City, school leaders' financial management challenges involved inadequate staff assistance in a small school; delayed release of funds in a medium school; high needs and priorities in a large school; and difficult Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) liquidation in a mega school. In terms of similarities, all cases experienced limited funds, balance, and adjustment pressure (Bantilan et al., 2023).

While existing literature has examined the importance of sound financial management in educational institutions, few studies have specifically explored the financial management practices of school heads regarding the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in the context of the Panabo City Division. From the researcher's professional experience as an Accountant III in the Department of Education, Panabo City Division, it has been observed that school heads encounter practical challenges in planning, allocating, and monitoring MOOE due to varying levels of financial management skills, compliance requirements, and resource limitations. These firsthand observations highlighted the need for an in-depth, context-specific investigation that provides empirical evidence on how school heads manage and utilize MOOE.

The conduct of this study would be vital to sustaining school operations and achieving educational quality, particularly in the Panabo City Division, where schools face diverse operational and instructional needs. With proper financial management practices, school heads could ensure that MOOE funds would be maximized to improve facilities, provide adequate learning materials, and support school programs that directly impacted student performance. The findings of this study would be disseminated through division-level presentations, school leader forums, and submission to relevant education authorities, ensuring that policymakers, school heads, and stakeholders gain actionable insights.

Existing studies on financial management practices and the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) among school heads show several important gaps. Many of these studies were conducted years ago, making their findings less applicable to the current educational and financial landscape, especially given the introduction of updated government budgeting policies, digital financial systems, and changes brought about by post-pandemic school operations. In addition, most previous research examined financial management practices in a general educational context and did not focus specifically on public secondary schools in the Panabo City Division, thereby limiting the relevance of the findings to the local situation. There is also limited research on how modern technological tools, such as digital accounting, electronic procurement, and online financial reporting systems, affect the efficiency, transparency, and proper utilization of MOOE by school heads. Moreover, earlier studies mainly focused on compliance with budgeting rules and procedures, while giving less attention to how effective financial management practices contribute to better resource allocation, accountability, and overall school performance in today's changing educational environment. These gaps underscore the importance of conducting an updated and localized study on the financial management practices and utilization of MOOE among school heads in Panabo City Division.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between financial management practices and the utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of:

    1.1 planning and budgeting;
    1.2 resource allocation;
    1.3 financial resource mobilization; and
    1.4 financial accountability?

2. What is the level of utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads in terms of:

    2.1 school operation and development;
    2.2 teachers' welfare and development; and
    2.3 students' welfare and development?

3. Is there a significant relationship between financial management practices and utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads?

4. Which domains of financial management practices significantly influence the utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads?

Objectives of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between financial management practices and utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads. Specifically, it sought to:

1. To assess level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of:

    1.1 planning and budgeting;
    1.2 resource allocation;
    1.3 financial resource mobilization; and
    1.4 financial accountability.

2. To determine the level of utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads in terms of:

    2.1 school operation and development;
    2.2 teachers' welfare and development; and
    2.3 students' welfare and development.

3. To examine whether there is a significant relationship between financial management practices and utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads.

4. To identify which domains of financial management practices significantly influence the utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads.

Significance of the Study

This research provided an opportunity for an in-depth analysis and understanding of the role of financial management practices in relation to school heads' utilization of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). In the field of education, this study offered valuable insights for stakeholders, including policymakers, school heads, teachers, and future researchers. The findings supported these groups in developing policies, designing programs, implementing interventions, and initiating initiatives that strengthen school heads' competencies in financial management and promote the effective, transparent, and strategic use of MOOE.

School Heads

The study would be highly relevant to school heads as it directly addressed their critical role in ensuring the effective, transparent, and strategic use of public funds to support school operations and development. School heads are entrusted with the responsibility of managing MOOE allocations to sustain daily operations, maintain facilities, provide quality learning resources, and implement programs that enhance both teaching and learning. The study could provide valuable insights into areas of strength and those requiring improvement, enabling school heads to make informed decisions, prioritize resources effectively, and comply with financial regulations. Such findings could help enhance their capacity for fiscal accountability and resource optimization.

Teachers

The study would be significant to teachers as it directly influences the availability of resources, learning materials, and support needed to deliver quality instruction. Teachers depended on well-managed MOOE allocations to access instructional supplies, maintain conducive learning environments, and implement school-based programs that enhance student achievement. The study could shed light on how financial decisions impact teachers’ ability to perform their roles effectively. The findings could also help promote transparency and collaboration between school heads and teachers in planning and prioritizing expenditures, ensuring that resources are aligned with instructional needs and professional development opportunities.

Learners

The study would be essential for learners, as the effective use of these funds directly impacts the quality of their education and overall school experience. Properly managed MOOE allocations ensure the availability of adequate learning materials, well-maintained facilities, and programs that support academic growth, extracurricular activities, and student welfare. The study could reveal how financial decisions contribute to creating a safe, engaging, and resource-rich learning environment. The findings could guide improvements in financial management that prioritize learners’ needs, thereby fostering better academic performance, promoting holistic development, and enhancing overall satisfaction with the educational experience.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study determined the significance of the relationship between school heads' financial management practices and the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in public secondary schools in the Panabo City Division. It specifically assessed financial management practices in planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability, as well as the level of MOOE utilization in relation to school operations and development, teachers’ welfare and development, and students’ welfare and development. The study also examined the significant relationships among these variables and identified the domains of financial management practices that influence MOOE utilization. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving one hundred fifty-six (156) public secondary teachers from selected schools in the division, using adapted survey instruments.

While this study provides meaningful insights into the financial management practices and utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) among school heads, several limitations must be recognized. The study relied on the perceptions and responses of teachers, which may not fully represent the actual financial management practices being implemented by school heads or the overall effectiveness of MOOE utilization. Since perceptions are subjective, responses may vary based on individual experiences and observations. Furthermore, the study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, which is useful in determining the existence of relationships between variables but does not allow the researcher to conclude that one variable directly causes changes in another. In addition, the study was limited to public secondary schools in the Division of Panabo City, which may affect the extent to which the findings can be applied to other school divisions, educational levels, or settings with different organizational and financial contexts. Therefore, the results should be interpreted within the scope and context of the study.

Definition of Terms

Financial Management Practices refer to the systematic processes and strategies used to plan, allocate, use, and monitor financial resources to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. In the context of schools, these practices involve ensuring that funds are managed transparently, in compliance with policies, and directed toward programs and activities that support quality education and overall school improvement. In this study, it refers to planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability

Utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) refers to the proper allocation and use of government-provided funds to cover a school's operational needs, including utilities, repairs, instructional materials, and other essential services. It ensures that resources are spent efficiently and in accordance with policies to support daily operations, improve learning conditions, and promote the overall development of the school community. In this study, it refers to school operation and development, teachers' welfare and development, and students' welfare and development.

REVIEW LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The related literature and studies for this study provided insights into financial management practices and the utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE). Also, it presented various studies showcasing the associations among the variables involved in this study. The independent variable is the financial management practices of school heads. It has four indicators, namely: planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability (Ban et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, the dependent variable is utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE). It has three indicators, namely: school operation and development, teachers' welfare and development, and students' welfare and development (Arevalo & Comighud, 2020).

Financial Management Practices of School Heads

Adequate financial management in institutions of learning is central to the delivery of quality education. Pagdilao and Paguyo (2023), as well as Alvarez and Delavin (2022), underscored the importance of managing funds as a critical approach to effective school management. Financial management is an essential yet challenging task for the school head. All financial decisions made by school heads require accountability and transparency. These two essential aspects of financial management ensure the efficient and effective use of financial resources and increase the school head's viability. Hence, success in financial management has been one of the parameters of an effective school head.

Mismanagement of school finances can easily tarnish someone's reputation and lead to the depletion of financial resources. School heads should uphold a professional code of conduct and high moral standards by managing finances with integrity and reliability. Hence, demonstrating accountability, transparency, and integrity in financial management can foster trust and confidence among school stakeholders. Many challenges in financial management also confront school heads. These include insufficient funds, late budget allocation to schools, limited training and support in fiscal management, a lack of skilled workforce in the finance team, and limited involvement of school stakeholders in financial planning. School heads must apply their resourcefulness and flexibility in managing finances to overcome these fiscal management challenges (Amado et al., 2025).

The assertion by the school heads regarding compliance with rules and regulations in liquidation reports complies with DepEd Order No. 29, s. 2019 and the COA-DBM Joint Circular No. 02 s. The 2022 standards set standards for the management of cash advances and program funds. Existing research by Casingal and Ancho (2022) on financial liquidation practices posits that various approaches should be adopted to ensure efficiency in learning institutions by complying with the set legal requirements and educational policies through regular audits. Liquidation in financial management refers to the sale of assets to settle all liabilities and account for all transactions in a precise manner (Yasin & Mokhtar, 2022). The deployment of stakeholders in financial governance, as envisaged in the Revised School-Based Management System, DepEd, has enhanced the principles of transparency and accountability in school financial practices. It should be noted that financial management is a crucial element in the proper functioning and further development of educational organizations. The following general trends found in the literature shed light on why this research is needed: Pagdilao and Paguyo (2023) focus on funding as a strategy for continuity in education, and, in turn, Alvarez and Delavin (2022) establish a relationship between the efficient control of resources and the professional development of school heads.

According to Gaspar et al. (2022), a number of school heads have a weak background in financial management education, thus facing issues with policies, procedures, and market prices. These problems point out the necessity of financial training and assistance. Proper use of funds and accountability are pivotal to raising educational standards. Altogether, these studies reveal a problem among school heads: insufficient financial competence in managing school funds and financial literacy, which this study seeks to address.

Moreover, the school head's efficient and effective management of financial or material resources is considered one significant factor in the attainment of institutional objectives. On the other hand, inappropriate and inconsistent financial management may lead to financial difficulties and resource mismanagement. In the end, excellent, improved performance is the ultimate aim of every organization as it aligns its financial management systems by wisely adopting applicable and advantageous practices (Vicente et al., 2023).

In the school setting, the financial management of school heads prevails when they have basic knowledge and a clear understanding of the processes involved in managing the school's accounts, the budgeting process, and the systems and controls necessary to ensure that the school's finances are not misappropriated. School financial management involves planning and implementing a financial plan, accounting, reporting, and safeguarding assets against loss, damage, and fraud. Basically, the level of school heads' financial management is usually determined by their formal education, on-the-job training, and experience. Sometimes their individual characteristics are also considered (Espiritu, 2020).

The Philippines' overall policy on this aspect is the empowerment of school heads to manage the school's personnel, fiscal (financial), and material resources, as stipulated in Letter E, Paragraph 7, Chapter 1 of Republic Act 9155. The said law, also known as the "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001," emphasizes that school heads are given authority, accountability, and, most especially, responsibility over fiscal or financial resources. Section 10 of Republic Act 9155 similarly emphasizes the provision of appropriations intended for the regional and field offices (comprising the elementary and secondary schools) and the schools division offices, to be allocated directly and released immediately by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to the said offices. As repeatedly pointed out in Republic Act 9155, all school heads in the Department of Education (DepEd) are already vested with defined authority, coupled with great responsibility and accountability, to manage their resources based on the needs and requirements of the school community (Bantugan, 2025).

Furthermore, school heads' financial management practices must always adhere to the existing policies and guidelines governing school fiscal management. Several policies, guidelines, and issuances guide school heads in the Philippines. These are the Basic Education Act (Republic Act No. 9155), the Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act No. 9184), the Rationalization Plan of 2004 (Executive Order No. 366), the Financial Management Operations Manual (FMOM) of the Department of Education, the Handbook on SBM, the Enhanced Process on SIP and SRC, the Government Accounting Manual (GAM) prescribed by COA Circular No. 2015-007, the State Audit Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 1445), and other associated financial rules. All the policies mentioned presented clear directions on how school heads manage school finances. According to the Philippine Professional Standard for School Heads (PPSSH), school head financial management practices should cover the following key stages: allocation, procurement, disbursement, and liquidation of funds (Espela et al., 2025).

Financial management practices in schools in the Philippines may differ depending on the category of school set by the DepEd, given schools' financial needs and management capacity (DepEd Order No. 60). Schools can be categorized as either schools with fiscal autonomy or implementing units, or schools without fiscal autonomy or non-implementing units. Implementing units are schools that directly receive the budget from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). In contrast, non-implementing units are those schools that do not receive a direct budget from the DBM. Non-fiscally autonomous schools receive budgets through their divisions. Usually, large schools are fiscally autonomous while small schools are not (Abellon et al., 2020).

Financial management is not a one-person task. School heads should involve and empower stakeholders and the finance team as key partners in preparing and managing school resources. Furthermore, it is the school's responsibility to ensure its stakeholders are informed about the transparency, accountability, and compliance that govern financial management (Mirando & Jalos, 2023). The school provides technical assistance to bookkeepers, disbursing officers, the Bids and Awards Committee, and the Inspectorate Team. The program also involves key stakeholders in budget preparation, financial reporting, and raising awareness in school operations.

Some of the best practices of school heads are advocating accountability and transparency, encouraging stakeholder engagement, and prioritizing programs and projects aligned with the SIP and AIP. School heads demonstrated very satisfactory financial management by strictly following guidelines, as evidenced by updated liquidation and transparent transactions. This means that financial management practices must always abide by the rules and regulations. Engaging stakeholders, empowering the finance team, and ensuring public transparency and accountability of transactions are necessary for effective financial management. Therefore, the implementation of good practices throughout the process determines the success of school heads' financial management. Schools were able to sustain their operating expenses through the school head’s engagement and involvement with stakeholders (Oliva et al., 2024).

The school heads' practices also revealed that their regular monitoring and internal audits helped in maintaining the fiscal integrity of their institutions. This enabled the schools to provide technical assistance to the finance teams, upskilling them with the necessary financial knowledge and skills to ensure that their management schemes align with the School Improvement Plan and Annual Improvement Plan. Integrating these school heads' practices into the financial model ensured effective financial management, providing a comprehensive scaffold, a transparent system, and aligned principles with the schools’ mission, vision, and overall goals. The best practices of school heads highlighted regular audits, clear reporting, and aligning financial management with the School Improvement Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan. These emphasized the significance of stakeholder engagement, transparency, and compliance with financial regulations in school management (Mamburao & Manubag, 2023).

Planning and Budgeting. Transparent and collaborative budgeting processes play a critical role in enhancing institutional performance in schools. Alvarez and Potane (2024) emphasized that transparent financial discussions, supported by structured budget dialogues, help align financial allocations with school priorities. Similarly, Bautista (2025) found that schools in which department heads actively participate in financial planning are more likely to distribute resources effectively. This highlights the importance of establishing structured consultation meetings where department leaders can present their financial needs and justify budget allocations. Furthermore, implementing standardized financial request systems can streamline funding procedures and ensure consistency across departments, ultimately leading to more balanced and equitable resource allocation.

Budgeting is a strategic tool that enables school leaders to plan and manage financial resources in alignment with institutional goals. According to Amaikwu and Ofojebe (2020), school budgeting involves quantifying school programs and activities in monetary terms, serving as a financial roadmap for the academic year. This process enables school principals to make informed spending decisions, avoid reckless expenditures, and prioritize key areas based on available funds. Effective financial planning includes setting clear objectives, managing time and human resources, purchasing learning materials, and accurately estimating costs (Alcantara, 2024). As Mirasol et al. (2021) pointed out, the Philippine government supports budgeting as a means to achieve the goal of “education for all,” thereby underscoring the principal’s role in practicing sound financial management.

In managing school funds, principals must balance the school's instructional and operational needs. Bore (2023) noted that one of the principal's primary responsibilities is ensuring that financial resources support classroom instruction. Chebet and Mugwe (2024) further emphasized that funds should be allocated to meet the teaching and learning needs of both students and teachers. Nachinguru and Mwila (2023) cited common uses of funds, such as the purchase of teaching aids and textbooks, support staff wages, and infrastructure improvements. While improving learning outcomes is a top priority, other necessary expenditures, such as those related to health, safety, and school property, often affect allocations for instructional resources. Schools must adopt a conservative approach to budgeting while strategically integrating innovation into national curriculum frameworks and legal policies.

Financial management and proper documentation are essential to ensure accountability and efficient use of funds. According to Amos et al. (2021), accurate record-keeping, such as maintaining receipt and cash books, not only facilitates financial audits but also strengthens the school's overall financial system. However, school heads continue to face challenges related to insufficient and delayed fund releases due to budget realignments and reductions, which hinder the effective implementation of school programs (Mark & Sylvia, 2022). These setbacks demonstrate the importance of integrating robust budgeting systems into future educational planning to ensure the continuity and sustainability of school operations.

To further enhance financial accountability, schools must adhere to national policies and auditing standards. The Department of Education (DepEd), through Order No. 29, series of 2019, mandates that financial transactions, particularly those involving MOOE funds, follow strict procedural and documentation guidelines. Additionally, the COA-DBM Joint Circular No. 2, series of 2022, emphasizes the role of the finance team in ensuring compliance with budgeting policies. This team is responsible for disbursement, authorization, and record-keeping, ensuring that all financial activities are properly documented and reported. Almazan (2023) noted that regular financial audits are key in identifying discrepancies and reinforcing transparency, ultimately fostering trust among stakeholders. Furthermore, the Revised School-Based Management (SBM) system promotes stakeholder engagement in financial matters, ensuring that all financial resources are properly managed in line with educational objectives.

Resource Allocation. Resources are broadly defined as means of supply or support that assist in meeting needs and accomplishing goals. While Glover and Levacic (2020) categorize resources as culture and knowledge, most scholars define resources more practically as encompassing time, personnel, materials, and money. Among these, financial resources remain central to educational success, particularly in the context of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in Philippine public schools. The effective allocation of these funds significantly enhances the quality of education, with a strong focus on supporting both students and teachers. School heads often prioritize procurement of classroom materials, aligning to improve learning outcomes. When MOOE funds are strategically directed toward instructional quality, such as learning materials and teacher development, there is a corresponding increase in student performance and engagement (Soroño and Quirap, 2023).

Studies support the notion that well-managed MOOE funds can positively impact student outcomes by enabling access to resources for academics, extracurricular activities, and essential services. To maximize this impact, school leaders are encouraged to assess student needs regularly and integrate these findings into their School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Annual Improvement Plan (AIP). Beyond instructional materials, many school administrators also allocate substantial funds to facility repairs and school maintenance, which are critical to creating functional and conducive learning environments. Ozcan (2021) emphasized that the physical state of school facilities directly affects academic performance, reinforcing the importance of infrastructure in educational outcomes. Consequently, strategic budgeting must balance both instructional and operational needs to foster better school performance.

However, schools often face challenges in monitoring resource consumption, ensuring cost-efficiency, and maximizing the lifespan of materials. Alvarez and Potane (2024) highlighted the necessity of rigorous oversight and structured planning to prevent resource wastage, while Espiritu (2020) emphasized that financial accountability improves when expenditure tracking systems are clearly defined. Financial management plays a vital role in enabling equitable distribution of educational opportunities, especially in high-poverty schools.

Study by Dedumo et al. (2024) found a positive, though non-linear, correlation between financial management and student achievement, highlighting that effective resource utilization, particularly in schools with limited means, can have a transformative impact. Sound budgeting practices, as discussed by Yasin and Mokhtar (2022), are crucial to minimizing expenses and aligning financial decisions with educational goals. This is echoed Njini et al. (2025), who pointed out that responsible fiscal planning promotes fairness, quality, and efficiency in education delivery. Government frameworks such as Republic Act No. 9155 and DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2016, underline the responsibilities of school administrators in managing financial and material resources effectively. Despite these policies, issues like management disparities and transparency concerns persist (Malipot, 2023), highlighting the need for continuous improvement in school financial governance.

According to Toctocan et al. (2023), effective financial resource allocation revolves around three key concerns: determining adequate funding levels, distributing resources based on student needs, and deploying available resources efficiently. For transformational schools, ensuring sufficient funding is directly tied to securing positive academic outcomes. Schools must allocate funds based on student demographics and learning contexts, especially for those in disadvantaged settings, to ensure academic equity. Moreover, financial management must be tailored to individual student needs, supporting them through tuition, learning materials, and academic services. Effective financial planning becomes even more crucial for students in challenging environments where equitable access to learning is often hindered.

Finally, planning plays a central role in shaping how resources are allocated in schools. As Pontarelli (2022) stated, planning involves the systematic determination of future resource use, while Frank (2025) emphasized that financial planning translates intentions into resource allocation that mirrors a school's priorities. This process requires principals and administrators to establish clear procedures to meet targeted goals over a specified time frame. Successful resource allocation demands not only equity and efficiency but also a strong understanding of legal, regulatory, and contractual guidelines. Principals must also possess knowledge of financial concepts, such as opportunity costs and unit costs, and apply these in decision-making processes involving both staff and stakeholders. In an era of school choice and increased accountability, school leaders must also focus on optimizing teacher-student matching, enhancing instructional quality, and supporting curricular and co-curricular initiatives. These skills collectively enable administrators to align resource allocation with educational priorities and institutional success.

Financial Resource Mobilization. The availability of adequate resources is a fundamental element in the success of any educational system. As Njoka and Ochieng (2023) emphasized, success is often the result of having the necessary resources available at the right time. Gwaro and Ngacha (2023) identified personnel, physical facilities, students, financial resources, and curriculum as the primary determinants of educational achievement. In this context, the resource mobilization skills of school heads are crucial. These skills involve the ability to identify potential donors, initiate fundraising campaigns, and engage in alternative income-generating activities to supplement the limited resources provided by the government.

Fundraising, as a key strategy in resource mobilization, involves soliciting voluntary financial contributions from charitable organizations, local businesses, or government institutions (Gao et al., 2022). It serves as a response to the persistent financial inadequacies faced by public schools. In countries like Tanzania, for instance, schools often rely on parental contributions and community support to raise funds for educational activities. However, Mosha et al. (2023) argued that the government alone cannot meet all school development needs, making community participation through fundraising an essential aspect of addressing resource gaps. Despite this, the actual implementation of such strategies in Tanzanian schools has been problematic. Mgaya and Onyango (2022) highlighted that many schools continue to face a lack of adequate classrooms and poor infrastructure, raising concerns about the effectiveness of current fundraising practices.

Studies conducted internationally reinforce the critical role of resource mobilization in school infrastructure development. In the United Kingdom, it was found that the successful implementation of infrastructure projects depends heavily on the availability and appropriate allocation of resources (Gwaro & Ngacha, 2023). Projects that are focused on tangible outcomes must include a clear estimation of the required resources to be successful. Similarly, in Kenya, Lawrence (2021) noted that effective resource mobilization requires not only fundraising capabilities but also strong donor relations, management skills, and the ability to generate both financial and in-kind contributions. While the government remains the primary source of funding in many countries, its support is often insufficient to meet all educational demands. Therefore, school leaders must proactively seek alternative resources to ensure the successful execution of their programs.

Resource mobilization skills are increasingly necessary due to rising budgetary constraints. Njuki et al. (2025) observed that many headteachers lack formal training in management and resource mobilization, limiting their capacity to respond to funding challenges. Volden and Welde (2022) further asserted that schools cannot solely rely on government allocations if they intend to achieve both short-term goals and long-term development. Hence, headteachers must develop the ability to mobilize resources through innovative strategies, including income-generating projects and community partnerships. Rico (2021) documented the widespread adoption of alternative funding strategies, such as PTA levies, school farms, classroom rentals, and the hiring out of school buses for social events. These efforts not only supplement school budgets but also empower school leaders to address the diverse and evolving needs of their students and institutions.

A study by Ossai et al. (2024) explored the relationship between principals' resource mobilization skills and their administrative effectiveness. Using a survey design with ANOVA for analysis, the study found that principals who effectively mobilized financial, human, and physical resources demonstrated significantly higher levels of administrative performance. These findings underscore the importance of equipping school leaders with the necessary skills and support systems to effectively mobilize resources. Based on these results, it was recommended that educational authorities such as the Ministry of Education and the State Education Board prioritize the provision of sufficient funding, conducive work environments, adequate facilities, and well-equipped libraries to enhance school leadership and performance.

The literature affirms that the capacity of school leaders to mobilize resources is indispensable for school development and educational success. While governments play a crucial role in funding public education, the persistent gap between available resources and actual needs requires school heads to employ creative and strategic approaches to resource mobilization. These include fostering community participation, initiating income-generating projects, and establishing partnerships with stakeholders. With adequate training and policy support, school leaders can become effective resource mobilizers, thereby ensuring that schools are better equipped to achieve their academic and infrastructural goals (Mujithapha et al., 2024).

Financial Accountability. Financial accountability in educational institutions is fundamental to the responsible and efficient use of public funds. According to Faku and Mulaudzi (2024), financial accountability refers to the use of public resources in alignment with principles of propriety, austerity, and efficiency. Sebidi (2023) emphasized that it involves reporting financial actions taken and being held responsible for those actions.

Dzagah et al. (2025) further defined accountability as being liable and responsible for specific decisions or actions. Within the school context, principals act as financial managers, responsible for budgeting, implementing financial plans, controlling expenditures, and reporting outcomes (Chebet & Mugwe, 2024). Financial management also encompasses a school's accounting systems, which aim to enforce prudent control and provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the school's financial status (Gaspar et al., 2022).

Transparency and accountability are not only essential to school governance but are also enshrined in legal frameworks. As stated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution (Section 28, Article II), the government is mandated to adopt a policy of full public disclosure for all transactions involving public interest. Similarly, Republic Act No. 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 stipulates that accountability and transparency must be operationalized across all levels of educational governance. Since public schools are funded by the state, they are required to manage education funds in accordance with equity, efficiency, and accountability principles (Damianus & Macaspac, 2023).

Despite these provisions, studies have identified several concerns in the actual implementation of financial management in schools. For instance, some school heads neglect financial monitoring responsibilities due to competing administrative tasks. Others lack adequate knowledge and skills to properly manage school finances. Previous studies have also noted the absence of research into effective accountability practices that could serve as models for other school leaders. This gap highlights the need to investigate how school heads maintain financial transparency and ensure responsible fund usage (Merano, 2023).

Operational guidelines have been established to mitigate misuse. For example, all school income must be identified, receipted, recorded, and deposited into the school's official bank account, and no individual is permitted to retain school funds for personal control or deposit them elsewhere. These practices aim to protect school finances from misappropriation and ensure funds are used solely for educational purposes. Ultimately, financial responsibility is critical to ensuring that school funds are effectively used to benefit learners. Factors such as regular supervision, visionary leadership, transparent communication, proper auditing, and adequate educational funding play significant roles in enhancing accountability in the education system. Therefore, strengthening the financial literacy and management skills of school leaders remains a vital strategy in improving the overall governance and transparency of public-school operations (Irsandi et al., 2024).

Utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) of School Heads

Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) are a vital part of the financial management framework in educational institutions, particularly within the Basic Education System. MOOE encompasses costs related to the day-to-day operations of schools, including maintenance, utilities, supplies, and other operational expenses that are not directly tied to the delivery of educational services (Bantugan et al., 2023). The efficient allocation and management of these funds are critical as they directly impact the quality of education and the overall learning environment. Research has indicated that MOOE funds are allocated to procure essential supplies, pay for utilities, support communication needs, conduct training activities, facilitate graduation rites, and maintain security (Arevalo & Comighud, 2020). Typically, school heads are entrusted with managing these funds, making them responsible for ensuring that the allocated resources meet the educational and operational needs of the institution.

The allocation and use of MOOE funds remain a significant challenge for school heads, particularly given the limited budgets schools often face. Budgeting for the continuous improvement of school facilities and services requires careful planning and prioritization. In many instances, school leaders' resort to using personal funds to bridge gaps and sustain operations to maintain educational quality. The Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) is a guiding document in the utilization of MOOE funds; however, the fulfillment of the minimum set standards depends heavily on budget availability. The Department of Education (DepEd) has issued policies such as DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2016, to decentralize education management and empower schools to manage their resources directly. This policy aims to create an environment of continuous improvement by transferring operational responsibilities to schools, thus fostering autonomy and accountability (Longaquit & Saro, 2024).

The government's commitment to enhancing basic education is evident in the increased budget allocations between 2010 and 2018, alongside various reform programs targeting equitable access and improved learning outcomes (Mirasol et al., 2021). Nonetheless, as schools age and enrollments grow, the demand for maintenance and operational funds also rises, adding pressure on the MOOE allocations. Studies further highlight the importance of transparency and teacher involvement in the financial planning process to optimize the use of MOOE funds. Teachers' participation not only promotes accountability but also ensures that expenditures address the real needs of the school community. Despite the availability of financial data through mandated transparency boards, many schools and stakeholders do not effectively utilize this information to identify or prevent financial problems, partly due to a heavy dependence on government funding (Gueta et al., 2024).

Research reveals that many school principals lack adequate knowledge about the formula used for MOOE allocation, with less than 10% knowing it correctly, according to the Public Education Expenditure Tracking and Quantitative Service Delivery Study (PETS-QSDS). This lack of knowledge hampers their ability to verify if the school is receiving appropriate funding (cited by Almazan, 2023). Moreover, only about 40% of parents are aware that schools receive MOOE funds, which limits community oversight.

The DepEd Order No. 15, s. 2020 expanded the scope of MOOE-eligible expenses to include Alternative Learning Materials, Personal Protective Equipment, sanitation facilities, and minor classroom improvements in response to evolving educational needs (Abellon et al., 2020). Principals tend to prioritize utilities over other expenses, such as minor repairs and grounds maintenance, but often demonstrate flexibility and resourcefulness by involving stakeholders and aligning budget priorities with academic excellence (Miranda & Perez, 2021).

Despite its importance, managing MOOE funds presents several challenges. School heads often struggle with transparency and accountability due to inadequate budgeting processes and poor record-keeping (Almazan, 2023). The complexities of monthly liquidation reports, delayed cash advances, insufficient funds, and the lack of trained administrative staff further complicate financial management (Espiritu, 2020). Additionally, some schools have been investigated for financial irregularities, including misappropriation, fraud, and theft. These challenges highlight the critical need for improved financial management training and stronger institutional controls to ensure that MOOE funds are properly allocated and utilized to sustain school operations (Mugala et al., 2023).

School Operation and Development. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) jointly establish the guidelines for the release and use of the Maintenance and Other

Operating Expenses (MOOE) fund. MOOE refers to the budget allocated to public elementary and secondary schools, intended to finance activities and essential needs that support learning programs and help maintain a safe, healthy school environment. These funds are designated for purchasing school supplies, reproducing teacher-made instructional materials, and covering utility bills, including electricity, water, communications, and internet expenses. Additionally, MOOE covers training programs to address the school's most urgent needs and improve educational outcomes, as well as costs for security, janitorial services, minor repairs, and other necessary expenses related to teaching and learning. Since the adoption of the updated MOOE funding formula in 2013, the number of learners is no longer the sole basis for funding allocation; other factors, such as the number of teachers, classrooms, and graduating students, as well as a fixed basic amount, are also considered. From 2016 onward, financial support for special programs has been integrated into the school operations budget. School heads are tasked with ensuring that all planned activities and programs are feasible and accounted for within the MOOE budget, which requires them to manage school finances effectively to meet educational objectives (Viernes, 2022).

To guarantee equitable access to quality education and promote holistic student development, DepEd has launched various reforms, resulting in a significant increase in government spending on basic education from 2010 to 2018. Research indicates that as schools age and student populations grow, the demand for facility maintenance and operational costs likewise rises (Navarro, 2022). School budget allocation, particularly through MOOE, plays a crucial role in reinforcing school-based management and accountability. Collaboration between school heads and budget officers ensures that funds are carefully planned and utilized in line with the Annual Improvement Plan (AIP). This process involves prioritizing expenditures such as utilities, training, security, travel, communication, repairs, and other operational needs (Abellon et al., 2020).

DepEd is committed to supporting schools by enhancing the availability and management of resources to improve teaching and learning outcomes (Gipaya, 2022). Financial management reforms have shifted responsibility and accountability for managing MOOE funds to school heads and administrative personnel, ensuring that funds are effectively used to develop school facilities and create safe, healthy environments conducive to learning (Ondong, 2024).

Moreover, a study by Abellon et al. (2020) found that Schools Division Offices (SDOs) have the authority to pre-allocate MOOE funds to schools, particularly those lacking fiscal autonomy. This approach allows schools to plan their budgets more effectively within government accounting and auditing frameworks. The study also stresses the importance of compliance with DepEd Order No. 013, s. 2016, which requires schools to submit monthly liquidation reports to the SDO for oversight, ensuring transparency and adherence to government financial standards.

Teachers' Welfare and Development. Welfare management is a complex and evolving challenge within human resource management. For any organization to meet its goals, effective management of its human resources, especially through employee welfare programs, is essential. In schools, achieving objectives largely depends on implementing welfare packages that motivate teachers and staff. While many factors influence school performance, providing welfare is a critical foundation for motivating personnel and driving success (Johnson et al., 2023).

Teachers play a vital role in the education system, significantly impacting student achievement and overall school effectiveness. However, public schools often face challenges in efficiently allocating and utilizing Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) funds, which are intended to cover operational needs. The effectiveness of MOOE funding remains under scrutiny, particularly regarding its influence on teaching quality and student development. In the Philippine education context, teachers' ability to fulfill their roles depends heavily on the proper allocation and use of MOOE, which supports essential items like instructional materials, utilities, and professional development. Despite this, discrepancies between allocated budgets and actual spending raise concerns about the extent to which teachers' welfare and professional growth are supported (Abio et al., 2025).

Recent studies emphasize the critical role of MOOE in creating a productive learning environment. Research by Balagosa and Arnejo (2023) showed that effective management of MOOE improves both teacher satisfaction and student engagement. However, there is still a limited understanding of how teachers perceive and use these funds.

Although Tagoranao (2024) documented links between resource allocation and teacher welfare, there is little exploration of MOOE's direct impact on educators' professional development.

Even with increased government education funding, MOOE's ability to sustainably support teacher welfare and development requires further examination. For instance, Cruz et al. (2023) evaluated MOOE use in instructional practices but did not fully explore how teachers view its role in their growth. Thus, assessing teachers' perceptions of MOOE utilization, especially for school-based training, instructional resources, utilities, and alignment with the School Improvement Plan (SIP), is crucial.

Recognizing that teachers sustain the educational system, it is essential to motivate them for student academic success. School leaders should implement incentive strategies to boost teacher performance. When teachers are well supported and motivated through welfare initiatives funded in part by MOOE, they are more likely to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, even when faced with challenges (Kairania & Nabirye, 2025).

Students' Welfare and Development. University education plays a crucial role in preparing graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary for both economic progress and social advancement. Consequently, higher education institutions face growing demands to deliver not only high-quality education but also enriching student experiences (Kaur & Amanpreet, 2020; Sohail & Hasan, 2021). A vital component of this quality is the comprehensive welfare and development of students, encompassing academic support, health services, counseling, and campus facilities. These welfare provisions significantly influence students' perceptions of institutional quality and contribute to the university's reputation and long-term sustainability (Sadera et al., 2022).

Student welfare services are fundamental in promoting the physical, mental, and social well-being of learners within academic institutions. In universities, these services commonly include sports and recreation, catering, counseling, and healthcare. The provision of high-quality welfare services positively impacts student well-being, academic outcomes, satisfaction, and institutional loyalty (Sultana et al., 2021). For example, catering services fulfill students' basic nutritional needs, which are crucial for maintaining energy levels and focus during classes, while also facilitating social interaction (Kuja et al., 2024).

Access to effective counseling helps students adapt to new environments and address personal challenges that might otherwise impede academic success (Rose et al., 2024). Given that university years often represent a transition to greater independence and decision-making responsibility, investing in healthcare services is imperative to support students' physical and mental health, thereby preventing adverse effects on academic achievement (Oladipo & Oladejo, 2020). Moreover, sports and recreational activities contribute to stress management, leadership development, emotional regulation, lifelong health habits, and improved academic performance (Nguri, 2024).

Instructional materials, ranging from textbooks to digital media and supplementary aids, are central to effective teaching and learning by facilitating content delivery and engaging students (Ordu, 2021). Although different stakeholders may have varied perspectives on these materials, their shared purpose is to enhance learning and academic success. In public education institutions, the procurement and upkeep of such resources are often financed through MOOE. This funding enables schools and universities to acquire both essential core materials and additional resources necessary for cognitive growth and skills development.

Providing students with access to relevant, updated, and diverse instructional materials directly supports their welfare by fostering inclusive, engaging, and adaptable learning environments (Bacia, 2024). It also ensures that diverse learning needs, whether for enrichment or remediation, are met, promoting equitable education for all students. When MOOE funds are strategically used to acquire and improve instructional materials, they help ensure quality education, promote academic achievement, and ultimately support students' overall welfare and holistic growth (Ecija, 2020).

Financial Management Practices and Utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) of School Heads

Financial management in schools involves various tasks, including preparing budgets, reporting on finances, allocating resources, managing procurement, and adhering to financial regulations. Riyadi et al. (2021) emphasize that school administrators must efficiently manage and allocate MOOE funds. However, gaps in knowledge and insufficient training can impede decision-making, leading to inefficient use of resources and missed opportunities to enhance the educational environment. Access to updated and relevant information on MOOE is vital for school leaders, but limited resources can hamper their ability to manage funds appropriately, increasing the risk of misallocation.

Legal frameworks such as Republic Act No. 9155 define the dual role of school heads as instructional leaders and administrative managers. The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) further stress the importance of effective financial management aligned with established policies. DepEd Order 60, s. 2016 highlights ongoing professional development in financial management and recognizes school leaders as catalysts for change. Additionally, DepEd Order No. 008, s. 2019, mandated transparency in declaring all sources of school funding, including MOOE, donations, grants, and stakeholder support. Despite these frameworks, studies such as Espiritu (2020) reveal that some school heads lack sufficient financial management procedures, underscoring the need for reorientation and capacity-building initiatives to improve their professional and ethical competencies (Buban & Janer, 2024).

Educational resources are vital in creating dynamic learning environments, enabling teachers to unlock students' potential. The Philippine government primarily supports public schools' financial needs through MOOE, with supplementary funds from Local Government Units (LGUs) via the Special Education Fund (SEF) (Dwangu & Mahlangu, 2021; Wadasen, 2024). The government ensures a significant portion of the national budget is allocated to education and mandates the effective and equitable use of these funds to achieve quality education (Radiamoda, 2021). MOOE is the primary budget allocated to public schools for operational expenses (Almazan, 2023).

While the national government primarily shoulders basic education, LGUs act as important partners by providing additional funding from sustainable local sources (Sicat et al., 2020). DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2019 also recognizes alternative funding streams such as donations, PTA contributions, canteen operations, and income-generating projects (Espiritu, 2020).

As financial resources are critical organizational assets (Yizengaw & Agegnehu, 2021), effective financial management is essential for maximizing performance and minimizing financial risks. School leaders must prudently prioritize and allocate limited resources to meet institutional goals, as poor financial management can lead to the misuse of funds and project neglect (Odide, 2021). To run a functional school, a comprehensive approach is required to address learning, infrastructure, operations, safety, and learner welfare (Hontanosas & Maed, 2024). Public schools rely heavily on MOOE funds to meet these diverse needs, including classroom and office supplies. Interviews with school heads revealed that strategic prioritization is crucial when utilizing MOOE funds to balance urgent and important needs, ensuring smooth school operations and supporting both student and staff development (Daraman et al., 2024).

Principals play a central role in school financial management, encompassing budgeting, resource planning, human resource management, procurement, and cost control (Hernandez, 2024). They are also responsible for sourcing additional funds to support institutional goals. Effective financial management includes accurate financial reporting and documentation (Armstrog, 2025). Given government support for budgeting, principals must manage finances competently to ensure inclusive, high-quality education (Odigwe & Owan, 2022).

The role of principals has evolved with educational reforms, positioning them as both instructional leaders and chief financial officers, acting as teachers and bursars simultaneously (Sharif, 2020). When principals apply sound financial management practices, transparency and accountability improve, facilitating successful program implementation and academic excellence (Supriadi et al., 2021). Through planning, controlling, and monitoring school finances, principals ensure that budgeting, accounting, and utilization of MOOE funds are conducted effectively, thereby enhancing overall school performance (Santos et al., 2021).

Synthesis

The relevant research and studies gathered strongly affirmed the connection between the variables examined in this study, offering valuable insights into each factor involved. The relationship between financial management practices and school heads' utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) is rooted in leaders' capacity to effectively plan, allocate, and monitor resources to support school operations and improvement. Sound financial management practices, such as transparent budgeting, strategic prioritization of expenditures, adherence to accounting guidelines, and regular financial reporting, ensure that MOOE funds are used efficiently and aligned with DepEd policies and school development plans.

When school heads demonstrate strong financial management competencies, MOOE allocations are more likely to be directed toward essential needs such as instructional materials, facility maintenance, and learner support services, thereby maximizing their impact on teaching and learning. Conversely, weak financial management can lead to misallocation, underutilization, or noncompliance issues that hinder school performance. This interplay underscores the importance of equipping school heads with both the technical skills and ethical grounding necessary for prudent and accountable use of public funds.

This section highlights, with support from multiple studies, the association between financial management practices and utilization of MOOE of school heads. Access to discussions and presentations on relevant research is essential for thoroughly analyzing the study's results and offering well-informed recommendations.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study was mainly anchored on Agency Theory by Jensen and Meckling (1976) as cited in Hendrastuti and Harahap (2023). This theory could be applied to the school context to analyze the relationship between stakeholders (principals) and those who manage the school (agents). This framework helps clarify potential conflicts of interest and the costs of delegating authority, particularly when principals and agents have differing goals or face information asymmetry.

In the context of the study, this theory explained the relationship between principals (the government or the Department of Education) and agents (school heads) in the management of resources. It highlighted the importance of accountability, transparency, and proper utilization of funds to meet organizational goals while minimizing conflicts of interest. In the context of MOOE, it underscored the responsibility of school heads to act in the best interest of stakeholders and ensure proper financial management.

Another theory that supported this study is the Stewardship Theory by Donaldson and Davis (1991, as cited in Scott, 2023). This theory aims to promote effective and efficient management in the organization. Stewardship theory has been the biggest development in the field of management, supporting managers by framing them as caretakers of the organization. The theory suggests that managers are supposed to act in the best interest of the company.

In the context of the study, this theory posited that leaders, such as school heads, act as stewards whose primary goal is to protect and maximize the resources entrusted to them for the benefit of the organization and its stakeholders. Applied to MOOE utilization, it emphasizes the role of school heads in responsibly managing funds to improve teaching and learning conditions, rather than for personal gain.

Also, this study was aligned with the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory by Barney (1991, as cited in Utami & Alamanos, 2025). RBV suggests that an organization’s resources, when managed effectively, can create sustainable advantages. For schools, MOOE funds are vital resources that, if allocated and utilized strategically, can enhance school performance, improve facilities, and strengthen teaching and learning processes. This theory supports analyzing how financial management practices influence resource optimization.

In the context of schools, when school heads implement sound financial management practices, such as transparent budgeting, strategic allocation, and efficient utilization, MOOE funds can directly contribute to improving school performance, upgrading facilities, procuring essential learning materials, and supporting various instructional programs. This alignment with the RBV underscores that effective stewardship of MOOE is not merely about compliance with policies but also about maximizing its potential to create long-term benefits for students, teachers, and the entire school community.

The conceptual model of the study focuses on the level of financial management practices and utilization of the MOOE of school heads. The independent variable is the financial management practices of school heads. It has four indicators, namely: planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability (Ban, Bautista, & Baustista, 2025).

In this study, planning and budgeting refer to the systematic process of identifying school needs, setting priorities, and allocating available resources to ensure the effective and efficient achievement of educational goals. Resource allocation is the deliberate distribution of available funds and resources to priority programs, projects, and activities that support the school's goals and operational needs. Financial resource mobilization is the strategic process of securing additional funds and resources from various sources to support and enhance the school's programs, projects, and operations. Financial accountability is the responsibility to ensure that all funds are used transparently and appropriately, in compliance with established policies and regulations, and that financial transactions are accurately reported.

Meanwhile, the dependent variable is utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE). It has three indicators, namely: school operation and development, teachers' welfare and development, and students' welfare and development (Arevalo & Comighud, 2020). In this study, school operation and development refer to the effective use of allocated funds to support the school's day-to-day functioning and to implement programs and projects that enhance its overall quality and performance. Teachers' welfare and development refers to the allocation of funds to support programs, activities, and resources that promote teachers' well-being, professional growth, and effectiveness in performing their roles. Students' welfare and development refers to the provision of funds for programs, services, and activities that enhance learners' well-being, academic performance, and overall personal growth.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the study's methodology, including the research design, research participants, research tools, data collection procedures, and data analysis to be used in this investigation.

Method Used

This study employed a quantitative research framework, specifically using a descriptive correlational method. The structured exploration of phenomena characterizes quantitative research through the collection of numerical data and the application of statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Grounded in the positivist perspective, this approach emphasizes statistical methods, including hypothesis testing, inferential analysis, and mathematical modeling. Additionally, quantitative research includes methodologies such as experimental and quasi-experimental designs, random assignment, blinding, and structured instruments, such as questionnaires with fixed response options (Ahmad et al., 2019).

A descriptive correlational research design sought to outline the characteristics of variables and explore the degree of association between them. Bhat (2024) explained that this approach involved gathering data to examine specific variables and assess their interrelationships. The primary objective was to provide a comprehensive view of the variables and their relationships, without modifying them or implying causal links. This design was effective for identifying patterns and correlations while ensuring an objective analysis of the data.

The study was appropriate as quantitative descriptive correlational research because it systematically measured and analyzed numerical data to determine the extent and nature of the relationship between school heads' financial management practices and their utilization of MOOE. This approach allowed the researcher to describe the prevailing practices and utilization patterns, quantify their occurrence, and identify possible associations without manipulating variables. By employing statistical tools, the study provided objective and reliable findings that could guide stakeholders in formulating policies, improving budget utilization strategies, and enhancing financial accountability within the division. The method's structured nature ensured that the results are evidence-based, comparable, and applicable for decision-making in educational financial management.

Sources of Data

This study targeted 156 public secondary teachers from Panabo City Division. By applying Slovin's Formula with a 0.05 margin of error, the initial population of 245 teachers teaching Grades 7 to 10, each with at least 5 years of teaching experience, was reduced to 156. This approach was aligned with Memon et al. (2020), who suggested that although a minimum sample size of 50 was acceptable for Pearson analysis, a sample size of 100 was generally preferred in research contexts. Therefore, the selection of 156 teachers was more than adequate to meet the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study used an adapted survey questionnaire, specifically crafted for its research objectives. The questionnaire was structured into two distinct sections to address the research effectively aims. The first section evaluated financial management practices, while the second section focused on measuring school heads' utilization of the MOOE.

Financial Management Practices

The financial management practices questionnaire was adapted from Ban, Bautista, and Baustista (2025). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It was composed of four (4) indicators, namely: planning and budgeting (1-5), resource allocation (1-5), financial resource mobilization (1-5), and financial accountability (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing with a Cronbach's alpha of .85. The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency, indicating that the items reliably measure the intended construct. Below was the rating scale of the financial management practices of school heads.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The financial management practices of school heads are always evident.
3.40-4.19	High	The financial management practices of school heads are oftentimes evident.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The financial management practices of school heads are occasionally evident.
1.80-2.59	Low	The financial management practices of school heads are seldom evident.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The financial management practices of school heads are never evident.

Utilization of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE)

The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of questionnaire was adapted from Arevalo and Comighud (2020). The instrument consisted of 15 items. It had the following indicators: school operations and development (1-5), teachers' welfare and development (1-5), and students' welfare and development (1-5). This was subjected to pilot testing, leading to a Cronbach's Alpha of .87, indicating that the items reliably measure the intended construct. Below is the utilization rating scale for the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads is always evident.
3.40-4.19	High	The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads is oftentimes evident.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads is occasionally evident.
1.80-2.59	Low	The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads is seldom evident.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The utilization of the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of school heads is never evident.

The research instrument for this study was revised to ensure it aligned closely with the research objectives and goals. It was evaluated for content validity by three expert validators. Following this evaluation, the survey questionnaire underwent pilot testing with thirty (30) public secondary teachers who were not part of the designated respondent group to assess its reliability. The researcher consistently integrated feedback, suggestions, and comments from the advisor, panel members, and expert validators in an iterative manner. This process was essential for refining the instrument and ensuring it accurately measures the intended constructs.

Sampling Technique

The researcher employed a probability sampling technique, cluster random sampling, to select the samples. This method involved dividing the larger population into smaller subgroups, or clusters, and then randomly selecting some of these clusters to form the sample. Cluster random sampling was particularly advantageous for managing large populations and achieving the desired sample size, as it streamlined the research process by reducing the number of participants needed when the overall population was too large to study comprehensively (Simkus, 2023). In this study, the researcher ensured that the selected schools were adequately represented in the sample.

In this study, the inclusion criteria comprised public secondary school teachers from the Panabo City Division who are currently teaching Grades 7 to 10 and have at least 5 years of teaching experience, ensuring that participants have sufficient familiarity with classroom and school operations to provide relevant insights. Teachers who did not meet these requirements were excluded from the study to maintain the focus on experienced educators within the targeted grade levels. Additionally, respondents were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences, ensuring that participation remained fully voluntary and ethical while respecting the autonomy of all selected teachers.

Procedure of the Study

The researcher adhered to a rigorous procedure and protocol for data collection, ensuring that the well-being of the respondents was protected at all times. All aspects of ethical considerations were strictly observed and implemented throughout the study.

Permission to Conduct the Study

After receiving approval from the Ethics Committee on November 11, 2025, and an endorsement from the Dean of Graduate Studies on November 22, 2025, the researcher formally requested permission and endorsement from the Division of Panabo City on January 12, 2026. Following this, an endorsement letter was issued to the respective school heads last February 2, 2026, to secure the necessary final authorization and support for the study. Once granted, the researcher coordinated with the school heads to set the schedule for distributing the survey questionnaire.

Distribution and Retrieval of the Questionnaire

Following this, a schedule was established for administering the survey questionnaire, ensuring strict adherence to health and safety protocols. The questionnaire was distributed directly to the participants from February 2, 2026, to February 13, 2026, with all necessary precautions carefully observed. Respondents were given a comprehensive briefing on the study’s objectives and were given 1 hour to complete the survey. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were conducted on school days, taking into account the respondents’ availability.

Collation and Statistical Treatment of Data

All the data gathered were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted confidentially and accordingly. This was made possible with the help of the designated Statistician.

Statistical Treatment

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized. These tools were used to address the problem statement and the study's hypotheses.

Mean. It is the average of a set of numbers. This was used to measure the level of financial management practices and utilization of MOOE of school heads. It answered the statements of problems 1 and 2.

Standard Deviation. Standard deviation was utilized in the study entitled Financial Management Practices and Utilization of MOOE of School Heads in Panabo City Division to measure the extent of variation or consistency in the responses of the respondents regarding the variables being studied. Specifically, it determined how closely or widely the responses of teachers and participants differed from the computed mean scores on financial management practices and MOOE utilization. A low standard deviation indicated that the respondents' answers were closely clustered around the mean, signifying consistency and agreement in their perceptions, while a high standard deviation showed greater variability and differing viewpoints among respondents. Through this statistical tool, the researchers were able to assess the reliability and uniformity of the data gathered, thereby providing a clearer interpretation of the level of financial management practices and the effectiveness of MOOE utilization among school heads in the Panabo City Division.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

This was utilized to determine the relationship between financial management practices and utilization of MOOE of school heads. It answered the statement of the problem 3 and the first hypothesis.

Regression Analysis

This determined the significant influence of financial management practices on utilization of MOOE of school heads. It answered the statement of the problem 4 and the second hypothesis.

Ethical Consideration

The ethical considerations of this study highlighted the importance of conducting research responsibly, with particular emphasis on ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. Accordingly, all ethical standards and research protocols were explicitly detailed in this quantitative study. These factors were closely aligned with the chosen methodology, and the research strictly followed the ethical guidelines established by the Rizal Memorial Colleges Ethics Review Committee.

Social Value

This study would hold significant social value as it provided insights that could enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the use of public funds. In examining how school heads managed and allocated MOOE, the findings would help ensure that resources were maximized to directly support teaching and learning, improve school facilities, and address the needs of learners. The results would also guide policymakers, education leaders, and stakeholders in implementing evidence-based strategies that would strengthen financial governance in schools, thereby fostering trust within the community and contributing to the overall improvement of the local education system.

Informed Consent Form

In this study, the researcher addressed the informed consent process by ensuring that all respondents were fully informed about the purpose, objectives, procedures, and potential benefits of the research before their participation. The informed consent form clearly outlined their rights, including the assurance that participation was voluntary, that they may withdraw at any time without any consequences, and that their confidentiality and anonymity were protected. The researcher provided respondents with sufficient time to read and understand the form; entertain any questions they had and obtained their signed consent as a formal agreement to participate in the study.

Vulnerability of the Research Respondents

In this undertaking, the researcher addressed the vulnerability of the respondents by ensuring that their participation was not exposed them to any form of risk, harm, or discomfort. The researcher took proactive measures to safeguard their professional reputation by maintaining strict confidentiality of their identities and responses, using codes or pseudonyms instead of names. Any information that could potentially link responses to individual respondents was securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher created a respectful and non-judgmental environment during data gathering, ensuring that respondents felt safe and comfortable in sharing honest and accurate information without fear of reprisal or negative consequences.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety

In this undertaking, the researcher addressed the risks, benefits, and safety of the respondents by ensuring that the research process did not cause any physical, psychological, or professional harm. Minimal risks, such as discomfort with sharing financial management practices, were mitigated by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. The potential benefits included providing respondents with an opportunity to reflect on and improve their financial management practices, as well as contributing valuable insights to strengthen school governance. To ensure safety, all data were handled with strict security measures, and the researcher adhered to established ethical guidelines, ensuring that respondents participated in a respectful, transparent, and risk-free environment.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Information

In this study, the researcher addressed the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents' information by implementing strict measures to protect their identities and responses. All data provided by the respondents were coded or anonymized to prevent any personal identification, and access to the collected information was limited exclusively to the researcher. Any records, electronic or physical, were securely stored throughout the study and used solely for research purposes. The researcher also ensured that results were reported in a manner that prevented the disclosure of individual respondents' information, thereby safeguarding their privacy and maintaining their trust throughout the study.

Justice

In this undertaking, the researcher addressed the principle of justice by ensuring that all respondents were treated fairly, equally, and without discrimination throughout the research process. Selection of respondents was based on clear and equitable criteria, giving every eligible participant an equal opportunity to contribute to the study. The researcher ensured that the benefits of the study, such as insights into effective financial management practices, were accessible to all respondents and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the researcher upheld fairness by respecting the respondents' rights, giving equal consideration to their perspectives, and avoiding any form of bias or favoritism in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Transparency

In this study, the researcher addressed transparency by ensuring that all respondents were fully informed about the research objectives, procedures, and the intended use of the data. The researcher clearly explained how the respondents' information was collected, analyzed, and reported, allowing them to understand the purpose and scope of their participation. Any questions or concerns from respondents were addressed openly, and regular updates on the research process were provided when appropriate. The researcher ensured that respondents had confidence in the research's integrity and clarity.

Recruitment

In this study, the researcher addressed respondent recruitment by employing a systematic and fair approach to invite eligible participants. The researcher provided clear information about the study's purpose, significance, and procedures to all potential respondents, ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary. Invitations to participate were extended through official and appropriate channels, and respondents were given sufficient time to consider their involvement. The researcher also ensured that recruitment was conducted without coercion, favoritism, or bias, so that all respondents had an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Conflict of Interest (COI)

In this undertaking, the researcher addressed potential conflicts of interest by ensuring that all interactions with respondents were impartial and objective. The researcher disclosed any personal or professional relationships that may influence the study and took steps to prevent these from affecting data collection, analysis, or interpretation. Respondents were assured that any favoritism or bias did not influence their participation, and that the results were reported honestly and accurately. The researcher ensured that the study upheld integrity and that respondents' trust and confidence were preserved.

Adequacy of Facilities

In this study, the researcher assessed the adequacy of facilities by ensuring that respondents had access to a comfortable, suitable environment for participation. The researcher prepared and provided all necessary materials, tools, and resources required for the smooth conduct of data collection, such as questionnaires, interview guides, and digital platforms if applicable. Any logistical or technical support needed by respondents to complete their participation was provided to prevent disruptions. By ensuring that the facilities and resources were adequate, the researcher facilitated a productive and efficient process, allowing respondents to contribute fully and accurately to the study.

Qualification of the Researcher

The researcher holds a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy and a Master's in Business Administration. He is a Certified Public Accountant and a Licensed Professional Teacher, demonstrating strong competence in both financial management and education. His relevant experience includes serving as an Accountant III in the Department of Education, Panabo City Division (2009–2025), where he gained extensive experience in managing and overseeing government funds, including school financial operations. He is currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Educational Management program at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., where this study on financial management practices and MOOE utilization of school heads was developed under the guidance of his research adviser and panel of experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study. These are the findings of the problems raised in the previous chapter. They are presented both in textual and tabular forms.

Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

In terms of Planning and Budgeting

The level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of planning and budgeting shows that the overall mean is 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.655, at a high level. This means that the level of financial management practices of school heads, particularly in planning and budgeting, is often evident. The data indicate that all 5 statements show high results. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: talking to every department head to ensure that their financial needs are allocated accordingly (4.15), prioritizing academic needs over the school's physical development (4.13), and holding a consultative meeting with teachers, students, and parents to ensure balanced allocation of funds (4.10). These items prove that the level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of Planning and budgeting are often evident.

The data presented indicates that these practices are oftentimes evident among the respondents. The result suggests that school heads consistently demonstrate sound financial planning behaviors, particularly in aligning financial decisions with institutional priorities and stakeholder needs. A high overall mean further implies that financial planning and budgeting are not merely procedural tasks but are actively practiced as part of school leadership responsibilities. A closer examination of the individual indicators shows that all five statements obtained high ratings, reinforcing the overall interpretation. The highest-rated practice involves consulting with every department head to ensure the appropriate allocation of funds, prioritizing academic needs over physical development, and conducting consultative meetings with teachers, students, and parents to ensure balanced fund distribution. These findings highlight a participatory, needs-based approach to budgeting that reflects transparency, collaboration, and an academic focus in financial decision-making. The data confirm that school heads frequently engage with stakeholders and apply strategic priorities when managing school finances.

The high level of planning and budgeting among school heads supports the findings of Alvarez and Potane (2024), who emphasized that transparent financial discussions, facilitated through structured budget dialogues, help ensure that resource allocations align with school priorities. Similarly, Bautista (2025) reported that schools where department heads actively engage in financial planning are more effective in distributing resources, underscoring the value of structured consultation meetings that allow department leaders to present their financial needs and justify budget allocations.

In line with the study's findings, Amaikwu and Ofojebe (2020) noted that school budgeting entails quantifying programs and activities in monetary terms, providing a clear financial roadmap for the academic year. This enables school principals to make informed spending decisions, avoid unnecessary expenditures, and prioritize critical areas based on available funds. Additionally, Alcantara (2024) highlighted that effective financial planning requires setting clear objectives, managing time and human resources, procuring necessary learning materials, and accurately estimating costs, all of which contribute to the efficient and strategic management of school resources.

Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

In terms of Resource Allocation

The level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of resource allocation shows that the overall mean is 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.575, at a high level. This means that the level of financial management practices of school heads, particularly in resource allocation, is often evident. The data indicate that all 5 statements show high results. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: leading in the planning of all resource allocation (4.18), focusing on the spending of resources based on agreed projections (4.17), and managing school resources in accordance with DepEd Policies, accounting, and auditing rules (4.16). These items show that the level of financial management practices of school heads, particularly in resource allocation, is often evident.

The results indicate that resource allocation practices are oftentimes evident among school heads. The result suggests that school leaders consistently demonstrate responsibility and strategic oversight in distributing school resources. A high overall rating implies that resource allocation is systematically managed and aligned with institutional goals, reflecting effective stewardship of financial and material assets.

Further analysis shows that all five indicators received high ratings, reinforcing the overall assessment. The highest-rated practice involves leading the planning of all resource allocation, followed by focusing expenditures on agreed projections, and managing school resources in accordance with DepEd policies and accounting and auditing rules. These findings highlight strong leadership initiative, adherence to financial plans, and compliance with established regulations. Collectively, the data indicate that school heads practice structured, policy-aligned, and forward-looking approaches in allocating school resources, ensuring accountability and sustainability in financial management. The high level of resource allocation among school heads supports the perspective of Soroño and Quirap (2023), who emphasized that prioritizing the procurement of classroom materials is essential for enhancing learning outcomes. When MOOE funds are strategically invested in instructional quality, including learning materials and teacher development, student performance and engagement tend to improve correspondingly.

Additionally, Toctocan et al. (2023) highlighted that effective financial resource allocation hinges on three critical considerations: determining adequate funding levels, distributing resources according to student needs, and deploying available resources efficiently. For transformational schools, ensuring sufficient funding is directly linked to achieving positive academic outcomes. Schools must allocate resources based on student demographics and learning contexts, particularly in disadvantaged settings, to promote equity.

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As noted by Pontarelli (2022), planning entails the systematic determination of future resource use, while Frank (2025) asserted that financial planning translates intentions into allocations that reflect school priorities. This process requires principals and administrators to establish clear procedures to achieve targeted goals within a specified timeframe, emphasizing that successful resource allocation depends on equity, efficiency, and adherence to legal, regulatory, and contractual standards.

Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

In terms of Financial Resource Mobilization

The level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of financial resource mobilization shows that the overall mean is 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.587, at a high level. This means that the level of financial management practices of school heads, particularly in financial resource mobilization, is often evident. It can be gleaned from the data that all 5 statements reveal a high result. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: balancing the needs of the school with available budget considering all other constraints (4.19), reviewing resource allocation strategies to adapt to changing needs (4.18), and involving teachers, department heads, and other stakeholders in the resource allocation process to identify needs and ensure buy-in (4.17). These items prove that the level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of financial resource mobilization is oftentimes evident.

The findings indicate that financial resource mobilization practices are oftentimes evident among school heads. The result suggests that school leaders are proactive and strategic in ensuring that financial resources are maximized and aligned with institutional priorities. A high overall rating reflects their consistent efforts to manage limited funds efficiently while responding to the dynamic needs of the school environment. A closer look at the indicators shows that all five statements garnered high ratings, reinforcing the overall finding. The highest-rated practice emphasizes balancing school needs with the available budget while considering existing constraints; regularly reviewing resource allocation strategies to address changing demands; and involving teachers, department heads, and other stakeholders in the allocation process to promote shared responsibility and support. These findings highlight adaptability, collaborative decision-making, and prudent financial judgment among school heads. The data affirm that financial resource mobilization is systematically and actively practiced.

The high level of financial resource mobilization reinforces the argument of Njoka and Ochieng (2023), who emphasized that achieving success in education often depends on having the necessary resources available at the right time. Similarly, Gwaro and Ngacha (2023) identified personnel, physical facilities, students, financial resources, and curriculum as key determinants of educational outcomes, highlighting the critical role of school heads' resource mobilization skills. These skills encompass identifying potential donors, initiating fundraising initiatives, and engaging in alternative income-generating activities to supplement limited government-provided resources.

The study's findings also corroborate Lawrence (2021), who asserted that effective resource mobilization requires not only fundraising capacity but also strong donor relations, effective organizational management, and the ability to generate both financial and in-kind contributions. While government funding remains the primary source of support in many contexts, it is often insufficient to meet all educational needs. Consequently, school leaders must proactively pursue alternative resources to ensure the successful implementation of school programs and initiatives.

Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

In terms of Financial Accountability

The level of financial management practices of school heads in terms of financial accountability shows that the overall mean is 3.36 with a standard deviation of 0.543, at a moderate level. This means that the level of financial management practices among school heads, in terms of financial accountability, is occasionally evident. It can be gleaned from the data that all 5 statements reveal a moderate result. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: ensuring that the school's financial report reflects academic priorities (3.39), practicing full transparency in the submission of the school's financial report (3.38), and providing

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measures for the timely submission of liquidation reports (3.35). These items prove that the level of financial management practices of the School Heads in terms of resource allocation are occasionally evident. The results indicate that financial accountability practices are occasionally evident among school heads. Compared with other areas of financial management, this result suggests that accountability measures, while present, may not be consistently implemented across all situations. It implies that school heads demonstrate awareness of their responsibility in financial reporting and compliance, but there may still be gaps in the regular and systematic application of accountability procedures.

A closer examination of the indicators shows that all statements were rated at a moderate descriptive level, emphasizing practices such as ensuring that financial reports align with academic priorities, maintaining transparency in report submission, and implementing measures to ensure timely liquidation. These findings suggest that school heads value transparency and proper documentation. However, the overall interpretation that it is only occasionally evident points to the need to strengthen monitoring systems and reinforce consistent adherence to financial accountability standards to promote greater transparency and trust within the school community.

Although it is moderate, the findings still confirm the existence of financial accountability among school heads, which aligns with the perspective of Faku and Mulaudzi (2024), describing financial accountability as the use of public resources in alignment with principles of propriety, austerity, and efficiency. Sebidi (2023) emphasized that it involves reporting on financial actions taken and being held responsible for them. Dzagah et al. (2025) further defined accountability as being liable and responsible for specific decisions or actions. Within the school context, Chebet and Mugwe (2024) emphasized that principals serve as financial managers, responsible for budgeting, implementing financial plans, controlling expenditures, and reporting on outcomes.

Supporting the moderate level of financial accountability among school heads, Merano (2023) found that some leaders overlook financial monitoring due to competing administrative responsibilities, while others lack the necessary knowledge and skills to manage school funds effectively. Additionally, prior research has noted a scarcity of studies on best practices in financial accountability to guide other school leaders. This gap underscores the need for further investigation into how school heads uphold transparency and ensure responsible utilization of financial resources.

Summary on the Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

Table 5 provides a summary of the level of financial management practices of school heads. It is evident that the overall mean of financial management practices among school heads is 3.94, with a standard deviation of 0.590, indicating a high level. This means that the level of financial management practices of school heads is oftentimes evident.

The data show that the four (4) indicators have varying results, ranging from moderately high to high levels. As arranged chronologically, both resource allocation and financial resource mobilization have the highest mean score (4.16). This is followed by planning and budgeting (4.09) and financial accountability (3.36). These serve as evidence that the level of financial management practices among school heads is often evident.

Table 5 Summary on the Level of Financial Management Practices of School Heads

No	Indicators	Mean	σ	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Planning and Budgeting	4.09	0.655	High
2	Resource Allocation	4.16	0.575	High
3	Financial Resource Mobilization	4.16	0.587	High
4	Financial Accountability	3.36	0.543	High
Overall		**3.94**	**0.590**	**High**

1.00 – 1.79 = Very Low 1.80 - 2.59 = Low 2.60 - 3.39 = Moderate

3.40 – 4.19 = High 4.20 – 5.00 = Very High

The results presented reveal that financial management practices are oftentimes evident in school leadership. These suggest that school heads generally demonstrate competence and consistency in managing school finances across various domains. It reflects their active involvement in ensuring financial processes align with school goals, policies, and stakeholder expectations.

Further analysis reveals that the four indicators vary from moderately high to high levels. Resource allocation and financial resource mobilization emerged as the strongest areas, followed by planning and budgeting, while financial accountability obtained the lowest rating among the domains. This pattern indicates that school heads are particularly strong in strategic allocation and mobilization of resources, but may need further enhancement in strengthening accountability mechanisms. The findings affirm that financial management practices are well established, though continuous improvement is necessary, especially in ensuring consistent financial transparency and reporting.

The high level of financial management practices among school heads corroborates the findings of Oliva et al. (2024), which revealed that school leaders achieved very satisfactory financial management by strictly adhering to guidelines, maintaining updated liquidation records, and ensuring transparent transactions. This underscores that effective financial management must consistently comply with rules and regulations, actively engage stakeholders, empower the finance team, and ensure transparency and accountability in all transactions. The successful implementation of these practices throughout the financial process is crucial to the overall effectiveness of school heads’ financial management.

Mirando and Jalos (2023) emphasized that financial management is a collaborative responsibility rather than a solo endeavor, highlighting the importance of involving stakeholders and the finance team as key partners in preparing and managing school resources. Additionally, schools have a duty to provide stakeholders with information that ensures transparency, accountability, and adherence to established financial regulations. Espiritu (2020) further argued that effective financial management depends on school heads possessing foundational knowledge and a clear understanding of budgeting processes, account management, and the necessary systems and controls to prevent misappropriation of funds. School financial management encompasses planning, implementation, accounting, reporting, and safeguarding of assets, and its effectiveness is shaped by the school head’s formal education, on-the-job training, and practical experience.

Level of Utilization of MOOE in terms of School Operation and Development

The level of MOOE utilization for school operations and development shows that the overall mean is 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.533, at a very high level. This means that the level of MOOE utilization for school operations and development is consistently evident. As revealed from the data, all ten (10) statements reveal a very high result. When arranged chronologically, the sequence is as follows: believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance repairs the provision of safety and basic janitorial services for the school welfare (4.26), believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance repairs to improve the necessary basic amenities and to meet the requirements for child friendly school system (4.25), and believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance the provision of communication services and internet access for better basic education services (4.24). These items demonstrate that the level of MOOE utilization for school operations and development is consistently evident.

The findings reveal that the use of MOOE for operational and developmental purposes is evident in schools. The result suggests that school heads consistently and effectively use available maintenance and other operating funds to support essential school functions. A very high overall interpretation reflects strong financial stewardship, ensuring that school operations run smoothly and that development initiatives are adequately supported. A closer look at the indicators shows that all statements were rated very highly, reinforcing the overall finding. The most emphasized uses of MOOE include financing repairs and providing safety and janitorial services for school welfare, improving basic amenities to comply with child-friendly school standards, and supporting communication services and internet access to enhance educational delivery. These findings demonstrate that MOOE funds are prioritized for both infrastructure maintenance and service improvement, directly contributing to a safe, functional, and learner-centered school environment. The data affirm that MOOE utilization for school operation and development is consistently practiced and strategically aligned with institutional needs.

The very high level of school operation and development in utilizing the MOOE is consistent with Navarro’s

(2022) view that ensuring equitable access to quality education and fostering holistic student development requires substantial government investment, reflected in DepEd's reforms and increased spending on basic education. Studies show that as schools mature and student populations expand, the need for facility maintenance and operational expenditures correspondingly increases.

Viernes (2022) emphasized that school heads are responsible for ensuring that all planned activities and programs are feasible within the MOOE budget, requiring strong financial management skills to meet educational objectives. MOOE allocations cover essential expenditures, including training programs targeting urgent school needs, security and janitorial services, minor repairs, and other operational costs that support teaching and learning.

Supporting these findings, Gipaya (2022) highlighted DepEd's commitment to enhancing resource availability and management to improve educational outcomes, while Ondong (2024) underscored that financial management reforms have placed responsibility and accountability for MOOE funds with school heads and administrative personnel, ensuring effective use of resources to maintain facilities and create safe, healthy learning environments.

Level of Utilization of MOOE in terms of Teachers' Welfare and Development

The level of MOOE utilization for teachers' welfare and development shows that the overall mean is 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.548, at a very high level. This means that the level of MOOE utilization for teachers' welfare and development is consistently evident. As the data show, all 10 statements indicate a very high level. Of which, the three (3) items which have the highest mean score are as follows: believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance travelling expenses, meals, accommodation and incidental allowances of teaches in the conduct of DepEd Initiated Activities (4.27), believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance teachers' training activities for pedagogical retooling and professional development (4.26), and believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance training of teachers on guidance and counseling as well as child protection policies (4.25). These items demonstrate that the utilization of MOOE for teachers' welfare and development is consistently evident.

The findings indicate that the use of MOOE funds to support teachers is always evident in schools. The overall result suggests that school heads consistently allocate financial resources to initiatives that enhance teachers' professional growth and well-being. Such a high level of utilization reflects a strong commitment to investing in human capital, recognizing that teacher development is essential to improving instructional quality and student outcomes.

All statements in this domain were rated very highly, highlighting the consistent support provided to teachers. The most emphasized areas include financing travel and related expenses for participation in DepEd-initiated activities, supporting pedagogical retooling and professional development programs, and funding training on guidance, counseling, and child protection policies. These findings demonstrate that MOOE funds are strategically directed toward strengthening teachers' competencies and ensuring their active participation in institutional and system-wide initiatives.

The very high level of teachers' welfare and development as a dimension of MOOE utilization aligns with Johnson et al. (2023), who emphasized that achieving organizational goals largely depends on effective human resource management, particularly through comprehensive employee welfare programs. In the context of schools, the successful attainment of educational objectives relies on implementing welfare initiatives that motivate teachers and staff, recognizing that personnel support is a critical foundation for enhancing performance and driving institutional success.

Kairania and Nabirye (2025) highlighted that motivating teachers is essential for ensuring student academic success, as teachers sustain the educational system. School leaders are therefore encouraged to implement incentive strategies that enhance teacher performance. When teachers receive adequate support and motivation through welfare programs funded in part by MOOE, they are better positioned to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Similarly, Abio et al. (2025) noted that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student achievement and overall school effectiveness. Yet, public schools often face challenges in efficiently allocating and utilizing MOOE funds.

Proper allocation of these resources, including instructional materials, utilities, and professional development, is critical to ensuring that teachers can perform their roles effectively.

Level of Utilization of MOOE in terms of Students' Welfare and Development

The level of MOOE utilization for students' welfare and development shows that the overall mean is 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.575, at a very high level. This means that the level of MOOE utilization for students' welfare and development is consistently evident. As the data show, all 10 statements have very high results. Of which, the three (3) items which have the highest mean score are as follows: believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance the purchase of sports equipment needed by the students in their participation in sports academies/activities (4.30), believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance basic safety and janitorial security services for students' welfare (4.29), and believing that the MOOE is utilized to finance students' registration fees and other expenses for participation in different contests (4.28). These items prove that the level of utilization of MOOE in terms of students' welfare and development is always evident.

The results presented reveal that the allocation of MOOE funds for students' needs is always evident in school practices. The overall result suggests that school heads consistently prioritize student-centered initiatives in the use of operating funds. Such a very high level reflects a strong commitment to creating a supportive, safe, and development-oriented learning environment where students are given adequate resources and opportunities to thrive academically and holistically.

All statements in this domain were rated very highly, underscoring the consistent and strategic use of funds for student welfare. The most emphasized areas include financing sports equipment for student participation in athletic activities, supporting safety and janitorial services to ensure student protection and well-being, and covering registration fees and related expenses for participation in academic and extracurricular competitions. These findings demonstrate that MOOE funds are directed toward enhancing both the physical safety and developmental experiences of learners. The data affirm that students' welfare and development are strongly prioritized in school financial utilization practices.

The very high status of students' welfare and development aligns with Sadera et al. (2022), who emphasized that a key aspect of educational quality is the comprehensive support and development of students, including academic assistance, health services, counseling, and well-maintained campus facilities. Such provisions play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of institutional quality and contribute to the school's reputation and long-term sustainability.

Bacia (2024) argued that granting students access to relevant, up-to-date, and diverse instructional materials directly enhances their welfare by fostering inclusive, engaging, and adaptable learning environments. This approach ensures that varied learning needs, whether for enrichment or remediation, are addressed, thereby promoting equitable education. Ecija (2020) further highlighted that the strategic use of MOOE funds to acquire and improve instructional materials strengthens the delivery of quality education, promotes academic achievement, and supports students' overall welfare and holistic development.

Summary on the Level of Utilization of MOOE

Table 9 provides a summary of the level of MOOE utilization. It is evident that the overall mean utilization of MOOE is 4.23, with a standard deviation of 0.550, indicating a very high level. This means the level of MOOE utilization is always evident.

Table 9 Summary on the Level of Utilization of MOOE

No	Indicators	Mean	σ	Descriptive Equivalent
1	School Operation and Development	4.21	0.533	Very High
2	Teachers' Welfare and Development	4.23	0.542	Very High
3	Students' Welfare and Development	4.26	0.575	Very High
Overall		**4.23**	**0.550**	**Very High**

1.00 – 1.79 = Very Low 1.80 - 2.59 = Low 2.60 - 3.39 = Moderate
3.40 – 4.19 = High 4.20 – 5.00 = Very High

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The data show that the three (3) indicators have high-level results. As arranged chronologically, students' welfare and development have the highest mean score (4.26). This is followed by teachers' welfare and development (4.23) and school operation and development (4.21). These serve as proof that the level of MOOE utilization is consistently evident.

The findings indicate that the use of MOOE funds is consistently evident in school practices. The overall result suggests that school heads consistently and effectively allocate operating funds to support key areas of school functioning. Such a very high level reflects strong financial management and responsible stewardship, ensuring that available resources are maximized to meet institutional goals and stakeholder needs.

Further analysis reveals that all three indicators received high descriptive scores, with students' welfare and development emerging as the most prioritized area, followed by teachers' welfare and development and school operation and development. This pattern indicates that while operational needs are adequately supported, greater emphasis is placed on initiatives directly benefiting learners and teachers. The findings affirm that MOOE utilization is strategically directed toward enhancing both instructional quality and student experiences, demonstrating a learner-centered and development-oriented approach to financial management.

The very high level of MOOE utilization supports the perspective of Bantugan et al. (2023), who noted that MOOE covers expenses related to the day-to-day operations of schools, including maintenance, utilities, supplies, and other operational costs not directly tied to instructional delivery. The effective allocation and management of these funds are essential, as they significantly influence the quality of education and the overall learning environment. Arevalo and Comighud (2020) further explained that MOOE is used to procure essential supplies, cover utility expenses, support communication needs, conduct training activities, facilitate graduation ceremonies, and maintain school security.

Miranda and Perez (2021) highlighted that school principals often prioritize utilities over other expenditures, such as minor repairs and grounds maintenance, while demonstrating flexibility and resourcefulness by engaging stakeholders and aligning budget priorities with academic goals. Abellon et al. (2020) added that DepEd Order No. 15, s. 2020 expanded the range of MOOE-eligible expenses to include alternative learning materials, personal protective equipment, sanitation facilities, and minor classroom improvements, reflecting the evolving needs of the educational system.

Significance of the Relationship Between Financial Management Practices of School Heads and Utilization of MOOE

Table 10 presents data on the significance of the relationship between school heads' financial management practices and the utilization of MOOE. As reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .428, with a p-value < 0.05, signified rejection of the null hypothesis. It means there is a significant relationship between school heads' financial management practices and the utilization of MOOE. This shows that the financial management practices of school heads are correlated with the utilization of MOOE.

Table 10 Significance of the Relationship Between Financial Management Practices of School Heads and Utilization of MOOE

<table>
<tr><th>Financial Management Practices of School Heads</th><th>Dependent Variable</th><th>r-value</th><th>p- value</th><th>Decision on Ho</th><th>Significant Level</th></tr>
<tr><td>Planning and Budgeting</td><td rowspan="5">Utilization of MOOE</td><td>0.426</td><td>0.000</td><td>Rejected</td><td rowspan="5">r = .428> .05
Moderate Positive Correlation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resource Allocation</td><td>0.430</td><td>0.000</td><td>Rejected</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financial Resource Mobilization</td><td>0.428</td><td>0.000</td><td>Rejected</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financial Accountability</td><td>0.424</td><td>0.000</td><td>Rejected</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overall</td><td>0.428*</td><td>0.000</td><td>Rejected</td></tr>
</table>

*Significant at 0.05 significance level. disseminate

Pearson r Value	Strength of Correlation	Direction
0.00 to ±0.10	Negligible or no correlation	Positive or Negative
±0.11 to ±0.30	Weak correlation	Positive or Negative
±0.31 to ±0.50	Moderate correlation	Positive or Negative
±0.51 to ±0.70	Strong correlation	Positive or Negative
±0.71 to ±0.90	Very strong correlation	Positive or Negative
±0.91 to ±1.00	Near-perfect to perfect correlation	Positive or Negative

From pairwise correlations among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability had r-values of 0.426, 0.430, 0.428, and 0.424, respectively, with p-values less than 0.05 at the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that as planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability increase, the utilization of MOOE also increases.

The overall correlation indicates a moderate positive relationship, with the r-value significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the financial management practices of school heads are significantly related to the utilization of MOOE. In practical terms, this suggests that schools with strong financial management practices tend to make more effective and efficient use of available operating funds.

A closer examination of the pairwise correlations among specific financial management practices further supports this relationship. Planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability all showed positive and significant correlations with MOOE utilization. This implies that improvements in these aspects of financial management are associated with better utilization of MOOE funds. In essence, the findings highlight that school heads' competence in managing finances directly influences the strategic, transparent, and purposeful use of operational resources, ensuring that funds are aligned with the needs of both teachers and students as well as overall school development.

The significant relationship between school heads' financial management practices and the utilization of MOOE corroborates the findings of Hernandez (2024), who emphasized that principals are central to school financial management, including budgeting, resource planning, human resource management, procurement, and cost control, as well as identifying additional funding sources to support institutional goals. Armstrong (2025) further noted that effective financial management requires accurate reporting and proper documentation, while Odigwe and Owan (2022) emphasized that, despite government-provided budgets, principals must demonstrate competence in managing school finances to ensure inclusive, quality education.

Supriadi et al. (2021) underscored that principals who implement sound financial management practices enhance transparency and accountability, thereby facilitating successful program execution and promoting academic excellence. Additionally, Santos et al. (2021) highlighted that by effectively planning, controlling, and monitoring school finances, principals can ensure that budgeting, accounting, and utilization of MOOE funds are properly conducted, ultimately improving overall school performance.

Regression Analysis on the Significant Influence of Financial Management Practices of School Heads on the Utilization of MOOE

Shown in Table 11 is the regression analysis of the significant influence of school heads' financial management practices on the utilization of MOOE. The overall p-value ($p<0.05$) indicates that the financial management practices of school heads are predictors of the utilization of MOOE. The B values of the independent variables, planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability are 0.426, 0.430, 0.428, and 0.424, respectively.

One unit change in planning and budgeting will lead to .426 unit change in the utilization of MOOE if the other predictor is at "0". Moreover, a 1-unit change in resource allocation will lead to a 0.430-unit change in the utilization of MOOE if the other predictor is at "0". Also, a 1-unit change in financial resource mobilization will lead to a 0.428-unit change in MOOE utilization if the other predictor is at "0". Furthermore, a 1-unit change in financial accountability will lead to a 0.424-unit change in the utilization of MOOE if the other predictor is at "0".

Among the four, resource allocation has a stronger influence on MOOE utilization than the other indicators. Lastly, the coefficient of determination of the R-squared value is also shown in the table, which was 0.183 or 18.3% of the utilization of MOOE is explained by the domains of financial management practices of school heads, which are planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability. Hence, the hypothesis that no domain in the financial management practices of school heads significantly influences the utilization of MOOE is rejected.

Table 11 Regression Analysis on the Significant Influence of Financial Management Practices of School Heads on the Utilization of MOOE

Utilization of MOOE					
Financial Management Practices of School Heads		**B (Standardized Coefficients)**	**B (Unstandardized Coefficients)**	**T**	**Sig.**
Constant		0.994	1.989	4.700	0.000
Planning and Budgeting		0.426	0.548	5.840	0.000
Resource Allocation		0.430	0.484	5.910	0.000
Financial Resource Mobilization		0.428	0.482	5.880	0.000
Financial Accountability		0.424	0.763	5.810	0.000
r		0.428			
r^2		0.183			
f		34.57			
p		0.000			

The results indicate that financial management practices are a significant predictor of MOOE utilization, as the overall p-value is less than 0.05. The B values for the independent variables, planning and budgeting, resource allocation, financial resource mobilization, and financial accountability, show that each domain contributes positively to changes in MOOE utilization. This means that for every 1-unit increase in any of these financial management practices, there is a corresponding positive change in MOOE utilization, with the other predictors held constant.

Among the four domains, resource allocation has the greatest influence, suggesting that strategic resource allocation is crucial to optimizing operational funds. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) indicates that 18.3% of the variation in MOOE utilization is explained by these financial management practices, reflecting a moderate but meaningful contribution. These findings confirm that school heads' competence in planning, mobilizing, allocating, and maintaining accountability in financial management significantly affects the effective use of MOOE funds. Consequently, the hypothesis that no domain of financial management significantly influences MOOE utilization is rejected, highlighting the importance of strong financial leadership in school resource management.

The findings of the study support the perspective of Yizengaw and Agegnehu (2021), who emphasized that financial resources are critical organizational assets and that effective financial management is necessary to optimize performance while minimizing financial risks. Odide (2021) further highlighted that school leaders must carefully prioritize and allocate limited resources to achieve institutional goals, as inadequate financial management can lead to misappropriation of funds and neglect of key projects.

Daraman et al. (2024) also noted that public schools depend heavily on MOOE funds to address a variety of needs, including classroom and office supplies. Insights from interviews with school heads revealed that strategic prioritization is essential when using MOOE funds, enabling schools to balance urgent and important needs, maintain smooth operations, and support the development of students and staff.

Summary of the Findings

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between financial management practices of school heads and utilization of MOOE in the public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. The study was conducted in the selected public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. There were one hundred fifty-six (156) public secondary teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The following summarizes the key findings:

1) The level of financial management practices of school heads was very high as reflected in the mean score of 3.94 with the standard deviation of 0.590. Among the domains, resource allocation and financial resource mobilization obtained the highest mean (M = 4.16), followed by planning and budgeting (M = 4.09), while financial accountability registered the lowest mean (M = 3.36), though still interpreted as high.
2) The level of the utilization of MOOE was rated very high (M = 4.23, SD = 0.550), with students' welfare and development obtaining the highest mean (M = 4.26), followed by teachers' welfare and development (M = 4.23) and school operation and development (M = 4.21).
3) There was a moderate positive and significant relationship between financial management practices and MOOE utilization ($r = 0.428$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. All domains of financial management practices were significantly correlated with MOOE utilization.
4) Regression analysis confirmed that all domains of financial management practices significantly influence MOOE utilization ($p = 0.000$), collectively explaining 18.3% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.183$). Among the predictors, resource allocation and financial resource mobilization showed slightly stronger influence.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

1) School heads demonstrate a very high level of financial management practices, particularly in resource allocation and financial resource mobilization, which indicates their capability to effectively manage and direct school financial resources. Although financial accountability obtained a relatively lower mean, it still reflects a consistent practice among school heads.
2) The utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) is at a very high level, suggesting that school funds are efficiently used to support school operations, as well as the welfare and development of both teachers and students.
3) Moreover, the study establishes that financial management practices have a significant and moderate positive relationship with MOOE utilization. This implies that improvements in financial management practices are associated with better utilization of school funds.
4) The regression analysis further confirms that all domains of financial management practices significantly influence MOOE utilization, collectively contributing to its effectiveness. Therefore, it can be concluded that strengthening financial management practices among school heads leads to more efficient and impactful utilization of MOOE.

The findings of the study provide strong support for the Stewardship Theory by Donaldson and Davis (1991), which emphasizes that leaders act as responsible stewards who prioritize the best interests of the organization. In this study, the very high levels of financial management practices and effective utilization of MOOE among school heads in the Panabo City Division suggest that they perform their roles as caretakers of public resources with a strong sense of accountability and commitment. This is evident in how school heads allocate, monitor, and utilize MOOE funds to address school needs, support instructional materials, and improve the overall learning environment.

Moreover, the findings imply that school heads do not merely perform administrative compliance but actively ensure that financial resources are used strategically and ethically. This behavior aligns with the core assumption of Stewardship Theory that managers are intrinsically motivated to act in the organization's best interest rather than for personal gain. The high level of responsibility demonstrated by school heads in managing MOOE reflects their dedication to maximizing limited resources for the benefit of teachers, learners, and the school community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were offered based on the findings of the study:

1) School heads should strengthen financial accountability practices**,** particularly in ensuring transparency, timely liquidation, and accurate financial reporting, since this domain obtained the lowest mean among the indicators. They are encouraged to institutionalize regular financial monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, such as quarterly budget reviews and stakeholder consultations, to sustain the high level of resource allocation and mobilization. Additionally, school heads should prioritize capacity-building activities (e.g., training on financial management systems, auditing procedures, and DepEd financial policies) to further enhance their competence and ensure more strategic and data-driven utilization of MOOE.
2) Teachers should actively participate in financial planning and decision-making processes, such as budget consultations and school improvement planning, to ensure that MOOE allocation aligns with actual classroom and instructional needs. They are also encouraged to practice accountability in the use of allocated resources, including proper documentation and timely submission of liquidation reports. Furthermore, teachers may initiate and support programs that maximize the use of MOOE for learners' academic and co-curricular development, particularly in areas such as remediation, research, and student engagement activities.
3) Future researchers may expand the scope of the studies by including other variables that may influence MOOE utilization, such as leadership style, organizational culture, or school performance outcomes. They may also consider using a mixed-methods approach in research to gain deeper insights into actual financial practices beyond perception-based data. In addition to survey questionnaires, researchers may include financial audits, document analysis, interviews, and case studies to obtain more detailed and well-rounded information about how financial resources are managed and utilized in schools. Conducting similar studies in different school divisions, educational levels, and geographic areas is also recommended to determine whether the findings are consistent across various educational settings. Moreover, future researchers may examine how financial management practices relate to important educational outcomes, such as students' academic performance, teachers' job satisfaction, improvement of school facilities, and overall school effectiveness. Exploring these areas may provide a broader perspective on the contribution of effective financial management to the achievement of educational goals and continuous school improvement. Further, conducting similar studies in different divisions or educational levels (e.g., elementary or private schools) is recommended to enhance generalizability. Lastly, future studies may explore longitudinal designs to examine how financial management practices affect MOOE utilization and school outcomes over time.

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