Budgeting and Financial Reporting Practices in Selected Public Elementary Schools in Parañaque: Inputs to Financial Management Capability Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

Financial management is fundamental to ensuring transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency in public educational institutions. Effective budgeting practices facilitate the efficient allocation and utilization of limited financial resources, while sound financial reporting promotes responsible governance and informed decision-making. Despite the implementation of financial management policies in the Philippine basic education system, empirical evidence on budgeting and financial reporting practices in public elementary schools remains limited, particularly at the local level. This study assessed budgeting practices in terms of allocation accuracy, expense monitoring, and compliance with standards, and financial reporting practices in terms of transparency and clarity, flexibility and adaptability, and participation and collaboration among selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City. It also determined differences in respondents' assessments, examined the relationship between budgeting and financial reporting practices, and identified implementation challenges. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 39 respondents, comprising school administrators and administrative personnel, through a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, an independent-samples t-test, and a Pearson product-moment correlation were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed that budgeting and financial reporting practices were implemented effectively. No statistically significant differences were found between the assessments of the two respondent groups. However, budgeting practices demonstrated significant positive relationships with financial reporting practices, indicating that effective budgeting contributes to improved transparency, accountability, and reporting efficiency. The study also identified operational challenges associated with documentation, regulatory compliance, and continuous competency development. The findings underscore the importance of sustained professional development and institutional support to strengthen financial governance and accountability in public elementary schools.

Keywords: Budgeting practices, financial reporting, financial management, accountability, public elementary schools, educational finance, Public Elementary Schools in Parañaque, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Financial accountability and transparency are essential to effective governance in public educational institutions. As schools manage limited public resources, budgeting and financial reporting have become critical financial management functions that support efficient resource allocation, regulatory compliance, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional accountability. Effective financial management enables schools to align available resources with educational priorities while maintaining public trust in the use of government funds.

In the Philippine basic education system, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Audit (COA) have strengthened policies governing budgeting, procurement, financial reporting, and accountability to promote responsible financial governance. These policy initiatives emphasize accurate budget planning, systematic expenditure monitoring, transparent financial reporting, and compliance with established financial standards as essential components of effective school management.

Despite these reforms, empirical studies that simultaneously examine budgeting and financial reporting in Philippine public elementary schools remain limited. Most previous investigations have examined these financial management functions independently, with few studies exploring their relationship or comparing the perceptions of school administrators and administrative personnel, particularly in local public school settings such as Parañaque City.

Accordingly, this study examined the budgeting and financial reporting practices of selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City. Specifically, it assessed budgeting practices in terms of allocation accuracy, expense monitoring, and compliance with standards, and financial reporting practices in terms of transparency and clarity, flexibility and adaptability, and participation and collaboration. It also determined differences in respondents' assessments, examined the relationship between the two financial management functions, and identified implementation challenges. The findings provide empirical evidence to support financial governance and capability enhancement in public elementary schools.

Research Gap

Although numerous international and local studies have examined financial management, accountability, transparency, and governance within educational institutions, most have investigated budgeting practices and financial reporting practices as separate organizational functions. Existing literature provides limited empirical evidence regarding how budgeting practices influence financial reporting practices within Philippine public elementary schools. Moreover, few studies have compared the perceptions of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding these financial management processes, despite their complementary responsibilities in school financial operations. Localized empirical evidence from public elementary schools in Parañaque City also remains scarce. Addressing these gaps contributes to educational financial management literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between budgeting and financial reporting practices within the Philippine basic education sector.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess the budgeting and financial reporting practices among selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Assess budgeting practices in terms of: allocation accuracy; expense monitoring; and compliance with standards;

2. Determine whether significant differences exist between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding budgeting practices;

3. Assess financial reporting practices in terms of: transparency and clarity; flexibility and adaptability; and participation and collaboration;

4. Determine the significant relationship between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices; and

5. Identify the problems encountered in implementing budgeting and financial reporting practices.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on **Public Accountability Theory** developed by **Bovens (2007)** and **Stewardship Theory** proposed by **Donaldson and Davis (1991)**. These theories provide complementary perspectives in explaining how school administrators and administrative personnel manage public financial resources through effective budgeting and financial reporting practices. Public Accountability Theory emphasizes transparency, answerability, and compliance in the management of public funds, while Stewardship Theory highlights responsible leadership, ethical governance, and commitment to organizational objectives. Together, these theoretical foundations explain the mechanisms through which budgeting and financial reporting practices promote financial accountability, operational efficiency, and stakeholder confidence within public elementary schools.

Public Accountability Theory

Public Accountability Theory (Bovens, 2007) asserts that public officials are responsible for explaining and justifying the management of public resources in accordance with legal, ethical, and institutional standards. Accountability is achieved through transparency, compliance, answerability, and responsible stewardship of public funds, thereby strengthening public trust and organizational effectiveness.

Within public elementary schools, the theory provides the foundation for effective budgeting and financial reporting. Budget allocation, expenditure monitoring, and compliance with financial regulations ensure that government resources are used efficiently and in accordance with Department of Education and Commission on Audit policies. Likewise, transparent and accurate financial reporting enables stakeholders to evaluate financial performance, supports informed decision-making, and reinforces institutional accountability. Thus, Public Accountability Theory explains how sound budgeting and financial reporting contribute to good governance in public educational institutions.

Stewardship Theory

Stewardship Theory (Donaldson & Davis, 1991) proposes that organizational leaders act as responsible stewards who prioritize institutional goals over personal interests. Guided by professionalism, ethical responsibility, and organizational commitment, stewards seek to protect resources, improve organizational performance, and strengthen stakeholder trust.

In public elementary schools, school administrators and administrative personnel serve as stewards of government resources by ensuring prudent budgeting, effective monitoring of expenditures, accurate financial reporting, and compliance with financial regulations. The theory also emphasizes collaboration, participation, and continuous professional development, highlighting the importance of collective responsibility and competency enhancement in sustaining effective financial management. Accordingly, Stewardship Theory supports the view that responsible leadership is fundamental to strengthening budgeting and financial reporting practices within public educational institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a **descriptive-correlational research design**, which is appropriate for examining existing conditions, describing the extent of implementation of organizational practices, determining differences between respondent groups, and identifying relationships among variables without manipulating the research environment. The descriptive component enabled the researcher to determine the extent to which budgeting practices and financial reporting practices were implemented in selected public elementary schools. The correlational component examined the statistical relationship between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices, while comparative analysis determined whether significant differences existed between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel. This research design is appropriate because it provides objective empirical evidence regarding current financial management practices while preserving the natural organizational setting in which these practices occur.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in **selected public elementary schools in the Division of Parañaque City, Philippines**. These schools operate under the Department of Education and implement standardized government policies on budgeting, procurement, financial reporting, auditing, and accountability. The participating schools represent various educational environments within the division while sharing common responsibilities for managing public financial resources. Conducting the study within these institutions provided an appropriate context for examining budgeting and financial reporting practices in accordance with national financial management policies and public accountability requirements

Participants of the Study

The study participants comprised 39 respondents, including **11 school administrators** and **28 administrative personnel** from selected public elementary schools in the Division of Parañaque City. These respondents were chosen because they are directly involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring, documentation, and reporting of school financial resources. School administrators are responsible for supervising budget preparation, approving expenditures, ensuring compliance with Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Audit (COA) regulations, and overseeing financial accountability within their respective schools. Meanwhile, administrative personnel provide technical and operational support by preparing financial documents, maintaining accounting records, processing financial transactions, and assisting in the preparation of financial reports. Their complementary responsibilities enabled the study to obtain comprehensive perspectives on budgeting and financial reporting practices in public elementary schools.

Description of the Participating Public Elementary Schools

The study was conducted among selected public elementary schools under the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Parañaque City, which operate within the governance framework of the Department of Education (DepEd). These schools implement standardized policies and procedures for budgeting, accounting, procurement, financial reporting, and auditing in accordance with DepEd, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Commission on Audit (COA) regulations. Although the participating schools differ in enrolment size, staffing complement, annual Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) allocations, and administrative workload, they perform similar financial management functions, making them appropriate settings for examining budgeting and financial reporting practices. The participating schools represent diverse educational communities located across different districts of Parañaque City, thereby providing a broader institutional context for assessing financial management practices in public elementary schools. To preserve institutional confidentiality and comply with the approved ethical protocol, the identities of the participating schools are not disclosed. Nevertheless, the schools collectively represent small-, medium-, and large-enrolment institutions, enabling the findings to reflect the Division's varied operational environments. Providing this contextual description enhances the study's transparency and allows readers to better evaluate the representativeness, transferability, and applicability of the research findings to comparable public-school settings.

Sampling Technique

The study employed **total enumeration sampling**, wherein all identified school administrators and administrative personnel who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate in the research. Since the total population consisted of only 39 qualified respondents, total enumeration ensured complete representation of individuals directly involved in school financial management. This sampling technique minimized sampling error, enhanced the reliability of the findings, and provided a comprehensive assessment of budgeting and financial reporting practices across the participating public elementary schools. Total enumeration is particularly appropriate when the target population is relatively small and accessible, allowing every eligible respondent to contribute to the study's findings.

Sample Size Limitation

Although the study employed total enumeration to include all qualified school administrators and administrative personnel directly involved in budgeting and financial reporting within the participating schools, the resulting sample consisted of only thirty-nine (39) respondents. While total enumeration ensured complete coverage of the target population, the relatively small sample size may have reduced the statistical power of the inferential analyses, thereby increasing the possibility of Type II errors in which actual differences between respondent groups may not have been detected. Furthermore, because the respondents were drawn exclusively from selected public elementary schools within the Schools Division Office of Parañaque City, caution is warranted when generalizing the findings to other school divisions or educational contexts. Future studies are encouraged to include a larger number of schools from other divisions and regions to improve external validity. Researchers may likewise consider involving additional stakeholder groups, such as teachers serving on School Financial Management Committees, School Governing Councils, Parent–Teacher Association officers, and community representatives, to obtain more comprehensive perspectives on budgeting and financial reporting practices in public basic education institutions.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire informed by an extensive review of the related literature, government financial management policies, and prior studies on budgeting and financial reporting. The instrument consisted of four sections: (1) respondents' demographic profile; (2) budgeting practices covering allocation accuracy, expense monitoring, and compliance with standards; (3) financial reporting practices focusing on transparency and clarity, flexibility and adaptability, and participation and collaboration; and (4) problems encountered in implementing budgeting and financial reporting practices.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater implementation of the identified financial management practices. The instrument generated quantitative data appropriate for descriptive, comparative, and correlational analyses.

Validation of the Research Instrument

The questionnaire underwent expert validation by specialists in educational management, financial management, research methodology, and statistics to establish its content validity. The validators evaluated the instrument for clarity, relevance, organization, and alignment with the study objectives, and their recommendations were incorporated into the final version.

A pilot test was subsequently conducted among respondents with characteristics similar to those of the target participants but who were excluded from the actual study. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, confirming that the instrument was valid and reliable for assessing budgeting and financial reporting practices

Data Gathering Procedure

Following approval from the appropriate academic authorities and the concerned officials of the Department of Education, the researcher sought permission from the school heads of the participating public elementary schools to conduct the study. Upon obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents and explained the study's purpose, the procedures for completing the instrument, and the ethical safeguards in place throughout the research process.

Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires independently without external influence. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion to ensure a high retrieval rate and minimize data loss. The collected data were carefully checked for completeness, accuracy, and consistency before being encoded for statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to established ethical principles governing educational research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, respondents were informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained before the administration of the questionnaire.

The researcher ensured that no identifying personal information appeared in the research report. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic and research purposes. Electronic and printed research records were securely maintained and accessed only by the researcher. Throughout the study, the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, privacy, confidentiality, and academic integrity were consistently observed.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques aligned with the study's objectives.

The percentage was used to describe the respondents' demographic characteristics.

The Weighted Mean was used to determine the extent of implementation of budgeting and financial reporting practices, as well as the degree to which operational problems were encountered.

The **Independent Samples t-test** was employed to determine whether significant differences existed between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding budgeting and financial reporting practices.

The **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r)** was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices.

All statistical analyses were interpreted using a **0.05 level of significance**, providing an objective basis for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses and ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the study were supported by empirical evidence

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Budgeting Practices

Empirical Findings (Introduction to Summary Tables)

To improve the clarity and accessibility of the empirical findings, summary tables were prepared to consolidate the study's major statistical results. The first summary table presents the overall weighted means and standard deviations for each dimension of budgeting and financial reporting practices together with their corresponding verbal interpretations, allowing readers to identify the strongest and weakest areas of implementation at a glance. The second summary table presents the results of the independent-samples t-test, including computed *t*-values, degrees of freedom, significance levels, effect sizes, and statistical decisions for each financial management dimension. The third summary table provides an overview of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analyses, including the correlation coefficients, significance values, and interpretations of the strength and direction of the relationships between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices. Presenting these consolidated statistical summaries enhances the manuscript's readability, facilitates comparisons across variables, and provides stronger empirical support for the study's conclusions.

Overall Summary of Budgeting Practices

Dimension	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
Allocation Accuracy	4.xx	0.xx	Highly Implemented
Expense Monitoring	4.xx	0.xx	Highly Implemented
Compliance with Standards	4.xx	0.xx	Highly Implemented
Overall	4.xx	0.xx	Highly Implemented

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Summary of Independent Samples t-test

Dimension	t	df	p	Effect Size	Decision
Allocation Accuracy					Not Significant
Expense Monitoring					Not Significant
Compliance					Not Significant

Summary Correlation Matrix

Budgeting Dimension	Financial Reporting Dimension	r	p	Interpretation
Allocation Accuracy	Transparency	...	...	Strong Positive
Expense Monitoring	Transparency	...	...	Strong Positive

The findings indicate that budgeting practices in the selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City were implemented at a **high level**, reflecting effective financial planning, prudent resource allocation, systematic expenditure monitoring, and compliance with government financial standards. The favorable assessments across allocation accuracy, expense monitoring, and compliance with standards suggest that the participating schools have institutionalized budgeting processes that promote transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

The results support both **Public Accountability Theory**, which emphasizes transparency and compliance in managing public resources, and **Stewardship Theory**, which views school administrators as responsible custodians of government funds. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that effective budgeting provides a strong foundation for sound financial governance, enabling schools to utilize resources efficiently while supporting institutional priorities and regulatory requirements

Allocation Accuracy

The findings indicate that **allocation accuracy was highly evident**, demonstrating that financial resources are generally distributed according to the operational and instructional priorities of the participating schools. This suggests that school administrators implement systematic budget planning that aligns available resources with institutional needs while minimizing unnecessary expenditures. Accurate budget allocation supports efficient resource utilization, operational continuity, and responsible financial governance. The findings are consistent with **Public Accountability Theory** and **Stewardship Theory**, which emphasize prudent resource management, accountability, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Expense Monitoring

Expense monitoring was likewise assessed as **Highly Evident**, indicating that schools consistently monitor expenditures, maintain financial documentation, and implement internal control procedures that promote transparency and accountability. Effective monitoring enables administrators to evaluate budget utilization, identify financial variances, and ensure compliance with government financial regulations. Although the use of automated financial management systems received comparatively lower assessments, the overall findings suggest that participating schools maintain effective expenditure monitoring practices that support sound financial governance.

Compliance with Standards

Among the budgeting dimensions, **compliance with standards** received the highest rating, indicating that school personnel consistently adhere to the Department of Education and the Commission on Audit policies governing budgeting, procurement, and financial reporting. Strong compliance minimizes financial irregularities, strengthens accountability, and ensures that public resources are utilized responsibly. The findings demonstrate that established financial management policies have been effectively institutionalized, thereby promoting transparency, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder confidence.

Significant Difference in the Assessment of Budgeting Practices

The statistical analysis revealed **no significant differences** between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding budgeting practices. This finding indicates that budgeting procedures are implemented consistently across organizational roles and that both respondent groups share a common understanding of resource allocation, expenditure monitoring, and regulatory compliance. The results further suggest that standardized financial management policies and established internal control mechanisms contribute to the uniform implementation of budgeting practices within the participating schools, reinforcing the principles of accountability and responsible financial governance.

Financial Reporting Practices

The findings indicate that **financial reporting practices were implemented at a high level**, demonstrating that participating schools maintain transparent, reliable, and collaborative reporting systems that support accountability and informed decision-making. Favorable assessments across transparency and clarity, flexibility and adaptability, and participation and collaboration suggest that financial reporting has become an integral component of school financial governance. These findings support both **Public Accountability Theory** and **Stewardship Theory**, which recognize transparent financial reporting as an essential mechanism for ensuring responsible management of public resources.

Transparency and Clarity

Transparency and clarity received the highest assessment among the financial reporting dimensions, indicating that financial information is generally prepared accurately, communicated effectively, and made accessible to relevant stakeholders. Transparent reporting strengthens accountability, facilitates informed decision-making, and promotes public confidence in school financial management. The findings affirm that reliable financial reporting remains a fundamental component of good governance within public educational institutions.

Flexibility and Adaptability

Flexibility and adaptability were likewise assessed as **Highly Evident**, indicating that financial reporting systems are generally capable of responding to evolving financial requirements and regulatory changes. Although this dimension obtained the comparatively lowest rating, the findings suggest opportunities to strengthen financial reporting through greater digitalization, continuous professional development, and process innovation. Enhancing these areas will further improve the responsiveness and efficiency of school financial management systems.

Participation and Collaboration

Participation and collaboration were assessed as **Highly Evident**, indicating that school administrators and administrative personnel actively cooperate in financial planning, reporting, and decision-making. Collaborative financial management promotes transparency, strengthens internal accountability, and improves the accuracy and reliability of financial reports. These findings support **Stewardship Theory**, which emphasizes collective responsibility, ethical leadership, and shared commitment to organizational goals. Overall, active stakeholder participation contributes to stronger financial governance and greater institutional accountability.

Significant Difference in the Assessment of Financial Reporting Practices

The independent-samples t-test revealed **no statistically significant differences** between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding financial reporting practices. This finding indicates that both respondent groups share similar perceptions of transparency and clarity, flexibility and adaptability, and participation and collaboration, suggesting that financial reporting procedures are implemented consistently across the participating public elementary schools.

The results imply that standardized financial management policies and reporting procedures established by the Department of Education and the Commission on Audit have promoted uniform implementation of financial reporting practices regardless of organizational role. The findings support **Public Accountability Theory**, which emphasizes consistent accountability and transparency in managing public resources, and **Stewardship Theory**, which highlights collaborative responsibility in achieving organizational objectives. Overall, the consistency in respondents' assessments reflects effective coordination, shared accountability, and sound financial governance within the participating schools.

Relationship Between Budgeting Practices and Financial Reporting Practices

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a **statistically significant positive relationship** between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices, indicating that schools with stronger budgeting systems also demonstrate more effective financial reporting. This finding suggests that accurate budget allocation, systematic expenditure monitoring, and compliance with financial standards contribute to transparent, reliable, and accountable financial reporting, highlighting the interdependent nature of these two financial management functions.

The findings support **Public Accountability Theory**, which views budgeting and financial reporting as complementary mechanisms for ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsible management of public resources. Likewise, **Stewardship Theory** explains that school administrators and administrative personnel fulfill their stewardship responsibilities by integrating sound budgeting with accurate financial reporting to achieve institutional goals. Overall, the results underscore the importance of adopting an integrated financial management approach that strengthens governance, promotes evidence-based decision-making, and enhances public trust in the management of school resources

Problems Encountered Relative to Budgeting and Financial Reporting Practices

The study also examined the problems encountered by school administrators and administrative personnel in implementing budgeting and financial reporting practices. The findings revealed that the identified challenges were **encountered to a moderate extent**, indicating that while the participating schools generally maintain effective financial management systems, certain operational concerns continue to affect the efficiency and effectiveness of budgeting and financial reporting processes. These challenges primarily relate to documentation requirements, compliance with evolving government regulations, technological limitations, workload demands, and continuous professional development. Although these concerns do not significantly hinder the implementation of financial management practices, they present opportunities for institutional improvement.

One of the most frequently encountered concerns was the extensive documentation and reporting requirements for government financial transactions. Respondents recognized that preparing supporting documents, maintaining complete financial records, and complying with numerous reporting requirements require considerable time and administrative effort. While comprehensive documentation is essential for transparency and accountability, excessive paperwork may increase the workload of school personnel and reduce the time available for other administrative responsibilities.

Another notable challenge involved **frequent updates in financial policies, budgeting guidelines, and reporting procedures**. As the Department of Education and the Commission on Audit continuously strengthen financial governance systems, school personnel must regularly adapt to revised policies and reporting requirements. Although these policy changes are intended to improve accountability and transparency, respondents acknowledged that keeping abreast of new regulations requires continuous learning and regular capability-building activities.

The findings likewise indicated that **technological and system-related limitations** remain areas requiring improvement. Although financial reporting practices were generally implemented effectively, some respondents observed that existing financial management systems could be further enhanced through greater automation, digital integration, and improved information management technologies. Modern financial information systems have the potential to reduce manual processing, improve data accuracy, facilitate real-time financial monitoring, and strengthen reporting efficiency.

Respondents also identified **capacity-building needs** as an important concern. Financial management responsibilities continue to evolve because of changes in government accounting standards, procurement regulations, auditing requirements, and digital financial systems. Consequently, school administrators and administrative personnel recognized the importance of continuous professional development to maintain competency in budgeting, financial reporting, financial analysis, and regulatory compliance. Regular training programs would enable personnel to respond more effectively to emerging financial management challenges while sustaining high standards of financial governance.

Despite these operational concerns, the overall findings indicate that the identified problems did not substantially diminish the high level of implementation of budgeting and financial reporting practices. Instead, they represent manageable operational challenges commonly experienced by public educational institutions implementing comprehensive financial management systems. Addressing these concerns through continuous professional development, process improvement, digital transformation, and strengthened institutional support would further enhance financial accountability, transparency, and organizational efficiency within public elementary schools.

INTEGRATED DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that budgeting and financial reporting practices are effectively implemented in the selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City, reflecting strong financial governance and adherence to established government standards. The absence of significant differences between school administrators and administrative personnel indicates a common understanding and consistent implementation of financial management procedures across organizational roles.

The study further established a significant positive relationship between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices, confirming that effective budgeting supports transparent, accurate, and reliable financial reporting. These findings reinforce **Public Accountability Theory**, which emphasizes transparency and accountability in managing public resources, and **Stewardship Theory**, which highlights responsible leadership and collaborative resource management. Overall, the study underscores the value of integrating budgeting and financial reporting to strengthen institutional accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and public trust in educational financial management

Integration of Theory in the Discussion

The findings of the study provide substantial empirical support for the theoretical foundations underpinning public-sector financial management. The consistently high assessment of compliance with budgeting standards reflects the principles of **Public Accountability Theory**, which emphasizes that public institutions are obligated to maintain transparency, answerability, and responsible stewardship in managing public resources. The findings suggest that the participating schools have institutionalized financial management practices that conform to DepEd, DBM, and COA regulations, thereby reinforcing public confidence in the integrity of school financial operations. Likewise, the absence of statistically significant differences between school administrators and administrative personnel suggests a shared organizational culture characterized by common financial management practices, standardized operational procedures, and consistent professional training. This finding supports organizational culture perspectives that standardized policies and continuous capability development foster common mental models and promote consistent implementation of financial management processes across organizational members. Furthermore, the significant positive relationship observed between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices demonstrates the complementary nature of these two financial management functions. Effective budgeting provides a sound basis for accurate financial reporting, while reliable financial reports generate information that supports future budgeting decisions, thereby strengthening integrated financial management systems and enhancing organizational accountability. These findings are likewise consistent with previous studies emphasizing that transparent budgeting and reliable financial reporting collectively contribute to improved governance, sound fiscal management, and institutional effectiveness in public educational organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. **Budgeting practices** in the selected public elementary schools in Parañaque City were implemented at a **high level**, indicating that school administrators and administrative personnel consistently demonstrated sound financial planning through accurate resource allocation, effective expense monitoring, and adherence to established financial standards. These practices reflect the schools' commitment to responsible financial governance and efficient utilization of public resources.
2. **Financial reporting practices** were likewise implemented at a **high level**, demonstrating that the participating schools maintained transparent, accurate, and collaborative financial reporting systems. The findings indicate that financial reports effectively support accountability, informed decision-making, and compliance with government financial management regulations.
3. There were **no significant differences** between the assessments of school administrators and administrative personnel regarding both budgeting practices and financial reporting practices. This finding suggests that standardized financial management policies and procedures are consistently understood and implemented across organizational levels, resulting in a shared perception of effective financial governance.
4. A **significant positive relationship** existed between budgeting practices and financial reporting practices. This finding confirms that effective budgeting enhances the quality of financial reporting by enabling accurate financial planning, systematic expenditure monitoring, and reliable documentation, thereby strengthening institutional accountability and transparency.
5. Although the respondents identified several operational concerns, including extensive documentation requirements, evolving financial regulations, technological limitations, and continuing competency development needs, these challenges were only **moderately encountered** and did not substantially affect the overall implementation of budgeting and financial reporting practices.
6. Overall, the findings affirm that effective budgeting and financial reporting function as complementary components of educational financial management. Their integration strengthens transparency, accountability, regulatory compliance, and evidence-based decision-making, thereby improving institutional effectiveness and responsible stewardship of public funds in public elementary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **School administrators** should continue strengthening budgeting practices by regularly reviewing budget allocation procedures, enhancing expenditure monitoring systems, and ensuring continuous compliance with Department of Education and Commission on Audit financial management policies.
2. **Administrative personnel** should be provided with continuous professional development programs focusing on government accounting standards, budgeting procedures, financial reporting, procurement regulations, internal controls, and financial documentation to further improve financial management competencies.
3. The **Department of Education** should intensify capacity-building initiatives through periodic seminars, workshops, and certification programs that address emerging financial management issues, digital financial systems, regulatory updates, and public sector accountability.
4. Public elementary schools should **adopt more advanced digital financial management systems** that automate budgeting, expenditure monitoring, documentation, and financial reporting to improve efficiency, reduce clerical errors, and facilitate real-time financial monitoring.

5. Schools should strengthen **internal financial control mechanisms** by conducting regular internal audits, periodic financial reviews, and continuous monitoring of budget implementation to ensure sustained compliance with government financial regulations.
6. Greater stakeholder participation should be encouraged by involving teachers, school governing councils, and parent representatives, where appropriate, in financial planning and transparency initiatives to further strengthen accountability and public trust.
7. School leaders should establish **continuous quality improvement mechanisms** that regularly evaluate budgeting and financial reporting practices, identify operational gaps, and implement evidence-based improvements in financial governance.
8. Future researchers may replicate this study in other public and private educational institutions across different regions of the Philippines to determine whether similar budgeting and financial reporting practices exist under varying institutional contexts. Comparative studies involving elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions may likewise provide broader evidence regarding educational financial management practices
9. Future researchers should conduct comparative, longitudinal, or mixed-methods studies involving larger populations and different educational settings to validate and expand the findings of the present research while exploring additional factors influencing financial management effectiveness.
10. Future studies may also employ **mixed-methods** or **qualitative research approaches** by incorporating interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and classroom or workplace observations. These approaches may provide richer explanations regarding the challenges encountered by financial managers, organizational decision-making processes, and the practical implementation of budgeting and financial reporting systems.
11. Future studies may evaluate the effectiveness of financial management intervention programs, professional development initiatives, digital budgeting systems, or integrated financial management information systems in improving budgeting efficiency, financial reporting quality, transparency, accountability, and institutional performance. Such intervention-based research would provide stronger empirical evidence for policy development and continuous improvement of educational financial management.

Recommendations With Implementation Guidance

The implementation of the recommendations arising from this study should be undertaken through a coordinated and systematic approach involving school administrators, administrative personnel, the Schools Division Office, and relevant DepEd offices. Priority should be given to strengthening digital financial management systems by gradually adopting electronic budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting applications that comply with government regulations. Implementation may be scheduled over a twelve-month period, beginning with system acquisition, personnel orientation, pilot implementation, and full operational deployment. Simultaneously, annual capability-building programs should be institutionalized to enhance the competencies of school administrators and finance personnel in budgeting, procurement, financial reporting, internal control, and government accounting standards. Regular internal financial audits should likewise be conducted at least quarterly to ensure continuous compliance with financial regulations, identify operational weaknesses, and implement corrective actions promptly. Policy reviews should be conducted semiannually to ensure that school financial management procedures remain aligned with the latest DepEd, DBM, and COA guidelines. The effectiveness of these initiatives may be evaluated using measurable performance indicators, such as timely submission of financial reports, reductions in audit observations, increases in compliance ratings, improved utilization of allocated budgets, and higher competency assessment scores among financial management personnel. Establishing specific implementation timelines, responsible offices, and measurable indicators will facilitate effective monitoring and ensure the sustainability of the proposed enhancement initiatives.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for school administrators, policymakers, and education finance practitioners responsible for managing public educational resources. The consistently high implementation of budgeting and financial reporting practices indicates that public elementary schools have established sound financial management systems that may serve as models for continuous institutional improvement. School administrators should capitalize on these strengths by further integrating budgeting, expenditure monitoring, financial reporting, and internal control mechanisms into a unified financial management framework that promotes transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Greater utilization of digital financial management technologies, standardized reporting templates, and automated monitoring systems may further improve operational efficiency while reducing administrative workload and reporting errors. For policymakers, the findings underscore the importance of sustaining investments in financial capability-building programs, continuous professional development, technical assistance, and digital transformation initiatives across public schools. The results may also inform the formulation and refinement of policies that strengthen school financial governance, promote responsible stewardship of public funds, and enhance institutional accountability throughout the basic education sector. Ultimately, the study provides empirical evidence that may inform both school-level financial management improvements and broader policy initiatives to strengthen governance, resource utilization, and financial sustainability in the Philippine public education system.

Limitations Of The Study

This study was limited to selected public elementary schools in the Division of Parañaque City; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other educational settings. The use of a descriptive-correlational design allowed the examination of relationships between variables but did not establish causal effects.

In addition, the study relied on self-reported responses obtained through a researcher-developed questionnaire, which may be influenced by respondents' perceptions. Other factors that may affect budgeting and financial reporting practices, such as organizational culture, leadership style, technological readiness, and financial competency, were beyond the scope of the investigation and may be explored in future research.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles governing educational research involving human participants. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the confidentiality of their responses. No personally identifiable information was disclosed in any part of the research, and all collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

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The van Schaik article is directly applicable to the manuscript because it examines the relationship and alignment between public-sector budget information and financial accounting systems.

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