

Fiscal Management Competence of Principals to Financial Performance and School Improvement in Public Elementary Schools: Its Impact on Financial Resources Management

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Abstract

The main concern of this investigation was to draw the possible association between the fiscal management competence and school improvement status in public schools. The public schools involved were those covered by Calauan Sub-Office in the Division of Laguna. Respondents were teachers who were conveniently sampled. The study run from September 2022 to March 2023. Data were gathered via online survey method.

Results showed that school heads were competent in decision making (3.63), accountability (3.63), formulation (3.69), expenditure (3.66), monitoring (3.61), results analysis (3.62) and performance control (3.54) with formulation as the aspect they were most competent and performance control being the least as supported by their overall means. Moreover, the financial performance of schools were highly satisfactory in terms of payment of suppliers (3.63), school projects completion (3.66), and outsourcing from stakeholders (3.67) as supported by the computed overall means. They also have highly satisfactory school improvement in terms of Support to Instructional quality (3.56), stakeholders' participation (3.76), and facility maintenance (3.67) as supported by the computed overall means.

Fiscal management competence of school heads was further found significantly correlated with their schools' financial performance. Schools with school heads who are competent in fiscal management have better financial performance. Additionally, when schools have good fiscal management, they can also have good school improvement. The positive relationship between the two helps in identifying one factor that might contribute in making school improvement a success – fiscal management competence.

Based on the results, the hypothesis that there is no significant association between the fiscal management competence and financial performance of public schools was not sustained. Similarly, the hypothesis that there is no significant association between the fiscal management competence and the improvements of public schools was not sustained. Researcher encouraged school heads to continue improving their fiscal management competence. She further encouraged stakeholders to assist school heads by ensuring the proper fiscal management of the schools through the school governance councils and involvement in various school activities. The SGOD Chief was likewise suggested to allocate resources for professional development opportunities related to fiscal management and school improvement while the TA Leads and District Supervisors may help in setting measurable goals and indicators of success related to fiscal management and school improvement. Finally, future researchers may explore innovative approaches to fiscal management that could help increase the level of performance and improvement of schools.

Keywords: fiscal management; school improvement plan; school governance councils

INTRODUCTION

School is integral to any society. It serves as an institution where formal learning and training of the people take place. This is where education happens. The major way in which a child acquires information is via their schooling. Children have the opportunity to acquire knowledge in a wide variety of educational domains, such as people, literature, history, mathematics, politics, and many other subjects via the use of this medium. When a person has more information, they are in a better position to help others around them.

Similar to other social institutions, schools have evolved over the millennia and continue to do so today. Experts define school reform as the process by which schools become more effective at promoting the social and cultural well-being of students and adults within the school, as well as academic outcomes. Keeping up with global innovations is one of the greatest challenges colleges face. Due to the swiftly changing nature of technology, the need for discernment as news articles stream from internet

sources, and the ever-expanding repository of knowledge resources, students must now navigate increasingly complex academic and social circumstances and decisions. Unlike in the past, when schools were only required to update textbooks every ten years, they now have the onerous task of ensuring that students are prepared to enter a world that is significantly more dynamic and demanding (Eastern Michigan University, 2018).

Indicators aid in predicting an outcome, allowing institutions to make necessary adjustments. Leading indicators provide plain and quantifiable evidence that the school is on track for improvement. Among these indicators are school instructional quality, increased student participation, school ethos, and overall objectives. Other school improvement indicators may include student achievement, referrals for disciplinary action, attendance rates, graduation rates, and teacher satisfaction (Emery, 2014), which are all included in DepEd's key performance indicators.

In this study, the researcher attempted to examine the state of school improvement in the aforementioned district. The basis for this is the theory of surveillance and evaluation. As part of implementation and decision-making, there are numerous techniques for determining whether interventions produce the intended outcomes. Performance monitoring necessitates the collection of intervention-related data in order to compare its efficacy to predetermined objectives and goals. Comprehensive assessments evaluate the efficacy of an intervention by providing answers to questions about how a particular intervention affects relevant outcomes.

There was a test of correlation between the specified school improvement status and the fiscal management practices in schools. According to Magdalera (2022), fiscal management in education ensures that a school or academic organization has sufficient funds to achieve its goals and objectives, and that these funds are used for their intended purpose. It involves the planning, management, and control of a company's or organization's financial resources (Norwich University, 2019).

The reviewed literature emphasized that a stronger commitment to and application of financial management principles leads to enhanced school performance. The connection between a school's potential and its fiscal management practices is essential to its growth. Financially sound institutions are prepared and inventive. Multiple factors contribute to an organization's success; therefore, the interaction between the school's performance and its financial management strategy contributes to its growth (MBA Knowledge Base, 2021).

Butt et al. (2015) examined organizational performance and financial management practices like capital structure decision, dividend policy, investment appraisal techniques, working capital management, and financial performance assessment in Pakistani corporations. The research sampled forty Karachi Stock Exchange-listed Pakistani firms in diverse sectors. Financial leaders and analysts from firm profiles and references completed a questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires collected data. Financial management techniques correlated positively with Pakistani company success.

Many other studies sought to correlate two variables, however, majority focused on private institutions. There was a limited number of studies conducted investigating the fiscal management of schools in the Philippines. While there was a rich volume of researches on school performance correlating it to other factors, very limited focused on financial factors. Considering these, the researcher was determined to measure possible association between this two. From this point of departure, proper recommendation could be made as to how fiscal management in public schools can be enhanced in order to promote better school improvement successes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the fiscal management competence and school improvement status in public schools in a district in the Philippines. It specifically described the profile of the schools in terms of lot area, enrolment, number of teachers and staff, and annual budget allocation. It further discussed the fiscal management competence in public school as to budget planning and preparation, budget execution, and budget control. The study likewise illustrated that status of financial performance of public schools as to payment of suppliers, completion of school projects, and outsourcing from stakeholders. The status of school improvement among public schools as to support to instructional quality, stakeholders' participation, and facility maintenance was also presented.

METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative because it involves numbers, logic, and an objective perspective.

Locale of the Study

The study was set in the Province of Laguna specifically, the municipality of Calauan was considered.

Respondents

There were 136 teacher-respondents, 5 as Master Teacher, 3 as Master Teacher II, and 0 as Master Teacher III, 74 of the overall population of teacher-respondents were designated as Teacher I, 17 as Teacher II, 37 as Teacher III, implying that the

majority of the population was designated as Teacher I. Convenient sampling was used in choosing the respondents of the study since there was a very large number to cover.

Researcher Instrument

The researcher utilized the researcher-made online survey questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering the data and information about managerial competencies and practices as predictors of service quality. The researcher delivered the survey questionnaire to the thesis adviser and other panel members for corrections and suggestions on how to improve it to ensure its consistency and correctness.

To ensure the quality of statements and alignment to the subject matter under study, the researcher requested content validation by one principal, one headteacher, one master teacher, and an English teacher. Additionally, the instrument underwent an internal consistency test to assess the reliability of the data gathered during its pilot testing. In terms of fiscal management competencies, financial performance, and school improvement, the sub-variables were all higher than 0.6 which indicated that the statements used were acceptable, good and excellent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the tabulated data and the results of the study, the corresponding analysis as well as the interpretation of the data as a result of the statistical treatment used.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents based on their School profile. It reveals that majority of the population coming from twenty one different schools in Calauan.

The table also presents the lot area among 21 schools, 3 of them are 1000-below square meter, 5 schools are 1001-2000 sq. m, 7 are 2001-3000 sq. m, 1 school is 3001-4000 sq. m, 2 are 4001-5000 sq. m, and 3 are 5000 and above. The findings about the distribution as to lot area undeniably reveals that most school has a medium size.

Table 1. School Profile

| School | School Profile | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| | Lot Area | Enrolment | # of Teachers | Annual Budget |
| Antonio Chipeco MES | 1001-2000 sq. m | 283 | 11 | 330,000 |
| Balayhangin ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 578 | 19 | 531,000 |
| Bangyas ES | 1001-2000 sq. m | 331 | 11 | 360,000 |
| Calauan Central ES | 5001 and above | 1488 | 50 | 1,244,000 |
| Dayap ES | 5001 and above | 1118 | 32 | 875,000 |
| Dayap ES Annex | 3001-4000 sq. m | 1541 | 46 | 1,175,000 |
| Imok ES | 1000 and below | 358 | 10 | 334,000 |
| Lamot ES Main | 4001-5000 sq. m | 555 | 17 | 491,000 |
| Lamot ES Annex | 1001-2000 sq. m | 266 | 10 | 259,000 |
| Lima ES | 1000 and below | 218 | 8 | 291,000 |
| Mabacan ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 651 | 18 | 510,000 |
| Mahabang Parang ES | 1001-2000 sq. m | 218 | 8 | 290,000 |
| Makativille ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 427 | 17 | 412,000 |
| Masiit ES | 4001-5000 sq. m | 281 | 12 | 367,000 |
| Paliparan ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 164 | 8 | 271,000 |
| Perez ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 345 | 10 | 369,000 |
| Prinza ES | 1001-2000 sq. m | 284 | 9 | 328,000 |
| San Isidro ES | 1000 and below | 351 | 13 | 387,000 |
| Santo Tomas ES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 477 | 16 | 1,721,000 |
| Santo Tomas ES-Annex | 5001 and above | 2121 | 52 | 1,721,000 |
| Teodoro C. Dator MES | 2001-3000 sq. m | 411 | 14 | 412,000 |

Moreover, it is indicated on the table the exact number of 21 school as to enrolment. Santo Tomas ES Annex displays as the most highest enrolment rate with the number of 2121 while the most lowest enrolment is Mahabang Parang ES and Lima ES with the number of 218.

In addition, the distribution as to number of teachers reveals that the large number is from Santo Tomas ES Annex with the total number of 52 public teachers while the lowest number of teachers is from Paliparan ES which has a total of 8 teachers

Lastly, the table also reveals the distribution of school-respondents as to their Annual Budget. It shows that Santo Tomas ES Main and Annex has the highest budget allocation with the total of 1,721,000 pesos while Paliparan ES is the least number of Annual Budget with 271,000 pesos.

Overall, the table evidently shows that the larged sized school or having a big lot area have a relation to the number of learners and teachers and thus correlate to the amount of annual budget.

In a study of Abellon et. Al (2020) The MOOE budget for every year depends upon the number of enrollees. School heads have utilized 51% to 75% of MOOE funds for each activity/program indicated in AIP. The majority of them were given priority on security and utility services and challenged on the complaints and misconceptions about spending and allocating of MOOE expenses. Transparency, accountability, and maintaining harmonious relationships are the keys to ensure collaboration and teamwork for the betterment of school and learners as well.

Table 4 shows the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of decision making.

Table 2. Budget Planning and Preparation as to Decision Making

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school solicits budget proposals from different principle coordinators or project leads to serve as basis for annual budget. | 3.57 | 0.68 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school conducts SWOT analysis as part of budget planning. | 3.63 | 0.54 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school practices collaborative budget planning by involving internal and external stakeholders in crafting the SIP and AIP. | 3.65 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school rates items requiring budget as to their urgency and possible impact. | 3.64 | 0.51 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school involves the school governance council, faculty and other stakeholders in finalizing budget plan. | 3.63 | 0.60 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.63 | 0.28 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Based on the results, all indicators of decision making were highly competent among school heads. Particularly, it was most evident that school practices collaborative budget planning by involving internal and external stakeholders in crafting the SIP and AIP ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.55$) having recorded the highest mean. Next to it was rating the urgency and possible impact of an item that requires budget ($M=3.64$, $SD=0.51$). Very close to these two and equal in mean were the conduct of SWOT analysis ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.54$) and the involvement of external stakeholders in budget finalization ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.60$).

However, it was observed that soliciting budget proposal from coordinators and project leads recorded the lowest mean i.e., 3.57 but with the highest $SD=0.68$. This means that the perception of the respondents were varied in this aspect of decision making. Nevertheless, it was still found evident.

Overall, it was found that fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of decision making was evident. It implied the use of various consultative mechanism in the preparation of budget.

According to a study by the National Education Association, involving stakeholders in the budget process can increase transparency and accountability, which can lead to better decision-making and greater trust in the school administration (National Education Association, 2019). Similarly, a report by the American Association of School Administrators found that engaging stakeholders in the budget process can increase the quality of the budget and improve stakeholder satisfaction (American Association of School Administrators, 2016).

In addition, involving stakeholders in the budget process can help schools identify areas of need and prioritize spending accordingly. For example, parents and teachers may identify a need for more classroom resources or support staff, while students may prioritize extracurricular activities or technology upgrades.

Overall, involving stakeholders in the budget process can lead to better decision-making, increased transparency and accountability, greater stakeholder satisfaction, and ultimately, a stronger school community.

Table 3. Budget Planning and Preparation as to Accountability

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school head documents the budget preparation and planning process. | 3.66 | 0.53 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head practices transparency to keep the public updated on the status of school budget. | 3.63 | 0.58 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head allows the public to access budget information by posting reports on the transparency board. | 3.60 | 0.58 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school's draft of budget plan is signed by internal and external stakeholders. | 3.63 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school informs the public about budget plan by conducting state of the school address. | 3.62 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.63 | 0.25 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Table 3 shows the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of accountability.

Based on the results, all five indicators were also highly competent among school heads. Particularly highest in mean was the documentation of the preparation and planning process ($M=3.66$, $SD=0.53$). Next highest were the practice of public transparency ($Wx = 3.63$, $SD = 0.58$) and signing of the draft by the internal and external stakeholders ($Wx = 3.63$, $SD=0.56$). It was also evident that school heads allow the public's access to transparency board ($Wx = 3.60$, $SD = 0.58$) and that they use SOSA as venue for informing the public on the budget plan ($Wx = 3.62$, $SD = 0.55$).

The results for all five indicators were very close. This strengthens further the overall findings that e fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of accountability was highly competent. It was evident that school heads exerted efforts to involve stakeholders thus promoting shared accountability.

According to Brown & Perkins (2017), involving stakeholders in decision-making can increase accountability by promoting transparency and reducing the likelihood of conflicts of interest. When stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making process, they are more likely to feel invested in the outcome and hold themselves and others accountable for achieving the desired results.

In a study conducted by Bovaird (2017), it was found that involving stakeholders in public service delivery can increase accountability by creating a shared sense of responsibility for achieving goals. This sense of shared responsibility can lead to greater cooperation, collaboration, and communication between stakeholders, which can help to identify and address issues that may arise.

Table 4. Budget Planning and Preparation as to Formulation

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school head traces annual income from MOOE, SEF, Donations, and Local or Canteen Funds. | 3.78 | 0.43 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head maps all fixed expenses for the whole fiscal year. | 3.68 | 0.51 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head reviews incidental and miscellaneous expenses from the previous year. | 3.67 | 0.49 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school head designs adjustment schemes for possible budget deficit. | 3.67 | 0.50 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school head considers seasonal and unexpected expenses as part of the annual budget. | 3.63 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.69 | 0.25 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Table 4 presents the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of formulation.

Results showed that all five indicators were highly competent among the school heads. In particular, school heads competently trace income from various sources ($M=3.78$, $SD=0.43$). It was also competent that school heads were mapping fixed annual expenses ($M = 3.68$, $SD=0.51$). Equally evident were the review of incidental and miscellaneous expenses ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.49$) and the adjustment schemes for deficit ($M=3.67$, $SD = 0.50$). The lowest mean was recorded for including seasonal and unexpected expenses ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.56$). Nevertheless, it was still competent among the school heads.

Overall, it was found that the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget planning and preparation in terms of formulation was competent.

Tracing income sources is an important step in budget planning as it allows schools to identify their sources of income and plan their expenses accordingly. By knowing their income sources, schools can create a realistic budget, ensure that they have enough money to cover their expenses, and make informed financial decisions. Additionally, tracing income sources can help schools identify areas where they can increase their income, such as through fund-raising activities (Kiplinger, 2019 and Bankrate, 2020).

There have been studies that have examined the budget planning capabilities of public school principals in the Philippines. For example, Tan and Rosario (2016) found that public school principals in Quezon City had a good understanding of the budgeting process and were capable of preparing budgets. Fortunato (2017) similarly found that public school principals in Laguna had a moderate level of budgeting competency. These studies suggest that public school principals in the Philippines are generally capable of budget planning. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of school principals in budget planning can vary depending on several factors, such as their level of expertise, experience, resources available, and the complexity of the budgeting process.

Table 5 presents the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget execution in terms of expenditure.

Results showed that school heads competently give attention to all projects and programs included in the school improvement plan or SIP ($M=3.72$, $SD=0.53$). It recorded the highest mean and next to it was the evident use of disbursement record in tracking expenses for school improvement projects ($M=3.70$, $SD=0.56$). Another evident results was the use of monitoring tools that ensure timely disbursement ($M=3.66$, $SD=0.55$). It was also evident that school heads were capable of resolving budgetary problems without compromising implementation of projects ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.58$).

Table 5. Budget Execution in as to Expenditure

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|------------------|
| 1. The school head ensures that all program/projects and activities in the SIP are attended to. | 3.72 | 0.53 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head has a disbursement record that helps monitor expenses for each project. | 3.70 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head avoids supplementary budget request. | 3.59 | 0.60 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school head has a means of augmenting budget shortages without resulting to project implementation deferment | 3.62 | 0.58 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school head has monitoring tools to ensure the timely disbursement of funds. | 3.66 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.66 | 0.27 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

However, it was observed that the lowest means was recorded for avoiding supplementary budget request ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.60$). According to Chan and Daily (2018), a supplemental budget request is a request for additional funds beyond what was originally budgeted for a particular period or project. As such, it may indicate that the initial budget did not adequately account for certain expenses or contingencies.

If a supplemental budget request is necessary due to unexpected events or unforeseeable circumstances, then it may not necessarily indicate poor forecasting or inadequate resource allocation in the initial budget. However, if the need for a supplemental budget is a result of poor forecasting or inadequate resource allocation, it may be a sign of inefficient budget planning.

For example, if a government agency or organization requests a supplemental budget due to unanticipated expenses that could have been predicted with better forecasting or planning, it may indicate a lack of foresight in the initial budgeting process. Similarly, if a project runs over budget because of poor allocation of resources, such as inadequate staffing or insufficient equipment, a supplemental budget request may be necessary to cover these costs.

Nevertheless, the overall results ($M=3.66$, $SD=0.27$) showed that the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget execution in terms of expenditure was competent.

Table 6. Budget Execution as to Budget Monitoring

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|------------------|
| 1. The school head has means to track performance and accountability over time | 3.63 | 0.54 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head refines school budgeting processes through continuous improvement | 3.65 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head keeps the transparency board visible to the public and updated. | 3.65 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school head render quarterly report on the school's financial status. | 3.55 | 0.60 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school head has a copy of school book of accounts open for everyone who wishes to see. | 3.55 | 0.63 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.61 | 0.24 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Table 6 presents the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget execution in terms of expenditure.

Results showed that all five indicators were competent among school heads. Particularly highest in mean were the practice of refining school budgeting processes through continuous improvement ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.55$) and keeping the transparency boards visible to the public and updated ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.56$). Next highest was tracing performance and accountability over time ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.54$).

On the other hand, the lowest means were recorded for rendering quarterly report on the school's financial status ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.60$) and making book of account open to the public ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.63$). Though lowest in means, these two indicators were still evident among school heads. Overall, results showed that the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget execution in terms of expenditure was evident.

There is limited research specifically focused on the transparency of public school principals in the Philippines. However, the present study support the findings of previous studies conducted on transparency and accountability in Philippine public institutions, including the education sector. The Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project, a joint project of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), aims to promote transparency and accountability in government agencies, including public schools. Meanwhile, the 2017 Global Integrity Report assesses the transparency and accountability of different countries around the world, including the Philippines, which highlights the challenges of corruption and lack of transparency in the country's public institutions, including the education sector (Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project, n.d.; Global Integrity, 2017).

Table 7. Budget Control as to Results Analysis

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|------------------|
| 1. The school head makes adjustments and decides with spending based on the emerging needs of the school. | 3.62 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head calls for general staff meeting to discuss budget constraints. | 3.55 | 0.63 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head must give emphasis for points of improvement from the budgetary problems encountered. | 3.60 | 0.57 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school head adjusts Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) whenever necessary. | 3.67 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school head prioritizes learning outcomes in making budgetary adjustments. | 3.65 | 0.54 | Highly Competent |
| Overall | 3.62 | 0.26 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Table 7 presents the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget control in terms of results analysis.

Results showed that all five indicators were competent among school heads. It was worth noting that adjusting the AIP whenever necessary recorded the highest mean i.e., 3.67 with SD=0.55. Second most competent was prioritizing learning outcomes in making budgetary adjustments (M=3.65, SD=0.54). Third highest was making adjustments and deciding with spending based on the emerging needs of the school (M=3.62, SD=0.56). Close to this was giving emphasis for points of improvement from the budgetary problems encountered (M=3.60, SD=0.57).

On the other hand, the lowest mean was recorded for calling a general staff meeting to discuss budget constraints (M=3.55, SD=0.63). Nevertheless, it was still evident. Overall results showed that the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget control in terms of results analysis was competent.

Results implied that school heads were willing to make adjustment if necessary. Adjusting plans to address budget problems is crucial for the success of any project or organization. Several recent studies have demonstrated the importance of this practice. For instance, a study by the Project Management Institute found that organizations with flexible budgeting processes were more likely to complete projects on time, within budget, and to a high level of quality (Project Management Institute, 2021). Flexibility enables organizations to adjust their plans in response to changing circumstances, which can help them avoid budget overruns.

However, it was observed that school heads need to improve in the area of participative approach. The participative approach is a management style that emphasizes employee involvement in decision-making processes, including budgeting (Lunenburg, 2020). In the context of budget constraints in an organization, a participative approach can be beneficial in several ways. Firstly, it increases ownership and accountability as employees are more likely to feel committed to achieving budget goals (Chong & Chong, 2018). Secondly, it leads to a better understanding of financial constraints, resulting in more realistic budgeting and better decision-making about resource allocation (Almaiah & Al-Kabi, 2016). Thirdly, it encourages creativity and innovation by allowing employees to contribute ideas for budget solutions (Jankowicz & Kao, 2014). Finally, a participative approach can increase communication and teamwork among employees and management (Gupta & Bhattacharya, 2021).

Table 8. Budget Control as to Performance Control

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school head periodically looks into and report on the financial status of the school regularly. | 3.61 | 0.55 | Highly Competent |
| 2. The school head periodically conducts and presents results of budget variances. | 3.54 | 0.61 | Highly Competent |
| 3. The school head crafts and presents alternative solutions to address budget variances. | 3.60 | 0.56 | Highly Competent |
| 4. The school head orients internal and external stakeholders on the target financial status of the school. | 3.59 | 0.59 | Highly Competent |
| 5. The school head invites COA/DBM to help assess its financial position. | 3.35 | 0.81 | Competent |
| Overall | 3.54 | 0.31 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Competent, 2.50-3.49 Competent, 1.50-2.49 Less Competent, 1.00-1.49 Incompetent

Table 8 presents the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget control in terms of performance control.

Results showed that four indicators were competent while one was only moderately competent. Most competent was the periodical and regular checking of the financial status of the school (M=3.61, SD=0.55). Next to it was the crafting and presentation of alternative solutions to address budget variances (M=3.60, SD=0.56). The third most competent was orientation of internal and external stakeholders on the target financial status of the schools (M=3.59, SD=0.59). Moreover, it was evident that school heads periodically conduct and present results of budget variances (M=3.54, SD=0.61).

On the other hand, it was observed that inviting COA/DBM to help assess schools' financial position was only moderately evident (M=3.35, SD=0.81). Nevertheless, the overall results showed that the fiscal management competence of school heads as to budget control in terms of performance control was competent (M=3.54, SD=0.31). This implies that school heads were manage their schools' financial performances well.

Budget performance control is crucial for organizations as it helps to ensure that they are achieving their financial goals and objectives. This is particularly true for educational institutions, where effective financial management can determine the success of the institution. The role of the school heads in financial performance control cannot be overemphasized, as they are responsible for the overall management of the school, including financial management.

Research has shown that effective financial performance control by principals is critical to the success of the school. In a study conducted by Asamoah and Kyei (2021), it was found that effective financial performance control by principals positively impacts the financial performance of schools. The study further highlighted that principals who are knowledgeable about financial management are more likely to effectively control the financial performance of their schools.

Another study by Karim et al. (2021) found that financial performance control by principals is positively associated with the academic performance of schools. The study suggested that effective financial management by principals leads to the efficient use of resources, which in turn positively impacts the academic performance of schools.

Table 9 presents the financial performance of public schools in terms of payment of suppliers.

Results showed that four of the indicators were highly satisfied while one was only satisfied. Most satisfied was regularly paying bills from suppliers and service providers ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.45$). Next to it was having no outstanding balance with suppliers and service providers ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.53$). Third highest in mean was the inexperience of power supply and internet disconnection ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.53$). Fourth was the ability of schools to secure the lowest reasonable prices for supplies ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.60$).

Table 9. Financial Performance of Public Schools as to Payment of Suppliers

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|------------------|
| 1. The school regularly settles bills from suppliers and service providers. | 3.81 | 0.45 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. The school has no outstanding balance with suppliers and service providers. | 3.68 | 0.53 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. The school does not experience disconnection of power supply and internet connectivity. | 3.63 | 0.53 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. The school receives incentives from suppliers like school supplies and other needed materials. | 3.48 | 0.68 | Satisfied |
| 5. The school secured the lowest reasonable prices for supplies. | 3.57 | 0.60 | Highly Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.63 | 0.36 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

However, receiving incentives from suppliers like school supplies and other needed materials ($M=3.48$, $SD=0.68$) recorded the lowest mean. This implied that schools somehow receive donations from their suppliers. While there are laws and regulations in place that govern the acceptance of gifts and donations by government officials and employees. For example, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (Republic Act No. 6713) and the Philippine Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act No. 9184) there remain schools which receive donations from suppliers (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, 1991; Philippine Government Procurement Reform Act, 2003; and Philippine Transparency Seal, n.d.).

Table 10. Financial Performance of Public Schools as to School Projects Completion

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|------------------|
| 1. School programs/projects and activities found in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) are funded. | 3.75 | 0.45 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. Ongoing school projects receive timely allocations | 3.66 | 0.52 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. School projects and their budget are managed by the implementing office / team. | 3.63 | 0.59 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. School projects are completed based on proposed timeline. | 3.63 | 0.54 | Highly Satisfied |

| | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 5. No school project is left incomplete due to budgetary constraints. | 3.61 | 0.56 | Highly Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.66 | 0.25 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

Table 10 presents the financial performance of public schools in terms of school projects completion.

Results showed that all five indicators were highly satisfied. Particularly highest in mean was the allocation of funds for all programs and projects found in the school improvement plans ($M=3.75$, $Sd=0.45$). Next highest was the timely allocation ($M=3.66$, $Sd=0.52$) for the ongoing projects. Additionally, there were equal means observed for allowing teams to manage the budget allocated for their projects ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.59$) and accomplishment of projects based on set timeline ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.54$). The lowest mean was observed for not having any project left incomplete for budgetary reasons ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.56$). Nevertheless, it was still evident.

Overall, it was found that the financial performance of public schools in terms of school projects completion was highly satisfied. This implied that the accomplishment of projects found in the SIP was relatively high in the sub-office.

While the effectiveness of SIPs in the Philippines can vary depending on the specific context and circumstances of each school, the current study support the report of the Department of Education (2019) that the implementation of SIPs has resulted in positive outcomes such as increased participation of stakeholders, improved school governance, and enhanced learning outcomes. The report also noted that SIPs have helped schools in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and in developing strategies to address them. In the case of the present study, it was established that school projects completion was evident thus, supporting the effectiveness of the SIPs.

Table 11. Financial Performance of Public as to Outsourcing from Stakeholders

| Indicators | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. School receives support from external stakeholders. | 3.71 | 0.46 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. External stakeholders monitor the progress of the project they sponsored. | 3.64 | 0.51 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. External stakeholders regularly support school projects. | 3.65 | 0.49 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. School request support and projects received from external stakeholders. | 3.68 | 0.48 | Highly Satisfied |
| 5. School is rated at least very satisfactory by external stakeholders in terms of project implementation and completion. | 3.66 | 0.47 | Highly Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.67 | 0.22 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

Table 11 presents the financial performance of public schools in terms outsourcing from stakeholders.

Results indicated that all five statements were found Highly Satisfied among schools subjected to investigation. The mean for receiving support from external stakeholder ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.46$) was the highest. It was followed by the mean for receiving the requested support and projects from external stakeholders ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.48$). Close to this were the means for having rated at least very satisfactory by external stakeholders in terms of project implementation and completion ($M=3.66$, $SD=0.47$), and receiving regular support for projects ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.49$). Lowest but still close to these was the mean for having stakeholder monitor the progress of projects their sponsored ($M=3.64$, $SD=0.51$).

Overall the results showed that the financial performance of public schools in terms outsourcing from stakeholders was evident. The findings of the current study were similar to the study conducted by Tayabas and Teope (2020) which found that stakeholders in public schools in the province of Batangas, Philippines, expressed high levels of support and engagement in various aspects of school management and governance, such as curriculum development, budget planning, and community outreach programs. However, the present study was not able to identify challenges that hindered stakeholders' participation.

On the other hand the present study's findings were different from another study by Castillo et al. (2020) which examined the role of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in public schools in the Philippines. The study found that PTAs can play a crucial role in supporting schools, particularly in promoting parent involvement, providing additional resources, and improving school facilities. However, the study also identified several challenges that hindered the effectiveness of PTAs, such as limited funding and lack of training and support for PTA officers.

Table 12 presents the status of school improvement in terms of support to instructional quality.

Results indicated that three statements were highly satisfied while two were only satisfied. The most evident was the provision of materials and equipment required to for quality teaching and enhancing student performance ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.50$). Next to it was the allocation of budget for curricular programs like learning materials and technology-aided equipment ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.61$). The third was the allocation of funds for benchmarking and training/workshop of teachers ($M=3.56$, $SD=0.61$).

Table 12. School Improvement as to of Support to Instructional Quality

| Statements | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school provides materials and equipment required to for quality teaching and enhancing student performance. | 3.71 | 0.50 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. The school allots budget for curricular programs like learning materials and technology-aided equipment. | 3.67 | 0.50 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. The school allocate funds for benchmarking and training/workshop of teachers. | 3.56 | 0.61 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. The school financed the paper or research presentation of teachers in regional or national forum. | 3.38 | 0.83 | Satisfied |
| 5. The school allocates financial support to activities on key equity indicators, such as the performance of different subgroups such as girls, students living in poverty, or students with disabilities. | 3.47 | 0.72 | Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.56 | 0.35 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

On the other hand, the allocation of financial support to activities on key equity indicators, such as the performance of different subgroups such as girls, students living in poverty, or students with disabilities was only satisfied ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.72$). Furthermore, financing the paper or research presentation of teachers in regional or national forum was also satisfied ($M=3.38$, $SD=0.83$).

Overall, results showed that the status of school improvement in terms of support to instructional quality was highly satisfied. However, results implied lack of budget for inclusive education and research.

Inclusivity in public education is crucial for ensuring that all students have equal access to learning opportunities and that their unique needs are met. According to the National Education Association (NEA), inclusivity involves creating a supportive and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or socioeconomic status (NEA, 2021). Inclusive education acknowledges and celebrates diversity, encourages critical thinking, and promotes empathy and understanding among students. Research has shown that inclusive education leads to better academic outcomes for students with disabilities, reduced bullying and discrimination, and improved social skills (Odom et al., 2020). By fostering inclusivity in public education, we can create a more equitable and just society that values and respects the dignity of all individuals.

Moreover, the limited budget for research in public schools in the Philippines has been a long-standing issue that hinders the improvement of education in the country. The lack of funding for research in schools makes it difficult for educators to conduct studies that could identify effective teaching strategies, evaluate existing programs, and develop new curricula that cater to the diverse needs of students. The Department of Education (2019) has acknowledged the need for more research in education and has implemented various initiatives to promote research in schools. However, the limited budget for research remains a challenge, as many schools lack the resources to conduct research independently. To address this issue, the government needs to increase funding for education research, encourage partnerships between schools and universities, and provide training and support for educators to conduct research effectively. By investing in education research, the Philippines can improve the quality of education and provide better learning opportunities for its students (Eclarin et al., 2017).

Table 13. School Improvement as to Stakeholders' Participation

| Statements | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school welcomes parent, NGOs, LGUs and private organization to participate on programs and projects for school improvement. | 3.77 | 0.42 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. The school encourages students to work together with peers and school staff and community. | 3.79 | 0.43 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. The school allows students to have a voice about school activities outside of the classroom | 3.74 | 0.48 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. The school has parents and community members regularly attending school functions. | 3.76 | 0.43 | Highly Satisfied |
| 5. The school has an active school governing council and general parents-teachers association. | 3.76 | 0.43 | Highly Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.76 | 0.23 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

Table 13 presents the status of school improvement in terms of stakeholders' participation.

Results showed that all statements were highly satisfied. Particularly highest in mean was encouraging students to work together with peers and school staff and community ($M=3.79$, $Sd=0.43$). Next highest was welcoming parent, NGOs, LGUs and private organization to participate on programs and projects for school improvement ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.42$). Equal means were recorded for having parents and community members regularly attending school functions ($M=3.76$, $Sd=0.43$) and having an active school governing council and general parents-teachers association ($M=3.76$, $SD=0.43$). The lowest mean was recorded for allowing students to have a voice about school activities outside of the classroom ($M=3.74$, $SD=0.48$). Nevertheless, it was still interpreted as highly satisfied

Overall, the results showed that the status of school improvement in terms of stakeholders' participation was evident. This implied the different partnerships which schools were able to establish with their external stakeholders.

The findings of the present study were different that of the study published by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (2021) which found that stakeholder participation in public schools in the Philippines is relatively low, particularly in remote and disadvantaged areas. The study cited several reasons for this, such as the lack of awareness among stakeholders about their role and responsibilities, the absence of a clear framework for stakeholder engagement, and the limited capacity of schools to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Table 14. School Improvement as to Facility Maintenance

| Statements | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The school head conducts re-orientation on the proper use and management of school facilities and utilities. | 3.65 | 0.54 | Highly Satisfied |
| 2. The school head checks if classrooms and other school facilities are functional. | 3.71 | 0.49 | Highly Satisfied |
| 3. The school head confers with teachers and students to hear about problems on facilities and utilities. | 3.65 | 0.55 | Highly Satisfied |
| 4. The school head acts immediately to resolve problems with facilities and utilities | 3.65 | 0.56 | Highly Satisfied |
| 5. The school head ensures a safe and secure or conducive environment for effective teaching and learning processes. | 3.71 | 0.50 | Highly Satisfied |
| Overall | 3.67 | 0.24 | |

Legend: 3.50-4.50 Highly Satisfied, 2.50-3.49 Satisfied, 1.50-2.49 Less Satisfied, 1.00-1.49 Not Satisfied

Table 14 presents the status of school improvement in terms of facility maintenance.

Results showed that all five statements were highly satisfied. Particularly highest were the means for checking the functionality of classrooms and other facilities ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.49$) and ensuring a safe and secure or conducive environment for effective teaching and learning processes ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.50$). The others recorded similar means.. It was evident that school head conducts re-orientation on the proper use and management of school facilities and utilities ($M=3.65$, $Sd=0.54$). It was likewise evident that they confer with teachers and students to hear about problems on facilities and utilities ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.56$) and act immediately to resolve problems with facilities and utilities ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.56$).

Overall, results showed that the status of school improvement in terms of facility maintenance was highly satisfied. This means that schools have well-maintained facilities. These findings were different from what related studies found. Several studies indicate that the facilities in Philippine public schools are generally inadequate and substandard. These studies found that many schools lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, chairs, textbooks, electricity, water supply, and toilets.

For example, Antonio et al. (2019) found that many Philippine public schools lack basic facilities such as classrooms, chairs, and textbooks, as well as inadequate sanitation facilities. Similarly, Tan and Aquino (2017) reported that the lack of infrastructure, such as electricity, water supply, and toilets, negatively impacts students' learning outcomes. Moreover, Labitag et al. (2018) found that many public school buildings in the Philippines are in poor condition, with issues such as leaks, cracks, and inadequate ventilation, and that many schools lack basic facilities such as laboratories and libraries. Overall, these studies indicate the inadequacy and substandard of Philippine public school facilities and the need for improvements.

Table 15. Relationship between Fiscal Management competencies and Financial Performance

| Fiscal Management Competence | Financial Performance | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Payment of Suppliers | Completion of School Projects | Outsourcing from Stakeholders |
| Budget Planning and Preparation | | | |
| Decision Making | .481** | .573** | .450** |
| Accountability | .485** | .651** | .467** |
| Formulation | .538** | .588** | .600** |
| Budget Execution | | | |
| Expenditure | .502** | .726** | .481** |
| Budget Monitoring | .529** | .706** | .496** |
| Budget Control | | | |
| Results Analysis | .478** | .706** | .501** |
| Performance Control | .532** | .712** | .540** |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15 presents the results of test of relationship between Fiscal Management competencies and Financial Performance.

Based on the results, budget planning and financial performance were significantly correlated. Decision making was positively correlated with payment of suppliers ($r=.481$), completion of school projects ($r=.573$), and outsourcing from stakeholders ($r=.450$). The same results were observed for accountability with r values computed (.485, .651, and .467) and for formulation ($r=.538$, .588, and .600) respectively. All aspects of financial performance were significantly correlated with budget planning and preparation competence in all respects at 5% level of significance.

Significant body of literature exploring the relationship between the decision-making of leaders and the financial performance of organizations. This research examines how the decisions made by leaders, such as top executives and managers, can impact various aspects of financial performance. Abdul Kareem et al. (2023) explained that strategic decisions made by leaders, such as those related to market positioning, product development, and resource allocation, can significantly influence financial performance. Scholars have investigated how factors such as decision-making style, risk appetite, and cognitive biases of leaders impact strategic choices and subsequent financial outcomes.

The results of the present study implied that as the budget planning and preparation in schools becomes more competent, their financial performance also increases. Watt (2019) explained that budget planning competence involves the ability to accurately forecast future revenues, expenses, and cash flows. When budgets are based on realistic assumptions and comprehensive analysis, organizations can make informed financial decisions. This enables them to allocate resources effectively and avoid overestimating revenues or underestimating expenses, leading to improved financial performance. This explains how the two are correlated.

Results further implied that when leaders have a strong sense of accountability, they take responsibility for their actions and decisions, and they are more likely to make choices that are in the best interest of the school's financial well-being.

Accountable leaders are more likely to make sound and strategic decisions that prioritize the long-term financial health of the school. They consider the potential impact of their choices on costs and overall financial stability.

Similarly, results showed how budget execution as positively correlated with financial performance. The results of correlation test indicated that expenditure was significantly associated with payment of suppliers ($r=.502$), completion of school projects ($r=.726$), and outsourcing from stakeholders ($r=.481$). The same significant correlation was found with budget monitoring and aspects of financial performance with r -values .529, .706, and .496 respectively. All aspects of financial performance were significantly correlated with budget execution competence in all respects at 5% level of significance.

These data implied that the competence of school heads to spend and monitor budget promote better financial performance. Thus, budget execution is proportionally associated with financial performance. This co-dependence exists in Calauan Sub-office. This implies that schools ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. It involves prioritizing and directing financial resources towards activities and projects that align with the office's goals and objectives. By allocating funds to the right areas, offices can optimize productivity, enhance operational efficiency, and achieve desired outcomes (Elucidate Education Ltd, 2022).

Indeed, the competence of school heads to spend and monitor budgets is crucial in promoting better financial performance in educational institutions. Competent school heads have the ability to effectively allocate resources, including budgets, to meet the educational needs of the institution. They analyze the school's priorities, identify areas that require funding, and allocate funds accordingly. By ensuring that financial resources are allocated efficiently, they optimize the use of available funds and promote better financial performance.

It is interesting to note that same significant correlations were observed for budget control and financial performance. Results analysis was found positively correlated with Payment of Suppliers ($r=.478$), Completion of School Projects ($r=.706$) and Outsourcing from Stakeholders ($r=.501$). The same was true with performance control which also showed significant association with the three based on r -value computed i.e., .532**, .712**, and .540**. All aspects of financial performance were significantly correlated with budget control competence in all respects at 5% level of significance.

Results implied that financial performance and budget control competence are indeed significantly correlated. Budget control competence refers to the ability of an organization or individual to effectively manage and control their budget, ensuring that expenses are within the allocated limits and financial goals are achieved. When budget control competence is high, it positively impacts financial performance in several ways. Effective budget control allows for better cost management. It enables organizations to monitor and control their expenses, ensuring that they stay within budgetary limits. This helps in avoiding overspending and unnecessary expenditures, leading to improved financial performance. Additionally, budget control competence involves regular monitoring and evaluation of financial performance against budgetary targets. This allows organizations to identify any deviations, take corrective actions, and make informed decisions to improve financial performance. It provides a feedback loop that helps in continuous improvement and drives better financial outcomes (Budgeting & Cost Control, 2017).

Table 16. Relationship between Fiscal Management competencies and School Improvement

| Fiscal Management Competence | School Improvement | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| | Support to instructional quality | Stakeholders' participation | Facility Maintenance |
| Budget Planning and Preparation | | | |
| Decision Making | .545** | .374** | .606** |
| Accountability | .565** | .367** | .682** |
| Formulation | .585** | .499** | .653** |
| Budget Execution | | | |
| Expenditure | .697** | .425** | .782** |
| Budget Monitoring | .681** | .501** | .781** |
| Budget Control | | | |
| Results Analysis | .654** | .422** | .790** |
| Performance Control | .747** | .437** | .748** |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 16 presents the results of test of relationship between Fiscal Management competencies and school improvement.

Based on the results, budget planning and school improvement were significantly correlated. Decision making was positively correlated with Support to instructional quality ($r=.545$), stakeholders' participation ($r=.374$), and facility maintenance ($r=.606$). The same results were observed for accountability with r values computed (.565**, .367**, and .682**) and for formulation ($r=.585$ **, .499**, and .653**) respectively. The significant correlations were supported by the computed p -values which are less than the 5% level of significance.

Similarly, results showed how budget execution as positively correlated with school improvement. The results of correlation test indicated that expenditure was significantly associated with Support to instructional quality (.697), Stakeholders' participation ($r=.425$), and Facility Maintenance ($r=.782$). It was also observed with budget monitoring which showed similar significant association with r -values .681, .501, and .781 respectively. The significant correlations were also supported by the computed p -values which are less than the 5% level of significance.

These results support the claim of Hallak (2015) that budget planning competence plays a crucial role in school improvement by ensuring that financial resources are allocated effectively and efficiently to support the educational goals and objectives of the institution. Budget planning competence helps school administrators allocate resources in a strategic manner. By understanding the needs of the school, analyzing data, and setting priorities, administrators can allocate funds to areas that have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. This ensures that resources are directed towards initiatives and programs that enhance the overall quality of education provided.

It is interesting to note that same significant correlations were observed for budget control and school improvement. Results analysis was found positive correlation with support to instructional quality ($r=.654$), stakeholders' participation ($r=.422$) and facility maintenance ($r=.790$). The same was true with performance control which also showed significant association with the three based on r -values computed i.e., .747**, .437**, and .748**. These results were likewise supported by the computed p -values which are less than the 5% level of significance.

This means that budget control competence plays a significant role in school improvement by ensuring that financial resources are managed effectively and efficiently throughout the budget cycle. The Institute of Education Sciences (2017) explained that budget control competence helps maintain financial accountability within a school. By establishing robust financial controls, monitoring expenditures, and reconciling budgets regularly, administrators can detect and prevent financial mismanagement, fraud, or waste. This ensures that resources are used appropriately and in line with the school's objectives, ultimately improving overall financial transparency and accountability.

Results showed that good budgetary management improves schools. The favorable association between the two suggests fiscal management competence may assist improve schools. Mpolokeng (2016) found that budgetary management is essential to school improvement. Effective fiscal management allocates financial resources efficiently and effectively to support school aims and objectives. Fiscal management helps schools stay afloat. It involves budgeting, financial compliance, and correct accounting. Financial stability underpins long-term planning and sustainable progress (Sujasan and Wibowo, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study led to the formulation of the conclusions that there is no significant association between the fiscal management competence and financial performance of public schools was not sustained and that there is no significant association between the fiscal management competence and the improvements of public schools was not sustained.

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, school heads are encouraged to continue improving their fiscal management competence in order to promote the financial performance and improvement of their respective schools. Stakeholders may assist school heads by increasing their participation in ensuring the proper fiscal management of the schools through the school governance councils and involvement in various school activities.

Additionally, the SGOD Chief may allocate resources for professional development opportunities related to fiscal management and school improvement. This will enhance the skills and knowledge of both administrative staff and teachers, enabling them to contribute effectively to the school's financial success and academic growth.

TA Leads and District Supervisors may also help in setting measurable goals and indicators of success related to fiscal management and school improvement. They may regularly assess progress towards these goals and adjust strategies as needed. Moreover, they may communicate the goals and progress to other stakeholders to foster a shared commitment to the schools' financial and educational achievements within the municipality.

Finally, future researchers may help in keeping the field abreast with emerging trends, technologies, and best practices in fiscal management, financial performance, and school improvement. They may explore innovative approaches to fiscal management that could help increase the level of performance and improvement of schools.

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