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School Heads' Financial Management Practices

Ethel Marie F. Costanilla [1]
0009-0007-1306-3368

Jose Donnie S. Sajonia [1]
0009-0004-5442-0729

1 – STI West Negros University, Philippines

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Abstract

This research determined the level of financial management practices of school heads in a first-class municipality in Negros Island Region in School Year 2026-2027 in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability, and whether these practices vary based on the age and length of service of the respondents. A descriptive research design was used in which the respondents were the 188 teachers of the municipality. The data were gathered using a valid and reliable questionnaire and were treated using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Mann-Whitney U test. It was found that school heads were highly competent in terms of financial management, specifically in budget planning (M = 4.31), budget execution (M = 4.30), and budget accountability (M = 4.29). In addition, it was shown by the Mann-Whitney U test that there were no significant differences in any of the three areas since all the p-values were greater than the 0.05 significance level. The results show that school heads in the municipality are competent in terms of financial management regardless of age and length of service, as perceived by their teachers. The study concluded that school heads in the municipality possess consistent sound financial management practices irrespective of age or length of service, as perceived by their teachers.

Keywords: *Budget Accountability, Budget Execution, Budget Planning, Financial Management Practices, School Heads*

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Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Financial management is a fundamental responsibility of school heads because it ensures that limited educational resources are allocated, utilized, and accounted for effectively to support quality teaching and learning. In public schools, sound financial management encompasses budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability, which collectively promote transparency, efficiency, and responsible resource utilization. These practices are particularly important in the Philippine educational system, where school heads must balance instructional priorities, operational requirements, and compliance with government financial regulations. The effectiveness of financial management may influence the availability of instructional materials, maintenance of school facilities, implementation of educational programs, and delivery of essential learner services. Consequently, examining school heads' financial management practices is necessary to understand how educational resources are managed and how financial governance can be strengthened at the school level.

In response to the need for responsible school financial governance, the Department of Education (DepEd) established policies that guide school heads in managing public funds. DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2015 emphasizes evidence-based school improvement planning and stakeholder participation through the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Report Card (SRC). These mechanisms provide a basis for aligning financial priorities with identified school needs. Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2016 establishes guidelines on the direct release and utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) allocations and other school-managed funds. These policies underscore the importance of proper budget preparation, authorized expenditure, financial documentation, and accountability in school operations (Department of Education DepEdDepEd, 2015, 2016). Nevertheless, the existence of financial management policies does not automatically establish the extent to which they are consistently practiced at the school level. Thus, assessing school heads' financial management practices is essential to determine how effectively these responsibilities are carried out.

Despite the established financial management framework, school heads may encounter challenges in balancing available resources with competing educational needs, implementing planned expenditures, and maintaining transparent financial reporting. DepEd Order No. 75, s. 2016 further illustrates the complexity of school financial management by establishing separate guidelines for capital outlay funds intended for specific school requirements, including furniture and equipment that cannot be charged against regular operating budgets. This distinction highlights the importance of understanding expenditure classifications and complying with prescribed financial procedures (DepEd, 2016).

In the context of a first-class municipality in the Negros Island Region, it is therefore necessary to examine how school heads perform their financial responsibilities in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability. Furthermore, determining whether teachers' perceptions differ according to their age and length of service may provide insights into the consistency of observed financial management practices. Although national policies provide standards for financial governance, the extent of their implementation in the selected municipality requires empirical investigation.

The researchers' motivation to conduct this study stems from their interest in understanding how school financial resources are managed to support the delivery of quality basic education. Recognizing that teachers are directly involved in implementing school programs and activities, the researchers considered their perceptions valuable in examining the financial management practices demonstrated by their school heads. In particular, the researchers sought to determine whether school heads consistently demonstrate effective budget planning, responsible budget execution, and transparent budget accountability, regardless of the respondents' age and length of service. This inquiry is also motivated by the need to generate localized evidence that may assist educational administrators in identifying existing strengths and areas requiring improvement. Hence, this study aimed to determine the level of school heads' financial management practices in a first-class municipality in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2026–2027, providing empirical information that may serve as a basis for strengthening financial governance and promoting responsible resource management in public schools.

Current State of Knowledge

Financial management in public schools has received increasing attention because of its role in ensuring the efficient allocation, utilization, and accountability of educational resources. Research in educational administration recognizes that financial management extends beyond the preparation of budgets to include the implementation of expenditure plans, monitoring of financial transactions, and reporting of resource utilization. These responsibilities require school heads to balance institutional priorities with available financial resources while maintaining compliance with government regulations. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (2016) established guidelines governing the direct release and utilization of school Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), emphasizing the responsibility of schools to manage operational funds according to authorized purposes. This policy provides an important foundation for examining budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability as interconnected dimensions of school heads' financial management practices.

De Guzman (2024) investigated school heads' financial management and program implementation in selected public schools in the National Capital Region, involving 350 respondents. The study examined financial management competencies in planning, prioritizing needs, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. Findings revealed that school heads were highly competent in financial management, although significant differences were observed among respondent groups in their assessments of planning, monitoring, and evaluation. These findings suggest that perceptions of financial management may vary across stakeholder groups despite generally favorable competency ratings. Similarly, Alvarez and Potane (2024) examined teachers' perceptions of school heads' financial management competencies in Region X and found high levels of competence. However, significant differences were observed according to teaching experience, while no significant differences emerged across age groups. These studies establish the relevance of examining respondents' age and length of service in assessing school heads' financial management practices.

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https://journals.aloysianpublications.com
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Furthermore, Espela et al. (2025) investigated financial management practices among school heads in non-fiscally autonomous secondary schools in Sorsogon, Philippines. Their study examined the relationship between prescribed financial management standards and actual school-level practices and proposed an integrated financial management model. This research emphasizes the importance of aligning financial procedures with institutional requirements and operational responsibilities. Meanwhile, Fabrao and Pacadaljen (2024) examined the fiscal management behaviors of 738 school heads across 26 districts in Samar. Their findings revealed generally positive practices in budget planning, formal review and approval, budget implementation, fund monitoring, and financial communication. These findings demonstrate that financial management involves interconnected processes extending from budget preparation to expenditure monitoring and communication. Both studies support the present investigation's focus on budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability as essential dimensions of school financial management.

More closely related to the present investigation, Eleccion et al. (2026), including Guanzon and Sajonia, examined school heads' financial management practices and performance in a city school division in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026. The study involved 271 teachers and assessed budgeting and planning, risk management, and financial reporting and accountability. Results indicated high levels of financial management practices across all dimensions, with risk management receiving particularly favorable assessments. No significant differences were found in budgeting and planning when respondents were grouped according to age, income, and educational attainment. However, significant differences emerged in selected financial management dimensions when grouped according to educational attainment. Moreover, financial management practices were not significantly related to school heads' performance ratings. These findings provide localized empirical evidence for the present study. Nevertheless, the current investigation differs by focusing specifically on budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability in a first-class municipality and by examining differences according to teachers' age and length of service. Thus, it seeks to extend existing knowledge by determining whether financial management practices are perceived consistently across these respondent groups in a different educational setting.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The present study is anchored on Stewardship Theory, developed by Donaldson and Davis (1991) and further elaborated by Davis et al. (1997). The theory explains that organizational managers, or stewards, are motivated to act in the best interests of the organizations they serve rather than prioritizing their personal interests. It assumes that stewards value organizational success, collective achievement, responsibility, and the effective utilization of resources. Unlike Agency Theory, which emphasizes potential conflicts between principals and agents, Stewardship Theory highlights trust, accountability, and the alignment of individual actions with organizational objectives. This perspective provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how school heads exercise their responsibilities in managing public financial resources.

In educational institutions, Stewardship Theory suggests that school heads serve as custodians of financial resources entrusted to them by the government and other stakeholders. Their stewardship responsibilities are reflected in three essential financial management practices: budget planning, which involves identifying institutional priorities and allocating resources according to educational needs; budget execution, which ensures that approved funds are utilized efficiently and for their intended purposes; and budget accountability, which emphasizes transparency, accurate financial reporting, and compliance with established regulations. From this perspective, responsible financial management demonstrates school heads' commitment to safeguarding public funds and advancing institutional objectives. The theory therefore provides a basis for examining financial management as an organizational responsibility rather than merely an administrative requirement.

In relation to the present study, Stewardship Theory provides a framework for examining the financial management practices of school heads in a first-class municipality in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2026–2027. Specifically, the theory supports the assessment of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability as observable manifestations of responsible financial stewardship. Through teachers' perceptions, the study seeks to determine the extent to which school heads demonstrate these practices and whether the assessments differ significantly when respondents are grouped according to age and length of service. While Stewardship Theory explains the organizational responsibilities underlying financial management, the demographic comparisons provide an additional perspective on the consistency of teachers' assessments. Thus, the theory establishes a foundation for understanding how school heads manage entrusted financial resources in pursuit of institutional goals, transparency, and accountability.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the level of school heads' financial management practices in a first-class municipality in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age and length of service; assess the level of school heads' financial management practices in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability; and examine whether significant differences existed in their assessments when grouped and compared according to age and length of service.

Research Methodology:

This section presents the research design, data-gathering procedure, other instrumentation, and statistical tools. It also discusses the parameters, especially the statistical tools, the respondents, and the study's locality.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, an approach used to systematically describe a population, condition, or phenomenon as it naturally exists without manipulating the variables under investigation. It provides information about the characteristics and existing conditions of the phenomenon being studied and may employ quantitative or qualitative data (Deckert & Wilson, 2023). This design was appropriate for the present study as it aimed to determine the level of school heads' financial management practices in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability, as perceived by teachers. It also facilitated the description of respondents' profiles in terms of age and length of service and the comparison of their assessments across these demographic groups. Through this design, the researchers were able to examine existing financial management practices and identify significant differences in teachers' perceptions without manipulating any variables or altering the natural school setting.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were 188 public elementary school teachers selected from a total population of 366 teachers across 27 public elementary schools in a district of a first-class municipality in the Negros Island Region. Proportionate sampling was employed to ensure that each participating school was represented according to its share of the total teacher population. This sampling technique allowed the researchers to allocate the sample proportionally across schools of varying sizes, thereby promoting balanced representation. The respondents provided their assessments of school heads' financial management practices in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability, which served as the basis for evaluating existing practices and developing an action plan.

Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part gathered the respondents' demographic profiles in terms of age and length of service, while the second part assessed school heads' financial management practices across three dimensions: budget planning (10 items), budget execution (10 items), and budget accountability (10 items), comprising 30 items. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Always) to 1 (Never). To establish content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by three experts with extensive experience in educational supervision, school administration, and research. The validators assessed the instrument using a five-point evaluation scale. The questionnaire obtained an overall validation mean of 4.94, interpreted as excellent, indicating that the instrument met the established content validation criteria and was suitable for the study.

Furthermore, the questionnaire underwent reliability testing involving 30 public elementary school teachers. All 30 responses were included in the analysis, with no cases excluded. Cronbach's alpha was employed to determine the internal consistency of the 30-item instrument. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.983, indicating excellent internal consistency. These findings established that the questionnaire demonstrated strong overall reliability and was suitable for administration to the actual respondents in assessing school heads' financial management practices.

Data Gathering and Procedure

After administering the validity and reliability tests, and upon approval of the schools division superintendent, the questionnaires were administered to the target respondents. The questionnaires were gathered, recorded, and analyzed. The data gathered from the responses of the respondents were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The encoded data was processed using SPSS.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The data were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency count and percentage were employed to describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age and length of service. Mean was used to determine the level of school heads' financial management practices in terms of budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability. Furthermore, the Mann–Whitney U test was utilized to determine whether significant differences existed in the assessments of financial management practices when respondents were classified into two independent groups according to age and length of service. All inferential analyses were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance, with the null hypothesis rejected when the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05.

Ethical Consideration

By guaranteeing the confidentiality of the respondents' answers and upholding their anonymity during the entire research process, the study made a concerted effort to reduce the possibility of harm to its target respondents in accordance with Republic Act 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researchers also requested their free and informed consent upfront.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to carry out the predetermined objectives of this study.

Profile of the Respondents

In all, 188 individuals took part in the study. Their profile was established based on age and length of service. A descriptive approach was taken in the analysis, using frequency counts and percentages as statistical tools.

Table 2
Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (below 38 years old)	90	47.9
	Older (39 years old & above)	98	52.1
Length of Service	Shorter (less than 12 years)	89	47.3
	Longer (12 years or more)	99	52.7
	Total	**188**	**100.00**

As illustrated in Table 2, of the 188 teachers who participated in the survey, 90 (47.9%) are from the younger group (age 38 years or below), while 98 (52.1%) are from the older group

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Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

(age 39 years or above). With regard to length of service, 89 (or 47.3%) are of shorter service (less than 12 years), while 99 (or 52.7%) are of longer service (12 years or more).

The balance of the distribution is quite even, such that the older and longer group has the numerical advantage. The even distribution will ensure validity when comparing the two categories.

Table 3
Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Planning

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head…		
1. plans expenditures based on the needs of learners, teachers, and the school.	4.43	High
2. ensures that planned activities have corresponding budget allocations and funding sources.	4.38	High
3. considers the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) when preparing the budget.	4.45	High
4. presents budget-related plans during faculty meetings.	4.29	High
5. involve teachers in planning projects and activities requiring MOOE and other fund allocation.	4.23	High
6. notifies teachers about the allocation of MOOE and other funds for school activities and projects.	4.25	High
7. discusses school budget priorities during faculty meetings.	4.28	High
8. prioritizes classroom, instructional, and learning resource needs when allocating available funds.	4.27	High
9. seeks teachers' suggestions regarding school needs before allocating funds from various sources.	4.22	High
10. Aligns school programs and activities with available school funds.	4.35	High
Overall Mean	**4.31**	**High**

The results reflected in Table 3 indicate that the teachers evaluated the performance of school heads in budget planning with an average score of 4.31, which can be interpreted as High. All ten practices were rated High, with means ranging from 4.22 to 4.45.

The top-rated practice is taking into account the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) when preparing the budget (4.45). Close behind is planning expenditure in accordance with the requirements of the learners, teachers, and the school (4.43).

The bottom-rated practice is consulting teachers about school needs before funding from different sources (4.22).

It implies that teachers see the school heads using the official planning documents for budget planning, as well as the school community's requirements. Financial management by school heads centers on budgeting, allocation, and planning, which form the basis of school financial resource management, as noted by Yizengaw & Agegnehu (2021). The focus of budgets on the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) and Action Improvement Plan (AIP) of the school also echoes what the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022) has stated, in that budget plans have to align with the strategic objectives of a school to effectively utilize its scarce resources. At the local level, Merano (2023) found that the school's success is significantly attributed to the school head's ability to apply knowledge and skills related to the school's finances, as evidenced by consistently high planning ratings. Go and Eslabon (2024) also stressed that school heads not only carry out instructional but also managerial roles, and that the management of school affairs includes the proper management of human, financial, and material resources, with planning as one of the essential roles of the school head. This finding is consistent with the consistently high ratings for planning in the current study. In addition, the findings are consistent with those of Maige, Ruvahofi, and Ogoti (2024), who found that strategic planning was lacking in the effective management of public secondary schools in Tanzania. More directly, Eleccion et al. (2026) reported a mean rating of 4.45 for alignment of financial plans with the SIP, AIP, and instructional objectives in Negros Island Region, a score which is identical to the highest rating in the current study, indicating a high level of competence.

This implies that budget planning provides the best basis for school heads' financial practices from teachers' perspective. The high rankings of the top three items, which are based on SIP and AIP, indicate that, in the eyes of teachers, planning is a practice based on need and compliance rather than discretion. The relatively low ranking of the item 'Getting teachers' suggestions' indicates a small gap in participative planning. As teachers implement budgeted programs, involving them in the planning process will be beneficial.

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https://journals.aloysianpublications.com
Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

Table 4
Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Execution

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head…		
1. implements school projects in accordance with approved budget plans.	4.38	High
2. ensures that school funds are used only for their intended purposes.	4.27	High
3. implements budgeted school activities according to schedule.	4.32	High
4. maintains the proper utilization of school resources during activities and projects.	4.29	High
5. provides instructional materials funded through MOOE and other funding sources when needed.	4.28	High
6. utilizes available funds to support programs and resources that improve learners' reading literacy, numeracy skills, and overall learning outcomes.	4.32	High
7. allocates funds to provide teachers with instructional materials, training, and support that enhance teaching effectiveness and improve learners' academic performance.	4.32	High
8. provides financial support for priority school programs and activities.	4.28	High
9. addresses concerns related to the utilization of funds from MOOE and other funding sources.	4.23	High
10. monitors the use of funds during the implementation of school programs and projects.	4.35	High
Overall Mean	4.30	**High**

According to Table 4, the teachers perceived the performance of the school heads on the execution of the budget at an average mean of 4.30, meaning High, where all ten practices are High and have means of 4.23 to 4.38. The best performing practice is that of executing school projects in accordance with the approved budget plans, with a mean of 4.38, while the second one is that of monitoring the expenditure of funds in the process of executing the school programs and projects, with a mean of 4.35.

The high scores reveal that teachers believe their school heads are able to implement the approved plans into action truthfully and monitor the use of money as the programs are implemented. Similarly, Alvarez and Potane (2024) defined financial management as the process

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https://journals.aloysianpublications.com
Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

by which funds are used appropriately in relation to educational goals, requiring that all expenditures be justified in terms of their influence on the education process, which seems to be the case here. At the local level, Gueta et al. (2024) have shown that public secondary school heads in Sorsogon operate through transparency and accurate reporting.

This means that in the execution stage, the school head's plan becomes a reality for the students. The good scores for the execution of projects based on approved plans and monitoring the use of funds imply that funds are reaching their desired destinations. However, the lowest point regarding the concerns of fund utilization is an indication that the school heads implement but do not respond adequately to any issues.

Table 5
Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Accountability

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head…		
1. demonstrates accountability in the management of funds from MOOE, donations, and other funding sources.	4.30	High
2. Practices transparency in financial transactions involving school resources and other budgetary funds.	4.23	High
3. promotes honesty, transparency, and accountability in handling funds from other sources.	4.26	High
4. submits required financial reports within prescribed timelines.	4.31	High
5. guarantees that expenditures are supported by complete and proper documentation.	4.38	High
6. informs teachers about how school funds, including MOOE and other funding sources, are utilized.	4.29	High
7. ensures that financial records and supporting documents are properly maintained.	4.35	High
8. explains financial concerns raised by teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.	4.26	High
9. presents financial reports during faculty meetings, PTA meetings, or assemblies.	4.22	High
10. Makes financial records posted on the transparency board and makes them available during school monitoring and audits.	4.27	High
Overall Mean	4.29	**High**

From Table 5, it can be noted that the teachers evaluated their school head's accountability in budgeting at an average of 4.29, which means High, and all ten indicators were High with an average of between 4.22 and 4.38. The best-performing indicator was ensuring that all expenditures are backed up with proper documentation (4.38), followed by maintaining financial statements and backing up documentation (4.35). The least performing indicator was presenting financial statements during staff meetings, PTA meetings, or assembly (4.22).

The high ratings indicate that teachers view school heads' actions of accountability as mainly involving record-keeping. This finding corresponds to that by Tsharane and Bussin (2022), which found that financial risk and financial accountability are important aspects of school financial management because school heads have to expect potential financial problems with implementing school programs and plans. This is another observation that challenges the circumstances presented by Dwangu and Mahlangu (2021) in the Eastern Cape, where the existing systems of accountability did not match, and weak monitoring created room for mismanagement. Yasin and Mokhtar (2022) highlighted that the principal and finance committee members should receive the right training, and financial actions should receive proper evaluation and supervision, a benchmark that the current headmasters seem to meet. In the local context, Gaspar et al. (2022) reported on high accountability in financial management by the school heads and financial officers in Nueva Ecija.

The implication is that accountability acts as the guarantee of the whole financial system. The weakness of the school heads, in the opinion of the teachers, is in the fact that they excel in documentations and record keeping and are safe when monitored and audited. The weakness of school heads is shown through the presentation of financial reports in faculty, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and assembly meetings because the school heads excel more in documentary compliance rather than in financial reporting to stakeholders.

Comparative Study on the Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices

Table 6

Difference in the Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Planning When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	*Sig. level*	Interpretation
Age	Younger	90	99.61	3950.000	0.198	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	98	89.81				
Length of Service	Shorter	89	98.66	4035.500	0.300		Not Significant
	Longer	99	90.76				

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Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

As per Table 6 below, the p-value derived from the Mann-Whitney U test on age is 0.198 and 0.300 for length of service, higher than the level of significance of 0.05. The lack of any significant difference between the variables shows that age and length of service of teachers have no bearing on their perceptions about the performance of the school head in preparing budgets. This is proven by the findings of the reviewed Philippine literature on the topic, since according to them, age and experience of the respondents do not necessarily have an effect on perceptions about the management of finances. Eleccion et al. (2026) stated that age has no impact on perceptions about such issues. Cañete-Ban et al. (2025) reported a lack of consistent differences in planning and budgeting based on age and length of service, while Santos et al. (2021) found no variance in perceptions of the leaders' management of resources.

This also means that there is uniformity in the perception of the school heads' budget planning regardless of their ages and length of service. The capacity building and planning reforms can therefore be targeted to all the school heads uniformly without targeting particular groups of teachers because the perception of planning effectiveness is not affected by the profile of the respondents.

The null hypothesis is thus accepted, showing that there is no significant difference in the level of school heads' financial management practices in budget planning depending on the age and length of service of respondents.

Table 7
Difference in the Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Execution When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	*Sig. level*	Interpretation
Age	Younger	90	98.92	4012.500	0.264	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	98	90.44				
Length of Service	Shorter	89	98.08	4086.500	0.370		Not Significant
	Longer	99	91.28				

From table 7, it can be seen that the p-value obtained from the Mann-Whitney U test is 0.264 for the age and 0.370 for the length of service, which is more than the 0.05 significance level and thus not significant.

The age and length of service of the teachers do not significantly impact the rating of the school heads' budget execution. The findings from the reviewed literature are in line with the study results since the age and length of service of the respondents may not necessarily impact the perception of the financial management practices. In Cañete-Ban et al. (2025), there was no

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https://journals.aloysianpublications.com
Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

consistent effect of age and length of service on resource allocation, while Eleccion et al. (2026) and Santos et al. (2021) found none either.

This further means that the consistency in the ratings on the execution reflects that the faithful implementation and monitoring of funds by the heads is a consistent phenomenon in the schools under study. Since there is no effect of the teacher's profile on these perceptions, the result reinforces the reliability of the High rating of budget execution.

Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, which states that there is no significant difference in the level of financial management practices of school heads in budget execution based on age and length of service of the respondents.

Table 8
Difference in the Level of School Heads' Financial Management Practices in Budget Accountability When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	*Sig. level*	Interpretation
Age	Younger	90	98.53	4047.500	0.307	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	98	90.80				
Length of Service	Shorter	89	99.09	3997.000	0.250		Not Significant
	Longer	99	90.37				

As per Table 8 below, the Mann-Whitney U test has resulted in a p-value of 0.307 for age and 0.250 for length of service, which are above 0.05 and hence not significant.

Age and length of service of the teachers have no effect on their perceptions of the budget accountability of the school heads. This conclusion is supported by the reviewed literature, where it is stated that the age and the experience of respondents have no influence on their perception of financial management practices. In their study, Santos et al. (2021) noted the absence of a variance in rating the resource management practices by various respondent groups. Canete-Ban et al. (2025) noted that there is no consistent difference by age and length of service, and Eleccion et al. (2026) noted that age does not matter in this case.

It shows that the school heads' accountability practices, as documented and recorded, are viewed uniformly by the teachers, regardless of their profiles. The uniformity of perception indicates that accountability is institutionalized across all schools and confirms the high rating of budget accountability in this study.

Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the level of financial management practices of the school heads regarding budget accountability among the respondents by age and length of service.

Online ISSN: 3082-5121
Aloysian Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, Education, and Allied Fields
https://journals.aloysianpublications.com
Volume 2 Issue 9 (2026)

Conclusion:

The findings revealed that the respondents were relatively evenly distributed according to age and length of service, with a slight predominance of older teachers and those with longer service. This distribution provided representation from teachers with varying demographic characteristics, allowing the study to examine their assessments of school heads' financial management practices across the identified groups.

Furthermore, school heads were perceived to demonstrate a high level of financial management practices in budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability. Budget planning was characterized by the alignment of financial priorities with the School Improvement Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, while budget execution emphasized the implementation of projects according to approved budget plans. Budget accountability was particularly evident in maintaining proper documentation of expenditures and financial records. Nevertheless, the findings suggest opportunities to further strengthen teacher participation in budget planning, responsiveness to fund utilization concerns, and financial reporting to stakeholders. Overall, the results indicate that teachers perceived their school heads as demonstrating sound financial management practices, with room for improvement in participatory and transparent financial governance.

Finally, no statistically significant differences were found in teachers' assessments of school heads' financial management practices in budget planning, budget execution, and budget accountability when grouped according to age and length of service. Thus, the null hypotheses were not rejected, indicating insufficient evidence of differences between the demographic groups. These findings suggest that teachers generally shared comparable perceptions of school heads' financial management practices regardless of their age and length of service. Consequently, financial management enhancement initiatives may be implemented across the participating schools, with emphasis on strengthening stakeholder involvement, responsible budget implementation, and transparent financial accountability.

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