

## Financial literacy training program among teachers and staff

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**Abstract:** The research evaluated the financial literacy of teachers and staff at San Isidro Elementary School in Talisay City, Cebu, during the school year 2023-2024. Employing a descriptive-correlational research method, data from 36 participants were analyzed using percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson-r. An adapted and modified questionnaire was used. The aim of the study was to investigate the association between respondents' budgeting and saving practices and financial stress. Results indicated frequent levels of budgeting practices (4.04), sometimes saving practices (3.12), and rare debt management practices (2.43), and suggesting prudent financial planning among participants. However, no significant correlations were found between financial stress and budgeting/saving behaviors or debt management. Additionally, participants reported moderate levels of stress (3.11). Overall, the findings suggest a need for further investigation into the factors influencing financial behaviors among teachers and staff members.

**Keywords:** Public administration, Financial behavior, Financial wellness, Financial literacy program, Financial stress, and Debt management.

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## INTRODUCTION

Financial literacy encompasses the skills necessary for individuals to make informed financial decisions, ultimately improving their welfare and minimizing losses (Sudakova, 2018). However, many government employees, particularly Department of Education (DepEd) teachers, struggle with financial management. Recent reports indicate that public school teachers collectively owe at least P319 billion, an increase of P18 billion in under two years (Polloso, 2019). Without financial literacy training, borrowing becomes a habitual solution to financial difficulties (Casingal et al., 2021).

Financial management plays a vital role in organizational operations, encompassing the planning, organization, direction, and control of financial activities (Hermawan, 2021; Suryana, 2020). It involves key functions such as fund procurement and utilization, aiming to reduce costs while maximizing profitability (Hermawan, 2021). Studies suggest that while teachers generally have strong financial knowledge, they often face financial difficulties and stress (Plaza & Jamito, 2021; Variacion et al., 2024). Former DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones highlighted the importance of financial literacy among teachers, particularly due to rising debt concerns (Sunnexdesk, 2017). Many educators struggle financially, frequently relying on loans from various lending institutions to meet their needs (Fernando & Arrieta, 2023; De Jesus & De Jesus, 2021). Research suggests that enhancing teachers' financial well-being and professional development should prioritize behavioral financial coaching over merely teaching financial concepts (Galapon & Bool, 2022; Martinez & Andal, 2021).

Around 95% of DepEd teachers have loans from legitimate institutions, with the percentage of Filipinos obtaining loans rising from 29% in 2017 to 41% in 2019 (BSP, CIMB BANK, 2020). Financial mismanagement can cause severe personal and professional stress, linking financial instability to mental health issues such as depression (Guan et al., 2022).

Limited studies focus on DepEd teachers' borrowing behaviors, but initial data from San Isidro Elementary School suggests similar financial patterns among faculty members in 2023–2024. This research assesses financial literacy among DepEd personnel, aiming to identify factors influencing debt behavior and propose strategies to enhance financial well-being. Addressing financial literacy concerns can improve employees' economic stability and overall financial management.

This study also contributes to the Master's in Public Administration (MPA) program by integrating financial literacy into the curriculum. Government institutions can use these findings to design targeted financial training, including budgeting, planning, and ethical financial management. Strengthening financial literacy among public administrators enhances their ability to implement sound fiscal policies, improving public sector accountability and economic stability. The MPA program, by incorporating financial literacy modules, equips government employees with the skills to manage personal and public funds effectively, fostering a more responsible and resilient public sector.

#### *Statement of the problem*

This research evaluated the manifestation of financial literacy training program among teachers and staff of San Isidro Elementary School, DepEd Talisay City Division, Talisay City, Philippines during the School Year 2023 – 2024 as basis for the Financial Literacy Training Program.

## METHODOLOGY

#### *Research design*

The study utilized a descriptive correlational research design, applying descriptive statistics to analyze respondents' profiles and assess financial behavior and wellness, while inferential statistics determined correlations between them. Data collection followed a systematic process, including obtaining permissions, administering questionnaires, and analyzing responses, ultimately leading to the development of a Financial Literacy Training Program.

#### *Locale of the study and respondents*

The study was conducted at San Isidro Elementary School in Talisay City, Cebu, the study involved 34 teachers and two non-teaching personnel. Respondents consisted of 32 female and two male teachers, along with two staff members.

#### *Research instruments*

The research employed a modified survey questionnaire comprising three sections: socio-demographic profiling, financial behavior (budgeting, saving, and debt management), and financial wellness (financial stress and goals). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

#### *Data analyses procedure*

The data collection process involved formal requests, questionnaire distribution, and verification by a professional statistician. Statistical treatments included percentage analysis for demographic profiling, weighted means for financial behavior and wellness levels, and Pearson-r correlation to examine relationships between financial behavior and wellness. The

Likert scale categorized financial behavior from "Never" (1.00–1.79) to "Always" (4.20–5.00), while financial stress levels ranged from "Very Low" (1.00–1.79) to "Very High" (4.20–5.00), indicating varying degrees of financial stability and distress. This structured system allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of financial habits and challenges, identifying key areas for financial literacy interventions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Profile of the respondents*

#### *Age*

Research suggests that while age and gender do not directly impact financial behavior, they influence financial literacy, which in turn affects financial decision-making (Garg & Singh, 2018; Khuc et al., 2022). The data shows that 94% of the respondents are female, with an average age of 44, and the majority (44.4%) are between 41–50 years old.

#### *Civil status*

Civil status plays a role in financial responsibilities, with 77.8% of respondents being married, which often correlates with higher financial obligations (Respicio, 2024). Educational attainment significantly impacts financial literacy and career advancement, with 50% of respondents holding a master's degree, a common requirement for promotion in the Philippine education system (Sofia, 2024). Dependents also affect financial stability, with 72.2% having two or fewer dependents, which influences financial planning and resource allocation (Gragnano et al., 2020).

#### *Job title and years in service*

Job titles and years in service determine salary progression, with 41.7% classified as Teacher III, earning between P31,320.00 and P33,591.00. Higher-ranking personnel, such as principals, earn significantly more (P46,725.00–P56,790.00) under DepEd's Executive Order No. 174 (2022). Most respondents (25%) have served 11–15 years, with salary increases linked to tenure rather than further education (Nikki, 2023). Despite gross salaries averaging P30,000, 52.8% of respondents take home only P5,000–P9,000 monthly due to deductions for taxes, loans, and contributions, leading to financial stress (Bringing Financial Security to Your Educators, 2021).

#### *Other engagements*

To supplement their income, 55% of respondents engage in side jobs, including business ventures, freelance work, tutoring, and receiving OFW remittances, while 45% rely solely on their teaching salary (Clouse, 2022; Todorov, 2023). Overall, teachers at San Isidro Elementary School face financial challenges influenced by demographic factors, salary structures, and economic conditions. Financial literacy and alternative income sources are crucial for improving financial stability and career progression.

#### *Extent of manifestation of the financial behavior*

The study examines the financial behavior of teachers and staff at San Isidro Elementary School, focusing on budgeting, saving, and debt management practices. Respondents recognize budgeting as essential for financial stability, with tracking income and expenses ranking highest (mean = 4.33). They frequently set realistic financial goals (mean = 4.17) and prioritize essential expenses over discretionary spending (mean = 4.14). While most engage

in structured budgeting, rigid financial plans may limit adaptability. Financial decisions are influenced by psychological and institutional factors, emphasizing the need for flexible, data-driven approaches.

Regarding saving practices, respondents primarily save for contingencies, monthly savings, and educational expenses. However, savings habits are inconsistent, with many setting aside money only when surplus income is available. The overall mean score for savings (3.12) indicates occasional engagement, highlighting financial instability and competing priorities. Financial constraints often force respondents to use savings for immediate needs rather than long-term investments.

Debt management findings reveal that 94.4% of respondents have financial liabilities, with an average of 3.8 loans per individual. The most common debt management practice is timely loan repayment (mean = 4.33), followed by consideration of interest rates before borrowing (mean = 3.86). Many respondents borrow from government agencies such as GSIS and PAG-IBIG due to their secure policies. However, borrowing for significant expenses like education, home renovation, and emergency needs is common. Borrowing from informal lenders, overspending, and credit card dependency are rare. The overall mean score for debt management (2.43) suggests infrequent engagement, with a high standard deviation indicating diverse financial circumstances.

These findings highlight the financial challenges faced by educators, emphasizing the importance of enhanced financial literacy programs, transparent debt management strategies, and resource optimization to improve financial well-being and stability.

### *Level of financial wellness*

The study evaluates financial management skills, emphasizing healthy money habits, goal-setting, and proactive financial planning for financial well-being. Financial wellness, defined as maintaining stability and freedom through prudent spending, is key to long-term security.

Respondents' financial stress levels average 3.11 (moderate stress), with varied experiences reflected in a standard deviation of 0.919. Research links financial stress to habits, socioeconomic factors, and mental health, emphasizing resilience and coping mechanisms to mitigate its impact.

Financial goals shape planning and resource allocation. Emergency savings and debt repayment rank highest among respondents, followed by retirement savings, investment growth, and large-purchase savings. Homeownership and education funding are also prioritized, while early retirement, charitable giving, estate planning, and insurance rank lower.

Studies highlight emergency savings as crucial for resilience, debt management for stability, and estate planning for wealth preservation. These insights underscore the importance of financial literacy programs to support goal achievement and reduce financial stress.

### *Correlations between financial behavior and financial wellness*

Responsible financial behavior, such as saving and budgeting, contributes to financial wellness but does not directly determine stability, satisfaction, or security. While positive behaviors generally correlate with higher financial well-being, this study finds no significant relationship between financial stress and financial behaviors.

Statistical analysis reveals a weak correlation between financial stress and saving/budgeting ( $r = 0.263$ ,  $p = 0.121$ ) and between financial stress and debt management ( $r$

= -0.240,  $p = 0.158$ ), both exceeding the 0.05 significance threshold. This suggests that financial stress is influenced by other factors beyond personal financial habits.

Existing research supports these findings, exploring how psychological, cognitive, and emotional factors shape financial stress. Studies highlight the role of financial education in reducing stress and promoting healthier financial behaviors. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of financial well-being, reinforcing the need for holistic financial literacy programs.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings indicate that most respondents are experienced professionals, predominantly female, aged 41–50, and highly educated, often holding master’s degrees. Despite their qualifications, a net pay between P5,000 and P9,000 per month, with 55% taking on side jobs to supplement their income. While respondents demonstrate structured budgeting habits, saving practices are inconsistent (mean = 3.12), and debt management is infrequent (median = 2.43). Financial stress is moderate (mean = 3.11,  $SD = 0.919$ ), with respondents prioritizing financial security plans like emergency funds, professional growth, retirement, and education for dependents.

Statistical analysis found no significant correlation between financial stress and budgeting, saving, or debt management. The study aligns with behavioral economics, Self-Determination Theory, and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, showing that financial decisions are shaped by cognitive biases and basic survival priorities.

To enhance financial stability, the study recommends a tailored Financial Literacy Training Program with regular workshops, follow-up sessions, and educator support groups. Sharing findings with the DepEd Division of Talisay City could also inform policy improvements for financial literacy programs.

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