

Perception on Investment of Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District

**Beyonce Myles Bancale¹, Maridel L. Gonzales²,
Jannah T. Solis³, Kathlene Mae B. Geloca⁴**

^{1,2,3}Student, Department of Business Administration, UM Digos College, Digos City, Philippines

⁴Associate Professor 1, Department of Business Administration, UM Digos College, Digos City, Philippines

Abstract:

Public school employees tend to favor traditional, low-risk investments due to limited knowledge of alternative investment opportunities. In response, this study aimed to determine the financial management practices and investment preferences of elementary DepEd staff in the Matanao I District. Using simple random sampling, 200 teaching and non-teaching staff members from the district's elementary schools were chosen. The study employed a quantitative methodology with a descriptive research design, gathering data through an adopted survey questionnaire. Expenditure Management Practices had the highest mean of all the financial management aspects evaluated, indicating that respondents place a high value on financial security and discipline. On the other hand, Liabilities/Debt Management Practices had the lowest mean, indicating that although the respondents are generally able to manage their debts and financial obligations, they still face challenges in controlling loans, making timely repayments, and reducing financial liabilities. Overall, managing spending and savings was a strength, but managing debt needs more work. To improve DepEd employees' debt management skills and overall financial wellbeing, it is recommended that the Debt Awareness Program and financial literacy initiatives be implemented to support debt restructuring.

Keywords: financial literacy, investment awareness, savings practices, DepEd personnel, elementary education, economic empowerment, Matanao I

Introduction

Teachers in public schools usually have an excellent financial attitude toward budgeting and saving, yet their actual participation in investment remains quite low (Tumaliuan, 2025). In support of this, Saranza et al. (2022) found that although educators recognize investing as an important part of financial literacy, their investment practices are relatively low compared with saving and debt management. Moreover, many teachers lack a basic understanding of economic concepts such as inflation, interest rates, and risk diversification; this lack of knowledge negatively affects their investment behavior and increases their exposure to financial risks (Acharya et al., 2023). Thus, improving financial well-being is important for both teaching and non-teaching personnel to reduce the risk of financial instability.

In Bangladesh, teachers showed a strong preference for bank deposits while avoiding riskier options, such as the stock market, indicating risk aversion and a lack of diversification (Lina et al., 2025).

Similarly, the study by Song et al. (2023) stated that risk tolerance also serves as a guide; therefore, even those with financial literacy may still avoid Investments if they have a high level of risk aversion. Moreover, the study by Oehler et al. (2023) emphasizes that investing in riskier assets does not always result in a high level of financial literacy. Instead, it lowers their fear of risk, which in result increases their willingness to invest. This shows that excessive fear of risk remains a barrier when making financial decisions. Teachers who engage in negative financial behaviors, such as less frequent saving, budgeting, and informed investment, are likely to experience positive financial well-being outcomes, and vice versa (Bayona, 2023). The study by Garcia (2025) found that teachers reported a high level of financial literacy, particularly in managing money and making informed financial decisions. However, several flaws were observed in more technical areas, such as understanding interest rates, credit scores, and borrowing costs, indicating that additional education or professional development could improve their financial management skills. Remis (2023) reported that some teachers have difficulty with budgeting, investing, and spending. In particular, teachers struggled to invest because they lacked technical expertise, feared losing money, and lacked awareness of business or real estate potential.

Investment is essential for ensuring financial stability, but it can be risky if lacking proper knowledge and understanding. Based on observations, some DepEd employees in Matanao rely mostly on their salaries for financial security and have limited knowledge of formal investment opportunities. Others, on the other hand, participate in unregulated or high-risk investment schemes, such as pyramid schemes and fraudulent investment programs (like KAPA and Rigen), which put them at risk of suffering large financial losses. This underscores the need for targeted awareness and education to promote safer, more successful investment practices, given the lack of investment literacy among educators

Under the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), individuals' actions are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In financial contexts, individual intentions to invest are influenced by how positively they view investment opportunities, the perceived social expectations from colleagues, peer, or family, and their confidence in handling financial resources. Octavania et al. (2024) emphasize that TPB effectively predicts financial decision-making since these three determinants shape a person's intention to adopt financial products or services. Similarly, TPB is used to analyze investment in mutual funds and found that attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict investment intention, with financial literacy serving as a reinforcing factor (Hapsari 2021). This makes TPB a valuable framework to examine how elementary DepEd personnel form perceptions and intentions toward investment.

By raising respondents' awareness of investment behavior and assisting them in making more informed financial decisions, this study's results would benefit the researchers and the community, especially the respondents (teachers and non-teaching personnel). Additionally, the study would reveal how the dependent variable (Factors Considered in Choosing Investment) is affected by the independent variable (Investment Preferences of DepEd Personnel). This study addresses a research gap in understanding how elementary DepEd personnel in the Matanao I District perceive and engage in investments, as little is known about their preferences, practices, and the factors influencing their financial choices. Lastly, the results may also serve as a basis for the Department of Education and school administrators in developing financial literacy programs and support initiatives that meet the financial needs of their employees.

Research Objectives

This study aims to address the perception on investment of Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District with the following objectives:

1. To describe the demographic profile of the DepEd Personnel-respondents. In terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 civil status;
 - 1.3 length of service;
 - 1.4 rank;
 - 1.5 employment status
 - 1.6 monthly income; and
 - 1.7 sources of income.
2. To determine the level of investment pattern, preferences, and practices of Elementary DepEd personnel in Matanao I District.
3. To determine the level of Financial Management Practices of Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District in terms of:
 - 3.1 Money Management Practices;
 - 3.2 Savings Management Practices;
 - 3.3 Expenditures;
 - 3.4 Liabilities/Debt Management Practices; and
 - 3.5 Investment Management Practices.
4. To develop a Debt Management Awareness Program for Elementary DepEd Personnel Matanao I District.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the elementary school personnel of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Matanao I District, including both teaching and non-teaching personnel who are officially employed during the academic year 2025-2026. A total of 200 personnel were included, which represents the entire population of qualified employees in the district. According to Lund (2025), survey-based research typically involves at least 200 respondents to ensure reliable results. However, studies that rely only on descriptive statistics may be conducted with a minimum of 100 respondents, while research using more complex analyses, such as regression or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), generally requires 250 or more participants. Moreover, the respondents were chosen through simple random sampling. In this method, every individual has an equal chance of being included in the study, with participants chosen purely at random (Noor et al., 2022). Respondents must actively perform their duties in the district throughout the study period, regardless of their demographic characteristics, including age, sex, civil status, length of service, educational attainment, and other sources of income. Local School Board (LSB), Provincial School Board (PSB) teachers, non-itemized personnel, respondents who decline to participate, and employees who would be reassigned to a different district are excluded from the study. This ensures that only eligible and relevant personnel are considered in gathering the comprehensive data in the study.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire, adapted from Mamacay et al. (2021), entitled "Investment Pattern, Preference, and Financial Management Practices of Wesleyan University-Philippines Employees," was the main instrument the researchers used to collect data. The survey questionnaire would be divided into three parts. The first section addressed the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, sex, civil status, length of service, educational attainment, monthly income, and other sources of income. The second part contains the respondents' investment patterns, preferences, and practices. The third part focuses on their financial management practices, particularly in terms of money management, savings, expenditure, liabilities, and investments, and uses a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree and 5 representing Strongly Agree, to determine how respondents agree with the given statements on financial investment practices. The responses were interpreted using the following scale:

Numerical Scale	Range Of Means	Descriptive Rating	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very High	This implies that the respondents' financial and investment management practices are highly manifested.
4	3.40 – 4.19	High	This implies that the respondents' financial and investment management practices are manifested.
3	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	This implies that the respondents' financial and investment management practices are moderately manifested.
2	1.30 – 2.59	Low	This implies that the respondents' financial and investment management practices are slightly manifested.
1	1.00 – 1.29	Very Low	This implies that the respondents' financial and investment management practices are least manifested.

Design and Procedures

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Siedlecki (2020) defined descriptive research design as a method used to describe individuals, events, or conditions by studying them in their natural state. Through quantitative methods, this study aims to determine the perceptions, investment preferences, and financial management practices of elementary DepEd personnel in Matanao I District. Great caution and effectiveness are expected, as the survey questionnaires will be distributed to respondents in person. The study by Noviana and Octaviani (2022) described a questionnaire as a set of questions that allows respondents to express their opinions on a given topic. The questionnaires are expected to be carefully prepared to capture the respondents' perceptions of investment. Before distribution, the researchers would secure permission and approval from the relevant educational authorities to ensure that ethical standards are observed. Respondents shall be informed of the purpose of the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation shall be emphasized.

After administration, the questionnaires shall be retrieved by the researchers, organized, and subjected to data encoding. Consequently, the results would then be tabulated and submitted to the statistician for interpretation and analysis of the problem statements. The results of the analysis shall be interpreted in accordance with the study, ensuring that the findings directly address the research objectives.

Moreover, the study used three statistical tools to analyze the data. Firstly, the frequency was used to profile the characteristics of Elementary Personnel in Matanao I District, as well as their investment patterns, preferences, and practices. Then, to determine the level of financial management practices of the Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District, the mean was utilized. The mean provided the average score of responses for each indicator and for the overall variable. Lastly, the standard deviation was used to measure the variability of responses around the mean.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers would undergo approval and review by the UM Digos College Research Innovation Center, serving as a basis for ensuring that all ethical standards were upheld in the conduct of the study. Additionally, the researchers would follow a study protocol assessment and standardized criteria in utilizing and organizing the data, including but not limited to:

Voluntary participation. All DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District have the chance to partake in the study in their own willingness. They were also free to terminate their participation at any time they wished without any sanction for non-volunteerism.

Confidentiality and Privacy. Any private and personal information that we would obtain in the study would be kept concealed with ultimate practice of confidentiality. The researchers would ensure that the data is safe and secured from the unauthorized access.

Informed Consent Process. The research questionnaire is composed of 40 research questions. Some are easy to comprehend while some are complex to understand, the researchers would be backed up with a translation from a separate paper for cases where the respondents are not able to comprehend the questions. The researchers seek approval from the Barangay; without such approval there would be no survey to be serve. Finally, a consent form distributed to the respondents, their approval signifies their participation and ratify their awareness of the purpose of the study.

Fabrication. The researchers would observe objectivity in developing the research, there are no intention to make the works of other researcher their own. The researchers also insure to give proper credit to the owners of the literature whom were involved in the study.

Falsification. The study is comprised of ideas from various reliable studies related to the topic. Citations were utilized to credit the sources and recognize the authors appropriately.

Plagiarism. The study does not involve any instances that could have resulted to plagiarism. The researcher paraphrased and used their own words to express ideas taken from various academic sources, and Turnitin was utilized to manage the similarity index.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Elementary Personnel in Matanao I District

The characteristics of the respondents in the data we gathered include age, civil status, length of service, educational attainment, and other sources of income. In terms of **age**, the majority of the 200 Elementary DepEd Personnel who participated in the study were relatively young; the largest age group was 20-29 years (35.5%), followed by 30-39 years old (31.0%), and the lowest age group was 50-59 years old

(13%). OECD (2023) noted that younger adults are more open to financial products but have less experience, whereas middle-aged individuals demonstrate stronger financial capability. Yakoboski et al. (2023) also found that financial literacy increases during working years, and Shaik et al. (2022) confirmed its influence on investment behavior. As for the civil status, more than half of the respondents were married (54.0%), while 43.5% were single, and only a few were separated or widowed, showing diverse financial responsibilities and priorities. Mencias-Tabernilla (2023) found that most public-school teachers are married, suggesting that family responsibilities influence financial decisions and long-term planning. Similarly, Bustos and Marapao (2025) reported that marital status and personal responsibilities affect financial literacy and decision-making. Sconti and Fernandez (2023) also noted that family responsibilities affect financial literacy and household financial decisions.

As to **length of service**, most respondents had 1–6 years of service (42.5%), followed by those with less than one year (29.5%), indicating that many are still early in their careers. Sujata and Preety (2024) found that teachers with longer service practice better financial planning, while BSP (2021) noted that stable employment encourages saving and investing. Kulal and Kumar (2022) also reported that more experienced teachers have better perceptions of investment options.

Table 2. Characteristics of 200 respondents included in the study, n = 200

Profile	f	%
Age		
20 - 29 yrs. old	71	35.50
30 - 39 yrs. old	62	31.00
40 - 49 yrs. old	41	20.50
50 - 59 yrs. old	26	13.00
Civil Status		
Married	108	54.00
Separated	3	1.50
Single	87	43.50
Widowed	2	1.00
Length of Service		
Less than one year	59	29.50
1 - 6 years	85	42.50
7 - 13 years	33	16.50
14 – 20 years	12	6.00
21 – 27 years	6	3.00
28 – 34 years	5	2.50
Educational Attainment		
College Graduate	137	68.50
MA/MAEd/MBA	28	14.00
MA/MAEd/MBA units	32	16.00
Ph.D./Ed.D	3	1.50
Other Sources of Income		
Business-Related Income	41	20.50

Investment	52	26.00
None	68	34.00
Passive Income	15	7.50
Service-Based Income	24	12.00

The most common **educational attainment** among the respondents was a college degree (68.50%), while a smaller number held graduate degrees or postgraduate units. Only 1.50% had earned a doctorate. The high level of basic college education suggests that respondents have foundational financial literacy, which may affect their understanding of investment options. However, the limited number of postgraduate qualifications indicates a diverse range of financial knowledge within the group. Previous studies have documented variations in teachers' educational attainment. Maribao and Narido (2025) also noted that most teachers held a Bachelor's degree (40.45%), while only a small portion had a Doctorate (3.56%), which aligns with the present findings. In contrast, Hufana et al. (2025) found that most secondary education teachers had completed a Master's degree (36.7%) or held a Master's degree (21.1%), with fewer holding doctoral degrees, Bachelor's degrees, or Doctorates. Also, the study by Estoconing (2024) reported that most teachers held a Master's degree (36.1%) or a Bachelor's degree (34.4%).

Research indicates that while some teachers supplement their salaries with additional income, most rely primarily on their teaching profession, the largest group (34.0%) stated that their teaching salary was their only source of income. Income from businesses and investments was also effectively reported (26.0% and 20.5%, respectively), with passive and service-based income being the least frequent. Buat et al. (2025) reported that 58% (145 respondents) engaged in farming, whereas 69% (69 respondents) had no other income, with only 17% running businesses and a few earning from remittances or part-time work (Tilan & Cabal, 2021). Likewise, Delmo et al. (2023) observed that 89.37% of teachers had no additional income, indicating that the majority rely solely on their salaries because they have little time for other sources of revenue. This research shows the most employees are primarily dependent on their DepEd salaries, which restricts their ability to make investments or shapes their preferences for low-risk or low-entry investment vehicles.

Level of investment pattern, preferences, and practices of Elementary DepEd personnel in Matanao I District

The results indicate that only a small minority of respondents ($n = 22$) reported having no savings, whereas the majority 89% (178 respondents) stated that they have savings. This suggests that most elementary DepEd personnel practice basic financial management by setting aside a portion of their income, reflecting a generally good saving habit among DepEd Personnel. These results align with primary school teachers who demonstrated a highly manifested of personal savings ($\mu = 4.138$) (Akeny & Mwesigwa, 2021). Mantawil et al. (2025), also discovered that teachers who are aware of investment options and have strong financial habits, such as seeking professional advice and practicing self-control, experience greater financial security and a positive work environment. It also aligns with the study of Elomina and Buama (2021) found that public elementary school teachers demonstrate financial literacy that supports regular savings, emergency funds, and prudent management of liquid assets.

The respondents stated multiple **purposes for saving**, with the most common being future investments ($n=110$). Ouyang et al. (2025) stated that individuals with stable employment tend to save for future-

oriented purposes such as investments and long-term financial preparedness, highlighting the role of forward-looking financial planning among salaried workers. Higher awareness leads to wiser investment decisions, and financial literacy promotes saving behavior (Peiris, 2021). Similarly, Jiang (2023) claimed that greater financial literacy boosts investment confidence, which in turn increases saving rates. However, emergency or unanticipated circumstances (n=105) show a strong focus on long-term planning and financial security. This aligns with Chen et al. (2025)'s explanation that workers are increasingly allocating savings to emergency funds to protect themselves from unexpected costs such as health problems, family emergencies, or income disruptions. Fulford et al. (2022) emphasized that people with emergency savings are more financially stable and less likely to rely on debt during times of crisis. Similarly, Aslam (2023) found that 60% of the respondents invest for emergency needs and secure future, while 45% invest for their children's education, 40% for tax benefits, and 35% for retirement, emphasizing the forward-looking financial behavior common among salaried professionals. A significant number also saved for vacation (n=57), indicating that the respondents are prioritizing leisure and personal well-being. Yan et al. (2024), who highlighted the significance of leisure activities and vacations in improving people's subjective well-being and life satisfaction, corroborate this conclusion. Also, many Americans prioritize travel spending despite limited emergency savings (Gillespie & Rubloff, 2023). By planning, automating savings, and setting priorities for important expenses, vacation savings should be balanced with other financial objectives like retirement and emergency funds (Mohamed et al.)

Table 3. Level of investment pattern, preferences, and practices of Elementary DepEd personnel in Matanao I District

Items	<i>f</i>	%
Do you have savings?		
No	22	11.00
Yes	178	89.00
Purpose of savings		
Children's Education	49	24.5
Down payment for house	17	8.50
Emergency/Unforeseen circumstances	105	52.50
Future Investments	110	55.00
Retirement	57	28.50
Start a business	28	14.00
No plan to save	1	0.50
Vacation	57	28.50
Wants	1	0.50
Wedding	7	3.50
N/A	3	1.50
At present, do you have investment?		
No	65	32.50
Yes	135	67.5
Type of Investment		

Agricultural investment	1	0.50
Bank Fixed Deposits (Time Deposits)	24	
Certificate/Public Provident	1	0.50
Coop/Share capitals	2	1.00
Fund/Provident Fund	14	7.00
Gold	1	0.50
Government Securities	31	15.50
Insurance	1	0.50
Land	1	0.50
National Saving	9	4.50
Pagibig- MP2	1	0.50
None	56	28.00
Partnership Business Investment	1	0.50
Savings Account	119	59.50
Percentage of Income able to Invest		
1% to 15%	180	90.00
16% to 30%	19	9.50
31% to 45%	1	0.50
Preferred Investment		
FOREX	3	1.50
Corporate Bonds/Commercial	21	10.50
Foreign Currency Exchange	12	6.00
Gold/Silver	101	50.50
Mutual Funds/UITFs	90	45.00
Items	f	%
Paper/Debentures	6	3.00
Private Equity Investment	29	14.50
Real Estates	42	21.00
Stocks/Equity	39	19.50
Virtual Real Estate	3	1.50

The results show that a majority of the respondents reported having existing **investments** (n= 135), while a smaller portion (n=65) currently do not invest indicating that while investment participation is not universal, some Elementary DepEd personnel are beginning to engage in financial planning. Núñez-Letamendia (2025) found that individuals with higher financial capability is more likely to invest, as they perceive investments as a means of protecting against inflation and securing future financial needs. However, gaps remain in financial preparedness, as teachers often do not plan for an emergency fund and resort to borrowing when emergencies arise (Casingal & Ancho, 2022), and income level has been shown to have no significant effect on investment behavior (Pastor et al., 2022). These findings suggest that even modest participation in investments reflects an awareness of financial security and the importance of planning for future financial needs among Elementary DepEd personnel.

Findings reveal that savings accounts (n=119) are the most common **type of investment** among respondents, this aligns with Jagtap and Khadke (2025), who reported that teachers largely favor low-risk investment choices due to financial security concerns, with only a few engaging in higher-risk investments, and is consistent with the findings of Islam Lina et al. (2025), who emphasized that saving behavior is mainly driven by factors such as future security, emergencies, and asset acquisition. In particular, individuals tend to prefer savings accounts due to their moderate financial literacy and preference for simple, low-risk, and accessible financial products (Casingal & Ancho, 2022). Government securities (n=31) ranked second among the investment preferences of teaching personnel. This corresponds to Abdhilla et al. (2024), who reported that government securities attract investors because of their low default risk. Mutuku (2024) also reported that salaried workers prefer government securities, making them suitable for conservative investors. Similarly, government securities are preferred by risk-averse investors, such as teachers, because they offer low risk, government backing, and predictable returns (Banda, 2025). Bank Fixed Deposits (n=24) ranked third among the preferred investment options. This suggests that salaried employees, including teachers, favor fixed deposits because they offer stable returns, capital protection, and lower investment risk, particularly for those with moderate levels of financial literacy (Hein, 2024). Risk-averse individuals, including teachers, often prefer fixed deposits because they provide low investment risk, protect their capital, and offer guaranteed returns, reflecting their stability and preference for financial security.

Most respondents reported investing only 1% to 15% (n=180) of their income, while few were able to allocate higher **income percentages for investment**. This is consistent with the findings of Sujata and Preety (2025), who noted that educators in the NCR generally have a moderate risk tolerance, with their investment decisions influenced by their financial goals and capacity. Likewise, Chavan et al. (2025) found that teachers often prefer traditional, low-risk investment options, reflecting a more conservative approach to managing their finances. Similarly, Tumaliuan (2025) found that although public school teachers demonstrated positive financial attitudes, their investment practices remained low, indicating limited involvement in investment activities. This suggests that limited disposable income and ongoing household expenses may reduce the ability of Elementary DepEd personnel to invest despite their willingness to do so.

In terms of **preferred investment**, gold/silver (n=101) is the highest response. According to Sulaiman and Aprianingsih (2023), gold is the most commonly owned investment product, indicating that the public considers it a safe, low-risk option. Ganesamurthy and Anjuka (2025) also reported that despite the growing number of investment options and fluctuating market conditions, many investors still prefer gold as a reliable and stable investment. The study on gold investment patterns is important because daily fluctuations in gold prices affect investors' decisions and portfolio stability (Jain, 2025). Also, mutual funds or UITFs (n=90) emerged as the second most favored option. Mutual funds give typical investors the chance to increase their earnings while taking on less risk (Nag et al., 2022). Also, small investors with little experience and low risk tolerance can invest in profitable portfolios run by professionals thanks to mutual funds (Saleem et al., 2021). Sakthivelu and Karthikeyan (2023) found that mutual funds, real estate, and gold are among the most preferred avenues, illustrating how individuals allocate their savings across traditional and modern financial assets. A significant number also favored real estate (n=42). There are two essential elements in real estate purchasing: consumption and investment (Tsou and Sun). Dang and Bui (2022) also found that people have strong intentions to invest in real estate because it is considered a good choice for long-term financial growth. Also, 28% of

Americans prefer real estate for long-term investment (Royal & Beers, 2021). This suggests that while respondents currently practice conservative investing, they aspire toward assets that offer long-term value appreciation and protection against inflation.

Level of Financial Management Practices of Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District

Table 4 presents the level of financial management practices, particularly in money management, savings, expenditures, liabilities, and investments, among elementary DepEd personnel in the Matanao I District. The overall mean score of 3.57 (SD = 0.51) indicates a high level of financial management practices among the respondents. This shows that, in general, the respondents demonstrate responsible and structured management of their financial resources. This result is consistent with earlier studies on public school teachers conducted by Mut, which reported that teachers with higher levels of advanced financial literacy, measured by investment knowledge, insurance planning, and long-term financial planning, demonstrate strong financial management skills. Similarly, Maribao and Narido (2025) reported that teachers regularly engage in financial management activities, showing moderate discipline and awareness but not always fully optimized, suggesting room for improvement. Mutia and Fernal (2025) found that effective financial management practices help teachers make informed, structured decisions despite limited resources.

Expenditure management practices recorded the highest mean score of 3.84 (SD=0.69), also interpreted as highly manifested. This indicates that respondents are generally careful in monitoring expenses, budgeting their income, and controlling unnecessary spending, reflecting strong discipline in day-to-day financial decisions. This result supports the findings of Garcia and Cagatao (2023), who observed that both teaching and non-teaching personnel practice responsible spending by staying within their budget, maintaining emergency funds, and avoiding unplanned expenses indicating strong daily financial discipline among education personnel. Likewise, public elementary school teachers exhibit strong financial capability, especially in budgeting and living within their means, although, challenges in meeting monthly obligations indicate a need to improve emergency savings (Reyes and Serviñas, 2025). Similarly, Valdez (2022) found that teachers practice proper budgeting and saving strategies to manage their financial decisions effectively, demonstrating responsible expenditure behavior and financial discipline in handling daily expenses.

Savings management practices obtained a mean score of 3.74 (SD=0.68), interpreted as high. This finding implies that respondents consistently practice saving behavior, such as setting aside funds regularly and making savings a priority in their financial planning, which supports them to be ready for future financial needs. This aligns with the study of Gono Jr. and Castro (2025), as the respondents in this study similarly demonstrate disciplined and goal-oriented saving practices, including regularly setting aside a portion of their income, maintaining dedicated accounts, budgeting for savings, and setting financial goals, which support consistent and future-focused financial management. The findings are further supported by Kotian and Aithal (2024) revealed that teachers exhibit structured saving behaviors influenced by income stability, financial awareness, and long-term security goals. Kirimo et al (2024) found that regular savings significantly contribute to employees' personal development, emphasizing that consistent saving habits enhance financial stability, future preparedness, and overall personal growth, which further reinforces the high level of savings management practices observed in the present study.

Table 4. Level of Financial Management practices of Elementary DepEd Personnel in Matanao I District

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD
Money Management Practices	3.74	0.58
Savings Management Practices	3.74	0.68
Expenditure Management Practices	3.84	0.69
Liabilities / Debt Management Practices	3.16	0.96
Investment Management Practices	3.35	0.80
Overall	3.57	0.51

Money management practices got a mean score of 3.74, which also falls under a high level. Consumers who have a higher level of financial literacy or a better understanding of financial matters are more capable of making informed financial decisions and are more likely to accumulate greater wealth (Abaya et al., 2021). The findings support previous studies indicating that an individual's level of education influences money management practices. Moreover, statistical evidence shows that attitudes toward money can also serve as a determinant of financial problems and dissatisfaction (Calonia & Tan, 2022). Lusardi and Mitchell (2021) emphasized that individuals with higher financial literacy are more likely to demonstrate responsible financial behaviors such as budgeting, saving, and making informed financial decisions, their study highlights that financial knowledge plays a crucial role in improving money management practices and overall financial well-being.

Investment management practices obtained a mean score of 3.35 (SD = 0.80), interpreted as moderately manifested. This indicated that although respondents engage in investment-related activities, their practices are limited or cautious. Aslam (2023) examined the financial behaviors of school teachers in Kolkata and discovered that although teachers recognized the importance of saving for their future needs, their knowledge and awareness of variety of investment options are limited. Most respondents preferred traditional investment options, with modern opportunities largely unexplored, which supports the findings of this study. Additionally, Borres (2023) explained that even though teachers have investment knowledge, their high living costs and inflation limit their income, making investment a low financial priority. Nonetheless, Nugraha et al. (2023) specified that further developing financial literacy through organized educational content greatly enhanced individual's understanding of financial management, including making investment decisions.

Liabilities or debt management practices had a mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.96), which falls within the moderate range. While respondents are somewhat capable of managing debts and financial obligations, challenges remain in areas such as loan management, timely repayment, and liability minimization. Based on data from a related study, public school teachers have a strong intention to pay off their debts, but many lack the motivation to do so consistently (Doroy, 2024). Paneda and Albay (2025) also observe that secondary school teachers in La Union, despite having a basic understanding of finance, often have no emergency savings and rely on loans during unexpected emergencies, revealing a gap between financial understanding and practical money management skills, showing the need for financial education programs. Furthermore, Manatad and Labitad (2025) highlighted that the way teachers handle their finances influences their performance at work. This suggests that poor debt management and financial stress may negatively affect teachers' focus and productivity, which is why it is important to strengthen their financial management competencies.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, Elementary DepEd Personnel in the Matanao I District are responsible for managing finances, including savings and spending. The findings indicate that Expenditure Management Practices obtained the highest mean. This indicates that they place significant emphasis on financial security and discipline. Liabilities/Debt Management Practices, on the other hand, had the lowest mean. Although the respondents can manage debts and financial obligations to some extent, there are still issues with loan control, timely repayment, and liability minimization. In general, strengthening their financial stability and promoting better long-term financial well-being can be achieved by increasing the consistency of their debt management.

Recommendation

In response to the study's findings, elementary DepEd employees in the Matanao I District should continue working on their debt management techniques while maintaining efficient savings, spending, and investment practices. DepEd should improve its financial literacy and investment awareness programs because the majority of respondents are young, relatively new to the workforce, and can invest only a small portion of their income. These programs are expected to focus on safe, long-term investment options, risk management, and the proper handling of financial obligations.

Furthermore, it is important to assist personnel in setting appropriate financial priorities. Vacations and other expenses should be considered discretionary spending rather than primary savings objectives. Vacations should be included in the 30% for wants under the 50–30–20 rule, which calls for allocating 50% of income to necessities and 20% to savings and investments. This helps prioritize financial stability before leisure spending. Furthermore, given that one-fourth of the personnel have no investment, the Investment Center of UM Digos College may conduct outreach programs for DepEd personnel in the Matanao I District, through beneficial guidance on debt restructuring strategies, portfolio planning, basic investment concepts, and financial goalsetting in seminars, workshops, and financial coaching sessions. This can also serve as a resource for current investment details and tools, helping personnel make informed and responsible financial choices. This partnership may bridge the gap between theoretical financial understanding and real-world investment activities.

Collaborating with financial institutions and government agencies may help provide accessible and teacher-friendly investment opportunities. Generally, these initiatives may enhance investment perception and contribute to the long-term financial stability among Elementary DepEd personnel.

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