

Ang Kuwento Sa Bawat Kuwenta: A Contextualized Change-Agent Theory on Teacher's Involvement in Fiscal Management

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Abstract— This study was conducted to explore teachers' involvement in fiscal management and their experiences related to their involvement that led to the development of a contextualized change-agent theory. Participants consisted of 12 secondary teachers from the 8 public secondary schools. They were recruited through purposive sampling, which involved a careful selection process based on predefined inclusion criteria. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis and theoretical saturation was determined through the ongoing analysis of data. Moreover, data were rigorously analyzed through multiple comparisons for codes, themes, and categories. The findings reveal the complexities of teachers' involvement in fiscal management, highlighting facilitators like empowerment and clear communication, and barriers such as restrictive policies and time constraints. Personal obstacles include lack of motivation and financial knowledge gaps. Teachers play significant roles in planning, budgeting, procurement, and reporting, facing challenges like budget constraints and time management but gaining professional growth and skills. The study introduces Teachers' Fiscal Involvement Theory with four key points: factors influencing engagement, roles in resource use, evaluation of fiscal experiences, and reflective practice. Teachers, as transformative change agents, improve institutions through adaptive fiscal management and administrative support.

Keywords— Fiscal Management: Grounded Theory: Teacher's Involvement: MOOE: Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are expected to make their best efforts to enhance and strengthen the quality of education. However, achieving this has been challenging for years due to various factors. The Department of Education (DepEd) mandates that educational systems must plan and implement programs that will help students reach their full potential. However, the lack of adequate funding and comprehensive planning by school stakeholders makes this task difficult.

Keung (2008) emphasized that involving employees in decision-making can be a viable administrative strategy that meets their needs for self-assurance and achievement. When these conditions are met, even with additional work and responsibility, they can contribute to the success of the organization. Schools should establish a financial committee that includes participation from stakeholders, particularly teachers, to strategically plan and allocate school resources for operational expenses.

According to the DepEd Operation Manual on School-Based Management, schools are required to create an improvement plan that includes fiscal management of resources, which should be developed and approved by all school stakeholders. The Manual highlights that funds from different sources, such as the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), should be allocated based on agreed-upon priorities (DepEd, SBM Manual). This underscores the necessity of involving teachers as legitimate stakeholders in decision-making processes (Bhengu et al., 2014). Transparency and stakeholder involvement should be prioritized to focus on the educational process. An active budget committee, as suggested by Burckbuchler (2008), can help schools effectively allocate and manage resources.

Tendoy (2019) found that teachers were motivated to participate in fiscal management to improve school performance. They contributed to the school improvement plan, assisted administrators in budgeting, and verified financial reports for accuracy. Teachers participated in planning, budgeting, procurement, and reporting, as part of their school responsibilities. This delegation of tasks and authority empowered them, increasing their confidence and commitment to enhancing student performance and overall school effectiveness.

Transparency is crucial in fiscal management to ensure the efficient and effective use of school finances. Teachers, as internal stakeholders, must ensure that the school budget meets students' needs in the classroom. Exploring their participation in fiscal management provides insight into how they contribute to sound financial management. Several studies highlight the significance of teacher involvement in school financial management and its impact on motivation and the teaching-learning process. Kingi (2016) found that teacher involvement in financial management positively influenced motivation levels. Schools should adopt participatory structures to encourage active teacher involvement in financial decision-making, enhancing their motivation and overall performance. Similarly, Espinosa (2018) emphasized that active involvement in school financial management contributes to improvements in teaching and learning. However, Bhengu and Ncwane (2014) found that despite teachers' desire for meaningful involvement, their participation in financial decision-making was often superficial and lacked

real influence. This gap between teachers' aspirations for involvement and actual practice must be addressed to maximize the benefits of participatory financial management in schools.

In many public schools, some teachers hesitate to participate in financial planning, which can lead to organizational discord. A qualitative study by Ochada and Gempes (2018) found that teachers often lacked awareness of MOOE fund utilization guidelines and had never received orientation on the subject. Teachers reported that their needs in teaching were rarely considered, and school administrators did not consult them when crafting the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Moreover, teachers had little to no involvement in decisions regarding MOOE fund allocation. A study by the Philippine Business for Education and Araullo University (2012) also revealed that teacher and parent involvement in financial decision-making was minimal.

This issue extends beyond the Philippines. Research on teacher roles in school decision-making found that while 90% of teachers had moderate or significant input in teaching techniques, fewer than 10% contributed to budget decisions (Ingersoll et al., 2018). This indicates that teacher participation in school budgeting is minimal, limiting their ability to provide insights on the financial management of school resources.

The findings suggest that teachers play a significant role in fiscal management to achieve school success and improved student outcomes. A qualitative study recommended that teachers should be actively involved in financial planning (Ochada & Gempes, 2018). Understanding teacher participation in fiscal management could provide opportunities to enhance their involvement. While various models of participation exist, few focus specifically on teacher participation in financial management. Thus, further research is needed to explore teachers' experiences in fiscal management to gain a clearer understanding of the issue.

Given these findings, there is a need to deeply examine teacher participation in school financial management. Establishing a framework for teacher participation can serve as a foundation for achieving sound fiscal management. A contextualized change-agent theory on teacher involvement in fiscal management may help schools optimize their financial planning and resource allocation, ensuring better educational outcomes and institutional success.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to explore teachers' involvement in fiscal management as well as their experiences related to their involvement. The findings contributed to the development of a contextualized change-agent theory that provide teachers with opportunities to actively engage in managing school resources. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do teachers get involved in fiscal management?
2. What are the experiences of teachers in their involvement in the fiscal management of the school?
3. What contextualized change-agent theory can be formulated based on the results of the study?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative research with a grounded theory approach to explore teachers' participation in fiscal management. Grounded theory was chosen for its inductive nature, allowing the development of a theory based on empirical data rather than a predefined framework. Through this approach, the study identified key factors influencing teachers' involvement in financial decision-making, their roles, and their perspectives on fiscal management.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews provided in-depth insights into teachers' experiences, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions and explore emerging themes. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding. The researcher employed theoretical sampling, selecting participants based on emerging data to refine the developing theory.

Participant observation enabled a firsthand understanding of teachers' engagement in fiscal management. By immersing in school settings, the researcher documented interactions and decision-making processes, capturing nuances that interviews alone might miss. Document analysis supplemented these methods by examining financial reports, budgets, and meeting minutes, providing objective records of teachers' involvement in fiscal processes.

The study was conducted among twelve secondary teachers which were selected through purposive sampling based on years of experience, financial management roles, and willingness to participate. Theoretical saturation determined the sample size. To ensure validity and reliability, member checking was employed, allowing participants to review findings for accuracy. The study adhered to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *How do teachers get involved in fiscal management?*

The involvement of teachers in fiscal management within the field of education is a crucial aspect of ensuring the effective functioning of educational institutions. Educators, as the frontline professionals in the realm of teaching and learning, possess unique insights and perspectives that can greatly contribute to shaping financial decisions and educational policies. In this context, this research question sought to explore the ways in which teachers actively participate in fiscal management highlighting their essential role in enhancing the quality and relevance of education. Understanding how teachers can engage in these processes is vital for fostering collaboration, transparency, and ultimately, the improvement of educational systems. Summary of the results of this research questions is divided into two parts (1) Barriers and Facilitators of their involvement and (2) Roles and Processes in Fiscal Management. These themes encapsulated how teachers get involved in the management of fiscal resources.

In terms of the barriers and facilitators of teachers' involvement in fiscal management, this study has found out that factors that facilitate and hinder teacher engagement they navigate within the context of fiscal management in educational institutions. On the positive side, a myriad of factors working in tandem to catalyze teachers' empowerment in fiscal management: (1) Teacher's Empowerment and Development, (2) Clear Communication and Supportive Environment, and (3) Delegated Responsibility and Administrator's Trust.

First, Teacher's Empowerment and Development underscores the idea that empowering teachers and investing in their personal development are essential catalysts for their proactive involvement in financial matters. When teachers feel empowered and equipped with the necessary skills, they are more likely to engage constructively in fiscal management. This supports to the study of Mlawa (2021) revealed that head teachers were using various ways and technique on motivating teachers like through recognizing their work performance, involving teachers in decision making, transparency and accountability. The study findings revealed that the more teachers, the more they worked hard in the school. This only means that recognition and appreciation are vital for teachers to perform better in school.

Secondly, Clear Communication and Supportive Environment pointed out that transparent communication and fostering a supportive environment within educational institutions are fundamental prerequisites for encouraging teachers to take an interest in financial decision-making. When there is open and honest communication, teachers are more likely to feel informed and engaged. When teachers perceive a clear connection between fiscal decisions and classroom outcomes, their motivation to participate in resource allocation increases (Kingi, 2016). Lastly, Delegated Responsibility and Administrator's Trust underscored the significance of delegating financial responsibilities to teachers and the trust that administrators place in them to handle these responsibilities effectively. When teachers are given a sense of ownership and responsibility in financial matters, it motivates them to actively participate. The relationship between trust and responsibility is significant in promoting a positive and collaborative work culture within educational institutions. Trusting relationships seem to help teachers by providing a safe space where teachers can learn and grow (Hong, et. al., 2020).

On the other hand, teachers encountered barriers which hinder them to actively participate in the management of fiscal resources. This is divided into two categories (1) Institutional Factors and (2) Personal Factors. From an institutional perspective, the subtheme highlights the pivotal role of various factors such as policies, resource allocation practices, time constraints, and institutional culture. Fiscal policies, for instance, can significantly influence the extent of teachers' participation, with restrictive policies limiting their involvement in crucial financial decisions. Time constraints, stemming from the demanding nature of teaching responsibilities, pose another obstacle to teachers' active engagement. Moreover, institutional culture, whether inclusive

and collaborative or hierarchical and bureaucratic, plays a crucial role in encouraging or discouraging teachers from contributing their insights. School culture can significantly impact teachers' willingness to engage in fiscal management (Paulsrud and Wermke, 2020). An open and collaborative culture that values teacher input is more likely to encourage their involvement to achieve school success (Gulsen & Celik, 2021).

On the personal front, the results delved into the emotional and cognitive dimensions that affect teachers' engagement. It explores feelings of lack of motivation, fear of errors, and a perceived lack of knowledge and understanding of financial matters. Teachers' motivation to participate is influenced by their level of interest and the perceived relevance of financial matters. Fear of making errors, driven by concerns over potential negative consequences, can act as a deterrent. Similarly, a lack of financial knowledge and understanding can undermine confidence and discourage teachers from actively engaging. This is related to the result of Mohammed (2017) unveiled that teachers' involvement in decision-making is affected by lack of skills in teachers, and knowledge in the decision.

Moreover, the second part, which is about the roles and processes in Fiscal Management, includes planning, budgeting, procurement, and reporting. In planning, the process starts with a rigorous Needs Assessment, where teachers take the initiative to delve beyond the conventional boundaries to thoroughly understand and identify the school's unique requirements. Subsequently, teachers play a pivotal role in crafting comprehensive action plans that serve as detailed roadmaps for executing educational initiatives throughout the academic year. Moreover, effective communication is a linchpin in this process, as teachers formulate project proposals and present them to stakeholders, emphasizing the potential positive outcomes of their fiscal strategies on educational growth. Furthermore, teachers meticulously manage and analyze data related to planning, guaranteeing its accuracy and logical arrangement. The planning process is more than just thinking up ideas. It needs careful attention and organization (Agra, 2023). Teachers take on the role of coordinators, making sure the plan gets carried out correctly (Escobar, 2019).

In terms of budgeting, teachers played a crucial role within schools, highlighting their active involvement in shaping effective financial decision-making for the betterment of education. Beyond their traditional instructional responsibilities, teachers actively contribute to decisions regarding the allocation of school funds for various projects. This involvement is paramount because teachers possess an intimate understanding of students' needs, ensuring that financial resources are used judiciously to enhance the overall quality of education. Moreover, teachers extend their influence beyond budgeting to engage in the comprehensive review of budgets. They meticulously assess expenses and propose cost-saving measures while ensuring that financial plans align seamlessly with their intended educational objectives. This commitment to fiscal responsibility further emphasizes their dedication to optimizing the allocation of resources for

educational excellence. Additionally, teachers take an active role in decision-making concerning other sources of funds, such as those generated through Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) activities, canteen operations, and the allocation of resources for the Special Education Fund (SEF). Teachers play a bigger role than just teaching – they actively contribute to deciding how money should be spent on school projects (Hadi, et. al., 2022). This is significant because teachers have a deep understanding of what students need. When teachers are involved in crafting budget plans, it ensures that money is used effectively to enhance education (Ngussa, 2017).

Further, in the procurement process, it is evident that teachers play a central and active role in ensuring the acquisition of necessary materials and supplies for their classrooms. This process typically begins with teachers identifying their specific needs and communicating these requirements to their department heads, who then act as intermediaries in requesting materials from supply officers. This collaborative effort reflects the commitment of educators to create conducive learning environments for their students. Also, teachers' involvement in procurement extends to various stages, including listing material needs at the commencement of classes, conducting price comparisons from different vendors to secure cost-effective options, and ensuring timely availability and quality control of supplies.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges posed by complex procurement procedures, particularly those related to government regulations like PhilGEPS. To navigate these challenges, teachers strategically plan their purchases to stay within specified thresholds and comply with regulations. This demonstrates their commitment to fiscal responsibility and compliance with established guidelines. Furthermore, some teachers also serve on critical committees such as the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) and inspectorate teams. Their roles primarily involve signing necessary documents, which underscores the trust and confidence placed in their school's leadership for fiscal management.

Lastly, in the reporting process, teachers played a pivotal role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and integrity within educational institutions, and teachers are actively involved in this crucial process. As integral members of the inspectorate team, they take on responsibilities that involve overseeing financial transactions, verifying deliveries, and managing inventory. Furthermore, teachers assume a vital role in reviewing and checking the liquidation reports of various fund sources, such as those from the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the canteen fund. Their involvement in evaluating these reports serves to uphold financial accuracy and adherence to established guidelines, contributing significantly to responsible financial management. Teachers' active participation in reporting processes underscores their dedication to upholding fiscal integrity and enhancing the financial credibility of educational institutions thus, their participation is vital in this endeavor in fiscal management (Gaspar, 2022).

B. What are the experiences of teachers in their involvement in the fiscal management of the school?

Teachers' active engagement in fiscal management within educational institutions has yielded both positive and negative experiences. On the negative side, challenges encompass navigating budget constraints, making strategic resource allocation decisions, managing time amidst curriculum demands, coping with intense deadlines, and experiencing emotional discomfort. This is similar with the study of Dureza, et. al., (2022) which discovered that secondary school teachers experienced significant stress primarily due to the demands of multitasking at their job.

On the positive side, this involvement has yielded significant results, such as opportunities for professional growth and development, extending beyond the classroom and enriching educators' skills, effectiveness, and overall understanding. Teachers actively involved in fiscal management often attend seminars, gaining valuable insights into financial management and its institutional implications. Additionally, their participation serves as a training ground for potential future leadership roles, fostering a sense of preparedness for administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, engagement in fiscal management enhances interpersonal skills, facilitating effective communication and collaboration among educators and stakeholders. Also, it grants teachers a deeper understanding of institutional processes and direction, aligning their resource allocation decisions with the school's overarching goals, ultimately contributing to their sense of fulfillment and purpose in promoting educational excellence. This was supported by the findings of Wadesango (2011) which revealed that teachers' involvement in budget control played a pivotal role in boosting their motivation.

Lastly, this study has found out that when teachers become increasingly engaged in the areas of fiscal management, they naturally encounter a range of outcomes, which act as pivotal indicators that shape their future participation in this intricate process. This crucial stage is marked by reflection and assessment of their experiences and the impact of their involvement. They reflect on their evolving roles and contributions in fiscal management, considering factors such as institutional support, personal motivation, and their ability to affect change. This introspective process guides teachers in making informed decisions about whether to sustain their active engagement in the fiscal management arena.

C. What contextualized change-agent theory can be formulated based on the results of the study?

Based on the results of the study, a contextualized change-agent theory on teachers' participation in fiscal management was formulated. Teacher's Fiscal Involvement Theory is built on four fundamental tenets that guide our understanding of teachers as change agents in the context of planning, budgeting, procurement, and reporting. The first tenet focuses on analyzing influencing factors, including both institutional and personal barriers, which can hinder or facilitate teachers' active engagement in fiscal management. The theory emphasizes the importance of addressing these barriers and promoting facilitating factors to create an environment conducive to teachers' effective participation.

The second tenet highlights the imperative for teachers to comprehend their multifaceted roles in fiscal processes beyond traditional pedagogical responsibilities. It outlines the involvement of teachers in planning, budgeting, procurement, and reporting, emphasizing their crucial contribution to the efficient utilization of resources. This tenet underscores the need for a holistic understanding of teachers' roles beyond the classroom, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping the financial landscape of educational institutions. The third tenet delves into the evaluation of diverse experiences encountered by teachers in fiscal management. The theory acknowledges both positive and challenging outcomes, emphasizing the dynamic nature of teachers' involvement, and aligning with the change agent's role. By recognizing and assessing these experiences, the theory provides a foundation for informed decision-making and continuous improvement, benefiting both individual teachers and the broader educational institution.

The fourth and pivotal tenet centers on promoting reflective practice among educators engaged in fiscal management. This tenet recognizes the non-linear nature of the journey and emphasizes the transformative potential of thoughtful contemplation. Teachers enter a reflective phase where they evaluate the impact on their professional growth and personal well-being, ultimately influencing their decision to continue or cease involvement. The theory underscores the crucial role of school administrators in guiding and supporting teachers during this reflective process, acknowledging their mentorship as instrumental in fostering positive transformations within educational institutions.

The Teachers' Fiscal Involvement Theory positions teachers as transformative change agents and advocates for a dynamic, adaptive approach to fiscal management. By addressing barriers, cultivating facilitating factors, and promoting reflective practice, the theory aligns with effective change management principles, emphasizing the need for a supportive environment and informed decision-making in driving positive transformations in educational institutions.

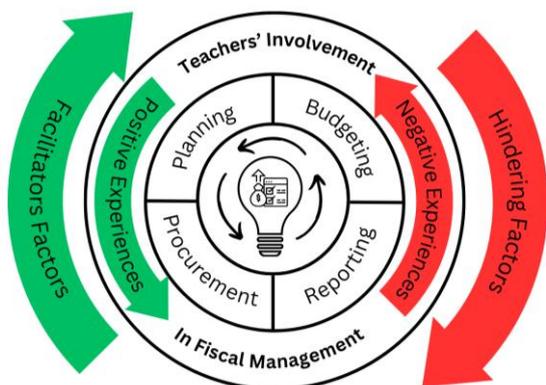


Figure 1. Model on Teachers' Fiscal Involvement Theory

V. CONCLUSION

The Contextualized Change-Agent Theory on Teachers' Involvement in Fiscal Management provides a comprehensive

framework that highlights the crucial role of teachers in financial decision-making within educational institutions. The study reveals that teachers actively contribute to budgeting, procurement, and resource allocation, ensuring financial decisions align with educational goals. Key facilitators of teachers' engagement include empowerment, clear communication, and delegated responsibilities, which enhance their ability to participate effectively. However, challenges such as complex institutional policies, time constraints, and knowledge gaps hinder their involvement, emphasizing the need for institutional support.

Teachers' experiences in fiscal management reflect both positive and negative aspects. While they face challenges like budget constraints, time management struggles, and emotional stress, they also gain professional growth, expanded skill sets, and deeper insights into educational management. Their involvement fosters a reflective process where they assess their impact, motivation, and institutional support, influencing their continued participation. The Teachers' Fiscal Involvement Theory underscores the importance of an adaptive approach to fiscal management, integrating change management principles. By fostering a supportive environment, educational institutions can enhance teachers' engagement in fiscal responsibilities, driving positive transformations in resource management and overall educational quality.

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