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THE LOAN DEPENDENCY AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SAN ISIDRO, DAVAO ORIENTAL: BASIS FOR AN ACTION PLAN

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent and differences in loan dependency among public-school teachers in San Isidro, Davao Oriental. It examined how demographic profiles relate to teachers' borrowing behavior across four dimensions: accessibility and affordability, financial needs and responsibilities, specific purchases and investments, and personal goals and aspirations. Using a quantitative descriptive-comparative design, the study involved 199 randomly selected teachers from elementary and secondary levels. Data were gathered through a validated questionnaire and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test, and Kruskal-Wallis test. Results revealed a high overall loan dependency with a mean of 3.92. The highest mean was observed in accessibility and affordability followed by financial needs and responsibilities, showing that teachers often rely on easily accessible, low-interest loans to meet family and daily expenses. Significant differences were noted in number of children, spouse's occupation, and department level, but not in sex or civil status. The study concludes that teachers' loan dependency is driven by financial pressures and behavioral factors, reflecting the influence of attitudes, social norms, and perceived control as posited by TPB. It recommends strengthening financial literacy and debt management programs, promoting savings schemes, and formulating policies that encourage responsible borrowing and financial resilience among teachers.

Keywords: Business Management, loan dependency, public-school teachers, accessibility and affordability, specific purchases, Kruskal-Wallis test and San Isidro, Davao Oriental.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Loan dependency leads to persistent financial stress and vulnerability, particularly when borrowers rely on credit for daily living (Kempson and Poppe, 2018). The rising indebtedness among public school teachers has become a serious concern, as a large portion of their salaries is often consumed by loan repayments, leaving little for essential needs. Motsamai and Dlamini (2017) revealed that teachers are caught in recurring loan cycles, frequently borrowing anew to settle previous debts. Similarly, Manasan (2015) found that 57.9% of households with public school teachers had outstanding loans—far higher than those of private school teachers or other government and private-sector workers. Ferrer (2017) further emphasized that public school teachers face considerable challenges in maintaining financial well-being due to increasing debt and limited disposable income.

Moreover, Flamiano (2024) discovered that teachers frequently use borrowed funds for paying off debts, financing small enterprises, and covering essential expenses such as housing, healthcare, and education. Likewise, Inuguidan (2023) reported that financial distress hampers teachers' focus and classroom performance, often resulting in absenteeism and emotional strain. Lancian et al. (2024) also highlighted that disorganized pay systems, bank obligations, and uncontrolled spending diminish teachers' effectiveness. Additionally, Bustos and Marapao (2025) found that debt-related anxiety and depression are prevalent among teachers, undermining their overall well-being. Consequently, studies by Netemeyer et al. (2018) and Perdizo et al. (2025) concluded that financial stability and supportive workplace management enhance teachers' mental health, job satisfaction, and teaching performance.

Furthermore, according to a study of Jalalon and Garcia (2024), over 60% of U.S. public school teachers borrowed for education; with 40% still repaying—many at \$342/month—leading to stress, part-time jobs, and potential career departure. Shailashree et al. (2024) found that age, employment status, and spending habits significantly impact savings and investment decisions among female teachers in India, while education level, marital status, and income did not have a notable effect. Moscoso (2023) similarly examined teachers of Iloilo, Philippines with their financial literacy, debt and loan types, and financial difficulties across demographics. It was revealed that civil status, literacy, loan type, and purpose were significantly correlated with financial trouble., developing a model via factor analysis to explain reliance on loans.

Although several studies had been conducted on loan dependency among public-school teachers, there was still a clear gap in the literature. Exploratory factor analysis in contexts like Sulop, Davao del Sur targets general government employees rather than teachers specifically. There's no robust, teacher-specific model explaining how demographic factors, employment status of spouse, and social norms influence loan dependency. These studies among public school teachers also do not deeply investigate in terms of accessibility and affordability, financial needs and responsibilities, purchases and investments, and personal goals and aspirations as linked to loan dependency. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap in existing literature and can serve as a source of new insights and information.

The findings of this study are disseminated to educational institutions through local and national research conferences or forums. The results are also presented at national and international

business research conferences. The researcher plans to publish the study in a reputable international journal. Copies are provided to the University of the Immaculate Conception library to support future researchers in their studies

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the differences in loan dependency among public-school teachers of San Isidro, Davao Oriental. Specifically, it addressed the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Sex;
 - 1.2 Civil Status;
 - 1.3 Number of children;
 - 1.4 Occupation of the husband/wife; and
 - 1.5 Department level belongs?
2. What is the extent of the loan dependency of public-school teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 Accessibility and Affordability;
 - 2.2 Financial Needs and Responsibilities;
 - 2.3 Specific Purchases and Investments; and
 - 2.4 Personal Goals and Aspirations?
3. Are there significant differences in loan dependency when grouped according to profile?
4. Based on the results, what appropriate action plan can be proposed?

Review of Related Literature

This section presented the related literature from various sources like books, journals, articles, electronic materials such as PDF or e-book, as well as existing foreign and local theses and dissertations that were considered beneficial to the advancement of information regarding the study.

Loan Dependency

Loan dependency is a situation where an individual or organization consistently relies on borrowed funds (loans) to meet everyday expenses or operating costs; rather than using income, savings, or internal funds (Pronto Finance, 2024). Moyo (2019) described loan dependency as the overreliance on borrowed funds which can create a cycle of debt and hinder sustainable economic growth. Kempson and Poppe (2018) noted that loan dependency leads to persistent financial stress and vulnerability, particularly when borrowers rely on credit for daily living. According to Plaza and Jamito (2021), educators who have taken out salary loans often find that the reduced monthly income, after loan deductions, is insufficient to cover their living expenses. This financial strain leads them to incur additional debt, especially during emergencies, due to the absence of adequate emergency savings.

Accessibility and Affordability. Haron et al. (2013) explicitly describes "credit accessibility" as the capability of individuals or enterprises to get financial services, including credit, deposit, payment, insurance, and other risk management services. Accessibility involves how easily borrowers can obtain loans, considering factors like eligibility criteria, application processes, and the availability of financial products tailored to different income groups while affordability refers to the extent to which loan terms like interest rates and repayment schedules are manageable for borrowers without causing financial strain (World Bank, 2023). Wang (2022) reported that a 49 % reduction in entry costs raised formal loan uptake by 36 % in Thai villages which was clear evidence that reducing lender-access barriers boosts borrowing. On

the other hand, study of Deloitte (2020) across ASEAN countries shows online lending platforms are primarily used for everyday expenses. Speed, convenience, and ease of approval—underscoring how accessibility strongly influences borrowing decisions. According to Yue et al. (2022), the presence of digital finance platforms (e.g., mobile lending apps) significantly boosts credit access and consumption among underserved households but also elevate the risk of households falling into debt traps. Zhang and Liu (2024) also demonstrated that digital finance platforms dramatically increased rural households' access to credit, narrowing coverage gaps between urban and rural borrowers.

Financial Needs and Responsibilities. Financial needs generally denote to the essential expenses or resources an individual or household requires to maintain their basic standard of living, ensure security, and pursue fundamental life goals. (Bankrate, 2024). According to Weida et al. (2020), financial responsibilities are mapped into four core domains: spend, save, borrow, and plan. Each domain includes actions such as meeting living costs, maintaining cash flow, managing debt responsibly, and long-term planning such as for emergencies or retirement. Besides, In the United States, according to a study of García et al. (2023), over 60% of public-school teachers hold student loan debt. Many take second jobs and report high levels of loan-related stress—especially early-career teachers—indicating financial responsibilities deeply influence borrowing. The study of Magallon et al. (2024) highlights the impact of financial needs and responsibilities, prompting some government employees including teachers to rely on loans to meet family needs and support their children's education, especially during economic downturns and health emergencies. Ferrer (2018) reported that an overwhelming majority (78.2%) of the teacher-respondents in his study were having difficulty meeting their daily expenses.

Specific Purchases and Investments. Specific purchase in the context of borrowing, state to loans taken for a clearly defined item or purpose, rather than general-purpose or revolving credit. These are typically one-time expenses, such as buying a refrigerator, laptop, furniture, or covering a travel cost with a loan explicitly tied to that purchase (Investopedia). Besides, Jones (2014) described investment as the sacrifice of certain resources in the present with the expectation of gaining greater resources in the future. In addition, an example to specific purchase is the targeted loan from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) allowing teachers to borrow up to ₱30,000 for purchasing a desktop or laptop—with fixed repayment over three years (Padin, 2020). Home Credit Philippines reports that in 2023–2024, 55–60% of consumer loans were for gadgets (phones/laptops), often including appliances like TVs, air conditioners, and e bikes and the surge in purchases directly correlated with borrowing growth. Jabar and Delayco (2021) surveyed 310 elementary and high school teachers in Metro Manila and found that poor record-keeping and impulse purchases often lead teachers to borrow money, even for non-essential items. Their research implies that specific purchases, without budgeting, directly drive loan uptake. The study of Mencias Tabernilla (2023) in Aklan also revealed spending patterns and debt profiles wherein teachers accumulated debt for various specific purchases. Those with frequent non-essential purchases had higher total debt and more frequent loan uptake.

Personal Goals and Aspirations. Personal goals and aspirations are the objectives and ambitions an individual sets for themselves

to achieve in different areas of life which provide direction, motivation, and a sense of purpose. Financial goals guide individuals toward desired financial outcomes by enabling informed investment decisions that match their objectives (Ang, 2024). Priyadharshini (2017) also stated that without well-defined and measurable financial goals, one would lack a clear path toward achieving financial freedom and setting financial goals can help people manage their finances better. In support of this, Dewi et al. (2020) said that financial stability should be the goal of every individual; without this goal, poor decision-making can affect a person's financial health. A study by Carpena et al. (2019) revealed that goal-setting and financial counseling bridge the knowledge and behavior gaps in financial education. Moreover, a study by Chituta (2025) on teachers in Lusaka, Zambia, found that personal bank loans were primarily sought due to economic hardships, buying assets like cars and land, and unexpected financial emergencies. Aspirations for asset ownership and the need to cope with life's necessities drive borrowing.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The TPB was derived from the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which was first introduced by Ajzen and Fishbein in (1980). It posited that behavioral intention was the primary predictor of actual behavior, influenced by three fundamental factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Nofsinger (2001) and Shefrin (2002) asserted that TPB examined how human psychology influenced financial decision-making. In the study of Herremans et al. (2023), Canadian payday loan users were analyzed using TPB. Attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and past behavior patterns were found to be associated with difficulties in loan repayment, demonstrating the applicability of the TPB to loan dependency.

In addition, Magallon et al. (2024) identified a positive attitude of the research respondents towards loans as a solution to their needs. Mencias Tabernilla (2023) applied TPB to teachers in Aklan, showing that teachers with favorable attitudes toward debt (e.g. to support education, health, family milestones) had stronger borrowing patterns. Also, if a person perceives loans as an easy way to acquire desired goods or overcome financial shortfalls without significant negative consequences, their attitude towards borrowing was favorable, increasing the likelihood of repeated borrowing. This is particularly relevant in contexts where wages are insufficient to meet living costs. Kennedy (2013) found a positive correlation between attitudes toward credit cards and the amount of credit card debt, suggesting that a favorable attitude towards credit can lead to higher indebtedness.

Moreover, in environments where borrowing is normalized or even encouraged through informal lending groups or peer influence, the subjective norm to borrow was strong. This can override individual reservations and lead to increased loan procurement. Plaza's (2021) research on teachers' indebtedness highlighted that many borrow from friends, relatives, and neighbors in addition to formal institutions, indicating a social network where borrowing is prevalent. Listijo et al. (2024) emphasized that individual relationships with their social environment (family, workmates, social community) are often bound by subjective norms, influencing the intention to carry out actions repeatedly, including repeat borrowing. Likewise, research of Taylor and Francis (2024) on financial inclusion highlighted the role of social factors in financial behavior. Tharanga and Gamage (2024) also explicitly

integrated TPB, demonstrating that social norms including acceptance of borrowing in teachers' circles, influenced debt behavior. Furthermore, Jalalon and Garcia (2024), in their study on teachers' financial literacy, noted that many teachers are heavily indebted, which implicitly points to widespread borrowing behavior that could be influenced by peer norms.

Likewise, teachers perceived behavioral control (PBC) over repaying loans is significantly enhanced by the automatic salary deduction mechanism, particularly for loans from institutions like GSIS. This perceived ease of repayment reduces the perceived difficulty of borrowing and reinforces their intention to take out loans. Magallon et al. (2024), in their study on loan dependency among government employees including teachers, identified "accessibility and affordability" as a key dimension, where salary deduction schemes contribute to the perceived ease of loan management. Similarly, studies on factors influencing loan availment often highlight stable income and ease of repayment as crucial factors. Casingal and Ancho (2021) found that teachers rely heavily on automatic salary deductions for loan repayment—enhancing their perceived ease and control over borrowing.

Thus, a history of borrowing, especially repeated borrowing, often leads to a "borrower identity" where taking out loans becomes a normalized and expected part of financial management. This past behavior strongly predicts future borrowing and contributes to a cycle of recurring debt or loan dependency. Chudry et al. (2011) found that past behavior significantly increased the predictive power of TPB models for debt-consumption intention. Herremans et al. (2023) TPB-based study on payday borrowers demonstrated that perceived behavioral control and self-identity as a borrower strongly predict repeated borrowing behavior and thus lead to dependency. The high debt burden reported by Doroy (2024) among Filipino teachers strongly implies a history of borrowing that has become a recurring pattern for many.

The study was anchored on the Sen's Capability Approach (1999) emphasizes an individual's ability to achieve well-being based on access to resources and opportunities. This theory highlights that financial well-being is not merely about income and financial knowledge but rather about having the capability to effectively manage finances, make informed decisions, and access financial services that enable individuals to lead stable lives. According to Sen (1999), financial capability determines a person's actual freedom to achieve financial security.

This study also draws on the Consumer Financial Behavior Theory as proposed by Xiao and Joo (2008), which emphasizes that financial well-being is a result of individuals' financial behaviors including budgeting, saving, spending, and debt management. While Sen's theory focuses on the capability to act given the available resources, Consumer Financial Behavior Theory highlights the actual financial actions and decisions individuals make. In the context of LGU employees, their day-to-day financial behaviors—such as regularly saving, controlling debt, or managing income are key reflections of their financial capability. These behaviors demonstrate how available resources are converted into real outcomes, such as improved financial well-being. Therefore, this theory complements the Capability Approach by explaining the behavioral mechanisms through which financial literacy, accessibility, availability, affordability, and usage contribute to achieving financial security among LGU employees in Davao del Norte.

Similarly, the study incorporates the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985). This theory posits that individuals are more likely to achieve well-being when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. In a financial context, this translates to having control over finances, being financially literate, and having access to social or institutional financial support. These psychological enablers complement Sen's view by emphasizing the internal motivation needed to convert opportunities into actions that support financial well-being.

Therefore, grounded on Sen's Capability Approach and supported by Consumer Financial Behavior Theory and Self-Determination Theory, the present study proposes that the financial well-being of LGU employees is significantly influenced by their access to resources, financial knowledge, behavioral practices, and motivational drivers. Specifically, it is proposed that: greater accessibility and availability of financial services enhance individuals' ability to engage with the financial system; the affordability of financial products increases inclusion and sustainable financial participation; and the actual usage of these services reflects both behavioral and motivational engagement. Collectively, these variables are expected to positively influence financial well-being, as they enable individuals to manage financial responsibilities, prepare for uncertainties, and maintain financial control. These theoretical assumptions guide the empirical investigation of how each regressor contributes to the overall financial security and stability of LGU employees in Davao del Norte.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methodology employed in the study was discussed. It included research design, research locale, the research respondents, research instrument, data collection procedure, statistical treatment used, and ethical considerations in conducting the study.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative design as the researcher aimed to describe the status and characteristics of loan dependency among public school teachers and compared these patterns across naturally occurring groups (e.g., by sex, civil status, number of children, occupation of spouse, and department they belong) without manipulating any variables.

Notably, Grove et al. (2013), in such designs the investigator identified variables of interest, measured them, and explored differences between groups to interpret meaningful patterns. For example, the study might document the proportion of teachers holding multiple loans and repayment strategies, followed by comparative analysis such as male versus female teachers or single teachers versus married teachers to uncover systemic disparities. By situating these comparisons at a single point in time, this design identified significant variations and provided deeper insights into the factors that might have intensified or alleviated loan dependency, forming a basis for theory refinement and targeted policy recommendations.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in twenty-four public schools in the municipality of San Isidro, Davao Oriental, comprising 20 elementary schools and 4 national high schools. These schools were selected based on their accessibility, representation of both elementary and secondary levels, and active employment of public-

school teachers. San Isidro is a second-class rural municipality known for its agricultural livelihood, cultural heritage, and strong commitment to public education. Despite its limited urbanization, the municipality plays a vital role in delivering basic education to learners across its upland and coastal barangays.

Given its rural setting, socioeconomic conditions, and significant population of public-school teachers, San Isidro provided an ideal context for examining loan dependency. Teachers in the area often serve as community leaders and breadwinners, managing multiple financial responsibilities that may lead to borrowing behaviors influenced by local economic realities.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were public-school teachers from the municipality of San Isidro, Davao Oriental. Data obtained from the DepEd San Isidro District Office and the Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) Human Resource Management Office indicated that the total teacher population in the municipality was 411. From this population, 199 respondents were selected to participate in the study using the Raosoft sample size calculator. Among them, 117 respondents (59%) were from the elementary level, 82 respondents (41%) were from the secondary or high school level. This distribution reflected the actual proportion of teachers across the different educational levels within the municipality. Furthermore, all participants were required to be permanent employees holding Plantilla positions, formally appointed, actively serving for at least one year. They also had to hold at least one outstanding loan, whether from GSIS, banks, cooperatives, or informal lenders to ensure relevance to the study's focus.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented the conclusions drawn from the study's findings and offered recommendations to address the issues that were identified.

Conclusion

To start, the study explored the loan dependency among public school teachers and its association with their demographic characteristics. Findings revealed that most respondents were female, married, and had one to two children, with most spouses employed either in public or private sectors.

Moreover, the extent of loan dependency among teachers was found to be high, particularly in terms of Accessibility and Affordability, followed by Financial Needs and Responsibilities, Specific Purchases and Investments, and Personal Goals and Aspirations. This indicates that teachers frequently rely on loans not only to meet essential family needs but also to support personal goals and financial aspirations.

In addition, the study found no significant differences in loan dependency when grouped according to sex and civil status. However, notable variations emerged according to the number of children, spouse's occupation, and department level, indicating that these factors play a role in shaping teachers' financial behaviors.

Furthermore, drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the findings indicate that teachers' borrowing decisions are shaped by their attitudes toward loans as practical means of addressing financial constraints, by subjective norms influenced by social and institutional acceptance of borrowing, and by perceived behavioral control derived from stable employment and the availability of loan programs. The observed differences across demographic

factors—such as number of children, spouse's occupation, and department level—highlight variations in teachers' perceived control and financial obligations, which, in turn, influence their borrowing intentions and behaviors.

The results confirm that loan dependency among public school teachers stems from the interaction between external financial circumstances and internal behavioral intentions, aligning with the central tenets of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the DepEd, HR offices, and partner agencies continue to implement annual financial literacy and debt management sessions for teachers. These programs should focus on promoting responsible borrowing, reducing overreliance on payroll deductions, and fostering financial independence. Since the study showed that loan dependency was widespread among teachers regardless of sex and civil status, but differed based on number of children, spouse's occupation, and department level, it is recommended that financial education programs be tailored according to teachers' demographic and socio-economic backgrounds.

In addition, workshops on family budgeting and financial planning should be conducted regularly to help teachers meet their family's basic needs without excessive borrowing. It is recommended that DepEd and government agencies establish welfare or emergency assistance programs that can serve as alternatives to loans. Introducing optional salary deduction savings plans could also help teachers build financial security and reduce reliance on credit for basic expenses. Teachers with dependents should be provided with specialized financial planning sessions focusing on managing family-related expenses and long-term savings. Teachers whose spouses are unemployed or self-employed may benefit from joint financial counseling sessions to promote household financial stability.

Teachers aspiring to purchase homes or invest in properties should be guided through home financing and investment seminars in collaboration with Pag-IBIG Fund, GSIS, and banking institutions. This will ensure that teachers make financially sustainable choices, manage long-term debt responsibly, and avoid overextending themselves.

Teachers interested in expanding small businesses should be provided with business and financial management training in coordination with DepEd, DTI, TESDA, and LGUs. Encouraging entrepreneurship as a supplemental income source can reduce dependency on loans, improve financial resilience, and empower teachers to achieve financial goals beyond salary-based income.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the implementing agencies regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives. Feedback mechanisms should be established to assess teachers' financial behaviors, identify challenges, and refine training content to ensure the initiatives yield tangible reductions in loan dependency.

Lastly, future researchers may conduct longitudinal or mixed-method studies to further examine the behavioral, psychological, and institutional factors influencing loan dependency. Researchers may also expand the scope of the study by including other employees, whether in the private or public sector, to provide a broader understanding of borrowing behaviors across different work environments.

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