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Level of Awareness and Extent of Practice in Fiscal Management and Pillars of Good Governance in a State University

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A B S T R A C T

This quantitative research was conducted to understand the level of awareness and extent of practice of personnel on the fiscal management and pillars of good governance, along with their associations. Researcher utilized a researcher-made instrument administered to 109 personnel of a state university in Northern Luzon, Philippines. The results revealed that university personnel had a high level of awareness and practice in fiscal management, particularly in fiscal managements and the pillars of good governance. Awareness on the fiscal management ranged from much aware to very much aware, with planning, monitoring, and budgeting scoring highest. Similarly, personnel demonstrated high awareness of good governance principles, particularly in integrity. In terms of practice, respondents often followed fiscal management practices, with consistent implementation in planning and monitoring, although there were some inconsistencies in reporting. A strong positive correlation was found between awareness and practice in both fiscal management and pillars of good governance.

Keywords: *fiscal management, governance practice, fiscal management, pillars of good governance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Fiscal management is an important organizational process aimed at ensuring efficient financial operations and goal attainment. According to Rivera (2015), fiscal management means operating an organization effectively within its available budget. In support of this, fiscal management has been defined historically as a systematic way of planning, directing, controlling, monitoring, and organizing financial resources to attain goals efficiently and effectively. Moreover, the area of fiscal management includes a wide range of activities, such as budget preparation, resource allocation, and expenditure tracking. These activities ensure that funds are used in conformity with predetermined organizational goals (Mahumot, 2020). In higher education, fiscal management is also important as it directly relates to financial sustainability and improvements in education (Figer-Canes, 2024).

Over the years, higher learning has been a great performer towards economic growth, technological advancements, and social welfare. To sustain this role, universities must establish a strong financial management systems. This is increasingly necessary since the costs of higher learning keep rising and, with the current university environment, there are not enough resources to sustain institutions grappling with complex financial issues (Figer-Canes, 2024). These issues involve constrained budgets, rigid compliance framework, as well as escalating calls for transparency and efficiency.

In the Philippine context, the General Appropriations Act (GAA), Commission on Audit (COA) rules, the Government Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184), and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issuances relative to budget execution provide the framework for fiscal prudence in state universities and colleges (SUCs). Each provision and administrative order aligns with the Philippine Development Plan and CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs), which are in line with the pursuit of financial sustainability, institutional accountability, and rational use of resources in SUCs.

Furthermore, fiscal management in the public sector is quite important as it ensures that taxpayers' money is used efficiently. The government and other public institutions are compelled to apply fiscal management techniques to allocate scarce resources to projects with conflicting interests while also ensuring transparency and accountability. In addition, the proper use of these resources ensures that institutions may gain public confidence.

One of the serious concerns of fiscal management is the mitigation of risks. Through continuous financial implementation tracking and advance planning, institutions have the capability to develop strategic plans to manage looming fiscal requirements. Some of the requirements include macroeconomic shifts, policy adjustments, and rate volatilities in enrolment and funding. As a result, fiscal management increases the resilience and long-term sustainability of institutions.

In this regard, school administrators take an important role in fiscal stewardship. Strategic management of finances when managed by them, ensures that financial activities harmonize with organizational missions. Effective fiscal stewardship allows SUCs to institute educational reform, maintain research productivity, and fund outreach programs while ensuring institutional stability.

Notably, the ability of fiscal management to reduce risk is an important component. By means of proactive planning and continuous financial performance monitoring, institutions can create backup plans to deal with new financial strains. These include changes in enrolment and funding levels, policy modifications, and macroeconomic shifts. In this way, fiscal management improves long-term sustainability and institutional resilience.

More importantly, fiscal management in SUCs is not just an administrative necessity but a strategic imperative. Institutions need to meet national standards of financial accountability and demonstrate the ability to efficiently handle limited public resources. Indeed, best practices in fiscal management directly affect institutional credibility, operational effectiveness, and academic outcomes (Delfin, 2016; Ramos & Lumapenet, 2023).

In view of this, and with the escalating sophistication of public financial management and the ever-growing performance-based nature of government funding, SUCs are required to create sound fiscal management systems. Such systems ensure the accuracy and integrity of financial data, provide protection against fund mismanagement, and support efficient decision-making processes (Messier et al., 2019). Fiscal management areas comprising planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and reporting need to be strategically coordinated in order to enhance financial accountability and operational effectiveness.

Additionally, fiscal management in SUCs should be anchored on four interconnected principles: integrity, transparency, accountability, and efficiency aligned with the work of Mamburao and Manubag (2023). These values promote ethical behaviour, openness in financial dealings, responsible decision-making, and effective resource utilization. When implemented effectively, they can turn fiscal processes into drivers of institutional innovation and long-term development.

However, a pronounced examination of the literature shows a persistent gap between fiscal awareness and the actual practice of sound financial management, despite the high expectations surrounding SUCs. Smith and Johnson (2020) and Ahmed et al. (2021) shed light on certain institutional strengths, namely in budgeting procedures and fiscal management systems. Nevertheless, they mostly overlook how these mechanisms interact with fundamental governance concepts like accountability and transparency.

Meanwhile, some studies also provide important findings. However, they tend to focus strictly on higher-level administrators, omitting the perspectives of mid-level management officials, finance, and support personnel. For example, Vicencio (2021) and Delfin (2015) specifically study university executives, while Garcia and Santos (2019) focus on local governments without linking their findings to broader transparency or governance frameworks. As a result, this leaves a gap in the knowledge of fiscal management.

Moreover, the COA (2021) report indicates that despite the availability of fiscal guidelines and government-sponsored training, many personnel in SUCs still lack the practical financial knowledge and competencies required for effective fiscal administration. This recurring issue highlights the urgent need for institutional capacity-building interventions that address actual gaps and challenges.

Research Paradigm

The paradigm of the study illustrates the interconnected relationship between the awareness and practice of fiscal management principles and good governance, highlighting their influence on addressing challenges and improving outcomes. This framework provides a structured approach to understanding how various components interact and contribute to effective fiscal management. The first major element of the paradigm focuses on the awareness and practice of the fiscal management. This system is composed of six key areas: planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. Awareness represents the knowledge and understanding of these areas, such as the ability to align planning with institutional goals or recognize the importance of monitoring to ensure compliance.

On the other hand, practice involves applying this knowledge effectively in day-to-day operations. For example, personnel with a solid understanding of reporting standards but limited experience in preparing accurate and timely reports may encounter challenges in implementation. Conversely, individuals actively engaged in reporting without a thorough understanding of the underlying principles may risk inconsistencies. The dynamic relationship between awareness and practice underscores the need for alignment between theoretical knowledge and practical execution to optimize fiscal management processes.

Another critical component of the paradigm is the awareness and practice of the pillars of good governance: integrity, transparency, accountability, and efficiency. These pillars serve as the ethical and operational foundation for fiscal management. Awareness entails understanding the significance of these principles for example, recognizing that transparency requires clear and accessible communication of financial decisions or that accountability ensures individuals are held responsible for fiscal actions. Practice, on the other hand, refers to the actual application of these principles in managing fiscal responsibilities, such as ensuring that budgets are prepared transparently, and financial decisions are documented and communicated to stakeholders. For instance, employees aware of the need for efficiency but lacking the skills to implement streamlined processes may lead to delays, while practicing accountability without a clear understanding of its importance may result in superficial compliance rather than meaningful change.

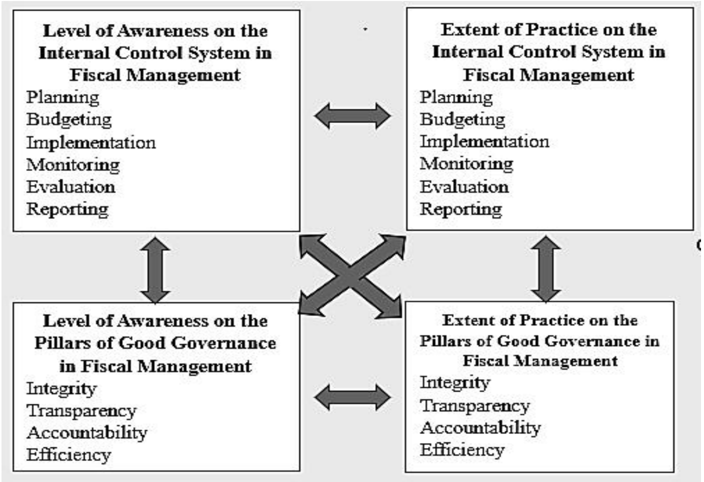

Figure 1. The Paradigm of the Study

Statement of the Problems

This research is designed to investigate the awareness and practice of university personnel on fiscal management and pillars of good governance and their association. In particular, this was designed to answer the following problems:

1. What is the (a) level of awareness and (b) extent of practice of respondents on the following domains:

1.1. fiscal management: planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

1.2. pillars of good governance: integrity, transparency, accountability, and efficiency?

2. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' (a) level of awareness and (b) extent of practice in the (i) fiscal management and (ii) pillars of good governance?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness and extent of practice of respondents on fiscal management practices and pillars of good governance.

2. Methodology

The researcher employed quantitative research in achieving the objectives of this study. In particular, descriptive-correlational research was utilized in determining the personnel's level of awareness and extent of practice on the fiscal management and pillars of good governance and their association. The researcher developed an instrument designed to assess level of awareness and extent of practice on the fiscal management and pillars of good governance. It was validated by professionals who are experts in fiscal management and a pilot study was conducted. The computed Cronbach's alpha value is approximately 0.94, indicating a high level of reliability according to the standards proposed by George and Mallery (2019). The survey questionnaire was administered to 109 randomly selected 109 personnel in GASS and colleges of the university in the main study.

The data analysis of this study was conducted in a systematic manner, aligned with each of the problem of the study. The level of awareness of respondents on the different domains of the fiscal management (planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting) was assessed using descriptive analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the mean score for each domain. Based on these scores, the level of awareness was categorized according to the following scale:

Table 1. Level of Awareness in the Fiscal management

Scale	Interval	Verbal Interpretation	Description
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very Much Aware (V.M.A.)	Extremely knowledgeable
4	3.40 – 4.19	Much Aware (M.A.)	Knowledgeable and well-informed
3	2.60 – 3.39	Aware (A.)	Adequately informed
2	1.80 – 2.59	Less Aware (L.A.)	Limited awareness
1	1.00 – 1.79	Not Aware (N.A.)	Little to no knowledge

The mean values and standard deviations for each domain were computed, and the corresponding verbal interpretations were assigned. The results provided insights into which areas of fiscal management the respondents were most or least aware of. Meanwhile, the extent of practice on the fiscal management was measured using the Likert scale to assess how often respondents engaged in practices related to planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The frequency of these practices was categorized as “Never,” “Rarely,” “Sometimes,” “Often,” or “Always.” The frequency responses were converted into numeric values (1–5), and descriptive analysis was conducted to compute the mean and determine the extent of practice. Based on the mean values, the following scale was used to interpret the extent of practice:

Table 2. Extent of Practice in the Fiscal management

Scale	Interval	Verbal Interpretation	Description
5	4.20 – 5.00	Always (A.)	Practice is consistently applied
4	3.40 – 4.19	Often (O.)	Regular practice
3	2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes (S.)	Inconsistent practice
2	1.80 – 2.59	Rarely (R.)	Rarely practiced
1	1.00 – 1.79	Never (N.)	Not practiced

The results from this analysis showed how frequently respondents engaged in each aspect of the fiscal management, highlighting areas for potential development or increased attention. The level of awareness of respondents regarding the pillars of good governance (integrity, transparency, accountability, efficiency) was also measured using the Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean score and standard deviation for each pillar, with interpretation based on the following scale:

Table 3. Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance

Scale	Interval	Verbal Interpretation	Description
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very Much Aware (V.M.A.)	Strong knowledge of governance
4	3.40 – 4.19	Much Aware (M.A.)	Good understanding of principles
3	2.60 – 3.39	Aware (A.)	Moderate awareness
2	1.80 – 2.59	Less Aware (L.A.)	Limited understanding
1	1.00 – 1.79	Not Aware (N.A.)	No understanding

The mean scores for each governance pillar revealed how well-informed respondents were about these key principles of fiscal management, identifying strengths and gaps in fiscal management awareness. The extent of practice on the pillars of good governance (integrity, transparency, accountability, efficiency) was surfaced using a similar methodology employed in assessing the extent of practice on the fiscal management. Respondents’ practices were categorized using the Likert scale and analyzed for frequency of application in daily fiscal operations. The mean values, standard deviations, and their verbal interpretations indicated the areas where respondents actively engaged with the principles of good governance. The descriptive analysis revealed the degree of practice in each governance pillar and identified significant gaps in the practical application of these values.

To determine the relationships between awareness and practice of both fiscal management domains and governance pillars. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the linear relationship between these two continuous variables (awareness and practice). To evaluate the significance of the relationship, the p-value was calculated alongside the correlation coefficient.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Awareness on Fiscal management

From all the fiscal management domains, university personnel's awareness about fiscal managements appears to be strong, as the overall mean is significantly high (3.88; "Much Aware", SD=0.75). This section brings together findings across all operational phases from planning to the reporting and reports that personnel have a solid understanding of the principles of fiscal governance and points to particular areas of its own competency development.

Table 4. Level of Awareness on Fiscal management

Domains of Fiscal management	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Planning	3.97	0.70	Much Aware
Budgeting	3.81	0.84	Much Aware
Implementation	3.72	0.90	Much Aware
Monitoring	3.92	0.88	Much Aware
Evaluation	3.58	0.92	Much Aware
Reporting	3.66	0.83	Much Aware
Level of Awareness on Fiscal management	**3.88**	**0.75**	Much Aware

Legend: 4.20 – 5.00: Very Much Aware; 3.40 – 4.19: Much Aware; 2.60 – 3.39: Aware; 1.80 – 2.59: Less Aware; 1.00 – 1.79: Not Aware

As presented above, the overall level of awareness on the fiscal management among university personnel, as reflected in Table 4, is high, with an average mean of 3.88, categorizing it as "Much Aware." This suggests that university personnel generally have a solid understanding of the fiscal managements related to fiscal management, which is important for ensuring the proper use of institutional funds and maintaining financial integrity. Mamburao and Manubag (2023) show that fiscal managements and financial literacy significantly affect fiscal management practices in educational institutions. This emphasizes the importance of strengthening financial literacy to ensure effective fiscal management and accountability within the university.

The highest mean of 3.97 (SD=0.70) is found in the planning domain, indicating that university personnel are most aware of the processes involved in financial planning. This strong understanding shows the importance placed on setting financial goals, developing strategies, and determining actions that guide the university's fiscal management. The ability to plan effectively lays a strong foundation for ensuring that the university’s financial resources are allocated properly and aligned with institutional priorities. Oleynikova, Helman, Halushchak, and Chuchuk (2019) emphasize that inefficient use of budgetary funds, reluctance to transform management approaches, and a lack of willingness to offer high-quality educational products are important factors affecting the financial and physical conditions of higher education institutions. This shows the importance of effective financial planning in ensuring the sustainable use of resources and the overall success of the university's financial management practices.

In terms of budgeting, personnel also show a strong awareness with a mean of 3.81 (SD=0.84). This suggests that they have a good understanding of the budgeting process, including the development, allocation, and monitoring of budgets. However, this mean indicates that there may be some areas where personnel could benefit from further clarification, particularly in more technical aspects of the budget formulation and approval processes. Ensuring a deeper understanding of the budgeting cycle will contribute to more efficient and transparent financial decision-making. Studies have shown that while many employees possess general budgeting knowledge, they often lack technical skills necessary for deeper financial planning. For example, non-financial managers in South Africa were found to be insufficiently involved in budget decisions and lacked proper training, emphasizing the need for continued capacity building (Zweni et al., 2023). Similarly, research in the Philippines recommended regular refresher courses and improved budgeting systems to address knowledge concerns and improve transparency (dela Peña, 2025). In Iran, a qualitative study on public financial management showed persistent weaknesses in budget formulation, approval, and monitoring due to inadequate technical expertise (Moradi et al., 2023). Therefore, strengthening personnel competencies in these areas is important for achieving more efficient and transparent financial decision-making.

The monitoring domain has a mean of 3.92 (SD=0.88), reflecting a high level of awareness regarding the tracking of financial activities for compliance with policies and regulations. Personnel are well-versed in the monitoring processes, such as conducting internal audits and comparing actual expenditures with approved budgets to identify discrepancies. This strong awareness of monitoring practices plays a important aspect in ensuring that funds are used appropriately, and that any financial mismanagement is quickly identified and addressed. Studies confirm that internal audit functions are important for maintaining accountability, compliance, and prudent financial management. For instance, research in Nigerian educational institutions found that internal audits significantly improved compliance with financial regulations and expenditure control (Ojiya & Andrew, 2024). Similarly, in South African provincial treasuries, effective internal auditing was shown to enhance financial accountability and service delivery performance (Msindwana & Ngwakwe, 2022). Also, continuous improvement of audit methodologies and auditor competence further strengthens supervision and minimizes financial mismanagement (Sattarov, 2023).

Awareness of implementation processes, which has a mean of 3.72 (SD=0.90), indicates a good understanding of how funds are utilized for their intended programs and projects. However, this domain has a slightly lower mean compared to others, suggesting that there may be some concerns in personnel’s familiarity with specific tools and processes, such as the Monthly Disbursement Program (MDP) and tracking of expenditures. Further education on these implementation mechanisms could strengthen the university’s ability to optimize fund utilization and minimize waste. Notably, Pathak, Pathak, and Baghela (2022) show the aspect of technology in tracking expenses, with tools like the Expense Audit Application effectively managing daily spending by tracking categories, dates, and quantities. Such systems can improve efficiency and effectiveness in procurement, which aligns with the need for more comprehensive knowledge and utilization of tools for fund tracking and management at the university.

In the evaluation domain, the mean of 3.58 is the lowest with a standard deviation of 0.92, indicating that personnel are somewhat aware of the need for periodic reviews and assessments of financial performance. Further, it can be assumed that the understanding of financial performance indicators and how they are used to assess the university's financial health could be expanded. Enhancing training in this area will enable personnel to contribute more effectively to evaluating financial strategies and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the university's fiscal management. Accordingly, Hou, Halim, and Basri (2022) suggest that financial performance indicators for universities include factors such as staff funds, full-time teacher ratio, student input, scientific research income per full-time teacher, and employment rate of graduates. Expanding awareness and application of such indicators will strengthen the university's ability to evaluate and improve its financial strategies.

Finally, in the reporting domain, the mean of 3.66 (SD=0.83) shows that personnel are generally aware of the reporting requirements, including the submission of financial reports to the DBM and COA. However, this mean suggests that there may be some uncertainty regarding the detailed requirements for preparing and submitting these reports, such as the BFARs and Trial Balance. It can be deduced that providing additional guidance on these reporting processes will ensure better compliance and transparency in financial operations. Implementing public sector accounting reporting standards, monitoring financial reports, and ensuring accurate budget targets all positively influence government agency performance accountability. Strengthening personnel's understanding of these detailed requirements will contribute to improved financial reporting and accountability within the university.

Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance

This subsection presents the overall awareness of university personnel on the key pillars of good governance integrity, transparency, accountability, and efficiency. It shows the extent to which these principles are recognized and understood in guiding responsible and ethical fiscal practices within the institution.

Table 5. Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance

Domains of Pillars of Good governance	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Integrity	**4.27**	**0.75**	Very Much Aware
Transparency	**4.08**	**0.91**	Much Aware
Accountability	**4.12**	**0.78**	Much Aware
Efficiency	**4.07**	**0.78**	Much Aware
Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance	**4.18**	**0.75**	Much Aware

Legend: 4.20 – 5.00: Very Much Aware; 3.40 – 4.19: Much Aware; 2.60 – 3.39: Aware; 1.80 – 2.59: Less Aware; 1.00 – 1.79: Not Aware

Table above presents the overall level of awareness in the pillars of good governance, where the results indicate a generally high level of awareness among university personnel regarding the key pillars of fiscal governance. The overall level of awareness in these pillars is rated at 4.18 (SD=0.75), which falls under the category of "Much Aware." This suggests that the personnel possess strong awareness of these four pillars of good governance.

Among the individual pillars, integrity emerges as the strongest, with a mean of 4.27 (SD=0.75), indicating that personnel are "very much aware" of the importance of ethical standards and honesty in fiscal operations. This high awareness is important in ensuring that fiscal management is conducted with transparency and accountability, reinforcing the importance of ethical conduct and fair decision-making processes. Axeldy and Seno (2024) emphasize that professional ethics in financial management focus on integrity, honesty, and the public interest, ensuring honesty and transparency in financial decision-making. This understanding among personnel shows the important aspect of ethical standards in maintaining the integrity of financial operations and fostering trust in institutional processes.

The pillar of transparency follows closely, with a mean of 4.08 (SD=0.91), categorized as "much aware." This reflects personnel's recognition of the need for clear and timely disclosure of financial information and the importance of ensuring that fiscal decisions are accessible to stakeholders. Windarti (2020) shows that internet financial reporting accessibility through e-government websites is a moderating factor in the compliance with financial information disclosures, enhancing financial transparency. However, this mean also suggests that while awareness is strong, there is still opportunity to enhance the implementation of transparent practices, especially in making financial information readily accessible. Strengthening the infrastructure for transparency will further support the institution's efforts to ensure that financial operations are open and accessible to all stakeholders.

For accountability, the mean of 4.12 (SD=0.78) places it in the "much aware" range as well. This indicates that personnel understand the significance of clearly defined aspects and responsibilities in fiscal management, as well as the importance of holding individuals accountable for their fiscal decisions. While awareness is strong, efforts may still be needed to reinforce the regular evaluation and reporting of financial activities to ensure that accountability is maintained. Amaya (2024) emphasizes that fiscal management is a presupposition of fiscal responsibility and correctly identifying its content and legal structure is important for ensuring the legitimacy and institutional validity of actions, promoting legal certainty for individuals, and fostering transparency in decision-making.

In terms of efficiency, the mean of 4.07 (SD=0.78) reflects a "much aware" level as well. Personnel recognize the importance of optimizing resource allocation, minimizing waste, and continuously improving fiscal processes. However, as this pillar shows the lowest mean among the four, there may be opportunities to enhance efficiency further, particularly in the application of technology and the review of financial practices to identify cost-saving measures.

Overall, the data suggests that university personnel exhibit a high level of awareness across the four pillars of good governance, with Integrity receiving the highest level of awareness. While there are areas where awareness could be further strengthened, such as the practical application of transparency, efficiency, and accountability measures, the results demonstrate a solid foundation for effective fiscal governance. The overall mean of 4.18 (SD=0.75) reflects a positive outlook, indicating that personnel are well-equipped to uphold the principles of good governance, with opportunity for continued improvement in specific areas.

Extent of Practice on Fiscal management

This section summarizes the overall extent to which university personnel implement fiscal management practices across six domains: planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Table 6. Overall Extent of Practice on Fiscal management

Domains of Fiscal management	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Planning	3.88	0.69	Often
Budgeting	3.78	0.85	Often
Implementation	3.79	0.71	Often
Monitoring	3.88	0.72	Often
Evaluation	3.78	0.76	Often
Reporting	3.78	1.00	Often
Overall Extent of Practice on Fiscal management	**3.92**	**0.65**	**Often**

Legend: 4.20 – 5.00: Always; 3.40 – 4.19: Often; 2.60 – 3.39: Sometimes; 1.80 – 2.59: Rarely; 1.00 – 1.79: Never

With an overall mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.65, results suggest that fiscal management practices are generally implemented with consistency and regularity. However, differences across domains indicate that while the foundation for sound fiscal governance is in place, opportunities remain to enhance alignment, uniformity, and institutional capacity across departments. In the planning domain, the mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.69 reflects consistent engagement in fiscal planning processes. The low variability suggests a uniform application of planning practices across units. According to Stapulone (2020), integrating fiscal managements into planning strengthens institutional understanding and compliance with strategic objectives. Similarly, Wardhani et al. (2019) emphasize that effective planning enhances fiscal resilience and promotes sound governance by aligning goals with budgetary allocations.

The budgeting domain also scored a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.85, indicating general familiarity with budgeting processes. However, the higher standard deviation points to inconsistencies in execution across departments. As Wardhani et al. (2019) noted, difference in budgeting participation may arise due to variations in training, experience, and resource access. Thus, standardizing budgeting practices and expanding stakeholder involvement may help close these concerns.

In terms of implementation, the mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.71 shows that personnel frequently adhere to fund utilization guidelines. This suggests a clear understanding of regulatory frameworks such as those issued by CHED, DBM, and COA. Nonetheless, some areas may benefit from further orientation to ensure that implementation remains compliant and efficient across units.

The monitoring domain achieved a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.72 reflecting strong and consistent practice in tracking financial performance. Departments regularly monitor the alignment of financial activities with approved plans. However, reinforcing the responsiveness to discrepancies, through enhanced transparency and regular audits, could improve the effectiveness of monitoring systems, as supported by Tan and Chen (2024).

In the evaluation domain, the mean score of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.76 suggests that personnel generally engage in financial evaluations but with some variation in depth and regularity. Research by Meskarpour-Amiri and Jafari (2023) shows that the use of standardized performance indicators, combined with digital tools, can increase the accuracy and strategic value of evaluations. Greater institutional support for such tools can promote uniformity in assessment practices.

The reporting domain shares the same mean of 3.78 but has the highest standard deviation at 1.00, suggesting significant differences in how departments prepare and submit financial reports. According to Dagohoy et al. (2023), inconsistent documentation and policy application often hinder reporting quality. This shows the need for continued capacity building, systematized protocols, and integration of digital reporting tools to enhance compliance and timeliness.

Overall, fiscal management practices are implemented by university personnel, with a relatively strong degree of consistency. However, areas such as budgeting, evaluation, and reporting show greater variability and signal the need for further improvement. According to Kahenda et al. (2022), strengthening internal financial control systems and aligning them with international standards can significantly improve institutional performance. Likewise, Ding (2024) advocates for more transparent, participatory, and data-driven governance models to ensure that financial management practices are fully integrated and effectively implemented across all levels of the organization. These findings affirm that while the university demonstrates commendable efforts in fiscal management, sustained improvements in training, communication, and system modernization are important to achieving uniform excellence in financial management practices.

Extent of Practice in the Pillars of Good governance

This section provides a summary of the overall extent to which the university practices the Pillars of Good governance. With an overall mean of 4.03, the findings indicate that key principles Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, and Efficiency are generally practiced "Often," though there is variability across departments.

Table 7. Extent of Practice in the Pillars of Good governance

Domains of the Pillars of Good governance	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Integrity	4.12	0.77	Often
Transparency	3.83	0.84	Often
Accountability	3.78	0.89	Often
Efficiency	3.86	0.91	Often
Extent of Practice in the Pillars of Good governance	**4.03**	**0.80**	**Often**

Legend: 4.20 – 5.00: Always; 3.40 – 4.19: Often; 2.60 – 3.39: Sometimes; 1.80 – 2.59: Rarely; 1.00 – 1.79: Never

Among the four pillars, integrity registered the highest mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.77), signifying a strong and relatively uniform practice across the university. This suggests that personnel consistently uphold ethical standards that include honesty, transparency, and fairness in financial operations. Marks (2019) emphasizes that institutional integrity requires congruence between a stated mission of the university and its actual fiscal practices, warning against behaviors that undermine core institutional values. The relatively low variability further indicates that ethical behavior is widely institutionalized among personnel of the university in their daily fiscal routines.

In comparison, transparency showed a slightly lower mean of 3.83 (SD = 0.84), also within the often range. It is evident that their practices such as disclosing financial information and publishing budget reports are generally observed. The standard deviation tells us that there are inconsistencies in application among respondents. According to Gootjes and De Haan (2022), transparency amplifies the impact of fiscal rules and improves budget compliance, when consistently practiced. Their findings reinforce the need to strengthen uniformity in openness and stakeholder communication throughout the institution.

The accountability pillar recorded a mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.89). This tells us that personnel are generally aware of the need to evaluate fiscal decisions and hold responsible parties accountable. However, variability suggests that some of them may lack structured mechanisms for consistently enforcing accountability. Cuong and Hung (2024) developed an accountability framework for public universities and concluded that performance evaluations and clearly defined aspects are important to help strengthen accountability and ensure equitable fiscal supervision.

For efficiency, the mean was 3.86 (SD = 0.91), which is a manifestation that they frequent by practice this, but they are inconsistent in the application of cost management, strategic resource allocation, and process improvement efforts. While some of them optimize financial resources effectively, others may struggle with minimizing waste or aligning financial strategies with institutional goals. Wang et al. (2023) found that only a small percentage of institutions operate at optimal efficiency, largely due to limited internal financial controls. In addition, El-Gibaly (2024) showed that the integration of activity-based costing with continuous improvement strategies can significantly boost operational efficiency and reduce resource waste.

According to Figer-Canes (2023), effective fiscal governance in higher education hinges on adherence to accounting standards, equitable resource distribution, comprehensive documentation, and active institutional involvement in strategic planning.

It can be noted that Integrity and Transparency emerge as the most consistently applied pillars while accountability and efficiency require more structured and standardized implementation. Ibrahim, Azmi, and Lokman (2020), through the development of a good governance index for public universities, also found that integrity and transparency are generally well-integrated, but mechanisms for enforcing accountability and efficiency often lag due to inconsistent policy enforcement and monitoring.

Moreover, Adeusi, Jejeniwa, and Jejeniwa (2024) argue that advancing financial governance in higher education requires a stronger emphasis on cost management strategies, regular performance audits, and inclusive planning processes. They stress that uniformity in applying governance principles across all departments is important for cultivating institutional trust, improving transparency, and ensuring sustainable fiscal outcomes.

Relationship Between the Level of Awareness and Extent of Practice on the (a) Fiscal Management and (b) Pillars of Good Governance

Table 8 presents the correlation between the level of awareness and the extent of practice concerning (a) the fiscal management and (b) the pillars of good governance. The table illustrates the strength and significance of the relationships among these variables, revealing how awareness in fiscal policies and principles translates into their actual application within the organization.

Table 8. Relationship Between the Level of Awareness and Extent of Practice on (a) Fiscal Management and (b) Pillars of Good Governance

Correlation	Level of Awareness on Fiscal management	Extent of Practice on Fiscal management	Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance
Extent of Practice on Fiscal management	.595**		
Level of Awareness in the Pillars of Good governance	.491**	.530**	
Extent of Practice in the Pillars of Good governance	.499**	.455**	.500**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation analysis reveal statistically significant and positive relationships between the level of awareness and the extent of practice in fiscal management and the pillars of good governance. All correlations were found to be significant, indicating that the probability of these relationships occurring by chance is less than 1%. This suggests a high level of reliability in the observed associations. This reinforces the reliability of the findings and supports existing literature emphasizing that enhanced awareness leads to better implementation of governance and control practices. For example, the study of Borbe (2024) at Laguna State Polytechnic University confirmed that higher awareness of fiscal management components, such as monitoring and communication, significantly improves adherence to good governance principles like transparency and accountability.

A moderately strong positive correlation ($r = .595$, $p < .01$) was found between the level of awareness and the extent of practice regarding the Fiscal management. This suggests that individuals with a deeper understanding of fiscal management mechanisms are more likely to implement them effectively. This relationship reinforces findings from recent studies, which show that institutional knowledge and awareness are important for the successful execution of internal financial controls. For example, Zhang (2024) identified that fiscal management in educational institutions stressed that raising staff awareness and training are important to ensuring effective policy implementation and minimizing mismanagement risks. These findings emphasize the importance of ongoing capacity-building programs to strengthen fiscal responsibility and operational integrity in universities.

Furthermore, a moderate positive correlation ($r = .500$, $p < .01$) was observed between the level of awareness and the extent of practice in the pillars of good governance. This suggests that a deeper understanding of transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law is associated with a greater likelihood of applying these principles in school-based fiscal management. This finding reinforces the idea that fostering good governance is not solely reliant on institutional policies and requires continuous education and awareness-building among personnel. Recent research supports this perspective: a 2024 study emphasized that training and awareness initiatives significantly enhance the institutionalization of governance values such as integrity and accountability in universities (Borbe, 2024). These information's complement broader frameworks such as those advocated by the World Bank, which emphasize that capacity-building and stakeholder engagement are foundational to sustainable governance reforms.

In addition, a significant positive correlation between awareness of the fiscal management and awareness of the pillars of good governance ($r = .491$, $p < .01$) indicates a meaningful overlap in knowledge between these two domains. This suggests that individuals who are knowledgeable about fiscal management also tend to be well-informed about governance principles, reflecting an integrated understanding of fiscal governance frameworks. Likewise, the extent of practice in fiscal management measures was positively associated with the extent of practice in the principles of good governance ($r = .455$, $p < .01$), reinforcing the view that these areas are operationally interconnected. This aligns with recent findings of Shareef et al. (2023) and Borbe (2024) emphasizing that the mutually reinforcing nature of fiscal management and governance structures in strengthening institutional performance, transparency, and accountability.

Interestingly, the analysis also found that awareness in one domain may positively influence practice in the other. For example, the level of awareness on the fiscal management was moderately correlated with the extent of practice on the Pillars of Good Governance ($r = .499$, $p < .01$). This implies that a deeper understanding of fiscal management may facilitate better application of governance principles, possibly because both rely on similar values such as compliance, responsibility, and system-based thinking. Conversely, the extent of practice on the Fiscal management was also significantly correlated with the level of awareness in the Pillars of Good Governance ($r = .530$, $p < .01$), indicating a reciprocal relationship where experience in applying controls may lead to increased awareness of governance ideals. This suggests that individuals with deeper understanding of fiscal management are more likely to apply governance principles effectively, and conversely, engaging in governance practices reinforces awareness of fiscal management. This mutual reinforcement is supported by recent research. This corroborates the study of Borbe (2024) suggesting that there is a significant relationship between fiscal management components (e.g., monitoring, communication) and the quality of governance particularly in areas such as accountability and transparency. Similarly, Shareef et al. (2023) showed that each element of fiscal management had a measurable impact on key governance outcomes such as trust, participation, and integrity.

These suggest that initiatives to improve fiscal management in schools must focus on compliance and procedural training but should also incorporate awareness-raising campaigns about the theoretical and ethical foundations of governance and control systems. Increasing stakeholders' conceptual understanding could enhance actual implementation and lead to more consistent and meaningful practice. Policymakers may consider designing integrated training modules that simultaneously address fiscal managements and good governance principles. Since these two dimensions are closely linked in both awareness and practice, a unified approach could yield more sustainable improvements in school financial management. Lastly, the significant associations observed in the data reinforce the idea that fostering a culture of accountability and transparency begins with knowledge, knowledge that translates into action when properly cultivated through interventions and leadership.

This affirms the important relationship between awareness and practice in both the fiscal management and the pillars of good governance. The findings tell us that knowledge is a foundational driver of effective implementation where greater awareness leads to more consistent and impactful practice. This relationship is further supported by Borbe (2024) and Shareef et al. (2023) showing that awareness-building through training and leadership engagement significantly improves institutional adherence to ethical, transparent, and accountable financial practices. These results provide a strong rationale for integrating awareness-building initiatives into capacity development strategies to strengthen fiscal management within the school system.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In the light of the salient results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

(a) Level of Awareness

(i) Fiscal management: The high level of awareness among university personnel regarding the fiscal management indicates that most staff members have a solid understanding of fiscal management processes, particularly in the areas of planning and monitoring. Although there is strong awareness across all domains, the lower scores in Reporting and Evaluation suggest areas where awareness can be further enhanced.

(ii) Pillars of Good Governance: The high overall awareness of the pillars of good governance demonstrates that university personnel have a strong grasp of the core principles of fiscal management. Integrity was the most emphasized pillar, highlighting the importance of ethical practices. While personnel were also aware of accountability, transparency, and efficiency, these areas may benefit from further focus to strengthen governance practices.

(b) Extent of Practice

(i) Fiscal management: The overall extent of practice of the fiscal management indicates that personnel generally adhere to processes "often." Planning and Monitoring practices were particularly consistent, but some variability was observed in practices related to Budgeting, Implementation, Evaluation, and Reporting. The reporting process showed the most inconsistency, suggesting areas for improvement in meeting deadlines and ensuring transparency.

(ii) Pillars of Good Governance: The extent of practice in the pillars of good governance reflects that the principles of integrity, transparency, accountability, and efficiency are generally followed. Integrity was the most consistently practiced pillar, while there is still room to strengthen the application of transparency and accountability measures.

(c) Relationship between awareness and practice on (a) fiscal management and (b) pillars of good governance. The correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between awareness and practice across both the fiscal management and the pillars of good governance. The data suggests that individuals who are more aware of fiscal management systems are more likely to apply them effectively. Furthermore, increased awareness in one domain tends to lead to better knowledge and practice in the other, highlighting the interconnectedness of fiscal management and good governance principles. The positive correlations (ranging from 0.455 to 0.595) demonstrate that enhancing awareness in both areas can lead to improved fiscal management practices.

Recommendations

Policymakers and the University Board of Regents are encouraged to enhance fiscal governance by institutionalizing updated policies that uphold transparency, accountability, and efficiency. In addressing challenges such as inconsistent policy enforcement and limited supervision, they are encouraged to allocate resources for a contextualized capacity-building program designed to strengthen the competencies of administrative and financial personnel. Conducting regular policy reviews based on audit results and institutional performance data is also recommended to ensure relevance and alignment with governance standards. Furthermore, they may consider advocating for the adoption of a university-wide Financial Management Information System (FMIS) to automate fiscal processes, promote data accuracy, and improve reporting timelines.

The university administration is encouraged to initiate strategic awareness campaigns that address observed gaps in fiscal knowledge, particularly in the areas of evaluation and reporting. They are advised to establish clear and standardized fiscal management guidelines across all departments and units to promote consistent practices. Introducing monitoring tools such as compliance dashboards and process checklists may help ensure proper implementation. To support continuous learning, the administration is also encouraged to operationalize a coaching and mentoring mechanism by engaging experienced fiscal officers in guiding their peers. These initiatives may be integrated into a modular training program that combines theoretical knowledge with applied exercises to foster a more competent and confident workforce.

Local and regional government authorities, including CHED, are encouraged to provide strategic assistance to higher education institutions in response to identified fiscal challenges such as outdated systems, inefficient procurement, and limited technical capacity. They may extend financial support for the digitalization of fiscal processes and offer technical guidance to improve compliance with reporting and audit requirements. In addition, these authorities may review and revise policies to help universities overcome systemic obstacles in resource allocation, thereby enhancing financial efficiency, transparency, and institutional resilience.

Future researchers and scholars are encouraged to build upon the findings of this study by investigating similar fiscal management challenges in other universities or regions. They may examine the recurring issue in the field of Administration, Organization, and Management (AOM), wherein increased awareness of fiscal procedures and governance principles does not always translate into consistent practice. Exploring this disconnect between theoretical knowledge and actual implementation may help uncover behavioural, structural, or cultural barriers that hinder effective application. These future efforts are expected to help establish more effective, evidence-based, and adaptable governance models for educational institutions.

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