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Financial Decision Making: The Factors Influencing Budget Utilization Among Students at Noveleta Senior High School

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Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing budget utilization among senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School during the Academic Year 2025–2026. It aimed to understand how students manage their allowances, identify their spending priorities, and determine how peer pressure, social media trends, and family financial habits affect their financial decision-making.

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used to explore students' lived experiences in managing their allowances. Ten (10) Grade 11 and Grade 12 students were selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings showed that most students prioritize essential needs such as transportation, food, and school supplies

before spending on non-essential wants. However, allowance sufficiency varies, and unexpected school expenses sometimes create financial challenges. Students attempt to manage their money through simple saving strategies such as dividing their allowance and setting aside small amounts. Peer influence, social interactions, and social media trends were also found to encourage impulsive spending, while family financial practices help shape students' budgeting habits.

The study concludes that students are aware of responsible money management, but their financial decisions are influenced by social, digital, and family factors. Strengthening financial literacy through budgeting strategies, parental guidance, and school-based programs is recommended to promote responsible financial behavior.

Keywords: Budget Utilization, Financial Literacy, Philippines

1. Introduction

Money management plays a vital role in the daily lives of students, as it affects how they meet their needs and make choices about their limited financial resources. In general, students receive money from various sources such as parental allowances, personal earnings, or occasional gifts, and they must decide how to allocate these funds responsibly. This process, commonly referred to as budget utilization, involves prioritizing essential needs—such as food, school supplies, and transportation—over non-essential wants like gadgets, fashionable clothing, and leisure activities.

Despite having similar financial responsibilities, students often display different spending behaviors. Some are able to manage their money effectively and follow a budget, while others struggle and quickly exhaust their funds. These differences suggest that students' financial decisions may be influenced by several factors, including the amount of allowance they receive, personal self-control, and external influences such as peer pressure and exposure to social media trends.

Adolescence is a critical stage for developing financial habits, as behaviors formed during this period can influence future financial stability. Factors such as discipline, personal interests, and financial limitations play a significant role in shaping how young individuals manage their money. Without proper guidance and awareness, students may develop poor spending habits that can negatively affect their long-term financial well-being.

In this context, the present study focuses specifically on students at Noveleta Senior High School, aiming to identify the factors

that influence their spending behavior and budget utilization. By examining these factors, the study seeks to raise awareness of responsible money management and promote financial literacy among senior high school students. Ultimately, the research encourages disciplined saving and informed financial decision-making that can support students' future stability.

Background of the Study

Financial literacy refers to the knowledge and skills needed to understand and manage basic financial concepts, enabling individuals to make informed decisions about money (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2020) [13]. For senior high school students, learning to plan and utilize a budget is an essential life skill that fosters responsible financial habits. Early development of these skills not only helps students manage their current allowance but also prepares them for future financial responsibilities.

Despite the recognized importance of financial literacy, several factors can influence how students handle their finances. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram often promote trends and non-essential purchases, which can encourage students to spend on items that are not truly necessary. Peer influence and personal spending habits also play a significant role, as students frequently imitate the financial behaviors of friends or online role models. Moreover, socioeconomic factors, including parental income and the allowance students receive, can shape saving and spending practices, creating differences in financial behavior across households (RSIS International, 2024).

However, limited research has specifically examined how these factors influence budget utilization among senior high school students in the Philippines. At Noveleta Senior High School, students come from a variety of economic backgrounds, leading to diverse approaches to budgeting and money management. While some students can effectively plan and follow their budgets, others struggle to maintain control over their spending. These variations highlight the need for a focused investigation into the factors that affect students' financial decisions.

This study aims to investigate the influences on budget utilization among senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School. By examining the impact of peer pressure, social media exposure, and personal financial habits on students' spending decisions, the research seeks to provide insights that can promote responsible financial behavior and enhance financial literacy among youth. Understanding these factors can inform strategies to help students make more thoughtful financial choices and prepare them for long-term financial well-being.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. Identify the profile of the students in terms of their daily or weekly allowance and their typical source of funds.
2. Determine the primary spending categories of the students, distinguishing between their "needs" (like school supplies, transportation fare, and meals) and their "wants" (like gadgets, trendy clothes, or entertainment).
3. Analyze the level of budget utilization among students. Specifically, how often they are able to make their allowance last and how much they are able to save.

4. Understand the factors that influence financial decision-making, focusing on:

Peer Pressure: How fear of missing out (FOMO) or the desire to keep up with friends influences spending.

Social Media Influence: The impact of trends seen on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Family Background: How parental income or home habits shape their view on money.

5. Propose a set of "Wais" Budgeting Tips or a financial awareness guide based on the findings to help Noveleta SHS students manage their money more effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine how students at Noveleta Senior High School manage their daily or weekly allowances and identify the factors that influence their spending habits. Understanding these factors is important because learning good money management skills helps students develop financial literacy, make responsible decisions, and build long-term financial stability.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Student Financial Profile: What does the typical financial situation of a Noveleta Senior High School student look like in terms of:
 - a. The actual amount of money they receive for their daily or weekly allowance
 - b. The sources of their funds (e.g., allowance from parents, part-time or side jobs)
2. Distribution of Expenses: How do students prioritize their spending amongst:
 - a. Needs such as transportation fare, food, and school materials
 - b. Wants such as online games, trendy clothes, or snacks purchased on impulse
3. Budget Utilization and Saving: How effectively do students manage their money throughout the week? Do they usually have enough to last until the end of the week, and are they able to set aside any amount for savings?
4. Influential Factors: In what field do the following influential factors affect a student's expenses?
 - a. Peer Pressure: The urge to belong, fit in, or keep up with friends.
 - b. Digital Trends: The influence of "budol" on viral products and trends on platforms like TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram that tempt students to buy unplanned items.
 - c. Home Environment: How family income and money habits at home shape students' own spending behaviors
5. Proposed Intervention: Based on the data collected, what practical "Wais" budgeting guide can be developed to promote responsible financial management among students of Noveleta Senior High School?

Hypothesis

Based on the problem stated above, the hypothesis is formulated:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between social media/digital trends, peer pressure, and home environment and the way students spend their money on "wants."

H_a: There is a significant relationship between social media/digital trends, peer pressure, and home environment and the way students spend their money on "wants."

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Social Learning Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Dual-Process Theory.

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, asserts that individuals acquire behaviors by observing and imitating the actions of others, particularly those they consider role models or peers (Bandura, 1977) [4]. In the context of this study, students often adopt the financial habits of classmates, friends, or social media influencers. Observing peers' purchases, such as trending items featured in online "checkout hauls," may encourage students to spend in order to align with social groups they wish to belong to. This theory explains the influence of social and environmental factors on spending behavior, supporting the examining how peer influence and social media exposure affect students' budget utilization.

The Theory of Planned Behavior, introduced by Icek Ajzen, posits that human behavior is guided by three determinants: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991) [2]. Attitude refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of a behavior, subjective norms describe perceived social pressure to act in a certain way, and perceived behavioral control reflects the perceived ability to perform or refrain from a behavior. Applied to the students' financial decisions, attitudes may involve a desire to stay trendy, subjective norms may include the influence of online "budol" culture, and perceived behavioral control is determined by the amount of allowance available. This framework helps explain why students sometimes make purchases even when they are aware of budget constraints.

Finally, Dual-Process Theory, developed by Keith Stanovich and Richard West and popularized by Daniel Kahneman, explains that decision-making involves two cognitive systems (Kahneman, 2011 [10]; Stanovich & West, 2000). System 1 operates quickly, intuitively, and emotionally, often resulting in impulsive or unplanned purchases, while System 2 is deliberate, analytical, and effortful, enabling careful budgeting, prioritization of needs, and long-term financial planning. This theory clarifies why students may make impulsive spending decisions despite knowing they should manage their allowance responsibly.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on the financial habits and budget utilization of senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School during the Academic Year 2025-2026. It examines how students manage their daily or weekly allowances and identifies the factors that influence their spending decisions. Specifically, the study includes students' spending on essential needs such as transportation, school supplies, and basic meals, as well as non-essential wants like trendy clothing, gadgets, and impulse purchases. It also covers influencing factors such as the size of allowance, peer influence, social media exposure, and personal spending habits, as these directly affect students' day-to-day financial decision-making and allowance management.

This study is limited only to selected senior high school students of Noveleta Senior High School and does not include students from other schools in order to maintain a focused and manageable scope of data collection. The study excludes long-term financial activities such as savings, investments, and future financial planning because these are not commonly practiced by most senior high school students

and are beyond the focus on daily allowance utilization. Additionally, family financial management, parental income, and other income sources are not included because the study aims to concentrate specifically on how students manage their personal allowances. These limitations allow the research to remain focused on students' immediate financial behaviors and ensure that the results are directly relevant to student allowance budget utilization.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the financial behaviors and budget utilization of senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School, particularly how allowance size, peer influence, social media exposure, and personal spending habits affect their financial decision-making. The findings of this study may benefit the following groups:

Students: Senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School may benefit from this study by helping them recognize the factors that influence their spending decisions, such as impulse buying, peer pressure, and social media influence. Through increased awareness, students may improve their ability to prioritize essential needs over non-essential wants and practice responsible allowance management. This may help them develop practical and wise spending habits, strengthen their budgeting skills, and make better financial decisions.

Parents: Parents may benefit from this study by gaining a better understanding of the factors that influence their children's spending behavior. The findings may help parents provide appropriate financial guidance, set reasonable allowance amounts, and teach their children the importance of budgeting and financial responsibility. This may also help improve communication between parents and students regarding money management.

Teachers and School Administrators: Teachers and school administrators may benefit from this study by gaining insight into students' financial behaviors and spending patterns. The findings may help them develop financial literacy programs, classroom discussions, and school-based activities that promote responsible money management. It may also assist in creating seminars or interventions that encourage students to become financially responsible.

Future Researchers: Future researchers may benefit from this study as it may serve as a reference or foundation for further research related to student financial behavior, allowance management, and budgeting practices. The findings may provide baseline data that can be used for comparison or expanded research in different schools, locations, or student populations.

Definition of Terms

For a clearer understanding of this study, the following terms are defined based on how they are used in the research:

Allowance: It refers to the daily or weekly amount of money given by parents or guardians to senior high school students of Noveleta Senior High School for their school-related and personal expenses.

Budget Utilization: It refers to how students divide and spend their allowance on needs, wants, and savings within a specific period.

Budol: It refers to students buying items due to social media influence, online trends, or peer recommendations, even if the purchase was not originally planned.

Digital Trends: It refers to social media content on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook that influence students' spending decisions.

Financial Literacy: It refers to students' awareness and ability to manage their allowance wisely, including budgeting, prioritizing needs, and saving money.

Needs: It refers to necessary student expenses such as transportation fare, basic meals, and school supplies.

Peer Pressure: It refers to the influence of friends or classmates on students' spending habits, including buying items to fit in or feel accepted.

Savings: It refers to the portion of students' allowance that they do not spend and instead keep for future needs or emergencies.

Wants: It refers to student spending on non-essential items such as gadgets, trendy clothing, and entertainment.

Wais: Refers to students' ability to manage their allowance responsibly by prioritizing needs, controlling impulse spending, and practicing saving habits.

2. Review of Related Literature

International

Globally, students' attitudes toward money and spending have been significantly influenced by the rapid growth of digital commerce. Kurešepi (2021) [11] explained that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok encourage young people to adopt consumer-oriented mindsets. Continuous exposure to idealized lifestyles and online trends often pushes students to prioritize non-essential spending in order to gain social approval or maintain an online presence. As a result, students may struggle to balance their wants and needs, which can affect their ability to manage their allowance effectively.

Modern purchasing strategies have also evolved beyond traditional promotions such as buy-one-get-one deals. Lee and Chen (2022) [12] highlighted the importance of "frictionless" payment methods, including digital coupons and one-click checkout systems, which reduce the "pain of paying," or the psychological discomfort people feel when spending money. Because transactions become faster and more convenient, students are more likely to justify impulsive or unplanned purchases. Over time, these convenient payment systems may weaken financial discipline and disrupt students' intended budget utilization. Similarly, Gautam *et al.* (2020) [8] found that the convenience and accessibility of online shopping platforms influence young consumers' impulsive spending behavior. Features such as easy browsing, fast checkout options, and personalized product recommendations encourage quick purchasing decisions. This sense of instant gratification often leads students to prioritize short-term happiness over long-term financial planning, negatively affecting their budgeting habits.

The allocation of students' allowance is often divided between essential and discretionary expenses. Ahista and Fikri (2024) [1] reported that food and transportation usually take up the largest portion of students' spending because these are necessary for daily academic activities. However, when students receive higher allowances or financial assistance, they tend to increase their spending rather than save more money. This finding shows that having more

financial resources does not always lead to better budgeting practices and may even encourage unnecessary spending.

Financial literacy also plays a crucial role in effective budget utilization. Mawad *et al.* (2022) [14] found that students with higher financial literacy are better able to plan for future financial needs and manage their daily expenses responsibly. When financial knowledge is combined with self-control, students are more capable of avoiding overspending and maintaining organized financial habits. These findings suggest that financial literacy strongly influences students' financial decision-making and their ability to manage their budgets wisely.

Local

Studies on students' spending behavior show that impulsive buying is a common issue among senior high school learners. Aquino *et al.* (2023) [3] examined senior high school students' spending behavior using a mixed-methods design and found that many students are influenced by immediate desires, which negatively affects their ability to save money for important academic expenses. The results showed that impulsive purchasing significantly interferes with students' budget utilization and financial planning.

Students' ability to manage their budgets is also influenced by financial education and family guidance. Daculan (2025) [5] found that students at the University of Eastern Philippines who regularly monitor their expenses are more likely to demonstrate responsible financial behavior than those who do not track their spending. This finding highlights the importance of developing organized financial habits through proper guidance and education, which helps students manage their budgets more effectively.

The Department of Education (DepEd, 2021) [6] has recognized the importance of strengthening financial education among Filipinos. Their report showed that only a small percentage of Filipinos could correctly answer questions about basic financial literacy. Many students struggle with managing their allowance because they lack financial knowledge, especially in distinguishing between needs and wants. These findings emphasize the importance of financial education in improving students' financial decision-making and budgeting practices.

Gabay *et al.* (2024) [7] also examined senior high school students' financial literacy to develop a financial stewardship plan. Their study revealed that although students are introduced to basic money management concepts in school, many still experience difficulty applying these skills in real-life financial situations. Students with a stronger understanding of financial concepts were more likely to make responsible financial decisions, highlighting the need for organized educational programs to improve students' budget utilization.

Rodriguez *et al.* (2024) [16] investigated the relationship between Generation Z's spending habits and financial literacy. The study found that despite this generation's familiarity with technology, external factors such as online trends and social media often influence their purchasing decisions. The authors also noted that financial knowledge alone does not always lead to responsible spending because actual financial behavior plays a major role. This suggests that students may understand budgeting concepts but still make impulsive decisions that affect their efficient use of their allowance.

These global and local studies show that digital commerce, social media influence, impulsive buying, and financial literacy all affect students' spending behavior and budget management. However, limited research has focused specifically on senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School. Therefore, this study aims to examine the factors influencing budget utilization among students in this context to better understand their financial decision-making.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods used in the study titled "Financial Decision Making: The Factors Influencing Budget Utilization Among Students at Noveleta Senior High School." It explains the research design, research locale, participants, research instruments, data gathering procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations followed by the researchers.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design employing a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (McLeod, PhD, 2024) ^[15]. In this study, the researchers explored the personal experiences of senior high school students in managing their allowance and budgeting their expenses.

The phenomenological design was chosen because the study aims to understand how students experience financial decision-making and how factors such as peer pressure, social media influence, and family background affect their budget utilization. Through this method, the researchers were able to identify common themes about students' spending habits and financial behavior.

Population and Sampling

The participants of this study consisted of ten (10) senior high school students from Grade 11 and Grade 12 at Noveleta Senior High School during the Academic Year 2025–2026. The students were selected because they regularly receive daily or weekly allowances and are actively involved in making financial decisions regarding their school-related expenses. Some participants also reported that they occasionally monitor or keep track of how they spend their allowances, which helped ensure that they could provide meaningful insights into their budgeting practices.

The researchers used convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate. This method was appropriate because the researchers had limited time and resources, allowing them to gather data efficiently from students who were accessible and willing to share their experiences.

Although the number of participants was small, it was suitable for a phenomenological study since the purpose was to gain in-depth understanding of students' lived experiences rather than collect large amounts of numerical data. The participants came from different academic strands and financial backgrounds to provide different perspectives on financial decision-making. Before participation, all students were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their voluntary consent.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Noveleta Senior High School located in Noveleta, Cavite. The school was selected because the researchers are currently enrolled in this institution, making it easier to access participants and gather relevant information. Noveleta Senior High School is an appropriate setting for the study because students in this school regularly receive allowances and make financial decisions related to transportation, school supplies, food, and personal expenses.

Conducting the research in this locale also allowed the researchers to observe and understand financial behaviors within a real academic environment. Students from different strands and economic backgrounds attend the school, which provided diverse perspectives about budgeting and spending habits. The senior high school department consists of several classes in Grade 11 and Grade 12 with an estimated class size of around 30–40 students per section, representing a varied student population with different financial experiences.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide prepared by the researchers. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to gather detailed information about students' allowance amount and source, spending priorities, saving habits, peer influence, social media exposure, and family financial practices.

Open-ended questions were used so that participants could freely share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This allowed the researchers to collect meaningful data about students' financial behaviors. Follow-up questions were also asked when necessary to clarify answers and gain deeper understanding.

The interview guide was reviewed and approved by the research adviser to ensure that the questions were clear, appropriate, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researchers sought permission from their research adviser and from the administration of Noveleta Senior High School. After approval was granted, the researchers selected students who were available and willing to participate. The purpose of the research was explained clearly, and informed consent was obtained from each participant.

The interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable environment within the school premises so that participants could express their thoughts freely. With permission, the researchers recorded the responses using a mobile phone voice recorder. Each interview lasted about 4–7 minutes, depending on the responses of the participants.

During the interviews, the researchers also made brief observational notes regarding participants' reactions, tone, and expressions to help provide additional context to the recorded responses. These observations supported the audio recordings and helped the researchers better interpret the participants' answers.

After the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed into written form. The researchers carefully reviewed the transcripts to ensure that all answers were recorded correctly.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is commonly used in phenomenological research. First, the researchers read the interview transcripts several times to become familiar with the responses. Important statements and repeated ideas related to financial decision-making were identified and highlighted.

Next, similar responses were grouped together to create themes. Examples of themes identified in the study include allowance sufficiency, spending on needs versus wants, saving habits, peer pressure influence, social media influence, and family financial guidance. These themes helped explain how different factors influence students' budgeting behavior.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis, multiple researchers reviewed and coded the interview transcripts. The themes identified by one researcher were compared and verified by the others to ensure consistency and accuracy. Any differences in interpretation were discussed until agreement was reached.

The researchers then interpreted the themes to describe the shared experiences of the participants. This process allowed the researchers to better understand students' financial decisions and identify patterns in their behavior.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers ensured that ethical standards were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the purpose of the research before agreeing to participate. They were also told that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

To protect the privacy of the participants, their real names were not included in the research paper. Codes or pseudonyms were used instead. All information gathered during the interviews was kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. The researchers stored recordings and notes securely and did not share them with anyone outside the study.

The researchers also maintained honesty, respect, and professionalism throughout the research process. They avoided forcing students to answer questions they were uncomfortable with and ensured that no harm was done to the participants.

4. Results and Discussion

Prioritizing Basic Needs in Allowance Spending: The first theme focuses on what students usually spend their allowance on first and the reasons why they prioritize these expenses. Most respondents explained that since their allowance is limited, they make sure that essential expenses such as transportation, food, and school supplies are covered before spending on other wants. This suggests that students are already aware of the importance of prioritizing necessities in order to manage their daily school expenses effectively.

Ayato shared that transportation is the first thing he considers when spending his allowance since it is necessary for him to get to school on time.

“Pag na-receive ko po yung allowance, ang pinakauna ko pong ginagastusan ay transportation po talaga. Kasi po kailangan ko transportation, kasi kung maglalakad ako, syempre mali-late po ako.”

(Ayato)

Similarly, Felix explained that he makes sure that his allowance is used for school-related needs such as food and transportation before spending it on anything else.

“Uhhh, first, hindi ko po agad ginagasta pang school po talaga e, kunyari pamasah, ganiyan, pang kain and needs.”

(Felix)

Another respondent, Freya, emphasized that printing school requirements is also one of her priorities since it is frequently required in their academic activities.:

“Ano, sa pag-a-ano namin, sa print. Kasi kailangan talaga siya sa amin eh, so parang inuuna ko siya.”

(Freya)

These responses suggest that students recognize the importance of prioritizing essential needs before spending on wants. One possible reason why students prioritize these needs is the limited amount of allowance they receive, which forces them to carefully allocate their money to ensure that important expenses are covered. In addition, parental guidance and early exposure to budgeting practices may influence students to focus on necessary expenses first.

Allowance Sufficiency: After establishing that students prioritize basic needs, the next factor influencing their financial behavior is the sufficiency of their allowance. This theme focuses on how much allowance students usually receive and whether it is enough to support their daily school expenses.

Respondents shared different experiences regarding the sufficiency of their allowances. Students who receive smaller daily allowances often feel limited in their spending, while those who receive weekly allowances feel more capable of managing their expenses.

Ayato shared that his allowance is sometimes not enough because he needs to divide it among several essential expenses.

“Feeling ko po hindi yun enough kasi divided pa po yung mga need kong gastusin—uhm, transportation, minsan wala po akong ulam, tsaka sa mga school needs.”

(Ayato)

Arthur, explained that his weekly allowance is enough for him because he is able to manage his expenses.

“Yung allowance ko natatangap ko, ano, kada week is 500... enough na siya sakin kasi marami na akong nagagastos.”

(Arthur)

Miles, stated that unexpected school expenses sometimes make it difficult to manage his allowance.

“Hindi, kasi minsan may biglaang pangangailangan na kailangan na bayaran sa school o kaya ano, may mga ambagan na gagawin sa groupings... sapat lang talaga sa pang pamasah at pagkain ko.”

(Miles)

These responses show that the sufficiency of allowances varies depending on students' financial situations and academic requirements. Unexpected expenses, such as group contributions, project materials, or school activities, can create financial pressure for students. As a result, students must learn to balance their limited resources carefully. This finding confirms earlier research suggesting that limited financial resources require students to develop practical strategies in managing their daily expenses.

Saving Practices and Strategies: After understanding how allowance sufficiency affects students' spending behavior, it becomes important to examine how students attempt to manage their allowance despite financial limitations. The next theme explores the different saving practices and strategies students use to control their spending and prepare for future expenses.

Many respondents shared that they attempt to save money through different methods, such as dividing their allowance, keeping money in a piggy bank, or avoiding unnecessary spending.

Ayato explained that he divides his allowance into different categories to ensure that his expenses are properly managed.

"Sinusubukan ko pong mag-save ng pera is naka-divide na po talaga yung gagastusin ko... doon ko na iniisip yung mga gastusin—kung saan ko i-d-divide yung gastusin ko sa transportation, necessities, or etc."

(Ayato)

Leo, shared that he saves money by placing it in a piggy bank and practicing discipline.

"Ahh, mag-iipon ako, ilalagay ko sa alkansya ko, tapos magiging strict ako sa sarili ko na hindi ko to gagastusin kahit anong mangyari."

(Leo)

Maya, mentioned that she regularly adds money to her savings every day.

"Meron akong ano, ipon. Naghuhulog ako sa ipon ko araw-araw."

(Maya)

These responses suggest that students recognize the importance of saving money even though they have limited allowances. Saving practices such as dividing expenses, setting aside money regularly, and maintaining self-discipline indicate that students are gradually developing basic financial management skills. This finding extends previous studies that emphasize the importance of financial literacy and self-control in helping students manage their personal finances.

Influence of Peers and Social Interactions: While students attempt to manage their allowance responsibly, external social influences also play an important role in shaping their financial decisions. The next theme highlights how peer relationships affect students' spending behavior.

Several respondents admitted that their friends sometimes influence them to spend money during social activities such as eating out or hanging out.

Arthur explained that social invitations from friends make saving money more difficult.

"Maraming nakaka-influence sayo na, 'Oy tara gala mamaya. Oy tara gala, kain tayo sa labas'... sobrang hirap mag-ipon."

(Arthur)

Jasper, also admitted that he sometimes overspends when he is with his friends.

"Na-i-impluwensyahan nila ako sa, ano, overspend, kasi pag kasama ko sila, sobra-sobra yung gastos namin."

(Jasper)

Iris, mentioned that invitations for social activities such as shopping or food trips also influence spending.

"Pag nag aaya sila ng gala, pag kunyari shopping or kahit food trip, ganiyan."

(Iris)

These responses suggest that peer pressure and the desire for social belonging can strongly influence students' spending habits. Students may feel motivated to participate in group activities in order to maintain friendships and social connections, even if it requires additional spending. This finding supports previous research which suggests that adolescents are highly influenced by peer behavior when making financial and purchasing decisions.

Effects of Social Media and Trends: In addition to peer influence, digital environments also affect students' spending behavior. The next theme explores how social media platforms and online trends encourage students to make purchasing decisions.

Ayato shared that social media platforms such as TikTok sometimes influence him to buy products that appear on sale or are trending online.

Ayato shared that social media platforms such as TikTok sometimes influence him to buy products that appear on sale or are trending online.

"Nakakaapekto talaga yung pambubudol ng mga tao sa TikTok... Tapos need mo nang bilhin kasi nga syempre minsan sale."

(Ayato)

Caleb, stated that advertisements can be tempting, but self-control can help avoid unnecessary spending.

"May pagka-enticing yung mga ganyang ads, advertisements. Pero kung meron kang self-control, ayun."

(Caleb)

Maya also admitted that social media sometimes influences her to purchase products like skincare items.

"Pag may mga nakikita ako sa social media... Kunwari skincare, gusto kong bumili ng skincare... parang nabubudol ako, ganern."

(Maya)

These responses suggest that viral trends, persuasive advertising, and the desire to follow popular products can influence students' purchasing decisions. Social media

platforms often use targeted advertisements, influencer promotions, and trending content to attract users' attention. As a result, students may feel encouraged to purchase products that are popular online even if they were not initially planning to buy them. This finding aligns with previous studies indicating that social media marketing significantly affects consumer behavior, particularly among young individuals.

Family Influence on Financial Habits: Despite the influence of peers and social media, family practices remain an important factor in shaping students' financial behavior. Jasper explained that he learned to be thrifty by observing his parents.

"Yung mga magulang ko kasi matipid. So ginagaya ko rin kung paano sila nagtitipid, ganon din ako."

(Jasper)

Caleb stated that his family is good at budgeting, which helps him manage his own finances effectively.

"Family ko is magaling din sila kasi mag-budget... And siguro yun, mimi-mimic ko lang yung ano nila, yung strategy nila, which is ayun, ang pagbabudget, yung way nila ng pagbabudget."

(Caleb)

Freya also shared that the limited amount of money she receives influences how she divides her expenses.

"Hinahati-hati ko... nakaaapekto siya sa kin kasi short lang yung naano sa kin pera na ibibigay. Pag nag i-i-spend din ako ng money, hinahati-hati ko."

(Freya)

These responses suggest that the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' financial attitudes and behaviors. Students often imitate the financial habits they observe at home, especially when parents demonstrate responsible budgeting and careful spending. This finding supports previous studies that highlight the importance of parental influence in developing financial responsibility among young individuals.

"Wais" Budgeting Guides and Advice: After examining the various factors that influence students' financial behavior, the final theme focuses on the practical advice students offer for managing allowances effectively.

Ayato suggested dividing money into different categories to manage expenses effectively.

"May parang pitaka... doon mo i-d-divide yung mga pera na gagastusin mo... sa pagkain, transportation, wants, needs, school projects."

(Ayato)

Arthur advised students to avoid excessive spending with friends.

"Minsan makisama rin kayo sa mga kaibigan, pero wag naman araw-araw para hindi maubos yung pera niyo. Isipin niyo muna yung gagastusin niyo kung mapapakinabangan bai to o hindi."

(Arthur)

Iris emphasized the importance of avoiding unnecessary purchases.

"Iwasan na lang yung pagbili ng mga hindi kailangan para may matitira ka pa pang budget sa mga kakailanganin mo pa."

(Iris)

Freya also advised students to prioritize important expenses rather than spending on unimportant things.

"Mas unahin niyo yung mga kailangan imbes na sa walang kwentang bagay lang."

(Freya)

These responses demonstrate students' growing awareness of financial responsibility. Their advice reflects practical budgeting strategies such as prioritizing needs, avoiding impulsive purchases, and practicing financial discipline. These insights highlight how students develop practical financial strategies based on their personal experiences and financial challenges.

The findings of this study show that senior high school students prioritize essential needs such as transportation, food, and school-related materials when spending their allowance. This result is consistent with the study of Ahista and Fikri (2024) ^[1], which found that students allocate a large portion of their allowance to essential academic expenses. This indicates that students recognize the importance of prioritizing necessities in managing their daily financial resources.

Furthermore, the results revealed that the sufficiency of allowance varies among students depending on the amount they receive and the number of expenses they must cover. Some respondents experienced financial limitations due to unexpected school expenses. This finding supports Gautam *et al.* (2020) ^[8], who explained that financial limitations require students to carefully manage their resources and balance their daily expenses.

In terms of saving practices, many students reported strategies such as dividing their allowance, saving money in a piggy bank, and practicing self-discipline in spending. These behaviors align with the findings of Mawad *et al.* (2022) ^[14], which emphasized that financial literacy and self-control help students develop responsible financial habits and improve their budgeting skills.

The study also revealed that peers and social interactions influence students' spending behavior, particularly during social activities such as eating out or going out with friends. This supports Aquino *et al.* (2023) ^[3], who found that impulsive buying among students is often influenced by social interactions and immediate desires. Similarly, Rodriguez *et al.* (2024) ^[16] noted that external social factors significantly affect the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers.

Moreover, social media and online trends were identified as factors that influence students' purchasing decisions. Respondents admitted that advertisements, trending products, and online promotions sometimes encourage them to make impulsive purchases. This finding is consistent with Kurešepi (2021) ^[11], who explained that social media platforms promote consumer-oriented behavior among young individuals. Likewise, Lee and Chen (2022) ^[12]

highlighted that convenient digital purchasing systems may reduce the psychological hesitation associated with spending money, leading to more impulsive buying behavior.

Despite these external influences, family practices were also found to play a significant role in shaping students' financial habits. Many respondents shared that they learned budgeting and saving behaviors by observing their parents. This supports the findings of Daculan (2025) [5], which emphasized that family guidance and financial education help students develop responsible money management practices.

5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, the conclusions drawn from the results of the study, and the recommendations proposed by the researchers. The purpose of this chapter is to synthesize the key information gathered from the investigation on the factors influencing budget utilization among senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School. It provides a concise overview of the significant themes that emerged from the analysis of the participants' responses regarding their allowance management, spending priorities, saving practices, and financial decision-making.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses the conclusions derived from the findings in relation to the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework. Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are presented to help improve students' financial awareness and budgeting practices. These recommendations may also serve as a guide for students, parents, teachers, and future researchers in promoting responsible financial behavior and strengthening financial literacy among senior high school learners.

The following sections present a detailed summary of the findings obtained from the data gathered in the study. These findings serve as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations proposed by the researchers regarding the factors influencing budget utilization among senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School.

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to examine the factors influencing budget utilization among senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School. The research focused on understanding students' allowance profiles, spending priorities, saving practices, and the influence of peer pressure, social media trends, and family financial habits on their financial decision-making. The study used a qualitative research design employing a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of students in managing their allowances. Ten senior high school students from Grade 11 and Grade 12 participated in semi-structured interviews, and the data gathered were analyzed through thematic analysis.

The findings of the study revealed several key themes related to students' budget utilization. The first theme, Prioritizing Needs, shows that most students prioritize essential expenses such as transportation, food, and school supplies when spending their allowance. Because their financial resources are limited, students tend to allocate their money first to necessities required for their daily school activities. The study also found that the sufficiency of allowances varies among students. Some participants reported that their allowance is sometimes not enough to cover all their needs, particularly when unexpected school

expenses such as project materials or group contributions arise. These situations require students to carefully manage their limited financial resources.

Another theme identified in the study is Saving Strategies. Despite financial limitations, many students attempt to save money through different strategies. Some participants divide their allowance into categories for different expenses, while others save money in piggy banks or regularly set aside small amounts for future use. These practices indicate that students are gradually developing basic financial management skills.

The findings also revealed the theme of Peer Influence, which affects students' spending behavior. Social interactions with friends, such as eating out or joining group activities, sometimes encourage students to spend more money than they initially planned.

In addition, the theme of Social Media Influence emerged from the study. Exposure to advertisements, trending products, and online promotions on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook often encourages students to buy items impulsively.

Lastly, the theme of Family Influence highlights the important role of family in shaping students' financial habits. Many participants shared that they learned budgeting and saving practices by observing their parents' financial behaviors at home.

Overall, the findings show that students' budget utilization is influenced by multiple factors, including their prioritization of needs, saving strategies, peer interactions, exposure to social media, and the financial practices they observe within their families.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that senior high school students at Noveleta Senior High School generally recognize the importance of prioritizing essential needs such as transportation, food, and school materials when managing their allowances. However, the adequacy of their allowances significantly affects their ability to maintain financial stability throughout the week. Students with limited allowances often face challenges in balancing their expenses, especially when unexpected financial obligations arise.

The findings revealed that, in relation to Research Questions 1–3, students generally prioritize essential needs such as transportation, food, and school materials when they receive their allowance. However, as reflected in Research Question 4, there are instances when they spend on non-essential items like snacks, games, or clothing, influenced by personal preferences, convenience, and the desire for enjoyment.

In connection with Research Questions 5 and 6, many students show awareness of budgeting by trying to make their allowance last throughout the week and by practicing simple saving strategies. Despite this, their financial decisions are also shaped by external factors such as peer influence, social media trends, and family practices in Research Questions 7–9, which can either support or challenge responsible spending habits.

Furthermore, the theme Family Influence on Financial Habits shows that the family environment plays a significant role in shaping students' financial behavior. Students who observe responsible budgeting and saving practices at home tend to adopt similar habits in managing their own allowances. This is supported by other themes such as

Prioritizing Basic Needs in Allowance Spending and Saving Practices and Strategies, which indicate that students demonstrate awareness of responsible money management by focusing on necessities and practicing simple budgeting techniques.

However, the themes Influence of Peers and Social Interactions and Effects of Social Media and Trends reveal that students' financial decisions are also affected by external social and digital factors, which can sometimes lead to impulsive spending.

Overall, while students show an understanding of proper money management, their financial behavior is shaped by a combination of family influence, social interactions, and digital exposure, highlighting the need to strengthen financial literacy and decision-making skills among students.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed. Students are encouraged to practice responsible allowance management by prioritizing essential needs, controlling impulsive spending, and developing consistent saving habits. Applying simple budgeting techniques, such as dividing allowances into categories for needs, wants, and savings, may help students manage their finances more effectively.

For Students: Students are encouraged to develop responsible financial habits by managing their allowances effectively. They should prioritize essential needs such as transportation, food, and school materials before spending on non-essential wants. Students may benefit from using simple budgeting strategies, such as creating weekly budget plans or using envelopes or digital notes to divide their allowance. Developing self-discipline and avoiding impulsive purchases influenced by peer pressure or social media trends can help improve their financial decision-making.

For Parents: Parents are encouraged to guide their children in developing responsible financial habits by teaching budgeting, saving, and the difference between needs and wants. They may support this by giving structured allowances, encouraging saving goals, and involving students in simple household budgeting discussions to build real-life financial awareness.

For Teachers and School Administrators: Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to strengthen students' financial literacy by integrating financial education into school programs. This may include organizing budgeting workshops, financial literacy seminars, or classroom activities that teach students how to manage money effectively. Schools may also introduce financial literacy modules or short lessons that focus on budgeting, saving, and responsible spending, as well as interactive activities such as budgeting simulations or student-led savings challenges.

For Future Researchers: Future researchers may expand this study by including a larger number of participants or conducting research in different schools or communities. Further studies may also explore additional factors influencing students' financial behavior, such as digital payment systems, financial education programs, or long-term saving practices. Conducting intervention-based studies, such as evaluating the effectiveness of financial literacy workshops or school-based programs, may also

provide deeper insights into improving students' financial management skills.

6. Dedication

The researchers dedicate this journey to the individuals who offered their unwavering support and made this research possible.

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The future researchers, who may use this study as a reference. It is hoped that the findings of this research will serve as a helpful guide, inspire further studies, and contribute to a deeper understanding of students' financial behavior and budget utilization.

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