

**The effect of inflation on the smart budgeting
of daily household expenses of Barangay Biabas residents**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effect of inflation on the daily household expenses of residents in Barangay Biabas, Ubay, Bohol. A descriptive correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between inflation awareness and smart budgeting practices. The respondents were household residents with direct experience in managing daily expenses and were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire that measured demographic profile, inflation awareness, and smart budgeting practices. The research followed a systematic process that included securing permission from local officials, validating the research instrument, administering the survey, retrieving completed questionnaires, and conducting statistical analysis. The findings revealed that respondents showed a high level of inflation awareness and practiced smart budgeting in managing their daily expenses. Monitoring expenses and controlling spending were among the most common budgeting practices. The results also showed that the person in charge of budgeting and the source of income influenced household financial decisions. Statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship between inflation awareness and smart budgeting practices, showing that increased awareness of rising prices leads to better budgeting behavior. The study concluded that residents are able to adjust their spending despite financial difficulties and that proper budgeting helps households manage the effects of inflation. It is recommended that residents continue practicing budgeting, barangay officials support financial literacy activities, and future researchers conduct related studies to improve household financial management.

Keywords: Inflation awareness, smart budgeting, household expenses, financial management, descriptive-correlational research, Barangay Biabas

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INTRODUCTION

Inflation is a major factor that affects the daily lives of many families, especially those with limited income, as it continuously reduces their purchasing power and makes it harder for them to afford basic necessities. According to Cacnio (2024), inflation is a major factor that affects the daily lives of many families, especially those with limited income, highlighting how even slight price increases can create financial pressure for households that already struggle to meet their daily expenses. As prices of food, transportation, and basic needs continue to rise, households are forced to adjust how they manage their money by changing spending habits, prioritizing essential goods, and finding ways to stretch their limited budget.

Smart budgeting, on the other hand, is the planned and careful way of spending that helps families make sure their needs are met even when money becomes tight, allowing them to allocate resources wisely and manage unexpected financial challenges. This study examines whether inflation has any meaningful influence on how families plan, spend, and save through smart budgeting, and understanding this relationship is important so we can clearly see how rising costs shape the daily decisions of residents in Barangay Biabas.

Inflation challenges households by reducing their purchasing power and limiting what they can afford. While some families try their best to control their expenses during high prices,

others struggle because of unstable income, unexpected bills, or lack of financial knowledge. This can lead to stress, debt, or poor spending choices. However, smart budgeting can help lessen these negative effects by teaching families to prioritize their needs, create simple spending plans, and avoid unnecessary expenses. The main causes of budgeting problems often come from sudden price changes and low or fixed income. To address these challenges, families need clear guidance on how to plan their expenses, access to community programs that teach basic budgeting, and encouragement to build small savings that can support them in times of high prices. This study was chosen to provide quantitative data on the extent to which inflation affects household budgeting practices in Barangay Biabas, filling a research gap in measuring this relationship numerically.

In summary, this study aims to understand how inflation affects the smart budgeting practices of households in Barangay Biabas. Its goal is to identify the struggles families face when prices rise and measure the changes in their spending patterns and allocation of funds using quantitative methods. By examining these data, the study hopes to provide useful insights that can help families improve their budgeting skills, become more prepared for rising costs, and make better financial decisions for their daily needs.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to investigate the effect of inflation on the daily household expenses of Barangay Biabas residents during the fiscal year 2025. Specifically, it seeks to examine the respondents' demographic characteristics, their level of awareness regarding inflation, and their smart budgeting practices, as well as determine significant differences and relationships among these variables and propose an action plan based on the findings.

1. What is the demographic profile of the Barangay Biabas households in terms of total number of family members in the household, number of family members who are employed, person mainly in charge of household budgeting, source of income of the household, average monthly income, and average monthly expenses?
2. What is the level of inflation awareness on the daily household expenses of the respondents in terms of household expense monitoring, market behavior observation, spending pattern recognition, and budget constraint understanding?
3. What is the level of smart budgeting practices on the daily household expenses of the respondents in terms of budget planning and tracking, spending control priorities, and saving emergency habits?
4. Is there a significant difference between the demographic profile and the level of inflation awareness of the respondents?
5. Is there a significant difference between the demographic profile and the level of smart budgeting practices of the respondents?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the level of inflation awareness and the level of smart budgeting practices of the respondents?
7. Based on the findings, what plan of action can help households manage their daily expenses during periods of high inflation?

METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a descriptive correlational method, which is appropriate for determining and describing the relationship between the respondents' level of inflation awareness and their smart budgeting practices. This design allows the researchers to present an accurate description of each variable while examining whether a significant association exists

between them without manipulating any conditions. The use of a structured survey questionnaire ensures consistent and measurable data, making it possible to analyze patterns and understand how inflation awareness may relate to the budgeting behaviors of the residents of Barangay Biabas. The study will be conducted in Barangay Biabas, a community in Ubay, Bohol composed mostly of low to middle income households. The barangay has residents engaged in various livelihoods such as farming, small businesses, tricycle driving, and wage labor, making them vulnerable to changes in market prices. Most families manage their daily expenses on limited and fluctuating incomes, which makes budgeting an essential part of their household routines. The study will specifically involve households responsible for managing their own finances to ensure accurate data on budgeting practices, and this environment provides a practical setting for examining how inflation affects the smart budgeting of daily household expenses.

The respondents will consist of 70 residents from Barangay Biabas who will be selected through a simple random sampling method. This sampling approach ensures that every household resident has an equal chance of being chosen, reducing selection bias and increasing the representativeness of the sample within the community. The inclusion criteria cover residents who are at least 18 years old, permanently living in Barangay Biabas, and responsible for or knowledgeable about their household's budgeting and daily expenses. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include individuals below 18 years old, non-residents, temporary visitors, and residents who are not involved in or informed about their household's financial decisions. The primary research instrument will be a researcher made survey questionnaire structured to address the specific research questions and divided into sections that measure the respondents' level of inflation awareness and their smart budgeting practices. The questionnaire consists of clearly designed items using a Likert scale to ensure measurable and consistent responses, and its structured format allows respondents to provide accurate information based on their experiences, enabling the researchers to gather reliable data for analyzing patterns, levels, and possible relationships between the study variables.

The researchers will follow a systematic process to ensure that all information collected is accurate, ethical, and relevant to the study's objective. Formal letters will be prepared and addressed to the Barangay Captain and council officials of Barangay Biabas, Ubay, Bohol, clearly stating the research title, purpose, target respondents, and the preferred schedule for data collection. Upon approval, coordination with the barangay secretary will be undertaken to obtain the household list needed for sampling. Informed consent forms will be distributed, explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, voluntary nature of participation, and the respondents' right to withdraw at any time, and only after securing full permission and consent will the actual data collection begin. The researchers will then design a structured researcher made survey questionnaire aligned with the Statement of the Problem, containing demographic profile items, indicators of inflation awareness such as household expense monitoring, market behavior observation, spending pattern recognition, and budget constraint understanding, as well as items covering smart budgeting practices including budget planning, spending control, and emergency saving habits. Each item will use clear and measurable statements on a Likert type scale. The questionnaire will be reviewed by experts in economics, research, and financial management for content validity, accuracy, and clarity, and a pilot test will be conducted with selected individuals outside the target barangay, after which the instrument will be revised based on expert comments and pilot test results.

Once the instrument is finalized, the researchers will proceed to Barangay Biabas and administer the survey to the selected household respondents using the identified sampling method. Before answering, the researchers will explain the study's purpose, assure confidentiality, and emphasize that participation is voluntary. Respondents will complete the

questionnaire individually in a quiet and convenient area to ensure focus and honesty in responses, while the researchers will remain available to clarify questions without influencing responses. Adequate time will be provided for each respondent to carefully answer all items. After the respondents finish the questionnaire, the researchers will immediately collect each accomplished form and check it for completeness and legibility. If items are left blank or unclear, respondents will be politely asked to provide or clarify their answers while the researcher is still present. Each questionnaire will then be assigned a unique code to organize responses and ensure anonymity, and all completed instruments will be placed in secure folders or envelopes and stored properly to prevent loss, damage, or unauthorized access. After all the data have been collected and verified, the researchers will organize, tabulate, and analyze the responses using appropriate statistical tools, and the results will be interpreted to answer the problems stated in the study.

The study will undergo an ethics review by the Thesis Committee of Biabas Trade High School. After obtaining request letters addressed to the administration, the researcher will explain the purpose of the study to the respondents. The respondents in this study will not be harmed, and their participation will be entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wish to do so. The dignity of the respondents will be respected, and the protection of their privacy will be ensured at any stage of the study. Adequate levels of confidentiality for their data will be exercised and guaranteed. Respondents will participate based on informed consent, which requires the researchers to provide individuals with sufficient information and assurances regarding participation so that they can understand the implications of their involvement and make a fully informed, considered, and freely given decision without any pressure or coercion. The researchers will strictly follow the No Harm Policy, and anonymity will be given paramount importance in conducting the study. A debriefing session with the school's guidance counselor or the designated authority will be conducted should there be any adverse effects relative to the conduct of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study are based on data collected from 70 respondents who were residents of Barangay Biabas, Ubay, Bohol. The study employed a descriptive correlational research design and utilized simple random sampling to ensure representativeness of the selected households. Data were gathered using a researcher made survey questionnaire composed of items measuring demographic profile, level of inflation awareness, and level of smart budgeting practices. The analysis of data involved the use of weighted mean, composite mean, and inferential statistical tools such as computed values compared against tabular values, as well as correlation analysis using r and t values. The interpretation of results is grounded in the data collected and is directly aligned with the objectives of the study, particularly in determining the levels of awareness and practices, identifying differences across demographic variables, and examining the relationship between inflation awareness and smart budgeting practices.

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals important socioeconomic characteristics that shape household financial behavior. In terms of household size, 41 respondents or 58.57% belong to households with 4–6 members, followed by 18 or 25.71% with 1–3 members, 9 or 12.86% with 7–9 members, and only 2 or 2.86% with 10 and above. This indicates that the majority of households are medium sized, which increases the demand for essential goods and services, particularly during periods of inflation. Regarding employment, 31 respondents or 44.29% reported having only 1 employed member in the household, 28 or 40.00% have 2 employed members, 7 or 10.00% have 3 employed members,

while only 2 or 2.86% reported none and 2 or 2.86% reported 4 or more. This distribution suggests a heavy reliance on a limited number of income earners, increasing vulnerability to rising prices. In terms of financial management, 51 respondents or 72.86% identified the mother as the person mainly in charge of budgeting, 11 or 15.71% indicated both parents, 8 or 11.43% indicated the father, and 0 or 0.00% identified elder siblings. This reflects the central role of mothers in managing household finances. For the source of income, 28 respondents or 40.00% rely on farming or fishing, 25 or 35.71% on regular employment, 13 or 18.57% on business or sari sari store, 4 or 5.71% on government assistance, and 0 or 0.00% on remittances. This indicates a strong dependence on primary and unstable sectors. In terms of income, 38 respondents or 54.29% earn below Php 10,000, 12 or 17.14% earn Php 10,001–Php 15,000, 15 or 21.43% earn Php 15,001–Php 20,000, 2 or 2.86% earn Php 20,001–Php 25,000, and 3 or 4.29% earn Php 25,001 and above. Meanwhile, 45 respondents or 64.29% spend below Php 10,000 monthly, 14 or 20.00% spend Php 10,001–Php 15,000, 9 or 12.86% spend Php 15,001–Php 20,000, 0 or 0.00% spend Php 20,001–Php 25,000, and 2 or 2.86% spend Php 25,001 and above. These figures demonstrate that most households operate within constrained financial conditions, reflecting a survival oriented budgeting approach.

The level of inflation awareness among respondents is consistently high across all indicators. For household expense monitoring, the composite mean is 3.37, interpreted as High within the scale 2.51–3.50, with the highest weighted mean of 3.47 for the statement on adjusting spending depending on income changes and the lowest weighted mean of 3.29 for recognizing the need to observe spending patterns frequently and paying attention to expenses when resources are scarce. This suggests that while respondents are adaptive, consistent monitoring at a micro level remains a challenge. In terms of market behavior, the composite mean is 3.23, also interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.34 for observing how prices affect purchasing power and the lowest weighted mean of 2.57 for observing market conditions before buying. This indicates that respondents prioritize direct price impacts over broader market analysis. For spending pattern recognition, the composite mean is 3.22, interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.30 for recognizing spending behavior based on intentions and the lowest weighted mean of 3.14 for observing spending patterns through decision cycles. For budget constraint understanding, the composite mean is 3.25, interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.53 interpreted as Very High for adjusting choices due to budget limits and the lowest weighted mean of 2.99 for reducing stress through understanding budget limits. The overall weighted mean for inflation awareness is 3.27, interpreted as High, with household expense monitoring ranked first at 3.37 and spending pattern recognition ranked lowest at 3.22. These findings indicate that respondents are highly aware of inflationary pressures and actively adjust their financial behaviors accordingly, consistent with theoretical perspectives such as adaptive expectations and consumer behavior under economic constraints.

The level of smart budgeting practices among respondents is also high. For budget planning and tracking, the composite mean is 3.29, interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.43 for improving financial stability through planning and tracking and the lowest weighted mean of 3.10 for organizing money into mental accounts. This suggests a preference for structured budgeting over informal approaches. For spending control priorities, the composite mean is 3.41, interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.54 interpreted as Very High for controlling spending through awareness of psychological biases and self-control, and the lowest weighted mean of 3.24 for making decisions through prioritization. For saving emergency habits, the composite mean is 3.39, interpreted as High, with the highest weighted mean of 3.46 for saving during stable income periods and the lowest weighted mean of 3.33 for reducing financial risks through savings. The overall weighted mean

for smart budgeting practices is 3.36, interpreted as High, with spending control ranked first at 3.41, followed by saving emergency habits at 3.39, and budget planning and tracking at 3.29. These results indicate that households exhibit disciplined and proactive financial management strategies, emphasizing control of expenditures and preparation for uncertainties.

The analysis of differences between demographic profile and level of inflation awareness shows no statistically significant relationships across all variables tested. For total number of family members, the computed value is 0.831, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.743711, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. For number of family members who are employed, the computed value is 0.251, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.51304, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. For the person mainly in charge of household budgeting, the computed value is 0.154, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.51304, indicating no significant difference and acceptance of the null hypothesis. For source of income, the computed value is 1.042, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.51304, resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. For average monthly income, the computed value is 0.654, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.51304, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. For average monthly expenses, the computed value is 0.623, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.51304, resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that inflation awareness is consistent across demographic categories, suggesting that awareness is influenced by shared economic conditions rather than individual household characteristics.

Similarly, the analysis of differences between demographic profile and level of smart budgeting practices also shows no statistically significant relationships. For total number of family members, the computed value is 1.506, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.744, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. For number of employed members, the computed value is 1.070, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.513, resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. For the person mainly in charge of budgeting, the computed value is 0.489, which is lower than the tabular value of 3.134, indicating no significant difference and acceptance of the null hypothesis. For source of income, the computed value is 1.690, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.744, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. For average monthly income, the computed value is 0.445, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.513, resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. For average monthly expenses, the computed value is 0.326, which is lower than the tabular value of 2.513, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. These results suggest that smart budgeting practices are uniformly applied across households regardless of demographic variations, indicating that external economic pressures such as inflation drive consistent behavioral responses.

The relationship between the level of inflation awareness and the level of smart budgeting practices reveals a statistically significant and strong positive correlation. The computed r value is 0.670, indicating a strong positive relationship, while the computed t value is 7.423, which is significantly higher than the tabular t value of 1.995 at the chosen level of significance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that as the level of inflation awareness increases, the level of smart budgeting practices also increases. The direction of the relationship is positive, meaning that greater awareness of inflationary pressures leads to more disciplined, structured, and proactive financial management behaviors among households. This result aligns with theoretical perspectives such as adaptive expectations and behavioral economics, which suggest that individuals adjust their consumption and financial decisions in response to perceived changes in economic conditions.

Overall, the findings of the study demonstrate that households in Barangay Biabas operate within constrained economic conditions characterized by low income and limited employment opportunities, yet they exhibit high levels of inflation awareness and smart

budgeting practices. The absence of significant differences across demographic variables indicates that these behaviors are broadly shared within the community, while the strong positive correlation between inflation awareness and budgeting practices underscores the critical role of awareness in shaping financial behavior. These results directly address the objectives of the study by confirming that inflation awareness significantly influences smart budgeting practices. The findings contribute to the understanding of household financial behavior in low income communities and provide empirical support for the development of targeted financial education and intervention programs. Furthermore, these results establish a foundation for the formulation of an action plan aimed at enhancing household resilience during periods of high inflation, which will be discussed in the subsequent section of the study.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that households in Barangay Biabas exhibit a strong capacity for economic resilience despite operating under constrained financial conditions. The findings reveal that a majority of households are medium sized, with 58.57% consisting of 4 to 6 members, and that 44.29% rely on only one employed family member, indicating a high level of financial vulnerability. Most households depend on farming and fishing at 40.00% or regular employment at 35.71%, while 54.29% earn below Php 10,000 and 64.29% spend below Php 10,000 monthly. These conditions confirm that a significant portion of the population lives near or below the poverty threshold, which necessitates careful and disciplined financial management. Within this context, mothers, who account for 72.86% of those responsible for budgeting, play a central role in managing limited resources, demonstrating the social and functional importance of household financial leadership in sustaining daily needs.

Despite these constraints, the respondents demonstrate a consistently high level of inflation awareness, as evidenced by an overall weighted mean of 3.27, with household expense monitoring ranked highest at 3.37 and spending pattern recognition ranked lowest at 3.22, both interpreted as High. This indicates that households are highly attentive to fluctuations in prices and actively adjust their spending behaviors based on income changes and perceived economic conditions. Similarly, the level of smart budgeting practices is also high, with an overall weighted mean of 3.36. Among the indicators, spending control priorities obtained the highest mean of 3.41, followed by saving emergency habits at 3.39 and budget planning and tracking at 3.29, all interpreted as High. These results demonstrate that households adopt structured financial strategies, emphasizing disciplined spending, prioritization of essential needs, and preparation for financial uncertainties. The findings further show that respondents rely more on conscious planning and control rather than informal or unstructured financial behaviors.

The inferential analysis provides additional insight into the nature of these behaviors. The absence of statistically significant differences between demographic variables and both inflation awareness and smart budgeting practices is evident, as all computed values are consistently lower than their corresponding tabular values. For inflation awareness, computed values such as 0.831 compared to 2.743711 for household size, 0.251 compared to 2.51304 for number of employed members, 0.154 compared to 2.51304 for person in charge of budgeting, 1.042 compared to 2.51304 for source of income, 0.654 compared to 2.51304 for average monthly income, and 0.623 compared to 2.51304 for average monthly expenses all indicate not significant results, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis in each case. Similarly, for smart budgeting practices, computed values of 1.506 compared to 2.744 for household size, 1.070 compared to 2.513 for number of employed members, 0.489 compared to 3.134 for person in charge, 1.690 compared to 2.744 for source of income, 0.445 compared to 2.513 for income, and 0.326 compared to 2.513 for expenses also confirm non-significant relationships.

These findings indicate that both inflation awareness and budgeting practices are uniformly manifested across households regardless of demographic variations, suggesting that shared economic pressures rather than individual characteristics primarily shape financial behavior.

More importantly, the study establishes a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between inflation awareness and smart budgeting practices, as evidenced by a computed r value of 0.670 and a computed t value of 7.423, which exceeds the tabular value of 1.995. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirms that higher levels of inflation awareness are associated with more effective and disciplined budgeting practices. This relationship underscores the role of awareness as a critical driver of adaptive financial behavior, indicating that households respond to rising prices by strengthening their financial planning, controlling expenditures, and preparing for future uncertainties. The findings suggest that inflation acts as a unifying external force that compels households, regardless of demographic differences, to adopt similar survival oriented financial strategies.

In light of these findings, it is concluded that while demographic factors such as income level, family size, and source of livelihood determine the scale and limitations of household consumption, they do not significantly alter the level of awareness or the application of smart budgeting practices. Instead, the external pressure of inflation serves as a universal catalyst that drives households toward more structured and disciplined financial behavior. This reinforces the importance of financial awareness as a key mechanism for enhancing household resilience during periods of economic instability.

Building on these conclusions, the study recommends that households continue strengthening their budgeting practices by consistently planning and monitoring their expenses and by engaging in shared financial decision making among family members to improve overall financial management. It is also recommended that local government and barangay officials implement programs that enhance income opportunities and financial stability, such as livelihood training initiatives and the establishment of a barangay price monitoring board that regularly provides updated information on the prices of basic commodities. Furthermore, financial educators are encouraged to conduct financial literacy programs and savings initiatives that focus on practical skills such as budgeting, saving, and responsible spending to further strengthen the financial capacity of residents. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand this line of inquiry by involving larger samples or different communities and by incorporating additional variables such as income level, family size, and spending behavior to provide a more comprehensive understanding of household financial adaptation during inflation.

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