

The Effectiveness of Project Deconcentration of Vital Operations for Leveraging Volumes of Education Services (DeVOLVES) on Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency in the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province

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Publication history: Received: June 17, 2026; Revised: July 4, 2026; Accepted: July 9, 2026

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Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES (Deconcentration of Vital Operations for Leveraging Volumes of Education Services) in promoting accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province and served as the basis for an action plan to strengthen its implementation. The study was anchored on Institutional Theory, Governance Theory, Public Value Theory, Policy Implementation Theory, and Transaction Cost Economics. A descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design with documentary analysis was employed. Data were collected from 212 non-teaching personnel from the first, third, and fourth congressional districts using a researcher-made, expert-validated questionnaire with excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .991). Descriptive and correlational statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that Project DeVOLVES was generally rated as Much Effective in implementation and Very Much Effective in accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Purpose and monitoring received the highest implementation ratings, while evaluation obtained the lowest, though still favorable, assessment. Significant agreement was observed in the implementation of selected project dimensions, whereas no significant agreement was found regarding its effectiveness across accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Strong positive relationships were identified among accountability, transparency, and efficiency, indicating that improvements in one governance dimension contribute to enhancements in the others. The study concludes that Project DeVOLVES effectively strengthens decentralized educational governance and public service delivery. It recommends strengthening evaluation practices, stakeholder feedback mechanisms, performance monitoring, staff development, resource management, and the standardization of best practices across all sub-offices. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting accessible and quality educational services and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by enhancing accountability, transparency, and effective public governance. Its sustainability impact lies in providing evidence to improve decentralized educational management and support continuous institutional improvement in public education.

Keywords: Accountability, Administrative Deconcentration, Efficiency, Project DeVOLVES, Public Service Governance, Transparency

1. Introduction

Project DeVOLVES (Deconcentration of Vital Operations for Leveraging Volumes of Education Services) was implemented by the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province to improve the accessibility and quality of public education services through administrative deconcentration. Anchored on the constitutional principles of accountability, transparency, and efficiency, the initiative supports the Department of Education's mandate of delivering responsive and quality basic education. This study evaluates the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in promoting accountability, transparency, and efficiency and provides a basis for an action plan to strengthen its implementation.

1.1 Background of Project DeVOLVES and Public Service Governance

The Philippine Constitution recognizes accountability, transparency, and public participation as fundamental principles of governance. Administrative deconcentration transfers selected government functions to local offices to improve responsiveness while maintaining accountability to the central government (Brilliantes Jr., 1987; Yuliani, 2004; Ribot, 2002). These principles are reinforced through Republic Act No. 6713, Republic Act No. 11032, and Republic Act No. 9155, which promote ethical public service, efficient government transactions, and quality basic education. In response to the geographical challenges of Quezon Province, the Schools Division Office established Project DeVOLVES by creating strategically located sub-offices to improve service delivery for teaching and non-teaching personnel. The project also supports the government's decentralization initiatives, including Executive Order No. 138.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Project DeVOLVES

The literature consistently identifies deconcentration as an effective governance strategy for improving educational service delivery, resource management, responsiveness, and stakeholder participation while maintaining central policy direction (PBED, 2018; Priyanda, et al., 2023; Channa, 2015; Aritonang, 2016; Maria El Khdari, 2018). Studies likewise emphasize that accountability, transparency, and efficiency are essential outcomes of successful decentralization. Effective implementation depends on clearly defined responsibilities, adequate institutional capacity, continuous monitoring, transparent governance, and stakeholder participation (Reyes et al., 2019; Kato and Tanaka, 2020; Anderson, 2021; Gupta, et al., 2020; Santos, et al., 2022; Clarke, 2020; Dizon and Sy, 2023; Wilson, et al., 2023; Mbaya, et al., 2021). Philippine studies further indicate that while decentralization strengthens local governance, challenges remain in policy implementation, monitoring, resource management, and organizational capacity, highlighting the need for continuous improvement in decentralized education systems (Santiago, 2017; Ramirez, 2020; Crouch, 2016; Orbeta, 2019).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Project DeVOLVES

Globally, deconcentration has been recognized as an effective strategy for improving educational governance through enhanced accountability, transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness (PBED, 2018; Priyanda, et al., 2023; Channa, 2015; Aritonang, 2016; Maria El Khdari, 2018). Nationally, the Philippines institutionalized decentralization through the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act No. 6713, Republic Act No. 11032, Republic Act No. 9155, and Executive Order No. 138 to strengthen quality public service and basic education. Locally, the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province implemented Project DeVOLVES to decentralize essential services through strategically located sub-offices, improving service accessibility and operational effectiveness across geographically dispersed schools.

1.4 Theoretical or Conceptual Basis of Project DeVOLVES

This study is anchored on Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), Governance Theory (Rhodes, 1997), Public Value Theory (Moore, 1995), Policy Implementation Theory (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973), and Transaction Cost Economics (Coase, 1937). These theories collectively explain how deconcentration influences organizational behavior, collaborative governance, public value creation, policy implementation, and efficient resource utilization. Guided by these theoretical foundations, the study examines the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in enhancing accountability, transparency, and efficiency and in developing an action plan for improving public service delivery in the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale

Although previous studies have examined deconcentration, decentralization, and educational governance, limited research has investigated their combined effects on accountability, transparency, and efficiency within the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province. Existing literature primarily focuses on governance, resource management, and organizational performance, leaving insufficient empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES. Hence, this study evaluates the implementation of Project DeVOLVES and proposes an action plan to enhance public service delivery in support of the Department of Education's mandate.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education by supporting initiatives that strengthen the accessibility and quality of basic education through effective governance. It also supports SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions by promoting accountability, transparency, and efficient public service delivery in educational institutions. These SDGs are consistent with the objectives and governance principles discussed in the study.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to institutional and governance sustainability by providing evidence that can strengthen decentralized educational management and improve public service delivery. The proposed action plan may assist education administrators and policymakers in enhancing accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency, thereby supporting sustainable institutional development and continuous improvement in basic education services.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design with documentary analysis. The descriptive-evaluative approach was used to determine the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in terms of accountability, transparency, and efficiency, while the correlational method examined the significant agreement and relationships among the respondents' assessments of the study variables.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province, specifically in the sub-offices implementing Project DeVOLVES located in the 1st Congressional District (Real), 3rd Congressional District (Catanauan), and 4th Congressional District (Gumaca). These strategically established sub-offices provide decentralized educational services to geographically dispersed schools and communities across the province.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were non-teaching personnel from the three congressional districts where Project DeVOLVES is implemented. The study population consisted of 452 respondents distributed across the three sub-offices. Using Slovin's formula, 212 respondents were selected, comprising 65 participants from the 1st Congressional District, 72 from the 3rd Congressional District, and 75 from the 4th Congressional District, representing 31%, 34%, and 35% of the total sample, respectively.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to identify the research locale and target respondents from the Schools Division Office sub-offices implementing Project DeVOLVES. Random sampling through Slovin's formula was subsequently used to determine the required sample size, ensuring adequate representation from the three congressional districts included in the study.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-made survey checklist questionnaire designed to determine the implementation and effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in terms of accountability, transparency, and efficiency. The instrument consisted of 104 items organized into four sections covering the implementation of Project DeVOLVES based on goals and objectives, purpose, monitoring, and evaluation; accountability through responsiveness, service delivery, and administrative commitment; transparency through information accessibility, information availability, and opportunities for feedback; and efficiency through resource utilization, time management, and process improvement. The instrument underwent content validation by experts in Public Administration, including a School Principal, Administrative Officer IV, Administrative Officer II, Administrative Assistant II, and the research adviser. Reliability testing demonstrated excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha (α) of .991, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for measuring the constructs of the study (George & Mallery, 2003).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher presented the dissertation proposal for evaluation, incorporated the recommendations of the evaluation committee, and prepared the research instrument. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province before the instrument was validated by experts and administered to the selected respondents. The completed questionnaires were retrieved, and the collected data were organized, analyzed, and interpreted. The manuscript subsequently underwent pre-oral and final oral evaluations, after which the recommended revisions were incorporated before final reproduction and submission.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were tabulated, collated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the implementation and effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in terms of accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Correlational analysis was employed to determine the significant agreement and relationships among the variables examined, providing the basis for the proposed action plan.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Implementation of Project DeVOLVES

3.1.1 Goals and Objectives

Project DeVOLVES was generally implemented effectively in achieving its goals and objectives, with an overall weighted mean of 4.48 (Much Effective). The 3rd and 4th Districts rated the implementation as Very Much Effective, while the 1st District rated it Much Effective. Respondents identified improved efficiency and effectiveness of educational service delivery as the highest-rated outcome. Other highly rated indicators included the project's positive impact on the educational sector, alignment with quality education initiatives, and strengthened personnel capabilities. Lower ratings were observed in reducing bureaucratic delays, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and addressing educational challenges, although these remained within the Much Effective category. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has substantially achieved its intended goals by improving educational service delivery and strengthening personnel capability. These results support the view of Bryson (2018) that clearly defined goals and objectives guide planning, implementation, and performance. Likewise, World Bank (2022) emphasized that decentralization improves service efficiency by bringing decision-making closer to local communities. However, the lower ratings in the 1st District suggest

uneven implementation, which may be attributed to differences in capacity, leadership, or logistical support. Consistent with Turner & Hulme (1997), decentralization requires strong administrative systems to minimize bureaucratic delays, while Bryk, et al. (2021) stressed that sustained educational improvement depends on active collaboration among stakeholders.

3.1.2 Purpose

The implementation of Project DeVOLVES in terms of purpose received an overall weighted mean of 4.50 (Very Much Effective). The highest rating was given to the project's alignment with the mission and vision of the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province. Respondents also highly rated its contribution to improved educational outcomes and the achievement of the division's educational goals. Indicators related to stakeholder confidence, adaptation to educational challenges, and promotion of innovation received comparatively lower ratings but remained within the Much Effective level. District ratings showed stronger implementation in the 3rd and 4th Districts than in the 1st District. These findings demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES effectively fulfills its intended purpose by supporting the strategic direction of the Schools Division Office. The results affirm the concept of Bardach & Patashnik (2016) that a project's purpose provides the direction for successful implementation and public sector reform. Although respondents recognized improvements in educational outcomes, the relatively lower ratings on stakeholder confidence and innovation suggest that greater engagement and localized innovations are still needed to strengthen long-term educational transformation.

3.1.3 Monitoring

Project DeVOLVES obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.50 (Very Much Effective) in monitoring. Respondents highly rated the project's ability to mitigate potential educational issues, comply with existing laws and regulations, ensure quality educational deliverables, and demonstrate proactive implementation. Monitoring of administrative processes and progress tracking received relatively lower ratings, particularly in the 1st District, although these remained within the Much Effective level. Overall, the 3rd and 4th Districts consistently recorded Very Much Effective ratings. The findings suggest that monitoring mechanisms have been effectively institutionalized, promoting accountability, compliance, and continuous improvement throughout Project DeVOLVES. These results support UNESCO (2023), which emphasized that systematic monitoring and performance evaluation are essential components of successful decentralized educational systems. Nevertheless, the lower ratings in some monitoring indicators indicate opportunities to strengthen administrative monitoring practices, particularly in districts with relatively lower implementation ratings.

3.1.4 Evaluation

The evaluation component of Project DeVOLVES obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.46 (Much Effective). The 3rd District achieved a Very Much Effective rating, while the 1st and 4th Districts were rated Much Effective. Respondents highly rated the use of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, the use of evaluation results to improve service delivery, and the application of findings in future planning. Lower ratings were observed in systematic data collection, stakeholder participation in evaluation, assessment of long-term project impact, and sustainability evaluation. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has established effective evaluation practices that support continuous improvement and informed planning. The use of multiple evaluation approaches reflects comprehensive assessment practices consistent with Senge (2006), while the need for stronger stakeholder participation and systematic data collection aligns with the recommendations of OECD (2019). The district differences further suggest the importance of strengthening evaluation capacity and standardizing evaluation procedures across all implementation areas to ensure consistent project outcomes.

3.1.5 Summary of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES

The overall implementation of Project DeVOLVES was rated Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.48. The 3rd and 4th Districts consistently obtained Very Much Effective ratings across the four implementation dimensions Goals and Objectives, Purpose, Monitoring, and Evaluation while the 1st District rated all dimensions as Much Effective. Among the implementation areas, Purpose and Monitoring recorded the highest overall weighted means of 4.50 (Very Much Effective), followed by Goals and Objectives with 4.48 (Much Effective) and Evaluation with 4.46 (Much Effective). These findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has been effectively implemented throughout the Schools Division of Quezon Province, although differences in district ratings suggest varying levels of implementation across local offices. The findings demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES has successfully institutionalized its implementation across the Schools Division by aligning its objectives, monitoring mechanisms, and evaluation processes with its intended purpose. The consistently high ratings, particularly in the 3rd and 4th Districts, support the findings of Johnson, et al. (2024) that systematic implementation and evaluation frameworks strengthen evidence-based decision-making and improve decentralized educational governance. However, the comparatively lower ratings in the 1st District indicate the need to reinforce monitoring, evaluation, and implementation support to ensure more consistent outcomes across all districts.

3.2 Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES

3.2.1 Agreement on the Implementation Dimensions

The test of significant agreement examined the consistency of respondents' rankings across the four implementation dimensions of Project DeVOLVES: Goals and Objectives, Purpose, Monitoring, and Evaluation. The analysis showed moderate agreement among respondents, with Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) ranging from 0.535 to 0.603. The highest agreement was observed in Purpose (W = 0.603), followed by Goals and Objectives (W = 0.539), while Monitoring and Evaluation both obtained W = 0.535. Statistical testing further revealed that Purpose, Monitoring, and Evaluation demonstrated significant agreement among respondents, whereas Goals and Objectives did not reach statistical significance because its computed Chi-square value was below the critical value. The results indicate that respondents shared a common perception regarding the implementation of Project DeVOLVES, particularly in terms of its purpose, monitoring, and evaluation processes. The significant agreement suggests that these implementation dimensions were consistently understood and experienced across the participating districts. Conversely, the absence of significant agreement for Goals and Objectives implies that respondents differed in how they interpreted or prioritized the project's strategic direction. This variation may reflect differences in local implementation contexts, administrative practices, or support mechanisms. The findings highlight the need to strengthen communication and alignment of project goals to achieve greater consistency in implementation across all districts.

3.3 Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES on Accountability

3.3.1 Responsiveness

Project DeVOLVES demonstrated a Very Much Effective level of accountability in terms of responsiveness, with an overall weighted mean of 4.55. The 3rd and 4th Districts obtained Very Much Effective ratings, while the 1st District was rated Much Effective. The highest-rated indicator was the prioritization of urgent matters, followed by personnel professionalism, proactive management of potential issues, management of stakeholder complaints, adherence to schedules and budgets, prompt response to requests, follow-up actions, and timely resolution of stakeholder concerns. Although all indicators received favorable ratings, the 1st District consistently obtained relatively lower scores than the other districts. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has strengthened accountability by promoting timely, professional, and responsive service delivery across the Schools Division. Effective adherence to schedules, prompt responses, and proactive management of issues demonstrate improved operational efficiency and accountability. These findings support Novikova & Liebert (2021), who emphasized that responsiveness is a fundamental indicator of effective public service, and Abidin, Singaravelloo, & Azizan (2018), who noted that timely responses enhance stakeholder satisfaction and public trust. The comparatively lower ratings in the 1st District suggest the need for additional administrative support and capacity-building to achieve more consistent responsiveness across all districts.

3.3.2 Service Delivery

Project DeVOLVES was likewise rated Very Much Effective in terms of service delivery, with an overall weighted mean of 4.56. The 3rd District recorded the highest mean (4.69, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.60, VME), while the 1st District obtained 4.38 (ME). Respondents highly rated personnel professionalism, staff competence, provision of adequate service information, management of service-related complaints, quality and reliability of services, availability of necessary resources, acceptance of service requests beyond official hours, and compliance with the No Noon Break Policy. Overall, respondents perceived that Project DeVOLVES significantly enhanced the quality and reliability of educational services across the Schools Division. The results demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES has improved accountability by strengthening service delivery and making educational services more accessible and reliable. High ratings in professionalism, staff competence, and responsiveness indicate that decentralization has enhanced institutional performance and stakeholder satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Sulasula & Moreno (2023), who emphasized that effective public service delivery strengthens public trust, institutional credibility, and sustainable governance. However, the relatively lower ratings in the 1st District suggest that additional support may be necessary to improve service consistency and resource availability across all implementation areas.

3.3.3 Administrative Commitment

Project DeVOLVES also demonstrated a Very Much Effective level of accountability in terms of administrative commitment. The 3rd District recorded the highest overall mean (4.69, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.60, VME), while the 1st District obtained 4.35 (ME). Respondents rated compliance with policies and regulations as the highest indicator, followed by commitment to achieving DepEd educational goals and ensuring fair and equitable treatment of employees. Administrative leadership support and staff development opportunities likewise received favorable ratings, although training and development obtained the lowest rating among the indicators while remaining within the effective range. The findings suggest that Project DeVOLVES has fostered strong administrative commitment by reinforcing policy compliance, organizational accountability, and leadership support across the Schools Division. The consistently high ratings indicate that local administrators have effectively assumed their expanded responsibilities under the deconcentration initiative. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower ratings for staff development and the lower district ratings in the 1st

District indicate opportunities to strengthen leadership development, employee capacity-building, and organizational support to ensure consistent administrative commitment throughout all districts.

3.4 Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES on Transparency

3.4.1 Information Accessibility

Project DeVOLVES was rated Very Much Effective in terms of information accessibility, with an overall weighted mean of 4.53. Respondents highly rated the accessibility of service information, the availability of the Citizen's Charter and office procedures, compliance with the Data Privacy Law, and the provision of clear information to stakeholders. The 3rd and 4th Districts consistently obtained Very Much Effective ratings, while the 1st District received a Much Effective rating. The indicator on providing information in multiple accessible formats received the lowest rating, although it remained within the Much Effective level. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has strengthened transparency by improving stakeholder access to essential information and government services. Accessible and timely information promotes accountability and enables stakeholders to participate more effectively in educational governance. The lower rating for multi-format information delivery suggests opportunities to improve accessibility for individuals with diverse communication needs. These findings are consistent with Santos (2016), who emphasized that transparent and accessible information systems strengthen citizen participation and accountability in decentralized governance.

3.4.2 Information Availability

Information availability received the highest rating among the transparency dimensions, with an overall weighted mean of 4.56 (Very Much Effective). Respondents highly rated the availability of necessary information, accessibility of service-related information, posting of the Citizen's Charter, and timely dissemination of documents and updates. The 3rd District obtained the highest rating, followed by the 4th District, while the 1st District consistently received lower, although still favorable, ratings. The findings demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES effectively promotes transparency by ensuring that stakeholders have timely access to relevant information needed for decision-making and service transactions. Consistent dissemination of information strengthens organizational credibility and accountability. These results support Firdaus, et al. (2020), who emphasized that reliable public information systems are fundamental to transparency and accountable governance. The comparatively lower ratings in the 1st District suggest that strengthening digital communication and localized information dissemination could further improve information availability.

3.4.3 Opportunities for Feedback

Opportunities for feedback were rated Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.46. Respondents recognized that Project DeVOLVES has established mechanisms that enable stakeholders to express concerns, provide suggestions, and participate in improving services. However, the 1st District consistently received lower ratings than the 3rd and 4th Districts, indicating differences in stakeholder participation across districts. The findings suggest that Project DeVOLVES has established functional feedback mechanisms that support stakeholder participation and transparent governance. However, strengthening these mechanisms would encourage greater stakeholder engagement and more responsive decision-making. This finding is supported by Kowalski, et al. (2020), who emphasized that technology-enabled feedback systems enhance responsiveness, transparency, and institutional accountability.

3.4.4 Summary of Transparency

Overall, the implementation of Project DeVOLVES on transparency was rated Very Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.52. Among the transparency dimensions, Information Availability received the highest rating (4.56, VME), followed by Information Accessibility (4.53, VME), while Opportunities for Feedback obtained the lowest rating (4.46, ME). The 3rd and 4th Districts consistently achieved Very Much Effective ratings, whereas the 1st District was rated Much Effective across all transparency indicators. The findings demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES has effectively strengthened transparency by improving access to information and ensuring the availability of essential public information. These results reinforce the importance of reliable information systems in promoting accountability and good governance, consistent with Firdaus, et al. (2020). Nevertheless, the comparatively lower ratings in opportunities for feedback indicate that stakeholder engagement mechanisms should be further enhanced to ensure more inclusive participation and continuous improvement throughout all districts.

3.5 Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES on Efficiency

3.5.1 Resource Utilization

Resource utilization was rated Very Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.55. Respondents perceived that Project DeVOLVES effectively optimized the allocation and utilization of available resources to support educational service delivery. The 3rd District obtained the highest rating (4.73, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.61, VME), while the 1st District recorded 4.32 (ME), indicating relatively lower efficiency in resource utilization. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES strengthened operational efficiency by promoting responsible resource management and maximizing available resources for service delivery. The higher ratings in the 3rd and 4th Districts demonstrate stronger implementation of resource management practices, whereas the comparatively lower rating in the 1st District suggests the need to improve

resource planning and utilization. These findings are supported by Villanueva (2018), who emphasized that performance-based budgeting and regular audit reviews enhance resource optimization in decentralized education initiatives.

3.5.2 Time Management

Time management was likewise assessed as Very Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.53. Respondents recognized that Project DeVOLVES promoted timely completion of activities, effective scheduling, and efficient coordination of project implementation. The 3rd District achieved the highest rating (4.71, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.61, VME), while the 1st District obtained 4.28 (ME). The findings suggest that Project DeVOLVES has improved organizational efficiency through better adherence to project timelines and work schedules. Effective time management contributed to faster service delivery and improved operational performance. However, the relatively lower rating in the 1st District indicates opportunities to strengthen scheduling practices and coordination mechanisms. This finding supports Torres (2021), who advocated integrating digital project management platforms and agile methodologies to improve time efficiency in local governance programs.

3.5.3 Process Improvement

Process improvement received an overall weighted mean of 4.53 (Very Much Effective). Respondents perceived that Project DeVOLVES continuously improved operational processes and aligned organizational activities with project goals. The 3rd District recorded the highest rating (4.69, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.57, VME), while the 1st District obtained 4.32 (ME). Although respondents positively evaluated continuous improvement efforts, the 1st District showed comparatively lower ratings, indicating opportunities to strengthen innovation and process enhancement. The findings demonstrate that Project DeVOLVES has promoted continuous improvement by refining operational processes and supporting efficient service delivery. However, the comparatively lower ratings in the 1st District suggest the need to strengthen innovation and stakeholder participation in process improvement initiatives. These findings are consistent with Reyes et al. (2019), who emphasized that Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) mechanisms, stakeholder-driven evaluations, and adaptive policy adjustments contribute to more effective and responsive public service delivery.

3.5.4 Summary of Efficiency

Overall, the implementation of Project DeVOLVES in promoting efficiency was rated Very Much Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.54. Among the three efficiency dimensions, Resource Utilization ranked highest (4.55, VME), while Time Management and Process Improvement both obtained 4.53 (VME). The 3rd District achieved the highest overall rating (4.71, VME), followed by the 4th District (4.60, VME), whereas the 1st District received 4.31 (ME). These results indicate that Project DeVOLVES effectively enhanced operational efficiency across the Schools Division, although implementation varied among districts. The findings indicate that Project DeVOLVES has effectively improved organizational efficiency through sound resource utilization, effective time management, and continuous process improvement. The stronger performance of the 3rd and 4th Districts reflects successful implementation of efficiency-enhancing practices, while the comparatively lower ratings in the 1st District highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve resource management, scheduling, and innovation. These findings support Villanueva (2018), Torres (2021), and Reyes et al. (2019), who emphasized that effective resource optimization, digital time management systems, and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) mechanisms are essential for sustaining efficient and responsive governance in decentralized organizations.

3.6 Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project DeVOLVES

3.6.1 Agreement on Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency

The test of significant agreement revealed low to moderate agreement among the congressional districts regarding the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) was 0.370 for Accountability, 0.194 for Transparency, and 0.283 for Efficiency. The computed Chi-square values (11.29, 5.67, and 7.16, respectively) were all lower than the critical value of 14.067 at the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating no significant agreement among respondents regarding the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES across the three governance dimensions. Accountability obtained the highest level of agreement, while Transparency recorded the lowest. The findings indicate that respondents from different districts perceived the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES differently, reflecting variations in local implementation, administrative capacity, resource availability, and stakeholder experiences. Although all districts generally viewed the project positively, the absence of significant agreement suggests that implementation outcomes were not uniform across the Schools Division. These findings highlight the need to strengthen implementation standards, monitoring practices, and continuous improvement initiatives to promote more consistent governance outcomes throughout all districts.

3.7 Test of Significant Relationship between Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency

3.7.1 Relationship between Accountability and Transparency

A very high positive correlation was found between accountability and transparency ($\rho = 0.90$, $p = 0.00$), indicating a statistically significant relationship. The findings show that improvements in accountability were associated with corresponding improvements in transparency. The results suggest that enhanced responsiveness, service delivery, and administrative commitment contribute to greater information accessibility, information availability, and stakeholder participation. Strengthening accountability therefore supports improved transparency, reinforcing the importance of integrating these governance principles in implementing Project DeVOLVES.

3.7.2 Relationship between Accountability and Efficiency

Accountability and efficiency demonstrated a high positive correlation ($\rho = 0.80$, $p = 0.00$), indicating a statistically significant relationship. Increased accountability was associated with improved resource utilization, time management, and process improvement. The findings indicate that accountable governance contributes to more efficient project implementation by promoting responsible resource management, timely service delivery, and continuous operational improvement. Strengthening accountability mechanisms therefore supports higher organizational efficiency and more effective implementation of Project DeVOLVES.

3.7.3 Relationship between Transparency and Efficiency

Transparency and efficiency exhibited the strongest relationship among the governance dimensions, with a very high positive correlation ($\rho = 0.95$, $p = 0.00$). This indicates that increased transparency was strongly associated with improved efficiency. The findings suggest that transparent information systems promote better decision-making, reduce operational inefficiencies, and improve resource management. Ensuring timely access to information and open communication therefore contributes significantly to efficient implementation of Project DeVOLVES and strengthens overall governance performance.

3.8 Test of Significant Interrelationship among Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency

3.8.1 Interrelationship among the Governance Dimensions

Multiple correlation analysis revealed a high positive correlation among accountability, transparency, and efficiency, with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.75 and a significance level of $p = 0.00$. The results confirm a statistically significant interrelationship among the three governance dimensions. The findings indicate that accountability, transparency, and efficiency are interdependent dimensions of effective governance. Improvements in one dimension are associated with improvements in the others, demonstrating that Project DeVOLVES functions as an integrated governance initiative. These findings support Rogerson (2024), who emphasized that accountable governance promotes transparency, informed decision-making, and efficient utilization of public resources, thereby strengthening organizational performance and public service delivery.

3.9 Proposed Action Plan

The findings identified areas requiring continuous improvement despite the overall Very Much Effective implementation of Project DeVOLVES. The 1st Congressional District consistently obtained lower ratings across several dimensions, particularly in administrative accountability, information accessibility, stakeholder feedback, resource utilization, time management, and process improvement. These findings provided the basis for developing a responsive action plan to address implementation gaps and strengthen project performance across all districts. The proposed action plan translates the study findings into practical interventions aimed at improving governance, strengthening district-level implementation, and promoting continuous organizational improvement. By addressing identified weaknesses while sustaining existing strengths, the action plan supports the long-term effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES and contributes to more accountable, transparent, and efficient educational service delivery throughout the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

Project DeVOLVES was found to be highly effective in improving the implementation of decentralized educational services within the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province. The project demonstrated very high effectiveness in purpose, monitoring, accountability, transparency, and efficiency, while evaluation remained effective but requires further enhancement. Although respondents showed significant agreement on the implementation of the project, no significant agreement was found regarding its effectiveness across accountability, transparency, and efficiency, indicating variations in perceptions among districts. The strong positive relationships among accountability, transparency, and efficiency confirm that these governance dimensions collectively contribute to more effective educational service delivery and organizational performance.

The Schools Division Office of Quezon Province should strengthen project implementation by improving issue resolution, expanding information dissemination, enhancing feedback mechanisms, continuously monitoring resource utilization, increasing staff development opportunities, improving workload and meeting schedules, strengthening performance monitoring through key performance indicators, and standardizing best practices across all sub-offices. The proposed action plan should also be adopted to further enhance the implementation of Project DeVOLVES and sustain improvements in governance and service delivery.

This study was limited to evaluating the effectiveness of Project DeVOLVES in terms of accountability, transparency, and efficiency within the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province using respondents from the first, third, and fourth congressional districts. The findings were based on a descriptive-evaluative-correlational design and respondents' assessments at the time of data collection, limiting the results to the study setting and preventing broader generalization beyond the participating Schools Division Office.

Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest. This study received no external funding. The authors acknowledge the participation of the respondents from the Schools Division Office of Quezon Province, whose participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Data were collected using non-invasive survey methods, and all responses were treated confidentially, with no identifying information disclosed in the reporting of the findings.

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