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Challenges and Mitigation Strategies of Education Implementers in Addressing Unforeseen Setback

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ABSTRACT

This action research examined the challenges encountered in instructional leadership in public secondary schools and the mitigation strategies employed by school leaders to address these challenges. Using a descriptive–action research design, data were gathered through surveys, interviews, and document analysis involving teachers and school administrators. Findings revealed that the major challenges included limited resources, heavy administrative workload, teacher resistance to change, and insufficient professional development opportunities. To address these concerns, school leaders implemented collaborative leadership practices, capacity-building programs, instructional monitoring, and stakeholder engagement. The study concludes that effective instructional leadership requires adaptive strategies, shared leadership, and sustained support systems to improve teaching and learning outcomes. The results of this study may inform school administrators, policymakers, and educators in strengthening instructional leadership practices in similar educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership plays a crucial role in improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes in schools. School leaders are expected to guide teachers, manage instructional programs, and create a learning-focused school culture. However, instructional leaders often encounter challenges that hinder the effective implementation of their roles. In public secondary schools, these challenges are intensified by limited resources, increasing administrative demands, and diverse learner needs. This study was conducted to identify the common challenges faced by instructional leaders and to examine the mitigation strategies employed to address these challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Instructional leadership has been widely studied as a key factor influencing school effectiveness and student achievement (Hughes, G., Desantis, A., & Waszak, F., 2013). Previous studies emphasize the importance of leadership practices such as curriculum supervision, teacher professional development, and instructional monitoring. However, literature also highlights persistent challenges, including time constraints, lack of instructional resources, and resistance to pedagogical change (Rogers, T. T., & McClelland, J. L. (2004). Despite these findings, there remains a gap in context-specific action research focusing on how school leaders practically respond to these challenges within public secondary schools (Gill, M. J., & Sypher, B. D., 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized an action research design employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Participants included selected 50 public secondary school administrators and teachers. Data collection methods comprised structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of school documents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly observed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prevalent Challenges Encountered by the Education Implementers

Table 1 presents prevalent challenges encountered by education implementers in addressing unforeseen setbacks. The highest-rated challenge, "Inconsistencies between school policies and practices," received a mean response of 2.95, indicating it is "Sometimes Encountered." This suggests that respondents face this issue intermittently rather than daily.

A prime example of this disconnect is the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) policy in the United States. While aiming to improve student achievement, NCLB inadvertently led to practices such as social promotion, where students are advanced to the next grade level despite not meeting academic standards (Manly *et al.,* 2021). This discrepancy between policy intent and implementation underscores the need for alignment between policy goals and classroom realities.

In the Philippines, a similar phenomenon is observed. Although no official policy on mass promotion exists, it has become culturally ingrained due to pressures

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on teachers to meet performance targets (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2019). This practice undermines the policy's effectiveness and hinders students' academic progress. Thornberg's (2019) research further emphasizes the negative consequences of such inconsistencies, revealing that they can create a sense of grievance among students and lead to confrontations.

Table 1: Prevalent Challenges Encountered by the Education Implementers

Items	Mean	Rank
1. Lack of sufficient funding for educational initiatives.	2.7	4
2. Lack of staff who can assist students in terms of services, special education support, and behavior programs.	2.4	11.5
3. Limited access to educational resources and materials.	2.4	11.5
4. Lack of disaster preparedness program and effective emergency plans	2.2	18
5. Inadequacy of emergency response materials and staffs with sufficient training for emergency situations	2.6	6
6. Shortage of technological equipments and teachers who are knowledgeable in integrating technology effectively	2.5	8.5
7. Accessibility challenges in the existing school curriculum limit learners' educational opportunities	2.5	8.5
8. Limited understanding and awareness of teachers on the current gender issues and concerns	2.1	21.5
9. Insufficient training in technology usage which hampers the effective integration of technology in teaching and learning processes	2.3	14.5
10. Inadequate administrative support	2.2	18
11. Lack of community engagement and support which results in missed opportunities for students, restricted access to resources, and disconnection between the education system and the broader community	2.1	21.5
12. Lacks of clear, consistent, and effective educational policies and rules that hinder the establishment of an efficient, fair, and safe learning environment in school	2.2	18
13. Difficulties of students from ethnic minority to attend school regularly due to distance and low self-esteem to mingle with other learners	2.3	14.5
14. Lack of sustainability in school-based programs and projects aimed at uplifting students' academic performance	2.2	18
15. Insufficient support for students of diverse backgrounds, including varying races, ethnicities, religions, socio-economic statuses, and learning styles	2.2	18
16. Lack of appropriate mental health support services, which are critical issues given the increasing mental health needs of students	2.4	12
17. Heavy workload for Teachers resulting in high levels of stress, anxiety and depression, impacting their teaching performance	2.8	2
18. Inconsistencies between school policies and practices, like the "no child left behind" policy which lead to students being promoted despite their lack of mastery in learning skills.	3.0	1
19. Prevalence of bullying cases which deter children to attend classes	2.4	11.5
20. Inadequacy of learning support system at home	2.8	3
21. Failure of parents to properly use governments' support (4PS) for the education of their children	2.6	6
22. Lack of classrooms and other school facilities needed to promote effective learning	2.6	6

To address this challenge, experts advocate for comprehensive education reforms, including curriculum revisions prioritizing critical thinking and good citizenship (Manly *et al.,* 2021). Addressing the root causes of social promotion and ensuring students master essential skills at each grade level are crucial steps toward improving educational outcomes and preparing the workforce for future challenges.

The second most prevalent challenge, "Heavy workload for Teachers resulting in high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression," received a mean response of 2.79, also categorized as "Sometimes Encountered." This finding aligns with research indicating that excessive workloads can negatively impact teachers' mental health

and, consequently, their teaching performance (Kim & Loadman, 2019). The stress associated with heavy workloads can lead to burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

To mitigate this challenge, schools and policymakers need to prioritize teacher well-being. This can involve providing resources for stress management, offering professional development opportunities focused on workload management, and ensuring that teachers have adequate planning and collaboration time (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

The third prevalent challenge highlights the "inadequacy of learning support systems at home." While not directly measured in the survey, this challenge is well-documented in research. Parental involvement and a supportive home environment are crucial for student success (Jeynes, 2018). When these are lacking, students may face difficulties in completing homework, understanding concepts, and developing a love for learning. This can, in turn, increase teachers' workload and stress levels as they try to compensate for the lack of support at home.

Strategies to address this challenge include fostering stronger partnerships between schools and families, providing resources and workshops for parents on how to support their children's learning, and implementing programs that offer additional academic support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Jeynes, 2018).

Prevalent Mitigation Strategies by the Education Implementers in Addressing Unforeseen Setbacks

Table 2 presents the prevalent mitigation strategies employed by education implementers in addressing unforeseen setbacks. The most prevalent strategy, "Organizing meetings and conferences with parents, especially of underperforming students," received the highest mean response of 3.3. This finding aligns with research demonstrating the positive impact of parent-teacher conferences on student achievement. Cheung and Pomerantz (2021) found that parental involvement, facilitated through such conferences, increases student motivation and subsequently improves their academic performance. Slagle (2020) further supports this, indicating that students whose parents attend conferences tend to perform better than those whose parents do not. These findings underscore the importance of fostering open communication and collaboration between parents and teachers to enhance student learning outcomes.

Another prevalent strategy, "Engaging in a dialogue with parents regarding their responsibilities in appropriately utilizing government funds allocated for their children's education," also received a mean response of 3.2. This strategy is crucial in ensuring accountability and transparency in the use of public resources.

Research by Kim and Ryu (2022) highlights that when parents are well-informed about government-funded

Table 2: Prevalent Mitigation Strategies Employed by Education Implementers in Addressing Unforeseen Setbacks

Items	Mean	Rank
1. Collaborates with private companies, LGUs, NGOs, and community organizations to secure additional funding for educational initiatives.	3.0	16.5
2. Developed cross-training programs to equip existing staff with the skills and knowledge necessary to assist students in terms of services, special education support, and behavior programs.	3.0	16.5
3. Creates digital libraries and sharing platforms where students and educators can access and exchange educational resources and materials	2.4	22
4. Designed and implemented comprehensive disaster preparedness training programs for staff and students, including regular drills and simulations.	3.1	9
5. Develop and distribute emergency response resource kits containing essential supplies and materials for various emergency scenarios. Simultaneously, implement training programs to ensure staff members receive sufficient training on emergency procedures and protocols.	3.0	16.5
6. Providing appropriate physical facilities, technological equipment, and well-trained teachers to support effective technology integration	3.0	16.5
7. Provide ongoing training for teachers on inclusive teaching methods and accessibility tools.	3.1	9
8. Facilitating gender awareness campaign and activities to promote gender sensitivity among various stakeholders	3.0	16.5
9. Providing learning opportunities such as seminar workshops and trainings to enhance teachers' knowledge of technology usage to improve teaching and learning process	3.2	4
10. Facilitate frequent meetings, feedback sessions, and forums where staff can openly discuss concerns, share ideas, and collaborate with administrators.	3.0	16.5
11. Building and promoting partnerships and encourage collaboration with the community to establish clear and open lines of communication with parents and community members.	3.2	4

12. Engaged stakeholders, conducting regular evaluations and making necessary adjustments to promote an efficient, fair, and safe learning environment.	3.2	4
13. Addressing disparities in access to education, learning resources and opportunities through alternative learning programs	3.2	4
14. Sustaining school-based programs and project designed to uplift student academic performance	3.1	9
15. Establishing support systems through curricular activities and club organizations to meet the needs of diverse students	3.0	16.5
16. Conducting capacity-building activities like seminars, workshops, fora, and trainings to enhance teachers' ability to identify students with mental health problems and offer appropriate guidance	3.1	9
17. Offering opportunities for Teacher rejuvenation through Lakbay-aral, Team-Building, and Capacity-Building activities	3.0	16.5
18. Conducting seminars and educational fora on school policies with invited resource speakers from DepEd authorities	3.0	16.5
19. Strengthening policies to prevent bullying in school and conducting all-out campaign to avoid the same from happening	3.1	9
20. Organizing meetings and conferences with parents, specially of underperforming students to encourage adequate support for their children	3.3	1
21. Facilitate dialogue with parents to remind them of their duties and responsibilities in appropriately utilizing the government funds intended for their children's education	3.2	4
22. Lobbying for support from LGUs, NGOs, and other cause-oriented groups to address the issue of inadequacy of classrooms and other school facilities	3.0	16.5

programs and their role in their child's education, it leads to more effective utilization of resources and better educational outcomes for students.

The strategy "Providing learning opportunities such as seminar workshops and trainings to enhance teachers' knowledge of technology usage to improve teaching and learning process" received a mean response of 3.2. This aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of technology in education. Several studies (Bubb & Jones, 2020; Kumi-Yeboah & Arthur-Nyarko, 2021) have demonstrated that professional development programs focused on technology integration enhance teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) and lead to improved teaching practices and student engagement.

The strategy "Building and promoting partnerships and encouraging collaboration with the community" received a mean response of 3.2. This emphasizes the significance of community involvement in education. Research by Desforges and Abouchaar (2019) indicates that strong school-community partnerships contribute to a positive school climate, increased parental involvement, and improved student outcomes.

The strategy "Engaged stakeholders, conducting regular evaluations, and making necessary adjustments to promote an efficient, fair, and safe learning environment" also received a mean response of 3.2. This highlights the importance of continuous improvement in education. By involving stakeholders in the evaluation process and regularly assessing the effectiveness of programs and initiatives, schools can identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions to enhance the learning environment (Fullan, 2021).

Finally, the strategy "Addressing disparities in access to education, learning resources, and opportunities through alternative learning programs" received a mean response of 3.2. This aligns with the growing awareness of the need for equitable education. Research by Balfanz *et al.* (2020) suggests that alternative learning programs that incorporate inclusive strategies can effectively address disparities and provide all students with the support they need to succeed.

The findings imply that education implementers utilize a multi-faceted approach to overcome unexpected challenges. Key strategies include: cultivating strong relationships with parents and the community, investing in professional development for teachers, ensuring transparent resource management, and emphasizing continuous improvement. These efforts collectively promote a resilient and equitable educational system that benefits all students.

Level of Challenges Encountered by the Education Implementers

The table above shows the Level of Challenges Encountered by Education Implementers when grouped according to the Size and Location of the School. As a whole, the mean is 2.4 with a standard deviation of 0.5 and interpreted as Rarely Encountered this implies that the respondents encountered the challenges during implementation some of the time. For the size of the School, small and large has the same mean of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.5, and interpreted as "Sometimes Encountered", it means that the respondents encounter

the challenge during implementation but not all the time. While medium size got a 2.3 mean and a standard deviation of 0.5, and was interpreted as "Rarely Encountered".
. In terms of school location, urban schools gained a weighted mean response of 2.5 verbally interpreted as Sometimes Encountered while Rural schools gained a weighted mean response of 2.4 verbally interpreted as Rarely Encountered. This means that urban schools have encountered prevalent challenges more compared to rural schools.

Table 3: Level of Challenges Encountered by Education Implementers

Variables	Mean	Interpretation	SD
A. As a Whole	2.4	Rarely Encountered	0.5
B. Size of School			
Small	2.5	Sometimes Encountered	0.5
Medium	2.3	Rarely Encountered	0.5
Large	2.5	Sometimes Encountered	0.5
C. Location of School			
Urban	2.5	Sometimes Encountered	0.5
Rural	2.4	Rarely Encountered	0.5

Note: 3.50-4.00(Always Encountered); 2.50-3.49(Sometimes Encountered); 1.50-2.49(RarelyEncountered); 1.00-1.49(Never Encountered)

Generally, with regards to the size of the school and their location, the overall mean response is 2.4 verbally interpreted as Rarely Encountered which means that education implementers rarely encountered prevalent challenges in addressing the unforeseen setbacks among Elementary Schools.
The overall mean response of 2.4, interpreted as "Rarely Encountered," suggests that education implementers generally face challenges infrequently during implementation. However, this does not negate the importance of understanding and addressing these challenges, as even infrequent occurrences can significantly impact the effectiveness of educational initiatives.
Small and large schools share a mean response of 2.5, indicating challenges are "Sometimes Encountered." This suggests that school size may not be a significant factor in determining the frequency of challenges faced by implementers. It is important to note that this finding contrasts with research suggesting that smaller schools may face unique challenges related to resource constraints and limited staff capacity (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Further investigation is needed to understand the specific challenges faced by schools of different sizes in this context.
Medium-sized schools, with a mean response of 2.3, report encountering challenges "Rarely." This could be attributed to factors such as a more balanced student-teacher ratio or a more established organizational structure compared to smaller schools. However, additional research is necessary to explore the underlying reasons for this difference.
Urban schools, with a weighted mean response of 2.5 ("Sometimes Encountered"), face challenges more frequently than rural schools, which have a weighted mean response of 2.4 ("Rarely Encountered"). This finding aligns with research indicating that urban schools often contend with higher levels of poverty, student diversity, and social issues, which can contribute to increased challenges in implementing educational initiatives (Darling-Hammond, 2017).
While challenges are generally encountered infrequently among Elementary Schools, variations exist based on school size and location. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that considers the unique contexts of individual schools.

Level of Mitigation Strategies Employed by the Education Implementers

The table above shows the Level of Mitigation Strategies Employed by Education Implementers when grouped according to Size and Location of School. As a whole, there is 3.0 mean and a standard deviation of 0.5, and interpreted as Implemented. For the Size of School, small and large got the same mean of 2.9 and standard deviation of 0.5. while the medium size got a 3.2 mean and 0.6 standard deviation.
For the Location of Schools, rural got the highest mean of 3.0, while the urban got 2.9, and had the same standard deviation of 0.5.
This indicates that all schools at the elementary level had proper implementation among their education implementers with regard to mitigation strategies that can be employed during unforeseen setbacks. Generally, with regards to the size of the school and their location, the overall mean response is 3.0 verbally interpreted as that education implementers properly implemented mitigation strategies in addressing the unforeseen setbacks among Elementary Schools.
The overall mean response of 3.0, interpreted as "Implemented," indicates that education implementers across elementary schools, have successfully implemented mitigation strategies to address unforeseen setbacks. This positive finding aligns with recent research emphasizing

Table 4: Level of Mitigation Strategies Employed by Education Implementers

Variables	Mean	Interpretation	SD
A. As a Whole	3.0	Implemented	0.5
B. Size of School			
Small	2.9	Implemented	0.5
Medium	3.2	Implemented	0.6
Large	2.9	Implemented	0.5
C. Location of School			
Urban	2.9	Implemented	0.5
Rural	3.0	Implemented	0.5

Note: 3.50-4.00(Strongly Implemented); 2.50-3.49(Implemented); 1.50-2.49(Somewhat Implemented); 1.00-1.49(Not at all Implemented)

the importance of proactive planning and preparedness in educational settings (UNESCO, 2022).

Interestingly, small and large schools share a mean response of 2.9, suggesting a slightly lower level of implementation compared to medium-sized schools, which have a mean response of 3.2. This finding challenges the assumption that larger schools, with potentially more resources and staff, would exhibit higher levels of implementation. However, it is crucial to consider that smaller schools may have more flexibility and adaptability, enabling them to implement mitigation strategies effectively despite resource constraints (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Further research is needed to explore the factors influencing the varying levels of implementation across different school sizes.

Rural schools exhibit a slightly higher mean response of 3.0 compared to urban schools (2.9). This finding is notable, as rural schools often face challenges related to resource scarcity and geographical isolation (Azano *et al.,* 2023). It suggests that despite these challenges, rural schools in District II have been successful in implementing mitigation strategies, potentially due to strong community support and a more adaptable approach to problem-solving.

The findings presented in Table 4 demonstrate the successful implementation of mitigation strategies across elementary schools. However, variations exist based on school size and location, highlighting the need for context-specific approaches.

Significant Difference in the Level of Challenges Encountered by the Education Implementers

Table 5 presents an analysis using Kruskal Wallis in order to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of challenges encountered among education implemented when grouped according to the size of the school. Based on the results of Kruskal Wallis analysis, the H-ratio is 4.198 and the p-value is 0.123, since the level of significance needs to be 0.05, the results indicate no significant difference in the level of prevalent challenges encountered among education implementers when grouped according to the size of school. This means that, regardless of the size of the school, the education implementers had the same level of challenges.

Table 5: Kruskal Wallis Results for the Difference in Level of Challenges Encountered by Education Implementers According to Size of School

Variables	Mean Rank	Df	H-ratio	p
Small	70.93	2	4.198	0.123
Medium	56.62			
Large	70.86			

This finding suggests that, despite potential variations in resources and organizational structures, education implementers in small, medium, and large schools experience a similar level of challenges when facing unforeseen setbacks. This aligns with research by Sun *et al.* (2022) which found that school size was not a significant predictor of teacher stress or burnout, two factors that can contribute to the level of challenges experienced.

While the Kruskal-Wallis test did not reveal a significant difference in challenges based on school size, the study's findings highlight the importance of providing comprehensive support and resources to all schools to ensure the successful implementation of educational initiatives.

Table 6 presents an analysis using the Mann-Whitney U Test in order to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of challenges encountered among education implemented when grouped according to the location of their school. Based on the results of Mann-Whitney U analysis, the U-ratio is 1456.500 and the p-value is 0.394, since the level of significance needs to be 0.05, the results indicate no significant difference in the level of prevalent challenges encountered among education implementers when grouped according to the location of the school. This means that, regardless of the size of the school, the education implementers had the same level of challenges.

This finding suggests that, despite potential differences

Table 6: Difference in Level of Challenges Encountered by Education Implementers According to Location of the School

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U Test			
				U-ratio	W	Z	P
Urban	33	70.86	2338.50	1456.500	6307.500	-0.852	0.394
Rural	98	64.36	6307.50				

in resources, demographics, and community support, education implementers in both urban and rural schools experience a comparable level of challenges when facing unforeseen setbacks. This aligns with research by Azano *et al.* (2023), which found that while rural schools may face unique challenges related to isolation and resource scarcity, these challenges do not necessarily translate to a higher overall level of difficulty in implementing educational initiatives. Similarly, urban schools, while often dealing with issues such as poverty and diversity, also possess unique strengths and resources that can help them navigate challenges effectively (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The Mann-Whitney U Test did not reveal a significant difference in challenges based on school location, the study's findings highlight the importance of providing equitable support and resources to both urban and rural schools.

Significant Difference in the Level of Mitigation Strategies Employed by the Education Implementers

As shown in Table 7, there is a significant difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by the education implementers when grouped according to size of the school, (H(2) = 7.461, p = 0.024).

Table 7: Kruskal Wallis Results for the Difference in Level of Mitigation Employed by Education Implementers According to Size of School

Variables	Mean Rank	Df	H-ratio	p
Small	59.75	2	7.461*	0.024
Medium	78.50			
Large	59.00			

p < 0.05

This implies that regardless of the size of the school, the education implementers had the same level of mitigation strategies in dealing with unforeseen academic setbacks. A comparison of the results is found in Table 7.

Contrary to the hypothesis, the significant result indicates that there is a difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by education implementers across different school sizes. This finding suggests that school size may be a factor influencing the implementation of strategies to address unforeseen academic setbacks. Possible explanations for this difference could be attributed to variations in resources, staffing levels, or organizational structures between small, medium, and large schools.

This finding aligns with research by Nguyen *et al.* (2023), which found that larger schools tend to have more established systems and protocols for dealing with crises, potentially leading to a higher level of implementation of mitigation strategies. Conversely, smaller schools may face challenges in implementing certain strategies due to limited resources or staff capacity (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

Table 8: Post Hoc Analysis for the Significant Difference in the Level of Mitigation Employed by Education Implementers According to Size of School

Size of School (I)	Size of School (J)	Mean Rank Difference (MRD)	p
Large	Small	0.745	1.000
	Medium	19.500	0.074
Small	Medium	-18.755*	.044

**p < .05*

Table 8 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by the education implementers when compared according to the size of the school in which medium sized-schools had higher mitigation strategies compared to small sized-schools, (MRD = 18.755, p = 0.044).

This implies that regardless of the size of the school, the education implementers had the same level of mitigation strategies in dealing with unforeseen academic setbacks.

Contrary to the hypothesis, the significant result (p = 0.044) indicates that there is a difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by education implementers across different school sizes, specifically between small and medium-sized schools. This finding suggests that

medium-sized schools are more likely to implement mitigation strategies in response to unforeseen academic setbacks compared to small-sized schools.

Several factors could contribute to this difference. Medium-sized schools may have a more established organizational structure, a wider range of resources, and a larger pool of staff compared to small schools, facilitating the implementation of comprehensive mitigation strategies. Additionally, medium-sized schools may benefit from a balance between the flexibility of small schools and the resources of large schools, allowing for more effective adaptation and response to challenges (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

Research by Nguyen *et al.* (2023) supports this finding, indicating that schools with a moderate student-to-teacher ratio often exhibit higher levels of organizational effectiveness and are better equipped to implement complex strategies. Conversely, small schools with limited resources and staff may face challenges in implementing certain strategies, particularly those requiring significant time and expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

Table 9 presents an analysis using the Mann-Whitney U

Table 9: Difference in the Level of Mitigation Strategies Employed by Education Implementers According to Location of the School

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U Test			
				U-ratio	W	Z	p
Urban	33	59.00	1947.00	1386.000	1947.000	-1.226	0.220
Rural	98	68.36	6699.00				

Test to determine whether there is a difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by education implementers according to the location of the school. Based on the results of Mann-Whitney U analysis, the U-ratio is 1386.000 and the p-value is 0.220, since the level of significance needs to be 0.05, the results indicate no significant difference in the level of mitigation strategies employed by education implementers according to the location of the school. This means that, regardless of the location of the school, the education implementers had the same level of mitigation strategies implemented among urban and rural schools.

This finding suggests that, despite potential differences in resources, infrastructure, and community support, education implementers in both urban and rural schools demonstrate a comparable level of proficiency in implementing mitigation strategies to address unforeseen setbacks. This result aligns with recent research emphasizing the growing emphasis on disaster risk reduction and preparedness in educational settings across various contexts (O'Brien *et al.,* 2022). It also highlights the adaptability and resourcefulness of education implementers in tailoring mitigation strategies to their specific environments, regardless of location.

The absence of a significant difference in mitigation strategies between urban and rural schools may be attributed to several factors. First, standardized guidelines and training programs for disaster preparedness and response are often implemented at the national or regional level, ensuring a consistent approach across different school locations (UNISDR, 2019). Second, the increasing availability of technology and communication tools has facilitated the dissemination of information and best practices for mitigation strategies, bridging the gap between urban and rural areas (Aysan & Yılmaz, 2021). Lastly, the growing awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness among educational stakeholders has led to a more proactive approach to risk reduction, regardless of school location (O'Brien *et al.,* 2022).

Significant Relationship Between the Challenges and Mitigation Strategies Employed by the Education Implementers

Table 10 presents Using Spearman's rho analysis, table 8 above shows whether there is a significant relationship between the challenges and mitigation strategies by the education implementers. Based on the results, the Correlation Coefficient (r-value) for the challenges is .376 and -.078 for the mitigation strategies and is interpreted as weak and negative.

Table 10: Relationship Between the Challenges and Mitigation Strategies by the Education Implementers

Variables	n	rho	p
Challenges	131	-.078	.376
And			
Mitigation Strategies			

The p-value is .376. Hence, the result is not significant at $p < .05$. Thus, the findings imply that there is no significant relationship between the challenges and mitigation strategies by the education implementers. This accepts the null hypothesis of the study which states that there is no correlation between the two variables.

The lack of significant correlations suggests that there is no strong linear relationship between the challenges faced by education implementers and the mitigation strategies they employ. This finding may seem counterintuitive,

as one might expect a direct relationship between the challenges encountered and the strategies implemented to address them. However, several factors could contribute to this lack of correlation.

Firstly, the nature of challenges and mitigation strategies in education is often complex and multifaceted. A single challenge may require multiple mitigation strategies, and a single strategy may be applicable to various challenges (Darling-Hammond *et al.,* 2020). This complexity could obscure a direct linear relationship between the two variables.

Lastly, the effectiveness of mitigation strategies may depend on various contextual factors, such as the specific characteristics of the school, the resources available, and the expertise of the implementers (Harris & Jones, 2022). These contextual factors could moderate the relationship between challenges and strategies, making it difficult to detect a significant correlation at the aggregate level.

Implications and Insights

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the prevalent challenges and mitigation strategies in education implementation. The identified challenges, such as "inconsistencies between school policies and practices" and "heavy teacher workloads," highlight systemic issues within educational frameworks that require continuous monitoring and adaptation to better align with local needs and realities. The recurrence of these challenges suggests potential gaps in communication and resource allocation, which can hinder the consistent delivery of educational services. This emphasizes the need for policy adjustments and the establishment of more flexible frameworks that empower educators and administrators to address these challenges effectively.

The study has significant implications for educational leadership and policy development. The high level of implementation of mitigation strategies across schools reflects a proactive approach among education implementers, particularly in fostering parent engagement and supporting teacher development. This commitment to overcoming setbacks demonstrates the resilience of education implementers in maintaining educational quality despite external challenges. The lack of a significant relationship between specific challenges faced and mitigation strategies employed suggests that strategy selection may often be driven by broader contextual needs rather than specific issues. This insight underscores the importance of adaptable, multi-layered approaches that allow implementers to exercise discretion in addressing diverse school environments.

The finding of a significant difference in mitigation strategy implementation based on school size further suggests that medium-sized schools may have more resources or flexibility in supporting their educators. This implies that resource allocation and support mechanisms should be calibrated to ensure that smaller schools have equitable access to effective mitigation tools. Additionally, the absence of significant differences in the challenges encountered across school size and location indicates that these challenges are systemic, underscoring the need for comprehensive policy reforms and strategic support systems.

The study underscores the importance of ongoing professional development for educators, strengthened parent-school partnerships, and context-sensitive policy reforms to better equip schools to handle unforeseen challenges. Future research could further explore the factors influencing strategy selection and the effectiveness of various strategies across different educational contexts, ultimately contributing to a resilient and adaptive educational management framework.

Intervention

Based on the findings of this study, an intervention program titled "Resilient Education Management: Strategies for Addressing Implementation Challenges and Mitigating Unforeseen Setbacks in Schools" is proposed. The intervention addresses the prevalent challenges identified, such as inconsistencies between school policies and practices, heavy teacher workloads, and limited parental engagement. This program is designed to enhance the capability of education implementers to manage systemic issues and adapt to unforeseen setbacks effectively, contributing to the overall resilience of educational delivery.

Program Components

Capacity Building Workshops for Education Implementers

This component provides school heads and teachers with training on policy alignment, workload management, and resilience in educational settings. Specific workshops focus on aligning school practices with policies, managing teacher workloads, and implementing adaptive management strategies.

Outcome: Enhanced skills among education implementers to ensure consistent and effective policy implementation and workload management.

Community and Parent Engagement Program

Strengthening collaboration with parents and local communities is essential to creating a supportive learning environment at home and school. Regular parentteacher meetings and community awareness sessions are included to engage parents in student progress discussions and promote responsible community involvement.

Outcome: Increased parental and community engagement, fostering a unified approach to supporting student learning and wellbeing.

Resource Allocation and Support Program

This program component addresses resource disparities across schools, especially benefiting smaller and rural schools. Educational materials, technological support, and training on managing funds are provided to ensure equitable access to resources.

Outcome: Improved resource accessibility and effective resource management, empowering schools to address specific educational challenges.

Professional Development Program for Teachers

Recognizing the demands on teachers, this component focuses on providing ongoing professional development, instructional innovation, and mentorship opportunities. Training sessions on new instructional techniques, digital tools, and teaching innovations are organized, alongside a mentorship program where experienced teachers support newer colleagues.

Outcome: Empowered teachers with access to professional growth opportunities, innovative teaching strategies, and support systems for managing workloads.

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

A structured monitoring and evaluation system is established to track the effectiveness of the intervention. Monthly progress reports from school heads and quarterly evaluation meetings with DepEd representatives, community leaders, and stakeholders will ensure that the program remains adaptive to evolving needs.

Outcome: Continuous feedback and iterative improvements in program implementation, ensuring alignment with educational goals and sustained impact.

Program Implementation Timeline

The intervention program is structured across phases to ensure systematic execution and evaluation. It includes preparation, capacity building, community engagement, resource distribution, and ongoing monitoring. The phased implementation allows for timely adjustments based on stakeholder feedback and emerging challenges.

Expected Outcomes

The intervention is expected to yield the following outcomes:

- Improved alignment of school policies and practices.
- Enhanced teacher well-being through workload management strategies.
- Strengthened partnerships with parents and community stakeholders.
- Equitable distribution of resources, ensuring all schools are adequately supported.
- A resilient and adaptable approach to education management, prepared to address unforeseen setbacks.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that instructional leadership in public secondary schools is confronted with multifaceted challenges that require adaptive and collaborative mitigation strategies. Strengthening professional development, promoting shared leadership, and enhancing support systems are essential in sustaining effective instructional leadership. The findings underscore the importance of context-based action research in informing practical and responsive school leadership practices.

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