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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SCHOOL HEADS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study investigates the lived experiences of school heads in managing limited school resources, with a focus on the challenges they face and the strategies they implement. Grounded in the principles of phenomenology, the study draws upon in-depth interviews with eight school heads from the districts of Laak North and Sta. Ana in the Divisions of Davao de Oro and Davao City, each possessing a minimum of five years of experience in school resource management. The study identifies six (6) central themes from the participants' experiences: faced challenges in budgeting and planning, juggled competing priorities, made personal sacrifices to sustain school operations, responded to unpredictable needs and emergencies, endured emotional and professional struggles, and encountered limitations due to insufficient funds. In response to these challenges, school heads adopt a range of strategies, including strategic planning, engaging teachers and parents, attending in leadership and professional development, optimizing available resources, organizing fundraising efforts, and seeking external support. The findings reveal that effective resource management leads to improved student outcomes, enhanced teacher morale, greater operational efficiency, and stronger trust and engagement from stakeholders. This study underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among school leaders, teachers, parents, and the community in addressing resource-related issues. It also emphasizes the value of targeted professional development to strengthen the capacity of school heads in managing scarce resources. The insights gathered aim to inform future policy and practice in promoting sustainable and effective educational leadership amid ongoing resource constraints.

KEYWORDS: *Education, School Heads, Resource Management, Limited resources, Resource constraints, Qualitative, Phenomenology, Thematic Analysis, Davao de Oro, Davao City*

INTRODUCTION

The role of school heads in resource management has become increasingly vital in sustaining quality education, especially in contexts where resources are scarce. Republic Act No. 9155 grants school heads the authority and accountability to oversee school operations and resources, empowering them to implement localized and innovative strategies to meet institutional needs (Philippine Supreme Court, 2001). As educational demands rise amidst persistent resource constraints, school heads are compelled to fulfill complex leadership roles that require strategic planning, financial acumen, and community engagement (Nwaham et al., 2024). These responsibilities often extend beyond traditional instructional leadership, requiring school heads to be creative problem-solvers and adaptive leaders who can sustain school operations even in the face of adversity.

Globally, resource limitations in education are prevalent, particularly in developing nations. In India, more than 78% of schools lack internet access, over 61% lack computers, and 17% are without electricity—posing significant barriers to educational innovation (Gohain, 2021). In Indonesia, decentralization has created inequalities in resource distribution, prompting school leaders to forge local partnerships for support (OECD, 2024). Similarly, rural schools in Vietnam continue to suffer from shortages despite systemic reforms, underscoring the indispensable role of school leadership in addressing these gaps (Tran, 2024). The Philippines shares similar struggles, especially in public schools characterized by overcrowded classrooms, deteriorating infrastructure, and insufficient teaching resources (Macatangay, 2023). According to Mirasol et al. (2021), weak policy implementation and inadequate monitoring systems further complicate the ability of school heads to deliver equitable education, often forcing them to take on financial responsibilities, mobilize stakeholders, and even make personal sacrifices to keep schools operational.

In Sta. Ana District of Davao City and Laak North District in Davao de Oro, these challenges are deeply felt. School heads in these areas face the dual pressures of limited budgets and administrative burdens while striving to maintain quality education through alternative funding, stakeholder collaboration, and grassroots initiatives (Bantilan et al., 2023). Although Caruz

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(2024) observed that innovative leadership behavior enhances organizational performance in Davao schools, limited empirical evidence exists on how school heads manage resources in both rural and urban contexts. This phenomenological study aims to explore the lived experiences of school heads in managing limited resources by examining their strategies for allocation, optimization, and innovation. By documenting their experiences, the research seeks to identify sustainable practices that can inform leadership training, policy reform, and school improvement. Furthermore, drawing from Creemers et al. (2022), who emphasize the direct link between resources
and student outcomes, this study contributes to understanding how school heads lead under pressure while balancing structural constraints with the emotional and psychological demands of leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how school heads in public elementary schools managed limited resources. The research focused on school heads from Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro, and Sta. Ana District, Division of Davao City. It aimed to assess how these heads used innovations and adaptations to ensure effective school operations despite resource constraints. Moreover, resource management was broadly defined as the strategic allocation of financial, material, and human resources to sustain quality education. The study sought to identify the most effective practices employed by school heads, including how they maintained school functionality and created conducive learning environments. Ultimately, the goal was to provide insights into effective leadership and resource optimization in resource-constrained educational settings.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of school heads in managing limited school resources?
2. What strategies do school heads use to address resource limitations in their schools?
3. How do the resource management practices of school heads impact the overall performance of their schools?

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in Resource-Based Theory (RBT), a strategic management framework introduced by Barney (1991), which asserts that an organization's success depends on its ability to utilize resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources—such as finances, instructional materials, infrastructure, and human capital—are often limited in public schools. School heads, therefore, must act as strategic resource managers who optimize available assets to maintain school operations and enhance teaching quality. Building on this, Utami and Alamanos (2022) noted that even in resource-constrained environments, institutions can sustain performance through innovative and adaptive resource use. According to them, competitive advantage stems not from abundance but from effective utilization. This study uses RBT to analyze how school heads in Laak North District and Sta. Ana District navigate these constraints and implement effective practices to uphold educational delivery.

Complementing RBT, Transformational Leadership Theory offers a people-centered view of school leadership under resource limitations. Developed by Bass and Bass (1985), this theory emphasizes visionary leadership that fosters motivation, innovation, and collaboration. Transformational leaders engage and inspire teachers and staff to commit to school goals, despite challenges. In the educational context, this involves collaborative decision-making and shared efforts in resource management. Chi et al. (2023) mentioned that transformational leader strengthens resilience and job satisfaction by leveraging both tangible and intangible assets. By integrating Transformational Leadership Theory with RBT, this study captures both the structural and interpersonal dynamics of resource management, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how school heads sustain performance in challenging settings.

Importance of the Study

This study is important because it sheds light on how school heads address the complex challenges of managing limited resources in public elementary schools. Through their lived experiences, the research uncovers adaptive strategies, innovative solutions, and leadership practices that sustain school operations and learning environments despite resource scarcity. By focusing on the realities faced by school leaders in Laak North District, Davao de Oro, and Sta. Ana District, Davao City, the study provides context-specific insights into how school heads balance administrative, financial, and instructional responsibilities. The findings are essential for informing education stakeholders, particularly in policy-making, leadership development, and resource allocation. This research also contributes to the broader discourse on educational equity and quality in developing countries where resources are often unevenly distributed. Moreover, the study empowers school heads and supports the creation of practical, sustainable solutions to improve school performance in resource-constrained contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of school heads in managing limited resources. A qualitative approach, as noted by Creswell (2014), allows researchers to deeply understand human experiences through rich, descriptive data. Phenomenology focuses on the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Williams, 2021; Hossain et al., 2024). It is particularly useful in examining complex realities such as school leadership in resource-constrained contexts. As Stolz (2023) added, phenomenology is valuable in educational research for uncovering lived realities and informing practice. Moreover, the design aligns with the principles laid out by Kostere and Kostere (2021), emphasizing the importance of individual narratives. More so, Seaborn et al.

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(2024) and Patterson et al. (2022) support this design for capturing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of leadership. Through this design, the study illuminated how school heads address resource limitations in real settings. The approach allowed for deep, context-rich understanding beyond numerical generalizations.

Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted in Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro, and Sta. Ana District, Division of Davao City. These locations were selected due to their persistent challenges in managing school resources. Eight public elementary school heads with at least five years of experience participated in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the selected individuals possessed extensive and relevant leadership experiences (Robinson, 2024). The selection of eight (8) participants aligns with phenomenological research recommendations, as Poth (2023) suggests that 6 to 12 participants are ideal for capturing lived experiences, while Van Manen (2023) states that studies with 5 to 10 participants allow for in-depth exploration of experiences. This strategy ensured data richness and contextual relevance across both urban and rural school settings. In addition, the inclusion criteria required current public-school heads or Officers-in-Charge (OICs) within the specified locations. Those outside the geographic scope or lacking relevant designation were excluded. This sampling strategy ensured that participants had firsthand knowledge of managing limited school resources.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Each session lasted 30 to 45 minutes, allowing participants to share their experiences in depth. An open-ended interview guide was used to maintain consistency while allowing flexibility (Pilarska, 2021). Follow-up questions were employed to probe deeper and explore emerging ideas (Chilisa, 2019). Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. This method allowed researchers to collect rich narratives reflecting the realities of school resource management.

Data Analysis

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using open coding techniques. Researchers closely reviewed transcripts to identify key themes and recurring patterns (Creswell, 2014). Codes were categorized and developed into broader themes that aligned with the research questions. Moreover, themes were refined iteratively to ensure they accurately represented participants' narratives and addressed the research questions. The process allowed for grounded and meaningful interpretation of the data.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To establish trustworthiness, the study applied the four criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was achieved through member checking and prolonged engagement with participants (Ahmed, 2024; Muzari et al., 2022). Dependability was addressed by documenting procedures and maintaining an audit trail (Hayre, 2021). Audit trails and reflective journals were maintained to ensure consistency and objectivity throughout the research process (Haq et al., 2023). Confirmability was ensured by securely storing transcripts and field notes, minimizing researcher bias (Kasirye, 2021). Rich, contextual descriptions supported transferability to similar educational settings (Drisko, 2025). These strategies contributed to the rigor and reliability of the research process

Ethical Considerations

The research strictly adhered to ethical standards, securing approval from an external Research Ethics Committee (REC). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Ethical principles such as social value, informed consent, risks, benefits, safety, privacy and confidentiality were strictly followed (Hasan et al., 2021). Participants could withdraw at any time, and sensitive questions were avoided to reduce discomfort (Kang & Hwang, 2021). More so, the research promoted social value by aiming to improve school leadership and resource management (May & Perry, 2022). Data management and storage complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Social Value. May and Perry (2022) emphasize that research should not only expand academic knowledge but also address real-world problems. This study aims to offer insights into how school heads manage resources to improve education. Findings may inform policy, strengthen support systems, enhance mentoring programs, and serve as a reference for future research on leadership and resource management.

Informed Consent. According to Millum and Bromwich (2021), informed consent requires full disclosure and participant understanding. This study will provide clear information through permission letters and obtain written consent. Participation is voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time, and confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety. This study follows nonmaleficence and beneficence principles to ensure participants face no harm or coercion (Tursunbayeva et al., 2022). The interview guide will be expert-reviewed, and interviews will be scheduled for participant convenience. Sensitive topics will be addressed carefully, with the option to skip questions. As appreciation, school heads will receive a token gift. Findings will be shared with education authorities to inform better resource management policies.

Privacy and Confidentiality. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, strict measures will protect participant identity (Ozolinčiūtė et al., 2022). Coded responses, encrypted files, and secure storage will be used, with all data deleted after three years. Information will be used solely for this study on school resource management.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Lived Experiences of School Heads in Managing Limited Resources

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Faced Challenges in Budgeting and Planning School Resources	• prioritizing budget needs and engaging in long-term planning to ensure sustainability • establishing partnerships and engaging the community for resource acquisition • promoting transparency and maintaining accountability to build trust and avoid mismanagement
Juggled Competing Priorities amid Limited Resources	• prioritizing urgent and essential needs, especially for instruction and student welfare • balancing academic, operational, and compliance demands within available resources • collaborating with teachers and staff to ensure equitable resource allocation
Made Personal Sacrifices to Sustain School Operations	• sacrificing personal time in favor of school responsibilities • experiencing frustration due to misunderstanding or lack of support from colleagues • spending personal finances and extending working hours to meet school needs
Responded to Unpredictable Needs and Emergencies	• dealing with unexpected expenses that strain school budgets • navigating remote locations and poor infrastructure • demonstrating flexibility and applying quick problem-solving in urgent situations
Endured Emotional and Professional Struggles in Resource Management	• experiencing stress and professional pressure from limited resources • facing isolation due to lack of collaboration or peer support • strengthening leadership, adaptability, and resilience
Encountered Limitations Due to Insufficient Funds	• struggling to manage financial limitations while maintaining operations • applying creative solutions to overcome material and financial shortages • making personal financial contributions to support school functions

Faced Challenges in Budgeting and Planning School Resources

Budgeting and planning are important in managing limited school resources. School heads explained that following a structured plan helps ensure that funds are used properly and meet the school's needs. Participants emphasized the importance of staying committed to the plan. In addition, the practice of conducting assessments focused on student performance and well-being before making financial decisions. More so, consistent evaluations and adjusting plans lead to better management outcomes.

IDI- 003 uttered that:

"I have learned that planning and sticking to the plan is essential when managing school resources."

Conversely, IDI-005 stressed

"I engage in regular monitoring and evaluation to identify areas for improvement in resource management."

In addition, IDI-006 said

"I conduct comprehensive assessments to identify priority areas based on student performance and well-being before allocating resources."

Also, IDI-007 mentioned that

"Proper financial management, including dividing the budget into quarters, helps avoid resource shortages and ensures smooth school operations throughout the year."

IDI-008 noted that

"Regular evaluation and adjusting strategies help improve perceptions of effectiveness in resource management."

These practices are consistent with the findings of Gunadi et al. (2023), who explained that aligning financial plans with school priorities and understanding how funds are sourced and used contributes to better decision-making. Baker (2022) also pointed out that detailed budgeting and continuous assessment are important for smooth school operations. Similarly, Ephrahem and Bhoke-Africanus (2021) observed that school heads with strong

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financial management practices are more likely to provide quality education. Together, these insights suggest that effective budgeting and planning help schools allocate resources more efficiently, respond to changing needs, and build the trust of their stakeholders.

Juggled Competing Priorities amid Limited Resources

School heads expressed the importance of carefully identifying and addressing the most pressing needs in the school when resources are limited. Participants emphasizes assessing what is most vital, as providing necessary support to teachers can increase their motivation and effectiveness. Moreover, prioritization is guided by urgency and the actual conditions within the school. Programs directly benefiting students, especially in academics, should be given precedence. In addition to learning-related needs, it is a necessity to ensure utilities like water and electricity, as well as the availability of teaching tools and staff support. Furthermore, involving teachers in setting priorities encourages collective decision-making and fosters shared responsibility.

As what IDI-001 shared

"You have to study the needs of the school. What are the things that are very much vital or important? If teachers are supported with their needs in school, they will be motivated to work."

Notably, IDI-002 accentuated

"The most needed and urgent will be prioritized based on the actual scenario in the school."

More so, IDI-003 stated

"In prioritizing resource allocation, I make it a point to prioritize those programs or needs related to academics that could directly benefit the children."

Further, IDI-005 stated that

"I prioritize resources based on the most urgent needs, such as classroom supplies and student support services. Involving teachers in the prioritization process helps ensure the right decisions are made."

In addition, IDI-007 added that

"Utilities such as water, electricity, and salaries for janitors are top priorities. We also ensure that exam papers and other teaching tools are available."

These insights align with Zahra (2021), who emphasized the importance of resourcefulness and strategic management, especially in constrained environments. Mukhuty et al. (2022) also underscored the value of inclusive and sustainable practices in resource prioritization, which considers the well-being of all stakeholders. Rico (2021) found that targeted resource allocation enhances school infrastructure and services but stressed the need for stronger financial planning. Collectively, these findings suggest that setting clear priorities and engaging key stakeholders are essential strategies for maximizing the impact of limited resources and improving overall school performance.

Made Personal Sacrifices to Sustain School Operations

School heads frequently go beyond their formal duties to address resource limitations, often making personal sacrifices that affect their well-being and family life. The emotional and physical toll of prioritizing school responsibilities over family, including sleepless nights and the inability to take personal time off. Participants expressed feelings of frustration when their efforts are met with misunderstanding from colleagues who expect them to provide resources beyond what is available. Additionally, some school heads spend personal funds and work additional hours to ensure that essential school needs are met. These experiences emphasize the emotional and financial burdens that school leaders endure to maintain school operations.

As what IDI-001 shared:

"I sometimes prioritize the school over my family. Sometimes I cannot sleep or go on vacation."

In support of that claim, IDI-002 said:

"I feel offended and hurt when teachers cannot understand the limitations of resources and demand the school head to provide everything."

Moreover, IDI-008 added:

"I spend my own money and work extra hours just to meet the needs of the school."

This theme echoes the findings of Martinez (2023), who described self-sacrificial leadership as a common trait among school heads, noting that many take on additional work, contribute personal resources, and experience stress due to the pressures of school leadership. Without adequate institutional support, these sacrifices can result in burnout and declining job satisfaction. Similarly, Olaivar and Loayon (2022) noted that while personal commitment by school heads contributes positively to school engagement and teacher performance, it also underscores the need for systemic support to prevent overburdening leaders. Addressing these challenges requires policies that promote shared leadership, sufficient resource allocation, and mental health support systems to sustain school heads' effectiveness without compromising their personal well-being.

Responded to Unpredictable Needs and Emergencies

Unpredictable needs and emergencies create constant challenges for school heads, particularly when working with limited financial resources. Sudden shortages of supplies, equipment failures, and logistical difficulties—compounded by the school's remote location and poor road conditions—frequently disrupt operations. These unforeseen expenses complicate financial planning and make it difficult to stick to budgetary priorities. Similarly, the difficulty of keeping facilities safe and functional

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without sufficient funds, often requiring school leaders to find creative and low-cost solutions in urgent situations.
As expressed by IDI-004:

"Unexpected needs, such as sudden shortages of supplies or broken equipment, catch us off guard. The distance of the school and hazardous roads add to the difficulty, especially in delivering materials."

In the same way, IDI-005 answered

"Managing limited resources is challenging, as unforeseen expenses can arise, making financial planning difficult.

Further, IDI-006 shared

"Keeping facilities up-to-date and safe can be difficult with limited financial resources. Sometimes, I have to look for alternative ways to address urgent needs."

These lived experiences reflect the findings of Jangu Alhassan et al. (2023), who pointed out that emergency management in educational institutions demands preparedness, adaptability, and strong leadership. According to Timothy (2022), proactive planning and contingency funds are essential tools in helping schools cope with crises, yet many school heads are left to manage these emergencies with little institutional support. To bridge this gap, leaders often rely on community involvement, fundraising, and prioritization of critical needs like utility services and instructional tools. However, these stopgap measures often fall short, stressing the need for more stable financial systems and policies that empower school heads to handle crises effectively without compromising the delivery of education.

Endured Emotional and Professional Struggles in Resource Management

School heads often face emotional and professional challenges while managing limited resources, which significantly impact their well-being and leadership effectiveness. Respondents shared feelings of exhaustion, frustration, and helplessness when they are unable to provide adequate supplies or maintain school facilities. These emotional burdens are amplified by the constant pressure to meet expectations despite financial constraints. Peer comparisons and the need to justify decisions add further stress, sometimes leading to feelings of isolation and professional doubt. The strain of balancing the needs of both students and teachers, while the emotional toll of managing stakeholder trust, especially when communication lapses occur or expectations are not met.

In line with this theme, IDI-001 stated

"I am also human. I sometimes feel tired, angry, and stressed because of many problems in the school."

Moreover, IDI-003 mentioned

"It cannot be avoided that peer pressure is one of the leading causes of stress when handling limited resources."

In addition, IDI-004 stated

"Professionally, I want to provide the best for my school, but my hands are tied. I feel frustrated when I can't get enough supplies or repair classrooms fast enough."

Likewise, IDI-005 conformed:

"Resource allocation can lead to significant stress when unable to meet the diverse needs of students and teachers."

Also, IDI-006 described

"I feel pressure to meet diverse needs and justify resource requests to stakeholders. Sometimes, I feel isolated due to limited collaboration opportunities with peers."

Further, IDI-007 uttered

"If a principal mismanages financial matters or lacks proper communication about resources, it can lead to emotional and professional struggles, such as losing the trust of teachers and parents."

These experiences align with DeMatthews et al. (2021), who reported that school leaders are highly susceptible to burnout due to chronic stress, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of systemic support. Moreover, Blaik Hourani et al. (2021) emphasized that emotional intelligence is vital for school heads to manage these pressures effectively. Leaders who are self-aware, empathetic, and emotionally resilient are more likely to sustain their professional roles and foster healthy school environments despite the demands of the job. Strengthening emotional intelligence and providing institutional support can thus play a crucial role in mitigating the emotional and professional struggles faced by school heads.

Encountered Limitations Due to Insufficient Funds

School heads repeatedly emphasized the difficulty of sustaining school operations and implementing programs due to limited financial resources, particularly the inadequacy of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) funds. The current budget is insufficient to support all planned projects, maintain facilities, and acquire necessary teaching and learning materials. Managing a large student population with constrained funds adds further strain to resource allocation, often forcing school leaders to make difficult decisions.

This theme was affirmed by IDI-001who shared

"The resources given in the school like the MOOE are not enough to sustain the programs, projects, and activities of the school."

Additionally, IDI-002 uttered:

"The challenge is finding ways to provide resources for the school."

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IDI-004 added that

"The insufficient funds make it hard to meet all the school's needs, and budgeting becomes a constant struggle."

Furthermore, IDI-005 stated:

"The limited funding restricts the ability to purchase necessary materials and maintain facilities."

IDI-006 stressed that

"Managing a large population with limited funding leads to challenges in providing adequate materials, support, and programs, which can strain available resources."

Meanwhile, IDI-007 mentioned:

"The school principal has so many plans to implement, but we only have limited resources."

These experiences align with Mncube et al. (2023), who found that schools, especially in rural areas, face severe challenges in curriculum implementation due to limited resources. Lapeña et al. (2023) also pointed out the lack of essential resources needed to promote inclusive education, such as adaptive learning tools and adequate staffing. Furthermore, Mac Taner (2023) emphasized that while MOOE is important for school functionality, issues like delays in fund release and ineffective management exacerbate financial difficulties. These findings collectively emphasize the pressing need for better fund utilization, timely disbursement, and improved financial oversight to enable school heads to provide quality education despite funding limitations.

Table 2
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Strategies Used by School Heads to Address Resource Limitations

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Undertaking Strategic Visioning and Planning	• aligning resource management strategies with the school's vision and long-term sustainability. • involving all stakeholders in planning to ensure shared responsibility and collective problem-solving. • developing a clear roadmap for school development, ensuring that every initiative contributes to long-term goals.
Engaging Teachers and Parents in the School	• fostering open communication with teachers and parents regarding resource limitations and collaborative solutions. • encouraging parents and community members to take an active role in school activities • creating opportunities for teachers and students to engage in cost-saving measures.
Attending Leadership and Professional Development Trainings	• participating in leadership, financial management, and resource allocation training to enhance decision-making skills. • engaging in LAC sessions and professional learning networks to share best practices with other school heads. • benchmarking best practices from other schools to adopt effective strategies in resource management.
Optimizing Available Resources in the School	• maximizing existing resources by prioritizing urgent needs, reallocating supplies, and implementing cost-effective measures. • utilizing locally available and reusable materials • encouraging collaboration among teachers, parents, and students to ensure efficient use of resources. • purchasing of supplies in bulk to reduce costs and ensure availability.
Organizing Fundraising and Community Involvement	• organizing fundraising activities • engaging parents and community members to contribute resources, volunteer their time, or assist in school projects. • implementing school-based projects which generate additional income
Seeking External Support	• actively reaching out to government officials, NGOs, and private organizations for donations and grants. • inviting potential donors to school events to showcase resource needs and gain their support. • writing formal request letters to various agencies for financial assistance, materials, and infrastructure support.

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Undertaking Visioning and Planning

Strategic visioning and planning emerged as a central strategy for school heads to secure the necessary support and resources for their schools. School heads shared the importance of clearly communicating the school's vision to both internal and external stakeholders. The school's vision with stakeholders helps to gain their support and aligns their efforts toward common goals. Building relationships with government officials and other external stakeholders increases the school's visibility, which can lead to additional support and resources.

As shared by IDI-003 that:

My strategy in engaging support on stakeholders, internal or external, is by showing them the vision.

IDI-007 stated:

Building connections with stakeholders ensures additional support and resources.

Related to that, IDI-004 said that:

I visit the offices of government officials to make our school more visible.

Also, IDI-001 remarked that:

School heads should look at the strategies that fit the school, especially if you are handling a far-flung school.

Moreover, IDI-006 who stated that:

Holding regular meetings with teachers, parents, and community members to discuss resource needs and solutions.

This result is consistent with the findings of Biondi and Russo (2022), who accentuate the importance of strategic planning in education institutions and its role in securing vital resources. Regular meetings with teachers, parents, and community members, as shared by IDI 006, also play an essential role in ensuring that the school's vision aligns with the community's needs, fostering collaborative efforts to address resource challenges. In remote areas, as noted by IDI 001, it is important to tailor strategies that are contextually appropriate, ensuring that resources are effectively utilized to meet the unique needs of the school. Leithwood (2023) further supports this by suggesting that strong personal leadership resources such as emotional intelligence and resilience are key to addressing challenges and inspiring others toward a shared vision. Additionally, Torres (2023) points out the need for proactive resource identification and strategic planning to prioritize areas that will most impact the school's success, such as school culture, emotional support for students, and instructional improvement.

Engaging Teachers and Parents in the School

Effective engagement of teachers and parents is paramount in managing school resources and improving educational outcomes. School heads consistently emphasized the role of communication in fostering collaboration and the importance of regularly consulting with teachers about available resources and resource limitations. Involving teachers in identifying priorities and suggesting cost-effective solutions, such as sharing lesson materials, helps address resource constraints. Furthermore, holding meetings with both teachers and parents to discuss resource needs and gather input on how to allocate resources effectively. This collaborative approach not only promotes a shared sense of ownership but also encourages stakeholders to take responsibility in maximizing the available resources.

IDI-001 expressed that:

Always have constant effective communication with the teachers to consult them about the available resources in the school.

As emphasized by IDI-002 that:

Always communicate to the teachers. Explain to them the resources you have in school and how to address the limited resources.

IDI-004 also said that:

I involve teachers by asking them to identify priorities and suggest low-cost solutions, like sharing lesson materials.

In addition to that, IDI-005 stated that:

Conduct meetings with teachers and parents to discuss resource needs and gather input.

Furthermore, IDI-006 also detailed that:

Encouraging stakeholder participation in resource allocation decisions to foster ownership and support.

The findings align with Subaidi et al. (2021), who stressed the role of regular communication and consultation in engaging teachers to improve the quality of teaching and resource management. Additionally, Mandolado and Ancho (2023) reinforced the value of school-community partnerships, stating that strong collaboration between schools, teachers, and parents enhances resource mobilization and leads to better educational outcomes. By fostering continuous engagement and shared decision-making, schools can create a supportive environment that effectively addresses local needs and promotes sustainable resource management.

Attending Leadership and Professional Development Trainings

Attending leadership and professional development trainings is necessary for school heads to enhance their resource management skills and improve overall school performance. As evidenced by the interview data, many school heads actively participate in seminars, workshops, and training programs to sharpen their leadership, financial management, and resource allocation abilities. Reading and benchmarking from other schools, while attending LAC sessions and trainings organized by district, division, and regional offices. These training opportunities,

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whether face-to-face or online, are seen as key to adapting to the evolving demands of educational leadership. However, such seminars, particularly those on financial management and leadership, are not always offered consistently by DepEd.
In support of this theme, IDI-001 said that:

I attended seminars for my continuous professional development. I always read, then benchmark from other schools.

IDI-002 also detailed that

I attended LAC sessions or trainings organized by the District, Division, and Region Office, both face-to-face and online, so that my resource management skills will be enhanced.

Moreover, IDI-004 added that

I attended seminars, like those on financial management or leadership, but the seminars were not offered by DepEd yearly.

Meanwhile, IDI-006 expressed that

I participate in workshops and training programs focused on resource management and leadership skills.

Furthermore, IDI-007 stated that:

Professional development programs and training sessions on financial management and resource allocation are undertaken to improve my skills as a school head.

These findings align with Mustoip et al. (2023), who discussed the integral role of professional development in equipping school leaders with the skills necessary to manage resources effectively. Furthermore, studies by Ballarta et al. (2022) and Perez and Lumaad (2021) reinforce the importance of continuous professional development in strengthening school-based management (SBM) practices, which ultimately leads to better decision-making and improved school performance. School heads who engage in these development opportunities are better equipped to foster positive changes in their schools and effectively engage with their communities.

Optimizing Available Resources in the School

Optimizing available resources in schools is important for maintaining quality education, particularly in resource-constrained environments. School heads frequently exhibit resourcefulness in maximizing the use of limited materials and funds. As indicated the responses, utilizing localized materials and repurposing existing supplies, such as broken chairs turned into makeshift shelves, is a common strategy for addressing teachers' needs while saving money. Reassessing and reallocating resources to prioritize necessities such as utilities, instructional materials, and staff salaries ensures that critical areas are adequately supported. Additionally, reassessing existing resources is important to improve efficiency, while encouraging the reuse of materials across classrooms to minimize waste and reduce costs.
In accordance with this theme, IDI-001 said that:

Be the solution and utilize whatever resources available. Sometimes, if there are localized materials, it will be our first option to supply the teachers' needs.

IDI-006 also added that

Reassessing and reallocating existing resources to maximize efficiency.

Eventually, IDI-004 said that

We've reused old materials—like turning broken chairs into makeshift shelves—to save money.

Related to this, IDI-008 pointed out that
I encourage the reuse of materials and supplies across classrooms to minimize waste.

Furthermore, IDI-007 mentioned that

I ensure that funds are allocated efficiently by prioritizing necessities such as utilities, instructional materials, and staff salaries.

These strategies align with the findings of Muliati et al. (2022), who stress that optimizing available resources is essential for sustaining quality education despite financial limitations. Furthermore, Sugianto (2024) emphasized the significance of innovative education management strategies that focus on creativity and collaboration. School leaders are encouraged to view resource constraints not as barriers, but as opportunities for problem-solving. By fostering a culture of collaboration and proactively planning, school heads can create a resource-efficient environment that supports effective teaching and learning.

Organizing Fundraising and Community Involvement

Fundraising and community involvement are vital strategies employed by school heads to address financial constraints and improve the quality of education. School leaders actively encourage the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), parents, and local community members to organize fundraising activities, which can support the financial needs of planned projects. In addition, involving parents and community members in donating materials or volunteering time provides much-needed resources and strengthens community ties. Initiatives such as "Brigada Eskwela" and local "bayanihan" efforts foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders, which helps reduce maintenance costs for the school and ensures more efficient resource use.

IDI-002 stated that

I also encourage the PTA Officials to conduct fundraising activities.

Also, IDI-003 uttered that

Having fundraising activities will support the financial aspect of any planned project.

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In addition, IDI-005 shared that:

Encourage parents and community members to donate materials or volunteer time.

IDI-004 further mentioned that:

I organize 'Brigada Eskwela' and invite barangay officials to participate, fostering a sense of ownership over the school.

Moreover, IDI-003 elaborated that

Engaging and encouraging the parents to participate in 'pahina' or 'bayanihan' helps us minimize costs when it comes to maintaining the physical aspect of the school.

These efforts align with the work of Yamamura and Koth (2023), who discussed the transformative impact of community engagement on educational institutions, pointing out how such involvement fosters mutual support and enhances sustainability. Moreover, Valenzuela and Buenvinida (2021) demonstrated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools effectively leveraged community engagement to manage resource shortages by adopting flexible learning approaches and collaborating with local stakeholders. This underscores the significant role of community involvement in overcoming resource challenges and sustaining educational continuity.

Seeking External Support

Seeking external support is a vital strategy for school heads to overcome resource limitations. Many school leaders proactively reach out to government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private donors to secure funding, materials, and other forms of assistance. This is often done through formal requests, such as sending letters to government officials, local partners, and private donors. By building connections with external entities, school heads can supplement scarce resources and ensure that the school's needs are met. Strategies such as pursuing grants and forging partnerships with local and external stakeholders enhance the school's sustainability and effectiveness.

Along with this, IDI-001 said that

If the resources are not enough, I will find ways and talk to any entity for partnership to address the scarce resources.

Also, IDI-002 denoted that:

By sending request letters to the government, NGOs, to supplement resources.

IDI-004, stated that

I submit letter requests to government officials and other partners in the school, like the municipal office, NGOs, or even private donors.

Moreover, IDI-007 mentioned that

To supplement resources, I build connections with the community and seek support from external organizations such as government agencies and NGOs.

Additionally, IDI-006 affirmed that

Actively pursuing grants from governmental and non-governmental organizations to supplement school resources.

These actions align with Palah et al. (2022) and Stephens and Karnes (2021), who emphasize the importance of forming strong partnerships and maintaining relationships with key external organizations to ensure long-term resource availability. Collaborative efforts with external organizations not only provide immediate relief but also support long-term development and sustainability in schools.

Table 3

Major Themes and Core Ideas on the impact of resource management practices of school heads in the overall performance of their schools

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Improving Student Academic Performance	• providing adequate resources for fostering student participation and academic excellence. • managing resources for creating a conducive learning environment. • prioritizing academic-related needs for achieving competitive performance. • planning effectively for translating efforts into better student outcomes.
Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness and Morale	• supporting teachers with resources for boosting motivation and job satisfaction. • equipping teachers properly for increasing confidence and capability. • ensuring equal access to opportunities and materials for promoting fairness. • conducting trainings and seminars for enhancing instructional quality.
Achieving Greater Operational Efficiency and School Stability	• planning and allocating effectively for supporting smooth school operations. • managing resources strategically for reducing disruptions in learning and operations. • budgeting and planning long-term for promoting sustainability. • managing collaboratively and transparently for enhancing school development.

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Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Trust	• practicing transparency and inclusivity for building trust among parents and partners. • communicating goals and outcomes actively for enhancing credibility. • mobilizing community support for ensuring sustainability and development. • strengthening stakeholder relations for increasing contributions and support.

Improving Student Academic Performance

Effective resource management plays an important role in enhancing student academic performance. As noted by several participants, when schools are adequately resourced, students are more motivated, engaged, and equipped to perform well in academic competitions and daily learning activities. Properly crafted and well-planned resource management schemes can lead to tangible improvements in students' academic outcomes, as effective use of resources creates conducive learning environments. Participants also emphasized that ensuring classrooms are functional and learning materials are accessible allows students to focus on their studies, thereby contributing to improved performance, even if only slightly. In addition, adequate resources, including instructional materials and a supportive learning environment, directly contribute to heightened student engagement and academic success.

Related to the theme IDI-001 shared that

Moreover, when students are provided with the resources, they can compete and excel. They will become winners in the competitions. Students will be encouraged to join. IDI-001

IDI-003 mentioned that

If the resource management scheme of the school is well crafted and well-planned… it will be visibly seen through the high academic performance of the students. IDI-003

In addition, IDI-004 affirmed that

When I manage resources well—like ensuring classrooms are usable or learning resources are shared—students can focus better, and their performance improves slightly. IDI-004

Moreover, IDI-008 shared that:

Adequate resources directly contribute to improved student engagement and academic success. IDI-008

These findings align with Nwachukwu et al. (2021) and Cox and Mullen (2023), who noted that well-managed school resources are instrumental in fostering an environment that promotes student achievement and reduces poor academic performance. The consistent relationship between resource allocation and academic success underscores the importance of strategic resource management in improving educational outcomes.

Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness and Morale

Effective resource management not only improves student outcomes but also significantly impacts teacher effectiveness and morale. As indicated by the participants, when teachers are provided with the necessary resources, they can focus more on teaching rather than worrying about resource shortages. Offering support and addressing teachers' resource needs enhances their professional capacity, allowing them to attend seminars and perform their duties more effectively. Participants also mentioned that adequate resources lead to higher teacher morale, which in turn enhances classroom effectiveness. Teachers who are equipped with the necessary materials are more confident and effective in their teaching practices.

In response with the theme by IDI-002 it stated that:

Teachers will be effective since they will be more focused in teaching and not in thinking where to ask support to address resource constraints.

IDI-001 expressed that

As a leader, you should find ways and offer what the teacher needs. In this way, the teacher will be capacitated in attending the seminar and be effective in his/her duties. IDI- 001

IDI-006 furthermore, mentioned that

Sufficient resources given to the teachers lead to higher teacher morale, which enhances classroom effectiveness.

Additionally, IDI-007 affirmed that

When teachers are equipped with the necessary materials, it enhances their effectiveness in the classroom.

These findings are supported by Lee (2021), who demonstrated that well-resourced classrooms improve instructional quality and student engagement. Additionally, research by Young (2021) emphasizes the close link between resource management and student achievement, suggesting that a well-structured resource management scheme fosters a supportive learning environment for both teachers and students. Tailoring resource allocation to meet specific teacher needs is also imperative, as it acknowledges the diverse challenges teachers face and reinforces the need for strategic resource management to enhance overall teaching effectiveness.

Achieving Greater Operational Efficiency and School Stability

Effective resource management is significant in ensuring smooth school operations and fostering long-term stability. Participants in the study emphasized that managing resources well leads to fewer disruptions, enabling consistent learning. Ensuring that utility bills are paid and resources are utilized efficiently throughout the year without requiring additional funding requests is a clear indicator of effective management. This approach contributes to the sustainability and growth of the school, as an effective

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resource management system is visible, transparent, and well-known to all stakeholders. Moreover, effective resource management allows for long-term planning and growth, ensuring the school is prepared for future needs.

As shared by IDI-004

When I manage resources well, the school runs smoother—fewer disruptions mean consistent learning.

IDI-007 expressed that

Ensuring that all utility bills are paid and that resources last through the year without additional funding requests indicates effective management.

Also, IDI-003 uttered that

Sustainability and development will happen in the school when the resource management is effective, visible, transparent and known to all.

Moreover, IDI-008 mentioned that

Effective resource management supports long-term planning for future needs and growth.

These insights align with Muliati et al. (2022), who underscore the importance of resource management in improving the quality of education. Fatoni et al. (2024) further stress the role of school administration in enhancing operational efficiency and educational quality. Additionally, Smith (2021) added that resilient leader who manage resources effectively instill hope and purpose in their teams, while Johnson (2022) emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in fostering supportive environments that enhance both teacher performance and student outcomes. Taylor (2021) also supports this view by stressing that addressing teachers' needs empowers them and improves teaching quality, reinforcing the connection between strong leadership and operational stability.

Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Trust

Building strong relationships with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community, is key to ensuring educational success. As indicated by participants, effective communication with stakeholders, particularly during meetings, is essential for building awareness and trust in the resource management process. Engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes creates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes. The importance of resource management is evident to stakeholders when they see its direct impact on student performance, leading to increased support for the school. Transparency in how funds are allocated and the visible improvements in educational outcomes further build trust and confidence in school leadership.

As a result, IDI-001 stated that

We have to connect to the stakeholders, our partners… because if you have a very good relationship with the teacher, with the parents, there is really a very good outcome.

As shared by IDI-006

The stakeholders will be made aware… if it will be clearly tackled, deliberated or presented during meetings. IDI-003

Moreover, IDI-006 pointed out that

Stakeholders see the importance of resource management, especially in the performance of their pupils… That is why the stakeholders extended help in the school. IDI-002

IDI-006 uttered that

When they see that funds are allocated effectively and that educational outcomes improve, it builds trust and confidence in the school's leadership. IDI-007

These findings align with the work of Kujala et al. (2022), who accentuate the significance of stakeholder engagement in achieving long-term success. Efunniyi et al. (2024) also stress that accountability and transparency are key to fostering trust. Wilson (2021) added that community involvement enriches educational experiences and strengthens the resource base for schools. Additionally, Martinez (2022) asserts that stakeholder participation in governance leads to better decision-making, reinforcing the link between stakeholder engagement and improved resource management.

IMPLICATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE

This study demonstrates the importance of strategic planning and sound budgeting in addressing the challenges posed by limited school resources. School administrators must possess the necessary skills to formulate comprehensive, long-term financial plans that address present needs while also preparing for future developments. In this regard, the Department of Education (DepEd) is encouraged to provide focused training in financial management to support school heads in dealing with budget limitations and competing priorities. Such initiatives would enable school leaders to allocate resources efficiently, ensure the fulfillment of operational requirements, and create sustainable development plans.

The study also emphasizes the value of establishing strong relationships with key stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and community members in managing school resources effectively. Involving these groups in decision-making processes and collaborative activities—such as fundraising and volunteering—can significantly enhance resource availability. Therefore, school heads should promote a culture of cooperation, transparency, and shared responsibility. Active stakeholder engagement fosters broader support and contributes to the school's ability to meet its needs despite existing constraints.

Moreover, the findings point to the necessity of providing emotional and professional support for school administrators. Managing resource scarcity can be emotionally demanding, and there is a need for systems that address the personal and

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professional well-being of school leaders. DepEd may consider implementing leadership development programs that include mentoring, peer collaboration, and counseling services. Supporting the wellness and resilience of school heads will strengthen their leadership capacity, improve the overall management of school resources, and contribute to a more stable and positive school environment.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies might investigate the effect of certain professional development initiatives on school heads' ability to manage resources. Since training was commonly cited as an important strategy to address resource constraints, it would be worthwhile to carry out a study on the effectiveness of different training models in improving the resource management skills of school leaders. This may include a comparison of on-site workshops, web-based training, and mentoring programs to establish which approach creates the most improvement in resource management practices.

Another possible research area for extension is the contribution of community participation to resource management. Though this research established the value of engagement with parents and local stakeholders, more comprehensive studies can investigate the long-term effect of such partnerships on the sustainability of school programs. Subsequent studies can look into successful models of community participation that schools with scarce resources have used and discuss how these models can be generalized to various educational settings.

Lastly, it would be useful to widen the research to encompass a wider selection of school heads from different regions, particularly rural and underprivileged districts. By examining the experience of school leaders in varying school types, subsequent studies could reveal other tactics and issues tied to diverse environments. This would allow more universalized suggestions for developing more effective resource management in schools from different levels of available resources, as well as geographical locations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The actions taken by school heads in response to limited resources are grounded in practical innovation, collaboration, and thoughtful foresight. Central to their approach is the efficient use of existing assets—addressing immediate needs, reallocating supplies, and adopting cost-efficient methods such as recycling materials and bulk purchasing to stretch available funds. School leaders actively encourage collaboration among teachers, parents, and students, creating a shared responsibility for maximizing what is already available. Fundraising activities are also essential, as school heads tap into support from families, local communities, and even municipal officials to generate resources for school projects and daily operations.

Furthermore, school heads frequently extend their efforts beyond the school grounds by reaching out to government agencies, private donors, and non-governmental organizations. Whether through formal proposals, building partnerships, or hosting events to raise awareness, these efforts often bring in much-needed support. In many cases, administrators also make personal sacrifices—spending their own money or working extended hours—to ensure that pressing school needs are addressed. Such actions reflect their strong commitment to maintaining a smooth and effective learning environment despite limited means. Long-term vision and ongoing professional development are crucial in helping them manage financial and material constraints effectively.

More so, effective resource management involves more than reacting to shortfalls—it requires strategic foresight aligned with the school's broader goals. Many school leaders actively pursue leadership training, attend financial planning workshops, and participate in learning communities like Learning Action Cells (LAC), where they strengthen their decision-making and planning skills. These efforts equip them with practical knowledge and innovative approaches to handling limited resources in their respective school contexts. By involving key stakeholders—teachers, parents, and community members—in the planning process, they foster a culture of shared problem-solving and ownership, which strengthens the community's investment in the school's development.

In addition, strategic planning ensures that even scarce resources are directed toward long-term improvements, such as curriculum enhancement, infrastructure development, and student welfare programs. Although schools are often faced with sudden challenges or emergencies, a strong leadership vision supported by deliberate planning allows administrators to maintain a productive learning environment. Balancing academic goals with operational and compliance demands under financial constraints is not easy, but it is a necessary part of school leadership. The ability to plan ahead, adapt quickly, and bring the school community together remains essential in overcoming the difficulties brought by limited resources.

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