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VOICES FROM THE FIELD: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM

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ABSTRACT

Leadership strategies in educational reform are intended to support teachers in adapting to changes, but they often fail to address the challenges teachers face, leading to resistance, misalignment with their needs, and inconsistent implementation of reforms. This study explored the challenges teachers encounter in response to leadership strategies for implementing educational reform, along with their coping strategies and insights, in the East 2 District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, using a phenomenological approach with in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that teachers face challenges such as inadequate support, limited resources, ineffective communication, unclear direction, leadership dynamics, and the need to manage student diversity. In response, teachers adapt their teaching practices, collaborate with peers, and engage in self-reflection. Teachers emphasize the need for collaborative leadership, ongoing support, regular communication, and aligning leadership strategies with their needs to ensure successful reforms. These findings suggest that addressing teachers' challenges through targeted leadership strategies, collaboration, and continuous support can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of educational reforms. Finally, future studies could explore a broader range of educational settings and incorporate additional theoretical frameworks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership strategies in educational reform.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership Strategies, Challenges, Teachers, Phenomenological Approach, Cagayan De Oro City.*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership has a critical role in driving educational change, as it influences the direction, effectiveness, and sustainability of reforms, while also setting the tone for educational innovation and guiding schools through the complexities of change. However, the impact of leadership on teachers remains understudied, especially in terms of how leadership strategies are perceived and experienced by teachers who are directly responsible for implementing reforms (Nguyen & Le, 2022). For educational reforms to succeed, leadership strategies must be aligned with teachers' needs and concerns and should be responsive to the realities that teachers face in the classroom (Jandrić, 2021). Despite this recognition, studies exploring how teachers perceive these strategies, particularly in terms of how leadership influences their daily practice, remain scarce, leaving a critical gap in understanding the dynamics between leadership and teacher effectiveness, which is essential for shaping reforms that genuinely support teachers (Sutherland & Raths, 2023).

In the United States, leadership has been identified as a crucial factor in reform success, demonstrating its role in fostering collaboration among teachers, however, the inconsistent implementation of leadership strategies across schools leads to challenges in achieving sustainable reform and exacerbates the gap between leadership intent and teacher effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 2021). In Finland, the importance of teacher autonomy and professional development in the success of educational reforms is widely acknowledged, nevertheless, it overlooks how teachers at the grassroots level interpret and react to leadership strategies (Karila & Kallio, 2022). Furthermore, studies on teachers' perceptions of how leadership strategies impact their daily teaching, particularly in countries where educational reforms are ongoing are still scarce (Nguyen & Le, 2023).

In the Philippines, several studies have explored leadership in the educational sector, but they often focus on administrative perspectives or the challenges faced by school leaders in managing reforms. A study by Chua and Galang (2021) discusses the leadership challenges faced by school principals in implementing reforms, while Torres (2022) explores the alignment of leadership practices with the professional development needs of teachers. However, little attention has been paid to how teachers themselves view these leadership strategies. This suggests that understanding teachers' experiences and perspectives on these strategies must be explored to ensure that leadership approaches are effectively aligned with their needs and can lead to successful educational reform.

This study has the potential to fill a crucial gap in educational leadership research, given that leadership plays a critical role in driving educational change. As educational reforms continue to

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shape the educational system, understanding teachers' perspectives on leadership strategies will provide valuable insights into how these reforms can be more effectively implemented. Effective educational leadership must address the real challenges teachers face in the classroom, and by examining how teachers perceive leadership strategies, more inclusive, effective, and sustainable reform practices can be developed, tailored to foster an environment that supports both teacher success and improved school performance.

Finally, this study sought to explore teachers' perspectives on leadership strategies used by school leaders. By delving into these insights, the study shed light on how leadership strategies aligned with or diverged from the needs of teachers, providing a thorough understanding of the key drivers that influence successful reform implementation. Moreover, exploring these perspectives helped identify areas where leadership strategies could be improved to better support teachers, fostering a more conducive environment for both teaching and learning. Ultimately, the findings could guide policymakers and school leaders in refining their approaches to educational leadership, ensuring that reforms are both effective and sustainable.

Research Questions

1. What challenges do teachers face in response to the leadership strategies used to implement educational reform?
2. How do teachers cope with the challenges posed by leadership strategies in the implementation of educational reforms?
3. What insights do teachers offer on leadership strategies in facilitating or hindering educational reforms?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents the related literature and studies that are closely connected to the problem under investigation.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Response to Leadership Strategies for Implementing Educational Reform

Brown and Smith (2023) highlighted that many teachers were hesitant to adopt new teaching methodologies due to entrenched practices and skepticism about the effectiveness of reform initiatives. This resistance was often rooted in concerns about the increased workload and the perceived lack of training. Similarly, Patel and Johnson (2024) found that when teachers felt that leadership failed to involve them in the decision-making process, their resistance deepened, making it difficult to implement changes successfully. A lack of adequate support and a top-down approach contributed significantly to teachers' reluctance to embrace reform, hindering progress and innovation in classrooms.

Moreover, Taylor and Roberts (2023) argued that for educational reforms to succeed, continuous and targeted professional development had to be a priority, but many teachers reported feeling underprepared to implement new strategies due to a lack of relevant training. Likewise, Martin and Lee (2024) cited that professional development sessions were often generic, failing to address the specific needs of teachers in diverse classroom environments. This lack of personalized and ongoing training not only affected teachers' confidence but also undermined their ability to effectively execute new educational strategies, thus stalling the intended reform efforts.

As noted by Williams and Carter (2023) that many teachers faced challenges in accessing the necessary teaching materials, technology, and administrative support needed to implement new strategies. They found that inadequate resource allocation led to teachers feeling overwhelmed, which negatively impacted their motivation and effectiveness. More so, Gonzalez and Martin (2024) emphasized that a lack of collaboration among school leaders and teachers further exacerbated this issue, as teachers did not feel they had the backing to experiment with new ideas. Without adequate resources and consistent support, educational reforms were unlikely to be effectively implemented, as teachers were unable to fully engage with the new initiatives.

Furthermore, Lee and Zhou (2023) pointed out that the introduction of new reforms often led to additional responsibilities, such as extra planning, administrative tasks, and assessment duties. This increased workload detracted from the time they could devote to actual teaching, thereby diminishing the quality of student learning. Additionally, Clark and Nguyen (2024) argued that when teachers were stretched thin, they were less likely to invest in the professional development necessary to implement reform strategies effectively. This overburdened workload led to burnout, which severely impacted teachers' engagement with reform efforts, ultimately reducing their effectiveness.

Finally, Fisher and Davis (2023) stated that when school leadership failed to articulate a clear, coherent vision for reform, teachers often felt confused and disoriented, making it harder for them to align their teaching practices with reform goals. In a similar view, Thompson and Lee (2024) found that teachers struggled to implement reform strategies when they were not provided with clear guidelines and expectations. The absence of transparent communication and a unified vision resulted in fragmented efforts, causing teachers to feel unsupported and unclear about the goals of the reform, which weakened its overall impact.

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers in Response to the Challenges Posed by Leadership Strategies in Educational Reform Implementation

According to Martin and Lee (2024) teachers seek peer support and engage in reflective practices, to handle the pressures of change. These strategies enable teachers to stay motivated and adapt to the evolving demands of their classrooms. Furthermore, Zhao and Wang (2023) emphasized that a supportive community within schools is essential for helping teachers cope with the stresses of reform. Collaborative environments not only provide emotional support but also enhance teachers' ability to adapt their

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teaching methods and embrace changes in curriculum and pedagogy.

In a similar vein, Taylor and Roberts (2023) highlighted that when school leaders provide clear and consistent communication about the goals and expectations of reforms, teachers experience less uncertainty and stress. Clear communication allows teachers to better understand the rationale behind changes, which helps reduce anxiety and encourages proactive engagement with new strategies. In contrast, when leadership communication is lacking or inconsistent, teachers tend to feel isolated and overwhelmed.

Additionally, Zhao and Tan (2024) found that active participation in reform discussions fosters greater teacher confidence. Teachers who feel heard and involved in the reform process are more likely to accept changes, effectively managing the pressures associated with these transformations. Moreover, Lee and Zhou (2023) explained that teachers burdened with excessive workloads or inadequate resources are more likely to resort to time management and stress reduction techniques, to maintain their well-being. These teachers often feel overwhelmed, and their ability to implement reforms effectively is hindered by the absence of necessary tools and support. In contrast, teachers with access to sufficient resources report higher levels of job satisfaction and are more effective in adapting to reforms.

In addition, Williams and Carter (2023) noted that in environments where teachers feel adequately supported, both physically and emotionally, their coping strategies are more robust, enabling them to better manage reform-related stress and implement new strategies more successfully. Gonzalez and Martin (2024) emphasized that teachers who possess emotional intelligence can regulate their own emotions, empathize with students, and remain calm under pressure, which allows them to cope effectively with stress. These teachers tend to exhibit greater resilience, showing a higher capacity to adapt their teaching strategies in response to reform.

In a related study, Kline and Myers (2023) cited that emotional intelligence training programs for teachers can enhance their coping abilities, equipping them with the skills needed to handle difficult situations and improve their interactions with students and colleagues.

Finally, Williams and Carter (2023) underscored that professional learning communities (PLCs) provide a vital space for teachers to collaborate, share ideas, and provide mutual support during educational reform. Teachers who participate in PLCs report feeling more confident and less isolated as they work together to address challenges. PLCs encourage a collective approach to problem-solving, which can reduce stress and improve the overall success of reform implementation.

Similarly, Smith and Robinson (2024) stressed that PLCs promote a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers feel supported and empowered to make changes in their practice. These communities help build resilience by allowing teachers to collectively navigate the challenges posed by leadership strategies, thereby improving the overall quality of education within schools.

Insights Teachers Offer on Leadership Strategies in Facilitating or Hindering Educational Reforms

As highlighted by Zhao and Tan (2024), active participation in reform discussions enhances teacher confidence and enables them to better manage the pressures of educational transformations. Kim (2024) suggested that collaboration and shared responsibility in decision-making further amplify this effect, fostering a sense of ownership among teachers and strengthening their commitment to the reforms. Creating an inclusive environment where teachers are actively engaged in discussions and decision-making processes not only boosts their confidence but also plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of educational reforms.

Moreover, Williams and Carter (2023) pointed out, emotional and physical support is critical in helping teachers cope with the stress that often accompanies educational reforms. Similarly, Taylor and Roberts (2023) emphasized that clear and consistent communication from school leaders can significantly reduce uncertainty and stress, thus facilitating the adaptation of teachers to new strategies. Ongoing support and open lines of communication from school leaders are essential to successfully implement leadership strategies and manage the challenges associated with reform.

Furthermore, Martin and Lee (2024) demonstrated that teachers who receive adequate support are more likely to engage in reflective practices and seek peer support, which helps them cope with the pressures of educational change. In addition, Zhao and Wang (2023) highlighted the role of supportive school leadership in alleviating reform-related stress, enabling teachers to remain motivated and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. A collaborative and supportive school environment, cultivated through strong leadership, is vital for teachers to navigate the complexities of reform successfully.

Finally, Taylor and Roberts (2023) asserted that aligning leadership strategies with teachers' needs leads to more effective reform implementation by improving teacher morale and commitment. Likewise, Williams and Carter (2023) emphasize that when leadership is focused on addressing teachers' concerns, it enhances their ability to manage change and adapt to new strategies. This alignment between leadership and teachers' needs not only fosters a more positive school culture but also ensures the long-term success and sustainability of educational reforms.

Theoretical Framework

This study used Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1985) and Avolio (1999), which focuses on how leaders inspire

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and engage followers for higher performance and growth. The theory highlights four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, thus empowering followers and fostering innovation, making transformational leaders more effective in driving change, motivation, and growth, particularly in educational settings.

In this study, Transformational Leadership Theory was used to explore how leadership strategies influence teachers' responses to educational reform. Teachers' ability to adapt and thrive often depends on the leadership styles of administrators. By examining behaviors like individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, the study assessed how leadership impacts teacher morale, resilience, and their capacity to handle reform pressures. Additionally, the theory helped explore how leadership fosters collaboration and openness to change, which are essential for successful educational reform.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, research locale, participants, research instruments, data-gathering procedure, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive design. As cited by Creswell (2023), qualitative descriptive designs are typically used to provide a straightforward, detailed description of an experience or phenomenon, focusing on the perspectives of participants. This design emphasizes the collection of rich, descriptive data, which allows for a clear understanding of the participants' lived experiences. In this study, a qualitative descriptive design was used to explore the challenges teachers face in response to leadership strategies used to implement educational reform, their coping mechanisms, and their insights on how these strategies facilitate or hinder the reform process.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among the five elementary schools of East 2 District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, coded as School A, B, C, D, and E. These schools offer a complete elementary curriculum led by full-fledged principals, who are well-established in their leadership roles, with a track record of implementing educational reforms. The researchers chose these schools due to their diverse teaching environments and the presence of established leadership structures, which are crucial for gaining in-depth insights into the challenges and coping mechanisms of teachers in response to leadership strategies for educational reform.

Research Participants

The study involved five elementary school teachers, one from each school in the research locale, who were selected using purposive sampling, which, according to Etikan et al. (2023), is a non-random sampling technique that allows for the selection of participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. Teachers were selected based on their minimum of three years' teaching experience, active participation in or exposure to educational reforms, and familiarity with leadership strategies in their schools, ensuring they can provide relevant insights into the challenges and coping mechanisms related to educational reform.

Research Instrument

This study used a semi-structured interview guide to gather in-depth responses from teachers on the challenges they face, their coping mechanisms, and their insights on leadership strategies in educational reform. The instrument was validated by a panel of experts to ensure that the questions align with the study's objectives, facilitating open, meaningful discussions that yield rich, qualitative data to address the core research questions.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, following a systematic process. First, the researchers transcribed the interviews verbatim to ensure accuracy. Next, the data were coded by identifying recurring themes and patterns related to the challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights on leadership strategies. Then, these codes were grouped into broader categories to capture key themes that address the study's research questions. Finally, the researchers interpreted the findings, linking them to the existing literature on educational reform and leadership strategies, while ensuring the analysis reflects the participants' perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards by ensuring that key considerations were met throughout the research process. Ethical considerations included obtaining review and approval from the UIC-REC, securing informed consent from respondents, and maintaining confidentiality. The study provided social value by exploring the challenges, coping strategies, and insights of teachers regarding leadership strategies for implementing educational reform, ultimately benefiting Department of Education officials, school heads, teachers, and future researchers. Informed consent was secured by informing participants of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time, ensuring no coercion. The research considered that the participants were no longer vulnerable, as they were of legal age. Risks were minimized by disclosing the research's nature, benefits, and confidentiality measures to participants, while avoiding harm or disruption to their routine. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained by safeguarding participants' identities and adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The principle of justice was observed by treating all participants fairly, offering tokens of appreciation, and respecting their dignity through transparent reporting. Transparency was maintained by providing clear and accessible information about the study's methods and findings, ensuring objectivity in data analysis. The researchers' qualifications were supported by research training, and the necessary resources and

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consultations were made available to ensure the study's success. Community involvement was a key consideration, with permission from relevant authorities sought, and the final results shared with the community to offer a better understanding of leadership strategies in educational reform.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, followed by an in-depth discussion of their implications. The analysis compares these findings with existing literature and explores their significance. The results not only highlight the challenges faced by teachers but also the coping strategies they employ and the insights they provide in response to leadership strategies for implementing educational reform.

Table 1
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Challenges Teachers Face in Response to Leadership Strategies Used in Implementing Educational Reform

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Inadequate Support And Resources	• lack of access to resources • teachers often feel unsupported • fail to provide the necessary resources and essential assistance
Ineffective Communication And Lack Of Teacher Agency	• poor communication • lack of clarity • not provided with clear guidelines and expectation
Lack Of Clear Direction And Strategy Implementation	• stemming from unclear guidance • teachers often feel disoriented • confusion and inconsistency in applying new strategies
Power Dynamics And Leadership Styles	• excluded from decision-making • lack of autonomy • frequent changes in leadership
Difficulty In Teacher Leadership While Navigating Student Diversity And Reform Implementation	• interplay between varied student needs • demands of educational reforms • increased stress and pressure on teachers • overlook the contextual realities

Challenges Teachers Face in Response to Leadership Strategies Used in Implementing Educational Reform

There are five essential themes that describe the challenges teachers face in response to leadership strategies used in implementing educational reform. These themes include *inadequate support, resources, and development opportunities*; *ineffective communication and lack of teacher agency*; *lack of clear direction and strategy implementation*; *power dynamics and leadership styles*; and *difficulty in teacher leadership while navigating student diversity and reform implementation.*

Inadequate Support and Resources

Teachers often feel unsupported when leadership strategies fail to provide the necessary resources and essential assistance, making it challenging to implement reforms effectively. This lack of support can lead to frustration, burnout, and decreased morale, ultimately impacting the quality of teaching. When teachers do not receive the guidance and tools needed for success, they may resist change, hindering overall progress in the educational reform process.

During the interviews, the participants shared that:

> *"…lack of access to resources."* (IDI-P3, L244)

> *"The skills are needed to improve. Lack of instructional strategies. Lack of teaching instruments. Lack of working activity sheets."* (IDI-P4, L328-329)

> *"There are also times when limited resources and a tight schedule make it harder to provide individual support. However, there are times when support is lacking, especially when materials are limited for us teachers."* (IDI-P5, L442-443. L453-454)

Williams and Carter (2023) noted that challenges in accessing resources hinder teachers' ability to implement reforms, which negatively affects the quality of teaching. Similarly, Johnson (2024) emphasized that, without adequate support, teachers struggle to adapt, leading to frustration and burnout. Ultimately, this compromises the quality of teaching and learning and weakens the effectiveness of educational reforms.

Ineffective Communication and Lack of Teacher Agency

Poor communication can severely hinder teachers' ability to connect with their students and adapt to educational reforms. This lack of clarity not only frustrates educators but also diminishes their sense of agency, ultimately jeopardizing the success of educational initiatives. Poor communication can severely hinder teachers' ability to connect with their students and adapt to educational reforms. This lack of clarity not only frustrates educators but also diminishes their sense of agency, ultimately jeopardizing the success of educational initiatives.

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During the interviews, the participants stated that:

"Communication with pupils can provide serious difficult for teachers as well". (IDI-P2, L125)

"Lack of clarity and communication. If reforms are not clearly communicated o understood, adaptation becomes more difficult." (IDI-P3, L229-230)

Thompson and Lee (2024) found that teachers struggled to implement reform strategies when they were not provided with clear guidelines and expectations. Additionally, Garcia (2025) highlighted that without clarity and direction, teachers' engagement with reforms diminishes significantly. This suggests that establishing effective communication and providing detailed guidance are essential for fostering teacher agency and promoting successful educational outcomes.

Lack of Clear Direction and Strategy Implementation

Teachers express difficulty stemming from unclear guidance, which leads to confusion and inconsistency in applying new strategies. Additionally, the varying learning styles and readiness levels among students exacerbate these challenges. This combination of ambiguous expectations and diverse student needs creates barriers that hinder effective reform implementation, ultimately impacting teachers' ability to provide a cohesive and responsive educational experience.

During the interviews, the participants expressed that:

"When teachers struggle with ... unclear guidance". (IDI-P5, L459)

"It is challenging because of the different learning styles and readiness of pupils to adopt the educational reforms in the system ". (IDI-P1, L22-23)

Fisher and Davis (2023) explained that when school leadership fails to articulate a clear vision for reform, teachers often feel disoriented, making it harder to align their practices with reform goals. Moreover, Rodriguez (2024) added that without a coherent strategy, educators may struggle to implement changes effectively, leading to disjointed teaching experiences. Consequently, this lack of clarity not only affects teachers' morale and engagement but also prevents students from receiving a consistent and meaningful educational experience.

Power Dynamics and Leadership Styles

When teachers' voices are excluded from decision-making, trust is eroded, and they feel disempowered, leading to disengagement. A lack of autonomy, along with frequent leadership changes, further exacerbates this issue, resulting in inconsistent reform implementation and a lack of accountability. These power imbalances create a barrier to effective change, as teachers may become passive recipients of top-down decisions rather than active participants in shaping the reform process.

During the interviews, the participants divulged that:

"...teachers' voices are not considered in decision-making". (IDI-P5, L558-559)

"...the group feeling like they aren't trusted with decisions or important tasks". (IDI-P1, L92)

"Frequent changes in leadership can lead to inconsistent implementation of reforms and lack of accountability." (IDI-P3, L290-291)

Patel and Johnson (2024) found that when teachers felt that leadership failed to involve them in the decision-making process, their resistance deepened, making it difficult to implement changes successfully. Furthermore, Lee (2025) emphasized that when educators lack a voice in reform efforts, they are more prone to passivity and frustration, further hindering progress and innovation within the educational environment. This cycle of disengagement ultimately undermines the effectiveness of reforms and diminishes the potential for meaningful transformation in educational practices.

Difficulty in Teacher Leadership while Navigating Student Diversity and Reform Implementation

The difficulty in teacher leadership while navigating student diversity and reform implementation underscores the complex interplay between varied student needs and the demands of educational reforms. The challenge of leading effectively within classrooms is compounded by the necessity to cater to a wide range of student backgrounds and abilities while simultaneously managing the complexities of reform implementation. This dynamic can lead to increased stress and pressure on teachers, making it harder to foster an inclusive learning environment that effectively meets all students' needs.

During the interviews, the participants revealed that:

" It is challenging because of the different learning styles and readiness of pupils to adopt the educational reforms in the system". (IDI-P1, L22-23)

"I need to adjust my lessons to fit different cultures, abilities, and learning needs of the students". (IDI-P5, L421-422)

"Implementing educational reform often involves leadership strategies that can present challenges to daily teaching practices". (IDI-P3, L218-219)

Garcia and Ortiz (2023) noted that educational reforms often overlook the contextual realities faced by teachers in diverse classrooms, which can lead to resistance and disengagement among educators. Likewise, Thompson (2024) highlighted that without adequate support and training, teachers may struggle to integrate reform initiatives effectively, further complicating their ability to lead in the context of student diversity. The interplay between student diversity, reform implementation, and teacher leadership creates a challenging landscape where educators must

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continuously adapt, ultimately resulting in increased stress and difficulties in fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Table 2
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Coping Strategies of Teachers with the Challenges Posed by Leadership Strategies in the Implementation of Educational Reforms

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Adaptation and Flexibility in Teaching Practices	• incorporating diverse instructional methods • pose open-ended questions • uses a range of techniques strategies • making learning more relevant and engaging
Collaboration and Peer Support	• seeking mentorship from experienced educators • inclusivity • open communication • share insights and solutions
Engagement in Reflection and Self-Assessment	• open-mindedness and learning from experiences • foster continuous growth • better equipped to meet the diverse needs

Coping Strategies of Teachers with the Challenges Posed by Leadership Strategies in the Implementation of Educational Reforms

There are three essential themes that describe the coping strategies teachers use to address the challenges posed by leadership strategies in the implementation of educational reforms. These themes include *adaptation and flexibility in teaching practices*, *collaboration and peer support*, and *engagement in reflection and self-assessment.*

Adaptation and Flexibility in Teaching Practices

Incorporating diverse instructional methods allows teachers to address the varied interests and abilities of their students, making learning more relevant and engaging. This approach not only caters to different learning preferences but also bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Ultimately, such responsiveness fosters critical thinking and enhances student engagement, supporting deeper understanding and retention of knowledge.

During the interviews, the participants elaborated that:

> *"I try to use different teaching methods, include technology in my lessons, and create a classroom where students feel comfortable asking for help".* (IDI-P5, L443-445)

> *"Pose open-ended questions questions that demand that students analyzed, assess and apply their information in order to foster critical thinking and deepen understanding".* (IDI-P2, L161-162)

> *"Uses a range of techniques strategies including practical exercised and group projects, multimedia materials and real word examples to address this".* (IDI-P2, L140-142)

Lindahl and Tining (2023) highlighted that adaptive teaching practices are key to addressing the diverse needs of classrooms, improving engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Carter and Johnson (2024) stressed the importance of flexible strategies, incorporating real-world applications to bridge theory and practice. As such, adaptable, inclusive teaching approaches are essential for student success.

Collaboration and Peer Support

Collaboration and peer support are essential for overcoming leadership challenges, especially during educational reforms. Through communication and teamwork, educators share insights and solutions, reducing isolation. Seeking mentorship from experienced leaders provides valuable guidance, fostering resilience and professional growth.

During the interviews, the participants explained that:

> *"Communication, collaboration, and support are the strategies I use to cope with the challenges posed by these leadership strategies".* (IDI-P1, L56-57)

> *"Seeking mentorship from experienced educators offers good result in managing the difficulties we face with educational reforms".* (IDI-P3, L260-261)

As stated by Martin and Lee (2024), teachers seek peer support and engage in reflective practices to handle the pressures of change, which helps them stay motivated and adapt to evolving classroom demands. In addition, Zhao and Wang (2023) highlighted the importance of a supportive community within schools, as it enables educators to cope with the stresses of reform. This emphasizes the positive impact of mentorship and peer support in fostering resilience and professional growth.

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Engagement in Reflection and Self-Assessment

Engagement in reflection and self-assessment is crucial for educators to improve their teaching practices. These reflective practices foster continuous growth, allowing educators to adapt and enhance their approach as they progress in their teaching journey. By recognizing what works best for both themselves and their students, educators are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their classrooms, especially while journeying through educational reforms.

During the interviews, the participants expounded that:

> *"I try to adjust my teaching methods based on what works best for me and my students while making sure I follow the school's guidelines".* (IDI-P5, L472-474)

> *"Self- paced study acknowledging that I could be better".* (IDI-P4, L358)

> *"Possessing qualities like open-mindedness and learning from experiences in the fields, making them work as we journey with our students".* (IDI-P2, L206-208)

As Martin and Lee (2024) suggested, reflective practices help educators stay motivated and adapt to the challenges of change by encouraging personal growth and professional development. More so, Zhao and Wang (2023) accentuated the importance of continuous learning and reflection in fostering resilience and equipping teachers to navigate the complexities of reform, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of their classrooms. These practices enable educators to fine-tune their approaches, adapt to new educational demands, and continuously improve their teaching methods.

Table 3
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Insights from Teachers on Leadership Strategies in Facilitating or Hindering Educational Reforms

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Collaborative Leadership on Reform Success	• promote collaboration and shared responsibility • encourages collective effort and accountability • highlighting the importance of teamwork • shared responsibility
Ongoing Support and Regular Communication from School Leaders	• continuous engagement • consistent interaction • feel supported and empowered • address challenges in real-time • give feedbacks and positive reinforcement
Sustaining Reform Efforts Through Ongoing Leadership Support	• structured approach • increased student engagement • teachers feel empowered and supported
Aligning Leadership Strategies with Teachers' Needs	• more effective and impactful implementation • successful outcomes • embrace and actively contribute • aligned with the needs and concerns

Insights from Teachers on Leadership Strategies in Facilitating or Hindering Educational Reforms

There are four essential themes that describe the insights from teachers on leadership strategies in facilitating or hindering educational reforms. These themes include *collaborative leadership for reform success*, *ongoing support and regular communication from school leaders*, *sustaining reform efforts through continued leadership support*, and *aligning leadership strategies with teachers' needs.*

Collaborative Leadership on Reform Success

Leadership strategies that promote collaboration and shared responsibility are essential for achieving educational reform goals. These strategies being implemented in the school are highly effective in supporting these goals, highlighting the importance of teamwork in driving progress. Fostering a culture of collaboration is seen as crucial, as it encourages collective effort and accountability, both of which are key to sustaining successful reform efforts.

During the interviews, the participants explicated that:

> *"..leadership strategies being implemented in our school is very effective in supporting the goals of education reform".* (IDI-P1, L78-79)

> *"Fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility within school is important".* (IDI-P3, L317)

The findings align with Zhao and Tan's (2024) study, which suggests that active participation in reform discussions boosts teacher confidence and helps them manage the pressures of educational transformations. Consequently, Kim (2024) found that collaboration and shared responsibility in decision-making enhance teachers' sense of ownership and commitment to reforms. Therefore, creating an inclusive environment where teachers are

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actively engaged strengthens their confidence and contributes to the success of educational reforms.

Ongoing Support and Regular Communication from School Leaders

Continuous engagement from school leadership is essential to effectively implement educational strategies. Such consistent interaction ensures that teachers feel supported and empowered throughout the process of change. This ongoing dialogue not only promotes trust but also enables leaders to address challenges in real-time, making the implementation process more successful.

During the interviews, the participants unwrapped that:

> *"It is very important that we have an active support and constant communication from school leaders in implementing these strategies because they can give you feedbacks and positive reinforcement for you to learn and grow professionally".* (IDI-P1, L40-42)

> *"...open communication from school leaders can really help to feel more confident in adapting these reforms".* (IDI-P5, L454-455)

Williams and Carter (2023) found that emotional and physical support enhances teachers' coping strategies, helping them manage reform-related stress. Taylor and Roberts (2023) highlighted that clear communication from school leaders reduces uncertainty and stress, making reforms easier to adapt to. These factors emphasize the importance of ongoing support and regular communication for successful strategy implementation.

Sustaining Reform Efforts Through Ongoing Leadership Support

Leadership strategies that align with educational reform goals are essential for creating a structured approach to implementing change within a school. When school leaders provide continuous support, teachers are better equipped to create positive and effective learning environments. This leads to increased student engagement and improved performance, as teachers feel empowered and supported in their efforts.

During the interviews, the participants disclosed that:

> *"...leadership strategies in supporting educational reform goals within a specific school".* (IDI-P3, L277-278)

> *"The support from school leaders that could help implementing these strategies to work. when teachers receive support, they create a more positive and effective learning space where students are more engaged and can perform better".* (IDI-P5, L450, L463-464)

Martin and Lee (2024) highlighted that when teachers receive adequate support, they engage in reflective practices and seek peer support to handle the pressures of change, which helps them stay motivated and adapt to classroom demands. In addition, Zhao and Wang (2023) emphasized that supportive school leadership is crucial for teachers to manage reform-related stress. By fostering a collaborative environment, school leaders provide emotional support and enable teachers to adjust their teaching methods, ensuring successful and sustained reform implementation.

Aligning Leadership Strategies with Teachers' Needs

When leadership strategies are in sync with teachers' needs, the implementation of reforms becomes more effective and impactful. This alignment ensures that teachers feel supported and understood, leading to more successful outcomes in the classroom. Additionally, when teachers' concerns are addressed, they are more likely to embrace and actively contribute to the reform process.

During the interviews, the participants disclosed that:

> *"Aligning leadership strategies with the actual concerns of teachers would make implementation smoother and more impactful".* (IDI-P5, L546-547)

> *"...leadership strategies are aligned with the needs and concerns of teachers".* (IDI-P1, L104)

The results are consistent with the work of Taylor and Roberts (2023), who highlighted that aligning leadership strategies with teachers' needs leads to more effective reform implementation by improving teacher morale and commitment. Likewise, Williams and Carter (2023) underscored that when leadership focuses on addressing teachers' concerns, it enhances their ability to manage change and adapt to new strategies.

Finally, the study's results can be understood through the lens of Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1985) and Avolio (1999), which emphasizes four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. First, idealized influence involves leaders serving as role models. The study shows that a lack of support and resources (IDI-P3, L244) hampers this aspect, as teachers struggle when leaders fail to demonstrate commitment and guidance. Second, inspirational motivation refers to leaders clearly communicating a compelling vision. Challenges like ineffective communication (IDI-P3, L229-230) and unclear direction (IDI-P5, L459) hinder teachers' alignment with reform goals, reducing motivation. Third, intellectual stimulation involves encouraging creativity and problem-solving. Teachers with diverse student needs (IDI-P1, L22-23) benefit from leaders who support innovative practices and foster collaboration (IDI-P1, L56-57; IDI-P3, L260-261). Finally, individualized consideration focuses on addressing teachers' unique needs. Teachers who feel unheard (IDI-P5, L558-559) or unsupported (IDI-P5, L450) struggle with reforms, but leaders who provide ongoing support and align strategies with teachers' concerns (IDI-P1, L104; IDI-P5, L546-547) empower and motivate teachers to adapt effectively.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the light of the findings and conclusions drawn, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

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Department of Education officials may focus on ensuring access to sufficient resources and enhancing communication to address the challenges teachers face in implementing educational reforms. By developing policies that align with teachers' needs and providing consistent leadership, they may create an environment conducive to the long-term success of reforms.

School heads may align leadership strategies with teachers' specific needs and offer continuous support to foster a positive and collaborative atmosphere. By promoting stability and collaboration, they may empower teachers to navigate challenges effectively and contribute to the success of educational reforms.

Teachers may benefit from continuous professional development to adapt their teaching practices, foster peer collaboration, and engage in reflection. By embracing flexibility and reflective practices, they may effectively overcome obstacles and enhance the success of educational reforms in their classrooms.

Future researchers may explore the relationship between leadership strategies and teacher effectiveness to guide the development of more effective reforms. Given the study's limitations, research incorporating diverse settings and additional theoretical frameworks alongside Transformational Leadership Theory could offer a broader understanding of educational reform complexities.

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