

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: MANAGING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines how school heads, teachers, and parents manage educational resources in Philippine public schools amid persistent constraints. Despite ongoing reforms and increased government investment, schools-particularly those in underserved and geographically isolated areas-continue to experience challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching materials, and delayed financial support. This study aimed to explore how key stakeholders navigate these contextual challenges and identify practices that support equitable and sustainable resource management.

Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten purposively selected participants composed of four school heads, three teachers, and three parents. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The analysis yielded four interrelated themes: (1) Contextual Challenges in Resource Management, (2) Adaptive Leadership and Strategies, (3) Equity and Perceptions of Fairness, and (4) Parental Engagement and Community Support.

Findings reveal that school leaders employ flexible planning and collaborative decision-making, teachers demonstrate innovation through resource sharing and improvisation, and parents contribute through fundraising, volunteerism, and advocacy. These practices are collectively framed as Strategic Resourcefulness, anchored in Inclusive Engagement. The study underscores the importance of participatory governance and context-responsive leadership in addressing resource inequities. Recommendations include strengthening school-based planning, supporting teacher innovation, empowering Parent-Teacher Associations, simplifying policy implementation, and prioritizing infrastructure and technology investment.

Keywords: Educational Resources, Strategic Resourcefulness, Inclusive Engagement, School Leadership, Parental Involvement.

Introduction

The management of educational resources remains a persistent challenge in Philippine basic education, particularly in the context of regional disparities and uneven access to infrastructure, instructional materials, and financial support. While government initiatives such as the K to 12 Program and the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) have aimed to improve educational delivery, many public schools continue to experience limitations that affect teaching and learning processes.

Studies indicate that inefficiencies in resource allocation, delayed fund releases, and bureaucratic procedures often constrain schools' ability to implement improvement plans. These challenges are more pronounced in rural and geographically isolated areas, where contextual factors significantly

shape resource availability. As a result, school leaders, teachers, and parents often rely on adaptive and collaborative strategies to sustain school operations and learning continuity.

Leadership competencies, school-based management, and participatory governance have been identified as critical factors in effective resource utilization. Research also highlights the growing role of parents and communities in supporting schools through fundraising, volunteerism, and engagement in school activities. However, the effectiveness of these practices varies depending on local capacity and school-community relationships.

This study builds on existing literature by examining

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the lived experiences of school heads, teachers, and parents who are directly involved in managing educational resources. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How do school heads and teachers experience and navigate challenges in managing educational resources within their local contexts? And (2) What practices and perspectives of parents contribute to effective and equitable resource management in Philippine public schools?

Theoretical Framework

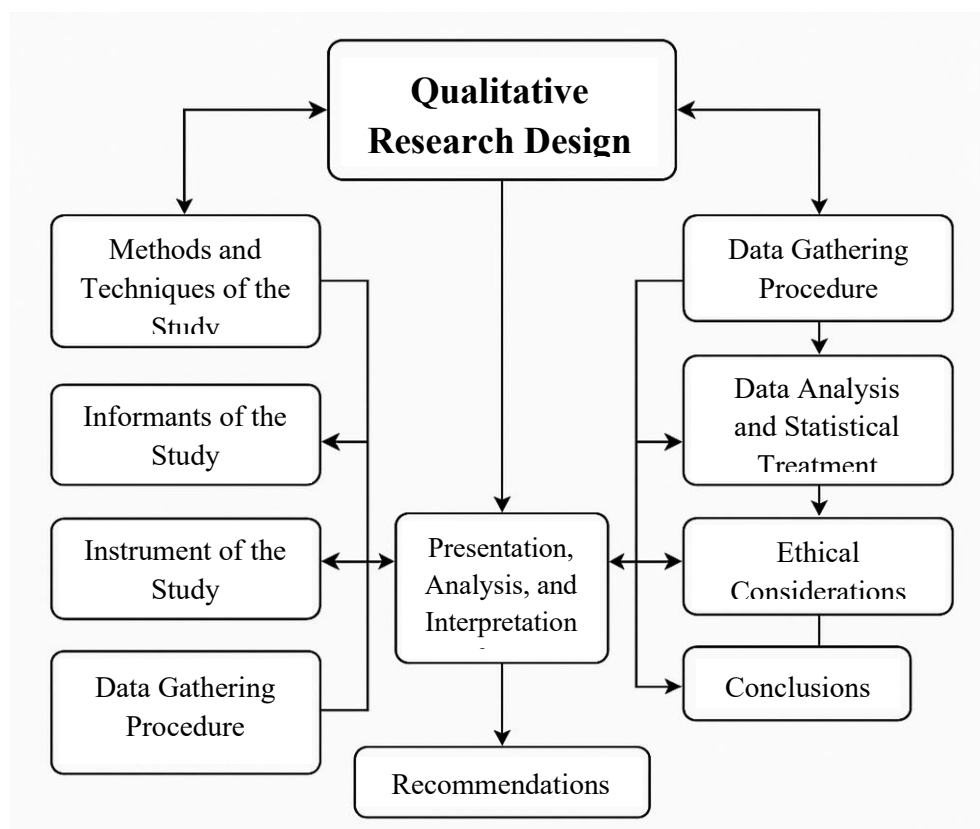
This study is grounded in Participatory Governance Theory, which together provide a lens for understanding how educational resources are allocated, utilized, and sustained within school

communities. Participatory Governance Theory underscores the importance of stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes. This is particularly relevant to the role of parents and communities in resource mobilization and oversight. As Gabriel et al. (2022) argue, transparency and accountability are essential in managing school financial resources, and active participation from parents can enhance both.

This theory supports the study's aim to explore how school leaders and educators navigate resource challenges and how parents contribute to fair and effective resource management.

Conceptual Framework

Illustration 1



The conceptual framework for the study "Voices from the Field: Managing Educational Resources in the Philippine Context" illustrates the flow of the research process using a qualitative design. At the center is the research method, which guides all components of the study. Surrounding it are key elements: methods and techniques used, informants involved (school heads, teachers, and parents), instruments like interviews, and the data gathering procedure. These lead to data analysis and ethical considerations, which ensure the integrity of the study. The framework then moves toward the

presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data, culminating in the study's conclusions and recommendations. Each part is connected, showing how they work together to understand and improve resource management in Philippine schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study, titled *Voices from the Field: Managing Educational Resources in the Philippine Context*, investigates the real-world experiences and collaborative practices of school leaders, educators, and parents in navigating the challenges of

educational resource management across diverse local settings in the Philippines. These are the following problems:

1. How do school leaders and educators in the Philippines experience and navigate the challenges of managing educational resources in their local contexts?
2. What practices and perspectives do parents observe and engage in that contribute to effective and equitable resource management in Philippine schools?

Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on exploring the lived experiences, practices, and perspectives of school heads, teachers, and parents in managing educational resources within selected Philippine public schools. It examines how these stakeholders navigate contextual challenges, employ adaptive strategies, and engage in collaborative efforts to ensure equitable and effective resource utilization. The scope is limited to qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten purposively chosen participants and does not include students, non-teaching staff, or DepEd officials. The study relies solely on narrative accounts and thematic analysis, excluding quantitative measures, financial documents, or direct observations. It covers general educational resources but does not provide detailed assessments of specialized equipment or budget structures. Conducted within the 2025 timeframe, the study does not account for policy changes or resource management practices beyond this period, and its findings are not intended for statistical generalization but rather for contextual understanding and insight.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to capture in-depth insights into stakeholders' experiences and practices in educational resource management. The qualitative approach was appropriate as it allowed for the exploration of context-specific realities and stakeholder perspectives.

Methods and Techniques of the Study

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. This process begins with familiarization with the data, where the researcher immerses in the transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content. Next, initial codes are generated to identify meaningful segments across the dataset. These codes are then organized during the searching for themes phase, where patterns and relationships

begin to emerge. The identified themes are reviewed for coherence and relevance, followed by defining and naming themes to clearly articulate their scope and meaning. Finally, the analysis culminates in producing the report, which presents the findings in relation to the research questions. Coding will be conducted manually and supported by qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo to help organize and visualize emerging patterns. Themes will be derived inductively, allowing insights to emerge directly from the data. To enhance the credibility of the findings, member checking will be employed, wherein selected participants will review and validate the interpretations drawn from their responses.

Informants of the Study

Ten participants were purposively selected, consisting of four school heads, three teachers, and three parents from selected public elementary and secondary schools. Participants had at least one year of direct involvement in school resource management and represented varied school contexts.

Instruments of the Study

The primary instrument used in this qualitative research is a semi-structured interview guide, designed to gather in-depth insights from school leaders, educators, and parents regarding their experiences and perspectives on managing educational resources. The interview guide consists of open-ended questions aligned with the study's objectives, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts while ensuring that key themes are consistently explored across interviews.

The interview guide is divided into sections tailored to each participant group. For school leaders and educators, questions focus on the challenges they encounter in resource management, the strategies they implement, and the influence of local and national policies. For parents, the guide explores their involvement in school activities, perceptions of fairness in resource distribution, and contributions to resource mobilization.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, the interview guide was reviewed by experts in educational research and piloted with a small group of participants. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine the wording and structure of the questions. In addition to the interview guide, audio recording devices (with informed consent) and field notes were used to document verbal responses, non-verbal cues, and contextual observations during the interviews. These instruments collectively support the richness, depth, and credibility of the data collected.

Data Gathering Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide aligned with the study objectives. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or online, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. Coding was conducted inductively, and emerging themes were reviewed for coherence and relevance. Member checking was used to validate interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

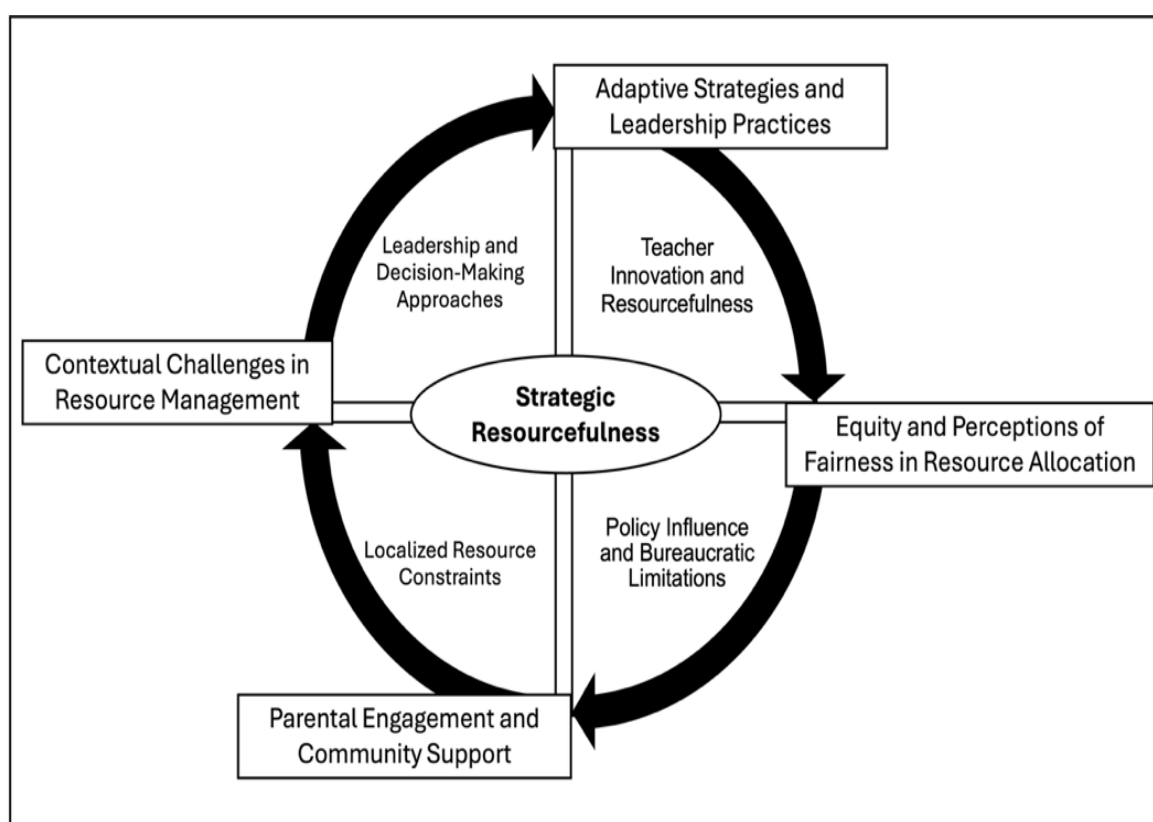
Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Informed consent was secured, and

confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the use of pseudonyms.

Results and Discussion

This study examined how school heads, teachers, and parents manage educational resources in Philippine public schools amid persistent constraints. Analysis of interview data revealed four interrelated themes that collectively illustrate a pattern of Strategic Resourcefulness, anchored in Inclusive Engagement among key stakeholders. This diverse composition ensured a well-rounded perspective on the management of educational resources in the Philippine context, capturing insights from leadership, instructional, and community viewpoints.

Illustration 2



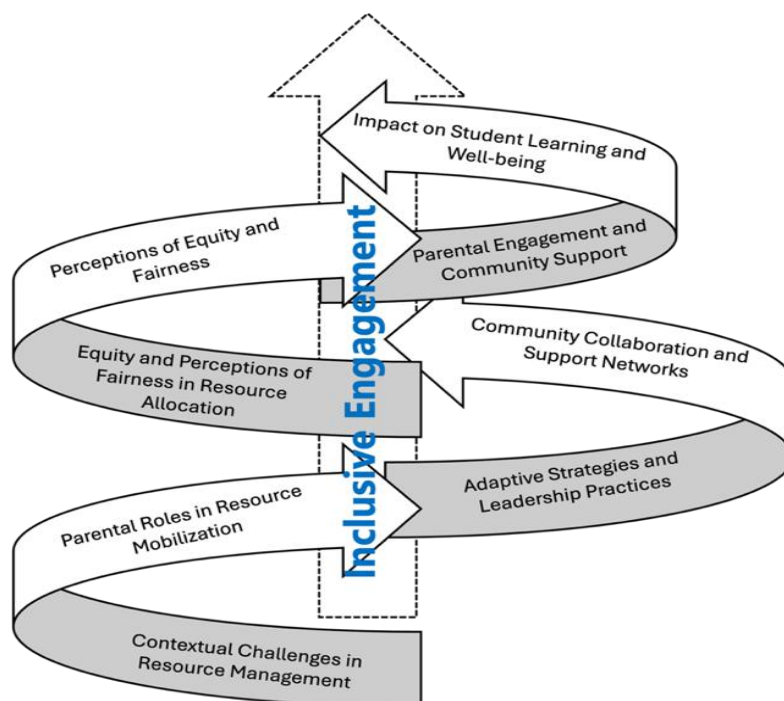
The illustration 2 presents Strategic Resourcefulness as the central dynamic through which school heads, teachers, and parents respond to persistent constraints in educational resource management. Findings reveal that contextual challenges—including limited funding, localized resource shortages, geographic isolation, and bureaucratic procedures—form the initial conditions shaping school practices. In response, school leaders adopt adaptive

leadership and decision-making approaches, such as collaborative planning and flexible policy interpretation, to align school priorities with available resources. Teachers complement these efforts through innovation and resourcefulness, employing strategies such as rotating instructional materials, developing teacher-made modules, and sharing available resources to ensure continuity of learning. These practices directly influence equity and perceptions of fairness in resource allocation, as stakeholders consciously strive to distribute limited

resources transparently and equitably across classes. Parental engagement and community support further strengthen this cycle through fundraising, volunteerism, and participation in school programs,

helping mitigate resource gaps. Collectively, these interconnected practices demonstrate how strategic resourcefulness emerges as a continuous, reciprocal process rather than a linear response to scarcity.

Illustration 3



The illustration 3 deepens this explanation through a spiral framework anchored in Inclusive Engagement, highlighting how collaborative resource management evolves and sustains impact. Beginning with contextual challenges, the spiral shows how parental roles in resource mobilization and community collaboration networks interact with adaptive leadership practices to promote shared responsibility. As engagement strengthens, stakeholders develop heightened perceptions of equity and fairness, reinforcing trust and collective participation in decision-making. This inclusive process ultimately leads to positive impacts on student learning and well-being, as resources—though limited—are utilized more effectively and responsively. The upward movement of the spiral signifies that inclusive engagement is not static; rather, it expands and strengthens through sustained collaboration among school leaders, teachers, and parents. Together, the two illustrations affirm that inclusive, context-responsive collaboration is central to sustaining equitable and effective educational resource management in Philippine public schools.

Conclusion

This study examined how school heads, teachers, and parents manage educational resources in Philippine public schools, particularly in contexts

marked by limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and policy constraints. Despite ongoing government reforms, findings indicate that local conditions continue to shape how resources are accessed, allocated, and utilized at the school level.

Drawing on interviews with ten participants, the study revealed that school leaders employ adaptive leadership and collaborative planning, teachers demonstrate innovation through resource sharing and improvisation, and parents contribute through donations, volunteerism, and participation in school activities. These practices collectively illustrate Strategic Resourcefulness, wherein stakeholders maximize limited resources through coordinated and context-responsive actions.

The study further demonstrates that Inclusive Engagement is central to effective resource management. The spiral framework highlights how school leaders, teachers, and parents interact to address contextual challenges, promote fairness in resource allocation, and strengthen community collaboration. As engagement deepens, these collaborative efforts positively influence student learning and well-being. Overall, the findings affirm that inclusive, participatory, and locally responsive approaches are essential for managing educational

resources equitably and sustainably, even under challenging conditions.

Recommendation

To enhance educational resource management, schools should strengthen school-based leadership and planning by actively involving teachers, parents, and community stakeholders in transparent decision-making processes. Capacity-building programs focusing on strategic and accountable resource management should be provided for school heads.

Teachers should be supported in developing and sharing low-cost, teacher-made instructional materials and encouraged to rotate and repurpose resources to promote equitable access. Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be empowered to take more active roles in fundraising, planning, and implementation of school initiatives, with volunteer efforts-particularly during Brigada Eskwela-formally recognized and sustained.

At the policy level, greater flexibility should be introduced by simplifying procurement and reporting procedures and increasing school autonomy to address contextual needs. Investments in infrastructure and technology should be prioritized in underserved areas, alongside strengthened partnerships with local government units, NGOs, and private organizations. Finally, schools should regularly monitor how resource management practices affect student learning and well-being, using stakeholder feedback to continuously improve resource strategies.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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