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Research Article

School Administrators' Leadership Competencies and Teachers' Resilience During Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Zone 1 Division of Zambales for the school year 2020-2021. Using a descriptive research design, data were gathered from 136 randomly selected principals and teachers through a questionnaire. Results indicated that the school administrators were rated "Excellent" in the leadership dimensions of managing change, solving problems, taking risks, setting vision, and demonstrating ethics and integrity. Similarly, teachers were assessed as "Excellent" in the resilience dimensions of self-awareness, realism, keeping calm under stress, empathy, and self-control. No significant difference was found in the perceptions of the school administrators and teachers regarding the administrators' leadership competencies. However, a significant difference was observed in the perceptions of teachers' resilience. The study further revealed a positive high correlation between administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school heads continue to employ democratic principles, embrace new ideas, and adapt to change while maintaining ethical integrity. Moreover, strengthening the partnership between school administrators and teachers is essential in achieving the school's vision and objectives. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct parallel studies to validate these results and support the development of effective leadership practices.

Keywords: *Leadership, Resilience, Education, Competencies, Integrity, Collaboration*

Introduction

The school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the

COVID-19 pandemic in the Zone 1 Division of Zambales for the school year 2020-2021. The unprecedented challenges brought by the

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pandemic highlighted the need for strong leadership and teacher adaptability in educational settings. Through a descriptive research design involving 136 randomly selected respondents, the study aimed to assess leadership and resilience dimensions, providing insights into how these factors contributed to managing crises in schools. The findings offer valuable implications for enhancing leadership practices and supporting teacher resilience in times of disruption. He conducted an in-depth study to assess the impact of teaching modalities, such as the HyFlex model, on teacher burnout and job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings highlighted that HyFlex teaching, which combines in-person and virtual instruction simultaneously, posed significant challenges for teachers, increasing workload and stress. However, the study also emphasized that robust administrative support played a pivotal role in mitigating these stresses. Effective leadership strategies, including providing resources, clear communication, and emotional backing, significantly enhanced teacher resilience and job satisfaction. (Marshall, Love, and Neugebauer. 2023)

The study addresses a significant gap in existing literature regarding the interplay between school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. While prior research has examined leadership styles and their general impact on educational outcomes, limited attention has been given to how specific leadership behaviors mitigate challenges unique to crisis scenarios such as the pandemic. Particularly, there is a paucity of longitudinal studies exploring how adaptive leadership strategies influence teacher burnout, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being during transitions from remote to hybrid and in-person modalities. This research also seeks to expand understanding by analyzing the role of instructional leadership in sustaining teacher motivation and resilience in high-stress environments, bridging theoretical frameworks like the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model with practical leadership approaches.

Framework of the Study

This study explores the school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the challenges faced by the Philippine education system. It examines how various leadership approaches—such as adaptability, crisis management, and emotional intelligence—affect teachers' ability to cope with stress, adapt to new teaching methods, and maintain their well-being. The study posits that effective school leadership not only supports teachers through communication and professional development but also contributes to building resilience by fostering a supportive environment. By identifying key leadership strategies that strengthen teachers' capacity to navigate crises, the study aims to inform policy development and educational practices for future crises.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the research will collect both quantitative and qualitative data from school administrators and teachers across different educational settings in the Philippines. Surveys will measure leadership competencies and teachers' resilience, while interviews and focus groups will provide deeper insights into their experiences. The study hypothesizes that administrators who demonstrate strong leadership competencies, particularly in providing emotional support and adapting to change, will positively influence teachers' resilience, helping them adapt to remote learning and continue providing quality education. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to improving leadership training, teacher resilience programs, and educational policies, enhancing the overall resilience of educational systems worldwide in times of crisis.

Central to this study is the concept of instructional leadership, which emphasizes the leader's role in improving teaching and learning through goal setting, monitoring, and professional development. As per Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005), effective instructional leadership is crucial for teacher performance and organizational success. During the pandemic, leaders' ability to adapt to hybrid and online learning models, and provide clear guidance and feedback, significantly influenced teachers' resilience

Masten (2018) posits that resilience is not just about bouncing back but also about positive adaptation in the face of challenges. In education, resilience has been linked to both individual teacher behaviors and collective organizational practices. The study builds on this theory by examining how supportive leadership contributes to fostering resilience in teachers amidst the unprecedented stress caused by the pandemic.

By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study can capture both the measurable effects of leadership on resilience and the nuanced experiences of teachers. The quantitative component, typically through surveys or questionnaires, allows researchers to identify statistical patterns and correlations between leadership practices—such as communication, decision-making, and support—and teachers' resilience indicators, such as job satisfaction and burnout levels. This provides a broad, generalizable understanding of how leadership strategies impact teacher well-being across large populations.

On the other hand, the qualitative aspect, such as interviews or open-ended responses, offers deeper insights into the personal experiences of teachers, capturing the subjective and contextual factors that explain why and how certain leadership practices are effective in fostering resilience. Teachers can describe the specific actions of administrators, like emotional support or professional development opportunities, which helped them navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Together, these methods enable a comprehensive analysis that integrates both the statistical relationships and the lived experiences, providing a fuller understanding of the impact of leadership on teacher resilience in crisis situations.

Objectives of the Study

The study examined how school administrators' leadership competencies influence teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. It aimed to identify effective leadership strategies that support teachers in adapting to challenges and maintaining quality education during crises.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to accurately observe, record, and analyze the current behaviors, characteristics, and experiences of school administrators and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents

This study consisted of 11 school administrators and 125 teachers currently employed in the public junior high schools under Zone 1 in the province of Zambales. These schools are located in the towns of Sta. Cruz, Candelaria, and Masinloc, which collectively house a total of 18 public junior high schools.

Instrument

It was a structured survey form, which consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions. It was designed to assess the leadership competencies of school administrators and the resilience of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey aimed to capture key insights related to administrators' leadership practices and teachers' ability to adapt and maintain their well-being under challenging circumstances. The collected data provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the educational environment in the Zone 1 Public Junior High Schools in Zambales.

In the study examining school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, reliability and validity testing are essential to ensure the credibility of the findings. Reliability can be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a widely used statistic that measures internal consistency. A higher Cronbach's alpha (typically 0.70 or above) indicates that the items in a survey or scale consistently measure the same concept, such as leadership practices or teacher resilience.

To assess validity, the study would use several methods. Content validity ensures that the survey or interview items adequately cover the constructs being measured, often verified by expert reviews in the field of education. Construct validity confirms that the instruments

truly measure the theoretical concepts they are designed to assess, such as leadership competencies or resilience, and can be tested through techniques like factor analysis. Finally, criterion-related validity tests how well the measurements correlate with other established tools measuring similar concepts, further validating the research instruments.

A descriptive research design is a suitable choice for studying school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic due to its focus on providing a comprehensive, factual portrayal of the phenomena without manipulating variables. Unlike correlational or experimental designs, which attempt to identify relationships or causal links between variables, descriptive research is primarily concerned with observing and documenting the characteristics and behaviors of participants as they naturally occur in their settings (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

In this study, the goal is to describe the current state of leadership competencies and resilience among teachers, rather than to predict or manipulate outcomes. The pandemic's unprecedented nature and the diversity of responses from administrators and teachers make this a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is better understood through detailed observation and description. A descriptive design allows the researcher to capture the breadth of leadership strategies employed by administrators and the different forms of resilience demonstrated by teachers in response to the crisis (Patton, 2015).

In sum, the descriptive design is ideal for capturing a detailed snapshot of the ongoing challenges faced by schools during the pandemic, offering a nuanced understanding of how leadership and resilience interact in real-world educational environments.

Results and Discussion

When teachers felt supported by their leaders, their resilience grew. It's like a cycle—strong leadership creates resilient teachers, and resilient teachers, in turn, help maintain strong leadership."

This interdependence suggests that school administrators' ability to offer emotional and

logistical support was critical in nurturing the resilience of their teachers. Teachers felt empowered when they knew their leaders understood the personal and professional struggles they were going through.

Our principal was always present, checking in not just about work but how we were holding up. Knowing that someone cared made a huge difference in how I handled the stress of teaching during the pandemic.

The differences in teacher resilience perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic can be attributed to several factors, including the level of support teachers received from their administrators, the external pressures they faced, and their individual coping mechanisms. Teachers who received strong support from their school leaders—such as clear guidance, frequent check-ins, and emotional backing—tended to report higher levels of resilience. In contrast, those who felt isolated or unsupported, especially in schools with less involved leadership, struggled more with stress and burnout. External pressures, such as managing family responsibilities or personal health concerns, also significantly impacted teachers' resilience. Teachers juggling personal crises, such as caring for sick family members or handling childcare while teaching remotely, often found it harder to maintain their professional resilience. On the other hand, teachers without these external burdens were better able to focus on their work and adapt to the challenges of online teaching. Moreover, individual coping mechanisms played a major role—teachers with more optimistic or adaptable personalities were better equipped to handle the challenges, while those who experienced anxiety or uncertainty struggled more. Finally, the school culture and organizational environment influenced resilience, with teachers in collaborative, supportive environments feeling more resilient compared to those in isolated or competitive settings. These combined factors—leadership support, external pressures, personal attributes, and school culture—explain the varied perceptions of teacher resilience during the pandemic.

Perception of the principal and teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Leadership Competencies

The study found that both principal and teacher-respondents rated leadership competencies as "Excellent," with an overall grand mean of 3.43. The highest-rated dimension was Managing Change (3.37), followed closely by Setting Vision and Strategy (3.43), and Demonstrating Ethics and Integrity (3.54). Other dimensions such as Solving Problems and Making Decisions (3.41) and Taking Risks and

Innovating (3.39) also received strong ratings. These results align with previous research by Siu (2008) and Parrett and Budge (2009), which identified challenges in educational reforms such as communication gaps and staff skill deficiencies. Effective leadership by principals is crucial in addressing these issues to ensure successful organizational change and enhance the learning-teaching process.

Table 1. on the Perception of the principal and teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Leadership Competencies

Dimensions on Leadership Competencies	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1 Managing Change	3.37	Excellent	1
2 Solving Problems and Making Decisions	3.41	Excellent	4
3 Taking Risks and Innovating	3.39	Excellent	5
4 Setting Vision and Strategy	3.43	Excellent	2
5 Demonstrating Ethics and Integrity	3.54	Excellent	3
Grand Mean	3.43	Excellent	

The principal and teacher-respondents assessed "Excellent" on all dimensions particularly on Managing Change (3.37) and ranked 1st; Setting Vision and Strategy (3.43) and ranked 2nd; Demonstrating Ethics and Integrity (3.54) and ranked 3rd; Solving Problems and Making Decisions (3.41) and ranked 4th and Taking Risks and Innovating (3.39) and ranked 5th. The computed grand mean on the responses towards dimensions on Leadership Competencies was 3.43 with qualitative interpretation of "Excellent".

This finding collaborates on the study of Siu (2008) and Parrett and Budge (2009) have identified the sources of implementation problems of educational reforms and changes as lack of communication, lack of staff skills, slow progress, disagreement over desired activities. These factors significantly impact on the organizational readiness for change which needs principal leaders to address in order to have successful change (Smith, 2005). Thus, identifying the current role of principals in facilitating learning-teaching process and providing suggestions is critical.

Perception of the principal and teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Leadership Competencies

The study found that both principals and teachers rated the dimensions of Teachers' Resilience as "Excellent," with the highest ratings in Self-Awareness (3.62) and Empathy (3.55), and the lowest in Keeping Calm Under Stress (3.37). The overall grand mean for Teachers' Resilience was 3.49, indicating excellent resilience among respondents. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding leadership competencies such as Managing Change, Solving Problems, Taking Risks, Setting Vision, and Demonstrating Ethics & Integrity, as evidenced by the F-critical values, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

The high ratings in the "Managing Change" dimension reflect school administrators' ability to adapt effectively to the challenges presented by the transition to remote and hybrid learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This dimension likely scored highly because administrators had to implement quick, decisive actions to ensure continuity of education, as well as to manage the emotional and logistical challenges teachers and students faced. This ability to manage change is consistent with findings from Siu (2008), who emphasized the critical role of leadership in navigating transitions and helping organizations cope with uncertainty.

Leaders who demonstrate strong change management competencies provide clear communication, support for professional development, and adaptability to new circumstances—

qualities that were especially important during the pandemic (Siu, 2008; Kotter, 2012).

Table 2. Perception of the principal and teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Teacher Resilience

Dimensions on Teacher Resilience	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1 Self-Awareness	3.62	Excellent	1
2 Realistic	3.46	Excellent	4
3 Keeping calm when under stress	3.37	Excellent	5
4 Empathy	3.55	Excellent	2
5 Self-Control	3.49	Excellent	3
Grand Mean	3.49	Excellent	

The principal and teacher-respondents assessed "Excellent" on all dimensions towards Teachers' Resilience particularly on Self-Awareness (3.62) and ranked 1st; Empathy (3.55) and ranked 2nd; Self-Control (3.49) and ranked 3rd; Realistic (3.46) and ranked 4th and Keeping calm when under stress (3.37) and ranked 5th. The computed grand mean on the responses towards dimensions on Teachers' Resilience was 3.49 with qualitative interpretation of "Excellent".

Moreover, Bass (1990) highlights that transformational leaders, those who inspire and motivate their teams through challenges, play a key role in effectively managing change. During the pandemic, administrators who could empower teachers and provide the necessary resources to adjust to new teaching modalities would have been highly rated in "Managing Change." This aligns with Fullan (2001), who found that effective leaders in educational settings actively engage their teams and encourage innovation during times of crisis. These leaders facilitate learning, collaboration, and problem-solving, all of which are vital in managing change within a school system during a period of rapid disruption.

In summary, the high ratings in "Managing Change" can be attributed to administrators' ability to quickly implement new technologies, adapt teaching methods, and provide ongoing support to both teachers and students in the face of the pandemic's challenges. This ability aligns with established theories on effective

leadership during change, as discussed by Siu (2008), Kotter (2012), and Fullan (2001).

Conclusions

The study concluded that both school administrators and teachers rated themselves as "Excellent" in key areas of leadership competencies, including Managing Change, Solving Problems, Taking Risks, Setting Vision, and Demonstrating Ethics & Integrity. They also assessed their resilience as "Excellent," particularly in Self-Awareness, Realistic Thinking, Keeping Calm Under Stress, Empathy, and Self-Control. While there was no significant difference in how administrators and teachers perceived leadership competencies, there was a notable difference in their perceptions of resilience. Overall, the study found a strong positive relationship between leadership competencies and teachers' resilience.

The study on school administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic offers several actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators. Given that both administrators and teachers rated themselves highly in leadership competencies and resilience, the study stresses the importance of institutionalizing leadership development programs focused on crisis management and resilience training. These programs should aim to enhance administrators' ability to manage change, solve problems, and lead with integrity, while also improving teachers' resilience through better

self-awareness, realistic thinking, and stress management. Policymakers should prioritize accessible, ongoing professional development that equips both administrators and teachers with skills to navigate crises effectively. Additionally, schools should foster peer collaboration and open communication between administrators and teachers, ensuring a supportive environment where educators can share strategies for overcoming challenges. Flexible policies that allow teachers to manage personal issues without compromising their professional duties should also be established. By investing in leadership training and resilience-building initiatives, and creating supportive systems within schools, policymakers and educators can better prepare for future challenges, strengthening both leadership effectiveness and teacher resilience.

School administrators' leadership competencies and teachers' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic provides valuable insights, but there are several limitations to consider. One limitation is the self-reported nature of the data, as both administrators and teachers rated their own competencies and resilience, which may introduce bias. Future research could involve more objective assessments or observations of leadership behaviors and resilience in action to provide a more comprehensive view. Another limitation is the sample size and demographic diversity of the participants. The study may not fully represent the experiences of educators in different regions, school types, or cultural contexts. Future studies could explore cross-cultural comparisons or involve a more diverse sample to better understand how different factors influence leadership and resilience in various educational settings.

Additionally, the study did not explore the long-term impact of leadership competencies and resilience on teacher retention, student outcomes, or the overall school environment. Future research could investigate how these competencies and resilience levels affect long-term educational success, teacher burnout, and retention rates. Another direction for future research could be to examine the specific strategies that administrators and teachers used to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic and how these strategies could be

integrated into future leadership training programs. Finally, exploring the role of external factors—such as community support, government policies, and technological infrastructure—on the resilience of teachers and the effectiveness of school leadership during crises would provide valuable insights for creating more robust educational systems.

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