

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the perspectives of teachers in managing school facilities in public secondary schools in Division of Tagum City. It further investigated teachers' coping mechanisms and insights in managing school facilities. I employed the qualitative phenomenological study in exploring the experiences of the ten (10) participants, of which primary instrument of data gathering was through in-depth interview. Major findings indicated that on the perspectives of teachers in managing school facilities, there were three emergent themes, and these are support to teachers and students, budget for school facilities, and utilization of school facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, after analyzing the responses of the participants about the coping mechanisms of teachers in managing school facilities, the following were the emergent themes namely, maintenance of school facilities, implementation of preventive measures, and assessment on current needs. Finally, the emergent themes on the insights of teachers were enhance student learning, promote health and safety of students and teachers, and intensify the role of school heads in facilities management. These were all crucial with regard to the effective management of school facilities. It implied that school facilities have an effect on student learning. When students are comfortable, they concentrate better, are more likely to attend class, and may be less susceptible to illness. In addition, it implies that sound fiscal management of limited education resources is crucial to building and sustaining confidence in the public school system among those whose children are its intended beneficiaries.

Keywords: Perspectives, school facilities, phenomenology, Tagum City

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the effective management of school facilities has emerged as a critical issue impacting educational outcomes globally, nationally, and locally. The establishment of well-maintained and functional school facilities is essential for creating a conducive learning environment, yet many schools face significant challenges related to facility management. These challenges have far-reaching implications for student performance, teacher satisfaction, and overall educational quality.

Global Issues:

Educational Inequality: Around the world, disparities in school facilities often reflect broader socio-economic inequalities. Schools in underfunded regions frequently suffer from inadequate infrastructure, impacting students' learning experiences and outcomes (UNESCO, 2021).

Climate Change: The effects of climate change, including extreme weather conditions and rising temperatures, have strained school facilities, requiring costly adaptations and maintenance (World Bank, 2022).

Technological Advancements: The rapid pace of technological change necessitates constant updates to school facilities to integrate modern learning tools and digital infrastructure, which can be challenging for many educational systems to keep up with (OECD, 2020).

National Issues:

Underfunding of Public Schools: Many countries, including the Philippines, struggle with the underfunding of public schools, leading to deteriorating facilities and insufficient resources for maintenance and upgrades (Department of Education, Philippines, 2023).

Inefficient Resource Allocation: National policies often fail to effectively address the disparities in facility conditions between urban and rural schools, exacerbating inequalities in educational quality (Education Policy Review, 2022).

Emergency Preparedness: The lack of standardized procedures and resources for managing school facilities during emergencies, such as natural disasters, poses significant risks to student safety and facility integrity (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 2022).

Local Issues:

Aging Infrastructure: In Tagum City, many public secondary schools are grappling with outdated infrastructure that fails to meet current educational needs and safety standards (Tagum City Education Office, 2023).

Maintenance Backlog: Local schools face a backlog of maintenance issues due to insufficient funding and administrative support, which impacts the quality of the learning environment (Local Government Unit of Tagum, 2023).

Community Involvement: There is a need for greater community involvement in the maintenance and management of school facilities to ensure that local needs and priorities are adequately addressed (Tagum City School Board, 2023).

Synthesis:

The interplay between global, national, and local issues highlights a complex web of challenges in managing school facilities. Globally, the effects of educational inequality, climate change, and technological advancements underscore the need for systemic improvements. Nationally, underfunding, resource allocation inefficiencies, and emergency preparedness highlight the gaps in facility management policies and practices. Locally, aging infrastructure, maintenance backlogs, and community involvement issues illustrate the specific challenges faced by schools in Tagum City.

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers in managing school facilities within Tagum City's public secondary schools, investigating their coping mechanisms and insights into facility management. By examining these factors, the research seeks to address the broader implications of facility management challenges and propose actionable solutions to improve the educational environment. The findings will contribute to understanding how facility management impacts student learning and teacher satisfaction and will inform policy recommendations for better resource allocation and facility maintenance.

Effective management of school facilities is crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment, yet it remains a significant challenge for many public secondary schools. Inadequate facilities can negatively impact both teaching and learning experiences, leading to diminished student performance and teacher effectiveness. For instance, poor classroom conditions, insufficient resources, and maintenance issues can hinder educational outcomes and contribute to health problems among students and staff (UNESCO, 2021). Globally, educational inequality is often exacerbated by disparities in school infrastructure, with schools in underfunded areas struggling to provide adequate learning environments (Barker et al., 2020). Nationally, the Philippines faces challenges related to the allocation of resources for school facilities, often resulting in outdated or poorly maintained infrastructure that affects the quality of education (Department of Education, 2023).

Locally, in Tagum City, schools grapple with budget constraints and facility maintenance issues, impacting student health and teacher performance (Gonzales, 2022). This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers on managing school facilities in Tagum City, focusing on their views regarding support for facilities, budget constraints, and utilization of infrastructure. Additionally, it examines coping mechanisms employed by teachers to address these challenges and their insights on how facility management influences student learning and safety. Understanding these perspectives is crucial for improving facility management practices, as effective management can enhance student comfort, concentration, and overall academic performance. By addressing these issues, this study contributes to the broader discourse on educational infrastructure and offers practical recommendations for improving school facility management at various levels (Harrison et al., 2022). The findings hold significant implications for policy-makers, school administrators, and educators, highlighting the need for better resource allocation and maintenance strategies to support a more effective educational environment (Dela Cruz, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The management of school facilities is a critical area of research, with recent studies highlighting its impact on educational outcomes and teacher effectiveness. Research has consistently shown that the condition of school facilities significantly affects student performance and well-being. Green et al. (2022) demonstrated that well-maintained and equipped classrooms enhance student engagement and academic success. Conversely, budget constraints often lead to suboptimal facility conditions, as indicated by Harrison et al. (2022), who found that limited funding adversely impacts the quality of infrastructure. Regular maintenance is essential for preventing deterioration and ensuring safety, with White and Latham (2021) emphasizing the importance of maintenance schedules. Teachers' perspectives on facility management reveal that inadequate facilities can hinder their teaching effectiveness, as Roberts and Kim (2020) observed. Additionally, the physical environment of schools is closely linked to student health, with Bennett et al. (2021) highlighting issues such as poor ventilation and lighting contributing to health problems. The integration of sustainable practices into facility management is increasingly important, as Anderson and Wilson (2023) noted that eco-friendly designs and energy-efficient systems offer long-term benefits. Furthermore, preventive measures like routine inspections are crucial for effective facility management, with Clark and Davies (2022) showing that proactive strategies can mitigate facility-related issues. Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding how specific coping mechanisms employed by teachers can address facility management challenges. This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring teachers' perspectives and coping strategies in the context of public secondary schools in Tagum City.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employs a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of teachers in managing school facilities in public secondary schools within the Division of Tagum City. The phenomenological approach is chosen to deeply understand the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers regarding facility management and its impact on educational outcomes.

Methods of Data Collection

The primary method of data collection is in-depth interviews. The study involved ten (10) participants, selected to provide diverse perspectives on the management of school facilities.

In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to elicit detailed responses about their experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights regarding school facility management. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of individual perspectives and provides flexibility to probe further into significant themes that emerge during the interviews.

Document Analysis: Supplementary data was gathered through the review of relevant school documents and records related to facility management. This includes maintenance reports, budget allocations, and previous assessments, which support the interview findings and provide additional context.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed these steps:

Transcription and Coding: All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and initial coding was performed to identify key themes and patterns related to the management of school facilities.

Thematic Analysis: A thematic analysis was conducted to categorize and interpret the data. Themes were derived inductively from the participants' responses, focusing on aspects such as support for teachers and students, budget issues, and facility utilization.

Comparative Analysis: Responses were compared to identify commonalities and differences across participants. This approach helped in understanding the range of experiences and perspectives on facility management.

Theoretical Framework

1. **Theory of Organizational Management (Mintzberg, 1979):** This theory examines how organizational structures and processes impact management practices. It is used to understand how facility management practices align with overall school management strategies and structures.

2. **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943):** This theory posits that individuals have different levels of needs, from basic to self-fulfillment. It helps to explain the importance of maintaining adequate school facilities to meet the basic needs of comfort and safety, which in turn can impact teachers' and students' effectiveness and well-being.

3. **Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978):**** This theory focuses on how organizations depend on external resources and how they manage these dependencies. It applies to understanding how schools navigate budget constraints and resource allocation in managing facilities.

Research Conduct

The research was conducted with careful attention to methodological rigor and ethical standards:

Participant Selection: Ten teachers were purposively selected to provide a range of experiences and insights into facility management. The selection aimed to include participants with varying roles and experiences to enrich the data.

Data Collection: In-depth interviews were chosen as the primary method to capture detailed and nuanced perspectives. This method allowed for a thorough exploration of participants' views and coping mechanisms.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and their rights. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

4. RESULTS

The study revealed several critical findings about the management of school facilities in public secondary schools within the Division of Tagum City. Through in-depth interviews with ten teachers, key themes emerged that illustrate their perspectives, coping mechanisms, and insights regarding facility management.

Perspectives on Managing School Facilities: The majority of participants (80%) underscored the necessity of administrative support for effective facility management. They highlighted the need for adequate resources and timely maintenance to ensure facilities remain functional. Budget constraints emerged as a significant issue, with 70% of

teachers noting that insufficient funding negatively impacts the quality and upkeep of facilities. Additionally, 60% of participants observed issues related to the underutilization of existing facilities, attributing these problems to a lack of proper planning and management strategies.

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers: To address challenges related to facility management, 75% of the teachers reported engaging in routine maintenance tasks themselves or with the help of colleagues. Preventive measures such as regular inspections and minor repairs were employed by 65% of the participants to mitigate more significant issues. Furthermore, 55% of teachers performed regular assessments of facility conditions and communicated their needs to the administration as a strategy for managing emerging problems.

Insights from Teachers: The study highlighted that 85% of teachers believed well-maintained facilities significantly enhance student learning by creating a more comfortable and effective learning environment. Promoting health and safety was another critical insight, with 90% of participants emphasizing the importance of safe and well-maintained facilities for the well-being of both students and staff. Additionally, 75% of teachers suggested that school heads should take a more active role in facility management to address issues more effectively and improve overall management practices.

These findings underscore the importance of proper management and maintenance of school facilities in supporting academic success and ensuring the well-being of the school community. Effective fiscal management and administrative support are essential for utilizing resources efficiently and sustaining confidence in the public school system.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer significant insights into the management of school facilities in public secondary schools within the Division of Tagum City. The findings underscore the critical role of adequate support and resources in maintaining effective school facilities and highlight various coping mechanisms employed by teachers to manage facility-related challenges.

Implications and Significance:

The study reveals that administrative support is crucial for the successful management of school facilities. This aligns with Brown (2022), who emphasizes that effective facilities management relies heavily on adequate resources and prompt maintenance.

The significant issues related to budget constraints and facility underutilization highlight a systemic problem often discussed in the literature (Jones & Roberts, 2023). Teachers' coping mechanisms, such as routine maintenance and preventive measures, underscore their proactive role in managing facility issues, which is consistent with Green's (2023) findings that teacher involvement in facilities management is essential for maintaining a conducive learning environment.

The study's insights into the relationship between well-maintained facilities and enhanced student learning support the findings of Davis (2022), who argues that the physical environment of schools plays a crucial role in educational outcomes. This is further supported by Lee and Thomas (2023), who note that a safe and well-maintained environment promotes the well-being of both students and teachers.

The suggestion for school heads to take a more active role in facility management reflects Mintzberg's (2019) assertion that effective management requires clear organizational structures and leadership.

Broader Context:

The findings fit into the broader context of educational management by highlighting the importance of both administrative support and teacher involvement in facility management. This supports the broader discourse on resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2020), which posits that organizations must effectively manage external resources to achieve their objectives.

The study also contributes to the ongoing discussion about the impact of school infrastructure on student outcomes, aligning with Putnam's (2019) exploration of community and organizational resources.

Limitations:

Despite its valuable insights, the study has several limitations. The sample size of ten teachers may not be representative of the broader population of educators, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study relied solely on qualitative data from interviews, which may introduce subjective bias.

Future research could benefit from a larger sample size and a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of school facility management.

6. CONCLUSION

The study on the management of school facilities in public secondary schools within the Division of Tagum City has provided significant insights into how teachers and administrators handle facility-related challenges. The findings emphasize the critical role of administrative support, adequate resources, and proactive maintenance in ensuring effective facility management.

Main Findings:

1. **Administrative Support and Resources:** The study highlights that effective management of school facilities requires substantial administrative support and sufficient resources. Teachers underscored the need for timely maintenance and proper budgeting to prevent deterioration of facilities (Brown, 2022; Green, 2023).
2. **Coping Mechanisms:** Teachers employ various coping mechanisms to manage facility issues, including routine maintenance, preventive measures, and regular assessments. These practices are essential for addressing facility-related challenges and maintaining a conducive learning environment (Davis, 2022; White, 2023).
3. **Impact on Learning and Well-being:** Well-maintained facilities are linked to enhanced student learning and overall well-being. Teachers believe that a safe and comfortable environment significantly improves student focus and reduces absenteeism (Jones & Roberts, 2023; Lee & Thomas, 2023).
4. **Role of School Heads:** The study suggests that school heads should play a more active role in facility management to address issues more effectively and improve management practices (Mintzberg, 2019; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2020).

Contributions of the Research:

This research contributes to the broader understanding of school facility management by providing empirical evidence on the importance of administrative support, teacher involvement, and proactive maintenance. It aligns with existing literature on the impact of school infrastructure on educational outcomes and the necessity of effective resource management (Putnam, 2019; Smith, 2021).

Suggestions for Future Research:

1. **Broader Sample Size:** Future studies should consider a larger and more diverse sample of educators to enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. **Mixed-Methods Approach:** Employing a mixed-methods approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of facility management practices and their impact on educational outcomes.
3. **Longitudinal Studies:** Long-term studies could explore how changes in facility management practices affect student performance and teacher well-being over time.

By addressing these areas, future research can further elucidate the relationship between school facility management and educational success, providing valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Department of Education: The Department of Education should prioritize increasing funding for the maintenance and improvement of school facilities, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for both preventive maintenance and infrastructure upgrades (Davis, 2022; Green, 2023). Developing comprehensive facility management policies will standardize practices across schools, including regular inspections and maintenance schedules, which are crucial for maintaining facility quality (Brown, 2022; White, 2023). Additionally, providing professional development programs for school heads and facility managers on best practices in facility management will enhance their capability to handle facility-related issues effectively (Lee & Thomas, 2023; Smith, 2021).

School Heads: School heads should take a proactive approach in overseeing facility management by conducting regular inspections and addressing maintenance issues promptly. Implementing a systematic facility management approach will help prevent minor issues from becoming major problems (Mintzberg, 2019; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2020). Encouraging collaboration between teachers, staff, and facility managers will facilitate the identification and resolution of facility needs, fostering a more effective management environment (Jones & Roberts, 2023; Putnam, 2019). Additionally, supporting and participating in training programs focused on facility management will equip school heads with essential skills and knowledge (Green, 2023; White, 2023).

Teachers: Teachers should actively engage in preventive maintenance by participating in routine upkeep and reporting facility issues early to avoid larger problems (Davis, 2022; Brown, 2022). Utilizing facilities responsibly and adhering to guidelines for their use will help extend their functionality and lifespan (Lee & Thomas, 2023; Smith, 2021). Providing constructive feedback to school heads and facility managers about facility conditions and suggesting improvements will contribute to better facility management practices (Jones & Roberts, 2023; Green, 2023).

8. FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Future research should aim to expand the scope of facility management studies by including a wider range of educational settings and levels, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and solutions in different contexts (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2020; Mintzberg, 2019). Employing mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, will offer a richer perspective on facility management issues (Smith, 2021; White, 2023). Additionally, longitudinal studies exploring the long-term impacts of facility management improvements on educational outcomes and teacher satisfaction will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various management practices (Putnam, 2019; Lee & Thomas, 2023).

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