



TEACHING IN ISLAND SCHOOLS: TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES ON SEA LEVELS AND WEATHER CONDITIONS AS BASES FOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

The qualitative research using phenomenological research design aimed to determine the teachers' challenges on sea levels and weather conditions in island schools in the District of Ajuy II during the School Year 2023-2024. The study used a researcher made interview guide for the twelve (12) teachers in island schools of the Schools District of Ajuy, Cluster II as the participants of the study. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data-gathering instrument, it underwent face and content validation by a panel of experts. Subsequently, the study utilized thematic analysis as the descriptive data analysis approach. The in-depth interviews revealed that teachers in island schools faced numerous challenges related to sea levels and weather conditions, such as impassable school gate entrances, safety concerns while traveling, and frequent class suspensions. To cope with the challenges, teachers employed innovative strategies, including taking alternative routes, wearing life jackets for safety, using mobile phones and social media platforms, and using modular distance learning.

Keywords: Challenges, Coping Strategies, Sea Levels, Weather Conditions, Island schools

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers teaching in island schools face unique challenges due to the geographically remote nature of their educational environments. Island schools, which are surrounded by sea, face unique challenges that greatly affect professional development, teaching methods, and student learning outcomes. The impact of sea levels and weather conditions can disrupt teaching and learning, as well as pose safety risks to students, staff, and school infrastructure.

These environmental challenges disrupt daily school operations, leading to delays, safety concerns, and increased absenteeism (Garcia & Santos, 2021).

Rising sea levels also often impair the structural integrity of school buildings, requiring continuous repair and adjustment to provide safe learning settings (Lopez et al., 2020).

The various challenges teachers face in island schools can have an adverse effect on teachers' general well-being and work-life balance.

To improve educational resilience and promote effective teaching practices, it is essential to learn about the particular challenges faced by teachers in island schools as well as the coping strategies they use.

The study aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers in island schools. It also analyzed the strategies used by teachers in addressing these environmental challenges. The result of the study may provide a foundation for policy suggestions to improve the circumstances and professional development of teachers in island schools.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research method, research design, participants of the study, data gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis to be employed in this study. This study aims to determine teachers' challenges and coping strategies on sea levels and weather conditions in island schools of the District of Ajuy II during the school year 2023-2024.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews to gather data. The qualitative descriptive design was chosen to provide a straightforward, detailed account of the participant's experiences and events, focusing on the what when, and why aspects without interpreting or theorizing the data.

Descriptive qualitative research aims to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. A method to qualitative research known as phenomenology concentrates on the shared nature of a lived experience within a group. To describe the nature of the phenomenon is the approach's main objective, according to Creswell (2013).

This method is required to give detailed information on the difficulties teachers face and their strategies for overcoming them in order to improve students' reading abilities. Teachers' personal narratives offer insight into what they valued in relation to obstacles they overcame, how they applied new knowledge, and the effects of their interventions in the classroom.

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Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design grounded in phenomenology, as defined by Smith (2013), involves examining the structural manifestations of consciousness from a first-person perspective. By focusing on individual's subjective experiences and perceptions, phenomenology aims to uncover how people construct meaning and interpret the world around them, often challenging dominant narratives and revealing unique perspectives. Phenomenology, which is commonly applied in disciplines like psychology, sociology, and social work, involves asking individuals questions to discover their perceptions.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the twelve (12) teachers in the island schools of the District of Ajuy Cluster II for the school year 2023-2024.

District of Ajuy Cluster II comprised 12 schools, including two island schools. Only two island schools were considered as participants of the study. These were Punta Buri Elementary School and Nasidman Primary School.

Sampling Design

This study employed a purposive sampling design, a type of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on the study's specific objectives and the characteristics of the target population, allowing for the deliberate selection of information-rich cases that can provide in-depth insights into the research phenomenon.

Purposive sampling is also referred to by other names, including judgment sampling, selective sampling, and subjective sampling, all of which reflect the deliberate and targeted

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selection of participants based on the researchers' judgment and the study's objectives. In short, the researcher determines what information is required and then searches for sources who can and will supply the information listed under expertise or experience, as mentioned by O'Keefe (2016).

Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data collected, a customized interview guide was developed and subjected to a validation process. A panel of experts reviewed and refined the guide, providing valuable feedback that was incorporated to finalize the research tool and guarantee its relevance with the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Procedures

The Dean of the Graduate School (UI-PHINMA), the thesis adviser, and the researcher signed a letter of permission to conduct the study.

The researcher was granted permission to conduct the study by the schools division superintendent, schools district supervisor, and school heads of the Schools District of Ajuy II.

The researcher personally delivered the letter requesting approval to the relevant authorities. To make it easier for respondents, the researcher physically visited the two island schools in the District of Ajuy II. The researcher also secured permission from each participant for the interview.

The researcher asked the participants to sign a consent document. To gather information, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents. The

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interview questions included open-ended inquiries that allowed the participants to share their perspectives on the challenges they believed they faced in island schools and how they cope these challenges. The researcher recorded the entire interview procedure on video and audio during the session. The respondents agreed on the use of video and audio and decided to keep it for privacy.

To ensure the interview guide effectively captured the study's purpose, it underwent rigorous validation and revision. A panel of experts reviewed and validated the researcher-developed interview guide, providing valuable comments and suggestions. All feedback was carefully incorporated to finalize the research instrument, enhancing its reliability and validity.

Data Analyses

A thematic analysis approach was employed to examine the collected data. This method, commonly used for analyzing qualitative data, involves systematically reviewing and coding text-based data, such as interview transcripts (Caufield, 2019). Through this process, the researcher identified recurring themes, concepts, and patterns, revealing underlying meanings and relationships within the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to determine the teachers' challenges and coping strategies on sea levels and weather conditions in island schools in the District of Ajuy II during the school year 2023-2024.

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The study utilized the phenomenological approach under qualitative-descriptive research.

In the study, in-depth interview under qualitative research design was used. The interviewer, during the interview, sits and thinks about a series of questions about a particular phenomenon. In a social context through the respondents' answers to the inquiries (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

A total of twelve (12) teachers from the two island schools in the District of Ajuy II participated in this study. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed the desired characteristics and could provide valuable insights aligned with the study's objective.

The study employed purposive sampling because the participants were selected based on the population's characteristics and the study's objectives.

A researcher-made interview guide was utilized to gather data. This tool was subjected to a validity test and found by the validators appropriate to use.

The data collected were analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method, involves systematically examining texts, such as interview transcripts to identify, code, and categorize recurring themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning. Through this process, the researcher uncovered commonalities and relationships within the data, revealing underlying concepts and insights.

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The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the study's findings and the in-depth interviews with each participant, it was discovered that impassable school gate entrance, safety in travelling and class suspensions were among the difficulties faced by teachers in island schools.

Additionally, it was discovered that teachers used alternative routes, wore life jackets, used mobile phones and social media platforms and used modular distance learning as coping strategies for the challenges they faced in island schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, the following insights were generated:

Teachers in island schools face unique challenges, particularly in the of rising sea levels and bad weather conditions in the Philippines. Despite the difficulties they face, teachers' commitment to their learners and their community are remarkable.

Teachers consistently demonstrate adaptability and resilience by using alternative routes when the infrastructure challenges face them due to high tide. Prioritization on their safety is important.

Teachers' resourcefulness in the use of communication technology is important when it comes to teaching in island schools.

Teachers utilize modular distance learning when classes are suspended due to bad weather. They disseminate modules and other learning materials with the help of the GPTA Officers and other community members.

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Teachers recognize the importance of collaboration among parents, stakeholders and community members to maintain the continuity of education during adverse weather conditions.



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