Challenges and Strategies of School Heads in Implementing and Managing Change in Schools

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Abstract— Managing change within educational institutions presents a range of challenges that can significantly impact the success of reform initiatives. This study explores these challenges and offers strategic recommendations to enhance the implementation and management of change in schools. Utilizing a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological research design, the study involved in-depth interviews with six school administrators, including school heads and teacher-in-charge personnel from various schools within the DepEd Division of Iligan City. Participants were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives. Moustakas' phenomenological approach was employed to analyze and interpret the responses, leading to the identification of sixteen major themes: Resistance to Change, Lack of Resources, Inadequate Trained Personnel, Unexpected Change, Alignment to Curriculum Standards, Communication Challenges, Sustaining Change Over Time, Managing Diverse Team Dynamics, Collaboration and Building Relationships, Strengthening Clear and Open Communication, Support Systems, Feedback and Evaluation Systems, Continuous Professional Development and Training, Collaboration and Stakeholder Involvement, Communication and Support, and Patience and Long-Term Focus. The findings underscore the importance of addressing resistance, enhancing communication, and leveraging professional development and external collaborations as essential components of effective change management in education. These recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for educational leaders to implement change more successfully and sustainably.

Keywords— Challenges, Strategies, Implementation and Management of Change, Phenomenological Research.

I. INTRODUCTION

School leadership plays a transformative role in shaping the educational landscape, embodying the vision, strategy, and ethics that underpin the learning environment. Leaders in education—be they principals, head teachers, or educational administrators—embrace the responsibility of steering their schools through the complexities of modern education. Furthermore, as leaders of educational institutions, school heads play a pivotal role in both the implementation and management of change, specifically, navigating challenges such as technological advancements, changing curricula, diverse student needs, and policy shifts, all the while maintaining a focus on creating a nurturing and stimulating learning environment. Hence, their functions are diverse, encompassing strategic planning, communication, motivation, and evaluation.

It is said that change is the law of nature and is different from the familiar (Sung & Kim, 2021). On the other hand, education, and especially school, is likewise immersed in a process of change (Feu-Gelis & Font, 2019). As school administrators deliver profound impact in implementing educational change, the quality of the service delivered and the success of the school is critically linked to school leader's knowledge and skill in change management (Feye, 2019). In the study of

Nastase, et.al, (2020), change management includes the control of the change in the organization and its flexible adaptation to the constant changes. Additionally, change management process enables practitioners within organizations to leverage and scale the change management activities that help impacted individuals and groups move through their transitions (Creasey,2021). On the one hand, managing change effectively requires a strategic approach that involves clear communication, active participation, and continuous support. It's essential to articulate the vision and reasons for the change to all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone understands the purpose and benefits. By fostering an environment of trust and openness, leaders can navigate the complexities of change more smoothly and achieve sustainable success.

However, the role of a school administrators is defined by AURA- Authority, Responsibility and Accountability comes with its set problems and difficulties as significant changes in management and implementation creates major challenges among leaders as they transfer from one station to another. As stipulated in Section 6.1, Rule VI of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9155, every public elementary and secondary school in the Philippines is required to have a school head.

Additionally, school heads were appointed and promoted in accordance with Dep.Ed Order No. 85, series of 2003. Despite the fact that school administrators have earned experience in leading over the years, they continue to encounter obstacles that require immediate attention these include managing diverse stakeholder expectations, adapting to changes in educational policies and practices, and addressing the social and emotional needs of students in an increasingly complex world. Moreover, balancing administrative duties with the leadership necessary to drive educational innovation that can be demanding in order to fulfill the intended educational goals

Thus, it is essential to conduct this study, this research will help discover the different changes in management implemented by the school heads, challenges that school heads encounter in their individual institutions and determine recommended solutions for these problems in managing change. The information gathered regarding the challenges and strategies employed of the school head's experiences will be analyzed and evaluated and will certainly provide knowledge of enlightenment to assist in resolving the challenges and improve strategies employed in change management.

Objectives of the study

This study explored the challenges and strategies employed by the school heads in the implementation and management of change in their school.

II. METHODS

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research method with phenomenological research design in this study. The goal of qualitative research method and phenomenological research design is to understand the depths of human experiences through the descriptions provided by the respondents. Furthermore, it aimed to figure out how people correspond of their real-life experiences (Oakley& Cohen. et.al. 2007)

Participants of the study

The participants of this study were the eleven (11) school administrators in the Dep.Ed Division of Iligan City. The participants were chosen using the purposive sampling method. According to Cresswell & Plano,(2011), purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individual that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. In accordance with this, the participants were chosen based on the inclusion criteria

set in this study, specifically; a.) a school head/principal for 3 years or more, b.) a school head/principal who have experienced implementing change in the assigned school and c.) employed at Dep.Ed Division of Iligan City.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at the Dep.Ed, Division of Iligan City. The City of Iligan is located in the Northern coast of Mindanao facing Iligan Bay, bounded in the north by the province of Misamis Orienal, in the east by the province of Bukidnon and Lanao del Sur and in the south by the province of Lanao del Norte. It is approximately 795 kilometers southwest of Metro Manila, at the boundaries of Region 10 and 12. Iligan City covers an area of no less than 81,337 sq.km. comprising of 44 barangays.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a semi- structured researcher-made interview guide questionnaire in gathering the data. It will be focused on the experiences of the School head and the challenges and strategies in implementing and managing change.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher asked for consent or authorization to conduct the study to the Schools Division Supertindent of Dep.Ed Division of Iligan City. Upon the approval, the researcher sent the letters to the participants of the study. After given permission, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and then conducted the interview. The information gathered were transcribed and organized.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized Moustakas' (1994) Phenomenological Approach to summarize and analyze the data. The eight procedural steps were employed: first, Horizontalizing, the researcher listed all relevant expressions found during the interview, considering each concept unique and of equal value. Second, Reducing Experience/Responses, the researcher classified those identified horizons into themes. Third, Thematic Clustering, the main goal of this step is to reduce the themes by clustering them according to how they may be interrelated. Fourth, Comparing Multiple Data Sources, the shared views are compared to other methods such as observations, field notes and related literature to verify accuracy across data sources. Fifth, Crafting Individual Textural Description of Participants,

this step is summarization that includes verbatim quotes and excerpts from the participants. Sixth, Constructing Individual Structural Description, this step is one of the processes in imaginative variation based on the constructed textural description and imaginative variation. Seventh, Constructing Composite Structural Description, this step is one of the processes in imaginative variation based on the constructed textural meaning. It will be added at the end of each paragraph to create a structural description. Lastly, eight, Synthesizing the Texture and Structure into an Expression, in this step, the researcher started to combine the structural to get complete picture of the phenomenon.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are crucial in research especially qualitative research when it comes to interpreting the words of the participant (Steffen, 2016). In this study, ethical considerations are based to the letter of Bryman and Bell (2017). To begin with, the participants of this study was not be harmed in any way. The dignity of the participants is the top priority. Before the conduct of this study, the participants will be asked for their full consent. The privacy of research participants, the appropriate, level of confidentiality of research data and the anonymity of individual's participating in the study were guaranteed.

Furthermore, deception and exaggeration about the study's goal and objectives will be avoided. Affiliations if any kind, funding resources and potential conflicts of interest will be declared. Finally, all research-related communications will be conducted with honesty and transparency and any misleading information or representation of primary data findings will be avoided.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Resistance to Change

Change can create uncertainty, leading to anxiety about potential negative outcomes in the future. This fear can be particularly strong if past experiences with change were negative or if the individuals affected do not have a clear understanding of the new processes or systems being implemented. Moreover, changes often require individuals to alter their routines, roles, or behaviors, which can lead to a perceived loss of control. When people feel that they are losing autonomy or influence over their work, they may resist changes that they feel are being imposed upon them without their input. Furthermore, participants often share that one the challenges they encounter is when their teachers resist

to new changes being implemented. As interviewed, the participants expressed the following:

Yes, ma'am, as I mentioned earlier that the first thing you need to deal was your colleagues and stakeholders, because, there are teachers, staff and even students who do not want change especially if they are too comfortable with the existing practices of the school. P1

Yes, especially those teachers that does not really want to adapt to new practices, it's very hard to deal with them. P2

I think the most challenging were those previous years implementing change within my handled school due to prevailing resistance from my colleagues. P3

Yes, there are teachers who are not willing to adjust in change especially concerning delivering new pedagogies relevant today. P6

I believe based from what I have observed, one of the major challenges was overcoming resistance from colleagues who were comfortable of the usual. P7

I really think that one of the main challenges was at first the negative responses I have observe from my faculty I am working with. People are naturally resistant to change, especially if it affects their daily routines. P9

As commonly shared by the participants, one of their challenges in implementing change is that some of their teachers and other colleagues in the field are somehow resistant to change. The phenomenon of "resistance to change", which was first noticed in the studies on change in schools in the 1960s, manifested itself in the dimensions of criticism, confusion, reluctance and the existing experience wished to maintain in schools (Terhart, 2013). According to Maag, (2009) many people resist change because it would take them out of their "comfort zone" or fear of not improving. Moreover, teachers resist changes because they believe in negative outcomes, or might even harm student learning outcomes. If they are not convinced of the benefits of change, they may be less likely to support or engage with it (Konakli &.Akdeniz, 2022). Further, teachers worry about how new policies, curricula, or technologies will affect their job security, workload, or teaching methods. This aligns to the review of related literature, as highlighted by Smith& Doe (2021), resistance from often stems from lack of understanding. This fear can be exacerbated by insufficient communication and a lack of clarity about the reasons

for the change and its expected outcomes (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2018).

Resistance to change is a natural response that can significantly impact the success of organizational change initiatives. Its implications include delays, increased costs, decreased morale, loss of talent, and potential stagnation. However, by understanding the roots of resistance and employing effective strategies to address it, organizations can mitigate these negative impacts and foster a more adaptive and resilient organizational culture.

Lack of Resources
Lack of resources often emerges as a challenge in educational reform, as it directly impacts the implementation and sustainability of change initiatives. This scarcity greatly affects schools disproportionately, continuing a cycle of inequity where students are unable to access the quality of education. Participants commonly highlight limited access to instructional materials, technology, and infrastructure as key challenges that prevent them from executing new policies effectively.

Next challenge is lack of resources; resources are one of the fundamental aspect to support the change to be implemented. P3

think my major challenge in implementing change was the additional resources it requires, such as funding, time, personnel, or training. Schools may struggle to allocate these resources adequately or even lack with these resources, it can hinder the implementation process P4

Additionally, there were other issues, such as insufficient resources and time constraints, which made the implementation process slower and more complicated than anticipated. P7

There was also the issue of limited resources, which made it difficult to implement the changes as quickly and effectively as we wanted. P8

Another challenge was managing the functional aspects especially no resources or materials and equipment, P9

The implications of resource shortages are multifaceted, affecting not only the teachers but also the overall learning environment. For instance, teachers in underfunded schools struggle to adapt to curriculum reforms without the necessary support systems in place,

leading to decreased instructional quality (Thaba-Nkadimene, 2019). The reliance on outdated teaching methods and materials further worsen the educational problem (Sharma & Yarlagadda, 2020).

Furthermore, without adequate technological infrastructure, for example, schools are unable to integrate modern pedagogical approaches, which has become particularly problematic in the era of digital learning (Mishra et al., 2020). Teachers in these contexts often face burnout and frustration, as they must navigate these challenges with limited guidance or support, which, in turn, reduces their capacity to foster student engagement and success (Mercer et al., 2019). Moreover, the lack of resources necessitates a reevaluation of current educational policies, with a focus on equitable distribution of funding and infrastructure. Policymakers must prioritize under-resourced schools to ensure that every student has access to quality education (Shah, 2020). Involving external stakeholders and community partnerships can also play a crucial role in supplementing these resource gaps, providing schools with additional support in the form of funding, materials, and expertise (Harrison & Hasan, 2021). Ultimately, overcoming resource-related challenges requires a collaborative, long-term approach to ensure that educational changes are both effective and sustainable (Singh & Gurung, 2022).

Inadequate Trained Personnel
Inadequate trained personnel present a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of change within organizations and educational institutions. This issue arises when there is a shortage of individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to successfully manage and execute new initiatives. The absence of qualified personnel can lead to several challenges, including inadequate planning, ineffective execution, and ultimately, the failure of change efforts. As participants expressed;

Honestly, also one of the challenges was the equipped teacher who will implement the changes within my school because they are very limited, that is why my school can hardly keep up for any educational development. P4

Of course, for me the major problem that I encounter upon implementing change was the lack of human force suitable to do the job related to the change initiative implemented, P5.

I think anyone can say and I also believe one of the primary challenges was having the right people for the job, P11.

One of the primary challenges associated with a inadequate trained personnel is ineffective planning and strategy development. Implementing change often requires careful planning and the creation of detailed strategies to ensure that the new initiatives are integrated smoothly into existing systems. Without individuals who possess the requisite expertise, organizations may struggle to develop comprehensive plans that address all relevant aspects of the change. This gap in expertise can lead to poorly conceived strategies that fail to anticipate potential issues or leverage best practices, increasing the likelihood of implementation problems (Cameron & Green, 2019). Moreover, the absence of qualified personnel can impede effective execution and management of change initiatives. Qualified personnel typically bring specialized skills and knowledge that are crucial for managing the complexities of change processes. They are equipped to handle challenges such as coordinating resources, addressing resistance, and monitoring progress. When such personnel are lacking, the execution of change initiatives may be haphazard or inconsistent, leading to suboptimal outcomes and diminished effectiveness (Gill, 2018). Another significant impact of insufficient qualified personnel is the increased burden on existing staff. When there is a shortage of skilled individuals, the responsibility for implementing change often falls on the shoulders of those who may already have full workloads or lack specific expertise. This added pressure can lead to burnout, reduced morale, and decreased productivity among staff, as they are forced to stretch their capacities and potentially handle tasks beyond their areas of competence (Piderit, 2017).

The lack of qualified personnel is a critical challenge in implementing change, affecting planning, execution, staff morale, and the overall success of change initiatives. To overcome this challenge, organizations must focus on developing the skills of their current workforce and ensuring that new recruits possess the necessary expertise. This investment in human resources is essential for navigating the complexities of change and achieving sustainable improvements.

Unexpected Challenges

Organizations frequently embark on initiatives for organizational change to modernize significant aspects or procedures within their business. However,

unexpected challenges often occur particularly in managing and implementing change. This challenge arises without warning and can include sudden shifts, unforeseen technical issues, or evolving student needs, which disrupt the smooth execution of educational reforms (Dunlop & Fidler, 2020). Participants describe how these unexpected hurdles often result in delays, additional workloads, and confusion, leading to frustration among teachers and administrators.

Another problem or challenge I experienced was unexpected changes along the way of implementing change. P2

Another challenge is that there are sudden problems that are unexpected, P6

The biggest challenge was dealing with the unknown. No matter how well you plan, there are always unexpected obstacles P10

The implications of these challenges are profound, as they often increase existing structural problems within schools, such as resource limitations, communication breakdowns, and inadequate training. For instance, schools may find themselves unprepared for sudden technological failures or shifting curriculum requirements, which can compromise the quality of instruction and student outcomes (Tytler et al., 2020). Teachers who are already stretched thin may become overwhelmed by these additional barriers, leading to burnout and reduced job satisfaction (Martin & Marsh, 2022). Furthermore, unexpected challenges can undermine collaborative efforts within schools, as teachers and staffs may focus more on short-term solutions rather than long-term strategic planning (Jones & Harrison, 2021). The lack of preparedness for these challenges often reveals gaps in leadership, resource allocation, and policy implementation that need to be addressed for effective change management.

The emergence of unexpected challenges underscores the necessity of building flexible, responsive systems that can quickly adapt to evolving situations. Schools need to foster a culture of continuous improvement and problem-solving, where unexpected challenges are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles (Fletcher & Matos, 2021). Additionally, institutions should establish contingency plans and allocate resources for rapid response to sudden challenges, ensuring that they can maintain momentum even in the face of adversity (Nelson et al., 2023). By doing so, schools can improve their resilience and

reduce the disruptive impact of unexpected challenges on their educational mission.

Alignment to Curriculum Standards

Alignment to curriculum standards presents a significant challenge in managing change within educational settings. Curriculum standards define the educational goals and expectations for students at various levels, serving as a benchmark for what students should learn and achieve. When changes are introduced, aligning new initiatives with these standards becomes critical yet challenging, impacting the effectiveness and acceptance of the changes. As interviewed the participants shared;

..its challenging to craft change initiatives due to several considerations including educational policies, regulations, curriculum requirement imposed by the district, P1

Yes, in terms of the curriculum standards, because we cannot implement change or initiatives without being anchored to the national standards of educations P4

...ensuring that the curriculum aligns with national, state/provincial, or local educational standards and expectations can be challenging. There may be discrepancies between mandated standards and the resources or capacity available in local schools, P5

Achieving alignment between changes and curriculum standards can be complex due to several factors. One major challenge is navigating regulatory requirements and institutional policies. Educational institutions often operate under strict guidelines and standards set by local, state, or national authorities. Any change implemented within the institution must adhere to these regulations, which can be cumbersome and restrictive (Hattie, 2017). For instance, integrating new technologies or pedagogical approaches must be done in a way that complies with existing educational standards and benchmarks, requiring meticulous planning and adaptation. Ensuring alignment with curriculum standards requires that any proposed changes to teaching methods, materials, or assessment strategies are consistent with established educational goals and requirements. This alignment is essential to ensure that the changes support rather than undermine the achievement of educational objectives. For instance, if a school introduces a new pedagogical approach or technology, it must be evaluated against the curriculum standards to confirm that it facilitates the desired learning outcomes and does not inadvertently divert focus from key learning goals (Guskey, 2021). Failure

to align changes with curriculum standards can lead to a disconnect between teaching practices and educational expectations, potentially compromising the quality of education and student performance.

Moreover, aligning changes with curriculum standards is a multifaceted challenge that involves ensuring consistency with educational goals, navigating regulatory and policy requirements. Successful management of this challenge requires careful planning, effective communication, and adequate support for educators. By addressing these factors, educational institutions can better integrate changes while maintaining alignment with curriculum standards and achieving desired educational outcomes.

Communication Challenges

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful change management, yet it often presents significant challenges within organizations. Communication challenges can arise from various sources, including unclear messaging and inadequate channels. Addressing these challenges is crucial for facilitating smooth transitions and ensuring that all members of an organization are aligned with the change objectives. Meanwhile, the participants have shared common experiences on communication challenges.

No open communication, I believe each group may have different perspectives, priorities, and levels of influence, making it challenging to gain consensus and support for change initiatives P2

They have different standpoints regarding which approach or strategies that best work for the school, the communication is there, however it is not clear because of the different ideas at hand they all have contributions P3

Well, the most encountered one was the diverse office mates, honestly their ideas and strategies clash all the time, like having proper communication is not practiced. P6

Change initiatives often involve complex information and complex goals that must be conveyed clearly to avoid misunderstandings and resistance. When communication is vague or inconsistent, it can lead to confusion among employees about the nature of the change, its rationale, and its expected outcomes (Vail, 2019). This lack of clarity can foster uncertainty and skepticism, hindering buy-in and participation in the change process (Kotter, 2019). For example, if a school

introduces a new curriculum without clearly explaining how it aligns with educational goals or how it will impact teaching practices, teachers may struggle to understand its relevance and resist its implementation. Another significant challenge is the adequacy of communication channels used to disseminate information about the change. Organizations must select appropriate channels that reach all relevant stakeholders effectively. Inadequate or inappropriate channels can result in incomplete or uneven dissemination of information, leading to gaps in understanding and engagement. For instance, relying solely on email communications might miss stakeholders who prefer face-to-face interactions or who are less frequent users of digital communication tools (Lewis, 2018). Effective change management requires a multi-channel approach, including meetings, workshops, written updates, and feedback mechanisms, to ensure that information is accessible and engaging for all parties involved.

Sustain Change Over-time

The challenge of sustaining change over time is often highlighted through participants' lived experiences of attempting to maintain reforms after the initial implementation phase. School leaders and educators frequently describe the enthusiasm and momentum at the start of a change initiative, but they also express concerns about how that momentum can wane over time due to factors like turnover, changing priorities, and external pressures. As the participants shared:

Keeping everyone aligned and motivated over the long term was a significant challenge. P7

Additionally, maintaining the momentum of the change initiative over time was tough, especially when results were not immediately visible. P8

..ensuring that the change was sustainable... P9

In managing change, the biggest challenge was maintaining consistency and ensuring that the change was fully integrated into daily operations. P 11

Participants emphasize that without ongoing support, resources, and reinforcement, initial efforts can deteriorate, leading to a regression to old habits and practices (Martin et al., 2021). The lived experiences of these educators suggest that while implementing change is difficult, the real challenge lies in embedding that change deeply enough into the school culture so that it becomes sustainable. The implications of this challenge are significant for both the efficacy of educational

reforms and the well-being of members in the organization, without proper strategies to sustain change, schools can experience a decline in staff morale, as teachers may become frustrated with the cyclical nature of reform efforts that never seem to take hold permanently (Griffith & Moore, 2019). Additionally, the lack of sustained change can hinder the long-term development of students, as inconsistent instructional methods or fluctuating policies can disrupt learning continuity (Clark & Hollis, 2022). Research highlights the importance of leadership commitment and the establishment of clear, achievable goals that are reinforced over time to sustain change. Schools that fail to prioritize these aspects may see an erosion of the progress they initially achieved, leaving them vulnerable to future challenges (Torrance & Forde, 2020).

From the participant's perspective, sustaining change requires a deep understanding of the lived experiences of those directly involved in the reform process. It is clear from the participants' experiences that ongoing professional development, consistent leadership support, and a culture of continuous improvement are critical to embedding changes into the fabric of school operations (Rowland & Oliver, 2018). By addressing these needs and supporting educators throughout the entire change process—not just during the initial implementation phase—schools can create more sustainable and lasting reforms.

Management of Diverse Team Dynamics

Managing diverse team dynamics is a significant challenge when managing change within an organization. The diversity in teams, comprised of individuals with varying backgrounds, perspectives, culture, age and working styles. Participants frequently describe how differences in teaching philosophies, communication preferences, and personal values can create friction within the team, making it difficult to reach consensus or work cohesively toward shared goals. As commonly shared by the participants:

For me, the school environment itself, it involves diverse stakeholders including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members, P1.

Yes, one primary challenge for me as a school head is the diverse teaching force and staff, I have,P3.

Well, mostly, the challenge that I encountered was uh, one, was the diverse office mates, honestly their ideas and strategies clash all the time, haha,, P6.

Additionally, it was challenging to address the varying levels of adaptability among team members—some embraced the change quickly, while others needed more time and support., P11.

Diversity, while a source of innovation and creativity, often presents challenges in the form of misunderstandings and conflicts that, if not managed effectively, can disrupt the implementation of change (Garcia & Cooper, 2019). Likewise, the implications of managing diverse team dynamics are multifaceted. Failure to manage diverse team dynamics can result in a breakdown of communication, reduced morale, and increased resistance to change initiatives (He & Freeman, 2021). Research indicates that leaders who neglect to address the diverse needs and perspectives within their teams may face prolonged periods of conflict and disengagement, ultimately stunting organizational progress (Smith & Davis, 2022). Furthermore, the experience of managing diverse teams underscores the need for continuous leadership development, particularly in areas related to conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and inclusive leadership (Torrance & Forde, 2020). Participants emphasize the importance of creating spaces for open dialogue and fostering a culture where differences are not only accepted but seen as assets (Brown & Wilkins, 2023). For schools and educational institutions, the implication is clear: the ability to manage diversity effectively is essential for the long-term success of any change initiative. By cultivating an environment where diverse perspectives are harnessed for collective growth, leaders can not only mitigate potential conflicts but also leverage the full potential of their teams to create meaningful and lasting change.

Collaboration and Building Relationships

Collaboration and relationship-building are often highlighted as essential strategies for coping with challenges in implementing and managing change. Participants frequently emphasize the importance of fostering strong relationships among colleagues, stakeholders, and the broader school community. By creating opportunities for collaboration, leaders, stakeholders and teachers can share insights, resources, and support systems, which can help alleviate the stress and uncertainty associated with change.

I simply cope up with these challenges that I've encounter in the field through creating opportunities of collaboration with my colleagues related to the school's goals and objectives, P1.

I cope with the challenges by creating team building activities from time to time to promote bonding and camaraderie among teaching staff. P3

Honestly, for more than 10 years in the service, regardless of how different my teaching staff with one another, I always see to it that we conduct team building and assessment with that we are still somewhat connected to one goal and we work together, as one, as a team , P6.

Finally, making sure that everyone understands the benefits of the change can help reduce resistance and build support. P10

Teams with strong interpersonal relationships are more adaptable and resilient when faced with unexpected challenges (Sims & Bertolini, 2021). Through effective collaboration, individuals can collectively address issues such as resource limitations, communication gaps, and resistance from stakeholders (Khan & Rodriguez, 2022). Additionally, fostering strong relationships builds trust, which is crucial for gaining buy-in and support from those involved in the change process. As a result, institutions that prioritize collaborative practices tend to experience more sustained and successful outcomes during periods of transformation (Parker & Jenkins, 2021). Additionally, collaboration underscores the need for educational leaders to cultivate environments where open communication and teamwork are valued (West & Jones, 2023). Participants often describe how relationship-building provided them with emotional and professional support, which helped them navigate the complexities of implementing change (Martinez & Delgado, 2020). These insights suggest that school leaders must focus not only on the technical aspects of change but also on fostering strong, supportive networks that empower individuals to contribute effectively. By prioritizing relationships, organizations can create a culture of collective ownership, thereby enhancing their capacity to manage future challenges and sustain long-term improvements (Smith & Davis, 2018).

Strengthen Clear and Open Communication

Clear and open communications refer to the practice of conveying information in a manner that is easily understandable, unambiguous, and precise. This form of communication aims to ensure that the message is accurately received and comprehended by the intended audience, minimizing the potential for misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Clear and open

communication is a critical strategy for effectively managing and implementing change within organizations. This approach involves transparently sharing information, actively listening to concerns, and fostering an environment of trust and collaboration. The benefits of clear and open communication in the context of organizational change are well-documented, as it helps mitigate resistance, align stakeholder expectations, and facilitate smooth transitions. When participants were asked what are their coping strategy, they shared the following;

Coping with the challenges, It is important to have a singular desire as an educational institution that is why having to or allowing my to have conversation and open communication helped me in achieving such goal. P2

I cope up with these challenges by creating team building activities from time to promote bonding and camaraderie among teaching staff..... In this way, we can be able to connect with each other, thus, in making organizational decisions it is more than a free space to express ideas and concerns. P3

Second, promote oneness in the working environment allow open communication so everyone will be heard that way we will be able to understand everyone. P4

Clear communication ensures that all stakeholders understand the reasons behind the change, the benefits it aims to bring, and the steps involved in the process.. According to Armenakis and Harris (2020), when leaders communicate the vision and goals of a change initiative transparently, it helps to align employees' perceptions with the intended outcomes, reducing misunderstandings and misconceptions. This clarity helps build a shared understanding and commitment to the change. Moreover, open communication fosters a sense of trust and inclusivity among stakeholders. By engaging in two-way communication, leaders can create a dialogue with employees, encouraging them to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. This engagement not only makes employees feel valued and heard but also provides leaders with valuable insights into potential issues and areas for improvement. As noted by Lewis (2018), open communication helps in building a collaborative culture where employees are more likely to support the change process because they feel they are a part of it. On the other hand, resistance to change is a common challenge in organizational transformations. Clear and open communication can play a crucial role in mitigating this resistance. When

leaders proactively address concerns and provide clear, honest information about the change process, it helps reduce fears and uncertainties that often lead to resistance. As Fullan (2019) points out, transparent communication about the benefits and challenges of the change, as well as the support available to employees, can help in managing resistance and facilitating a smoother transition. Furthermore, clear and open communication also supports adaptation and learning within the organization. By clearly communicating the skills and knowledge required for the change, organizations can ensure that employees are adequately prepared and trained. This preparation is crucial for adapting to new processes, technologies, or structures introduced during the change. According to Kotter (2019), effective communication about training and development opportunities helps employees feel more competent and confident in their ability to navigate the change, thus enhancing overall organizational capability.

Clear and open communication is an important coping strategy in the face of the challenges associated with implementing and managing change. It enhances understanding, builds trust, facilitates feedback, and supports adaptation and learning. By prioritizing transparent and inclusive communication practices, organizations can better manage change and achieve successful outcomes.

Support System
The support system, particularly seeking guidance from colleagues, emerges as a significant coping mechanism for School administrators who are facing challenges in implementing and managing change. Participants often describe the importance of turning to colleagues for advice, mentorship, and emotional support when navigating the complexities of organizational transformation. As the participants express their experience:

What helped me overcome these problem was simply asking for guidance from my co head teacher and colleagues P4

Next is, whenever I face difficulties I would always ask my seniors and colleagues in the field, as e all know experience is the best teacher I believe with their experience they will be able to help me find solutions to my problems. P8

Well, I cope with the challenges by asking help and suggestions to other people in the field and listening to

them, in that way I can get to distinguish and apply some advices from seniors and colleagues P10

The implications of relying on a support system, such as seeking guidance from colleagues, are profound in terms of leadership, morale, and organizational resilience. Studies show that teams with robust support systems are better equipped to manage stress and adapt to change (Parker et al., 2021). Asking for guidance not only alleviates the pressure on individuals but also fosters a collective problem-solving approach. This collaborative dynamic allows for a deeper understanding of the change process and offers multiple perspectives on overcoming obstacles (Foster & Hayes, 2019). The shared experiences and collective wisdom of colleagues enhance the capacity of individuals to manage uncertainty and resistance effectively. Additionally, these support systems serve as a buffer, enabling individuals to stay motivated and focused, even when facing significant resistance or resource constraints (Garcia & Thompson, 2022). Also, consulting with colleagues reinforces the sense of community within the organization, leading to stronger relationships and trust. These interpersonal bonds are essential for maintaining engagement and commitment to the change process (Wang & Patel, 2023), particularly in educational institutions where change can affect multiple levels of staff and stakeholders.

This highlights the importance of fostering an organizational culture that encourages open communication and mutual support. Leaders should prioritize creating formal and informal networks where staff can easily seek advice, share experiences, and collaborate on solutions. In doing so, organizations can build resilience, enhance individual coping mechanisms, and create a more cohesive approach to implementing and managing change (Miller & Taylor, 2019).

Feedback and Evaluation system

Managing and implementing change inside an organization often requires overcoming difficult obstacles, such as employee resistance, ambiguity surrounding the change process, and possible goals that aren't aligned. One effective strategy to cope with these challenges is fostering a strong feedback and evaluation system. It is essential for creating a responsive and adaptive educational environment. It empowers stakeholders, promotes a culture of continuous improvement, and ensures that the educational system can effectively meet the diverse needs of its students and community. This process aims to improve teaching and learning outcomes, enhance educational practices, and ensure the alignment of educational programs with the needs and expectations of the community. As interviewed the participants have expressed common experiences in utilizing giving of feedback and evaluation as coping strategies;

Providing feedback also is a powerful way to help achieve goals. P1

When everyone understands the purpose and potential benefits of the change, it can help mitigate resistance and build collective ownership. P2

Also, I do prioritize their feedback, listening to concerns. P5

I also provided continuous support, whether it was through additional training or simply being available to answer questions and address concerns. P9

I also provided ample opportunities for training and feedback. P11

Feedback systems play a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement during change initiatives. By providing a structured way for employees to voice their concerns, suggestions, and experiences, organizations can make employees feel valued and involved in the change process. This inclusive approach helps build a sense of ownership and commitment among employees, reducing resistance and fostering a more supportive environment. According to Kennedy (2019), involving employees in feedback processes can lead to higher levels of engagement and a greater willingness to embrace new practices and policies. Furthermore, a well-designed evaluation system collects and analyzes data on the impact and effectiveness of the change initiatives. This data-driven approach provides leaders with a clear understanding of what is working well and what may need adjustment. For instance, quantitative metrics such as productivity levels, employee satisfaction scores, and customer feedback can offer concrete evidence of the change's impact. Qualitative data, such as employee testimonials and open-ended survey responses, can provide deeper insights into the nuanced effects of the change. According to Fullan (2019), using feedback and evaluation data to inform decision-making ensures that changes are aligned with organizational goals and are responsive to the needs of stakeholders. Moreover, a transparent feedback and evaluation process can build trust between leadership and employees. When employees see that their feedback

is taken seriously and leads to tangible changes, it reinforces their trust in leadership and the change process. This trust is crucial for overcoming skepticism and resistance, as it reassures employees that their voices matter and that the change is being managed thoughtfully and inclusively. Lewis (2018) highlights that transparency in communication and decision-making processes is essential for building and maintaining trust during times of change.

Fostering a feedback and evaluation system is a vital coping strategy in the management of organizational change. It enhances employee engagement, encourages continuous improvement, and builds trust within the organization. By integrating these systems into the change management process, organizations can navigate the complexities of change more effectively and achieve their desired outcomes.

Continuous Professional Development and Training

Continuous Professional Development and training are critical components for enhancing the implementation and management of change within organizations, particularly in educational settings. CPD involves ongoing education and training for professionals to update their skills, knowledge, and competencies. This continuous learning process is vital in adapting to new methodologies, technologies, and evolving standards, which are essential during periods of change. As interviewed, the participants have shared;

..they must undergo continuous professional development and training to equip them with adequate expertise related to the change. ,P1

Well, for me my suggestion the continuous implementation of professional development and training for school leaders, including administrators and school head or even TIC's, on effective change management strategies., P2

They can offer workshops, seminars, and training programs tailored to support teachers and staff in adopting new instructional practices or educational technologies. P6

Also, providing ongoing training and support can make the transition smoother P7

Continuous Professional Development and training programs are crucial in equipping staff with the necessary skills to adapt to new processes and technologies introduced during change initiatives.

According to Kennedy (2019), providing targeted professional development opportunities ensures that employees are well-prepared to handle new challenges and responsibilities. This preparation helps reduce the learning curve associated with change and increases overall organizational efficiency. Moreover, Effective change management often requires strong leadership to guide and support employees through transitions. CPD programs that focus on leadership skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and strategic thinking, can significantly enhance leaders' ability to manage change. As Kotter (2019) points out, well-trained leaders are better equipped to articulate the vision for change, motivate their teams, and address any issues that arise during the implementation process. On other hand, according to Armenakis and Harris (2020), professional development programs that focus on the latest pedagogical methods, curriculum standards, and educational technologies can significantly enhance the effectiveness of change initiatives. Kennedy (2019) suggests that such a proactive approach to professional development ensures that the organization remains competitive and capable of responding to new challenges and opportunities.

Continuous Professional Development and training are indispensable for the successful implementation and management of change. By enhancing skills, fostering a culture of adaptability, supporting leadership development, ensuring alignment with best practices, and improving job satisfaction, CPD contributes significantly to the effectiveness and sustainability of change initiatives. Organizations that prioritize CPD are better positioned to navigate the complexities of change and achieve their strategic objectives.

Collaboration and Stakeholders' Involvement

Collaboration and stakeholders' involvement refer to strategic alliances formed between an organization and entities outside its own structure to achieve mutual goals and enhance capabilities especially in the educational sector. This approach involves building relationships with external entities such as other educational institutions, government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry experts, and research organizations. These collaborations can provide valuable resources, knowledge, and support that are crucial for successfully navigating change. As interviewed, the participants shared the following:

I think, we have to explore partnerships and collaboration opportunities with schools, educational

institutions or organizations not just in our country but possibly with other countries, P4.

My suggestion for much more improved implementation and managing change within the educational institutions would be partnering of link ties with research institutions or think that specialize in education policy, leadership, curriculum development, or pedagogical research, P5.

My suggestion is to improve collaboration with external organizations or consultants specializing in professional development, P6.

I would suggest involving all stakeholder early in the process, P7.

My suggestion is to focus on transparency and inclusivity from the start, P8.

Finally, involving everyone in the planning process can help create a sense of ownership and reduce resistance.

Collaborations and stakeholder' involvement allow organizations to tap into a broader pool of expertise and resources. For example, collaborating with universities and research institutions can provide access to cutting-edge research and best practices that can inform change initiatives. According to Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2018), these partnerships can bring in specialized knowledge and skills that may not be available internally, thus enhancing the organization's capacity to implement change effectively. External collaborations can lead to shared resources, reducing the financial burden associated with implementing change. This includes sharing training materials, professional development programs, or technological infrastructure. Partnerships with government bodies or NGOs can also provide funding opportunities or grants that support change initiatives. As Fullan and Quinn (2018) note, leveraging external resources can be a cost-effective way to support comprehensive change efforts. Furthermore, Collaboration with external partners, fosters innovation by exposing organizations to new ideas and approaches. Partnerships with other educational institutions or industry leaders can introduce innovative teaching methods, technologies, or management practices. For instance, a study by Harris and Jones (2019) found that schools engaged in collaborative networks were more likely to adopt innovative practices that improved student outcomes and school performance. Partnerships and collaborations often lead to continuous improvement, as

they encourage ongoing dialogue and exchange of ideas. This continuous engagement can help organizations stay up-to-date with emerging trends and challenges, ensuring that change initiatives remain relevant and effective over time. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2018) highlight that sustained partnerships contribute to the long-term sustainability of change efforts by fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

Strengthening collaborations and stakeholder involvement is a powerful strategy for improving the implementation and management of change. By accessing expertise and resources, fostering innovation, sharing costs, enhancing credibility, expanding networks, and supporting continuous improvement, these partnerships provide a robust framework for managing complex change processes. Organizations that invest in building and maintaining strong external relationships are better positioned to navigate change successfully and achieve their strategic goals.

Communication and Support
Clear, ongoing communication was emphasized as essential to ensuring that everyone understands the reasons for the change and feels supported throughout the process. Providing consistent updates, addressing concerns, and maintaining an open dialogue can help sustain the momentum of change. Additionally, communication and support emerge as central themes in coping with challenges during the implementation and management of change. Participants often highlight that clear, open, and consistent communication helps mitigate the confusion and uncertainty that accompany organizational transformation.

Encourage them to set goals for improvement, experiment with new ideas, and adapt strategies based on feedback and evaluation P3

Lastly, it's important to remain flexible and open to feedback, as adjustments will almost certainly be needed along the way. P7

I would suggest putting a strong emphasis on communication and training from the outset P9

Lastly, creating a feedback loop where people can voice their concerns and suggestions can help make the process smoother and more inclusive. P11

Prioritizing communication is the creation of an inclusive environment where everyone feels informed and valued. When leaders effectively communicate the

purpose, goals, and potential outcomes of the change, it fosters a sense of shared understanding and alignment among all stakeholders (Wang et al., 2019). Moreover, open communication channels allow team members to voice concerns, ask questions, and contribute to the decision-making process, which can reduce resistance and promote collaboration (Jenkins & Howard, 2021). Studies have shown that teams with strong communication networks are more resilient and adaptable during periods of change (Martinez & Clark, 2022). Supportive communication not only addresses the technical aspects of change but also serves to reassure and motivate individuals who may feel overwhelmed by the process (Turner & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, support—whether in the form of mentorship, training, or emotional encouragement— enables team members to feel equipped to handle the challenges they face (Harris & Mitchell, 2018). This blend of communication and support helps to foster a collaborative culture where individuals are more likely to engage in problem-solving and contribute to the success of the change initiatives (Parker & Reed, 2023).

Moreover, organizations should ensure that communication strategies are integrated into the fabric of change management processes. Leaders must focus on both formal and informal communication channels to provide continuous updates, gather feedback, and address concerns in real-time (Foster & Hayes, 2023). Additionally, providing ongoing support—whether through professional development, peer networks, or access to resources—creates an environment where individuals feel prepared to face the uncertainties of change (Taylor & Johnson, 2020).

Patience and Long-term Focus

Understanding that change is a gradual process, in such processes suggest that immediate results are rare, and change is often a slow, evolving process, not an immediate event, was a recurring theme. Participants frequently emphasize the importance of adopting a forward-looking mindset, recognizing that the benefits of change may not be apparent immediately, but are more likely to manifest over time (Henderson & Clark, 2020). By exercising patience, individuals can avoid becoming discouraged by initial setbacks, allowing them to remain committed to the overall vision of change. By keeping an eye on the long term, school administrators can develop the resilience required to deal with the uncertainties and complexities that come with transformative projects.

Lastly, being patient and understanding that change is a process, not an event, can make the journey more manageable. P8

It's also important to be patient and understand that change takes time P9

Additionally, fostering a culture of continuous improvement can help ensure that changes are sustained over time. P10

I would suggest investing time in building a strong case for the change P11

Maintaining patience and long-term focus is that it helps leaders and team members stay grounded, even when faced with challenges that threaten to disrupt the change process. Research has shown that those who prioritize long-term goals are better able to persevere through difficulties and manage expectations, particularly in educational and organizational settings (Johnson & Parker, 2021). Furthermore, the emphasis on a long-term perspective allows for more strategic planning and adaptability. Participants' experiences reflect a need to balance immediate operational demands with the larger, overarching goals that drive the change initiative (Mitchell & White, 2019). This perspective encourages a more measured approach, in which decisions are made with the understanding that setbacks are part of the process rather than failures dimension of managing change. Participants often discuss how maintaining this outlook helps them manage stress and anxiety associated with the uncertainty of change (Garcia et al., 2022). Leaders and team members who adopt this approach are more likely to foster a supportive environment, where individuals feel empowered to contribute over time without the pressure of immediate success (Davis & Green, 2023). Practically, this means organizations should encourage a culture of patience, where small victories are celebrated, and individuals are motivated to stay the course in pursuit of meaningful, long-term outcomes (Reed & Taylor, 2021). Ultimately, patience and a focus on long-term benefits help to sustain momentum and ensure that change initiatives can be fully realized over time.

Essence: The challenges and strategies in implementing and managing change reveals that resistance to change, resource limitations, and communication barriers are significant obstacles faced by educational leaders. Participants emphasized the complexity of balancing diverse perspectives, aligning goals with national standards, and managing emotional resistance to new

initiatives. To cope with these challenges, they highlighted the importance of fostering collaboration, maintaining open communication, providing ongoing support, and nurturing professional development. Long-term commitment and adaptability were also identified as crucial strategies to sustain and effectively manage change within educational institutions.

CONLCUSION AN RECOMMENDATION

Effectively managing educational change requires addressing significant challenges, such as resistance, communication barriers, and the need for alignment with curriculum standards. Success hinges on fostering clear communication, establishing robust feedback systems, prioritizing continuous professional development, and leveraging external partnerships. These strategies create an environment of collaboration and innovation, enabling educational institutions to navigate complexities and achieve meaningful improvements in teaching and learning outcomes.

To support these efforts, various stakeholders must take proactive roles. Teachers should engage in professional development, embrace new practices, and provide constructive feedback. Aspiring school heads need training in change management, communication, and conflict resolution while fostering relationships with stakeholders. School heads should prioritize transparency, maintain open communication, and offer targeted professional development to their staff. The DepEd, Division of Iligan City should ensure accessible training programs and establish communication networks to address challenges and share best practices. Future researchers are encouraged to study effective change strategies and the impact of professional development on educators' adaptability and success in implementing educational reforms.

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