Challenges and Responses of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Towards Academic Resilience

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Abstract: **This study aimed to explore the challenges, approaches, and outputs as experienced by educational leaders of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) towards academic resilience. Participants of the study were 14 educational leaders represented by either President or Deans of HEIs in Region XI. This study was conducted last January to June of 2021 and it employed a phenomenology-qualitative research design. Virtual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were utilized as data gathering tools in generating responses. Difficulty in sustaining the quality of education and instructional delivery, lack of faculty training in using technology in instruction delivery, poor internet connectivity and non-availability of teaching gadgets, and not-well managed institutional resources were the themes that emerged from the responses on the challenges faced by educational leaders in achieving academic resilience. Educational leaders employed the following approaches: adapt the new normal situation with a positive mindset; implement flexible learning; apply innovative leadership in handling resources and operations of HEIs; intensify faculty development; and collaborate with teachers, stakeholders, partner – institutions, and other agencies. The output of the approaches shows that educational leaders were able to build resilience amid the new normal situation and improved efficiency in delivering its services. The results implied that challenges make the educational leaders more innovative, positive, determined, and collaborative. The management of higher education institutions may assess the Learning Management System, evaluate the results of the approaches of educational leaders, and craft relevant policies to fully achieve academic resilience.**

Keywords: **Challenges, Responses, Academic Resilience, Higher Education Institutions, Educational Leaders**

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to wipe off the promising future of the students once they had finished their studies. According to the United Nations, more than 91 percent of students worldwide have been impacted by temporary school closures, leading closely to 1.6 billion students going out of school because of the pandemic. Grahl (2019) cited that this impact of the pandemic on education will continue even after the development of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The global data gave the picture of the challenges in delivering education to the young. With utmost positivity, educational leaders are looking for ways and strategies to respond to these challenges. However, leaders of educational institutions are having a hard time applying strategies on how to manage the workplace (Dirani et al., 2020) and school programs (Pambudi & Gunawan, 2020; Toquero, 2020), the teachers, and the students (Demuyakor, 2020), the parents and stakeholders (Juharyanto et al., 2020; Laguador, 2020; Stachová et al., 2019) and even the school resources (Sukawati et al., 2020; Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2020) in the new normal because of the pandemic.

To become academically resilient, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) need to respond to the situation of their learners. With over 3.5 million tertiary-level students enrolled in roughly 2,400 HEIs, several HEIs in the country have enforced proactive policies for the continuance of education despite the cancellation of the face-to-face meeting. These policies consider modified forms of online learning aimed to facilitate student learning activities (Joaquin et al., 2020). Online learning might be in terms of synchronous, real-time lectures and time-based outcomes assessments, or asynchronous, delayed-time activities, like pre-recorded video lectures and time-independent assessments (Oztok et al., 2013).

Further, the educational system is facing challenges towards the new normal approaches of education as resilience and adaptability will be crucial for the next generations (d' Orville, 2020). Academic resilience is a great challenge to educational leaders. Academic resilience despite the pandemic situation could mean training the teachers on the proper procedures in the new normal on preparing and conducting classes effectively; conducting webinars and training on how to make instructional designs for open and distance learning; creating and reviewing the instructional designs; and conducting an assessment of students output while pursuing their education during the pandemic.

In addition, De Vera (2020) introduced the acronym "BRIGHT" as a result of his study on challenges and teacher resilience in the new normal. It stands for Build resilience to overcome the challenge of new normal; Resourcefulness in time of pandemic; Innovate to produce interactive and effective instructions; Goal-oriented; Hone skills in various teacher preparations that will show flexibility and authenticity; and Technology-assisted learning environment with social media. While the main purpose of De Vera's study is to assess the challenges and teacher resilience during the new normal classroom instruction with the use of social media in the Philippine context, the study failed to explore the challenges met by the educational leaders other than the full-time classroom teachers during the new normal towards achieving

academic resilience and not just the teacher resilience. The said study of De Vera wanted to explore how the classroom teachers view the reality of education despite this pandemic that will give a perspective of the actual situation of our students and teachers. However, while the teachers and learners are having the challenges and BRIGHT theories presented as the teachers' resilience, there is a need to explore the challenges and approaches of the educational leaders as the managers of the academic institution and the immediate supervisors of the classroom teachers. Further, there is also an unexplored study on academic resilience as a whole and not just the teachers' resilience in the new normal situation.

With these unexplored challenges of the educational leaders, it is timely to have a deeper significance on getting the stories and experiences of our educational leaders to give the view of the new normal situation in Higher Education Institutions. The conduct of this study is deemed necessary to analyze the challenges, approaches, and outputs of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) towards academic resilience.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the challenges, approaches, and outputs of educational leaders of higher education institutions in managing their institutions in the new normal towards achieving academic resilience. Through this study, it could also give ideas and insights to design effective programs and policies that are applicable in the new normal situation.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by educational leaders of higher education institutions in achieving academic resilience?
2. What are the approaches of educational leaders of higher education institutions towards achieving academic resilience?
3. What are the outputs generated by educational leaders of higher education institutions in implementing academic resilience?

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used the qualitative-phenomenological approach. Kuper et al. (2008) asserted that the qualitative method is used when the research needs to know the participants' opinions. In this research, the educational leaders' shared experiences gave a deeper understanding of the nature of handling the challenges and applying strategies to become academically resilient in the academe.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were the educational leaders of Higher Education Institutions of Region XI which were represented by either the Deans of Institute or President of the HEIs both in State Universities and Colleges and Private

Higher Education Institutions. The main participants to share the challenges and approaches experienced by HEIs to achieve academic resilience were 14 educational leaders.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a researcher-made interview guide questionnaire validated by three (3) experts on qualitative research. The questions and probe questions were based on the research questions. The interview-guide questions were validated by experts.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure started by asking permission to conduct the study, giving orientation to participants, conducting the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, recording and transcribing the data, and analyzing the data.

Permission from the HEIs and the approval to conduct the study was first secured by the researcher through a formal letter. Second, was the orientation of participants on the manner of conducting an in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The third was to conduct the in-depth interview and the conduct of focus group discussion with the Deans or Presidents of the selected SUCs and PHEIs of Region XI. The fourth was the data recording and transcription. The interview proceedings were recorded through zoom and all other important discussions and interactions were also noted through pen and paper. Recorded data were then transcribed and the results of transcriptions were returned to the participants for verification and to ensure the validity of the result. Lastly, analyzing the data or the gathered information as conceptualized by Moustakas (1994) on data analysis for phenomenology was used by the researcher. In analyzing the data, clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents were applied. The clustered and labeled constituents were the core themes of the experienced challenges and responses of the educational leaders.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, transcriptions of the recorded data were done thoroughly. The responses were grouped as to challenges, approaches, and output. From the grouped responses, coding thru horizontal analysis was utilized, and a thematic analysis by looking for patterns. Highlighting words becomes helpful to make the coding easier. Eventually, thematic analysis was used to find patterns in the responses of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and identify meaning (Joffe, 2002). Before finalizing the themes, the researcher asked two (2), qualitative researchers, to have this paper peer-reviewed. The results of the analyses were then put into a table indicating the core ideas, themes, and frequency of responses.

Trustworthiness of the Study

It is essential to scrutinize the trustworthiness of every phase of the analysis process, including the formulation, organization, and reporting of results. In handling the issues of reliability and validity (Creswell & Clark, 2011) of this study,

four (4) vital procedures were observed so that the gathered information will be reliable. These include credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. In this study, methods triangulation was utilized to established credibility. The concept of dependability is based on the premise of replicability or repeatability of the study (Crowley et al., 2016); (Goodman et al., 2016). This was observed by strictly pursuing the standard in the conduct of research. The research questions were subjected to experts' validation for validity and reliability.

Furthermore, transferability was addressed in this study since the researcher was digging out specific details of the challenging situations of the educational leaders and collating their shared approaches and outputs towards achieving academic resilience. Finally, confirmability refers to the credibility of the results which could be substantiated by others (Trochim, 2006). This aspect was established in this study through the thematic analysis of information. In this study, the findings are truthfully taken from the participants' responses and not of any potential bias or some personalized motives of the researcher.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows the results of the information provided by the research participants on the challenges and responses of Higher Education Institutions toward academic resilience. The frequency of responses was adopted from San Jose's (2019) presentation of responses where it is considered *General* if the occurrence of the pattern was 50% or more; *Typical* if similarities of patterns were 21-49%; and *Variant* if 20% and below.

Results

Challenges Encountered by Educational Leaders of Higher Education Institutions in Achieving Academic Resilience

Educational leaders are experiencing difficulties in managing their subordinates, students, and the institutions as a whole during this paradigm shift. During the implementation of the new normal academic operations brought about by the pandemic, the educational leaders of HEIs encountered challenges in achieving academic resilience.

Table 1 presents the challenges faced by educational leaders of Higher Education Institutions in achieving academic resilience.

Table 1. Themes and Core Ideas on the Challenges faced by Educational Leaders of Higher Education Institutions in achieving Academic Resilience

Major Themes	Core Ideas	Frequency of Response
Difficulty in sustaining the Quality of Education and Instructional Delivery	**Risking the quality of education** because of the new delivery of instruction	General
	Adjusting abruptly to the sudden shift of instructions	General
	Preparing and distributing instructional/ learning materials are laboriously done in the conduct of blended instructions	General
	Being constrained in attaining the required competencies for subjects with laboratory activities	General
	Delivering quality services as to the mandate of the institutions: instructions, research, extension, and production with difficulty	Typical
	Systematizing the monitoring system for both synchronous and asynchronous classes is challenging	General
	Deviating from the standards of practices in the institution as well as the processes in the operating manual **means non-conformity** to ISO	Typical
Lack of faculty training in using technology in instruction delivery	**Showing indifference and resistance in using the learning management system** of the school for the new normal	General
	Having a hard time manipulating technologies for online classes	Typical
Poor internet connectivity and non-availability of teaching gadgets.	Experiencing **poor or intermittent internet connection**	General
	Living in areas with **no stable communication signal and internet connection**	Variant
	Lacking of teaching and learning gadgets	Typical
Not well-managed institutional resources like human, financial, and physical.	**Worrying for the safety and health of the faculty**	Typical
	Performing multiple tasks makes the faculty exhausted	General
	Making communication more challenging because of the WFH scheme	Typical
	Delaying output for completion of infrastructure projects and activities	Typical

Difficulty in sustaining the quality education and instructional delivery

Educational leaders of Higher Education Institutions experienced difficulty in sustaining the quality of education and instructional delivery. The core ideas revealed that quality education is being threatened because of the new delivery of instruction in which faculty and students are forced to make an abrupt adjustment to the sudden shift of instructions. Difficulty in sustaining quality education and instructional delivery as a challenge experienced by educational leaders was supported by Oyedotun (2020) stating that the challenge of the sudden transition to online pedagogy as a result of COVID-19 and causing inequalities is now the new reality in the educational sector.

Apparently, modules contributed to the quality of education, especially for those students who do not have internet connectivity. Completion of the preparation and reproduction of modules in schools became a challenge due to the lack of production materials and even computers and copying equipment (Asia Society Philippines, 2020). True enough that this is one of the challenges in the academe that need to be resolved since, without enough learning materials, quality education will be at risk.

On the other hand, there are also constraints of attaining the required competencies for subjects with laboratory activities. When it comes to subjects with laboratories, it is very hard to attain the required competencies without the actual performance with the use of technologies, materials, facilities, and equipment. This study revealed that complying with the competencies in subjects with laboratories is still a difficulty faced by faculty and educational leaders. It is supported by Adams et al. (2020) stating that complying with the competencies is even harder for the students because there were differences in students' readiness for blended learning based on their field of study.

Moreover, educational leaders also experienced difficulty in delivering quality services as to the mandate of the institutions: instructions, research, extension, and production. Virtual reality exists but the quality of education and learning is still unsure. Makransky et al. (2019) highlighted that students who are virtually present learned less in immersive conditions. With this flexible learning, there is a need to systematize the monitoring system of classes. Further, Zhao et al. (2020) reported that parents see the importance of having their children monitored in homeschooling but several teachers thought that they could not monitor their students at all, thus, these teachers anticipated that the academic performance of the students would be adversely affected by homeschooling style.

Further, deviations from the standards of practices in the institution as well as the processes in the operating manual is another core idea affecting the sustainability of quality education and instructional delivery of Higher Education Institutions. As Di Napoli et al. (2019) opined that community trust is significantly associated with community engagement especially in advancing urban development, social empowerment, and establishing community well-being. Inefficiency to carry out the HEI's mandates could affect the rapport that the HEIs wanted to establish by gaining the trust of the community. Higher Education Institutions are in dire need to deviate their practices to thrive with the new normal situation. As mentioned by Allison & Reeves (2011) what could put the school's resilience at risk is when the leaders ignore critical indicators to refine and revise the work of the organization. The effect of deviations from the standard procedures and processes of the HEIs has bothered educational leaders.

Finally, this first major theme on the challenges faced by educational leaders towards academic resilience gives the hindsight of every HEIs' situation dealing with the new normal. The core ideas explicitly present the challenges which should be taken into consideration in crafting academic and institutional policies for HEIs to continuously sustain quality education and instructional delivery.

Lack of faculty training in using technology in instruction delivery

The second major theme on the challenges faced by educational leaders of HEIs which come out of this research is the lack of faculty training in instruction delivery. This became a challenge to educational leaders during the new normal situation because some seasoned faculty are adamant to use the learning management system of the school for the new normal. The core idea which was disclosed in this study is showing indifference and resistance of the faculty in using the Learning Management System (LMS) of the school for the new normal. Awofala et al. (2019) affirmed that computer attitudes, computer anxiety as well as computer self-efficacy have a significant correlation and that it is recommended that academic institutions pay more attention to the computer anxiety of the teachers, especially in this flexible learning and must adapt to the proper ways of reducing the said computer anxiety.

Flexibility in this current situation is compulsory. Teachers become more than ever the primary actors in the teaching and learning process and must re-adapt their way of teaching. The challenges faced by educational leaders in the lack of faculty training in using technology in instruction delivery is indeed frustrating for them to achieve academic resilience in this new normal situation.

Poor internet connectivity and non-availability of teaching gadgets

The third major theme on the challenges of HEIs towards academic resilience is poor internet connectivity and teaching gadgets availability. Academic institutions need computers, gadgets like cellphones, and other ICT devices that are integrated into a smart fashion in the educational environment to make the best use of internet-enabled learning. However, this became a challenge to educational leaders during the new normal situation because most of the faculty and students are experiencing poor or intermittent connections.

The instructional delivery of this new normal mostly uses technologies and internet connection. However, educational leaders perceived the poor internet connection as the most frustrating because it can hamper their activities and in delivering their instructions online. Besides, it can also add costs in delivering their functions especially if they are working from home because internet connectivity is not free. Martin & Furiv (2020) reports that important components of resilience like the digital infrastructure and robust IT support must be considered during this new normal situation.

Definitely, poor internet connectivity and the non-availability of teaching gadgets are frustrating for educational leaders, faculty, and students because the new normal situation demands internet connectivity and the use of technology for teaching and learning activities. This challenge experienced by educational leaders needs to be addressed to attain academic resilience as the educational system shifts to flexible learning.

Not well-managed institutional resources like human, financial and physical

The fourth major theme of the challenges faced by educational leaders of HEIs is on not well-managed institutional resources. To make the institution deliver its mandate, there is a need for several resources which include human resources, financial resources, and physical facilities. In the fourth major theme, the core ideas that revolved around it are: (a) worrying for the safety and health of the faculty; (b) performing multiple tasks which makes the faculty exhausted; (c) making communication more challenging because of work from home (WFH) scheme; (d) delaying output for completion of infrastructure projects and activities. Etxebarria et al. (2021)

revealed that during this new normal, there is a high percentage of teachers who showed anxiety, depression, and stress symptoms and there is a need to protect the mental health of teachers to have a better and improved quality of teaching and at the same time to safeguard the mental health of students that these teachers are handling. In addition, Duggan & Theurer (2021) mentioned in the Resilient Leadership Model that a leader can navigate the complexities of leadership more expertly if the leader understands about the hidden chemistry of organizational families.

The resources are affected, therefore, there is a need to properly manage the institutions' resources. Moreover, there is a need to work on translating activities from what is so-called "normal" to the "new normal".

Approaches of Educational Leaders in Higher Education Institutions towards Academic Resilience

The major themes that emerged as a result of this study showed that educational leaders were able to adapt to the new normal situation with a positive mindset; implement flexible learning; apply innovative leadership in handling resources and operations of HEIs; intensify faculty development; and collaborate with teachers, stakeholders, partner - institutions and other agencies.

Table 2 below showed the major themes on the approaches of educational leaders of HEIs towards academic resilience as well as the core ideas that revolved around the major themes and the frequency of responses made by educational leaders during the conduct of this study.

Table 2. Themes and Core Ideas on the Approaches of Educational Leaders in Higher Education Institutions towards Academic Resilience

Major Themes	Core Ideas	Frequency of Response
Adapt to the new normal situation with a positive mindset	**Implementing leniency** through policies (no failing grades, an extension of deadlines for projects, assessment, and requirements, etc.	General
	Adjusting, understanding, and being flexible in the current situation	General
	Conducting mental health awareness program for faculty and students	Typical
Implement flexible learning	**Utilizing online** tools such as google Classroom, messenger, etc.	General
	Installing Learning Management System (LMS)	General
	Categorizing students as to who have an internet connection and those who do not have an internet connection	Typical
	Designing and compiling course packs and modules	General
Apply innovative leadership in handling resources and operations of HEIs	**Communicating and mentoring effectively**	General
	Assessing the adaptive capacity of the faculty and students to the new normal	General
	Procuring ICT equipment, technologies, and needed facilities	General
	Observing health protocols	General
Intensify faculty development	**Learning new things** especially in using technology	General
	Pursuing graduate studies to become more productive	Typical
	Attending webinars to gain new teaching approaches applicable to the new normal	Variant
	Conducting research which are useful for this new normal situation	Typical
Collaborate with teachers, stakeholders, partner – institutions, and other agencies	**Solving the problem collaboratively**	Typical
	Coordinating among agencies (CHED, National, Local Agencies)	Typical
	Connecting with the management for plans and implementation;	Typical
	Planning with heads and subordinates (Strategic plans, learning continuity plan, and catch-up plans)	General

Adapt to the new normal situation with a positive mindset

The first major theme of the approaches made by educational leaders is that they adapt to the new normal situation with a positive mindset. The core ideas revolved are: (a) implementing leniency through policies like no failing grades, the extension of deadlines for projects, assessments, and requirements, etc.; (b) adjusting, understanding, and being flexible in the current situation; and (c) conducting mental health awareness program for faculty and students. Consequently, Francisco & Nuqui, (2020) revealed that new normal leadership is the leader's ability to become adaptive while staying strong with one's commitment. The new normal leadership is also about being an effective instructional decision-maker; someone who is vigilant, a good planner, and an efficient initiator.

Hence, adopting the new normal situation with a positive mindset contributed to faculty and students becoming resilient during the pandemic time. Indeed, a leader's presence is highly contagious and could spread throughout the entire system of the organization.

Implement flexible learning

The second major theme on the approaches of educational leaders towards academic resilience is the implementation of blended or flexible learning. The core ideas are: (a) utilizing online tools such as google classrooms, messenger, etc.; (b) installing Learning Management System (LMS); (c) categorizing students who have an internet connection and those who do not have an internet connection, and (d) designing and compiling course packs and modules. Kariippanon et al. (2020) emphasized pedagogical shift, professional development, and ongoing support to teachers and students are requirements for an effective design and transformation of the learning environments.

Hence, in flexible learning, it is necessary to deliver the lessons with the means that are appropriate for the learners. To determine what approach is appropriate for the learners, then it is necessary to implement flexible learning. Some may utilize the LMS but there are students also who are dependent on the modules or course packs. In either way, what is important is that students learn their lessons and perform the competencies expected from them.

Apply innovative leadership in handling resources and operations of HEIs

Applying innovative leadership in handling resources and operations of HEIs comes out to be the third major theme in the approaches applied by educational leaders. The core ideas revolved around: (a) communicating and mentoring effectively; (b) assessing the adaptive capacity of the faculty and students to the new normal; (c) procuring ICT equipment, technologies, and needed facilities; and (d) observing health protocols. Innovative leadership is the skill of a leader to inspire and lead their subordinates to become productive and resilient during challenging times when the institution had just started its operation, initiate invention, deal with ambiguity, and experience uncertainty, and risks (Cone, 2019).

Thus, during a challenging time, educational leaders must apply innovative leadership in handling the resources and operations of HEIs. Educational leaders must be sensitive to the needs of their faculty and provide strategies in satisfying those needs of their manpower. Other resources must also be given attention since they could hinder the delivery of the institution's services to the clientele.

Intensify faculty development

Intensifying faculty development is the fourth major theme in the approaches applied by educational leaders. The core ideas in this approach of intensifying faculty development are: (a) learning new things, especially in using technology; (b) pursuing graduate studies to become more productive; (c) attending webinars to gain new teaching approaches applicable to the new normal, and (d) conducting researches which are useful for this new normal situation. Moreover, Bilal et al. (2019) affirmed that faculty vitality is the main component in enhancing professional education and competence.

Eventually, in this research, educational leaders applied an approach to intensify faculty development by learning new things in using technology; pursuing graduate studies to become more productive; attending webinars to gain new teaching approaches applicable to the new normal; and conducting research that are useful for this new normal situation. With these approaches, it is believed that continuously developing the knowledge and skills of the faculty will help in attaining the academic resilience of the HEIs.

Collaborate with teachers, stakeholders, partner institutions, and other agencies

The next major theme of the approaches made by educational leaders toward academic resilience is the importance of collaboration. During the pandemic time, HEIs' leaders find it important to have the following core ideas: (a) solving the problem collaboratively; (b) coordinating among agencies (CHED, National, and Local Agencies); (c) connecting with the management for plans and implementation; and (e) planning with heads and subordinates (Strategic plans, learning continuity plan, and catch-up plans). According to Lambrecht et al. (2020), leadership styles are connected in one way or another with school leaders using their extent of action concerning fostering collaboration.

Consequently, the results of this study revealed that during this challenging time, educational leaders are not in competition with other institutions but rather they are in collaboration and cooperation. The approach of educational leaders towards academic resilience includes finding a way to connect and collaborate with partner agencies and some other educational leaders in order not just to survive this situation but to ceaselessly render its functions with utmost quality and efficiency.

Outputs of Educational Leaders in Higher Education Institutions towards Academic Resilience

The major themes that emerged in the result of this study showed that educational leaders have built resilience amid the new normal situation and improved efficiency in delivering services. Table 3 below shows the major themes, core ideas, and the frequency of responses made by educational leaders on their outputs from the approaches that they had applied in Higher Education Institutions toward academic resilience.

Table 3. Themes and Core Ideas on the Outputs of Educational Leaders of Higher Education Institutions towards Academic Resilience

Major Themes	Core Ideas	Frequency of Response
Built resilience amid the new normal situation	**Adapting to the new normal situation**	General
	Improving the delivery of learning suited to the new normal situation	General
	Motivating and encouraging the faculty and students to become resilient amidst pandemic	General
Improved efficiency in delivering the services	**Receiving commendations** by partner agencies for various deliverables	Typical
	Conducting and publishing several types of research during pandemic time	Typical
	Receiving very satisfactory and satisfactory result of the evaluation	Variant

Built resilience amid the new normal situation

One of the major themes in the outputs generated by educational leaders of Higher Education Institutions in implementing academic resilience is built resilience amid the new normal situation. Generally, the core ideas are: (a) adapting to the new normal situation; (b) improving the delivery of learning suited to the new normal situation, and (c) motivating and encouraging the faculty and students to become resilient amidst the pandemic. Leadership styles are connected in one way or another with school leaders using their extent of action concerning fostering collaboration (Lambrecht et al., 2020).

Consequently, the adaptive capacity of the faculty and students in this new normal situation is a result that could be attributed to the educational leaders who first handled the situation with the utmost positive behaviors and applied innovative leadership. Any leader has his/her innovative way of handling challenges and looking for new and possible solutions. Somehow, the adaptive capacity of the subordinates shows how effective those efforts exerted by the educational leaders are and how they need to enhance their approaches to address the challenges in securing the academic resilience of their institutions.

Improved efficiency in delivering the services

The next major theme is the efficient services rendered by educational leaders. The core ideas revealed that

educational leaders are receiving commendations from partner agencies for various deliverables; conducting and publishing several types of research during the pandemic time; and receiving a very satisfactory and satisfactory ratings of evaluation. These findings conform to Allison and Reeves (2011) that highly resilient leaders draw on diverse perspectives to make well-informed decisions that ultimately improve their services and create new realities in organizations.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the approaches applied by educational leaders is assessed through the occurrence of the output in higher education institutions. With the shared output of educational leaders, they were able to improve efficiency in delivering the services. It is therefore confirmed that educational leaders are on their way to achieving academic resilience in this new normal situation.

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implication for Knowledge

There are no challenges or obstacles that would stop the educational system. Education greatly contributes to developing the lives of the people and forming the whole nation. Without education, facts would remain invisible and solutions would remain theories.

The effect of the pandemic on the operations of HEIs can be determined by how educational leaders navigate the operations of HEIs. The results of this study will impart in transforming instructional programs of the HEIs that would fit the new normal situation. Educational leaders shall integrate the results as educational initiatives in setting academic regulations and policies, developing the HEIs' academic programs, and in performing the HEIs' general mandates on instruction, research, extension, and productions amidst any challenges.

Implication for Practice

Leaders have innate capabilities and intellect to drive people to become somebody with a purpose. Leaders may be affected by challenges, war, and pandemics. But a true leader will still be resilient and pull up the organization to become effective in delivering its mandates. The leaders deliberately displayed the 21st-century competencies of which they are applying approaches with critical and inventive intelligence, global awareness, and with consideration to effective communication, collaboration, and information skills. With the executed competencies of the educational leaders, the maturity of the leaders to handle any challenges in the HEIs is indisputable.

On the other hand, collaborations among agencies, leaders, institutions, faculty members, and students are very much impelling. The results of this study on the challenges of HEIs in facing this new normal will serve as indicators for educational leaders in taking appropriate actions. The approaches applied by educational leaders lead to building resilience and improving efficiency in delivering the service. These approaches will later be evaluated to form the best

practices of every HEIs in responding to the challenges during this new normal situation.

Further, the result of the study has taught that humans are meant to survive. Educational leaders may realize that they have different needs in times of pandemics. And they have this social responsibility towards their institutions and constituents in continuously serving and becoming resilient amidst challenging times. There may be setbacks, but those challenges will make them more innovative, positive, determined, and collaborative to make timely and relevant strategies to attain academic resilience.

Recommendations

Educational leaders are taking action and strategies with the challenges that they have experienced because of the new educational system. From the result of this study, several recommendations can be considered to improve the delivery of instructions and services. In adapting flexible learning, an assessment of the appropriateness of the learning management system and modified instructional materials shall be conducted. Some faculty experienced difficulties in utilizing the LMS, it is suggested that HEIs may consider the convenience, knowledge, and skills of the faculty as key actors in delivering the instructions.

While academic resilience has started to emerge in every HEIs, it is further recommended to continuously evaluate the performance and results of the approaches made by educational leaders to fully evolve with resiliency.

Moreover, it is recommended to craft relevant policies and guidelines for the HEIs to implement while dealing with the new educational system. The crafting of policies and guidelines leading to new academic processes may be receptive for both the faculty and students for them to become more resilient in the new normal situation.

Finally, the conduct of future research and studies relative to academic resilience is highly recommended to assess the situations of the teachers, students, and stakeholders in thriving in this new educational system.

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