

Exploring the Lived Experiences of School Heads in Resource Mobilization: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

School heads need resources to ensure that school operations take place according to the needs of the school communities, toward the delivery of conducive and proactive learning environment. This study explored the lived experiences of school heads in resource mobilization. It was conducted in the selected public elementary schools in the Division of Oroquieta City. The phenomenological research design was used in the study. Thirteen school heads served as the participants identified through purposive sampling. An Interview Guide was used in gathering the data that were analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) method of data analysis. The following were the themes identified in the study: dealing with financial and resource scarcity, navigating external and contextual barriers; strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement, implementing strategic and adaptive resource management; handling economic and external dependence, and managing policy, governance, and institutional factors. School heads need adequate school resources and support from stakeholders amid the limitations that school communities face in their regular operations. Heavy reliance on external support together with policy, governance, and institutional constraints creates significant challenges that affect the efficiency and timeliness of resource mobilization in schools. It is recommended that school leaders continuously enhance collaboration with stakeholders while adopting flexible and innovative resource management strategies to optimize available support.

Keywords: Barriers, Governance, Management, Policy, Resource Scarcity

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Education continues to have a significant impact on societal advancement and national development. To meet the changing needs of 21st-century learners and to support global competitiveness, educational reforms are being implemented worldwide (Pa-alisbo, 2023). As instructional leaders, school administrators ensure programs run smoothly by offering guidance, resources, and support (Sagragao et al., 2025). They are in charge of resource mobilization activities, and their success or failure depends on the strategies adopted by these school administrators (Twarary & Thinguri, 2025).

Resource mobilization is the process of obtaining more resources for an organization (Likoko et al., 2022). Principals need to diversify resource mobilization tactics by working with NGOs, alumni, and technology companies (Munywoki et al., 2025). The involvement of stakeholders is crucial to mobilizing resources because they are involved in resource mobilization and decision-making, and they guarantee the availability of appropriate instructional resources (Cherono, 2023).

School administrators require financial resources for several purposes, including paying salaries, maintaining school buildings and facilities, funding academic field practice, funding extracurricular activities, and supporting other school programs (Ephrahem & Bhoke-Africanus, 2021). School administrators must be able to mobilize resources and ensure their efficient use, as the performance of school infrastructure projects depends on the resources available in schools (Gwaro & Ngacha, 2023). Their leadership ability to mobilize institutional

resources greatly influences overall teaching and learning (Mujitapha et al., 2024). The success of curriculum implementation depends on school heads' capacity to mobilize resources, whether through partnerships with outside organizations, financial management, or stakeholder engagement (Twarary & Thinguri, 2025). When implementing the competency-based curriculum, headteachers' resource mobilization strategies are crucial (Njoka & Ochieng, 2023).

The principal is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the school. Without both material and human resources, the school cannot succeed (Mujitapha et al., 2024). School administrators had a variety of responsibilities in strategically promoting and mobilizing resources within the educational system (Simwanza & Mabagala, 2022). Non-material resources include legitimacy, honesty, relationships, social networks, public attention, authority, moral commitment, and unity; material resources include money, organizations, human resources, technology, means of communication, and digital and print media (Munywoki et al., 2025). In public secondary schools, principals' ability to mobilize resources is crucial to the successful implementation of strategic plans (Njoka & Ochieng, 2023).

However, rural schools face several issues. It is difficult to meet the expectations of a digital learning environment when efforts to get sufficient funding for ICT initiatives are hampered by a lack of collaboration with stakeholders in resource mobilization (Munywoki et al., 2025). Factors of ineffective financial resource utilization in secondary schools include the delayed release of budget allocation to schools, a shortage of skilled personnel necessary for efficient budget utilization, the involvement of school management in various tasks, a lack of planning and execution of school activities with stakeholders, and interference from school principals (Gaspar et al., 2022).

To address observed financing shortfalls, several schools have implemented various strategies to mobilize resources and raise funds (Likoko et al., 2022). A study in Kenya found that some head teachers were eager to participate in alternative revenue-generating activities to fund infrastructure projects (Gwaro & Ngacha, 2023). Planning, carrying out, and overseeing fundraising events takes a lot of time and effort, which may compromise the provision of high-quality services. To guarantee that a financial and implementation strategy is in place for the upcoming year, planning and budgeting are essential components of management (Likoko et al., 2022).

Inadequate financial management abilities, such as the inability to prepare school financial statements, to identify cost variability and pertinent costs, and to address financial shortages, are just a few of the many financial management challenges faced by school heads (Ephrahem & Bhoke-Africanus, 2021). The role of school heads becomes even more crucial in rural and resource-constrained communities, where they face specific implementation challenges, especially since teachers often rely heavily on their leaders' guidance and support (Domingo & Ferolino, 2023).

Various studies disclosed the importance of resource mobilization and instructional effectiveness in basic education. However, there remains a knowledge gap regarding school heads' experiences in resource mobilization. While several studies highlight the importance of community partnerships in education, there remains a lack of research exploring what school administrators go through to ensure schools function smoothly and accordingly. This knowledge gap limits policymakers' and school leaders' ability to make data-informed decisions grounded in localized school-community dynamics. In the Division of Oroquieta City, school heads play a pivotal role in bridging community partnerships, optimizing available resources, and leading effective instruction in basic education.

However, informal reports and monitoring data suggest varying levels of community engagement and resource support across schools, which may affect the consistency and effectiveness of curriculum implementation. This research aimed to explore school heads' experiences in resource mobilization, a factor considered paramount to school performance. The findings may provide evidence-based insights for school leaders and education stakeholders to enhance their strategic planning and curricular implementation.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on three main theories. These theories are: Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory by Epstein (1995) and Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Deci (2024).

The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence by Epstein (1995) explains three distinct but related domains such as school, family, and community having an impact on a child's learning and development. When the community, family, and school collaborate, the learning environment is more supportive. These entities' shared duty for fostering academic success through collaborative efforts in communication, involvement, and resource sharing. The links between these domains of impact are crucial for improving educational outcomes.

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory has been used in recent research in a variety of educational settings. Family-school-community engagement occurs when families, schools, and community organizations work together in ways that benefit all parties involved. While all stakeholders have a role to play, school leaders are essential in promoting family-school-community involvement (Moore, 2024). When Pestaner et al. (2023) looked into how family and community involvement affected students' achievement in underprivileged schools, they found that students' performance greatly increased in schools with active partnerships.

In rural K–12 schools, community involvement increased program quality and enhanced resource mobilization (Matthews & Tan, 2021). The theory was applied in this study to emphasize the significance of stakeholder cooperation and engagement in relation to resource mobilization for school communities.

Deci and Ryan's (2012) Self-Determination Theory is a comprehensive theory of human motivation that describes how people's behavior and performance are impacted by how well their basic psychological needs are met. The theory states that people function at their best when their three essential needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied.

Self-determined motivational styles, such as well-internalized extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, result from this. However, when these conditions are not satisfied, motivation is diminished or controlled, which results in decreased performance, engagement, and perseverance. Self-determination theory has been widely applied in educational, professional, and health contexts because it provides a strong explanatory framework for understanding how supportive circumstances foster motivation, well-being, and effective functioning.

Using the lens of the self-determination theory (SDT), a study examined the drive and dedication of school administrators and teachers. The results show that the participants' controlled motivation, amotivation, and autonomous motivation are influenced by both positive and negative external stimuli (Van der Vyver & Geduld, 2022). A study expanded the scope of SDT's application and showed how useful it is for explaining why stakeholders are motivated to participate in transformational change in schools (McClure, 2025). The theory was utilized in this study to explain the motivation and experiences of school heads related to resource mobilization.

Conceptual Framework

This study identified the following themes: dealing with financial and resource scarcity; navigating external and contextual barriers; strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement; implementing strategic and adaptive resource management; handling economic and external dependence, and managing policy, governance, and institutional factors.

Dealing with Financial and Resource Scarcity. Resources for schools include both human and financial resources. Inadequate capacity on the part of school administrators, parents, and non-governmental groups hinders the development of evidence-based resource allocation and usage in schools (Njati, 2022). Financial resources are among the most crucial for getting a top-notch education. Improving educational quality requires ensuring that the required financing is obtained on schedule and that the schools are optimizing their current financial resources (Nachinguru & Mwila, 2023). A study conducted in Kenya revealed that most primary school pupils complete the primary schooling cycle without getting the requisite general literacy skills and

competencies. These skills are important focal points for expanding the country's knowledge-based economy (Njati, 2022).

Navigating External and Contextual Barriers

Schools face significant obstacles to sustained Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development, such as low finance, expensive equipment, erratic internet and power, a lack of technical expertise, and inadequate maintenance assistance. Principals should improve ICT capacity through ongoing teacher training, expand parental and community involvement in ICT projects, and diversify resource mobilization tactics by working with NGOs, alumni, and technology companies (Munywoki et al., 2025). A study in the Philippines disclosed that educational leaders employ a number of fundamental tactics to deal with the difficulties of allocating resources in schools (Gumilao, 2024). Schools had to deal with a variety of issues, such as a lack of human resources, poor infrastructure and facilities, financial limitations, little student involvement, and little outside assistance (Kurniadiningsih et al., 2025).

Strengthening Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder involvement has become a commonly used concept. It is extremely appropriate to comprehend and elucidate the interactions between organizations and stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, local communities and residents, and the varied, has led to its popularity (Grunwald et al., 2024). It is essential for school administrators to build cooperative connections with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and community members to improve schools. School reform and attaining favorable educational outcomes include including stakeholders in decision-making processes, acknowledging and appreciating their contributions, and establishing solid community partnerships (Cabrillos, 2024).

Implementing Strategic and Adaptive Resource Management

Improving the efficiency of school administration and the caliber of instruction is largely dependent on the use of primary competences in managing educational resources (Agusalim et al., 2025). The principal must improve the caliber of instructors and create the necessary infrastructure to support efficient teaching and learning in order to boost the standard of education (Safrida et al., 2023). Low levels of financial, human, and physical resources are available for implementing inclusive education in secondary schools, according to a study (Mbon et al., 2023).

Handling Economic and External Dependence

Public organizations are facing resource reductions and growing pressures to show accountability and enhance service quality (Knies et al., 2024). Education policies have a big impact on how secondary schools manage their physical resources, especially when it comes to making sure that school buildings are regularly maintained to reduce hazards (Koko & Nkemjika, 2022). Reduced user fees, political influence, and inadequate government support were only a few of the obstacles secondary schools faced in their efforts to raise finances (Lutempo, 2022).

Managing Policy, Governance, and Institutional Factors

The quality of education provided to students in any primary school depends on a variety of factors, including the proper execution of projects, for such educational goals and curricular objectives to be accomplished (Gwaro & Ngacha, 2023). Strategic resource mobilization techniques are essential for raising performance, but they are still not widely used (Mohamed & Senaji, 2025). School administrators should always include the private sector in the management of school operations. The mobilization and management of financial resources are critical to the success of any educational program (Nnam et al., 2024).

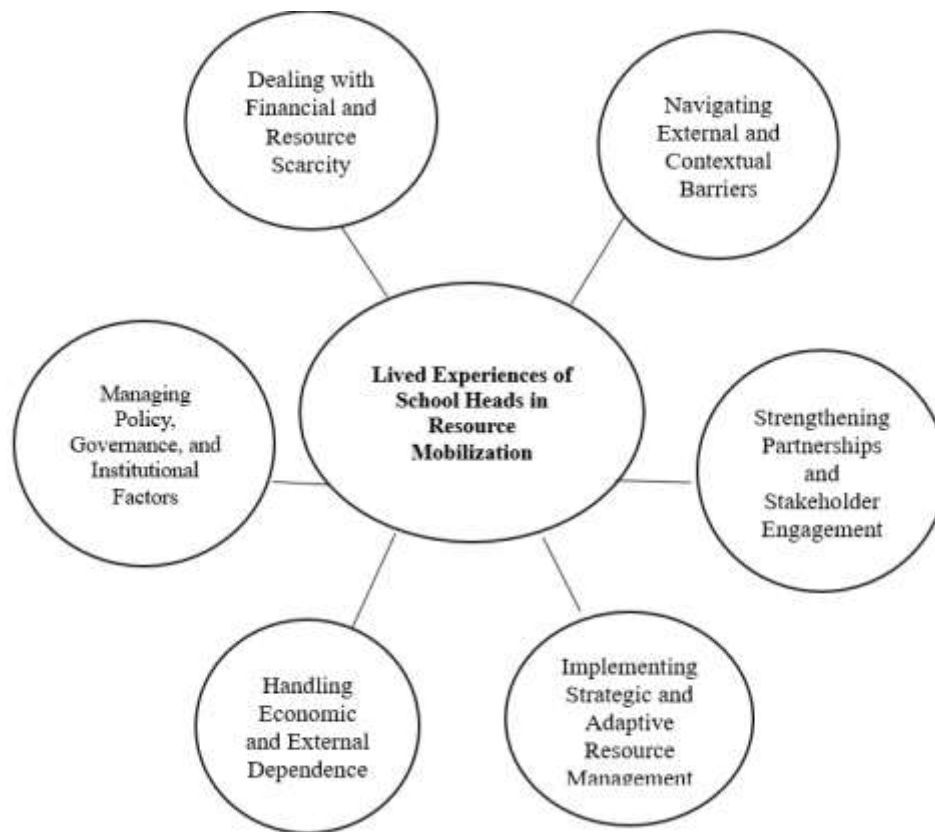


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the lived experiences of school heads in resource mobilization. It was conducted in the selected public elementary schools in the Division of Oroquieta City. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the are the experiences of school heads in resource mobilization?
2. How do school heads address or manage the challenges in resource mobilization?
3. What are the factors contributing to the resource mobilization challenges in elementary schools?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study used the phenomenological research design. Phenomenology involves recounting the experiences of one or more individuals regarding the experiences they encountered related to a particular concept or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). It seeks to describe the collective interpretation of the lived experiences of multiple individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (Webb & Welsh, 2019). This design was considered appropriate for exploring the experiences of school heads in resource mobilization.

Setting

This study was conducted in selected five Districts in the Division of Oroquieta City. Each district is overseen by a Coordinating Principal, while individual schools are managed by school heads serving in various capacities such as principal, head teacher, or teacher-in-charge. The research setting was purposively selected based on

factors such as environmental homogeneity, rural classification, and comparable socioeconomic conditions, which ensured that teachers served similar types of learners across the districts.

Participants

The participants of this study were 13 school heads selected through purposive sampling. The actual number of the participants was based on data saturation. The following were the inclusion criteria in selecting the participants: 1) assigned in public elementary schools in Oroquieta City Division; 2) school heads for at least 3 years; and 3) gave informed consent to participate in the study.

Instrument

An Interview Guide was utilized in this study. The Opening Question focused on school heads' perceptions of resource mobilization in their schools. The Core Questions explored the experiences or challenges of school heads in resource mobilization and the coping mechanisms or strategies used to respond proactively to the challenges encountered, while the Exit Question explored the insights of the participants related to resource mobilization. To ensure validity of the instrument, it underwent validation process by the experts in the field. Pilot interviews were conducted to ensure the reliability of the instrument. Questions that seemed confusing or unclear were revised prior to the actual interviews with the target participants of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the gathering of the necessary data for this study, the main researcher first sought formal approval from the Dean of the Graduate School of Misamis University, Ozamiz City. Upon securing this approval, a request letter was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Oroquieta City, to obtain permission to conduct the study in the selected public elementary schools. Subsequently, letters of coordination were distributed to the supervisors and school heads in the participating schools. Informed consent forms were provided to the target participants, ensuring that they fully understood the purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature of their participation.

During the interviews, the researcher used a field notebook for note-taking and with prior consent from the participants on the use of digital voice recorder to ensure the accuracy of the data. Participants were invited to review the transcribed interviews to validate the information captured. After validation, the researcher systematically coded and categorized the data to identify emerging themes, which were then analyzed and interpreted to draw meaningful insights and conclusions relevant to the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

To uphold the highest ethical standards in this research, the study was reviewed and approved by the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee. The study guaranteed the confidentiality of responses and the anonymity of participants' identities. Before the interviews, every participant signed the Informed Consent Form. Prior to participation, every participant was clearly informed of their right to decline answering any question that might cause them discomfort. They were made aware that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time without consequences. These measures were instituted to create a respectful and secure research environment, ensuring that ethical obligations were met throughout the data collection process. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour.

Data Analysis

This study utilized the Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology (1994). The following are the steps in the phenomenological reduction which served as a guide in analyzing the data gathered: (1) Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

Bracketing is an approach used to mitigate the effects of preconceived notions and perceptions that are to be held before the study can start. It is a process of suspending judgments and biases, or 'epoche.' Consequently, it reaches a deep level of inquiry from topic and population selection, interview design, collection and interpretation, and dissemination of research findings. In the study, this step was followed during the selection of the participants, as well as how the data were collected and interpreted to identify the experiences of the school heads in resource mobilization.

Horizontalization is the process of compiling all the exact expressions relevant to the study. In the study, each statement was given equal consideration. However, statements that are deemed irrelevant, repetitive, overlapping, or outside the scope of the study would be disregarded. The remaining sections, referred to as horizons, are the essential and meaningful parts of the phenomenon. This procedure was applied when transcribing the interview responses of the participants.

Clustering is an essential step in concluding a study. It includes reducing experiences to standard patterns, identifying core themes, and validating these patterns using various sources of data. To validate the patterns found in the study, other research studies were examined using different methods, such as observation, field note-taking, and related literature. This validation process is essential for ensuring the accuracy and clarity of the findings. It is during this step that the themes of the study were identified.

Textural description, or 'what occurred,' refers to an account that describes the perception of the phenomenon. In obtaining the textural description of the experience of the participants, verbatim excerpts from the interview were used, and a narration of the meaning units derived from the themes was provided. Based on the themes identified, it was supported with the verbatim statements of the participant of the interview questions. After identifying the themes formulated based on the research data, the researcher supported them with answers from the participants as to how they stated them.

Structural description, or how it occurred, is the integration of imaginative variation, which is an ingenious outlook and insights, to the textural description. An imaginative variation is considered in the mental experiment, analyzing the details and structures of the participants' experiences by being detached from natural inclination through epochesia. It is appended in each paragraph of textural descriptions to generate a structural description. This step was done by providing insights into the experiences of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Dealing with Financial and Resource Scarcity

The theme speaks of the lack of sufficient money, material resources, or access to essential goods and services needed to meet daily needs and maintain well-being.

Insufficient Budget and Financial Constraints. Limited available money or financial resources were used to provide the needs of the schools. Participants 1, 2, 3, 12, and 13 gave the following statements:

“The major challenges include limited financial capacity of stakeholders, lack of consistent donor support, and competition with other schools or organizations for the same resources. Additionally, some stakeholders have limited awareness or interest in supporting school initiatives. These challenges delay or limit the implementation of school programs and projects. Some planned activities are either scaled down or postponed, which may affect the quality of education, learning environment, and overall school performance.” (P1)

“One of the major challenges is the lack of budget which constrains the plan project and sometimes it takes so long to produce the amount for that budget. The framework of time will affect our school schedule or target time to finish the project.” (P2)

“The major challenges in resource mobilization faced by School Heads include limited budget allocation, which often restricts the procurement of sufficient instructional materials, learning resources, and support for school

programs.” (P3)

“One of the major challenges is the lack of budget which constrains the plan project and sometimes it takes so long to produce the amount for that budget. The framework of time will affect our school schedule or target time to finish the project.” (P12)

“In my experience, resource mobilization is challenging because schools often rely heavily on government allocations. Unfortunately, these funds are not only insufficient but also delayed, which makes it difficult to address urgent needs on time. As school heads, we carry the responsibility of finding ways to bridge those gaps, and that can be a heavy task.” (P13)

The participants consistently emphasized that limited financial capacity, delayed funding, and inadequate budget allocations hinder the implementation of school programs and projects. Weak donor support, competition for resources, and lack of stakeholder interest often result in postponed or scaled-down activities, affecting educational quality and school performance.

Lack of Materials, Facilities, and Human Resources. Shortage or unavailability of essential physical resources, infrastructure, and personnel affected the effective delivery of tasks, programs, or services. Three of the participants gave the following statements:

“Another challenge is the shortage of manpower, making it difficult to efficiently implement and monitor school initiatives.” (P3).

“We lack budget, books, and classrooms. We also need more teaching materials that fit different grade levels in one room. It makes teaching harder. Teachers and pupils have to share things because we do not have enough tools.” (P6).

“One of the major challenges school heads face in resource mobilization is limited funding, which can make it difficult to provide sufficient learning materials, facilities, and support for both teachers and students.” (P9)

Participants 3, 6, and 9 highlighted that shortages in manpower, learning materials, classrooms, and financial support negatively affect the effective implementation of school programs and the quality of education. The lack of budget, books, classrooms, and grade-appropriate teaching materials, which makes teaching more difficult and forces both teachers and pupils to share limited resources.

Resource mobilization becomes essential for closing equity gaps and maintaining educational reforms, particularly in underfunded environments (Mkhize & Davids, 2021). The Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory by Epstein (1995) claims that a child’s development and educational outcomes are shaped through the shared and interconnected influence of three key environments: family, school, and community.

Handling External and Contextual Barriers

This main theme pertains to the barriers that are often beyond the direct control of school heads, yet they significantly affect their ability to secure financial assistance, materials, manpower, and community participation.

Limited Stakeholder Support and Engagement. Stakeholders may include parents, community members, local government units, private organizations, alumni, and donors whose contributions are essential in providing financial assistance, materials, manpower, or other forms of support. When stakeholder involvement is weak or inconsistent, school heads may struggle to gather the resources needed to implement programs and projects effectively. The following significant statements were given by Participants 5, 8, 9, and 11:

“Some of the challenges of the school leadership has been the consistency and sustainability of the support from external and internal stakeholders in the resource mobilization of the school.” (P5)

“Another challenge is the lack of awareness or understanding among some stakeholders about how they can contribute to school programs/.” (P8)

“Additionally, building strong partnerships with parents, local officials, and community organizations can be challenging, as it requires time, trust, and effective communication.” (P9)

“School heads face a complex landscape in resource mobilization, primarily characterized by a heavy dependency on external stakeholders and the unpredictable nature of community voluntarism.” (P11)

The participants emphasized that school heads often struggle with the consistency, sustainability, and reliability of support from both internal and external stakeholders. Maintaining continuous stakeholder support is a challenge, suggesting that assistance is often irregular and difficult to sustain over time. Some stakeholders lack awareness or understanding of how they can contribute to school programs.

Policy, Economic, and Environmental Constraints. The participants emphasized that school heads often struggle with the consistency, sustainability, and reliability of support from both internal and external stakeholders. The following statements were given by four of the participants:

“If there is no clear implementation of school policies, resource mobilization would be very challenging because of lack of clear guide to follow. For example, in the MOOE, if the school doesn’t have knowledge in per pupil policy in computing the budget of each learner, this will create a financial problem in school.” (P4)

“Because we have many needs but limited fund. Rules sometimes make the process slow. The poor economy also makes it hard to get help.” (P6)

“Geographical isolation makes it challenging to connect with potential donors or organizations from urban centers who might be willing to provide support. Logistics for transporting donations also become an issue. Being in a remote area, the economic capacity of the immediate community is often limited.” (P7)

“Government policies on fundraising, procurement, and spending often limit our flexibility. Even if we see an urgent need and want to mobilize resources quickly, we can’t just act on it right away. If I plan to initiate a fundraising activity, I need to secure approval from top management first, and that process slows us down.” (P13).

The participants emphasized that unclear or poorly implemented school policies can create confusion and financial difficulties, especially when school heads lack sufficient knowledge of budgeting guidelines such as the per-pupil allocation under Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). Schools have many urgent needs, limited funds, strict regulations, and economic hardship slow down the process of obtaining support. Schools in geographically isolated areas face difficulties in reaching donors or organizations, while transportation and logistics issues further complicate the delivery of donations and assistance.

Resource poverty in rural communities and schools has been further revealed and aggravated by growing inequality and current economic restrictions made worse by the pandemic (Munywoki et al., 2025). The Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory by Epstein (1995) can explain the external and contextual barriers due to conditions such as poverty, limited stakeholder engagement, weak community participation, policy restrictions, and geographical isolation. Strict bureaucratic policies or lack of awareness among stakeholders can further weaken collaboration among the spheres, making it harder for schools to respond to their needs.

Strengthening Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

The main theme pertains to the deliberate effort of school heads to build, maintain, and enhance collaborative relationships with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, local government units, community organizations, private donors, and other external partners to support school needs and initiatives.

Building Collaborative Relationships. The process of establishing and nurturing strong, cooperative connections involved school heads and various stakeholders such as teachers, parents, local government units, community members, and external organizations to support school development and resource mobilization. In resource management, building collaborative relationships ensures that schools are not working in isolation but are actively engaging stakeholders as partners in addressing needs and implementing programs.

The following statements were given by Participants 1, 3, and 7:

“We strengthen partnerships with stakeholders by maintaining open communication and transparency. We also organize fundraising activities, submit proposals to potential donors, and encourage community involvement.” (P1)

“I strengthened partnerships with stakeholders such as parents, local officials, and community members to seek support in terms of materials, logistics, and other needed resources.” (P3)

“We organize community-led initiatives, where parents and community members volunteer their time and skills for school repairs, gardening, or clean-up drives. We also reach out to alumni and local businesses for potential donations or sponsorships.” (P7)

The participants highlighted that open communication, transparency, fundraising activities, proposal submissions, and encouraging community involvement are important strategies for sustaining stakeholder support and trust. Effective partnership-building requires active engagement and continuous communication with potential donors and community members.

Transparency and Trust-Building. In school leadership and resource mobilization, it means clearly explaining how funds are raised, allocated, and used. It also involves including stakeholders in decision-making when it's suitable. This openness builds trust among parents, community members, donors, and other partners. Three participants gave the following statements:

“Recognition of donors and proper documentation of resource utilization help build trust and sustain support.” (P1)

“Another step is to foster a sense of accountability and transparency in order to encourage all stakeholders to help and support the school.” (P4)

“We ensure full transparency in how all mobilized resources are used, building trust with our stakeholders.” (P7)

“Maintaining clear and transparent reporting on how funds and resources are used builds trust and encourages continued and repeat support from our partners and community.” (P13)

Participants 1, 4, 7, and 13 pointed out that recognizing donors and carefully documenting how resources are used helps build trust and encourages ongoing support. They suggested that appreciation and accountability work together to sustain partnerships.

A school that offers students effective and efficient educational services depends on more than just the skills of its staff. Rather, all internal and external stakeholders must contribute. Academic performance results may be impacted by stakeholder involvement in schools and leaders' capacity to affect them (Cruzat et al., 2022). Stronger collaborations amongst all parties involved are required to promote a shared dedication to expanding educational possibilities and improving the school community (Lopez & Bauyot, 2025). The Social Capital Theory can explain how resources and benefits come from networks of relationships, trust, and social connections. In schools, building partnerships with stakeholders like parents, local governments, alumni, community members, and private organizations shows how social capital can support educational goals.

Strengthening Strategic and Adaptive Resource Management

This main theme speaks about how school leaders can plan, organize, and use available resources flexibly and with focus while responding effectively to changing conditions and challenges.

Planning, Budgeting, and Prioritization. Resource mobilization by school heads pertains to the systematic process of identifying school needs, allocating available resources, and deciding which programs or projects should be addressed first based on urgency and importance. Three participants gave the following significant statements:

“Budget and look for other resources, minimize spending unnecessary expenses in school and prioritize the immediate need.” (P2)

“I also prioritized proper planning and budgeting to ensure that available funds and materials were used effectively and aligned with the school’s priorities.” (P3)

“That’s why school heads should budget well our school MOOE to answer the basic needs of our learners and the school.” (P5)

Participants 2, 3, and 5 emphasized the importance of careful financial planning and wise allocation of limited resources to address the most urgent school needs. There is the need to budget properly, seek additional resources, reduce unnecessary expenses, and prioritize immediate needs, showing a practical approach to maximizing limited funds.

Creativity and Resourcefulness. In the context of resource mobilization, this sub-theme highlights how school leaders go beyond traditional funding sources by improvising solutions, maximizing available materials, realigning resources, and seeking alternative support from the community or stakeholders. The following statements were given by three participants:

“We make our own materials using recycled. We use what we have wisely.” (P6).

“I explored diverse funding sources rather than relying on a single stream, such as grants, sponsorships, and community-based initiatives.” (P9)

“By leveraging local partnerships and transparently reporting our progress, we turned a scarcity of funds into an abundance of community support.” (P10)

Participants 6, 9, and 10 highlighted the practice of creating instructional materials from recycled items and using available resources wisely. Schools can reduce costs while still supporting teaching and learning needs. Exploring diverse funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, and community-based initiatives rather than depending on a single funding stream, indicating a proactive and strategic approach to resource acquisition.

It takes a lot of time and effort to plan, carry out, and oversee fundraising operations, which may compromise the provision of high-quality services (Likoko et al., 2022). Ineffective communication between the principal and teachers and education staff, with parents and students, as well as a lack of discipline and accountability for efforts to improve school quality, are factors that hinder the principal's strategic management (Palah et al., 2022). In reference to the Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Deci (2024), school heads are motivated to effectively plan, allocate, and adjust resources when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported. School heads need to be keen at considering on how school resources can be used and how stakeholders’ assistance can be sought and utilized.

Handling Economic and External Dependence

This main theme in the context of resource mobilization by school heads point to the strong reliance of schools

on external sources of support such as government funding, local government units, donors, private organizations, alumni, and community stakeholders to meet their financial, material, and operational needs.

Economic Constraints. Financial limitations and adverse economic conditions restrict the ability of school heads to secure, allocate, and sustain the resources needed for effective school operations and program implementation. The following statements were given by three of the participants:

“Economic constraints, shifting priorities of donors, and lack of awareness about school needs contribute to the difficulty. It also depends on the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to extend support.” (P1)

“Because we have many needs but limited fund. The poor economy also makes it hard to get help, especially when families also struggle with their daily needs.” (P6)

“Being in a remote area, the economic capacity of the immediate community is often limited. Many families cannot contribute financially even if they are willing to support the school.” (P7)

The significant statements show that these constraints are influenced not only by limited school funding but also by external economic realities affecting stakeholders and communities. Schools face numerous needs but operate with limited funds, while the poor economic condition of families further reduces the likelihood of receiving help, as community members are also struggling to meet their own basic needs.

Dependence on External Support. Many educational institutions struggle to maintain their programs because of limited internal budgets and low income from their own efforts. Consequently, school leaders must actively seek donations, grants, sponsorships, and partnerships to fill resource gaps. Participants 1, 5, and 7 gave the following statements:

“Resource mobilization is challenging because it depends on external support, which is not always guaranteed. Support from stakeholders may change depending on their priorities.” (P1)

“One of the challenges of school leadership has been the consistency and sustainability of the support from external and internal stakeholders in the resource mobilization of the school.” (P5)

“Ensuring that resource mobilization efforts are sustainable and not just one-off events is a constant challenge because support from stakeholders is not always continuous.” (P7)

The participants consistently pointed out that schools depend a lot on outside help. However, this support is often uncertain and varies due to changing priorities of those involved. Gathering resources is tough because it relies on external support that may not always be there. Stakeholders can easily shift their focus to different priorities, making assistance unpredictable.

Public organizations are facing resource limitations and increasing pressure to demonstrate responsibility and improve service quality in order to fulfill the expectations of service customers (Knies et al., 2024). A study found that education policies have a significant influence on how secondary schools manage their physical resources (Koko & Nkemjika, 2022). Using Joyce Epstein’s Overlapping Spheres of Influence (1995), it can be seen that economic and external dependence show how families, schools, and communities support each other and depend on outside sources for learners’ education and development.

Managing Policy, Governance, and Institutional Factors

This theme involves the rules, regulations, administrative structures, and decision-making systems that affect how school heads access, manage, and use resources. It includes government policies on budgeting, procurement, and fundraising, along with the guidelines and approval processes that schools must follow.

Policy and Bureaucratic Constraints. Limitations and delays can be caused by government rules, institutional guidelines, and administrative procedures that school leaders must follow when mobilizing and using resources. The following statements were given by three of the participants:

“If there is no clear implementation of school policies, resource mobilization would be very challenging because of lack of clear guide to follow. For example, in the MOOE, if the school doesn’t have knowledge in per pupil policy, this will create a financial problem in school.” (P4)

“There are procedural and policy-related limitations that sometimes make it difficult to access external resources quickly, especially when approvals and requirements take time.” (P8)

“This challenge is further compounded by the strict regulatory and bureaucratic layers required for compliance, where school heads must balance immediate needs with lengthy processes.” (P11)

Participant 4, 8, and 11 conveyed the implementation of school policies being unclear. Procedural requirements and limitations to policy can delay access to external resources because of the time it takes to get approval and comply. Systems designed to promote fairness and order can inadvertently create scarcity of funds in which schools cannot get sufficient resources even when policies are in place to do so.

Institutional Capacity and Leadership. Vertical governance facilitates or hinders resource mobilization and management in school improvement depending on leaders’ competence, efficiency of administration and systematic readiness. The following statements are given by a few of the participants:

“Institutional capacity and governance play a crucial role in the effectiveness of resource mobilization. The school’s ability to plan, manage, and monitor resources depends on the strength of its leadership and systems.” (P3)

“How we manage the school and support from leaders also matters because it affects how resources are utilized and sustained.” (P6)

“Institutional capacity and governance also play a crucial role. A school with strong leadership, clear systems, and transparent management is more likely to gain the trust of stakeholders.” (P9)

Participants 3, 6, and 9 consistently comment that the success of resource management and acquisition largely depends on the strength of leadership, governance systems and institutional capabilities within the school. The ability of a school to plan, manage and monitor resources is directly related to good leadership and functioning systems, which in turn impacts on its ability to mobilize resources. Good governance builds trust among stakeholders and this translates into more support.

Reduced user fees, political influence, and inadequate government support were only a few of the obstacles secondary schools faced in their efforts to raise money (Lutempo, 2022). Participation in technology-intensive industries is encouraged and workforce skills are improved when digital tools are incorporated into education (Mammadov et al., 2026). Epstein’s Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory (1995) emphasizes the three spheres such as school, family and community affects the learning of students and the more the spheres overlap the better the outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Monetary constraints and other compelling factors can significantly hinder school heads’ capacity to secure, manage, and sustain the essential resources needed for effective school development and improvement. Strong stakeholder engagement combined with strategic and adaptive resource management enables school heads to effectively address resource gaps and sustain school improvement initiatives despite limitations. Heavy reliance

on external support, together with policy, governance, and institutional constraints, creates significant challenges that affect the efficiency and timeliness of resource mobilization in schools.

Recommendations

It is recommended that school authorities strengthen support systems and improve access to alternative funding sources to reduce the impact of financial and contextual constraints. School heads continuously enhance collaboration with stakeholders while adopting flexible and innovative resource management strategies to optimize available support. The Department of Education may streamline policies and strengthen institutional capacities to reduce bureaucratic delays while gradually building greater internal resource sustainability in schools. Future researchers explore effective ways for school heads to secure the resources schools need.

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