

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness of School Administrators: Basis for Strategic Intervention

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the disaster preparedness practices, resource management, and communication strategies of school administrators in public schools. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study identified key areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in existing safety protocols. The findings revealed a high level of awareness among administrators regarding emergency preparedness, with the highest awareness about school protocols. However, the understanding of how to manage personal stress during actual emergencies scored lower, despite still being rated as high.

Currently implemented preparedness practices primarily focus on integrating drills into operations, clearly communicating protocols to staff, and maintaining documented plans. In terms of resource management, administrators prioritize safety funding highly, yet the sufficiency of manpower to implement protocols was rated only as moderate, indicating a critical gap. Communication mechanisms are well-established through information dissemination, coordination with internal and external stakeholders, and the strategic use of social media.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that while a foundational level of preparedness exists, it is not uniformly robust across all domains, particularly in human resources and stress management. To address these gaps, the study proposes the development and implementation of "Project SAFER Schools (Strengthening Awareness, Focused Response, Engagement, and Resilience in Schools)," a comprehensive intervention program.

This program aims to enhance awareness, strengthen current practices, improve resource generation, and institutionalize unified communication systems. The findings underscore the necessity for a holistic and sustainable approach to fortify school resilience against disasters, moving beyond basic awareness to ensure effective action and resource adequacy during critical incidents.

Keywords — *Administrator Preparedness, Communication Mechanisms, Disaster Preparedness, Emergency Protocols, Intervention Program, Resource Management, School Safety*

INTRODUCTION

Schools are among society's most fundamental institutions, carrying the profound responsibility not only to cultivate cognitive development but also to foster the social, emotional, and ethical growth of young people, which inherently requires providing a physically, psychologically, and socially safe environment where learning can thrive. However, this obligation exists in constant tension with an increasingly volatile global risk landscape, as schools are not insulated sanctuaries but dynamic microcosms embedded within their communities, making them vulnerable to a vast spectrum of emergencies including sudden-onset natural hazards like earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, and floods, slower climatic crises such as drought and sea-level rise, as well as human-induced threats like technological accidents, armed conflict, terrorism, and public health emergencies.

The convergence of climate change acceleration, geopolitical instability, socioeconomic inequality, digital dependency, and globalized health vulnerabilities has fundamentally altered risk calculus in the twenty-first century, positioning schools as critical frontlines for community resilience and survival, with school administrators—principals, headteachers, and senior leaders—emerging as the paramount determinants of safety outcomes because they operate at the crucial interface between policy mandates and operational crisis response. At the international level, frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 explicitly prioritize the protection of educational infrastructure, championing proactive risk reduction and the "build back better" principle, while UNESCO reports and studies by the World Bank and UNICEF paint a stark picture of millions of children annually losing access to education due to conflicts and climate-related events, with projections indicating that climate displacement could affect hundreds of millions by 2050, disproportionately impacting school-aged children, and the COVID-19 pandemic served as a global stress test that exposed profound disparities in digital readiness, the fragility of school feeding programs, and the immense strain on administrators forced to make high-stakes decisions with incomplete information.

Translating these global imperatives into local reality is especially challenging in disaster-prone countries like the Philippines, which sits within the Pacific Ring of Fire and the typhoon belt, experiencing an average of twenty tropical cyclones annually alongside constant seismic and volcanic threats, yet the country has developed one of the world's most advanced legal and policy architectures for disaster risk reduction, including Republic Act 10121 and its subsequent revisions, as well as the Department of Education's Comprehensive School Safety Framework and DRRM Manual, which mandate the establishment of School DRRM Teams, integration of DRRM into curricula, regular hazard-specific drills, and maintenance of preparedness stocks.

Despite this robust policy scaffolding, however, a persistent and well-documented implementation gap plagues the system, with national and local studies consistently revealing chronic underfunding where DRRM budgets remain meager and unpredictable, inadequate and inconsistent training that offers one-off theoretical seminars rather than practical scenario-based simulations, overburdened leadership where principals treat DRRM as a compliance-driven add-on rather than a core function, and fragmented planning exacerbated by centralized decision-making and procurement within DepEd that strips school administrators of the fiscal autonomy needed to address site-specific vulnerabilities promptly.

This culmination of global pressures and national systemic constraints manifests with acute intensity at the level of the individual school, where principals must navigate the diverse needs of students with disabilities, the safety of teaching staff, the anxieties of parents, logistical demands for infrastructure and supplies, and coordination with external agencies like local DRRM councils and health offices, all while making split-second decisions during earthquakes, floods, or pandemics, and localized studies—such as those examining the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda—have shown that schools with proactive principals who forged strong community links and stored supplies responded more effectively and even served as recovery hubs, whereas those led by administrators who viewed DRRM merely as a directive were left more exposed. Existing research has largely focused on mapping policies, assessing student awareness, or evaluating structural safety, leaving a significant gap in systematic investigations that place the school administrator at the center of analysis and examine the complex interplay of institutional, cognitive, resource-based, and socio-cultural factors shaping their preparedness actions and decisions.

This study directly addresses that gap by building upon global theoretical foundations and grounding its inquiry in the specific documented challenges of the Philippine education system, aiming to generate a nuanced, empirically rich understanding of the preparedness ecosystem surrounding school administrators in the Magallanes North District, and its ultimate scholarly and practical contribution will be the development of a Strategic Enhancement Plan—not a generic manual but a structured, phased, and actionable framework designed to bridge identified gaps through revised competency models for disaster leadership, continuous simulation-based professional development, proposals for decentralized school-based DRRM budgeting, templates for authentic localized planning, and protocols for building collaborative networks with community responders, thereby converting the latent potential of school administrators into a manifest force for resilience that protects

learners, preserves educational continuity, and strengthens communities in the face of an uncertain and hazardous future.

This research addressed the problems along with inadequate translation of policy into effective, sustainable, and context-sensitive preparedness practices at the school level, leading to the following central inquiry. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergencies and disaster preparedness in public schools?
2. What specific preparedness, practices, and protocols are currently implemented by school administrators to ensure safety during emergencies and disasters?
3. To what extent do school administrators manage resources along disaster preparedness?
4. How do school administrators establish communication and coordination mechanisms with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies during emergencies and disasters?
5. What intervention program could be proposed to improve the implementation of disaster preparedness practices and protocols?

This study was confined to the thirteen (13) elementary school heads currently serving within the Department of Education's Magallanes North District, Sorsogon Division, namely: Anibong Elementary School, Bartolome G. Lee Integrated School, Behia Elementary School, Cagbolo Elementary School, Cagtalaba Elementary School, Doña Olimpia De Castro Mella Elementary School, Hubo Elementary School, Iluminado Carranza Elementary School, Magallanes North Central School, Pili Elementary School, Sta. Elena Elementary School, Sta. Lourdes Elementary School and Tagas Elementary School. The study examined the professional experiences, self-assessed leadership readiness, and contextual challenges of this defined group to construct a detailed profile of the administrative landscape at the elementary level.

Excluded from this study are principals from the district's five secondary schools, as their operational context presents distinct administrative dynamics. Furthermore, the research is delimited from directly involving personnel from the Division Office, classroom teachers, non-teaching staff, students, or other external community stakeholders as participants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A foundational theme emerging from literature is the fundamental reconceptualization of the school's role in the twenty-first century. No longer viewed as passive sanctuaries insulated from external threats, schools are now understood as dynamic microcosms embedded within their communities, making them acutely vulnerable to a vast and escalating spectrum of emergencies. The IFRC in the World Disasters Report¹ highlighted that climate-related disasters are escalating in frequency and intensity, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, including children in schools, and called for a paradigm shift towards anticipatory action and localized preparedness.

This global call is echoed powerfully by UNICEF² in "The Climate Crisis a Child Rights Crisis," which presented data showing that nearly every child is now exposed to at least one major climate and environmental hazard, stressing the role of schools as essential protective environments that must be made resilient. The OECD³ found that effectiveness hinged on pre-existing digital infrastructure and, crucially, on the adaptive leadership of school principals who could mobilize communities and support teachers. This is directly related to the present study as it provides a recent, global-scale validation that a school administrator's strategic preparedness—for a pandemic as a specific disaster type—was the critical variable in determining educational outcomes during a prolonged crisis, underscoring the necessity of the proposed enhancement plan.

Sayers et al⁴. from the World Bank developed a "Resilient Education Systems Framework," emphasizing the need to build redundancy, flexibility, and equity into delivery to withstand future shocks, providing a contemporary, systemic framework against which the current state of school-level preparedness can be benchmarked. UNESCO⁵, in its Global Education Monitoring Report, focused on technology, revealing a deep digital divide that hampered educational continuity during the pandemic and arguing for the integration of digital resilience into broader disaster preparedness planning, expanding the definition of "disaster" and "preparedness" to include technological and connectivity failures.

In the Philippine context, this global imperative takes on an acute and urgent character. Cruz and Dela Fuente⁶ conducted a seminal assessment of disaster preparedness among public school administrators in Metro Manila, uncovering a significant "policy-to-practice gap," finding that while administrators demonstrated high awareness of DepEd policies, their operational readiness was hampered by inadequate training, limited resources, and the treatment of DRRM as a compliance activity rather than a strategic leadership function. This is fundamentally related to the present study as it provides direct, empirical evidence from the Philippine context for the core research problem, validating the investigation into the disconnect between administrative awareness and the implementation of effective, strategic preparedness practices.

Lagman and Genanda⁷ performed a systematic review of school-based DRRM implementation in the Philippines from 2010 to 2020, synthesizing findings from multiple regional studies to identify chronic, systemic barriers including inconsistent funding, tokenistic training programs, and a lack of localized planning, confirming that the challenges are pervasive and systemic rather than isolated. Del Rosario and Bautista⁸ examined the cognitive preparedness of newly appointed school principals for multi-hazard scenarios in Central Luzon, revealing that new principals relied heavily on templates from predecessors without understanding the risk rationale, creating vulnerability during atypical events, and that their decision-making under simulated stress was reactive rather than strategic. The study concluded that current induction programs fail to build critical situational awareness and adaptive thinking skills, directly relating to the present research, as it identifies a foundational gap in how new administrators conceptually approach disasters.

A second major theme concerns the complex, multifaceted demands placed on school administrators during crises, extending far beyond simple procedural execution to encompass psychological, ethical, communicative, and adaptive competencies. Boin et al⁹., in their book "Governing the Pandemic," analyzed the political and administrative challenges of crisis coordination, noting that pre-existing networks and "improvisational capacity" were more valuable than rigid plans. This is critically related to the present study as it reinforces the importance of the "Communication and Coordination Mechanisms" variable, suggesting the research should evaluate not just the existence of plans, but the quality of administrators' professional networks and their capacity for adaptive, improvised action.

Harris and Jones¹⁰ surveyed school leaders globally at the peak of the first COVID-19 lockdowns, documenting unprecedented levels of stress, role overload, and the need to make high-stakes decisions with incomplete information, highlighting the extreme psychological and decision-making demands placed on administrators during a crisis. Pollock¹¹ studied the role of school principals in Canada during COVID-19, concluding that they acted as crucial "sense-makers" for their communities, translating complex public health directives into actionable school-based protocols, identifying a specific, high-level leadership competency—sense-making and contextual translation—that is essential for effective preparedness. Netolicky¹² explored the concept of "crisis leadership" in education, arguing that it requires a blend of transactional leadership (managing logistics) and transformative leadership (inspiring hope and a vision for recovery), providing a contemporary leadership theory lens for the present study.

Azorín et al¹³. investigated the international lessons for educational leadership from the pandemic, emphasizing the newfound importance of "distributed leadership" and empowering teacher teams to handle specific crisis-response tasks, pointing to a potential best practice in preparedness. Johnson and Thompson¹⁴ explored school principal preparedness for active shooter events in the Midwestern United States, concluding that preparedness was largely performative and failed to build the adaptive decision-making capacity required

for dynamic threats, and recommending mandatory, joint simulation exercises. Gillen et al¹⁵. conducted a systematic review of literature on principal leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying key themes of crisis communication, emotional support for staff, and rapid technological upskilling as critical leadership functions that were largely unaddressed in pre-service training, offering a precise checklist of areas that the research should investigate.

In the Philippines, this theme is powerfully illustrated by localized studies. Torres¹⁶ examined the role of school principals in the aftermath of Typhoon Odette in the Visayas, documenting how leaders who had pre-existing strong ties with local government units and community organizations were able to facilitate faster relief distribution and initiate makeshift learning programs, empirically linking the quality of an administrator's external networks to tangible recovery outcomes. Dimalanta and Santos¹⁷ investigated the psychosocial preparedness of school leaders during prolonged crises, finding a severe lack of training in psychological first aid and trauma-informed leadership, which left administrators ill-equipped to support the mental health of students and staff.

Mendoza and Lopez¹⁸ analyzed the decision-making of school principals in Ilocos Norte regarding school closure during typhoon signals, showing that principals often made pre-emptive closure decisions based on hyper-local knowledge despite facing criticism, concluding that effective crisis leadership requires the courage to exercise discretionary judgment based on contextual risk intelligence. Corpuz¹⁹ documented the experiences of school heads in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao, detailing how they navigate safety, negotiate with various stakeholders, and maintain education amidst intermittent violence, requiring a unique set of diplomatic and security-conscious leadership skills beyond natural hazard preparedness, expanding the scope of "disaster" to include complex human-induced crises.

A third and pervasive theme across both foreign and local literature is the persistent and well-documented gap between policy mandates and practiced reality, a chasm driven by chronic underfunding, inadequate training, overburdened leadership, and fragmented planning. Campbell²⁰ analyzed policy responses to school safety during COVID-19 across several Asian nations, finding that top-down, one-size-fits-all mandates often failed and that flexibility for school-level adaptation was key to successful implementation. Mendoza et al²¹. examined school recovery after the 2020-2021 string of hurricanes in Central America, finding that schools with principals who actively engaged parents in reconstruction committees and advocacy recovered faster and more equitably.

Karakaya and Bozyiğit²² investigated the disaster preparedness of school administrators in earthquake-prone regions of Turkey post-2023 earthquakes, identifying severe deficits in practical, scenario-based training and a lack of authority to allocate funds for preparedness measures, exceptionally relevant to the present study as it provides a very recent and devastating case study mirroring the Philippine context. Trujillo et al²³. analyzed how school districts in the United States navigated political polarization and public health misinformation during COVID-19, finding that principals who had built strong, transparent communication channels before the pandemic faced less resistance to safety protocols, highlighting a modern challenge—misinformation—and demonstrating that effective crisis communication is a trust-based practice built over time.

Within the Philippine context, this implementation gap is documented with striking consistency. Albino and Ramos²⁴ explored the critical issue of fiscal autonomy in a case study of the Division of Laguna, detailing how centralized procurement and rigid budget controls severely limit a school administrator's ability to address urgent safety needs. Sison²⁵ conducted a policy analysis of the DepEd DRRM Manual's implementation, concluding that its effectiveness is diluted by concurrent demands of other massive department reforms, leading to "reform fatigue" among school heads. Cordero and Lim²⁶ analyzed the implementation of the "Three-Star" assessment system for the Comprehensive School Safety Framework in Davao Region, finding that while the tool raised awareness, it often became a compliance checkbox, and schools rarely progress beyond one star without direct external support.

Imperial and Cruz²⁷ evaluated the interoperability of school DRRM plans with Barangay DRRM Plans in Quezon City, uncovering a stark misalignment where evacuation sites were sometimes listed as relief hubs

without the school's knowledge, and concluded that plans were developed in parallel silos. Villanueva²⁸ assessed the structural safety of school buildings in Eastern Samar post-Typhoon Yolanda, reporting that despite retrofitting programs, many administrators were not trained to conduct basic visual hazard assessments. Bautista and Ocampo²⁹ evaluated the "Brigada Eskwela" program, noting that while it successfully mobilizes community volunteers for physical repairs, it is rarely leveraged for collaborative DRRM planning or simulation exercises, representing a missed opportunity for building shared responsibility.

The final theme addresses the solutions and pathways forward, with both foreign and local studies offering evidence-based models for enhancing administrator preparedness and building systemic resilience. Harris and Jones highlighted the need for psychological preparedness and ethical decision-making support for administrators. Sayers et al. emphasized building redundancy, flexibility, and equity into education delivery. (Tanaka and Yamamoto)³⁰ In Japan, researchers investigated "leadership shadowing" programs in which novice principals observed veteran principals managing crisis drills, finding that shadowing accelerated the development of situational judgment and reflective practice more effectively than traditional lecture-based training, thereby offering a proven, low-cost pedagogical model for the proposed Strategic Enhancement Plan. Rossi and Conti³¹ in Italy analyzed decision-making fatigue during extended remote learning, recommending clear, tiered decision-making frameworks to reduce cognitive load on frontline administrators. Dubois and Leclerc³² in France examined how school principals in diverse communities managed crisis communication to ensure inclusivity for non-native-speaking families, concluding that inclusive communication is a deliberate strategy requiring pre-planning. Jensen and Sørensen³³ in Denmark investigated the use of tabletop exercises for preparing leadership teams for complex, cascading scenarios, revealing hidden dependencies and communication gaps, and advocating for moving beyond single-hazard drills to multi-threaded scenario planning.

In the Philippines, innovative models and promising practices are also emerging. Sanchez³⁴ evaluated a peer-mentoring network for novice school principals on DRRM, finding that communities of practice significantly improved participants' confidence and problem-solving abilities, providing evidence for a highly effective component of the proposed enhancement plan. Fernando and Lim³⁵ explored the use of indigenous knowledge and practices in disaster preparedness in Cordillera schools, finding that administrators who incorporated local wisdom fostered greater community trust and participation, offering a model for culturally grounded, context-sensitive preparedness. Soliman and Torres³⁶ investigated the use of indigenous early warning signs by school administrators in Cordillera Mountain schools, demonstrating that principals who actively consulted community elders achieved higher levels of community trust and earlier preparatory actions. Soriano and Gonzales³⁷ analyzed the communication strategies of school principals in Marikina during sudden urban flooding, highlighting the effective use of closed social media groups with parent leaders, outperforming traditional SMS blasts.

Gutierrez and Lim³⁸ explored the role of school principals as "boundary brokers" in securing corporate social responsibility resources for school safety projects in Cebu, illustrating a proactive strategy for overcoming budgetary limitations through strategic partnership development. Castro and Morales³⁹ evaluated the long-term sustainability of DRRM programs, finding that sustainability was tied to whether safety practices were embedded in the School Improvement Plan and its budget, providing key insights into institutional anchors that prevent backsliding. Almonte and Santos⁴⁰ investigated the specific challenges of boarding schools and dormitories, identifying unique risks not addressed by standard DepEd guidelines, arguing that the enhancement plan must be adaptable for unique operational contexts. Marcelo and Chua⁴¹ examined the role of alumni associations as a resource for school disaster recovery in Iloilo, documenting how principals who maintained active alumni networks were able to channel aid and expertise, highlighting another potential community asset.

This foreign and local literature and studies establish a clear and compelling foundation for the present research. It confirms the reconceptualized role of schools as critical frontline institutions in disaster resilience and unequivocally identifies the school administrator as the pivotal actor in translating policy into effective, localized preparedness. It maps the complex, multifaceted competencies required for crisis leadership and documents, with remarkable consistency across contexts, the systemic gaps that prevent optimal implementation.

Finally, it offers a rich repository of evidence-based models and promising practices—from leadership shadowing and peer-mentoring networks to indigenous knowledge integration and community asset mapping—that can inform the development of a Strategic Enhancement Plan.

The present study, by placing the school administrator at the center of analysis and examining the complex interplay of institutional, cognitive, resource-based, and socio-cultural factors shaping their preparedness actions, directly addresses the significant gap identified in the literature. It aims to generate a nuanced, empirically rich understanding of the preparedness ecosystem surrounding school administrators in the Magallanes North District and to develop a structured, actionable framework that bridges the documented gaps, thereby converting latent administrative potential into a manifest force for resilience that protects learners, preserves educational continuity, and strengthens communities in the face of an uncertain and hazardous future.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Complexity Leadership Theory, Situated Vulnerability Theory, and Resilience Engineering, which collectively explain how school administrators navigate and manage the non-linear, emergent, and high-stakes environment of disasters within a constrained organizational system. The researcher posits that effective school disaster preparedness is achieved when awareness is operationalized through repetitive practice, resource limitations are mitigated through structured community partnerships, communication is simplified and institutionalized, and improvement is embedded as a continuous, low-cost cycle. This study is anchored in the following theories:

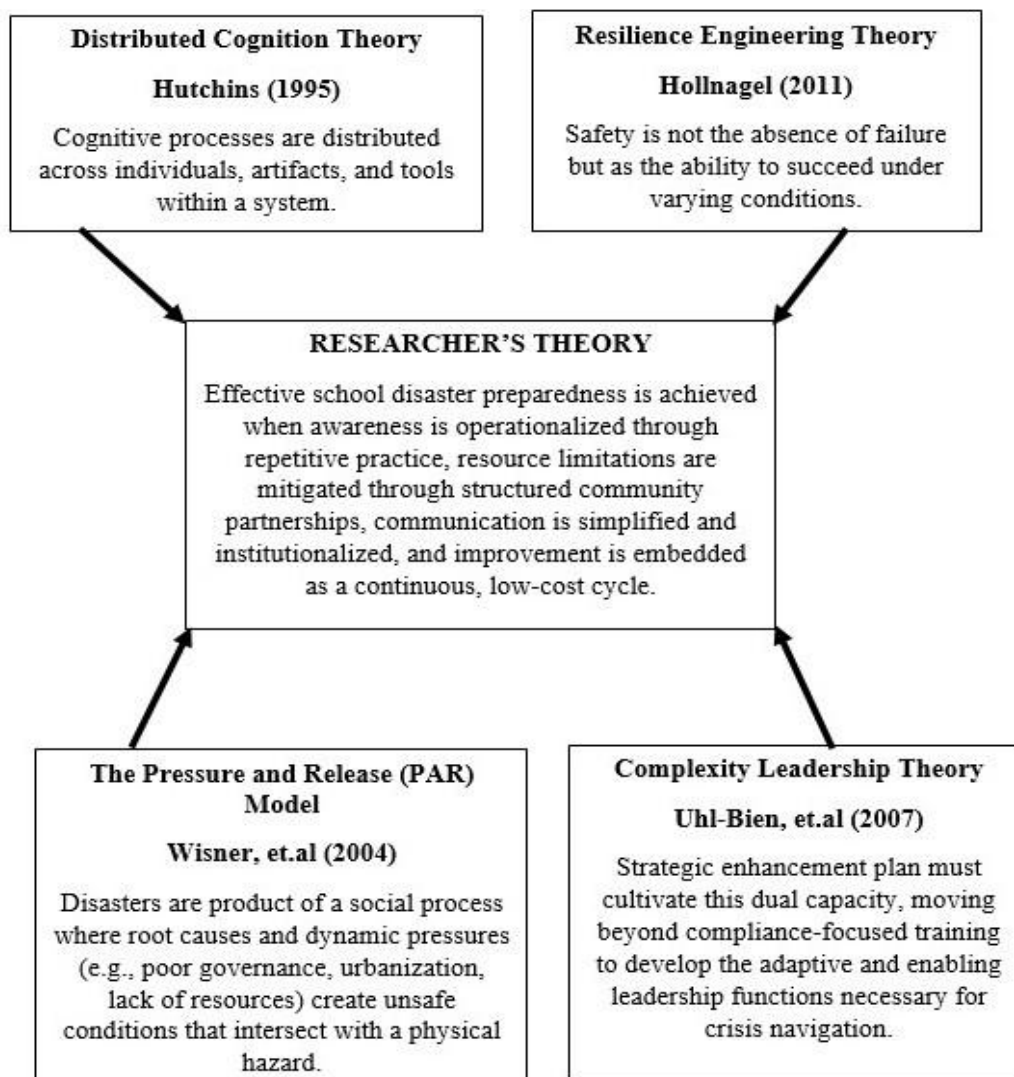


Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm

Complexity Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien et. al). This study theorizes that a strategic enhancement plan must cultivate this dual capacity, moving beyond compliance-focused training to develop the adaptive and enabling leadership functions necessary for crisis navigation.

Pressure and Release (PAR) Model (Wisner et al.). Disasters are a product of a social process where root causes and dynamic pressures (e.g., poor governance, urbanization, lack of resources) create unsafe conditions that intersect with physical hazards.

Resilience Engineering (Hollnagel). Safety is not the absence of failure but the ability to succeed under varying conditions. It focuses on an organization's capacity to anticipate, monitor, respond, and learn from disruptions.

Distributed Cognition Theory (Hutchins). This theory posits that cognitive processes are distributed across individuals, artifacts, and tools within a system.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study illustrated how a diagnostic assessment of school administrators' emergency and disaster preparedness serves as the empirical foundation for designing a strategic, multi-level enhancement plan to build institutional resilience. This highlighted a systematic flow from situational analysis, through strategic development and implementation, to measurable outcomes, with an embedded feedback mechanism for continuous adaptation and learning.

The **Input Phase** represents the foundational elements that define the current state of preparedness. This includes the Administrator's Preparedness Constructs: First is the level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergency and disaster preparedness in public schools. Also included in this phase are the specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators to ensure safety during emergencies and disasters. Extent that school administrators have access to and effectively manage resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, manpower) for emergency and disaster preparedness, and how school administrators establish communication and coordination mechanisms with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies during emergencies and disasters, comprises this phase.

The **Process Phase** was located in the second box of the paradigm and comprised the data-gathering phase through Survey Questionnaire, Interview, Data Tabulation, Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Thematic Analysis.

The **Output Phase** represents the direct, tangible products of the research process. The primary output is the SAFER (Strengthening Awareness, Focused Response, Engagement, and Resilience in Schools). Project SAFER is a school-based initiative designed to address these specific gaps by transforming high awareness into focused action, strengthening resource capabilities through partnerships, engaging the entire school community, and building long-term resilience—all with minimal financial cost.

The **Outcome Phase**, which is the last box, captures the intermediate and long-term impacts of implementing the enhancement plan. The outcome focuses on enhancing the leadership capacity of school administrators through adaptive safety systems, sustained educational continuity, and rapid post-disaster recovery.

The **Feedback Mechanism** is integral and cyclical, gathering data from all phases. This feedback is critical as it closes the loop, informing the continuous revision of the Strategic Enhancement Plan, the refinement of training approaches, and the advocacy for supportive policies, thereby ensuring the framework remains dynamic, responsive, and effective in fostering sustained resilience.

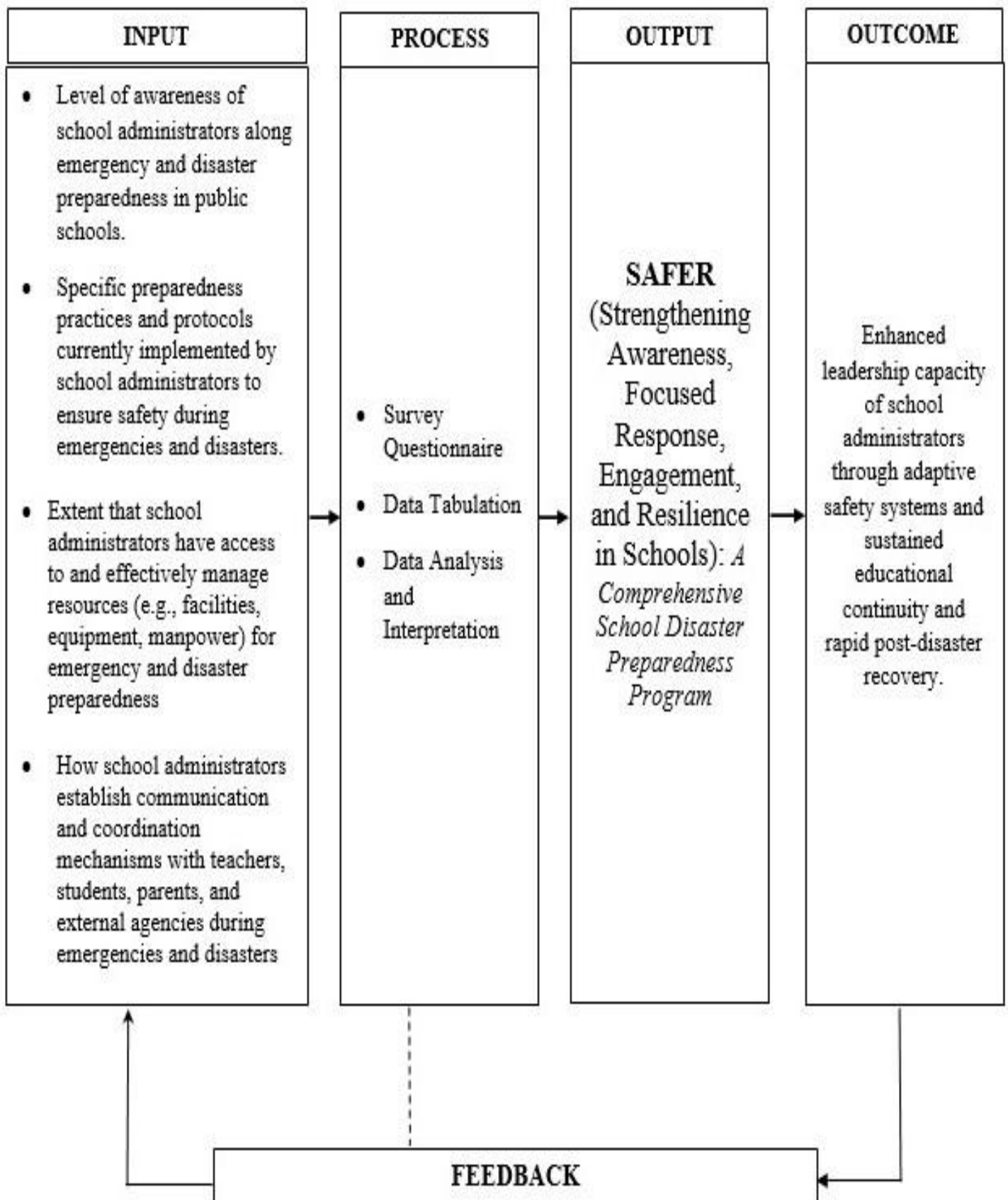


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Method

This study employed a mixed method of research design to systematically investigate, document, and analyze the current state of emergency and disaster preparedness among school administrators in the Magallanes North District. The research utilized a survey technique as the primary tool for comprehensive data gathering, deploying a structured questionnaire to the complete population of school principals and head teachers within the district to ensure a full depiction of the administrative landscape. This questionnaire was designed to yield quantifiable data on the level of awareness, the nature and frequency of preparedness practices, the adequacy of resource management, the effectiveness of communication mechanisms, and the scope of post-disaster recovery measures.

The descriptive narrative with contextual depth and illustrative detail, the study incorporated supplementary qualitative techniques, including the careful examination of existing documents such as School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Plans, drill reports, and memoranda, and the conduct of informal, structured interviews with a purposively selected sample of administrators. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights.

This combination of quantitative and qualitative descriptive tools painted a holistic picture, capturing not only the statistical profile of preparedness but also the operational realities, perceived challenges, and contextual nuances that define how school administrators understand and enact their roles in disaster risk management, in the development of a relevant and evidence-based Strategic Enhancement Plan.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and secure data storage, with approvals obtained from the Department of Education authorities and the affiliated research ethics committee.

Respondents

The respondents of this study are the thirteen (13) public elementary school principals and head teachers in active service within the Department of Education's Magallanes North District, Schools Division of Sorsogon. This constituted the complete population of elementary-level school administrators in the district.

The 13 schools are: Anibong Elementary School, Bartolome Lee Integrated School, Behia Elementary School, Cagbolo Elementary School, Cagtalaba Elementary School, Doña Olimpia De Castro Mella Elementary School, Hubo Elementary School, Iluminado Carranza Elementary School, Magallanes North Central School, Pili Elementary School, Sta. Elena Elementary School, Sta. Lourdes Elementary School and Tagas Elementary School.

Research Instruments

This study utilized two main research instruments: a structured survey and a semi-structured interview guide. The survey questionnaire contains the following parts: 1) The Level of Awareness of School Administrators Regarding Emergency and Disaster Preparedness in Public Schools; 2) The Specific Practices and Protocols in Preparedness Currently Implemented by School Administrators to Ensure Safety during Emergencies and Disasters. 3) The Extent of School Administrators in Managing Resources Along Disaster Preparedness, 4). How School Administrators Established Communication and Coordination Mechanisms with Teachers, Students, Parents, and External Agencies During Emergencies and Disasters.

Statistical Treatment

This study provided a comprehensive and data-driven analysis of the emergency and disaster

preparedness of school administrators in the Magallanes North District. The following statistical measures and analytical techniques were utilized to address each specific research problem:

For Problem Number 1, the weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of school administrators regarding emergency and disaster preparedness in public schools.

For problem number 2, frequency count and rank were used to identify specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators to ensure safety during emergencies and disasters.

For problem number 3, the weighted mean was also used to determine the extent of the school administrators' involvement in managing resources for disaster preparedness. The same table of equivalents in problem 1 was used for reference purposes.

For problem number 4, the researcher resorted to using thematic analysis on the responses of participants regarding how school administrators established communication and coordination mechanisms with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies.

Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation of Data

This chapter is a presentation of data gathered by the researcher from the respondents. Likewise, these data are analyzed and interpreted in this section.

The Level of Awareness of School Administrators Regarding Emergency and Disaster Preparedness in Public Schools

Effective disaster management in schools begins with informed leadership. As the primary decision-makers and overseers of daily operations, school administrators hold the crucial responsibility of not only formulating safety policies but also ensuring their practical implementation. Their cognitive and procedural awareness of potential threats—ranging from natural calamities like earthquakes and floods to human-induced emergencies such as fires or security breaches—directly influences the overall resilience of the educational environment. This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the awareness levels of public-school administrators concerning emergency and disaster preparedness.

Table 1 answers to what level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergency and disaster preparedness in public schools. As gleaned from the table, weighted means ranged from 3.85 to 4.46, all of which are described as a high level of awareness. Similarly, the average weighted mean of 4.09 is also described as High.

It is of interest to note that, among the given indicators, the highest mean of 4.46 is the Awareness of the school's emergency and disaster preparedness policies. Examples of these policies are the adherence to DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2015 (Student-Led School Watching and Hazard Mapping) and the utilization of the Comprehensive School Safety Checklist through Republic Act No. 110121.

It is followed by two (2) indicators, both with a weighted mean of 4.23: Understanding my role during emergencies and disasters, and Awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction in schools. These results suggest that as a school administrator, one should know his role to play in times of emergencies and disasters like acting as the Incident Commander who leads the overall response operations, serving as the focal person for coordination with local government units and disaster risk reduction offices, overseeing the safe and immediate evacuation of learners and personnel, managing the release of accurate information to parents and the media to prevent panic, and ensuring the accounting and welfare of all individuals under his or her supervision.

Likewise, emphasizing risk reduction or zero casualty in school means that administrators must prioritize preventive measures such as the regular conduct of drills, the identification and mitigation of hazards before they cause harm, the integration of disaster awareness lessons into the daily curriculum, and the establishment of early warning systems that allow for timely evacuation. This proactive stance ensures that schools are not merely reactive during calamities but are inherently safe spaces designed to protect lives regardless of the emergency at hand.

Table 1

Level of Awareness of School Administrators Regarding Emergency and Disaster Preparedness in Public Schools

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
Awareness of the school's emergency and disaster preparedness policies.	4.46	High
Understanding my role during emergencies and disasters	4.23	High
Awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction in schools.	4.23	High
Knowing the procedures for evacuation during emergencies.	4.15	High
Awareness of the importance of conducting regular drills.	4.15	High
Understanding the role of administrators in disaster management.	4.08	High
Being confident as to awareness of emergency preparedness protocols.	4.00	High
Being knowledgeable about earthquake preparedness measures.	3.92	High
Familiarity with national and local disaster preparedness guidelines.	3.85	High
Understanding the steps to take during fire emergencies.	3.85	High
Average	4.09	High

In a similar vein, another two (2) indicators, both with a weighted mean of 4.15, know the procedures for evacuation during emergencies and are aware of the importance of conducting regular drills. These results imply that schools are prepared in case there is a typhoon, earthquake, fire, or any other calamity on what to do; and therefore, training and seminars are needed. Two more indicators with high weighted mean are understanding the role of administrators in disaster management, with a weighted mean of 4.08, and being confident in awareness of emergency preparedness protocols, with a weighted mean of 4.00.

The Specific Preparedness Practices and Protocols Currently Implemented by School Administrators to Ensure Safety During Emergencies and Disasters.

The analysis of specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators reveals a significant gap between cognitive awareness and tangible, consistent action. While the previous section established a high level of awareness among administrators regarding disaster preparedness, awareness alone does not guarantee safety, and this examination of practical application demonstrates that the translation of knowledge into functional, ready-to-execute measures remains incomplete.

Table 2 presents the specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators. The indicator with the highest frequency of 11, ranked 1st, is that preparedness practices are integrated into school operations. This finding signifies that disaster preparedness has become a regular and normalized part of the school's daily routine rather than an isolated event, indicating that activities such as safety inspections, earthquake and fire drills, and hazard mapping are conducted systematically as part of the school calendar, and that discussions on safety are incorporated into regular faculty meetings and parent-teacher associations.

This integration ensures that preparedness is sustained throughout the year, keeping safety at the forefront of everyone's consciousness and ensuring that protocols always remain familiar and actionable. Following closely are safety protocols being clearly communicated to all staff with a frequency of 10, ranked 2nd, and the school having a documented emergency preparedness plan with a frequency of 9, ranked 3rd, manifesting the importance of good communication and planning in the implementation of preparedness practices and protocols to avoid untoward incidents and have clear guidelines to follow. Additionally, two indicators, both with a frequency of 8 and ranked 4.5th, are administrators enforcing strict adherence to disaster protocols and preparedness protocols being updated regularly, indicators that go hand in hand, as strict implementation and updating of protocols are as important as integration into school operations, communication, and planning. Next is safety inspections being conducted periodically with a frequency of 7 and ranked 6th, which is related to monitoring activities concerning preparedness protocols.

Table 2

Specific Preparedness Practices and Protocols Currently Implemented by School Administrators to Ensure Safety During Emergencies and Disasters|

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Preparedness practices are integrated into school operations.	11	1
Safety protocols are clearly communicated to all staff.	10	2
School has a documented emergency preparedness plan	9	3
Administrators enforce strict adherence to disaster protocols.	8	4.5
Preparedness protocols are updated regularly	8	4.5
Safety inspections are conducted periodically	7	6
Teachers and students are trained in emergency response	5	7.5
Administrators ensure compliance with safety standards	5	7.5
School regularly conducts emergency drills	4	9
Emergency exits and evacuation routes are properly marked	3	10

However, a concerning pattern emerges with the lower-ranked indicators. Two indicators, both with a frequency of 5 and ranked 7.5th, are teachers and students being trained in emergency response and administrators ensuring compliance with safety standards. These findings imply that while school administrators recognize the importance of building the capacities of both teachers and learners as frontline responders, this training may not yet be consistently or universally conducted across all schools. The relatively lower frequency suggests that opportunities for skills development, such as first aid training, basic life support, and student-led response teams, might be limited by factors such as time constraints, resource availability, or the lack of qualified trainers.

Similarly, the indicator on ensuring compliance with safety standards implies that administrators actively monitor adherence to national guidelines and DepEd orders, yet the ranking indicates that this compliance monitoring may face challenges, including insufficient funding to meet all infrastructure requirements, difficulty in sustaining documentation and reporting mechanisms, or the need for more frequent safety inspections. Taken together, these two indicators point to a gap between the intention to build a prepared school community and the actual execution of training and compliance activities, highlighting areas where further support and resources are needed to strengthen the overall disaster preparedness framework.

The most concerning findings are the last two indicators with the lowest frequency and rank: school regularly conducts emergency drills, and emergency exits and evacuation routes are properly marked, both with a frequency of only 3 and ranked 10th. These results suggest that many schools find it difficult to conduct emergency drills regularly and similarly struggle to put up emergency exits and evacuation routes in their schools. This finding aligns with international research by Licitis et al⁴²., who found that school district requirements or recommendations, at 81.6%, were the top reported factor influencing decisions on the use of prevention strategies, indicating that compliance with higher-level directives is a primary driver of school-level actions. However, their study also noted that only 26.7% implemented or exercised an Emergency Operations Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the significant gap between policy awareness and actual implementation.

The Extent of School Administrators in Managing Resources Along Disaster Preparedness

While the integration of preparedness practices into school operations establishes the foundation for a safety-conscious culture, the sustainability of these practices ultimately depends on the effective management of available resources. This section examines the extent to which school administrators manage resources for disaster preparedness, encompassing the allocation, utilization, and maintenance of financial, material, and human resources essential for emergency response. Effective resource management ensures that schools possess not only the knowledge and protocols required for disaster preparedness but also the tangible assets—such as first aid supplies, communication equipment, evacuation tools, and trained personnel—necessary to translate plans into action. By assessing how administrators procure, deploy, and sustain these resources, this section provides insight into the operational capacity of schools to respond effectively when emergencies occur.

Table 3 determines the extent of school administrators in managing resources along disaster preparedness, with weighted means ranging from 3.23 to 4.08, interpreted from a moderate extent to high extent. The average weighted mean of 3.67 is described as high, with eight out of ten indicators having a high description, while two are described as moderate. Topped among the indicators is that administrators prioritize resource management for safety, with a weighted mean of 4.08, described as high, indicating that school administrators give priority to whatever resources they have for the safety of the school.

It is followed by school has access to external support during emergencies with a weighted mean of 3.92, described as high, with examples of this support including the Local Government Unit (LGU) through the provision of rescue equipment, personnel, and evacuation vehicles during disasters; the Municipal or City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (M/CDRRMO) which provides early warning information, technical assistance, and training for teachers and students; the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) through the distribution of family food packs, hygiene kits, and temporary shelter assistance; the

Philippine National Police (PNP) and Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) who assist in security, traffic management, and fire suppression operations; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector partners who donate emergency supplies, first aid kits, and funding for disaster preparedness initiatives. This external support network plays a vital role in augmenting the school's internal resources, ensuring that administrators are not solely reliant on their limited budgets and supplies when responding to emergencies.

Table 3|

Extent of School Administrators in Managing Resources Along Disaster Preparedness

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
Administrators prioritize resource management for safety.	4.08	High
School has access to external support during emergencies.	3.92	High
Facilities are maintained to ensure safety during disasters.	3.85	High
Administrators ensure resources are distributed effectively.	3.85	High
Resource management contributes to effective disaster preparedness.	3.77	High
Emergency supplies are regularly checked and replenished.	3.69	High
Emergency kits are available and accessible.	3.54	High
Administrators allocate sufficient budget for disaster preparedness.	3.54	High
school has adequate emergency equipment (fire extinguishers, alarms, etc.).	3.23	Moderate
Manpower is sufficient to implement emergency protocols.	3.23	Moderate
Average	3.67	High

How School Administrators Establish Communication and Coordination Mechanisms with Teachers, Students, Parents and External Agencies During Emergencies and Disasters

Communication and coordination mechanisms are established by school administrators with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies during emergencies and disasters to prepare for whatever untoward scenarios might happen in school and the community. The responses of the participants were divided into three sub-themes: namely, relaying information dissemination during emergencies and disasters, coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, and utilizing social media during emergencies and disasters.

Under the sub-theme of relaying information during emergencies and disasters, participants shared their responses on how they relay information. Participant 2 realized that as a school administrator, they utilized the SPTA assembly as a means of communication and coordination with parents and stakeholders in emergency

and disaster preparedness, taking into account the role and responsibilities of each member of the school community, particularly the personnel, learners, parents, and stakeholders.

Participant 1 added that they conducted information dissemination during SPTA meetings, with Participant 4 providing the same response. Participant 5 reiterated several key factors or steps that should be considered in establishing a communication and coordination mechanism among stakeholders, including the school DRRM team conducting a risk assessment to identify potential hazards that are more likely to expose the school, and the team developing a contingency plan and presenting it to parents and other stakeholders during the SPTA meeting so that everyone is aware of the protocols and knows what to do during emergencies and disasters. Participant 9 explained that the school is located in a place where cellphone signal is not available, and internet signal is only available to those who can afford it, emphasizing that advanced planning and information dissemination are important before a disaster occurs, especially since the school is used as an evacuation center for the barangay when it is at full capacity.

The data reveals four key insights regarding information dissemination in school disaster management: first, school administrators primarily rely on SPTA assemblies for communication, recognizing that face-to-face engagement builds trust and allows for clarification in ways digital platforms cannot fully replace; second, effective dissemination requires risk assessment and contingency planning before information is shared, ensuring stakeholders receive credible and actionable protocols rather than mere warnings; third, schools in geographically isolated areas face communication infrastructure limitations, necessitating alternative strategies such as satellite devices, radio systems, or coordination with barangay LGUs; and fourth, when schools serve as evacuation centers, communication must extend beyond the school community to include the broader barangay population and LGU officials. Thus, effective information dissemination is characterized by proactive planning, utilization of existing community structures, adaptation to local contexts, and coordination with external stakeholders.

Still along relaying information, Participant 11 elaborated that as a school administrator, establishing robust communication and coordination mechanisms begins long before an emergency occurs, and they develop and regularly update a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that explicitly defines roles, protocols, and communication trees for various scenarios, with this plan shared with all staff through mandatory trainings and drills. Participant 12 also shared that they proactively embed themselves with local emergency planning committees, ensuring their school is a known entity to external agencies and that they can seamlessly integrate into broader disaster response. Participant 13 emphasized that effective communication during emergencies is built on trust and clarity forged in calmer times, prioritizing transparent, regular communication about safety protocols with the entire school community throughout the year, including parent workshops on emerging procedures and age-appropriate discussions with learners.

Participant 10 concluded that under DRRM laws and guidance, proper cascading of communication and coordination is of greater importance, making proper and enough knowledge along this line of utmost concern. These responses reveal a more proactive, structured, and institutionalized approach to information dissemination, building upon the foundational practices discussed earlier, and demonstrate that effective information dissemination operates on four interconnected levels: internal planning through EOPs and training, external integration with response agencies, relational trust-building with the school community, and legal compliance with DRRM frameworks. The most prepared schools treat communication not as an afterthought but as a carefully planned, continuously maintained, and legally grounded system. Byrd conducted a qualitative, multi-site case study exploring crisis communication strategies utilized by superintendents and communication leaders in PK-12 public school districts, anchored in Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model, examining communication frameworks, practices, and decision-making processes during crises.

Findings revealed that effective crisis management heavily relies on structured communication systems, strategic practices, and thoughtful decision-making, with each district in the study employing centralized communication structures and clear protocols, facilitating swift and effective communication during crises. Superintendents and communication leaders leveraged these structured channels to ensure accuracy and

consistency in messages disseminated to stakeholders, thereby upholding the integrity and trust of the district during turbulent times. Key insights included the importance of adaptability, the role of empathy in communication, and the strategic use of media and technology to disseminate information, while proactive communication practices such as regular updates and community engagement were identified as crucial for maintaining transparency and trust.

Under the sub-theme of coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, which speaks about a good relationship between and outside schools, Participant 11 highlighted that coordination with external agencies is formalized through mutual aid agreements and joint tabletop exercises with local police, fire, and emergency management officials, ensuring plans are integrated with community response efforts. Participant 13 added that when a crisis occurs, coordination is activated through a dedicated Emergency Response Team (ERT) that includes key administrators, counselors, and facility managers, using a unified command structure to manage internal response and serve as the sole liaison point for external agencies like EMS or the health department, preventing conflicting information. Participant 8 mentioned that they conduct and attend coordination meetings with internal and external partners to ensure support and participation so that everyone is safe. Similarly,

Participant 12 reiterated that for parents, they established clear expectations that the school's official channels are the primary sources of truth to prevent rumor proliferation. These responses reveal that school administrators employ a structured and formalized approach to stakeholder coordination across multiple levels, involving formalized external partnerships, dedicated internal response teams with unified command, regular multi-stakeholder meetings, and controlled communication channels for parents, ensuring seamless integration between school and community response systems while maintaining order and trust during crises. Three more participants gave their thoughts on coordinating internal and external stakeholders, with Participant 6 responding that they coordinate with parents and work closely with the barangay LGU, DRRMO, and BHW through pre-established protocols and regular drills to ensure an organized response during emergencies and disasters. Participant 7 stated that coordination with external agencies like disaster response teams and local authorities would be pre-established to facilitate swift action. Participant 3 shared that proper coordination of each member is achieved by facilitating them.

This paragraph showcases the need for written protocols to be followed in case of emergencies and disasters, and that training along disaster management is necessary. Seddighi et al⁴³. conducted a qualitative study examining disaster preparedness education programs in Iran and identified that communication and coordination are among the main challenges in providing disaster programs to school children, specifically identifying stakeholder communication, stakeholders' recognition, informing of stakeholders, inter-organizational coordination, and intra-organizational coordination as critical factors, emphasizing that successful implementation requires different organizations to work together effectively.

Under the sub-theme of utilizing social media during emergencies and disasters, Participant 12 enthusiastically shared that they maintain a meticulously updated, secure contact database for parents and staff and employ multiple platforms, including a mass notification service for urgent alerts, the school website and social media for official updates, and a phone hotline for recorded information. Participant 7 similarly said that as a school administrator, they have established a multi-channel communication system to keep everyone informed during emergencies, including SMS, email, and social media, with clear protocols for sharing updates and instructions.

Participant 6 shared that they establish clear emergency communication by using an updated contact list and official group chats. Participant 8 revealed that they establish communication and coordination during emergencies by creating clear channels and protocols, including setting up systems such as emergency hotlines and group chats and ensuring information is shared quickly and accurately. Participant 11 shared that for immediate communication, they utilized a mass notification system capable of sending simultaneous alerts via text, email, and voice calls to staff and parents, and internally, they equip teachers with handheld radios for instant contact when cell networks may fail, establishing a clear chain of command.

The responses revealed that school administrators have embraced a multi-platform, redundant, and technology-driven approach to emergency communication, recognizing that no single channel is sufficient to reach all stakeholders during a crisis, reflecting an understanding that effective communication requires both diversity of platforms and redundancy of systems to ensure messages are received despite potential infrastructure failures. Across the responses, several common themes emerge: administrators consistently emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate and secure contact databases for parents and staff, recognizing that outdated information renders even the most sophisticated communication systems useless; schools employ multiple communication channels simultaneously, including mass notification services, school websites, social media, phone hotlines, SMS, email, and official group chats, ensuring that stakeholders can receive information through their preferred or most accessible platforms; the responses also highlight the integration of both digital and traditional communication methods, with administrators recognizing the limitations of technology during disasters and equipping teachers with handheld radios for instant communication when cellular networks fail, demonstrating foresight and understanding that infrastructure may be compromised during large-scale emergencies; and underpinning these technological tools are clear protocols and chains of command, with administrators emphasizing that technology alone is insufficient and must be accompanied by established procedures governing who communicates what, when, and through which channels to prevent conflicting or unauthorized messages from causing confusion during crises.

Rizal et al⁴⁴. conducted a qualitative case study examining disaster communication in Pangandaran Regency, Indonesia, a disaster-prone region, revealing that digital platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook have become central channels for risk information dissemination, while also identifying challenges including misinformation, connectivity gaps, and limited institutional presence online. The study highlighted that informal networks, local knowledge, and school-based disaster education initiatives have significantly shaped public understanding and response behavior and emphasized that communication strategies must embrace a multi-channel, participatory, and culturally adaptive approach to strengthen community disaster mitigation literacy and preparedness, offering a novel contribution by bridging modern digital tools, formal education efforts, and indigenous knowledge in one framework.

Proposed intervention program to improve the implementation of disaster preparedness practices and protocols

Project SAFER (Strengthening Awareness, Focused Response, Engagement, and Resilience in Schools) is a comprehensive school disaster preparedness program designed to address critical gaps identified in a study of public-school administrators. The study revealed that while administrators possess high awareness of emergency protocols, significant gaps persist in stress management during emergencies, manpower sufficiency, documentation-focused practices rather than regular testing, and informal communication systems. These findings demonstrate that awareness alone is insufficient, necessitating a practical, school-based program that bridges knowledge and action while operating within the constrained resources of public schools.

The program is anchored on DepEd Orders No. 21, 23, and 37, series of 2015, as well as Republic Acts No. 10121 and 9155. Its objectives include enhancing the practical skills of school personnel in managing stress and making quick decisions during emergencies, improving manpower and material sufficiency through partnerships, establishing clear low-cost communication systems, and ensuring continuous improvement of preparedness efforts. The program defines key technical terms such as the Communication Tree, GAD (Great Anticipation Drill), Huddle for Safety, and SEPP (School Emergency Preparedness Plan) to ensure standardized understanding across all stakeholders.

The action plan is organized around four objectives with specific activities and deliverables. To strengthen awareness into focused response, the program conducts quarterly unannounced simulation exercises, monthly GAD sessions for teachers, and post-drill Huddle for Safety debriefings. To foster focused response through optimized resources, it implements a School-Based Resource Audit, launches an Adopt-an-Item Campaign through the GPTA, and organizes the Brigada SAFER Volunteer Brigade. To engage stakeholders,

it develops a Communication Tree, maximizes existing social media platforms, and establishes Barangay Link coordination. To build resilience, it conducts quarterly Drill-Exam sessions, annual SEPP reviews, and establishes a SAFER Corner bulletin board.

The program assigns clear roles to the School Principal as overall Program Manager and Incident Commander, the SDRRM Coordinator as Program Coordinator, Class Advisers for classroom implementation, the GPTA President for parent mobilization, the Property Custodian for inventory management, the School ICT Coordinator for digital communication, the Guidance Counselor for psychosocial support, the Barangay Link Teacher for community coordination, and all Teachers for drill participation and student management. A comprehensive risk management plan addresses potential challenges, including teacher resistance, parent refusal to volunteer, student panic, and lack of funds, with preventive and contingency measures for each.

Project SAFER is designed for sustainability through integration into existing school structures, strong community partnerships, volunteerism, resourcefulness with an estimated budget, culture-building through recognition, documentation for succession, and a continuous improvement cycle. The program produces fifteen specific deliverables, including drill reports, GAD session reports, resource audit logs, volunteer lists, communication trees, quarterly accomplishment reports, and an updated SEPP. Through these evidence-based, low-cost interventions, Project SAFER transforms public schools from being merely aware of disasters to being genuinely prepared and resilient, ensuring the safety of every learner under their care.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the salient results of the study about the statement of the problem. It also explains the conclusions and recommendations made based on the relevant outcomes of the present work.

Findings

The following are the salient findings from the study:

1. The level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergencies and disaster preparedness in public schools was high in all indicators, such as awareness of the school's emergency and disaster preparedness policies with a weighted mean of 4.46, understanding the role during emergencies and disasters, 4.23, and awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction in schools, 4.23.
2. The specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators to ensure safety during emergencies and disasters were preparedness practices are integrated into school operations with a frequency of 11 and ranked 1st, safety protocols are clearly communicated to all staff with a frequency of 10 and ranked 2nd, and the school has a documented emergency preparedness plan with a frequency of 9 and ranked 3rd.
3. School administrators managed resources along disaster preparedness to a high extent, as administrators prioritize resource management for safety, with a weighted mean of 4.08; the school has access to external support during emergencies (3.92). Facilities are maintained to ensure safety during disasters, 3.85, and administrators ensure resources are distributed effectively (3.85).
4. School administrators established communication and coordination mechanisms with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies during emergencies and disasters by relaying information during emergencies and disasters, coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, and utilizing social media during emergencies and disasters.
5. An intervention program to improve the implementation of disaster preparedness practices and protocols is designed.

Conclusion

Based on the salient findings of the study, the following are the conclusions:

1. The level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergency and disaster preparedness in public schools is high.
2. The specific preparedness practices and protocols currently implemented by school administrators to ensure safety during emergencies and disasters are focused on integration into school operations, communication to all staff, and having a documented emergency preparedness plan.
3. The extent of school administrators in managing resources for disaster preparedness is high.
4. School administrators established communication and coordination mechanisms with teachers, students, parents, and external agencies during emergencies and disasters through information dissemination, coordination with internal and external stakeholders, and the use of social media.
5. The PROJECT SAFER (Strengthening Awareness, Focused Response, Engagement, and Resilience in Schools) is designed to improve the implementation of disaster preparedness practices and protocols.

Recommendations

Based on the following findings obtained and the conclusions drawn from them, the following are recommended:

1. The level of awareness of school administrators regarding emergency and disaster preparedness be enhanced by awareness of the school's emergency and disaster preparedness policies, understanding the role during emergencies and disasters, and awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction in schools.
2. Integration of current emergency and disaster preparedness, practice, and protocols into school operations be sustained and strengthened.
3. Capability-building activities and the exploration of alternative resource generation schemes along disaster preparedness be conducted.
4. A unified communication system, expanding partnerships with external stakeholders, and maximizing the use of social media and other digital platforms for real-time information dissemination be institutionalized.
5. A comprehensive disaster preparedness program entitled "Project SAFER Schools (Strengthening Awareness, Focused Response, Engagement, and Resilience in Schools)" be implemented to improve the implementation of disaster preparedness practices and protocols.

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