



**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN NAVIGATING CRISIS
MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of school administrators in the Philippines as they navigated crises within their educational institutions, focusing on the challenges they faced, strategies they employed, and lessons they learned. Using a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews were conducted to capture the emotional, ethical, and strategic dimensions of administrators' decision-making during unexpected, high-pressure events. Thematic analysis revealed that administrators' experiences were characterized by Immersive Responsibility and Emotional Engagement, managing both operational and emotional aspects of crises, and Heightened Situational Awareness and Decision Pressure, reflecting their capacity for rapid, high-stakes decision-making. Key challenges identified included communication barriers, stakeholder conflicts, and resource constraints, while effective strategies involved proactive planning, protocol development, and adaptive, inclusive crisis response. Administrators' reflections underscored the importance of critical self-reflection, situational learning, and integration of experiences into institutional knowledge. The study concluded that effective crisis management requires balancing operational leadership with emotional support, proactive preparedness, adaptive strategies, and reflective practice. Recommendations include developing comprehensive crisis protocols, establishing robust communication systems, prioritizing emotional support, conducting regular drills, and fostering collaboration with stakeholders to enhance school resilience and ensure safety and well-being.

Keywords: *crisis management, school administrators, lived experiences, educational leadership, organizational resilience, situational awareness, adaptive strategies*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In today's constantly evolving environment, school administrators play an important role in handling difficult problems such as crisis management and resource allocation. Their passion and expertise are critical in building resilience and sustainability in the face of unpredictable events such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and technology advancements. However, the importance of understanding their experiences, techniques, and lessons gained has never been clearer. As a result, the significance of this research cannot be overstated.

UNESCO (2022) highlighted the weaknesses of schools in crisis response strategies across different nations. The lack of efficient administrative decision-making during crisis exposed gaps in policy implementation, stakeholder communication, and continuity of instruction (Bozkurt et al., 2020). In low-resource countries, the impact was even more severe due to fragile infrastructures and limited access to emergency training and technology (Alsabri et al., 2025). For instance, Stephen (2024) empathically detailed how Texas secondary school principals maneuvered the dual responsibilities of crisis management and caring for students and staff, often placing other's needs over their own.

In the Philippines, crisis management in education is a recurring problem, exacerbated by regular typhoons, earthquakes, and sociopolitical confrontations in some

areas. Public schools frequently face a lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient administrative crisis response training (Moreno & Sulasula, 2024). To address this gap, Pastor, Acosta, and Aquino (2024) developed the Educational Crisis Resiliency Management Framework (ECRMF) using data from Filipino school administrators, emphasizing the lack of specific attention to pre-, during-, and post-crisis policymaking, as well as sustainability planning and capacity building.

However, despite the numerous of data and literature, there is a notable lack in localized research concentrating on administrators' experiences with crisis management in public elementary schools in the Philippines. The majority of extant literature focuses on secondary education or school administration in general, without delving into school administrators' experiences. As a result, there is a need to examine administrators' attitudes toward crisis management in basic education institutions (Pido & Baguio, 2025).

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of administrators as to their challenges, strategies, and lesson learned in navigating crisis management in education among public elementary schools in Cotabato Division, North Cotabato. Specifically, it seeks to explore the challenges, strategies, and lesson learned of school administrators in navigating crisis situations. The findings of this study hope to contribute to evidence-based practices that can strengthen school readiness and resilience in the face of crises.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to understand how administrators in various sectors in the Philippines personally experience and manage crises. It addressed the gap in the literature by capturing the emotional, ethical, and strategic components of their decision-making through phenomenological inquiry. The overarching goal was to contribute practical and contextually grounded insights to the discourse on crisis leadership.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of administrators in navigating crisis situations within their respective organizations?
2. What challenges do administrators encounter in managing organizational crises?
3. What strategies do administrators employ before, during, and after a crisis event?
4. How do administrators reflect upon and make sense of their crisis management experiences?
5. What lessons have administrators learned that could inform future leadership practices in crisis situations?

Significance of the Study

This study holds meaningful significance for various stakeholders in the educational system, particularly in the context of crisis leadership and school management.

For School Administrators/Principals. The study provides a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of fellow administrators in navigating crises. It offers practical insights into effective strategies, emotional resilience, and ethical

decision-making during challenging situations. These findings may serve as a reflective guide for improving leadership practices, strengthening preparedness, and fostering adaptive capacity in future crises.

For Teachers. They play a crucial role during crises. The findings of this study can help them better understand administrative decisions and contribute collaboratively to school-based crisis response efforts. It also emphasizes the importance of a supportive leadership environment that values teacher involvement in decision-making.

For the Community. Schools are central to the community, especially in times of crisis. This study highlights the importance of strong school-community partnerships. Community members can gain awareness of how they can support and engage with schools during emergencies, contributing to a more cohesive and responsive crisis management system.

For Parents and Learners. They can benefit from understanding how school leadership works to ensure their safety, learning continuity, and well-being. It also encourages active involvement of families in school crisis preparedness and recovery efforts.

For Future Researchers. This study contributes to the limited body of phenomenological research on crisis leadership in the Philippine education context. It provides rich, qualitative data that can be used as a foundation for further studies exploring leadership behavior, organizational resilience, and ethical decision-making during crises.

Definition of Terms

To deepen the understanding on the study, the following terms will be operationally defined:

Administrators. Refers to individuals occupying leadership or managerial positions in various organizations, including schools, healthcare institutions, government agencies, and corporate entities. Conceptually, they are recognized as key decision-makers responsible for overseeing operations and guiding organizational direction. Operationally, they are the respondents selected through purposive sampling who have had direct involvement in navigating crises within their institutions.

Challenges. Refers to the internal and external obstacles faced by administrators while navigating crises. These may include resource limitations, ethical dilemmas, institutional resistance, stakeholder conflicts, and emotional burdens. In this study, challenges are identified and analyzed based on patterns emerging from the administrators' testimonies.

Crisis Management. Refers to the systematic process by which organizations prepare for, respond to, and recover from unexpected disruptive events. It involves planning, decision-making, communication, and resource coordination. In this study, crisis management is examined through the lens of administrators' experiences before, during, and after actual crisis events.

Lessons Learned. Denotes the realizations, insights, and knowledge that administrators gain as a result of their crisis experiences. These lessons may influence future decision-making, leadership practices, and institutional policies. In this research, lessons learned are those self-identified by participants as outcomes of reflection and adaptation during or after crisis events.

Lived Experiences. Pertains to the personal narratives, emotions, reflections, and meanings that individuals assign to significant events in their lives. Conceptually grounded in phenomenology, the term refers to the subjective realities that administrators construct through their engagement in crisis situations. Operationally, it encompasses the insights and stories shared by participants during in-depth interviews.

Strategies. Refer to the actions, responses, and approaches adopted by administrators to manage crises effectively. This includes both proactive and reactive measures such as communication plans, collaboration mechanisms, and leadership behaviors. The term is explored operationally through the thematic analysis of interview data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

This chapter presents the literature on crisis management, leadership experiences, and organizational resilience in educational settings. It examines theories, research studies, and scholarly articles to establish the academic context and identify gaps in existing knowledge.

Crisis Management

In the context of schools, strong leadership is critical not just for crisis response but also for long-term recovery and resilience development. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the relationship between crisis management and the larger social, economic, and political settings in which schools function (Kilag et al., 2023).

Striepe and Cunningham's (2022) found that the crises that school administrators encountered over a 10-year period included natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and human-caused disasters including death, suicide, school shootings. Many of these sorts of crises may be planned for at the national or school level using crisis management strategies, particularly in the case of natural catastrophes due to their geographical predominance.

Various organizations become vulnerable during disasters. These crises manifest in a variety of ways and might hit unexpectedly. Organizational crises that can result in loss include disasters, cyber-attacks, financial downturns, and even pandemics (Amelia

et al., 2024). With the likelihood of such crises comes the necessity for competent crisis management, which is critical to an organization's survival and growth.

Crisis management is a significant component of organizational management that entails taking proactive actions to mitigate the impact of crises and perhaps preserve businesses from additional losses. Scholars stress the complex character of crises, emphasizing the importance of adaptable, comprehensive, integrated, and efficient responses to these difficulties (Boin et al., 2016; Amelia et al., 2024).

Crisis management is an important part of organizational management since it involves taking preemptive efforts to mitigate the effect of crises and perhaps save lives. School administrators should devise a comprehensive strategy, identify probable crises, build a crisis management team, and develop an emergency reaction team. Regular training and drills are essential for an efficient reaction. During a crisis, it is vital to activate the management team, follow protocols, and provide post-crisis assistance. Effective leadership, readiness, and consistent response processes are critical to sustaining school safety (Agrawal, 2025).

Lived Experiences of Administrators in Navigating Crisis Situations

Amelia et al. (2024) provide methods to reduce the impact of crises, such as preemptive planning, good communication, agile decision-making, collaboration, and continuous learning. These measures improve resilience and readiness by integrating crisis management ideas into organizational principles, allowing for coordinated responses to emerging risks and challenges, and eventually assisting in crisis management.

Administrators at educational institutions have critical roles in managing transformative change, devising success strategies, and encouraging cooperation. Their performance is dependent on meeting goals, creating high-achieving pupils, cultivating positive attitudes, and resolving life skills issues. They oversee resources, finances, and operations to guarantee efficiency and effectiveness (Lueangam 2019).

Harriot (2025) highlights the significance of re-establishing confidence in companies during a disaster through cultural awareness, ethical frameworks, and digital technology. Transparency, sincerity, and narrative are stressed as ways to rebuild a reputation. Human capital, resource management, and technology innovation are examples of integrative approaches that may help organizations recover and sustain themselves. Future study might use artificial intelligence and generative media into crisis management to improve decision-making and influence public opinion.

Förster et al. (2022) underline the need of proactive crisis responses that strike a balance between optimism and realism. They emphasize the contradictions of logic and intuition, leadership's effect on organizational survival, and the conundrum of mobilizing resources against offering assistance. Understanding these paradoxes can help companies realize their potential advantages amid crises.

Bhat and Saba (2025) develop a response-recovery paradigm for crisis management, recognizing critical leadership responsibilities and competences at key stages. The concept stresses the dynamic evolution of leadership positions, effective communication, organizational resilience, and dispersed leadership as crisis mitigation strategies. It offers practitioners practical insights on how to effectively handle crises, with a focus on adaptive leadership styles and proactive crisis preparedness for the future.

Research consistently underscores the pivotal role of school administrators in crisis management (Mitchell, 2018). School leaders are responsible for decision-making under pressure, communication with stakeholders, and the overall implementation of crisis response plans (Cordova Jr, et al., 2023).

Atef (2022) pointed out the importance of local government institutions in building modern states and political processes. It emphasizes the need for committees to manage disasters and crises wisely. The study emphasizes the importance of good planning and early preparation for emergencies, highlighting the vital role of leaders in executing their entrusted tasks. This highlights the need for wise disaster management and early preparation.

Al-Qarni study (2021) revealed that school leaders possess high administrative competences in managing crises and disasters, particularly in follow-up, planning, direction, and organization, with no significant differences found in training courses, educational levels, or teaching experience among the study samples.

Al-Hajri (2020) demonstrated the ineffectiveness of rapid intervention teams non crisis management, as well as the fact that team members did not obtain the necessary number of training sessions. Furthermore, crisis management competencies, such as work division, planning, and organization, were inadequate.

Crisis and calamities have an influence on secondary technical education. Morsi (2020) found fundamental hurdles to achieving educational goals, such as a gap between the educational process and job market expectations. The study also found that when educational leaders have crisis management competences, they are better able to handle crises by providing suitable solutions to problems that happen in school settings.

School administrators see crisis situations as disruptions to the teaching process that create anxiety in schools. Parents are a significant stakeholder, and they often cooperate with many authorities and groups while adhering to the law. Both within and outside of schools, they evaluate factors that either make crisis management more difficult or easier. Organizational structure and culture are mostly to blame for the detrimental effects of crisis events on schools, since they lead to stress among parents, employees, and students. Conversely, they highlight the advantages of crisis situations, such as encouraging organizational innovation (Karadağ & Altınok, 2022).

Challenges Administrators Encounter in Managing Organizational Crises

As educational institutions struggle with the complex issues that arise from crises, working together becomes essential to fostering resilience and guaranteeing long-term recovery. Stakeholders help with both the short-term reaction and the long-term adaptation and improvement of educational systems by sharing accountability and working together (Martinez et al., 2023).

A challenging scenario was navigated by school officials, some of whom showed strong leadership abilities. Some, however, neglected their responsibilities, which caused parents, kids, and instructors to get confused, rumors to circulate, and panic. They also did not plan or prepare for the crisis, which led to a disorganized and chaotic reaction. School administrators must address these issues (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021).

The contradictory actions of leaders in times of crisis are examined by Förster et al. (2022). These paradoxes can lead to stress and conflict while making decisions since they are conflicting but linked. Optimism and realism, reason and intuition, and strategic

and operational thinking are some of the major paradoxes. Leaders may successfully traverse crises and their companies by managing these contradictions.

Head teachers face a number of difficulties including an unsafe school climate, teachers' reluctance to assist with student supervision, a shortage of school personnel, poor student behavior, and unfavorable opinions about education in general and school education (Tudzi, 2018). In addition, Anwer et al. (2018) stated that some principals also lack stringent accountability within the system, have a lot of administrative responsibilities, oversee student affairs, have packed classrooms, lack parental involvement in their kids' education, lack subject-qualified instructors, use evaluation procedures, and have dropout rates.

Miller et al. (2021) noted that the digitization of educational institutions has increased the incidence of technological crises, disrupting normal operations. Schools rely heavily on technology for administration and education, and faults can have major implications. Cyberattacks such as ransomware or hacking events can damage sensitive data, and prolonged power outages can force courses to cease, especially at universities that rely heavily on digital learning resources.

Strategies Administrators Employ on Crisis

Effective crisis management in education necessitates an awareness of the linked elements that shape crises, as well as the capacity to adjust solutions to the specific difficulties provided by disruptive events. Leadership, particularly transformational and collaborative leadership, is emerging as an important aspect in managing crises and bringing schools through recovery (Kilag et al., 2023).

Miller et al. (2021) reported that schools with crisis management methods were better equipped to react, but those without proper planning failed to preserve educational continuity. This demonstrates the need of readiness in ensuring educational institutions can handle unforeseen occurrences.

Jones and Harris (2020) underline the need of school leaders establishing clear communication channels and processes to guarantee that students, parents, and staff receive correct information on time. During a crisis, disinformation spreads swiftly, aggravating the situation. Thus, having a reliable communication system is vital in minimizing disruptions and maintaining order.

Heisel (2024) suggests early identification of crisis issues in an organization for effective management. Other key strategies include emergency preparedness, resource allocation, stakeholder participation, safety measures, and proactive/reactive measures. These should be integrated into the organization's routines and policies to ensure their effective application.

Shahi (2024) emphasizes the importance of adaptation, transparency, and empathy in crisis leadership. It emphasizes the role of open communication, empathy, and proactive crisis management methods in building trust, resilience, and empowering teams. Leaders should adopt these strategies to navigate challenges, ensure business continuity, and emphasize the team's role in the organization's survival.

Marsen (2020) provides a complete method to crisis management following substantial harm to an institution. He highlights the significance of crisis communication and the necessity for a quick reaction to restore the organization. The report recommends that organizations choose appropriate spokespersons to successfully interact with

stakeholders during and after the crisis. An personalized approach to communication is critical for a successful outcome, catering to a broad set of stakeholders.

Williams et al. (2017) highlighted the significance of organizational transformation in crisis management. They argued that organizations that fail to adapt to changes in consumers and stakeholders risk collapse. Transformation is driven by internal factors like efficiency, revenue enhancement, and employee prosperity, while external factors like competition, technological advancement, and consumer demands can trigger it. The study identified four major competencies for crisis transformation: task competencies, human relation competencies, adaptive competencies, and virtual competencies.

Lesson Learned by Administrators for Future Leadership Practices in Crisis Situations

A healthy school culture boosts principal leadership effectiveness by fostering trust, cooperation, and commitment to the educational mission. School leaders can reinforce symbolic leadership practices by enhancing the representation of the organizational culture. This provides a framework for understanding the organization's goals, strategies, and practices influencing decision-making, encompassing various perspectives, expectations, attitudes, narratives, and trends (Cooray 2023; Brion, 2021).

Kaiser and Thompson (2021) assert that effective leaders leverage outside support to augment internal resources by providing opportunities for professional growth, new projects, and additional student services. Similar to this, additional research has looked at the relationship between leadership style and outside help (Adam & Alarifi, 2021), where outside help is defined as assistance given to the company by outside parties.

Furthermore, continuing cooperation centered on student learning the main objective of schools is a requirement of external funding.

Effective administrative decision-making significantly increases an organization's ability to manage crises. Their findings showed that schools with strong frameworks for decision-making were more flexible and capable of managing crises via the use of clear mandates, structured processes, and timely interventions (Freeman et al., 2021).

Grissom and Condon's (2021) noted that school administrators that exhibit good judgment and strategic planning are able to respond to crises in a more coordinated and effective manner, which eventually lessens the detrimental effects on school operations.

Furthermore, the study by Mizrak (2024) affirmed that leadership decision-making and institutional crisis management are significantly correlated, emphasizing that organized and proactive decision-making processes enhance stakeholder confidence, speed up recovery, and increase preparedness during critical events.

Thompson (2019) contends that competent crisis leadership may be the difference between a quick recovery and lengthy interruption. Leaders should be trained in crisis management and decision-making under pressure, which includes understanding when to escalate crises to external authorities and when to change plans in real time to reflect the changing nature of the crisis.

Mitchell (2018) accentuates the broader landscape of crisis management in education, emphasizing the importance of preparing administrators for the diverse challenges they may encounter. However, the limited focus on scale development identified in this study indicates that despite a growing awareness of the significance of

crisis management skills, the tools available for systematically measuring these competencies are insufficient. Moreover, the exploration of this finding aligns with

Labrague et al. (2018) discovered a severe lack in research on designing and evaluating assessment tools for school managers. The study underlines the necessity for specialized research on scale development to measure crisis management abilities in school administrators, emphasizing the value of good crisis management.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on two (2) key theories: Crisis Management Theory as proposed by Mitroff, Pearson, and Pauchant (1992), and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) rooted in Husserl's Phenomenology (early 20th century).

Firstly, Crisis Management Theory emphasizes the importance of strategic foresight and reflective learning both before and after a crisis. It posits that organizations that proactively identify threats and develop adaptive strategies are better equipped to minimize harm and maintain operational continuity. Central to this theory are the roles of leadership, communication, and decision-making in successfully navigating crises. In the context of public elementary school administration, this theory serves as a valuable framework in helping school leaders recognize early warning signs, mobilize resources, manage disruptions effectively, and foster institutional resilience.

Secondly, Adaptive Leadership Theory focuses on Adaptive Leadership focuses on the ability of leaders to respond to changing environments and lead through uncertainty, especially when facing problems that lack clear solutions. This theory helps frame how school administrators adjust mindsets, strategies, and structures in response

to the shifting demands of a crisis, rather than relying solely on technical fixes (Wale, 2025).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, locale of the study, respondents of the study, research instruments, sampling procedure, data gathering procedure, and the tools utilized in the analysis of data for this research.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-phenomenological research design, appropriate for exploring the lived experiences and personal insights of administrators across various sectors in the Philippines as they navigate and manage crisis situations. The phenomenological approach was suitable for capturing the challenges, strategies, and lesson learned of school administrators. Through this method, the study aimed to deeply understand how these administrators make sense of and respond to crises, providing contextually grounded insights into crisis leadership practices.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in the Municipality of Kabacan, Cotabato Division. Kabacan is a municipality in the landlocked province

of Cotabato. The municipality has a land area of 448.09 square kilometers or 173.01 square miles which constitutes 4.81% of Cotabato's total area. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 93,822. This represented 6.29% of the total population of Cotabato province, or 1.91% of the overall population of the SOCCSKSARGEN region. Based on these figures, the population density is computed at 209 inhabitants per square kilometer or 542 inhabitants per square mile.

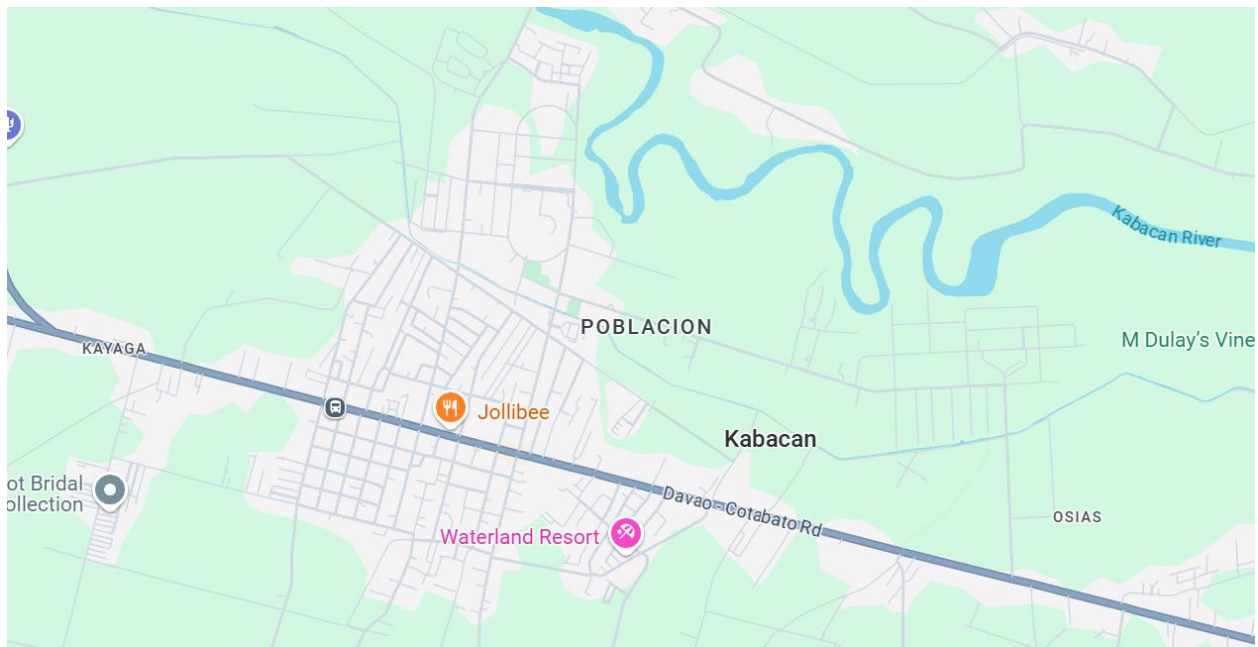


Fig. 2. Map of the Municipality of Kabacan (googlemap.com)

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of ten (10) principals/school heads from selected public secondary schools in the Municipality of Kabacan, Division of Cotabato.

Sampling Technique

The study utilized purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that involves selecting individuals who are best positioned to provide relevant and insightful information. Administrators chosen had firsthand experience in managing crises within their respective organizations, ensuring the richness and depth of data collected.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was developed by the researcher and validated by field experts. The guide included open-ended questions aligned with the study's objectives to facilitate detailed narratives from respondents regarding their lived experiences, challenges, strategies, and reflective insights during crisis situations.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before commencing data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals and permissions from the appropriate institutional authorities. An official request letter, duly endorsed by the research adviser and the dean of the Graduate School, was forwarded to the selected institutions.

Upon receiving approval, the researcher coordinated with the chosen administrators to arrange interview schedules. Depending on participants' availability, interviews were conducted either in person. All interviews were audio-recorded with the informed consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed for thematic analysis. Throughout the research process, ethical consideration including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent was strictly observed.

Data Analysis Tool

The collected data was examined through Thematic Analysis, following a six-phase process that includes data familiarization, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review of emerging themes, definition and naming of themes, and the development of the final report. Interview transcripts were manually coded, with themes identified both inductively from the participants' responses and deductively in alignment with the study's objectives. This method of analysis enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns and meaningful insights that capture the essence of administrators' experiences in handling crisis situations.

Ethical Considerations

This qualitative study on administrators' experiences managing organizational crises emphasizes ethical responsibility. It adheres to ethical principles to protect participants' rights, dignity, and well-being. Ethical safeguards include informed consent, confidentiality, risk minimization, and fairness. These safeguards align with institutional research standards, ensuring the study's credibility and integrity.

Social Value. This study provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of administrators in managing crises, a topic with increasing relevance in the Philippine context. By documenting their strategies, reflections, and ethical decision-making processes, the study aims to inform leadership development programs, policy

formulation, and institutional crisis preparedness. The findings can contribute to strengthening leadership resilience and responsiveness during crises.

Informed Consent. All participants will be provided with a written informed consent form detailing the nature, scope, and purpose of the study. The form will explain that participation is voluntary, and that respondents may decline or withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. It will also clarify the confidentiality of their responses and that any personal or institutional identifiers will be removed or anonymized.

Vulnerability of Research Respondents. The study acknowledges the sensitive and possibly distressing nature of crisis-related experiences. To minimize risks, participants will be given full autonomy over the extent of information they wish to share. Anonymity will be strictly maintained to protect them from potential institutional, political, or reputational harm. Their identities will not be disclosed at any stage of the research process.

Risk, Benefit, and Safety. Interviews will be conducted in a non-coercive, respectful, and psychologically safe environment. Participants may pause or discontinue the interview at any time. While minimal risk is anticipated, emotional discomfort may arise when recounting crisis situations. However, potential benefits include enhanced self-reflection, contribution to crisis leadership knowledge, and possible influence on future policy and leadership training.

Privacy and Confidentiality. All interviews will be audio-recorded with the participant's consent and transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions will be anonymized using pseudonyms or codes, and any identifying information will be removed. Data will be

stored securely in password-protected digital files and physical documents will be kept in locked storage. Only the principal researcher will have access to identifiable data.

Justice. Participants will be selected through purposive sampling based on their crisis management experience and leadership role. Equal opportunity to participate will be offered regardless of gender, ethnicity, or school type, ensuring fairness in representation and treatment throughout the study.

Transparency. The researcher is committed to transparency in all phases of the study from data collection to reporting. Participants will be informed about how the results will be used. A summary of findings may be shared with participants and interested school communities, particularly those who may benefit from the insights.

Qualification of the Researcher. The researcher has undergone academic training in qualitative research methods and has received guidance from experienced advisers in educational management and ethics. Proper protocols for ethical interviewing, confidentiality, and data handling will be strictly followed throughout the study.

Adequacy of Facilities. The researcher has access to the necessary equipment and tools, including audio recording devices, transcription software, secure data storage systems, and institutional research support. These resources ensure efficient and ethical data collection and management.

Community Involvement. Prior to data collection, coordination and permission will be sought from relevant school division superintendents or officials. The study is intended to benefit the broader educational community by contributing to more context-aware, community-sensitive crisis leadership frameworks, especially in policy-making and capacity-building initiatives.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data gathered through survey questionnaires and in-depth interview guide questionnaires. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the experiences, reflections, strategies, and lessons learned by administrators as they navigated various crisis situations within their organizations. Using thematic analysis, the narratives of the participants were examined to identify recurring patterns and overarching concepts that shaped their crisis management experiences.

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Lived experiences of administrators in navigating crisis situations within their respective organizations

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to identify themes emerging from the participants' detailed accounts. Their narratives revealed two overarching themes: Immersive Responsibility and Emotional Engagement, and Heightened Situational Awareness and Decision Pressure. Each theme encapsulates the administrator's lived experiences as they responded to sudden, unexpected, and emotionally charged events.

Theme 1: Immersive Responsibility and Emotional Engagement

This theme reflects how administrators found themselves deeply immersed in crises that required not only operational decision-making but also emotional leadership. Their roles extended beyond managerial functions as they became anchors of reassurance and stability for their school communities. Significant remarks were highlighted below:

The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1

I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2

A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3

A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4

A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5

A sudden rise in the heat index compelled the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and teachers. This required immediate communication with parents and staff, as well as temporary closure of school facilities to ensure everyone's safety. IDI_P10

A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6

Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7

A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional distress, and disruption of school operations. IDI_P8

The sudden announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9

A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10

Theme 2: Heightened Situational Awareness and Decision Pressure

This theme highlights how administrators exercised rapid decision-making, clear situational assessment, and leadership under pressure while ensuring the welfare of all stakeholders. Significant remarks were highlighted below:

I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2

I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3

I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4

I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas, distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5

I needed to promptly adjust school operations by shortening class hours, ensuring constant hydration, monitoring students for heat stress, and coordinating quick dissemination of information to parents and staff regarding the sudden suspension of classes. IDI_P10

I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6

I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7

I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8

I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of students and personnel. IDI_P9

Table 1

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Lived experiences of administrators in navigating crisis situations within their respective organizations

Issues Probed	Core Ideas / Statements	Themes
<p>Essential Themes that Emerged from the Administrators' Reflection of their Crisis Management Experiences</p>	<p><i>The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among</i></p>	<p>Critical Self-Reflection and Situational Learning</p>

	<p><i>students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>A sudden rise in the heat index compelled the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and teachers. This required immediate communication with parents and staff, as well as temporary closure of school facilities to ensure everyone's safety. IDI_P10</i></p> <p><i>A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional</i></p>	
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	<p><i>distress, and disruption of school operations. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>The sudden announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10</i></p>	
	<p><i>I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas,</i></p>	<p>Preparedness, Flexibility, and Resilient Leadership</p>

	<p><i>distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>I needed to promptly adjust school operations by shortening class hours, ensuring constant hydration, monitoring students for heat stress, and coordinating quick dissemination of information to parents and staff regarding the sudden suspension of classes. IDI_P10</i></p> <p><i>I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of students and personnel. IDI_P9</i></p>	
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Essential Themes that Emerged from the Challenges Administrators Encounter in Managing Organizational Crises

In analyzing the complexities of organizational crises within educational institutions, it became essential to explore the lived experiences of school administrators who navigate these challenges firsthand. Through rigorous thematic analysis of interview data, several core themes emerged that illuminate how administrators confront, manage, and adapt to crises as they unfold. These themes provide a deeper understanding of the multifaceted obstacles they face, the contextual factors that shape their responses, and the strategies they employ to maintain continuity and stability within their schools.

Theme 1: Communication Barriers and Information Gaps

This theme reflects how compromised communication channels, misinformation, and infrastructural limitations hindered efficient crisis response. Significant remarks were highlighted below:

Initial delays in authorizing emergency procurement of safety equipment because the standard approval hierarchy was too slow. Maintaining consistent, unified communication across multiple channels to counter misinterpretation in the community. IDI_P1

The lack of stable communication lines made coordinated rescue difficult. Decision-making had to be fast, with limited data and no immediate LGU support. IDI_P2

Power interruption disrupted communication, forcing reliance on runners and radio. IDI_P3

Communication lines were disrupted as the earthquake caused temporary power and signal interruptions, forcing us to rely on megaphones and manual roll-calls to coordinate evacuation and verify attendance. IDI_P4

Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P5

Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P10

Poor signal due to the heavy rains, limited transportation options, and a shortage of waterproof equipment made it difficult to coordinate with teachers and barangay responders, delaying real-time decision-making. IDI_P7

Rumors among staff and group chats intensified the tension, causing division among teachers and affecting teamwork. IDI_P8

Rapid transition to online learning exposed gaps in digital literacy, limited access to devices, and inconsistent internet connectivity among staff and students. IDI_P9

Theme 2: Stakeholder Conflicts and Resource Constraints

This theme emphasizes flexibility, stakeholder coordination, and adapting strategies to the needs of learners, parents, and staff. Significant remarks were highlighted below:

Conflict with the teachers over the terms of crisis-mandated changes to working hours and duties. IDI_P1

Some parents insisted on retrieving children despite unsafe terrain. Teachers were anxious about their own families while working. IDI_P2

Parents accused the school of negligence, demanding immediate explanations. IDI_P3

Some parents rushed to the school demanding immediate access to their children despite safety protocols, creating additional pressure and requiring careful crowd control. IDI_P4

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P5

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P6

Parents insisted on immediate release of students despite unsafe floodwaters, while some teachers expressed concerns about their ability to return home before roads became impassable. IDI_P7

Some parents and staff demanded disciplinary action, while others insisted the issue be handled privately, placing pressure on decision-making. IDI_P8

Parents demanded immediate instruction continuity, while some teachers struggled with adapting to online platforms, creating tension and stress. IDI_P9

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P10

Table 2

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Challenges Administrators Encounter in Managing Organizational Crises

Issues Probed	Core Ideas / Statements	Themes
<p>Essential Themes that Emerged from the Challenges Administrators Encounter in Managing Organizational Crises</p>	<p><i>Initial delays in authorizing emergency procurement of safety equipment because the standard approval hierarchy was too slow. Maintaining consistent, unified communication across multiple channels to counter misinterpretation in the community. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>The lack of stable communication lines made coordinated rescue difficult. Decision-making had to be fast, with limited data and no immediate LGU support. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>Power interruption disrupted communication, forcing reliance on runners and radio. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>Communication lines were disrupted as the earthquake caused temporary power and signal interruptions, forcing us to rely on megaphones and manual roll-calls to coordinate</i></p>	<p>Communication Barriers and Information Gaps</p>

	<p><i>evacuation and verify attendance. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P10</i></p> <p><i>Poor signal due to the heavy rains, limited transportation options, and a shortage of waterproof equipment made it difficult to coordinate with teachers and barangay responders, delaying real-time decision-making. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>Rumors among staff and group chats intensified the tension, causing division among teachers and affecting teamwork. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>Rapid transition to online learning exposed gaps in digital literacy, limited access to devices, and inconsistent internet connectivity among staff and students. IDI_P9</i></p>	
	<p><i>Conflict with the teachers over the terms of crisis-mandated changes to working hours and duties. IDI_P1</i></p>	<p>Stakeholder Conflicts and Resource Constraints</p>

	<p><i>Some parents insisted on retrieving children despite unsafe terrain. Teachers were anxious about their own families while working. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>Parents accused the school of negligence, demanding immediate explanations. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>Some parents rushed to the school demanding immediate access to their children despite safety protocols, creating additional pressure and requiring careful crowd control. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>Parents insisted on immediate release of students despite unsafe floodwaters, while some teachers expressed concerns about their ability to return home before roads became impassable. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>Some parents and staff demanded disciplinary action, while others insisted the issue</i></p>	
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	<p><i>be handled privately, placing pressure on decision-making.</i> IDI_P8</p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate instruction continuity, while some teachers struggled with adapting to online platforms, creating tension and stress.</i> IDI_P9</p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties.</i> IDI_P10</p>	
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Essential Themes that Emerged from the Strategies Administrators Employ Before, During, and After a Crisis Event

The proactive and reactive strategies of school administrators play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of crises and ensuring the continuity of educational operations. By examining their experiences before, during, and after crisis events, several essential themes emerged that highlight Proactive Planning and Protocol Development, and Adaptive and Inclusive Crisis Response. These themes offer valuable insights into how strategic leadership, preparedness, and responsive actions contribute to effective crisis management within educational settings.

Theme 1: Proactive Planning and Protocol Development

Administrators reflected deeply on how each crisis shaped their understanding of leadership, communication, and responsiveness. Significant remarks were shown below:

Initial delays in authorizing emergency procurement of safety equipment because the standard approval hierarchy was too slow. Maintaining consistent, unified communication across multiple channels to counter misinterpretation in the community. IDI_P1

The lack of stable communication lines made coordinated rescue difficult. Decision-making had to be fast, with limited data and no immediate LGU support. IDI_P2

Power interruption disrupted communication, forcing reliance on runners and radio. IDI_P3

Communication lines were disrupted as the earthquake caused temporary power and signal interruptions, forcing us to rely on megaphones and manual roll-calls to coordinate evacuation and verify attendance. IDI_P4

Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P5

Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P10

Poor signal due to the heavy rains, limited transportation options, and a shortage of waterproof equipment made it difficult to coordinate with teachers and barangay responders, delaying real-time decision-making. IDI_P7

Rumors among staff and group chats intensified the tension, causing division among teachers and affecting teamwork. IDI_P8

Rapid transition to online learning exposed gaps in digital literacy, limited access to devices, and inconsistent internet connectivity among staff and students. IDI_P9

Theme 2: Adaptive and Inclusive Crisis Response

This theme represents how administrators converted crisis experiences into actionable knowledge that informs institutional improvement. Significant remarks were shown below:

Conflict with the teachers over the terms of crisis-mandated changes to working hours and duties. IDI_P1

Some parents insisted on retrieving children despite unsafe terrain. Teachers were anxious about their own families while working. IDI_P2

Parents accused the school of negligence, demanding immediate explanations. IDI_P3

Some parents rushed to the school demanding immediate access to their children despite safety protocols, creating additional pressure and requiring careful crowd control. IDI_P4

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P5

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P6

Parents insisted on immediate release of students despite unsafe floodwaters, while some teachers expressed concerns about their ability to return home before roads became impassable. IDI_P7

Some parents and staff demanded disciplinary action, while others insisted the issue be handled privately, placing pressure on decision-making. IDI_P8

Parents demanded immediate instruction continuity, while some teachers struggled with adapting to online platforms, creating tension and stress. IDI_P9

Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P10

Table 3

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Strategies Administrators Employ Before, During, and After a Crisis Event

Issues Probed	Core Ideas / Statements	Themes
Essential Themes that Emerged from the Strategies Administrators Employ	<i>Initial delays in authorizing emergency procurement of safety equipment because the standard approval hierarchy was too slow. Maintaining</i>	Proactive Planning and Protocol Development

<p>Before, During, and After a Crisis Event</p>	<p><i>consistent, unified communication across multiple channels to counter misinterpretation in the community. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>The lack of stable communication lines made coordinated rescue difficult. Decision-making had to be fast, with limited data and no immediate LGU support. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>Power interruption disrupted communication, forcing reliance on runners and radio. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>Communication lines were disrupted as the earthquake caused temporary power and signal interruptions, forcing us to rely on megaphones and manual roll-calls to coordinate evacuation and verify attendance. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>Limited shaded areas, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient electric fans made it difficult to create safe and comfortable learning spaces, delaying implementation of adjusted schedules. IDI_P10</i></p> <p><i>Poor signal due to the heavy rains, limited transportation</i></p>	
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	<p><i>options, and a shortage of waterproof equipment made it difficult to coordinate with teachers and barangay responders, delaying real-time decision-making. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>Rumors among staff and group chats intensified the tension, causing division among teachers and affecting teamwork. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>Rapid transition to online learning exposed gaps in digital literacy, limited access to devices, and inconsistent internet connectivity among staff and students. IDI_P9</i></p>	
	<p><i>Conflict with the teachers over the terms of crisis-mandated changes to working hours and duties. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>Some parents insisted on retrieving children despite unsafe terrain. Teachers were anxious about their own families while working. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>Parents accused the school of negligence, demanding immediate explanations. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>Some parents rushed to the school demanding immediate access to their children despite safety protocols, creating additional pressure and requiring careful crowd control. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while</i></p>	<p>Adaptive and Inclusive Crisis Response</p>

	<p><i>some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>Parents insisted on immediate release of students despite unsafe floodwaters, while some teachers expressed concerns about their ability to return home before roads became impassable. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>Some parents and staff demanded disciplinary action, while others insisted the issue be handled privately, placing pressure on decision-making. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate instruction continuity, while some teachers struggled with adapting to online platforms, creating tension and stress. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>Parents demanded immediate changes to class hours, while some teachers expressed concern about prolonged exposure to extreme heat during monitoring duties. IDI_P10</i></p>	
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Essential Themes that Emerged from the Administrators Reflection of their crisis management experiences

The reflections of school administrators on their crisis management experiences revealed valuable insights into how they navigate complex and unexpected events. Through these reflections, two essential themes emerged: critical self-reflection and situational learning, and the integration of experiences into institutional knowledge. These themes illustrate how administrators not only respond to immediate crises but also translate their experiences into strategies that strengthen the school's preparedness, resilience, and overall capacity to manage future challenges effectively.

Theme 1: Critical Self-Reflection and Situational Learning

This theme reflects administrators' ability to reflect on their personal experiences during crises, identifying the emotional, logistical, and operational challenges they faced and the lessons learned for future preparedness. Important responses were displayed below:

The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1

A major landslide occurred near the school after continuous rainfall, forcing immediate suspension of classes and evacuation. Communication with parents and responders was delayed due to blocked roads and unstable signal. IDI_P2

A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3

A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4

A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5

A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6

Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7

A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional distress, and disruption of school operations.

The sudden IDI_P8 announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9

A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10

Theme 2: Integration of Experience into Institutional Knowledge

This theme underscores the significance of proactive planning, flexible adaptation to unforeseen circumstances, and resilient leadership that can guide schools through crises while sustaining operations. Important responses were displayed below:

As an administrator and my role as a human being merged I had to manage the grief of the community while managing the logistics of support. IDI_P1

I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2

I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3

I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4

I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas, distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5

I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6

I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7

I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8

I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of students and personnel. IDI_P9

I had to adjust class schedules, reorganize staff monitoring duties, implement safety measures for students, and ensure clear communication to prevent confusion and panic. IDI_P10

Table 4

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Administrators Reflection of their crisis management experiences

Issues Probed	Core Ideas / Statements	Themes
<p>Essential Themes that Emerged from the Administrators Reflection of their crisis management experiences</p>	<p><i>The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>A major landslide occurred near the school after</i></p>	<p>Critical Self-Reflection and Situational Learning</p>

	<p><i>continuous rainfall, forcing immediate suspension of classes and evacuation. Communication with parents and responders was delayed due to blocked roads and unstable signal. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers</i></p>	
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	<p><i>inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional distress, and disruption of school operations. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>The sudden announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10</i></p>	
	<p><i>As an administrator and my role as a human being merged I had to manage the grief of the community while managing the logistics of support. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Integration of Experience into Institutional Knowledge</p>

	<p><i>I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas, distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of</i></p>	
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	<p><i>students and personnel. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>I had to adjust class schedules, reorganize staff monitoring duties, implement safety measures for students, and ensure clear communication to prevent confusion and panic. IDI_P10</i></p>	
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Essential Themes that Emerged from the Lessons Learned by the Administrators that could inform future leadership practices in crisis situations

The experiences of school administrators in managing crises provide valuable lessons that can inform and enhance future leadership practices. From these lessons, two essential themes emerged: the prioritization of safety, well-being, and effective communication, and the cultivation of preparedness, flexibility, and resilient leadership. These themes highlight how reflective practice and experiential learning can guide administrators in making timely decisions, protecting their school communities, and fostering a culture of resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Theme 1: Prioritization of Safety, Well-Being, and Communication

This theme highlights administrators' emphasis on safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of students, staff, and stakeholders during crises, while ensuring timely, transparent, and effective communication to prevent confusion and panic. Significant statements are presented below:

The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1

A major landslide occurred near the school after continuous rainfall, forcing immediate suspension of classes and evacuation. Communication with parents and responders was delayed due to blocked roads and unstable signal. IDI_P2

A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3

A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4

A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5

A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6

Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7

A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional distress, and disruption of school operations. IDI_P8

The sudden announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9

A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10

Theme 2: Preparedness, Flexibility, and Resilient Leadership

This theme underscores the importance of proactive planning, adaptive strategies, and resilient leadership in effectively navigating crises, ensuring operational continuity, stakeholder safety, and institutional stability. Significant statements are presented below:

As an administrator and my role as a human being merged I had to manage the grief of the community while managing the logistics of support. IDI_P1

I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2

I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3

I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4

I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas, distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5

I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6

I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7

I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8

I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of students and personnel. IDI_P9

I had to adjust class schedules, reorganize staff monitoring duties, implement safety measures for students, and ensure clear communication to prevent confusion and panic. IDI_P10

Table 5

Essential Themes that Emerged from the Lessons Learned by the Administrators that could inform future leadership practices in crisis situations

Issues Probed	Core Ideas / Statements	Themes
<p>Essential Themes that Emerged from the Administrators Reflection of their crisis management experiences</p>	<p><i>The sudden, campus death of a student, which required activation of our bereavement and counseling for the entire school. A systemic sudden crisis that was deeply personal, such as a tragedy that struck a student body, requiring a whole-community response. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>A major landslide occurred near the school after continuous rainfall, forcing immediate suspension of classes and evacuation. Communication with parents and responders was delayed due to blocked roads and unstable signal. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>A school laboratory fire broke out due to an electrical malfunction during a storm, prompting immediate evacuation and coordination with firefighters. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>A strong earthquake occurred during mid-morning classes, causing light structural damage, panic among students, and the immediate evacuation of the entire school to designated open grounds. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>A sudden spike in the heat index reached danger levels, causing multiple cases of student dizziness, dehydration, and heat stress, which forced the suspension of afternoon classes and</i></p>	<p>Prioritization of Safety, Well-Being, and Communication</p>

	<p><i>adjustment of school schedules. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>A neighborhood dispute escalated into violence near the school gate, causing panic among parents. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>Continuous heavy rainfall due to a developing Low-Pressure Area (LPA) caused sudden flooding around the school perimeter, disrupting dismissal time and trapping several students and teachers inside the campus until waters subsided. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>A serious conflict between two teachers escalated during a faculty meeting, resulting in raised voices, emotional distress, and disruption of school operations. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>The sudden announcement of a COVID-19 lockdown forced the school to close immediately, requiring urgent transition to remote learning and securing the campus. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>A sudden rise in the heat index forced the school to suspend classes to prevent heat-related illnesses among students and staff, requiring immediate communication with parents and staff and temporary closure of school facilities. IDI_P10</i></p>	
	<p><i>As an administrator and my role as a human being merged I had to manage the grief of</i></p>	<p>Preparedness, Flexibility, and Resilient Leadership</p>

	<p><i>the community while managing the logistics of support. IDI_P1</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage both the physical safety of learners and the emotional distress of parents. Professionally, I coordinated transport, evacuation routes, and temporary shelters while managing staff anxiety. IDI_P2</i></p> <p><i>I balanced crisis command with reassuring panicked teachers and students. IDI_P3</i></p> <p><i>I had to simultaneously lead evacuation procedures, check for building safety, and reassure emotionally distressed teachers and learners while maintaining full command of the situation. IDI_P4</i></p> <p><i>I had to modify class hours, arrange shaded waiting areas, distribute hydration supplies, and ensure that all teachers monitored students for heat-related symptoms during school hours. IDI_P5</i></p> <p><i>I had to secure the campus while calming parents who feared for their children. IDI_P6</i></p> <p><i>I had to manage the safety of stranded students, coordinate temporary sheltering inside classrooms, and communicate updates to</i></p>	
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	<p><i>anxious parents waiting outside flooded roads. IDI_P7</i></p> <p><i>I had to intervene immediately, separate the parties involved, and prevent the conflict from affecting the rest of the staff and students. IDI_P8</i></p> <p><i>I had to reorganize teaching schedules, guide teachers and staff on remote instruction, and ensure the safety and well-being of students and personnel. IDI_P9</i></p> <p><i>I had to adjust class schedules, reorganize staff monitoring duties, implement safety measures for students, and ensure clear communication to prevent confusion and panic. IDI_P10</i></p>	
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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter synthesizes findings from a study on school administrators' experiences managing crises. It summarizes key results, interprets their implications, and offers data-driven conclusions. Additionally, it proposes practical recommendations to improve crisis preparedness, response, and school resilience while reflecting on lessons learned to inform future leadership practices and policy development in crisis management.

Summary

This study investigated the lived experiences of school administrators in managing crises within their educational institutions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, to explore the experiences, reflections, strategies, and lessons learned by administrators during sudden, unexpected, and high-pressure events.

The analysis revealed that administrators faced a range of crises, including student deaths, natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides, laboratory fires, violent incidents near school premises, sudden spikes in heat index, and abrupt school closures due to health emergencies. Two major themes emerged from these experiences: Immersive Responsibility and Emotional Engagement, highlighting the administrators' deep involvement in both operational and emotional aspects of crisis management, and Heightened Situational Awareness and Decision Pressure, reflecting their ability to make rapid, high-stakes decisions while ensuring the welfare of all stakeholders.

Administrators also faced challenges, such as communication barriers, information gaps, stakeholder conflicts, and resource constraints, which complicated their crisis response efforts. Despite these challenges, they employed proactive planning, including protocol development, emergency preparedness, and resource allocation, as well as adaptive strategies, such as flexible scheduling, conflict management, and stakeholder engagement, to mitigate the effects of crises. Their reflections underscored the importance of integrating personal experiences into institutional knowledge, promoting critical self-reflection, and situational learning as key drivers of school resilience and continuous improvement.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, effective crisis management requires administrators to balance operational leadership with emotional support for their school communities. Second, rapid decision-making and heightened situational awareness are critical to navigating complex crises while safeguarding students, staff, and parents. Third, communication barriers, stakeholder conflicts, and limited resources remain significant challenges that can hinder effective crisis response. Fourth, proactive planning and adaptive strategies enhance organizational resilience, enabling schools to respond efficiently to unforeseen events. Finally, reflective practice allows administrators to learn from previous crises, integrate lessons into institutional procedures, and improve the effectiveness of future crisis management.

Recommendations

Considering these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed.

- 1) School administrators should develop comprehensive crisis protocols for various emergency scenarios and establish reliable communication systems to ensure timely and accurate information dissemination.
- 2) Emotional support mechanisms for students, staff, and parents should be prioritized, including counseling services and well-being initiatives. Regular drills, capacity-building exercises, and training programs are recommended to strengthen preparedness, decision-making, and coordination among school personnel.
- 3) Collaboration with stakeholders, including parents, local authorities, and community partners, should be emphasized to enhance collective response capacity.
- 4) Education authorities and policymakers should provide adequate resources, such as emergency equipment, infrastructure improvements, and digital communication tools, and issue guidelines to support adaptive learning and operational continuity during crises. By implementing these measures, schools can foster a culture of resilience, ensuring the safety, well-being, and uninterrupted learning of all stakeholders.

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APPENDICES



September 20, 2025

ROMELITO G. FLORES, CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent
Schools Division Office of Cotabato
Amas, Kidapawan City

Sir:

Greeting of Peace and Prosperity!

May I have the honor to ask permission from your good office to gather information through a survey questionnaire from ten (10) principals/school heads from selected public secondary schools in the Municipality of Kabacan, Division of Cotabato. This is in relation to my study entitled, **LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN NAVIGATING CRISIS MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND LESSONS LEARNED.**

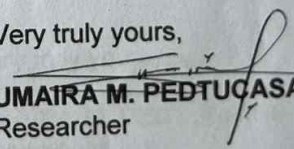
Rest assured that all responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will just be used for purposes of discussion as basis for intervention plan.

May this request be given favorable action.

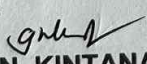
Thank you very much.

God bless you!

Very truly yours,


UMAIRA M. PEDTUGASAN
Researcher

Noted by:


GEMMA N. KINTANAR, EdD
Dean, Graduate School

Approved by:

ROMELITO G. FLORES, CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent



CENTRAL MINDANAO COLLEGES
Nurturing a Culture of Excellence

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that:

Manuscript Title: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN NAVIGATING
CRISIS MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND
LESSONS LEARNED

Principal Researcher: UMAIRA M. PEDTUCASAN

Date of Submission for Ethics July 21, 2025

Committee Review:

Protocol Code: REC-E-2025-GSE-39

has submitted for Ethics Review and was considered by the ethics committee on July 22, 2025 meeting all requirements of Central Mindanao Colleges – Research Ethics Committee (2025) and was approved, through expedited review on, July 28, 2025.

This certification is being issued this 28th day of July 2025, Central Mindanao Colleges, Kidapawan City Philippines, with a validity period of 1 year.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

none

Signed:



Axil Jaime A. Mauna, Maed
AXIL JAIME A. MAUNA, MAED
Secretary of the Ethics Committee



Research Ethics Committee
Central Mindanao Colleges
Osmeña Drive, Kidapawan City
Tel. No. (064) 577-4275



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
SOCCSKSARGEN REGION
SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE OF COTABATO

23 September 2025

UMAIRA M. PEDITUCASAN
Researcher
Central Mindanao Colleges
Kidapawan City

Dear Mr/Ms. Peditucasan:

Greetings of peace!

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated September 20, 2025 regarding to your request to conduct research entitled *"LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN NAVIGATING CRISIS MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES STRATEGIES AND LESSONS LEARNED"* this division.

In view of the restrictions implemented by this office on the face-to-face contact and other health protocols inside the school and office premises, and the pertinent provisions stated in the DepEd OASGFO No. 2022-058 Memorandum titled, "Request for the Participation of Learners and Teachers in Extra-Curricular Activities", all officials and employees of DepEd are reminded from time to time to observe the *"no disruption of classes policy"* of the department.

This office hereby *APPROVES* your request provided that the activity requested shall be done after class hours, preferably on weekends. It is also advised that you coordinate directly with the Public Schools District Supervisors or with the School Principals/School Heads for proper arrangement.

Thank you and more power.

Respectfully yours,

ROMELITO G. FLORES, CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent

By the Authority of the
Schools Division Superintendent

CHARON J. INITAN
Administrative Officer V
Head, Administrative Services



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Documentation

