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Teaching Beyond the Mainland: The Challenges and Coping Strategies of Teachers in an Island School

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Abstract. Teaching in island schools may involve geographical, instructional, and professional challenges that influence teachers' daily responsibilities and classroom practices. This study aimed to describe the challenges encountered by teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School, examine how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and identify the coping strategies they employed. A qualitative descriptive research design was utilized, involving three teacher-participants selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered in June 2026 through a researcher-developed open-ended questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire was reviewed by three education professionals before its administration. The participants' written responses were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six phases of Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings revealed three major challenges: geographical and transportation challenges, limited instructional resources and technological access, and diverse learners' needs and foundational learning difficulties. These challenges influenced the participants' instructional practices, requiring them to adjust their teaching approaches and respond to learners' varying needs. Their experiences also contributed to their professional and personal development, while presenting additional demands in fulfilling their responsibilities and balancing work and personal life. To cope with these challenges, the participants employed adaptive problem-solving and resourcefulness, collaboration and support-seeking, and personal motivation, commitment, and resilience. Based on the findings, an Island Teacher Support and Instructional Improvement Program is proposed to strengthen school-based support, improve access to instructional resources, and promote collaboration among teachers and relevant stakeholders. The study highlights the importance of context-responsive institutional and community support in helping teachers address the demands of teaching in an island-school setting.

Keywords: Island Education; Teacher Experiences; Instructional Challenges; Professional Responsibilities; Coping Mechanisms

Introduction

Education plays an important role in developing individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Teachers contribute significantly to this process by facilitating learning, responding to pupils' educational needs, and fulfilling various professional responsibilities. However, teaching conditions may differ across communities, particularly in geographically isolated areas where accessibility, resource availability, and technological facilities can influence the delivery of education. In island communities, geographical separation and dependence on water transportation may create additional difficulties for teachers in reaching their schools, obtaining instructional materials, and carrying out their daily responsibilities. In the Philippines, teachers assigned to remote communities encounter working conditions that may affect their instructional practices and professional experiences. Albina et al. (2025) found that teachers in remote mountainous schools experienced transportation difficulties, unfavorable weather conditions, limited instructional materials, and inadequate educational infrastructure. Similarly, Galut (2025) reported that teachers in remote areas encountered accessibility and resource-related challenges while demonstrating perseverance in fulfilling their responsibilities. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from island schools, their findings provide relevant insights into the difficulties that may accompany teaching assignments in geographically isolated communities. Limited access to instructional resources and technology may also affect teachers' preparation and delivery of lessons. Navarro (2024), in an assessment of school infrastructure in the Philippines, identified continuing inequalities in access to essential educational facilities and infrastructure,

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including electricity and information and communication technology (ICT) resources. Such limitations may require teachers to identify alternative resources and adjust their instructional approaches. In addition, teachers must respond to pupils' varying learning abilities and academic needs, including difficulties in reading, comprehension, and other foundational skills. Addressing these needs may require additional preparation, differentiated activities, and appropriate instructional adjustments. Despite these conditions, teachers in remote communities continue to find ways to carry out their responsibilities. Wabingga and Tomakin (2025), in their study of teachers' experiences during the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum in remote schools, identified localized teaching approaches, improvised instructional resources, community collaboration, and peer support as practices used to address challenges. These findings indicate that teachers' experiences in geographically isolated settings involve not only the difficulties they encounter but also the adjustments and support systems they rely on to sustain instruction. Although previous studies have examined teachers' experiences in remote and geographically isolated communities, further context-specific accounts of teachers working in individual island schools remain important. The conditions experienced in one community may differ from those in another in terms of geographical accessibility, transportation arrangements, availability of instructional resources, and pupils' learning needs. Moreover, examining how these conditions influence teachers' instructional practices and professional responsibilities, together with the coping strategies they employ, can provide a more detailed understanding of their experiences within a particular school context. In response to this need, the present study focused on the experiences of teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School, an island school. Specifically, it sought to describe the challenges they encountered, examine how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and identify the coping strategies they employed. By documenting the accounts of the participating teachers, the study aimed to provide context-specific insights into the realities of teaching in an island-school setting and contribute to discussions on the support needed by teachers working in geographically isolated educational communities.

Research Questions

This study aimed to describe the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching at an island school, examine how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and identify the coping strategies they employed to address these difficulties. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching in an island school?
2. How do these challenges influence the teaching practices and professional responsibilities of teachers in an island school?
3. What coping strategies do teachers employ to address the challenges they encounter in teaching in an island school?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the challenges encountered by teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School, an island school, how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed. It involved three (3) teacher-participants from Pasilmata Elementary School who were available and willing to participate during the data-collection period. The participants were teachers assigned to the school during the conduct of the study and were willing to share their experiences through an open-ended questionnaire. The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. Data were gathered in June 2026 through an open-ended questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire allowed the participants to describe their experiences in their own words in relation to the three research questions. Their written responses served as the primary source of data and were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to the challenges they encountered, the influence of these challenges on their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed. The study was delimited to the experiences of the three participating teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School. It did not include the perspectives of school administrators, parents, or learners, nor did it compare the experiences of teachers from other island schools or geographically isolated communities. Data were limited to the participants' written responses to the open-ended questionnaire. Classroom observations, follow-up interviews, and other data-collection methods were not included. Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. Since the study involved only three teachers from one school, the findings represent the accounts of the participating teachers within a specific school context and are not intended to be generalized to all teachers working in island schools. Furthermore, the use of an online open-ended questionnaire relied on the participants' willingness and ability to express their experiences in writing. Their responses may not have captured every aspect of their experiences or provided the depth of information that could have been obtained through follow-up interviews. Accordingly, the findings should be understood as

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context-specific descriptions of the participating teachers' experiences rather than comprehensive representations of teaching conditions in all island communities.

Literature Review

This section presents literature and previous studies relevant to understanding the challenges and experiences of teachers working in island schools and other geographically isolated educational settings. It discusses island education, teachers' experiences, instructional challenges, professional responsibilities, coping mechanisms, and geographically isolated schools. The reviewed studies provide a basis for understanding how geographical conditions, resource availability, learner needs, and institutional support influence teachers' work. They also offer insights into the ways teachers respond to challenges and continue fulfilling their professional responsibilities in geographically isolated communities.

Island Education

Island education involves the provision of educational services in communities separated by bodies of water. In these settings, geographical conditions may influence school accessibility, resource distribution, communication, and the continuity of educational activities. Dependence on water transportation and exposure to changing weather conditions may create logistical difficulties for teachers, learners, and other members of the school community. These circumstances may also affect the transportation of instructional materials and access to educational support. Ucag et al. (2024), in their study *Navigating Educational Frontiers: Unweaving the Challenges Faced by Teachers in Far-flung Schools on Negros Island*, examined the experiences of ten teachers assigned to far-flung schools. Their findings identified transportation difficulties, limited resources, and inadequate electricity and internet access as physical challenges. The teachers also experienced emotional and social difficulties associated with separation from their families and adjustment to their assigned communities. Similarly, Jemsy et al. (2026) examined adaptive instructional leadership among elementary school principals in geographically isolated schools in Tawi-Tawi. Their findings described how the province's archipelagic geography and limited accessibility contributed to transportation difficulties, insufficient learning materials, and unstable communication signals. Although the latter study focused on school principals rather than teachers, it provides relevant information about the geographical and institutional conditions affecting educational delivery in island communities. Taken together, these studies suggest that geographical separation can influence education through transportation, resource distribution, and access to communication facilities. However, the conditions experienced by island schools may differ depending on their location, transportation arrangements, and available institutional support. Thus, findings from one island community cannot automatically represent the circumstances of another. This supports the importance of examining the experiences of teachers within the particular context of Pasilmata Elementary School.

Teacher Experiences in Geographically Isolated Settings

Teachers assigned to remote and geographically isolated schools may encounter professional and personal circumstances that differ from those experienced by educators in more accessible communities. These experiences may include transportation difficulties, limited instructional resources, adjustments to unfamiliar environments, and separation from family members. Such circumstances may influence how teachers perform their responsibilities, respond to learners' needs, and establish relationships with the surrounding community. Ucag et al. (2024) found that teachers assigned to far-flung schools on Negros Island experienced physical, emotional, and social challenges. Despite these difficulties, the participants demonstrated creativity, innovativeness, and resilience in carrying out their responsibilities. Similarly, Albina et al. (2025), in their study *Navigating Through Difficult Roads and Terrains: Novice Teachers' Challenges in Teaching in Remote Mountainous Settings in the Philippines*, examined the experiences of nine newly hired teachers assigned to remote mountainous schools in Negros Oriental. Their findings highlighted difficult transportation, harsh weather conditions, inadequate basic necessities, limited instructional materials, and insufficient educational infrastructure. The study also emphasized teachers' resilience and the importance of partnerships with school stakeholders in addressing these challenges. Although these studies were conducted in different geographical settings, they reveal a common concern: the working environment can shape teachers' professional and personal experiences. Ucag et al. (2024) highlighted the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of teaching in far-flung schools, while Albina et al. (2025) emphasized the difficulties associated with transportation, basic necessities, and instructional resources among novice teachers in mountainous communities. Both studies also point to teachers' capacity to adjust to challenging conditions and draw support from others. These findings provide relevant perspectives for examining the experiences of teachers working in the island-school setting covered by the present study.

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Instructional Challenges

Instructional challenges refer to the difficulties teachers encounter in planning, delivering, and managing classroom instruction. In geographically isolated schools, these challenges may be associated with inadequate instructional materials, limited technological facilities, unstable internet connectivity, and the need to respond to learners' varying educational needs. These conditions may require teachers to modify their instructional approaches, prepare alternative learning activities, and identify practical ways of facilitating learning. Wabingga and Tomakin (2025), in their study *From Challenges to Solutions: How Teachers in Remote Schools Cope with the MATATAG Curriculum Shift*, examined the experiences of five educators in a rural area of Davao del Sur. Their findings identified insufficient and delayed delivery of instructional materials, technological and internet connectivity limitations, difficulties in curriculum contextualization, and inadequate stakeholder understanding and support. The researchers also reported that teachers used localized teaching approaches, improvised resources, community collaboration, and peer support to address these challenges. Similarly, Albina et al. (2025) found that teachers in remote mountainous schools experienced difficulties associated with limited instructional materials and inadequate educational infrastructure. Their findings also highlighted teachers' use of innovative approaches and adjustments to meet localized educational needs. In a related context, Maloloy-on and Apas (2025), in their study *Pedagogical Practices of Multigrade Teachers: A Phenomenological Study*, examined ten multigrade teachers in geographically isolated schools in Manticao, Misamis Oriental. Their findings highlighted creative and contextualized pedagogy, differentiated instructional strategies, and community involvement in managing multigrade instruction. These studies demonstrate that instructional challenges in geographically isolated schools involve both limitations in available resources and the need to adapt teaching practices to local conditions. However, their respective contexts offer different perspectives. Wabingga and Tomakin (2025) focused on curriculum implementation, Albina et al. (2025) examined the experiences of novice teachers in mountainous settings, and Maloloy-on and Apas (2025) explored pedagogical practices in multigrade classrooms. Despite these differences, their findings emphasize the importance of instructional flexibility, resourcefulness, and contextualized teaching. These insights are relevant to understanding how teachers in the present study manage instruction amid geographical limitations, resource constraints, and learners' diverse educational needs.

Professional Responsibilities

Teachers' professional responsibilities extend beyond classroom instruction. These may include lesson preparation, classroom management, assessment of learning, preparation of instructional materials, communication with parents, participation in school activities, and other assigned duties. In geographically isolated schools, the performance of these responsibilities may be influenced by workload demands, limited resources, transportation difficulties, and restricted access to professional and institutional support. Limbaro and Ardiente (2026), in their study *Teaching Beyond Isolation: Lived Experiences, Resilience, and Adaptation of Teachers in Geographically Isolated Areas*, explored the experiences of teachers assigned to extension classes in Sitio Kapihan, Socorro, Surigao del Norte. Their findings identified institutional neglect and structural disadvantage, workload intensification and role expansion, and institutional isolation and limited professional support as major concerns. The study also found that teachers adjusted their instructional practices through contextualized resource utilization, curriculum prioritization, and adaptive teaching strategies. Ucag et al. (2024) likewise described how transportation difficulties, limited resources, and separation from family formed part of teachers' experiences in far-flung schools. Although their findings do not directly establish the presence of additional administrative duties, they provide context for understanding the personal and logistical circumstances that may accompany professional assignments in geographically isolated communities. Taken together, these studies suggest that teachers' professional responsibilities should be understood in relation to the conditions under which they work. Limbaro and Ardiente (2026) particularly highlighted workload intensification, role expansion, and limited professional support, while Ucag et al. (2024) described the logistical and personal difficulties associated with far-flung school assignments. These findings indicate that geographical and institutional conditions may influence how teachers organize their tasks, prepare instruction, and fulfill their responsibilities. They provide a basis for examining how teachers in the present study manage their teaching practices and professional responsibilities within their island-school context.

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Coping mechanisms refer to the strategies individuals use to manage difficult situations and adjust to challenging circumstances. Among teachers working in island and geographically isolated schools, coping may involve resourcefulness, problem-solving, instructional adjustments, collaboration with colleagues and community members, and maintaining commitment to professional responsibilities. These strategies may help teachers respond to limitations in their working environments, although they do not necessarily eliminate the

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structural difficulties they encounter. Ucag et al. (2024) found that teachers assigned to far-flung schools demonstrated creativity, innovativeness, and resilience in responding to transportation, resource, and social challenges. Their findings highlighted how teachers developed ways of managing difficulties while continuing to perform their responsibilities. Similarly, Fabrigas and Paglinawan (2025), in their study *Beyond the Classroom: Challenges and Resilience of Teachers in Remote Schools*, examined ten teachers assigned to remote schools in Bukidnon. The study identified limited resources, cultural diversity, and professional isolation as significant challenges and explored the motivations and coping strategies that helped teachers continue their work. It also emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation in their professional experiences. Mopuyang (2024), in *Narratives of the Teachers in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas*, explored the experiences of eight teachers in GIDA elementary schools in South Upi, Maguindanao. The study identified social support from parents, community members, agencies, and other concerned partners; practical problem-solving; acceptance and devotion to work; and a desire to contribute to the community as coping strategies. In addition, Maloloy-on and Apas (2025) reported the use of creative and contextualized pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and community involvement among multigrade teachers in geographically isolated schools. Although their study primarily examined pedagogical practices, its findings also illustrate how instructional adjustments and community participation may help teachers address classroom demands. The reviewed studies indicate that coping in geographically isolated schools may involve both individual and collaborative strategies. Individual responses include resourcefulness, practical problem-solving, instructional adaptation, and resilience. Collaborative responses involve seeking assistance from colleagues, parents, community members, and other stakeholders. The studies also suggest that teachers' personal commitment and sense of purpose may help them continue working despite challenging conditions. However, these individual and collective strategies should not be viewed as substitutes for adequate institutional support and resources. These findings provide a relevant foundation for examining how teachers in the present study respond to the challenges they encounter and sustain their professional responsibilities in an island-school setting.

Geographically Isolated Schools

Geographically isolated schools are located in communities where distance, difficult terrain, limited transportation, or geographical separation may restrict access to educational services and institutional support. In the Philippine context, these conditions may be experienced by schools in island communities, mountainous areas, and other remote locations. The effects of geographical isolation may extend beyond physical accessibility and influence school infrastructure, instructional resources, communication facilities, and opportunities for professional support. Navarro (2024), through the Philippine Institute for Development Studies research paper *School Infrastructure in the Philippines: Where Are We Now and Where Should We Be Heading?*, assessed the condition of infrastructure in the Philippine basic education sector. The study identified continuing inequalities in classroom availability and school infrastructure, including concerns involving facilities in remote areas. Although the research was not specifically focused on island schools or teachers' experiences, it provides a broader national context for understanding infrastructure-related concerns in basic education. At the school level, Mopuyang (2024) explored the experiences of teachers assigned to GIDA elementary schools in South Upi, Maguindanao. The findings described both the difficulties encountered in far-flung school assignments and the positive experiences that contributed to teachers' sense of purpose. Similarly, Maloloy-on and Apas (2025) examined multigrade teachers in geographically isolated schools in Manticao, Misamis Oriental. Their findings highlighted the demands of handling multiple grade levels and the importance of contextualized instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, and community involvement. These studies demonstrate that geographical isolation may be associated with different educational concerns depending on the location, school arrangement, and available support systems. National infrastructure research provides a broader view of structural inequalities, while school-based studies offer insights into the experiences and instructional practices of teachers in remote communities. Nevertheless, the specific circumstances of individual island schools require contextual examination rather than assumptions based on findings from other geographical settings. This reinforces the relevance of examining teachers' experiences at Pasilmata Elementary School.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the challenges and coping strategies of teachers working at Pasilmata Elementary School, an island school. According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive description of experiences and events while remaining close to the participants' accounts. This design was considered appropriate because the study

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sought to describe the difficulties teachers encountered in carrying out their teaching responsibilities, examine how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and identify the coping strategies they employed. Through this approach, the study focused on presenting the participants' experiences and perspectives in a clear and context-specific manner without extending the interpretations beyond what their accounts supported. Rather than measuring predetermined variables, the research concentrated on understanding and describing the experiences shared by the participating teachers. The findings were intended to provide a contextualized account of teaching in the selected island school and were not intended to generalize the experiences of the participants to all island schools.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Pasilmata Elementary School, an island school. The school was selected as the research locale because it provided an appropriate setting for exploring the challenges and coping strategies of teachers working in a geographically isolated educational environment. Specifically, the study examined the challenges teachers encountered in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities, how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed to address these difficulties. Data were gathered from three teacher-participants assigned to the school through an open-ended questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The findings were limited to the experiences shared by the participating teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School and were not intended to represent the conditions of other schools or island communities.

Research Participants

The participants of this study consisted of three teachers from Pasilmata Elementary School. They were selected based on the relevance of their teaching experiences to the objectives of the study, as well as their willingness and availability to participate. The participants provided written accounts of the challenges they encountered in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities, how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed to manage these difficulties. Their responses to the open-ended questionnaire administered through Google Forms served as the primary source of data for understanding their experiences within the island-school context. To protect their confidentiality, participant codes were used in place of their actual names in the presentation and discussion of the findings.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed open-ended questionnaire administered through Google Forms as its primary research instrument. The questionnaire was developed based on the research questions and focused on three areas: the challenges teachers encountered while working in an island school, the influence of these challenges on their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed to address the difficulties. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed and validated by three education professionals with relevant backgrounds and expertise. Their evaluation focused on the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions in relation to the objectives of the study. Their comments and recommendations were considered in refining the instrument before its administration. The open-ended format allowed the three teacher-participants to express their experiences and perspectives in their own words. Their written responses provided qualitative information relevant to the research questions and served as the basis for the subsequent thematic analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school head of Pasilmata Elementary School. The purpose of the study, the nature of participation, and the procedures involved were explained to the prospective participants. Informed consent was obtained before the administration of the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were informed about the intended academic use of the information they would provide. Following the necessary arrangements, the finalized open-ended questionnaire was administered through Google Forms in June 2026. The participants were asked to provide written responses concerning the challenges they encountered while teaching in an island school, how these challenges influenced their teaching practices and professional responsibilities, and the coping strategies they employed to address these difficulties. After the participants submitted their responses, the researcher retrieved and organized the collected data for analysis. The responses were handled confidentially and used for the purposes of the study. The collected written accounts were then reviewed and prepared for thematic analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns and develop themes relevant to the research questions.

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Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching in an island school?

The analysis of the participants' responses revealed three major themes concerning the challenges they encountered in teaching in an island school: (1) Geographical and Transportation Challenges, (2) Limited Instructional Resources and Technological Access, and (3) Diverse Learners' Needs and Foundational Learning Difficulties. These themes describe the geographical, instructional, and learner-related conditions that formed part of the participants' experiences at Pasilmata Elementary School.

Theme 1. Geographical and Transportation Challenges

The findings revealed that geographical accessibility and transportation difficulties were among the challenges encountered by the participants. In particular, traveling to and from the island school became difficult during unfavorable weather conditions and rough sea conditions. These circumstances created additional concerns for teachers in reporting to school and carrying out their responsibilities.

Participant 1 shared, "One of the main challenges I have encountered is traveling to the island school, especially when the waves are strong and the sea is rough. The journey can be tiring and sometimes difficult due to changing weather conditions." Similarly, Participant 2 stated, "One of the major challenges I have encountered while carrying out my teaching responsibilities in an island school is the difficulty of transportation, especially during bad weather and rough sea conditions. These circumstances sometimes affect class attendance, the delivery of learning materials, and participation in school activities." Participant 3 also identified transportation as a challenge, stating, "transportation difficulties especially during bad weather conditions."

The participants' accounts highlight transportation accessibility as a recurring concern in carrying out teaching responsibilities in the island school. Participants 1 and 2 described the difficulties of traveling during rough sea conditions, while Participant 3 also identified unfavorable weather as a factor contributing to transportation problems. Participant 2 further explained that these circumstances could affect not only travel but also class attendance, the delivery of learning materials, and participation in school activities. These accounts suggest that geographical conditions and weather-dependent transportation create additional logistical considerations for teachers working in island communities. These findings are consistent with Catan (2026), who examined the working conditions and challenges of teachers in Philippine island schools and identified transportation and accessibility, including weather-related concerns, as significant challenges. Similarly, Jemsy et al. (2026), in their study of geographically isolated schools in Tawi-Tawi, identified transportation difficulties associated with boat travel and weather-dependent accessibility, which also complicated the delivery of school supplies and access to educational support. Furthermore, Albina et al. (2025) found that teachers assigned to remote mountainous schools in the Philippines experienced difficulties traveling because of challenging geographical conditions and transportation barriers. Although their study focused on mountainous rather than island schools, it provides additional evidence of how geographical accessibility can influence teachers' experiences in remote educational settings. Although these studies were conducted in different geographical contexts, their findings provide relevant support for understanding the transportation and accessibility challenges described by the participants in the present study. Overall, the findings indicate that geographical and transportation difficulties, particularly during rough sea conditions and unfavorable weather, posed challenges to the participants in carrying out their teaching responsibilities. These conditions may disrupt travel to and from the school and affect other school-related activities, including attendance, the delivery of instructional materials, and participation in school programs. This highlights the importance of considering geographical accessibility and weather conditions when addressing the educational needs of island communities.

Theme 2. Limited Instructional Resources and Technological Access

The findings revealed that the limited availability of instructional materials, classroom resources, and technological facilities was another challenge encountered by the participants. These limitations affected lesson preparation and the delivery of classroom instruction, requiring teachers to maximize available resources and find alternative ways to prepare appropriate learning activities.

Participant 2 stated, "Another challenge is the limited availability of instructional materials, classroom resources, and access to technology, which makes it necessary to be creative and resourceful in preparing lessons and learning activities." Similarly, Participant 3 shared, "The difficulties I encounter include limited learning resources, unstable internet connectivity, and transportation problems, especially during bad weather. Sometimes, learners have different learning abilities and need additional support to understand the

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lessons. I also find it challenging to prepare instructional materials using only the resources available in our school and community."

The participants' responses indicate that limited resources and unreliable internet connectivity create additional demands in preparing and delivering lessons. Participant 2 emphasized the need to become creative and resourceful when preparing instructional materials, while Participant 3 specifically described the difficulty of developing learning materials using only the resources available in the school and community. These accounts suggest that teachers must consider the resources accessible to them when planning and implementing classroom activities. The findings also highlight how limitations in educational facilities and technology may affect the availability and use of instructional materials in geographically isolated settings. These findings are consistent with previous studies examining resource-related challenges in geographically isolated educational settings. Jemsy et al. (2026) identified shortages of instructional materials and equipment, as well as unreliable internet access, among the challenges experienced in geographically isolated schools in Tawi-Tawi. Similarly, Sanchez (2026) reported that elementary teachers in Bakun, Benguet, encountered difficulties involving limited instructional materials, inadequate infrastructure, internet connectivity, and delayed distribution of resources. These findings provide relevant evidence of the difficulties teachers may encounter when access to essential educational resources is limited. Furthermore, Rarugal and Sermona (2024) discussed limitations in internet access in hinterland schools and developed an offline learning management system to provide access to educational materials without depending entirely on internet connectivity. This study provides additional context for understanding the technological limitations described by the participants, particularly the difficulties associated with accessing digital learning resources in areas with limited internet services. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant support for understanding the resource and technological constraints encountered in geographically isolated schools. Overall, the findings indicate that limited instructional resources and technological access presented practical challenges to lesson preparation and classroom instruction. The participants' experiences highlighted the importance of maximizing available materials and finding alternative ways to prepare learning activities when educational resources and internet services are limited. These findings suggest that the availability of appropriate instructional materials, school facilities, and technological support is an important consideration in delivering instruction in an island-school setting.

Theme 3. Diverse Learners' Needs and Foundational Learning Difficulties

The findings revealed that addressing pupils' different learning abilities and educational needs was another challenge encountered by the participants. In particular, they identified difficulties among pupils in reading, comprehension, and other foundational skills. These learning differences required teachers to recognize individual needs, provide additional academic assistance, and consider appropriate instructional approaches to support pupils' learning.

Participant 1 explained, "One of the difficulties I encounter is addressing the different learning abilities of my pupils, especially those who need extra support in reading and understanding lessons. I need to adjust my teaching strategies and prepare activities that match their learning needs." Similarly, Participant 2 stated, "Some pupils need additional support in reading, comprehension, and other basic skills, while others have limited access to learning resources and parental guidance at home. These situations require me to provide differentiated instruction, individualized assistance, and additional learning activities." Participant 3 also shared, "Sometimes, learners have different learning abilities and need additional support to understand the lessons."

The participants' accounts indicate that differences in pupils' academic abilities require teachers to provide varying levels of instructional support. While Participants 1 and 2 specifically identified difficulties in reading, comprehension, and other basic skills, Participant 3 emphasized the need to assist pupils who struggle to understand lessons. Participant 2 also highlighted limited access to learning resources and parental guidance at home as additional factors affecting pupils' learning. These responses suggest that teachers must consider not only pupils' differences in academic performance but also the circumstances that may influence their learning. These findings are consistent with previous studies examining teachers' experiences in addressing diverse learning needs. Ignacio (2026) reported that teachers in a remote public elementary school encountered challenges involving different reading levels, gaps in foundational reading skills, and limited home literacy support. Similarly, Villaceran et al. (2024) explored the experiences of elementary teachers handling learners with reading difficulties in mainstream classrooms, highlighting the challenges involved in providing appropriate support to struggling readers. Furthermore, Tabiado et al. (2026) found that elementary teachers addressed varying learner support needs through differentiated tasks, adjustments in instructional time, and individualized assistance. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant evidence of the instructional demands

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associated with supporting pupils who have different academic abilities and learning needs. Overall, the findings indicate that pupils' diverse learning needs and difficulties in foundational skills require teachers to provide appropriate and individualized academic support. The participants' experiences particularly highlighted the need to assist pupils who struggle with reading, comprehension, and understanding lessons. These challenges underscore the importance of responsive instruction in helping pupils address their learning difficulties and participate meaningfully in classroom activities.

Research Question 2: How do these challenges influence the teaching practices and professional responsibilities of teachers in an island school?

The findings revealed three major themes concerning how the challenges of teaching in an island school influenced the participants' teaching practices and professional responsibilities: (1) Adjustments in Instructional Practices, (2) Proactive Management of Professional Responsibilities, and (3) Professional Growth, Resilience, and Personal Sacrifice. These themes describe the changes and effects experienced by the participants in their instructional work, professional responsibilities, and personal lives.

Theme 1. Adjustments in Instructional Practices

The findings revealed that the challenges encountered in the island school influenced the participants to adjust their instructional practices to address their pupils' varying learning needs. They described modifying their teaching strategies, employing differentiated instruction, and providing additional learning support, particularly to pupils experiencing difficulties in reading and other foundational skills. These adjustments reflected their efforts to make instruction responsive to the learning abilities and circumstances of their pupils.

Participant 1 explained, "The challenges I have encountered have helped me become more patient, flexible, and resourceful in my teaching practices. I have learned to adjust my teaching strategies based on my learners' needs, especially those who struggle with reading." Similarly, Participant 2 stated, "The Challenges have encouraged me to use differentiated instruction to address the diverse learning needs of my pupils, especially those who need additional support in reading and other basic skills." Participant 3 also shared, "The challenges I encounter have taught me to become more resourceful, creative, patient, and flexible in my teaching practices."

These responses suggest that the challenges influenced the participants to become more flexible and responsive in delivering instruction. While Participants 1 and 2 specifically emphasized adjusting their teaching strategies and providing additional support to pupils experiencing reading difficulties, Participant 3 highlighted the importance of resourcefulness, creativity, and flexibility in teaching. Collectively, their responses indicate that the challenges required the participants to reconsider how they approached instruction and respond more deliberately to differences in learners' abilities. In this regard, the influence of the challenges was reflected in their efforts to make classroom instruction more appropriate to pupils' learning needs. The findings are supported by Bunga et al. (2025), who found that teachers in Philippine multigrade classrooms employed differentiated instruction through intentional instructional planning, learner profiling, curriculum mapping, and flexible pacing to address learners' diverse needs. Similarly, Ignacio (2026) reported that teachers in a remote Philippine elementary school used developmentally appropriate strategies, differentiated instruction, and assessment-driven adjustments to respond to differences in pupils' reading levels and foundational skills. In addition, Tabiado et al. (2026) found that teachers in a Philippine public elementary school combined differentiated learning tasks with individualized support and adjusted instructional time to accommodate learners' varying needs. Villaceran et al. (2024) also explored the experiences of elementary teachers handling learners with reading difficulties and identified challenges and practices associated with providing support to struggling readers. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant evidence of how teachers adapt their instructional practices to address diverse learning needs. Overall, the findings indicate that the challenges of teaching in an island school influenced the participants to become more flexible and responsive in their instructional practices. Through modified teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and additional learning support, they made efforts to address pupils' varying abilities, particularly those experiencing difficulties in reading and other foundational skills. These experiences show that the challenges affected not only the conditions under which the participants taught but also the instructional decisions they made in responding to their pupils' needs.

Theme 2. Proactive Management of Professional Responsibilities

The participants' responses further revealed that the challenges of teaching in an island school influenced how they organized and carried out their professional responsibilities. They emphasized the

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importance of preparing lessons in advance, managing their schedules, prioritizing tasks, and seeking assistance from other members of the school and community when necessary.

Participant 1 shared, "I manage my professional responsibilities by planning my lessons ahead of time, managing my schedule, and adjusting my teaching strategies based on my learners' needs. I also seek guidance from my school head and colleagues whenever necessary." Participant 2 explained, "When challenges arise, I prioritize my responsibilities, adjust my teaching strategies, and seek support from my fellow teachers, school head, parents, and community members whenever necessary." Similarly, Participant 3 stated, "I manage my professional responsibilities by being organized, resourceful, and flexible in performing my duties. I prepare my lesson plans ahead of time, use available learning materials, and adjust my teaching strategies according to my learners' needs and the situation in our island community."

These accounts suggest that teachers managed their professional responsibilities through individual planning and organization, as well as through assistance from others. While Participants 1 and 3 emphasized advance lesson preparation, schedule management, and organization, Participant 2 highlighted prioritization and seeking assistance from colleagues, school leaders, parents, and community members. Their responses indicate that the demands of teaching in an island school influenced how they organized their time, identified priorities, and approached their assigned responsibilities. Rather than focusing solely on classroom instruction, the participants also had to consider how to manage their work in response to the circumstances of their school environment. The findings are supported by Algar et al. (2025), who reported that Filipino teachers used prioritization, time management, and personal routines to manage their professional responsibilities, with support from colleagues and school heads helping them cope with their workload. Similarly, Basister et al. (2026) found that collaboration among mathematics and special education teachers through Lesson Study involved joint lesson planning, classroom observations, reflection, and lesson revision. These practices highlight the value of professional collaboration and shared planning in carrying out teaching-related responsibilities. Ronda et al. (2026) also identified teacher collaboration and leadership support as important factors in sustaining professional learning activities among Filipino teachers, while recognizing time constraints as a challenge. Furthermore, Daga et al. (2025) reported that teachers in selected Philippine public schools allocated part of their working time to lesson preparation and other teaching-related duties. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant evidence of how teachers organize their professional responsibilities through planning, time management, and collaboration. Overall, the findings indicate that the participants managed their professional responsibilities through advance planning, time management, prioritization of tasks, and coordination with school personnel and community members. These practices helped them organize their work and respond to the demands of teaching in an island-school setting. Their accounts suggest that the challenges influenced not only their classroom practices but also the way they arranged and fulfilled their professional duties.

Theme 3. Professional Growth, Resilience, and Personal Sacrifice

The findings revealed that teaching in an island school influenced the participants' personal and professional development. Their experiences were associated with increased patience, responsibility, perseverance, and commitment to their learners. They also described becoming more resilient, resourceful, and appreciative of their roles as teachers. However, the responses further indicated that fulfilling professional responsibilities in an island setting may involve personal sacrifices, particularly in maintaining time and presence with family members.

Participant 1 described both professional growth and personal sacrifice, stating, "My experience teaching in an island school has influenced me both professionally and personally. As a teacher, I have learned to be more patient, responsible, and dedicated to my learners. However, it also comes with personal sacrifices, especially being away from my child and loved ones. Sometimes, it is difficult knowing that I cannot always be there to take care of my child and spend time with my family." The participant further explained, "This experience has taught me the importance of sacrifice, perseverance, and balancing my responsibilities as a teacher and as a mother." Similarly, Participant 2 shared, "Personally, teaching in an island school has strengthened my resilience, compassion, and sense of responsibility. The challenges I encounter have taught me to appreciate the value of perseverance, sacrifice, and dedication in the teaching profession." Participant 3 also stated, "My experiences in this island school have helped me grow both professionally and personally as a teacher. Professionally, I have become more resourceful, creative, patient, and flexible in preparing lessons and addressing my learners' needs despite limited resources and other challenges. Personally, these experiences have taught me to be more understanding, resilient, and appreciative of the importance of education in the community."

These responses suggest that teaching in an island school provided the participants with experiences that contributed to their personal and professional development. All three participants described positive

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changes in their attitudes, values, or professional qualities, particularly in terms of patience, responsibility, perseverance, and resilience. Participants 1 and 3 specifically emphasized how their experiences contributed to their growth as teachers, while Participant 2 highlighted the development of compassion and dedication to the profession. However, personal sacrifice was particularly evident in Participant 1's account, which described the difficulty of being away from family. This illustrates how professional responsibilities in an island-school setting may also involve personal adjustments, especially in balancing work and family life. This experience should be understood as the account of one participant rather than a condition shared by all three participants. The findings are supported by Galut (2025), who found that teachers assigned to remote areas demonstrated perseverance, adaptability, and dedication despite geographical and occupational challenges. The study also highlighted the fulfillment teachers derived from contributing to their learners' education and the sacrifices they made to support them. Similarly, Pregoner et al. (2026) reported that teachers in geographically isolated and resource-constrained communities sustained their professional commitment through a sense of responsibility toward learners, relationships with colleagues and communities, and a professional identity strengthened by their experiences. In an island-school context, Bien (2025) identified dedication to the teaching profession and the desire for professional growth as factors influencing teachers' experiences in implementing learning recovery programs. The study also noted that additional professional responsibilities could affect some teachers' time with their families. Furthermore, Dala and Ambalong (2025) found that teachers in hinterland schools experienced difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities, with family encouragement and manageable workloads associated with stronger organizational commitment. Although these studies were conducted in settings and circumstances different from the present study, their findings provide relevant support for understanding teachers' resilience, professional commitment, personal development, and the family-related demands associated with working in remote and island communities. Overall, the findings indicate that teaching in an island school contributed to the participants' personal and professional growth by developing their patience, resilience, resourcefulness, and sense of responsibility. However, their experiences also highlighted the possibility of personal sacrifices, particularly in balancing teaching responsibilities with family life. Despite the demands of their work, the participants expressed perseverance and continued commitment to their learners. These accounts show that the influence of teaching in an island-school setting extended beyond instructional responsibilities and also shaped the participants' personal experiences and professional development.

Research Question 3: What coping strategies do teachers employ to address the challenges they encounter in teaching in an island school?

The findings revealed three major themes concerning the coping strategies employed by the participants in addressing the challenges of teaching in an island school: (1) Adaptive Problem-Solving and Resourcefulness, (2) Collaboration and Support-Seeking, and (3) Personal Motivation, Commitment, and Resilience. These themes describe the practical actions, sources of assistance, and personal sources of motivation that the participants relied on in managing the demands of their work.

Theme 1. Adaptive Problem-Solving and Resourcefulness

The findings revealed that the participants responded to teaching-related difficulties through adaptive problem-solving and resourcefulness. Their responses showed that they made practical adjustments to their instructional approaches, remained composed when challenges arose, and maximized the resources available to them. These practices enabled them to continue their teaching responsibilities while responding to the needs of their learners and the limitations of their island-school environment.

Participant 1 explained, "When I encounter difficulties, I stay calm and try to find solutions. I also ask for advice from my fellow teachers when needed. I do my best to overcome challenges and continue fulfilling my responsibilities as a teacher." Similarly, Participant 2 shared, "When I encounter difficulties in carrying out my teaching responsibilities, I try to remain calm, patient, and positive while looking for practical solutions. I assess the situation and adjust my lesson plans, teaching strategies, and classroom activities according to the needs of my learners and the resources available. When instructional materials are limited, I improvise by using locally available materials and incorporating examples from the learners' daily lives and island environment." Participant 3 also emphasized the importance of resourcefulness, stating, "When I encounter difficulties in carrying out my teaching responsibilities, I remain patient, positive, and resourceful. I find alternative ways to prepare lessons and conduct classroom activities using the available resources."

The participants' accounts demonstrate that adaptive problem-solving involved identifying practical responses to immediate difficulties and making instructional decisions based on available resources, learners' needs, and the conditions of the teaching environment. Participant 2's account particularly illustrates this

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practice through the adjustment of lesson plans and the use of locally available materials and familiar examples. Meanwhile, Participants 1 and 3 highlighted the importance of maintaining composure, finding alternative solutions, and continuing their responsibilities despite challenges. Taken together, these responses suggest that flexibility and resourcefulness were practical ways through which the participants managed difficulties in their setting. These findings are consistent with Albina et al. (2025), whose study of novice teachers in remote mountainous schools in the Philippines documented challenges involving difficult terrain, limited instructional materials, and inadequate infrastructure, alongside teachers' adjustments to their working conditions. Similarly, Ahamat and Kabilan (2022) found that rural primary school English teachers adapted instructional materials to make lessons more relevant to their learners' local contexts. Wabingga and Tomakin (2025) also reported that teachers in remote schools used localized teaching approaches and improvised or offline resources to respond to instructional challenges. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant evidence of how teachers in geographically challenging and resource-limited contexts adapt their instructional practices and utilize available resources. Overall, adaptive problem-solving and resourcefulness emerged as important coping strategies among the participants. Their accounts highlighted the value of remaining calm, identifying practical alternatives, adjusting instructional activities, and making meaningful use of available resources to support classroom instruction. These actions enabled the participants to respond to difficulties while continuing to carry out their teaching responsibilities.

Theme 2. Collaboration and Support-Seeking

Another theme that emerged from the findings was the importance of collaboration and support-seeking in managing teaching-related challenges. The participants' responses revealed that they relied on different forms of assistance, including guidance from school administrators, professional cooperation with fellow teachers, and support from parents and community members. These relationships provided opportunities to seek advice, exchange instructional resources, and obtain assistance in addressing their teaching responsibilities.

Participant 1 shared, "I receive support and guidance from our school head and fellow teachers, especially when I need advice or help with my responsibilities. Parents also help by encouraging their children to study and participate in class." Similarly, Participant 2 emphasized the contribution of parents and community members, stating, "Parents and community members contribute by encouraging their children to attend school, supporting learning activities at home, and participating in school programs and activities whenever possible." Participant 3 also described the support received from different members of the school community, explaining, "My fellow teachers share ideas, teaching strategies, and learning materials that help me improve my teaching practices." The participant further mentioned the guidance provided by school administrators and the assistance of parents and community members in supporting learners' educational needs.

The participants' accounts indicate that collaboration and support-seeking involved both individual efforts to obtain assistance and contributions from members of the school community. Seeking advice from school administrators and fellow teachers provided opportunities to address professional concerns and exchange practical solutions. Meanwhile, the sharing of teaching strategies and instructional materials enabled teachers to draw on the experiences and resources of their colleagues. Parental and community involvement also extended support beyond the classroom by encouraging learners' school attendance, participation, and learning activities at home. Taken together, these experiences suggest that the participants did not rely solely on their individual efforts but also sought assistance and cooperation from people who could support their work. These findings are supported by Kaihoi et al. (2022), who found that teachers identified their colleagues as important sources of support when managing work-related stress. Similarly, Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) reported that teacher collaboration was positively associated with teacher well-being across rural, regional, and metropolitan school settings. These findings provide relevant support for the participants' accounts of seeking advice and receiving professional assistance from fellow teachers. Regarding parental involvement, Mbhiza and Nkambule (2022) highlighted the importance of partnerships between parents and schools while also identifying barriers that may limit parental participation. Myende and Nhlumayo (2022) likewise emphasized the importance of effective communication and stronger parent-teacher collaboration in encouraging parental involvement in rural schools. Although these studies were conducted in settings different from the island school examined in the present study, their findings provide relevant perspectives on the role of collegial relationships and school-family partnerships in supporting educational activities. Overall, collaboration and support-seeking emerged as important coping strategies among the participants. Their experiences highlighted the value of administrative guidance, professional cooperation, and parental and community involvement in addressing the demands of teaching in an island-school setting. These findings

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suggest that supportive relationships within and beyond the school can provide teachers with practical assistance and encouragement as they manage their responsibilities.

Theme 3. Personal Motivation, Commitment, and Resilience

The findings revealed that personal motivation, commitment, and resilience played an important role in helping the participants continue fulfilling their teaching responsibilities despite the challenges of working in an island school. Their responses indicated that motivation came from different sources, including concern for learners' future, appreciation of learners' progress, passion for teaching, and personal values. For some participants, family and faith also served as sources of encouragement and strength.

Participant 1 explained that the desire to provide learners with better opportunities and the inspiration drawn from family helped sustain dedication to teaching, stating, "I stay motivated because I want to give my learners a better future and help them learn. I also think of my family, especially my child, who inspires me to keep going despite the sacrifices and challenges. My passion for teaching helps me remain dedicated and fulfill my responsibilities." Similarly, Participant 2 emphasized the importance of recognizing learners' achievements, even when these involved small improvements, sharing, "I stay motivated by focusing on the positive aspects of my work, appreciating even the small achievements of my learners, and celebrating their progress." The participant further explained that passion for teaching and the desire to provide quality education encouraged continued dedication to the profession. Participant 3 also identified learners' progress, participation, and happiness as important sources of motivation. The participant added that maintaining a positive outlook, praying for strength and guidance, and seeking support from fellow teachers, school administrators, parents, and the community helped in managing the demands of the work.

These responses suggest that the participants drew motivation from both professional and personal sources. Their concern for learners' development and appreciation of their progress reinforced their commitment to teaching, while family, faith, and support from others provided additional encouragement for some participants. These accounts also reflect the participants' efforts to maintain a positive outlook and continue fulfilling their responsibilities despite the difficulties associated with their work setting. Their motivation was therefore not limited to overcoming immediate instructional concerns but also involved maintaining a sense of purpose in their profession. These findings are consistent with Nguyen et al. (2026), who explored the experiences of teachers working in remote and disadvantaged regions of Vietnam. Their study identified internal motivation, passion for teaching, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose as important ways through which teachers responded to challenging working conditions. However, the researchers also emphasized that personal resilience alone could not fully address the difficulties teachers encountered and that institutional, financial, and practical support remained important. Similarly, Zara et al. (2022) found that teachers' pedagogical resilience was shaped by personal, professional, and social factors, including adaptability and relationships with colleagues. These findings provide relevant support for understanding how personal motivation and social support may help teachers sustain their professional responsibilities. In the Philippine context, Albina et al. (2025) reported that novice teachers assigned to remote mountainous schools demonstrated resilience in responding to challenging work environments, including transportation difficulties and limited resources. Their findings highlight the importance of perseverance and the ability to adjust to demanding teaching conditions. Although their study was conducted in a different geographical setting, it provides relevant evidence on the experiences of teachers working in remote communities where access and resource limitations may affect their professional responsibilities. Overall, the participants' responses show that personal motivation, commitment, and resilience were important in helping them continue their work despite the challenges of teaching in an island school. Their motivation was sustained by their desire to support learners' development, recognition of small achievements, passion for teaching, and, for some, encouragement drawn from family and faith. These findings suggest that personal motivation and a sense of professional purpose helped the participants maintain their commitment to teaching. However, these personal sources of motivation should not be viewed as substitutes for the institutional and practical support needed by teachers working in geographically isolated settings.

Proposed Intervention

To address the challenges identified in the study, an Island Teacher Support and Instructional Improvement Program is proposed for Pasilmata Elementary School. The program aims to provide practical support to teachers in managing geographical and transportation difficulties, limited instructional resources and technological access, and the diverse learning needs of pupils. It will include the development of a weather-related contingency and communication plan in coordination with the school head, teachers, community representatives, and appropriate local authorities to facilitate timely communication regarding unfavorable sea conditions, possible transportation difficulties, and adjustments to school activities while prioritizing the safety of teachers and learners. To address the lack of instructional materials and unstable internet

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connectivity, teachers may collaboratively develop and organize shared offline learning resources, such as printable worksheets, localized reading passages, reusable instructional aids, and supplementary learning activities that do not require internet access. The program will also encourage school-based professional development activities focusing on differentiated instruction, foundational reading support, classroom management, and the preparation of contextualized learning materials. Regular teacher collaboration sessions may likewise be conducted to provide opportunities for sharing teaching strategies, instructional resources, classroom experiences, and practical solutions to common challenges. Furthermore, communication and coordination with parents and community members may be strengthened through orientations and consultations to encourage regular pupil attendance, support learning activities at home, and promote community participation in school programs. The implementation of the proposed program may be monitored by the school head in coordination with teachers and concerned stakeholders through activity reports, attendance records, meeting documentation, available instructional materials, and teacher feedback. Periodic evaluation may also be conducted to determine the relevance and effectiveness of the activities and identify necessary adjustments based on the needs of the teachers and the available resources. Overall, the proposed program seeks to strengthen school-based support mechanisms, promote responsive instructional practices, and help teachers manage the professional demands of working in an island-school setting. Its implementation will be subject to school approval, resource availability, and coordination among the concerned stakeholders.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with due consideration for the rights, privacy, confidentiality, and welfare of the participants throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school head. The participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study, the procedures involved, and the intended use of the information they provided. Informed consent was obtained before participation. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the participants were given the right to decline or withdraw from the study without penalty or any form of pressure. To maintain confidentiality and protect the participants' identities, codes were used instead of their actual names in the presentation and discussion of the findings. Identifying information that was not necessary for the analysis was excluded from the manuscript. The responses collected through Google Forms were treated confidentially and used solely for academic and research purposes. Access to the collected data was restricted to the researcher, and electronic records were handled and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access, disclosure, or use. The research data will be retained only for the period necessary to complete the study and will be permanently deleted, including relevant electronic files, upon completion of the research, in accordance with the stated data-management plan.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the three teacher-participants from Pasilmata Elementary School encountered challenges related to geographical accessibility and transportation, limited instructional resources and technological access, and pupils' diverse learning needs, particularly in reading and other foundational skills. These conditions created additional demands in carrying out classroom instruction and other professional responsibilities. In response, the participants adjusted their instructional approaches, prepared learning activities suited to pupils' needs, and made use of the resources available to them. The participants also described organizing their responsibilities through advance lesson preparation, schedule management, task prioritization, and assistance-seeking when necessary. Their accounts further highlighted the importance of patience, flexibility, resourcefulness, perseverance, and resilience in managing the demands of teaching in an island-school setting. Personal sacrifice was also evident in the account of one participant, who described adjustments involving family life; this experience was not reported by all participants. To cope with the challenges, the participants described adaptive problem-solving, collaboration, and personal sources of motivation. They adjusted instructional plans, maximized available materials, exchanged ideas and resources with colleagues, and sought assistance from school personnel, parents, and community members. Their accounts indicate that personal commitment and support from others helped them continue fulfilling their teaching responsibilities. The findings also point to the importance of practical school-based and institutional support, including accessible instructional materials, appropriate professional development, reliable communication, and collaboration among teachers, parents, and community members. Since the study involved only three teachers from one island school, the findings are limited to the experiences shared by these participants and are not intended to represent all teachers working in island communities. Nevertheless, the study provides context-specific insights into the challenges, professional adjustments, and coping strategies described by teachers at Pasilmata Elementary School.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed. Teachers may continue to use flexible and adaptive instructional strategies to respond to pupils' varying learning needs, particularly in reading and other foundational skills. They may prepare alternative learning activities and offline instructional materials that can be used when internet connectivity is unavailable. Sharing lesson materials, classroom strategies, and available resources with colleagues may also support instructional preparation and collaboration. The school head may maintain regular communication with teachers regarding transportation difficulties, weather conditions, and possible adjustments to school activities. In coordination with teachers and community representatives, the school may develop a practical communication and contingency plan for periods of unfavorable sea conditions, with the safety of teachers and learners as the primary consideration. The school may also provide opportunities for teachers to discuss classroom concerns, exchange instructional strategies, and identify shared resource needs. Parents and community members may be encouraged to support pupils' learning by guiding reading activities, monitoring learning tasks at home, and communicating with teachers about pupils' progress. Such involvement may be particularly helpful for learners who need additional assistance with foundational skills. The Department of Education and other concerned stakeholders may consider providing island schools with appropriate instructional materials, basic classroom resources, and offline learning materials to help address limitations in technological access. Professional development opportunities focusing on differentiated instruction, foundational reading support, classroom management, and the preparation of contextualized learning materials may also be made accessible through school-based or district-level activities. Coordination with local government units may further help identify feasible arrangements for addressing transportation and other logistical concerns during unfavorable weather conditions. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving teachers from several island schools or other geographically isolated communities to explore whether comparable challenges and coping strategies are reported in different settings. A larger and more varied group of participants, together with additional data collection methods such as individual interviews and classroom observations, may provide a broader understanding of teachers' experiences. Future studies may also include the perspectives of school heads, parents, and learners to examine educational conditions and support needs from different stakeholder viewpoints.

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