



HEADS OF DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE LAW STRATEGIES OF MANAGING SCHOOLS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide schools with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage sustained crises in schools. The role of heads of department (HODs) in administering schools during times of crisis is covered in this article. The Covid-19 crisis has brought to light a new chance to explore the role of HODs, the stakeholders they represent, and how they could progress toward a larger understanding and better response to critical school concerns. As a result, the author's goal in this article is to find out "How should HODs exercise their powers in crisis management?" The author emphasizes the significance of flexibility and organizational creativity in times of crisis based on this investigation. The author also discusses how HODs can bridge the gap between school administrators and teachers, school crisis management and resolution, knowledge of technology information, and communication, virtual learning, communication, crisis management strategies, and how principals can support HODs when the next crisis is right around the corner. The Corona Virus (Covid-19) epidemic created fear and vulnerability among people and school personnel and students, particularly in educational systems..

Keywords : *management, crisis time, school, head of department.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article administrative law will mean the exercise of power by the head of department in a school setting. The primary focus of this article will be on the operations of schools, specifically the role of heads of department (HODs) in times of crises in schools. The head of department's job in a school entail participating in classroom instruction, being responsible for the department's effective operation, and planning pertinent/related extracurricular activities in order to guarantee that the subject, learning area, or phase as well as the learners' education are promoted in a proper manner (Department of Basic Education 2022). The COVID-19 epidemic had a profound and unprecedented impact on the running of schools. Systematic statistics, however, do not provide strong evidence for the crisis' effects on schools' administration (Kugler et al., 2023). Because crises are uncomfortable, dangerous, and stressful, schools need to put a stop to them as soon as possible (Zijderveld & Kalkman, 2023). According to Bray (1988), administrative law regulates the operations of school governing bodies, professional teachers' councils, education committees, departments of education (including provincial education departments), and schools. The recommendation made in this article is that to mitigate crises in schools we need to promote a sense of legal consciousness in schools, principals must grant HODs authority. The importance of efficient school management and administration cannot be overstated.

The article offers some techniques for assisting HODs in crisis management. A crisis as a process can result in an occurrence that disrupts a school's routine operations, whereas the term "crisis" refers to an unexpected, unanticipated, and dramatic incident that necessitates an organization's response. Economic, environmental, geopolitical, social, and technological crises are the most common types of crises. As a result, different crisis situations necessitate different crisis management tactics. Crisis management is the method by which a school as an organization deals

with an unforeseeable and catastrophic event that threatens the school and its stakeholders. HODs must be capable of crisis identification, responsive actions, and proactive strategies in crisis management (Kukanja et al. 2022). HODs in schools must foresee crises such as workplace violence, sabotage, poor employee connections (union breakdowns), food poisoning/contamination, poor risk management and financial decision making, hostile takeovers, and unethical leadership. When students are obliged to learn online from home, HODs are required to become familiar with technology to obtain information and interact (Olayvar, 2021).

PURPOSE

The article explored the role of HODs in managing schools in times of crises. Effective leaders are expected to get people of different personalities and values to agree on what is important and move forward. Without establishing common values, leaders may not be successful in their pursuits in managing schools in times of crises if they are unable in inspiring and persuading others to act. Therefore, the role of HODs in managing in times of crises must be the lifting of teachers' vision to higher sights, the raising of their performance to a higher standard, and the building of their personality beyond their normal limitation. This implies that HODs as leaders must understand those they wish to lead and help them develop their potential to perform optimally. HODs must therefore possess the capacity to motivate people to overcome obstacles and accept constant change (Munene, 2021). The teacher is not merely a teacher who transfers knowledge, but also an educator who transfers values as well as a mentor who provides direction and guides students in learning (Rahayu et al. 2023). The HOD's duties must include chatting and listening to teachers as well as keeping an eye on their work both inside and outside of the classroom. HODs must devote a lot of their time to monitoring teaching and learning as well as coaching teachers because they are the leaders of learning. This research explores the perceived roles and duties of HODs in managing schools during times of crisis. Subject experts known as HODs are in charge of setting and maintaining high standards for instruction and learning in respective fields. The managerial responsibilities of the HODs include organizing, coordinating, and controlling (Sengai 2021). The gap that the HODs must recognize is "how to enhance student learning amid disruptive situations in schools?"

BACKGROUND

Adversity is a natural element of life, according to Kiper et al. (2022). HODs may encounter challenges completing tasks and achieving goals as a result of a range of private, public, and governmental problems, including illness and job loss, fires and floods, conflicts, and pandemics. Being a skilled HOD who understands how to strike a balance and works hard to ensure that everything he or she does is in the best interests of the school, teachers, and students is challenging and time-consuming. In times of crisis, time is the most valuable resource, so a good HOD must make the most of it by prioritizing, scheduling, and arranging activities promptly (Alazmi & Alhajeri, 2022, p.1). As a result, education stakeholders, particularly department heads, should be concerned about the times at which teachers carry out their tasks. As a result, HODs must guarantee that instructors fulfill their duties as part of their administrative obligations. As a result, the importance of HODs in ensuring quality and instruction in schools during times of crisis cannot be emphasized. By influencing all facets of the school's operations through their actions and personality traits, HODs, who serve as administrators and leaders, have a huge impact on the success of teaching and learning in schools. They are therefore anticipated to take on a range of duties to guarantee that effective teaching and learning take place in their schools in order to fulfill the stated objectives and aims (Amenu, et al., 2022).

HODs instructional leadership practices in schools should include the following: (i) defining educational objectives; (ii) disseminating educational objectives; (iii) supervising and assessing teacher performance; (iv) overseeing curriculum development and instruction delivery; (v) monitoring students' progress; (vi) maintaining high visibility; and (vii) promoting teacher professional development. HODs instructional leadership methods should be related to establishing



the best conditions for teaching and learning. In the context of this article, instructional leadership practices of HODs are administrative activities and roles focused at providing support for teachers and students in order to ensure quality instructional delivery for the school in times of crisis is achieved (Ikediugwu & Agu, 2022).

Additionally, HODs are supposed to choose teacher leaders informally or formally. The former is based on knowledge and is typically informal, while the latter is based on the position's title, which is legitimated and a part of the formal structure. Both of these instances of shared leadership, despite being separate conceptualizations, are present. HODs, on the other hand, need to strike a balance between assisting teachers in difficult situations and allowing them to develop in a variety of ways. It is extremely challenging to use positional authority to improve teacher professional learning within a bureaucratic school administration structure. Additionally, HODs must be aware that placing teachers in formal leadership roles can occasionally create hierarchies within the teaching ranks, which can cause conflicts among teachers in emergency situations (Chen & Zhang, 2022). Leaders in schools with tough situations, according to Berkovich and Grinshtain (2022, pp.111-112), must exhibit both transformational and transactional tendencies. For example, in tough contexts, HODs must deal with the consequences of repressive social structures and state policies that make learning, school support of learning, and support of learning difficult for students (Berkovich & Grinshtain, 2022).

Again, HODs should build a support network that includes advice on online course preparation, organizational challenges, and the use and delivery of free open content resources (Ceylan, 2022). In a similar vein, Soraya et al. (2022) found that employing servant leadership, which emphasizes empowerment, collaboration, engagement, and academic leaders with emotional intelligence and stability who put the interests of others before their own, can help organizations deal with unforeseen adaptive challenges like the corona virus pandemic. Academic leaders must once again be able to assign duties to a network of teams and improve the caliber of crisis-resolution assessments. In brief, as the highest authority in curriculum management at the school, the head of department should plan the teaching and learning process from planning through execution, monitoring, and assessment. Teachers and students can also use services and constantly monitor the teaching and learning process. HODs have an impact on the school staff's loyalty and contentment through modeling independence, responsibility, accountability, transparency, and justice. Various managerial and operational actions must be directed toward achieving the vision, goal, and strategies that will lead to school management efficiency (Soraya, et al., 2022).

HODs need to play a crucial role in times of crises in schools. According to Lagesen and Suboticki (2021), HODs must act as boosters for staff in times of crises. They also need to participate in 'micro-politics'. The author reviewed previous studies on HODs responsibilities to argue that paying closer attention to their behaviors can help us better comprehend their involvement in crisis situations. Devolution of responsibility to schools and the expansion of school-based administration, according to Rosenfeld, et al., (2009), have had a significant impact on the role and workload of school leaders. Delegated authority must be delegated by principals of public secondary schools to deputy principals and HODs. Most HODs, according to Brandmo, et al. (2021), have a mix of administrative and teaching responsibilities. Principals of secondary schools sometimes lack subject-specific competence in more than two or three areas. As a result, subject-specific responsibilities were frequently delegated to the HODs, resulting in shared leadership. According to Almutairi and Shraid (2021), HODs must be involved in teacher evaluation than principals, and teachers must respect their evaluative position substantially more than other internal or external evaluators. One reason for this could be that HODs are more specialized in their work. Hence, a lack of subject expertise was an issue when evaluating teachers in their many topic specializations at schools.

An example of a crisis by Soup and Kenei (2021) was the 2018 unrests which reminded Kenyans of earlier bloody incidents that caused anguish, loss, and harm. Many parents are probably still lamenting the loss and suffering that these occurrences have brought about. Another instance is

the horrific shooting that took place at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in April 1999, when two teens opened fire at random on students and teachers. After killing one instructor and perhaps twelve additional children, the shooter shot himself. A month after the tragedy, a second fifteen-year-old youngster shot six of his classmates and caused serious injuries. Five pupils at an Oklahoma middle school were hurt after a kid brought a pistol to class. School unrest occurred in many areas of the United Kingdom in November and December 2010, but it primarily affected central London. Nigeria is in trouble, just like the rest of the world. In 1982, among the schools that went on the rampage were Elemenwo Girls, Government Boys Secondary School, and Holy Rosary College - Ogbakiri. In 1983, similar incidents expanded to Okrika Grammar School - Okrika. The school principal was the target of staged riots and attempted assassinations by students. In the same year, Buabom Community Secondary School's principal was attacked by rioting students. In a second instance, students from Akpor Grammar School abducted members of the faculty, including the principal. In times of crisis, HOD duties in schools must be reevaluated. Although HODs must be conscious of their responsibilities as instructional leaders, they are constrained for a variety of reasons, including rigid educational frameworks, unequal power distribution within the school, a lack of training, and administrative responsibilities. This meant that the principle must establish circumstances that enable HODs to perform both their responsibilities as instructional leaders and crisis managers. Instead of clinging to power and trying to run the school like supermen and superwomen, principals should welcome empowering and delegating leadership to the HODs (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Head of department

It is a person who is in the position of curriculum leadership in a school situation. His or her knowledge, seniority, teaching skills and an understanding of the way schools work make him or her to qualify as HOD (Gold, 2000, p.1).

Management

In this paper the term management means to help, motivate, capture, sharing, and use of knowledge in the school context for the smooth functioning of the school (Litvaj, et al. 2022). This involves directing the actions of the planning, execution, and evaluation of the policies and educational plans of the school by ensuring the involvement of teachers, parents, students, employees, and representatives of the community, as well as the organizations that work in the field of education and the agencies that integrate this educational system (Da Paz & Coutinho, 2022).

Sustained crisis

Costa et al. (2022) found that a crisis is ambiguous in its causes, effects, and ways of resolution. It is a situation in which something or someone is affected by one or more very serious problems. Again, a crisis is a difficult time which needs a solution to manage, especially in schools.

Crisis

This is a difficult situation which needs a solution. For example, the crisis caused by a pandemic (e.g., Covid-19). Innovation strategies must consider preventive and planning before a crisis, responding to the crisis, learning from the crisis, and revising after the crisis (Liu, et al., 2022, p.5). Crises are typically conceived as sudden and unexpected events (Riggio & Newstead, 2023). Crises occur when firmly held societal principles are in jeopardy, making the public aware of them. When responding to crises, leaders frequently must choose between opposing principles; how these decisions are presented and supported will determine how sincerely they are accepted (Boin & Mark Rhinard, 2023). These ideals include things like individual liberty and communal safety, for instance.



School

A school is a place where formal education or learning is conducted. This essay uses term to refer to both lower-level and higher-level educational institutions (Nyatuka, 2020).

Leadership

In this paper leadership refers to awareness, alertness, adaptability, change and creativity in managing the schools in times of crisis (Ahmed et al. 2022).

Middle manage

In this article, middle management will be referred to as the involvement of the HODs, the involvement of other teachers, structured lessons, intellectually challenging instruction, a work-centered environment, maximum communication between teachers and students, accurately and efficiently maintaining records, parental and community involvement, a favorable climate, consistency among teachers, a successful division of labor among teachers, and positive parent feedback (Mbangual & Albert, 2022).

This section presents the role of HODs and its challenges, crisis management and resolution in schools, knowledge of technology information and communication to do learning virtually, strategies in managing schools in times of crisis, and communication. It briefly describes HODs, then discusses recent related works. A highly experienced or senior teacher who lacks a career shortfall was promoted to serve as the head of a subject is known as a HOD. In order to manage various tasks in various departments and to comply with various policies, the head of department must also work in concert with the administrations and heads of subjects (Aebsapap, et al., 2022).

How heads of department can bridge the gap between school administrators and teachers?

According to Kemethofer, et al. (2022), the HOD's responsibilities should encompass not just administrative duties, but also organizational and personnel management, as well as oversight of the school's instructional program. Successful HODs are required to respond to the school's requirements and opportunities by focusing on increasing teaching and learning quality. As school leaders, HODs must motivate their personnel, ensuring that their beliefs and moral purpose are in line with the school's overarching vision. Teachers' commitment and drive to achieve organizational goals can be strengthened by providing adequate support. HODs' management and leadership talents, according to Operario (2022), play a key role in a range of organizational systems. Teachers must be held accountable by HODs. They must encourage teachers to supervise students daily. HODs must chastise those teachers who fail to follow instructions and directives. They must hold them accountable for the spread of apathy and warn them that revealing the confidentiality of high management's correspondence and decisions would result in retaliation. HODs must also encourage teachers to stay at school till the end of the school day (Al-Rahamneh, 2022).

HODs must reprimand teachers who disregard rules and regulations. They must hold them responsible for the development of apathy and caution them against disclosing the privacy of senior management's communications and decisions for fear of reprisals. Teachers need to be encouraged by HODs to stay until the conclusion of the school day (Al-Rahamneh, 2022).

The department's annual budget, course rotations, department recruitment, mentoring, evaluation, and retention, development and implementation of department strategies, acting as a liaison between the department and the school administration, and communicating administrative decisions to department teachers are all tasks that fall under the purview of the HOD (Bell, 2022). According to Malinga, et al., the HOD is generally knowledgeable about the topic and the development of school-based assessment tasks in the South African setting (2021). HODs are also expected to participate in lessons, exhibit best practices, and provide teachers with templates and feedback on their lessons. Therefore, as part of their duties, HODs are expected to establish topic goals, directions, and achievement expectations, keep an eye on the effectiveness of instruction and learner and instructor performance levels, and assess instructional strategies and learning. Therefore, HODs must also maximize the work of the educational organization, conduct evaluations, and aid in staff hiring. HODs must view themselves as active instructional leaders

more so than their instructors do. Malinga et al. (2021) discovered that HODs represent teachers on the school management team (SMT) and in subject-department meetings with inspectors in addition to acting as a liaison between management and teachers. HODs simultaneously work within a team, for the team, and lead the team. According to anecdotal data, some HODs do not even have time to guide and influence teachers in their departments (Malinga et al. 2021).

Crisis management and resolution in schools

Individuals with a strong preventative emphasis, according to Miocevic (2022), are more concerned about minimizing losses during times of crisis. HODs with a strong prevention focus would search for security in times of crisis. Such HODs are responsible for ensuring that policies, protocols, and procedures are followed. Because of their work, HODs must assist in supervising, monitoring, inspecting, assessing, and evaluating the development of teachers and students to help strategize for the future in times of crisis. Again, HODs should promote teacher professional development by establishing school-based in-service training programs. They must also inspire and support teachers by providing the required resources and creating a climate that promotes instructional delivery and learning, as well as teacher and learner safety, and guidance and counseling services in times of crises (Amenu, et al. 2022). In times of crises, e.g., during a pandemic, learners and teachers, must be provided with proper virus protection, such as suits and masks. Social responsibility must be a consistent theme when establishing precautionary guidelines and rules for the schools, such as maintaining one-meter distances, staying home when sick, and always wearing masks. It was stressed that these actions should be taken to protect our loved ones and other students (Tan & Chua, 2022). During the times of crises, HODs must work together in teams to ensure that the teaching personnel is properly allocated and that resources are used wisely. It is believed that all members must be able to contribute individually and collectively to the development of novel solutions to complicated challenges. Extra-role conduct, citizenship behavior, social exchange, and reciprocity are common examples of inventive behaviors that must be adopted by HODS to improve performance in schools. HODs must have well-organized crisis management teams that could respond collectively in the event of a crisis. To properly manage crises, HODs must have a strong communication standards and processes (Ahmed, et al. 2022).

The treatment of trauma symptoms and indicators requires a comprehensive approach that HODs might employ. There are a variety of choices, including student characteristics and educational facilities, as well as guidance and counseling, survivors' education, social support, and anxiety management using psychologic and psychopharmacologic approaches. In crisis intervention, the employment of crisis counseling tactics is beneficial. On the other hand, teacher-counselors might not be appropriately staffed with counselors when it comes to establishing guidance and counseling in schools. The relief, aid, or direction that a person or group of people receives via formal or informal interactions to lessen suffering could also be referred to as social support (Lusambili, et al. 2022).

A crisis is defined as "an extraordinary turning point, an emergency occurrence in the life of the organization that loses the balance" by Kadum and Al-Malah (2022). To deal with crises, a strategy as a preventive plan must always be accessible (Kadum & Al-Malah, 2022).

Schools in challenging circumstances frequently share a number of problematic traits, including: (1) students from low-income or unemployed families; (2) a student population dominated by a nonhegemonic ethnicity or a multiethnic composition; (3) a high ratio of students who do not master the teaching language; (4) parents who do not adequately support their children's learning; and (5) a challenging socio-spatial location (e.g., urban, inner city, rural) (Berkovich1 & Grinshtain, 2022, p.111). The Covid-19 global crisis has been described as a high-impact, slow-burning catastrophe that had enormous effects on global communities, stressed social and political infrastructures, and caused an unprecedented crisis in education. While the Covid-19



issue prompted global action, the schooling crisis continues to be plagued by managerial discourses of delay (Boersma, et al. 2022).

Knowledge of technology information and communication to do learning virtually.

Ovcharuk, et al. (2022) list the lack of knowledge of digital tools for distance learning in contemporary settings among HODs and teachers as one of the biggest problems in education today. Additionally, in today's digital environment, educational systems struggle with a dearth of teaching resources, guidelines for using technology to teach their courses, and teacher preparation for using digital tools in the workplace. HODs are expected to discover opportunities and support teachers in enhancing their digital competencies, as well as to grow their own abilities and those of their instructors. Teachers who lack the skills to effectively use digital devices into their lessons might learn how to do so if the materials are made available. However, not all instructors have access to top-notch professional resources to aid in their understanding of and use of technology (Ibid, 2022).

Crises and disasters frequently serve as catalysts for the adoption of efficient and effective information systems (IS) that can support businesses in the face of upcoming crises. When making decisions, it's critical to have relevant and easily accessible information on hand. Information is required for advancement at all levels, whether social, institutional, or governmental; without it, there can be no knowledge or reasonable decision-making. Modern technology has made it feasible to interact with information in a transparent manner and to benefit from it in a variety of ways. Information systems are one of an organization's most important resources, allowing it to achieve and build a real-time decision-making process that improves the rationalization of economic resources and meets organizational goals (Dalloul et al. 2022). As a result, any information system's success could be determined by the following factors: (1) The information system's quality level: this is a level that pertains to the information system itself, including the technology it relies on to create it as well as the outputs and services it offers. (2) The user's level of influence: This is a level related to the users of the information system who handle and assess the information system's quality. This is demonstrated by the frequency with which they use the system and the degree to which they are satisfied with it. (3) The general or final impact level: This refers to a level concerned with the information system's final benefits and times it takes to achieve the goals for which it was created, whether at the organizational, individual, or beneficiary level, depending on their diversity and differences (Dalloul et al. 2022).

Social media are independent information systems that can be applied in numerous contexts, both in terms of time and space. Fast information extraction and transmission, which is one of social media's key strengths, can be of great assistance to HODs who are taking the lead in crisis management. For instance, social media communication could be crucial for schools during natural disasters like floods or man-made crises like terrorist attacks when there is an urgent need to locate current situational information and effectively disseminate it among directly and indirectly affected stakeholders. There's also a need to make sure that information spreads more widely and has a greater impact than unfounded rumors or deliberate misinformation (Basyurt, et al., 2021). The availability of computers and Internet connection, particularly among students, is one of the most pressing issues to be addressed (Zepeda & Quintero, 2022).

Janakovi (2022) advise that HODs need to rely on cloud computing during times of crises. Because cloud-based services may rapidly adapt to the needs of any organization by providing a wide range of services, cloud computing enables flexibility. Due to the immediate payment of cloud computing services and the absence of initial infrastructure investments, it can initially save money. There is a reduction in the requirements for purchasing expensive apps because they are now accessible via the cloud via an Internet browser. There is no need to buy hardware-intensive computers, create data backups, or outfit pricey server rooms because the provider takes care of everything. Another advantage is complete usage and access to Office apps for a low monthly fee, provided you have a computer and an Internet connection. With better collaboration, workers may share apps and work on papers from their desks simultaneously, see coworkers and records in real

time, and receive updated data. Since cloud computing offers automatic software updates, i.e., server maintenance by the provider, including software upgrades and security updates, users have more time and resources to finish other tasks. There is a clear document management system in place because instructors and other staff members can email files from one location to another. Although the machine has not changed, the user still has secured access to data. Using cloud computing during times of crisis can allow HODs and teachers in schools to work from anywhere, resulting in elasticity that improves employee work-life balance and productivity. The ability to streamline software engineering tasks and lessen any crises is made possible by cloud computing, which makes use of computers, memory, and other resources over a network (Ibid, 2022).

Strategies in managing schools in times of crisis.

The ability of schools to innovate, adapt, and support teachers in assisting one another varies from school to school and country to country. School capacities, on the other hand, can be strengths during uncertain times as well as valuable in coping with difficulties like the Covid-19 pandemic crisis because they generate good solutions to challenges. Schools have had to rely on out-of-the-box thinking and techniques to keep learning continuing when school budgets have been cut. Teachers having prior expertise with online training may be able to use online platforms to communicate and disseminate information. Teachers and students must have access to computers in order to participate in e-learning activities (Siambi, 2022). According to Thakur and Hale (2022), crises can be internally or externally produced. Internal crises result from management or employee negligence whereas external crises are created by unanticipated and unavoidable events that are not directly related to the business. When a business is exposed to possible losses from the external environment, defensive measures are used to fend off numerous competitors and protect its competitive advantage or position in the market. By using the organization's competitive advantage to keep potential attackers (i.e., competitors) at bay, defensive strategy aims to dissuade potential attackers. HODs may resolve crises through forced compliance when the company is required to do so by rules, such as government policies or laws, in order to address stakeholder losses or concerns. The opposite of mandatory compliance is voluntary compliance, in which the company voluntarily addresses the issue and stakeholder losses or complaints. "Super efforts" are when a business voluntarily goes above and beyond to manage and overcome a problem (Thakur & Hale, 2022, p.7).

Crises are periods of disequilibrium that disrupt routine behaviors and ways of thinking and lead to a number of policy modifications. An important turning point at which new policy trajectories and long-term policy changes are established is a crisis. Endogenous crises in education, however, can be brought on by a number of factors, such as demand-side dissatisfaction with the current educational system, unequal working conditions for teachers, or subpar performance in international evaluations. Endogenous factors frequently result in small adjustments, which take the form of new policy instruments being adopted or existing ones being adjusted (Zancajo, Verger & Bolea, 2022). Reimers and Marmolejo (2022) found that despite the challenging circumstances created by physical separation, educational institutions ranging from pre-schools to universities have employed a variety of methods to provide some form of educational continuity to carry out their instructional mission. Generally, this required prompt development and execution of alternative distribution techniques as well as continuing adaptation based on what they discovered about the effectiveness of the employed strategies. As a result, to continue operating and provide educational opportunities despite the geographical constraints, schools and colleges launched an unparalleled global innovation effort in response to the pandemic's disruption. Some pupils were found to lack the self-control skills necessary to learn effectively online and more independently than they did in conventional classrooms (Ibid, 2022). Furthermore, a good awareness of today's social and cultural developments would aid adolescents in adapting to and integrating into various contexts while maintaining healthy self-esteem. In addition to the guidance and counseling teacher working with them, schools require qualified



student peer counselors. Such students have the advantage of being able to communicate with their classmates informally in class, during games, in the dorms, and at any other moment when the occasion arises (Kagama, 2022).

Meshram et al. (2022) advise HODs to prioritize students' self-regulated learning during times of crisis, such as the Covid-19 outbreak. Students need to be encouraged to consciously choose to study if interrupted face-to-face learning situations do not offer them the same possibilities. Hence, the HODs must recognize the importance of the gap to enhance student learning amid disruptive situations. HODs should be aware of established processes in times of crisis, according to Fersch et al. (2022). By learning about the crisis via the media's information and utilizing that knowledge as the basis for a careful adaptation of their everyday activities to the new situation, they can maintain their composure and sense of reason in the face of the disaster. Digital knowledge access and the ability to interact with people might help this challenging process. HODs are required to abide by official recommendations based on reflexive, regular, functionally generalized trust. The focus should be on functionally specialized trust that is reflective; for instance, HODs should investigate the backgrounds of persons making suggestions and distinguish between qualified specialists and politicians (Ibid, 2022).

According to Zacher and Rudolph (2022), crisis management should be viewed as an effort to bring a disrupted or weakened system back online at any point throughout a crisis. According to study, employees who develop their cognitive, behavioral, emotion-regulation, and relational skills are better able to anticipate crises and adapt and react to them. Organizations could create and adopt strategies that enable staff to become resilient and successfully foresee and handle crises (e.g., performance management and training). Susilo and Prayudi (2022) recognized three phases: pre-crisis (prevention and readiness), crisis reaction, and post-crisis (recovery). Pre-crisis actions are those conducted by the organization prior to the crisis. When a crisis arises, an organization is in the crisis response phase. Management focuses on responding to crises and getting the company back to normal functioning. Action is required amid a crisis, and the business must provide some sort of response. Post-crisis refers to the rehabilitation and preventative phase that comes after a crisis.

Any crisis can be broken down into stages, as stated by Kadum and Al-Malah (2022). These stages include: (i) A scenario that arises due to ambiguity and causes doubt, astonishment, and disbelief regarding what is happening is known as the shock stage. It is inversely proportional to human knowledge and awareness. (ii) The stage of degeneration begins after the shock, and indicators of doubt and bewilderment appear more frequently, along with symptoms like a rise in the quantity of unproductive work (chaotic works). (iii) The stage of recognition, which comes after absorbing the shock, is the rationality of thinking, as a process of thorough awareness and investigation of the issue starts to dismantle it. (iv) During the adaptation stage, the organization uses predetermined plans and procedures as well as material and human resources to manage and mitigate the effects of the changes. Since teaching has moved online, using new teaching methodologies in unheard-of ways, and delivering lessons via electronic platforms, teachers are required to change their methods quickly. On the other side, some HODs and instructors could find it challenging to utilize technology as opposed to changing their practices to accommodate online or remote learning. They can simply provide teachers advice to give students too much homework and to use archive-based platforms rather than discussion-based ones. These circumstances might emphasize the importance of a system of assistance for schools that rely on their current collaborations with certain higher education institutions (HEI) (Costa et al. 2022).

According to Berkovich and Grinshtain,m(2022), HODs should make a distinction between loving leadership that is focused on crisis management and loving leadership that is focused on vision, with the former showing up in caring behaviors and the latter in consideration behaviors. Similarly, vision-oriented tough leadership differs from crisis management-oriented harsh leadership in that the latter exhibits structure-initiating behaviors while the former exhibits zero tolerance behaviors. In order to lead effectively in challenging conditions, a leader must possess

both hard and soft qualities. A tough-love leader (Head of Department) in a demanding school may adopt loving consideration behaviors but switch to severe zero-tolerance behaviors when violent events occur. For the benefit of the students, tough love HODs leaders in schools must be able to choose between the two elements and strike a balance between them.

According to Soraya et al. (2022), HODs acting as learning activity leaders must use the right approach to carry out online learning that supports governmental policy. The Covid-19 has ushered in a new era of habits, and classroom management strategies are being implemented to keep learning activity at the same level as it was prior to the epidemic. The department head is in charge of putting online learning activities into place in the event of a pandemic catastrophe. In order to lead in schools, the head of department must fulfill a number of requirements. To raise the quantity and caliber of infrastructure utilized in schools, HODs and school administrators can work together to increase the purchase of auxiliary buildings and infrastructure, such as computer laboratories, internet networks, learning resources, teaching aids, and ICT-based learning media. The head of department should manage and oversee the development of ICT in schools. HODs who keep up with technological advancements can encourage, direct, and encourage teachers in the implementation and development of education. Teachers will be able to understand the demands of the school. Training programs and educational activities can help teachers become more proficient in using ICT in the classroom. Leadership's role should be to persuade schools to provide teachers with ICT training and expertise. As a communication leader, HODs must have strong communication skills to effectively convey information to the public and other company employees while preventing misunderstandings. The department head, working with teachers and other school staff, shall inform and encourage students to participate in online learning activities at home with their parents or guardians during the outbreak. Covid-19. When measuring the digital proficiency of HODs, it is crucial to take into account organizational goals, task evaluation and teamwork, establishing an open environment with the effect of a collaborative atmosphere to handle conflict situations, communication, and creativity (Soraya et al. 2022).

Communication

Crisis communication is derived from public relations, according to Zhang et al. (2022). To maintain the stability of teaching and learning in schools, crisis communication by HODs must be planned to control the school community's attitudes toward crisis occurrences and reduce associated hazard perceptions through messaging. Parental engagement can take many different forms, including home involvement (such as helping with schoolwork), school involvement (such as volunteering), and home-school communication (e.g., talking with teacher about assignments). HODs are in charge of promoting parental involvement and putting it into school policies intended to increase student achievement (Kirksey, et al., 2022). The involvement of parents in their children's education can promote their physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Parental involvement in their children's academic success is unquestionably more important at times of crisis than it was prior to in-home schooling (Wijayanti, et al. 2022). Parental involvement can take many different forms, including parenting, home-based learning, communication, community involvement, and decision-making. The first four areas prompted discussion about parents' knowledge of the curriculum and their children's learning processes, the kinds of learning activities occurring at home, the resources used to aid learning, and the level of support provided by schools and teachers. These questions can be used to interpret the significance of parents' experiences during the pandemic and their level of involvement with their children's education. It's also important to look at how parents interact with one another, and the web content, movies, and extracurricular activities provided by nearby institutions like libraries and museums. Making decisions is crucial because they define how much support the school will offer to parents and kids (Bates et al. 2021). As instructional leaders, HODs are responsible for (a) ensuring that all other aspects of education (such as administration, organization, and finance) support a more robust core technology and improved student learning, as well as (b) maintaining a consistent focus on the



core technologies of education (such as instruction, curriculum, and assessment) (Cravens & Zhao, 2022, p.1-2). In managerial decision-making, it is thought that HODs are endowed with perfect reason and, as such, may construct normative judgment procedures for dealing with school crises. The function of emotions in every decision-making process is recognized by decision-making theory (Tagliaro & Hua, 2022).

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The research design is the framework within which the author chose the research methods and approaches. The author used the research methodologies that are appropriate for the topic. A research design provides a guiding framework to scientific discourse informed by scientific knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes (Thomas & Dew, 2022). More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Melo and Dourado (2022), hampered or even shut down authors' physical access to the field. As a result, web research has aided the author in gathering knowledge from afar. Countless research around the world have moved online with considerable changes in their original objectives, so writing the conceptual paper is not ridiculous. The paper explored the role of HODs in managing schools in times of crisis. The methodology for this paper was qualitative in nature. Interpretivism was used as a paradigm in exploring the topic. Methods used in gathering information was through a literature review.

Research model

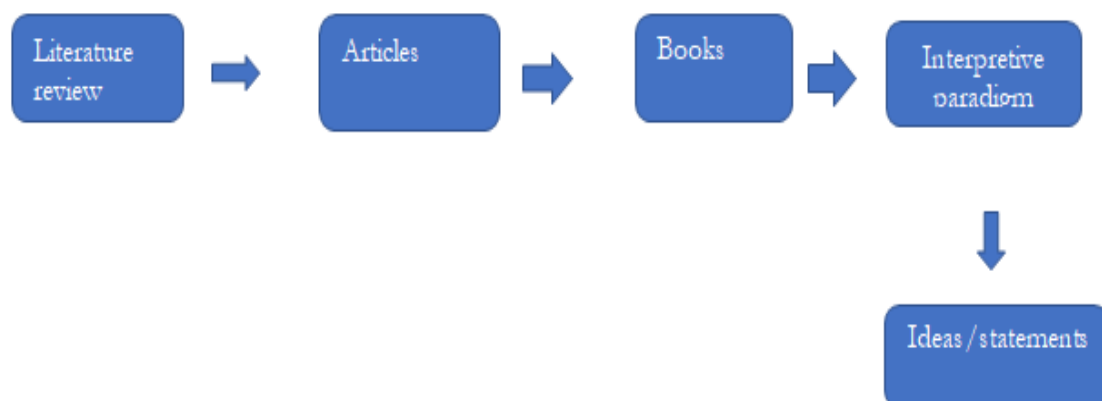


Figure: 1 Research model

The paper adopted a qualitative method, with data collected through a literature review of articles and books, and the interpretative paradigm was used to analyze other authors' remarks and findings to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. The review of literature is important because without it one cannot be able to know what has been researched, how was it done and what is not known about the topic. The collected information provided the conceptual framework of supporting the HODs in times of crises.

Research objective

The objective of this paper was to determine the way the HODs can manage schools in times of crises. The HODs should know what to do in times of crises when managing schools.

Data collection tools-documents

The author used articles and books in compiling the paper. The author preferred to draw on a wide range of sources. The literature review approach was utilized to obtain data by examining things such as articles and books that were relevant to the problem of the functions of HODs in

crisis management. A thorough literature study considers several sources, including academic publications and scholarly books. The criteria for identifying literature were based on the appropriate topics found in books and articles connected to the issue from 1988 to 2023.

Research question

The overarching question that this article explored was: What is the role of heads of department in managing schools in times of crisis?

Data analysis

The interpretive paradigm was used to assess the findings of other authors of articles and books in order to make sense of what this work was examining. Books, book articles and articles provide more clarity on conceptual underpinnings of the role of HODs in managing schools in times of crises. Therefore, the author collected books and articles in English language from 1988 to 2023.

Procedure

This is a conceptual paper that was put together using data from 1988 to 2023. The study employed a qualitative approach as well as an interpretive paradigm. A literature review was conducted to learn more about the subject. According to Burns et al. (2022), an interpretive paradigm author acts toward things based on the meanings that those things have for them. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the thing he [or she] encounters. The meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of, the social interaction with other people. The interpretive phenomenological author must take into account how the philosophical concepts of embodiment, spatiality, temporality, and caring relate to the nature of human being. Thus, preunderstandings are the setting in which interpretation takes place, in accordance with interpretive phenomenology. The outcomes of an interpretive phenomenological investigation are co-constructed in this manner. An interpretive phenomenological study starts with the author raising a question that seeks to comprehend the essence of being human in a particular circumstance and, in doing so, may allow for the access of what is concealed and so inform methods for change.

Interpretivism infuses human interest into a study since it asks authors to interpret what they have discovered from their findings. Interpretive academics contend that social constructs like language, consciousness, and shared meaning derived from the research of other scholars are the sole means by which to access reality (whether it be predetermined or socially constructed). The reality of interpretivism is a subjective ontological assumption of interpretivism is multiple realities and multiple interpretations, relativism -local and specific constructed realities. Moreover, epistemological assumptions are individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus, transactional/ subjectivist; created findings (Ikram & Kenayathulla, 2022). A review article must always aim to advance the topic of study in addition to just presenting the current state of research in a descriptive manner. This can be achieved by the article by identifying research gaps and potential research issues (Kraus et al. 2021).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In times of crisis, if there is no proper crisis management by HODs in schools, there may be uncertainty. A crisis could easily disrupt a school's usual operations if it is not handled correctly by HODs (Kukanja et al., 2022). Time is of the essence in times of crisis, and a competent HOD must make the most of it by prioritizing, scheduling, and organizing things as quickly as possible (Alazmi & Alhajeri, 2022). For education stakeholders, particularly HODs, the times at which teachers carry out their obligations is and should be a subject of concern. As a result, HODs must guarantee that teachers fulfill their duties as part of their administrative responsibilities. As a result, the way HODs carry out their management responsibilities must impact on instructional quality and teaching and learning standards in schools. As instructional leaders, HODs must maintain a constant focus on the core business of education (e.g., instruction, curriculum, and assessment), as



well as (b) ensuring that all other aspects of education (e.g., administration, organization, and finance) support improved student learning (Cravens & Zhao, 2022). In times of crisis, parents' contributions to their children's success are more important than they were before in-home schooling (Wijayanti et al. 2022). Parental involvement must include parenting, homeschooling, communication, community involvement, and decision-making. According to Thakur and Hale (2022), externally induced crises are those that arise from unanticipated and unavoidable circumstances that are not directly related to the organization. When an organization is vulnerable to external losses, defensive strategies must be devised to ward off a slew of competitors and protect the organization's competitive edge position. HODs should make a distinction between vision-oriented loving leadership and crisis management-oriented loving leadership, the former of which manifests in caring behaviors and the latter in consideration behaviors, according to Berkovich and Grinshtain (2022).

Similarly, crisis management-oriented harsh leadership varies from vision-oriented harsh leadership, with the former displaying zero tolerance behaviors and the latter displaying structure-initiating behaviors. In times of crises, Janakovi (2022) advises HODs to use cloud computing. Because cloud-based services may swiftly adapt to the needs of any organization by offering a wide collection of services, cloud computing offers flexibility. Cloud computing services can initially be less expensive because they are paid for immediately and don't need any infrastructure investments beforehand. Meshram et al. (2022) advise HODs to use students' self-regulated learning as the main teaching strategy during times of crisis, such as the Covid-19 outbreak. If interrupted face-to-face learning situations do not offer students the same opportunities, they must be encouraged to actively choose to learn. HODs must understand the significance of the gap to improve student learning in the face of adversity. HODs should become aware of and follow established procedures in times of crisis (Fersch et al. 2022).

According to Chen and Zhang (2022), principals need to be exceptional in terms of professional skill, professional title, and experiences to help HODs. Although the tasks and responsibilities of HODs frequently overlap with those of the school principal, most of their job responsibilities and descriptions are highly influenced by those demands. As a result, HODs are required by their principals to possess abilities in managing students, instructional leadership, and people. Mentorship has been demonstrated to support the development of HODs' knowledge and talents, confidence, and self-efficacy in schools despite the demanding responsibilities. Gonzales and Roberts (2022, pp. 8–9) state that principals should provide HODs with leadership skills such as managing classrooms, understanding school and district politics and cultures, curriculum, making decisions, and collaborating with staff. There is, however, little time for a HOD to learn from the school principal, who must act as a role model and mentor to the HODs in schools, because the majority of a HOD's day is spent dealing with student discipline, supervising students during non-instructional activities, overseeing classroom coverage, class scheduling, and other minor administrative tasks.

The principal is the instructional leader who must support HODs in taking accountability for the accomplishments and shortcomings of their departments. A good leader puts others' needs above their own. Furthermore, a capable administrator is always looking for ways to enhance the work of HODs in schools, no matter how bad the situation is. The efficiency of any HOD will depend on the principal's direction. As a result, a principal is essential to a HOD's success, and a principal who isn't a leader may find it difficult to encourage HODs (Mbangula & Albert, 2022). The principal must be able to deal with the many difficulties that HODs raise and persuade them that he or she would do everything in his or her power to enhance their departments. In summary, the principle must help the HODs comprehend administrative accountability issues and how accountability systems function. HODs need to be aware of a few concerns related to administrative accountability systems, including as setting goals, determining who is accountable for educational accomplishments, placing pressure on teachers, and embracing administrative

responsibility and its potential effects. Principals must assist HODs in identifying the obstacles to accountability systems for this reason (Al-Rahamneh, 2022).

PRACTICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This article provides evidence in favour of the notion that HODs' responsibilities for running schools during emergencies must be situation specific. Policymakers need to be mindful that what works in one system of education may not be easily applied to another. HODs must value instructional contacts with the principal, teachers, and students even though they are socialized as teachers themselves. HODs need to be aware that managing schools during crises takes time and may prevent them from giving their unique leadership responsibilities as HODs their full attention.

4. CONCLUSION

The article discussed the role of HODs, crisis management and resolution in schools, knowledge of technology information and communication to do learning virtually, strategies in managing schools in times of crisis, and communication. There was a need for HODs to have strategies to manage in crises, especially curricula management to better prepare schools for future challenges. HODs are expected to develop policies for online learning in schools by consulting with the appropriate teachers and school administrators, enhancing the facilities and caliber of ICT infrastructure for learning activities in schools, enhancing the caliber of human resources in integrating IT for learning activities, corresponding with parents and guardians of students at home, and educating students about online learning activities (Soraya, et al., 2022). The role of HODs in guaranteeing quality and teaching in schools during times of crisis cannot be overstated. HODs have a significant impact on the success of teaching and learning in schools as administrators and leaders because they influence all aspects of the school's activities through their behavior and character. HODs need to have well-coordinated crisis management teams on hand so they can act as a unit in the case of an emergency. HODs should rely on cloud computing during emergencies. Because cloud-based services may rapidly adapt to the needs of any organization by providing a wide range of services, cloud computing enables flexibility. HODs having prior expertise with online training may be able to use online platforms to communicate and help teachers and students in disseminating information. Teachers and students ought to have access to computers for them to participate in e-learning activities in times crises. Given the many responsibilities of HODs in managing schools during times of crisis, I contend that additional leadership knowledge, abilities, and dispositions are required for determining directions and controlling instructional processes in the face of extreme contextual shifts. As a result, future research is needed to focus on HODs' management methods and duties in managing schools during times of sustained crisis, such as managing instructional quality during difficult periods as the recent Covid-19. Scholars should also make more attempts to understand the roots of crises, as this could yield new and valuable insights into their progression.

SUGGESTIONS

HODs, as instructional leaders should consistently focus on technology by ensuring that all other aspects of schooling work in support of technology to improve student learning. HODs ought to involve parents in schools in helping students to develop physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually in times of crisis. It is suggested that when HODs exercise their administrative law (exercise of power), they should be 100 percent supported by their school principals in carrying out their legal responsibilities. Principals should have high standards and hold HODs accountable to those same standards. There is little chance of creating and sustaining a high-quality learning environment in schools without a qualified and dedicated instructional leader. According to Nnochiri and Robert-Okah (2022), principals' decision-making communication



techniques, collaborative problem-solving techniques, and containment management measures can help resolve crises in schools

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