
Uncovering the Human Resource Development Practices in Northern Mindanao: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study explored human resource development (HRD) practices within the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao, emphasizing the lived experiences of HRD specialists in implementing professional development initiatives. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), data were collected from 13 purposively selected HRD specialists. Open-ended questions examined HRD practices, professional development needs, challenges in implementation, and program effectiveness. The coding and thematic analysis process revealed a structured framework encompassing leadership, well-being, technological skills, collaboration, and opportunities for advanced education. Key challenges included limited funding, inadequate staffing, resource accessibility issues, and inefficient organizational processes. Effective evaluation strategies highlighted measurable improvements in skills, competencies, and job performance among educators. The findings stress the critical need for prioritizing HRD programs to align with school division goals. With this, Schools Division Superintendents are urged to allocate sufficient resources, staffing, and materials to enhance the delivery and impact of professional development initiatives.

Keywords: HRD practices, assessment, challenges, and interpretative phenomenological analysis

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Development (HRD) practices in the education sector are critical for ensuring the continuous improvement of teaching and administrative staff, ultimately enhancing the quality of education provided to students. Common HRD practices in the education sector include professional development programs, performance evaluations, and capacity-building initiatives (Keltu, 2024). These programs aim to develop the competencies of teachers, school heads, and administrative staff, ensuring that they remain effective in delivering quality education (DepEd Order No. 024, 2020). Additionally, many education sectors have adopted mentoring systems (Bowman, 2014) peer reviews Keinänenet et al. (2023), and workshops (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012) to align individual goals with institutional objectives.

One of the pressing issues in HRD in the education sector is the overlapping of activities, where various programs or training sessions overlap in schedule or content, leading to inefficiencies. For instance, teachers often attend multiple seminars and workshops within the same academic year, many of which cover similar topics (Ayagbil & Alda, 2024). This results in redundancy, reduced effectiveness of the training, and wasted resources. Another common issue is the assignment of functions not related to the Key Result Areas (KRA) of personnel, especially teachers. Many teachers are burdened with tasks unrelated to their core teaching responsibilities, such as administrative work, event organizing, or extracurricular activities (Arañas, 2023). These additional tasks detract from the time and energy teachers could devote to instructional planning, student engagement, and professional growth.

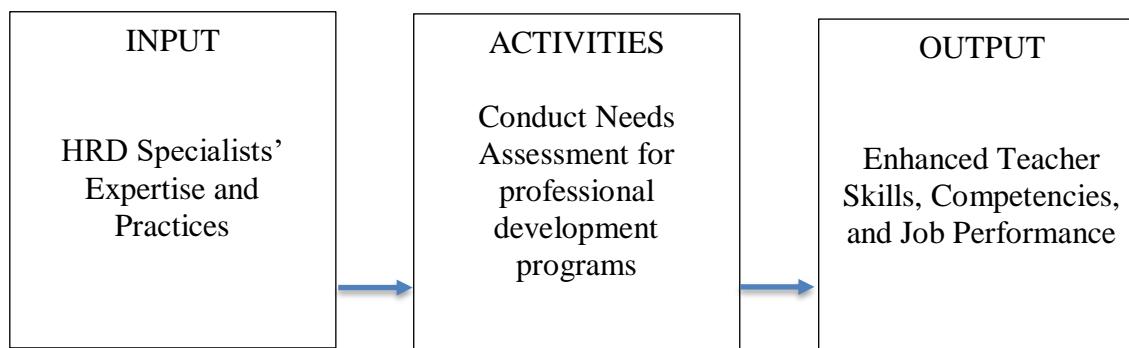
Essentially, undermanning in the HRD departments is another significant concern. Many divisions in the education sector face a shortage of HRD personnel relative to the increasing number of employees that need development and training (Tanjung, 2020). This imbalance often results in delays in the implementation of professional development programs and inadequate support for educators. The organizational structure of the education sector at the regional level is not always align with the number of HRD personnel available at the

division level. For example, studies have highlighted discrepancies in staffing, with regions often being better resourced than divisions, leading to challenges in adequately addressing personnel needs at the local level (UNESCO, 2019; DepEd, 2021). There is often a disproportionate allocation of HRD personnel, with regions receiving more HRD resources compared to divisions, even though divisions handle a larger number of employees directly (García, & Weiss, 2017). This lack of equitable distribution of resources results in divisions struggling to meet the professional development needs of their staff, creating a bottleneck in the system.

Uncovering HRD practices in the education sector is essential for the continuous improvement of the workforce. However, despite the growing body of research on HRD, there is a noticeable gap in studies focusing on the specific challenges faced in the context of Northern Mindanao. Issues such as overlapping activities, tasks unrelated to Key Result Areas (KRAs), understaffing, and misalignment within the organizational structure have been identified as challenges that impact effectiveness in various regions. For example, a study conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) revealed that overlapping functions within government agencies often lead to inefficiencies in service delivery (CSC, 2020). Additionally, a report by the Department of Education (DepEd) highlighted the misallocation of tasks not aligned with KRAs, contributing to staff burnout and reduced productivity (DepEd, 2021). Undermanning has also been cited in regions where the teacher-to-student ratio remains high, limiting the ability to meet educational targets effectively (UNESCO, 2019).

To address this research gap, this study intended to explore and analyze the HRD practices in the education sector in Northern Mindanao, aiming to provide insights that can help mitigate these issues and enhance workforce development in this specific regional context.

Conceptual Model



This conceptual model illustrates the flow of human resource development within the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao, emphasizing how HRD specialists' expertise and practices serve as the foundational input for implementing professional development initiatives. These inputs drive the core activity of conducting needs assessments, which allows HRD specialists to identify priority areas, capability gaps, and learning requirements among teachers. Through this systematic assessment process, appropriate professional development programs are designed and delivered. The resulting output reflects enhanced teacher skills, competencies, and job performance, demonstrating how the effective application of HRD specialists' expertise leads to meaningful improvements in instructional quality and professional growth across schools.

Research Questions

The objective of the study was to uncover the human resource development practices in the Department of Education in Northern Mindanao.

Specifically, this paper sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the HRD practices implemented by HRD specialists in the school division offices?
2. How do HRD specialists assess the professional development needs of teachers and non-teaching staff?

3. What challenges do HRD specialists encounter in implementing HRD programs and initiatives?
4. How do HRD specialists evaluate the effectiveness of HRD programs in enhancing the skills and competencies of educators?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews relevant literature from a variety of sources with the goal of uncovering key human resource development practices and their impact on workforce improvement.

HRD Practices in Dep ED

In the Department of Education (DepEd) divisions in the Philippines, HRD specialists implement a range of practices designed to enhance the professional growth and effectiveness of teaching and non-teaching personnel. One of the key HRD practices is the Learning and Development (L&D) system, which includes workshops, seminars, and training programs focused on pedagogy, leadership, and administrative skills. These programs are designed to address the competencies outlined in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBS-SH), ensuring that teachers and school leaders are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the education system (DepEd Order No.42, 2017). The L&D system is often customized to the needs of the division, with specialists conducting Training Needs Assessments (TNA) to identify priority areas for professional development.

HRD specialists also facilitate the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), which aligns individual performance with organizational goals. Through RPMS, teachers and administrative staff undergo regular evaluations, allowing HRD personnel to monitor progress and provide targeted support to improve performance. This practice promotes accountability and ensures that personnel are consistently working towards achieving the Key Result Areas (KRAs) relevant to their roles. Additionally, the RPMS process is complemented by coaching and mentoring programs, where more experienced staff provide guidance and support to less experienced colleagues, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration (Llego, 2021).

To address emerging challenges in the digital age, DepEd HRD specialists have also integrated ICT-based professional development programs. These initiatives include training in digital literacy, online teaching strategies, and the use of DepEd's Learning Management System (LMS) to ensure that teachers are equipped to handle blended learning and remote teaching modalities. These ICT-based programs have become especially crucial during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as teachers and learners alike have had to adapt to new modes of teaching and learning. The HRD efforts in this area reflect a commitment to modernizing the education workforce and ensuring their readiness for a technology-driven environment (DepEd, 2022).

Assessment of the Professional Development Needs

HRD specialists assess the professional development needs of teachers and non-teaching staff through Training Needs Assessments (TNA) and competency evaluations. This process helps identify specific areas where teachers and administrative personnel require further development, ensuring that training programs are aligned with the actual needs of the workforce. Based on the TNA results, HRD specialists design and implement targeted professional development initiatives such as workshops, in-service training, and coaching sessions. These initiatives are often focused on improving teaching strategies, leadership skills, and administrative competencies to enhance overall educational outcomes (Corpuz, 2020).

In addition to these assessments, HRD specialists facilitate continuous learning and mentoring programs to support both new and experienced personnel. These programs create opportunities for peer collaboration and knowledge-sharing, helping individuals enhance their skills over time. Mentorship, particularly, plays a critical role in guiding newly hired teachers and staff, allowing them to acclimate to their roles and improve their performance through direct, practical support from more seasoned colleagues. This approach ensures that personnel development is not a one-time event but an ongoing process integrated into the workplace culture (Hill et al., 2022).

Moreover, HRD specialists also incorporate performance management systems such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) to evaluate individual progress. These evaluations are based on key competencies and responsibilities, allowing specialists to monitor growth and identify further development opportunities. Through RPMS, performance gaps can be addressed by designing personalized interventions or additional training to ensure that every staff member is equipped to meet both their individual Key Result Areas (KRAs) and the organizational goals (Llego, 2021).

Challenges in Implementing HRD Programs and Initiatives

HRD specialists within the Department of Education (DepEd) encounter several challenges in implementing HRD programs and initiatives, particularly in terms of resource limitations. A primary challenge is budget constraints, as many divisions face insufficient funding to fully execute training programs and development initiatives for teaching and non-teaching personnel. This limits their ability to provide comprehensive training opportunities, especially in remote areas where logistical costs for organizing workshops, seminars, and other professional development activities are significantly higher (DepEd Order, 2022). As a result, some schools did not receive equal access to quality HRD programs, leading to disparities in professional growth opportunities across different regions.

Another challenge is overlapping responsibilities and administrative workload, which often distracts teachers and non-teaching staff from fully participating in professional development programs. HRD specialists often struggle to schedule training sessions that accommodate the busy workloads of educators, who are frequently tasked with administrative duties beyond their teaching roles (Tarraya, 2024). Additionally, HRD specialists themselves were overburdened, handling multiple roles that prevent them from focusing entirely on HRD activities. This can lead to delays in the implementation of programs and hinder the effectiveness of HRD initiatives.

Furthermore, resistance to change and lack of engagement are significant challenges in the implementation of HRD programs. Teachers and staff sometimes were reluctant to adopt new methods or participate in training due to a lack of motivation, skepticism about the relevance of the training, or comfort with established routines (Gorospe & Edaniol, 2022). HRD specialists must work to overcome this resistance by demonstrating the benefits of these programs, providing incentives, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Effective communication and strong leadership support are essential in mitigating this challenge and encouraging active participation in HRD initiatives.

Evaluation of HRD Programs

HRD specialists evaluate the effectiveness of HRD programs by using various assessment tools and methodologies to determine how well these programs enhance the skills and competencies of teachers. One of the most commonly used approaches is the Kirkpatrick Model, which evaluates training outcomes at four levels: reaction (participants' feedback), learning (knowledge gained), behavior (changes in job performance), and results (impact on organizational goals) (Llego, 2021). Specialists collect data through surveys, tests, and performance reviews to measure how effectively the training programs have improved teachers' competencies in areas such as instructional strategies, classroom management, and leadership skills.

In addition to formal evaluation models, HRD specialists often rely on performance appraisals and feedback mechanisms, such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), to assess how professional development programs translate into better teaching practices and student outcomes. These systems track teachers' performance based on key indicators aligned with their Key Result Areas (KRAs) and provide ongoing feedback through classroom observations, mentoring, and coaching (Sugot & Ladia, 2024). By continuously monitoring and adjusting HRD initiatives, specialists ensure that training programs are responsive to the evolving needs of educators and contribute meaningfully to their professional growth.

In synthesis, the related studies on HRD practices in the education sector highlight the importance of structured professional development programs, such as the Learning and Development (L&D) system and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), in enhancing the skills and competencies of teachers and

non-teaching staff. However, challenges such as budget constraints, overlapping responsibilities, and resistance to change hinder the full implementation of these initiatives. HRD specialists utilize various evaluation methods, including the Kirkpatrick Model and 360-degree feedback, to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Despite these efforts, gaps remain, particularly in addressing issues such as the mismatch between organizational structures and HRD personnel allocation, as well as the need for more region-specific research, especially in areas like Northern Mindanao, to tailor HRD practices effectively to local needs.

The insights from the analysis of HRD practices in DepEd divisions emphasize the integral role of structured systems such as the Learning and Development (L&D) system and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) in cultivating professional growth among teaching and non-teaching personnel. These initiatives align with national competency standards, ensuring teaching and non-teaching staff are equipped to meet evolving demands, particularly in areas like ICT and blended learning. However, significant challenges such as budget constraints, workload pressures, and resistance to change hinder the full potential of these programs. Effective solutions include tailored training through needs assessments, mentorship, and evaluation models like the Kirkpatrick Model to ensure alignment with organizational goals and sustained professional improvement. The findings indicate the need for equitable access to resources, stronger leadership support, and region-specific adaptations to bridge gaps and optimize HRD initiatives across diverse educational contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of HRD specialists in implementing human resource development practices within the Divisions of DepEd Northern Mindanao. IPA is an approach that focuses on understanding how individuals make sense of their personal and social worlds (Rajasinghe et al., 2024), making it particularly suited for examining the specific HRD practices and experiences of these specialists.

Central to IPA is its double hermeneutic process, where the researcher sought to interpret how participants make meaning of their own experiences. The steps in IPA included collecting rich and detailed data through methods like semi-structured interviews, immersing in the data through repeated readings, and making detailed initial notes that capture descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual elements. Themes were then developed from the data, connected to form overarching patterns, and presented in a narrative account that integrates participants' quotes and researcher interpretations. For multiple participants, cross-case analysis was conducted to identify shared patterns and unique perspectives. The findings were then contextualized within broader theoretical and social frameworks, providing a comprehensive understanding of the participants' lived experiences. This process ensures a detailed and reflective examination of HRD practices.

The flexibility of IPA is crucial for examining the diverse, context-specific HRD practices in Northern Mindanao. Drawing on Creswell and Poth's (2018) guidance, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to elicit rich, detailed narratives from HRD specialists. Open-ended questions will facilitate in-depth discussions, helping to uncover the deeper meanings behind their practices and experiences. The data were analyzed using a systematic process of coding and theme development. The analysis focused on both the participants' interpretations of their experiences and the researcher's own insights. Emerging patterns and themes were examined within the context of the specialists' lived experiences, ultimately offering a comprehensive understanding of HRD practices in the region.

Data saturation was carefully monitored throughout the interview process. Saturation was considered reached when recurring patterns, themes, and narratives consistently emerged across participant responses, and no new substantive insights arose during the final interviews. The repetition of ideas related to HRD practices, challenges, and evaluation processes signaled that further data collection was unlikely to contribute additional perspectives, thereby supporting the adequacy of the sample size for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, inter-coder reliability was strengthened through collaborative coding sessions among the researchers. Codes were compared, negotiated, and refined to achieve a shared understanding of emerging themes. Although a formal statistical reliability index (such as Cohen's Kappa) was not computed due to the qualitative and interpretative nature of IPA, the consensus-building process helped enhance consistency and minimize individual bias during thematic interpretation.

Participants and Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study comprised 13 HRD specialists from various Schools Division Offices within DepEd Northern Mindanao, selected through purposive sampling to ensure that participants possessed the relevant experience and expertise in implementing HRD practices. Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate for phenomenological research, as it targets individuals who have directly engaged with the phenomena under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015). These specialists, drawn from both rural and urban areas, offered diverse perspectives on the assessment, implementation, and evaluation of HRD programs, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in enhancing educators' competencies in the region.

The participants represented key HRD functions, including education program supervisors, HRD coordinators, division training personnel, and senior education specialists, with varying lengths of service, professional backgrounds, and areas of HRD responsibility. While this composition ensured meaningful insights from those directly involved in HRD implementation, it did not include school-based HRD focal persons or regional-level administrators, which may limit the overall breadth of perspectives captured.

Instruments

To address the research questions regarding HRD practices in the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao, a set of self-structured, open-ended questions were employed. These questions explored the current HRD practices implemented by specialists, assessed the professional development needs of both teachers and non-teaching staff, identified the challenges faced by HRD specialists in implementing HRD programs, and evaluated the effectiveness of these programs in enhancing the skills and competencies of educators. Utilizing open-ended questions captured rich, qualitative data that reflects the diverse perspectives and experiences of HRD specialists, providing a comprehensive understanding of the HRD landscape within DepEd Northern Mindanao. This approach facilitated a deeper exploration of the nuances in HRD practices and their impacts on educational outcomes.

FGD Questions	Domains
Can you describe the HRD programs or initiatives currently being implemented in your division? What specific professional development activities are most commonly offered to teachers and non-teaching staff? How do you tailor these HRD practices to the specific needs of your division?	HRD Practices
How do you assess the professional development needs of teachers and non-teaching staff in your division? What tools or methods do you use to identify areas for improvement? Once needs are identified, how do you prioritize and address them through HRD initiatives?	Professional Development Needs of Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff
What challenges do you face in implementing HRD programs within your division? Are there any organizational or structural issues that make it difficult to fully implement HRD initiatives? How do you manage overlapping activities or tasks that are outside the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the staff?	Challenges in Implementing HRD Programs and Initiatives

How do you measure the success or effectiveness of the HRD programs in your division? What indicators or metrics do you use to evaluate the improvement in teachers' skills and competencies? Can you share any examples of how HRD initiatives have led to measurable changes in teaching or administrative practices?	Evaluation of the Effectiveness of HRD Programs
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To ensure the validity of the instruments, the questions underwent a validation process involving expert review, allowing for necessary adjustments based on feedback to enhance the clarity and relevance of the questions. This thorough validation approach contributed to the credibility of the findings and insights derived from the research.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering process for this research adopted a systematic approach to ensure comprehensive and reliable insights into the human resource development (HRD) practices within the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao. The process began with securing formal permission from the Office of the Regional Director down to Schools Division Superintendents of each division, ensuring ethical compliance and institutional support. A set of self-structured, open-ended interview questions was designed, focusing on key themes such as current HRD practices, the professional development needs of teachers and non-teaching staff, the challenges faced by HRD specialists, and the effectiveness of HRD programs. These questions were validated through expert review and pilot testing to ensure clarity, relevance, and depth.

Once the instrument was finalized, purposive sampling was employed to select HRD specialists from various divisions across Northern Mindanao. Data collection was conducted via semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to provide detailed, reflective responses about their experiences. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also organized to encourage collaborative dialogue among the specialists, enabling the exploration of diverse perspectives and shared insights. Both the interviews and FGDs were recorded, with participants' consent, and meticulously transcribed for analysis.

Thematic analysis was applied to the transcribed data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to HRD practices. This approach provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes in HRD implementation across the region, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of HRD strategies in the DepEd Northern Mindanao context.

Data Analysis

The use of NVivo for data analysis facilitated coding, identifying themes, and exploring relationships within the data, making it easier to uncover patterns and gain insights. Thematic analysis was applied to analyze responses from interviews and focus group discussions. After transcribing the data, it was organized and reviewed to ensure a thorough understanding. Initial coding highlighted key themes, such as current HRD practices, professional development needs, challenges, and program effectiveness. These codes were then refined and grouped into broader categories to identify recurring themes. This structured approach allowed for meaningful insights into HRD practices within DepEd Northern Mindanao.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were integral to the research process, ensuring integrity and respect for participants' rights and welfare. Permissions were obtained through a structured process, beginning with a formal request to the Regional Director, followed by endorsements from the Schools Division Superintendents. Each proposal emphasized key ethical principles, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent. Once approvals were secured, the researcher collaborated with HRD specialists to schedule interviews, ensuring compliance with institutional protocols and minimizing disruptions to their duties.

Before data collection, informed consent was meticulously obtained from all participants, detailing the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and the measures to safeguard their confidentiality. Participants were assured of the anonymity of their responses, which would be used solely for research purposes. The study

adhered strictly to ethical research guidelines, including transparency about potential conflicts of interest and responsible data handling. Throughout the process, sensitivity to participants' feelings and perspectives fostered trust and openness. Finally, the findings were disseminated in a manner that honored participants' contributions, enhancing the understanding of HRD practices in the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao.

During the analysis process, attention was given to the context and nuances of the participants' responses, ensuring that the interpretations remained grounded in their experiences. Member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review the findings and provide feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations. This iterative process enhanced the credibility and validity of the analysis, ultimately leading to a comprehensive understanding of HRD practices within DepEd Northern Mindanao. The findings were presented in a narrative format, supported by direct quotes from participants to illustrate key points and provide a rich, contextualized view of the HRD landscape in the region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, emphasizing the nuanced experiences, perspectives, and narratives of the participants. Exploring these qualitative dimensions seeks to uncover patterns, themes, and insights that offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions, framed within the context of relevant literature and theoretical perspectives.

Problem 1: What are the HRD practices implemented by HRD specialists in the school division offices?

Matrix 1 describes the current HRD practices implemented by HRD specialists in school division offices. It has highlighted five key themes. These include **leadership and management training**, which focuses on developing leadership and managerial competencies among staff, and **staff wellness and mental health support**, aimed at promoting employee well-being and resilience. Another theme is **digital literacy and online learning**, which emphasizes equipping staff with technological skills essential for modern education. Additionally, **peer support and mentorship programs** foster collaborative learning and professional growth through shared experiences. Lastly, **financial support for further education** provides opportunities for employees to pursue advanced studies, enhancing their qualifications and expertise. These themes collectively highlight the comprehensive efforts to support and develop human resources in the education sector.

Matrix 1

The Selected Significant Responses, Formulated Meaning, and Themes on the Current Practices Implemented by HRD Specialists in the School Division Offices

Selected Significant Responses	Formulated Meaning	Themes
<p><i>"We have a Leadership Development Program that aims to enhance the management and leadership skills of current and aspiring school leaders. It covers areas like decision-making, conflict resolution, and instructional leadership." (Participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>"Every year, we conduct leadership development programs aimed at aspiring leaders. This includes training on leadership skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution, especially for teachers interested in administrative roles." (Participant 9)</i></p> <p><i>Plus (11) eleven other responses</i></p>	<p>Programs aim to build management and leadership skills.</p>	<p>Leadership and Management Training</p>
<p><i>"In our division, we're focusing on wellness programs that support mental health. We have workshops on stress management, team-building activities, and even access to counseling services. This has been</i></p>	<p>Initiatives focus on improving staff morale and productivity through mental health support and fostering collaboration.</p>	<p>Staff Wellness and Mental Health Support</p>

<p>beneficial for improving staff morale and productivity.” (Participant 2)</p>		
<p>“Team-building activities are part of our professional development offerings. These activities foster a collaborative environment and help staff build stronger working relationships.” (Participant 4)</p>		
<p>“We also have regular wellness programs. This includes stress management workshops for both teaching and non-teaching staff, which helps everyone stay mentally healthy and productive.” (Participant 5)</p>		
<p>“Digital literacy training has been a priority, especially with the shift toward online and blended learning. We provide workshops on using learning management systems, digital tools, and online resources to help teachers adapt to modern teaching requirements.” (Participant 4)</p>	<p>Training equips teachers and staff with digital and data skills to meet modern teaching and administrative needs.</p>	<p>Digital Literacy and Online Learning</p>
<p>“Specialized training sessions on blended learning approaches help teachers integrate online tools into traditional classrooms.” (Participant 10)</p> <p>Plus (8) eight other responses</p>		
<p>“We have a Peer Mentorship Program where experienced teachers support newer ones. This program fosters a supportive environment and allows new teachers to gain practical insights and strategies from their more experienced colleagues.” (Participant 5)</p>	<p>Programs promote support systems and structured onboarding for new teachers.</p>	<p>Peer Support and Mentorship Programs</p>
<p>“Our division offers a Teacher Induction Program for new hires. This program covers policies, expectations, and teaching standards, which helps teachers adapt to our division’s culture and ensures a smooth transition.” (Participant 11)</p> <p>Plus (11) eleven other responses</p>		
<p>“Scholarships and grants are available for our teachers who want to further their studies. We encourage staff to pursue graduate studies or specialized training, as it benefits their personal growth and our Division’s teaching quality.” (Participant 7)</p> <p>Plus (12) twelve other responses</p>	<p>Support for advanced education encourages personal and professional growth.</p>	<p>Financial Support for Further Education</p>

Leadership and Management Training

In the Department of Education Region X, leadership development initiatives play a vital role in fostering a culture of excellence and innovation among school leaders. Leadership development programs are a cornerstone of the Department of Education’s Human Resource Development (HRD) practices, aimed at equipping current and aspiring school leaders with the skills necessary for effective management and decision-making. As one participant shared, “We have a Leadership Development Program that aims to enhance the management and leadership skills of current and aspiring school leaders. It covers areas like decision-making, conflict resolution, and instructional leadership” (Participant 1). These programs are essential for preparing teachers and staff to oversee academic programs, manage resources, and promote a collaborative environment. Training in key areas

such as strategic planning and instructional leadership ensures that school leaders are equipped to address educational challenges effectively. For example, mentoring systems within schools, where trained leaders guide less experienced staff, promote professional growth, reduce turnover rates, and create a culture of shared responsibility.

Recent studies reinforce their significance in educational contexts. For instance, Rai and Beresford-Dey (2023) emphasized that leadership training focused on instructional leadership and decision-making positively impacts teacher performance and student outcomes. Their research highlights the value of mentorship in fostering professional growth among educators, which aligns with the mentoring systems described. Similarly, Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) explored the role of leadership development in addressing resource management and collaboration. They found that strategic planning initiatives in training programs equip leaders with tools to tackle complex educational challenges effectively.

Leadership development programs also cater to teachers interested in pursuing administrative roles. As another participant highlighted, *“Every year, we conduct leadership development programs aimed at aspiring leaders. This includes training on leadership skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution, especially for teachers interested in administrative roles”* (Participant 9). These initiatives empower educators to lead projects such as curriculum innovation and teacher collaboration, both of which are crucial for adapting to educational reforms and technological advancements. Culduz (2023) emphasized that such training cultivates a sense of accountability among teachers, resulting in improved classroom practices and student engagement.

Furthermore, leadership training enhances organizational efficiency by equipping teachers and administrators with the tools needed for effective resource management and communication. For instance, workshops on team leadership and resource allocation enable school leaders to set clear goals, maintain high morale, and ensure smooth operations within their institutions. These skills are critical for sustaining a positive school culture and achieving educational goals. As the DepEd continues to invest in leadership development, it ensures that its workforce is prepared to meet the demands of modern education, developing both individual growth and institutional excellence.

Staff Wellness and Mental Health Support

The Department of Education recognizes that fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for its workforce is essential to achieving educational excellence. Another significant HRD practice in the Department of Education is staff wellness and mental health support, which are crucial for promoting a healthy and productive work environment. Teachers and staff face numerous stressors, such as workload pressures, student needs, and administrative demands, which can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction and performance. To address these challenges, wellness programs and mental health support play a key role in promoting resilience, emotional well-being, and overall physical health. For instance, the department offers counseling services and stress management workshops that help staff navigate mental health challenges. As one participant shared, *“We have workshops on stress management, team-building activities, and even access to counseling services. This has been beneficial for improving staff morale and productivity”* (Participant 2). These initiatives enable teachers to better cope with their responsibilities while cultivating a more supportive work environment.

In the same way, wellness programs also contribute to building a positive school culture where teachers feel valued and supported. Mental health initiatives, such as peer support groups and mindfulness practices, encourage open discussions about emotional struggles, reduce stigma, and strengthen workplace relationships. For example, team-building activities are incorporated into professional development offerings, as noted by another participant: *“Team-building activities foster a collaborative environment and help staff builds stronger working relationships”* (Participant 4). These efforts promote a sense of community and work-life balance, preventing burnout and enhancing overall job satisfaction. Moreover, regular stress management workshops, highlighted by Participant 5, are provided to both teaching and non-teaching staff, ensuring that all employees benefit from resources that support mental health and productivity.

The benefits of mental health support extend beyond staff well-being to positively impact student outcomes. When teachers are mentally and emotionally healthy, they are better equipped to engage with students, manage classrooms effectively, and implement impactful teaching strategies. Research supports this connection, with

Murphy (2024) noting that organizations prioritizing staff wellness see improvements in employee engagement, productivity, and retention rates.

Digital Literacy and Online Learning

DepEd continues to champion initiatives that empower educators to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Through its Digital Literacy Program, DepEd provides training and resources to enhance teachers' technological competencies, ensuring they are equipped to deliver quality education in the 21st century. Digital literacy training has become a priority for the Department of Education, particularly with the shift toward online and blended learning environments. As one participant explained, *"We provide workshops on using learning management systems, digital tools, and online resources to help teachers adapt to modern teaching requirements"* (Participant 4). These initiatives equip teachers with the skills to effectively integrate technology into their classrooms, improving instruction and administrative processes. For example, during the pandemic, specialized training sessions enabled teachers to design interactive lessons, conduct virtual classes, and use data to monitor student progress. Another participant highlighted, *"Specialized training sessions on blended learning approaches help teachers integrate online tools into traditional classrooms"* (Participant 10). This training allows teachers to create engaging and flexible learning experiences, essential for modern education.

The incorporation of online learning platforms not only supports teaching but also enhances student engagement and outcomes. Teachers proficient in digital literacy use tools such as learning management systems (LMS) to streamline lesson delivery, track student performance, and provide immediate feedback. These platforms, like Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams, have become vital for remote and hybrid learning settings. Research by Basar et al. (2021) underscores the importance of digital literacy, showing that teachers trained in online platforms exhibit increased confidence and effectiveness in managing virtual classrooms. This proficiency enables teachers to offer personalized learning opportunities tailored to individual student needs, further enriching the teaching-learning process.

Beyond immediate classroom applications, digital literacy and online learning promote long-term professional growth and educational innovation. Teachers with advanced digital skills can connect with global professional learning networks, sharing best practices and collaborating on innovative strategies. These opportunities develop a culture of continuous improvement within the education system. Furthermore, integrating technology into teaching prepares teachers to adapt to future advancements and challenges in education.

Peer Support and Mentorship Programs

Peer support and mentorship programs are another significant practice in the professional development of teachers in the Department of Education. These programs create a collaborative environment where fellow teachers can share knowledge, skills, and experiences, promoting both personal and professional growth. One example is the Peer Mentorship Program, where experienced teachers guide and support their newer colleagues. This initiative not only builds a supportive environment but also enables new teachers to gain practical insights and strategies from their more seasoned peers. As Participant 5 shared: *"We have a Peer Mentorship Program where experienced teachers support newer ones. This program fosters a supportive environment and allows new teachers to gain practical insights and strategies from their more experienced colleagues."*

Additionally, the Teacher Induction Program is offered in some Divisions to assist newly hired teachers. This program covers essential topics such as policies, expectations, and teaching standards, helping new teachers adapt to the Division's culture and ensuring a smooth transition into their roles. According to Participant 11: *"Our division offers a Teacher Induction Program for new hires. This program covers policies, expectations, and teaching standards, which helps teachers adapt to our division's culture and ensures a smooth transition."* Research supports the value of mentorship and peer support in education. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), mentorship programs significantly impact teacher retention and effectiveness. Their study found that new teachers who participated in structured mentorship programs were more likely to remain in the profession and demonstrated improved teaching practices. Ultimately, peer support and mentorship programs strengthen the education system by cultivating a culture of collaboration, shared growth, and continuous professional development. These initiatives ensure that new teachers are equipped to succeed while experienced teachers contribute to the collective improvement of teaching practices.

Financial Support for Further Education

Financial support for further education, such as scholarships and grants empowers teachers and staff to enhance their qualifications and expertise. Opportunities for graduate studies and specialized training not only contribute to personal and professional growth but also improve the overall quality of education in schools. As Participant 7 stated, *“Scholarships and grants are available for our teachers who want to further their studies. We encourage staff to pursue graduate studies or specialized training, as it benefits their personal growth and our Division’s teaching quality.”* This support system reflects the Department of Education’s commitment to nurturing lifelong learning among its teachers. Investing in financial assistance programs encourages more teachers to pursue advanced degrees or certifications, leading to improved instructional methods and leadership skills.

For instance, teachers who enroll in postgraduate programs often develop specialized knowledge in curriculum design, pedagogy, or subject expertise, which they can bring back to their classrooms. Moreover, financial support for further education contributes to institutional development by developing a culture of excellence and innovation. Teachers with advanced training are better equipped to implement evidence-based practices, mentor colleagues, and assume leadership roles within their schools. Research by Smet (2021) found that teachers who received financial support for further education reported higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction, with a positive impact on student outcomes. Similarly, funding opportunities make professional development accessible to teachers who might otherwise face financial barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for advancement.

Problem 2: How do HRD specialists assess the professional development needs of teachers and non-teaching staff?

Matrix 2

The Selected Significant Responses, Formulated Meaning, and Themes on HRD Specialists’ Assessment of Professional Development Needs for Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Selected Significant Responses	Formulated Meaning	Themes
<p><i>“We use online surveys to gather input from teachers and non-teaching staff. These surveys allow us to reach a wide group and collect data on areas they feel need improvement.” (Participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>“We hold focus group discussions with both teaching and non-teaching staff. These group discussions often bring up shared challenges and help us identify areas for improvement collectively.” (Participant 4)</i></p> <p><i>“We utilize one-on-one interviews with selected staff members, allowing us to go deeper into their specific challenges and improvement needs.” (Participant 10)</i> <i>Plus (10) ten other responses.</i></p>	<p>Tools such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews gather staff insights into their challenges and developmental needs.</p>	<p>Gathering Staff Input</p>
<p><i>“Classroom observations are one of our primary tools. Observing teachers in action helps us identify specific instructional strategies that may need further development.” (Participant 2)</i></p> <p><i>“We use self-assessment tools where staff members rate their own skills and identify areas where they feel they need improvement. This helps us address their personal development goals.” (Participant 5)</i></p>	<p>Classroom observations, self-assessments, and peer feedback identify instructional gaps and areas for personal improvement.</p>	<p>Observational and Self-Reflective Methods</p>
<p><i>“Peer observations are another effective tool. Teachers</i></p>		

<p><i>observe each other and provide constructive feedback, which highlights areas where they feel improvements could be beneficial.” (Participant 9)</i></p> <p><i>Plus (10) ten other responses.</i></p>		
<p><i>“We categorize needs based on urgency and impact. Those that directly affect student learning outcomes are prioritized and addressed first through targeted training sessions.” (Participant 1)</i></p>		
<p><i>“Budget availability plays a role in prioritizing needs. We focus on high-priority, high-impact needs that fit within our budget, and plan other initiatives as funds become available.” (Participant 3)</i></p> <p><i>“Immediate needs are scheduled first, while less urgent needs are planned for the coming school year.” (Participant 8)</i></p> <p><i>Plus (10) ten other responses.</i></p>	<p>Prioritization is based on urgency, impact, and available resources, focusing on student outcomes and feasible implementation.</p>	<p>Prioritization and Resource Allocation</p>
<p><i>“We rank needs by alignment with regional and national educational priorities. If a need aligns with these goals, it becomes a higher priority in our planning.” (Participant 6)</i></p> <p><i>“Feedback from school heads helps us prioritize needs. If multiple school heads highlight the same area of improvement, we address it through targeted training or support.” (Participant 7)</i></p> <p><i>“Needs are also prioritized based on the level of support they already have. For example, if certain skills have been neglected, we give them more attention through our HRD programs.” (Participant 10)</i></p> <p><i>Plus (10) ten other responses.</i></p>	<p>Alignment with broader educational goals and leadership input ensures the relevance and necessity of HRD programs.</p>	<p>Strategic Alignment</p>

Matrix 2 highlights four key themes in the assessment and addressing of professional development needs for teaching and non-teaching staff. The first theme, *gathering staff input*, emphasizes the importance of collecting feedback from staff through surveys, consultations, and other methods to identify their specific development needs. The second theme, *observational and self-reflective methods*, focuses on using observations and self-reflection as tools to gain insights into individual and team performance, which informs targeted development strategies. The third theme, *prioritization and resource allocation*, ensures that the most critical professional development needs are addressed first, with resources allocated efficiently to meet those needs. Finally, *strategic alignment* ensures that professional development initiatives are in line with the broader goals and priorities of the school division, contributing to the overall educational objectives. These themes work together to provide a structured approach to fostering staff growth and improving overall educational effectiveness.

Gathering Staff Input

Gathering staff input is a crucial practice for HRD specialists in assessing and addressing the professional development needs of teaching and non-teaching staff. Actively involving employees in identifying areas for improvement ensures that HRD programs address specific challenges and enhance overall performance. As one participant noted, *“We use online surveys to gather input from teachers and non-teaching staff. These surveys allow us to reach a wide group and collect data on areas they feel need improvement”* (Participant 1). Such surveys are effective in collecting comprehensive data and ensuring that the voices of a diverse group of employees are heard. This data-driven approach allows HRD specialists to design relevant training programs that align with the actual needs of the workforce.

In addition to surveys, more interactive methods like focus group discussions provide valuable insights into shared challenges and collective needs. As another participant explained, “*We hold focus group discussions with both teaching and non-teaching staff. These group discussions often bring up shared challenges and help us identify areas for improvement collectively*” (Participant 4). Focus group discussions create a platform for open dialogue, enabling HRD specialists to explore common issues and encourage collaboration among staff. For example, if multiple teachers highlight challenges in integrating technology into their teaching, HRD specialists can prioritize digital literacy workshops. Research by Bah et al. (2024) indicated the importance of collaborative input, revealing that organizations that actively involve employees in identifying professional development needs achieve higher engagement and program effectiveness.

For a more in-depth understanding of individual concerns, one-on-one interviews are also employed to personalize support. As one participant shared, “*We utilize one-on-one interviews with selected staff members, allowing us to go deeper into their specific challenges and improvement needs*” (Participant 10). These interviews provide an opportunity for staff to share personal experiences and challenges that may not emerge in broader surveys or group discussions. For instance, a non-teaching staff member can highlight unique issues with administrative workflows that require targeted interventions. Research by Thahir et al. (2021) showed that personalized approaches to professional development, informed by direct staff input, significantly improve job satisfaction and performance.

Observational and Self-Reflective Methods

In the same way, it was discovered that observational and self-reflective methods are essential tools used by HRD specialists to assess and address the professional development needs of teachers and staff in the Department of Education. Classroom observations, for instance, offer valuable insights into teaching practices and instructional strategies that may need further development. As one participant stated, “*Classroom observations are one of our primary tools. Observing teachers in action helps us identify specific instructional strategies that may need further development*” (Participant 2). These observations enable HRD specialists to provide targeted support, such as workshops or mentoring programs, to address gaps in teaching techniques. For example, observing a teacher struggling with classroom management may lead to recommendations for specific training in student engagement strategies. Research by Tarusha and Bushi (2024) emphasizes the importance of observational methods, noting their effectiveness in identifying actionable areas for improvement in teaching practices.

Self-reflective methods, such as self-assessment tools, empower staff to take an active role in their professional development. As another participant explained, “*We use self-assessment tools where staff members rate their own skills and identify areas where they feel they need improvement. This helps us address their personal development goals*” (Participant 5). These tools encourage teachers and non-teaching staff to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth, fostering a culture of self-awareness and continuous learning. For instance, a teacher who identifies a lack of confidence in using digital tools may seek training to enhance their skills in this area. According to a study by Musaigwa (2023), self-assessment methods improve employee engagement and ensure professional development plans align with individual aspirations, resulting in more effective outcomes.

Similarly, peer observations further complement these methods by promoting collaborative professional growth. One participant noted, “*Peer observations are another effective tool. Teachers observe each other and provide constructive feedback, which highlights areas where they feel improvements could be beneficial*” (Participant 9). This method fosters a supportive environment where teachers can learn from one another, share best practices, and develop their skills collaboratively. For example, a teacher observing a colleague’s innovative use of technology in the classroom might adopt similar techniques in their own teaching. Research by To, Tan, and Lim (2023) emphasized the value of peer observations, showing that they not only enhance instructional quality but also strengthen professional relationships among teachers and staff.

Prioritization and Resource Allocation

It was also brought to light that prioritization and resource allocation are key aspects of the HRD specialists' approach to addressing professional development needs within the Department of Education. The process begins with categorizing the needs based on urgency and impact, ensuring that the most pressing issues are addressed

first. As one participant stated, “*We categorize needs based on urgency and impact. Those that directly affect student learning outcomes are prioritized and addressed first through targeted training sessions*” (Participant 1). By focusing on areas that have a direct impact on student learning, HRD specialists ensure that resources are allocated efficiently to improve educational outcomes. For example, if teachers require training on new instructional methods that are crucial to enhancing student engagement, these training sessions will be prioritized to improve classroom practices swiftly.

In the same vein, budget availability plays a significant role in the prioritization process, influencing the scope and timeline of HRD initiatives. As another participant highlighted, “*Budget availability plays a role in prioritizing needs. We focus on high-priority, high-impact needs that fit within our budget, and plan other initiatives as funds become available*” (Participant 3). HRD specialists must align their professional development goals with the financial resources available to them. This means that high-priority needs, such as leadership training or technology integration, are given precedence, while other less urgent training initiatives may be deferred until additional funds are allocated. Studies by Pratama, Dachyar, and Rhezza (2023) reinforced that effective resource allocation ensures that critical areas of development are met without overextending limited budgets, leading to a more sustainable approach to professional growth.

The scheduling of professional development activities also reflects the urgency of the identified needs. As one participant explained, “*Immediate needs are scheduled first, while less urgent needs are planned for the coming school year*” (Participant 8). This approach ensures that immediate challenges are addressed in a timely manner while allowing for strategic planning of long-term professional development goals. For example, if a new educational policy requires immediate implementation, HRD specialists would prioritize related training sessions, while planning other initiatives, like wellness programs or specialized certifications, for the following year. According to Bello et al. (2024), effective prioritization and resource allocation not only optimize the impact of HRD programs but also help in managing expectations and ensuring that resources are used wisely to meet the most critical needs.

Strategic Alignment

Ultimately, strategic alignment is a critical factor in prioritizing professional development initiatives for teachers and staff in the Department of Education. HRD specialists ensure that identified needs are ranked based on their alignment with regional and national educational priorities. As one participant explained, “*We rank needs by alignment with regional and national educational priorities. If a need aligns with these goals, it becomes a higher priority in our planning*” (Participant 6). This approach ensures that HRD programs not only address immediate concerns but also contribute to broader educational objectives. For example, if a national initiative emphasizes digital literacy, HRD specialists prioritize training sessions on integrating technology into teaching. Such alignment fosters cohesive efforts across various levels of the education system, leading to a unified direction in professional development.

In a similar fashion, feedback from school heads also plays a significant role in aligning HRD efforts with the strategic goals of schools. As another participant noted, “*Feedback from school heads helps us prioritize needs. If multiple school heads highlight the same area of improvement, we address it through targeted training or support*” (Participant 7). This collaborative approach ensures that HRD specialists focus on areas that are directly relevant to the schools' operational needs and objectives. For instance, if several school heads identify a need for improved classroom management techniques, HRD programs can include workshops addressing this specific concern. Research by Mallillin (2023) supports this method, demonstrating that involving school leadership in HRD planning leads to more impactful and context-relevant professional development initiatives.

Additionally, HRD specialists consider the level of existing support for various skills when determining priorities. As one participant shared, “*Needs are also prioritized based on the level of support they already have. For example, if certain skills have been neglected, we give them more attention through our HRD programs*” (Participant 10). Addressing gaps in under-supported areas ensures balanced professional growth and prevents critical skills from being overlooked. For example, if training in conflict resolution has been historically neglected, HRD specialists might develop targeted programs to address this deficiency. According to Arulsamy et al. (2023), focusing on neglected areas not only enhances overall competency but also boosts staff morale by addressing long-standing professional development needs.

Problem 3: What challenges do HRD specialists encounter in implementing HRD programs and initiatives?

Matrix 3 focuses on the challenges faced by HRD specialists in implementing professional development initiatives for teaching and non-teaching staff within school division offices. Four key themes emerge as significant barriers to effective implementation. The first is *financial limitations*, which highlight the constraints posed by inadequate funding and budgetary restrictions that hinder the delivery of comprehensive development programs. The second theme, *staffing challenges*, underscores issues such as insufficient personnel and the difficulty in balancing workloads while accommodating professional development activities. The third theme, *resource accessibility issues*, points to the limited availability of necessary materials, tools, and facilities needed to support training initiatives. Finally, *structural and organizational barriers* refer to systemic issues within the organization, such as rigid policies or inefficient processes, that impede the smooth execution of professional development efforts. These themes collectively illustrate the complexities and hurdles HRD specialists must navigate to enhance staff capacity effectively.

Matrix 3

The Selected Significant Responses, Formulated Meaning, and Emergent Themes on Challenges Faced by HRD Specialists in Implementing HRD Programs and Initiatives

Selected Significant Responses	Formulated Meaning	Themes
<i>"Limited budget impacts the type of training we can offer, sometimes postponing or canceling programs." (Participant 1)</i>	Budget constraints hinder the ability to consistently offer impactful and ongoing HRD programs.	Financial Limitations
<i>"Budget allocation is a significant issue. Without a dedicated HRD budget, offering regular programs is difficult." (Participant 3)</i>		
<i>"Lack of funds restricts continuous development, limiting programs to one-off sessions that hinder long-term growth." (Participant 5)</i>		
<i>"Staffing constraints mean we don't have enough people to manage and implement HRD initiatives effectively." (Participant 2)</i>	Insufficient staffing limits the capacity to plan, execute, and sustain HRD initiatives effectively.	Staffing Challenges
<i>"Limited staffing affects follow-up on training initiatives, reducing the effectiveness of workplace learning." (Participant 6)</i>		
<i>"Small teams struggle to coordinate multiple programs simultaneously, slowing progress." (Participant 9)</i>		
<i>"Resource constraints mean we rely on online sessions instead of in-person workshops, limiting interaction." (Participant 4)</i>	Resource gaps in technology, travel funds, and access limit HRD program reach and quality.	Resource Accessibility Issues
<i>"Lack of travel funds affects access to training for remote areas, leaving some schools underserved." (Participant 10)</i>		
<i>"Using in-house trainers instead of specialists can reduce program depth." (Participant 11)</i>		
<i>"Balancing HRD with competing priorities affects focus and implementation." (Participant 7)</i>	Competing priorities, policy changes, and limited leadership backing disrupt HRD program consistency.	Structural and Organizational Barriers
<i>"Policy changes require frequent adjustments to HRD plans, disrupting consistency." (Participant 12)</i>		
<i>"Leadership support is sometimes insufficient, impacting program effectiveness." (Participant 13)</i>		

Financial Limitations

Financial limitations significantly affect the implementation and sustainability of HRD programs in the Department of Education. Budget constraints directly influence the type and frequency of training offered to teachers and staff. As one participant noted, *“Limited budget impacts the type of training we can offer, sometimes postponing or canceling programs”* (Participant 1). For instance, essential programs like digital literacy workshops or leadership training may be delayed due to insufficient funds, leaving critical professional development needs unaddressed. Such disruptions can stall the progress of initiatives aimed at improving teaching quality and administrative efficiency, highlighting the need for stable funding sources to ensure continuity in HRD efforts.

The lack of a dedicated HRD budget poses a significant challenge to offering consistent professional development opportunities. As one participant noted, *“Budget allocation is a significant issue. Without a dedicated HRD budget, offering regular programs is difficult”* (Participant 3). Many HRD activities rely on reallocated funds from other school programs, which can result in inadequate resources for addressing critical development areas. For example, if funding for technology integration is deprioritized, teachers may lack the necessary training to adapt to modern educational tools, affecting both their professional growth and student outcomes. This issue highlights the importance of consistent funding for HRD programs, as emphasized by Day et al. (2016), who argue that such funding is essential for maintaining the quality and relevance of professional development in education.

Moreover, financial limitations often restrict HRD initiatives to one-off sessions rather than sustained programs, which undermines long-term growth. As a participant observed, *“Lack of funds restricts continuous development, limiting programs to one-off sessions that hinder long-term growth”* (Participant 5). While single-session training can address immediate needs, it often fails to provide the comprehensive skill-building required for lasting improvements. For instance, a single workshop on classroom management may introduce strategies but lacks the follow-up sessions necessary for reinforcing and refining these skills. Studies by Padillo et al. (2021) suggest that continuous professional development, supported by adequate funding, yields better outcomes in teacher performance and student achievement by fostering deeper learning and practical application over time.

Staffing Challenges

Staffing challenges present significant obstacles to the effective implementation of HRD initiatives in the Department of Education. Insufficient personnel to manage and execute programs can limit the scope and quality of professional development opportunities. As one participant explained, *“Staffing constraints mean we don’t have enough people to manage and implement HRD initiatives effectively”* (Participant 2). This shortage often results in overburdened teams, delaying program rollouts and reducing the overall impact of HRD efforts. For instance, when key HRD activities like teacher training on new curriculum standards are postponed due to staffing shortages, it compromises the readiness of teachers and staff to meet updated educational requirements.

Follow-up on training initiatives is another area where limited staffing impacts effectiveness. As one participant explained, *“Limited staffing affects follow-up on training initiatives, reducing the effectiveness of workplace learning”* (Participant 6). Without adequate personnel, it becomes difficult to assess whether participants are applying newly acquired skills or to provide additional support when needed. For example, teachers who attend a workshop on differentiated instruction may require subsequent mentoring sessions to fully implement these techniques in their classrooms. According to Kushwaha (2023), sustained follow-up is critical for reinforcing learning and ensuring that professional development translates into measurable improvements in teaching practices.

In the same way, small teams managing HRD initiatives also face difficulties coordinating multiple programs simultaneously, further hindering progress. *“Small teams struggle to coordinate multiple programs simultaneously, slowing progress”* (Participant 9). For instance, a single HRD team tasked with organizing leadership training, wellness programs, and digital literacy workshops may lack the capacity to deliver all programs effectively, leading to delays or compromised quality. Research by Jubaidi and Khoirunnisa (2023) emphasized the importance of adequate staffing for HRD programs, highlighting that well-staffed teams can

better handle the complexities of planning, execution, and evaluation, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes.

Resource Accessibility Issue

Resource accessibility issues pose significant challenges to the delivery of effective HRD programs in the Department of Education. One notable constraint is the reliance on online sessions due to resource limitations, which reduces the level of interaction and engagement compared to in-person workshops. As one participant shared, *“Resource constraints mean we rely on online sessions instead of in-person workshops, limiting interaction”* (Participant 4). While online sessions are a cost-effective alternative, they may not fully replicate the immersive learning experiences that face-to-face interactions provide, which are often essential for building stronger relationships and facilitating deeper discussions. As suggested by Hollister (2022), in-person training is often more effective in promoting collaborative learning and creating opportunities for direct feedback from trainers.

Another challenge is the lack of travel funds, which can limit access to training for staff in remote areas, leaving some schools underserved. As one participant noted, *“Lack of travel funds affects access to training for remote areas, leaving some schools underserved”* (Participant 10). This can result in teachers in distant locations missing out on critical professional development opportunities that are available to their peers in urban areas. As observed, teachers in remote schools do not have access to specialized training in areas like digital literacy or curriculum updates, further exacerbating educational inequities. Research by Afzal et al. (2023) indicates that geographical barriers to professional development programs can widen the gap in teaching quality, particularly for educators in rural or underserved regions.

Finally, the use of in-house trainers instead of external specialists can reduce the depth and quality of HRD programs. As observed by a participant, *“Using in-house trainers instead of specialists can reduce program depth”* (Participant 11). In-house trainers, while knowledgeable, may lack the specialized expertise required to deliver cutting-edge training in areas like advanced technology integration or leadership development. This limitation can prevent teachers and staff from gaining access to the most current methodologies or best practices in education. According to Asiyah et al. (2021), specialized training delivered by external experts brings fresh perspectives and advanced techniques that are often crucial for driving innovation and improving teaching practices.

Structural and Organizational Barrier

Structural and organizational barriers pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of HRD programs in the Department of Education. One of the primary barriers is the need to balance HRD initiatives with competing priorities, which can divert attention and resources away from professional development efforts. As one participant noted, *“Balancing HRD with competing priorities affects focus and implementation”* (Participant 7). In schools and divisions, HRD programs often compete with other pressing tasks such as administrative duties, student assessments, and curriculum changes. This can lead to HRD initiatives being sidelined or delayed, affecting the overall effectiveness of these programs. According to Namada (2018), organizational priorities and competing demands often result in insufficient attention to HRD, hindering the development of staff and the improvement of teaching practices.

Additionally, frequent policy changes require HRD programs to be continuously adjusted, disrupting their consistency and long-term planning. As stated by one participant, *“Policy changes require frequent adjustments to HRD plans, disrupting consistency”* (Participant 12). When education policies or priorities shift, HRD initiatives must be realigned to meet new requirements, often leading to confusion or loss of focus on previously established goals. For example, if a new national curriculum is introduced, HRD programs may need to be redesigned to train teachers on the changes, leaving little time for other essential professional development activities. A study by Al-Suraihi et al. (2021) emphasizes that constant policy changes can undermine the stability and continuity of HRD programs, preventing them from achieving their intended outcomes.

Leadership support is another crucial factor that influences the success of HRD programs. Without strong backing from school leaders, HRD initiatives may lack the necessary resources, motivation, and visibility. As

one participant pointed out, “Leadership support is sometimes insufficient, impacting program effectiveness” (Participant 13). When leaders do not fully support or prioritize HRD efforts, it can lead to inadequate funding, a lack of participation, and low morale among staff. Research by Okolie et al. (2021) shows that strong leadership support is essential for ensuring that HRD programs are properly implemented and sustained. Effective leaders provide the resources, encouragement, and strategic direction needed to ensure that HRD initiatives are successfully carried out and lead to tangible improvements in teaching and learning.

Problem 4: How do HRD specialists evaluate the effectiveness of HRD programs in enhancing the skills and competencies of educators?

Matrix 4 highlights the strategies employed by HRD specialists to evaluate the effectiveness of HRD programs in enhancing educators' skills and competencies. Three key themes emerged: measuring training effectiveness, performance-based impact assessment, and behavior and skill improvements. *Measuring training effectiveness* involves using tools such as pre- and post-training evaluations, feedback forms, and performance reviews to determine whether the programs meet their intended objectives. *Performance-based impact assessment* focuses on linking training outcomes to tangible improvements in teachers' job performance and instructional practices, ensuring alignment with organizational goals. Additionally, *behavior and skill improvements* are monitored by observing how teachers and staff apply acquired skills in practice, enabling HRD specialists to identify areas for further support.

Matrix 4

The Selected Responses, Formulated Meaning, and Themes on How HRD Specialists Evaluate the Effectiveness of HRD Programs in Enhancing Educators' Skills and Competencies

Selected Significant Responses	Formulated Meaning	Themes
<p><i>“We use post-training surveys to get immediate feedback from participants.” (Participant 1)</i></p>		
<p><i>“Follow-up evaluations a few months after training are a key measure to check practical application of learning.” (Participant 3)</i></p>	<p>Immediate and follow-up evaluations, including classroom assessments, gauge the practical application of training outcomes.</p>	<p>Measuring Training Effectiveness</p>
<p><i>“Observations before and after training reveal skill application.” (Participant 8)</i></p>		
<p><i>“Classroom assessments showed students were more engaged and performed better after differentiated instruction training.” (Participant 12)</i></p>		
<p><i>“We track improvements in staff performance after HRD programs.” (Participant 2)</i></p>		
<p><i>“Feedback from school heads highlights growth areas and improvements in staff performance.” (Participant 7)</i></p>	<p>Observable performance improvements and feedback from supervisors reflect the impact of HRD on teaching and management.</p>	<p>Performance-Based Impact Assessment</p>
<p><i>“Through coaching sessions, we observed teachers applying new classroom management techniques, resulting in better environments.” (Participant 10)</i></p>		

<p><i>“We have seen noticeable improvements in teaching effectiveness and student engagement after staff participated in HRD programs.”</i> (Participant 5)</p>		
<p><i>“Ongoing performance reviews show that teachers are consistently applying new strategies, leading to enhanced classroom outcomes.”</i> (Participant 1)</p>		
<p><i>“Student feedback indicates engagement and effectiveness of teachers' new strategies.”</i> (Participant 4)</p>		
<p><i>“Post-training assessments show skill retention and knowledge improvement.”</i> (Participant 6)</p>		
<p><i>“Training on mental health awareness led to wellness practices and reduced stress among teachers and students.”</i> (Participant 13)</p>	<p>Assessments and behavioral changes, such as wellness practices and student feedback, validate the benefits of training.</p>	<p>Behavior and Skill Improvements</p>
<p><i>“Interactive workshops have increased collaborative teaching practices and improved classroom dynamics.”</i> (Participant 5)</p>		
<p><i>“Regular coaching sessions post-training have helped sustain teaching innovations and foster professional growth.”</i> (Participant 9)</p>		

Measuring Training Effectiveness

Measuring training effectiveness is essential to ensure that HRD initiatives achieve their intended outcomes and promotes professional growth among teachers and staff. One approach is the use of post-training surveys to gather immediate feedback from participants about the relevance and quality of the program. According to one participant, *“We use post-training surveys to get immediate feedback from participants”* (Participant 1). These surveys provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the training, enabling facilitators to make improvements for future sessions. Additionally, follow-up evaluations conducted a few months after training help assess the practical application of learning in real-world scenarios. As another participant shared, *“Follow-up evaluations a few months after training are a key measure to check practical application of learning”* (Participant 3). Parpucu and Al-Mabuk (2023) found that collecting feedback immediately after training and conducting follow-up evaluations significantly improve professional development programs. Their study emphasized that timely feedback enables organizations to refine training content, while follow-up assessments help measure long-term skill application in workplace settings.

Observational methods are also a key strategy for evaluating the impact of training programs. Observations conducted before and after training sessions provide direct evidence of how well participants are applying newly learned skills in their roles. As one participant noted, *“Observations before and after training reveal skill application”* (Participant 8). This method allows HRD specialists to identify areas where further support or reinforcement may be needed. Furthermore, classroom assessments serve as an indirect measure of training effectiveness by evaluating changes in student outcomes. For example, one participant observed that *“Classroom*

assessments showed students were more engaged and performed better after differentiated instruction training" (Participant 12). A study by Kahmann et al. (2022) concluded that observational data and classroom-based assessments effectively measure professional development impact, as their study demonstrated significant improvements in student performance and engagement through teacher-training programs on differentiated instruction.

Performance-Based Impact Assessment

Performance-based impact assessment is a vital approach to evaluating the effectiveness of HRD programs in the Department of Education. One method involves tracking improvements in staff performance after training, as noted by one participant: "*We track improvements in staff performance after HRD programs*" (Participant 2). *Feedback from school heads also provides valuable insights, as they often highlight areas of growth and specific improvements in staff performance* (Participant 7). These performance-based evaluations offer clear evidence of how HRD initiatives influence teachers' abilities to manage classrooms, deliver lessons, and implement innovative teaching practices. Furthermore, coaching sessions serve as a practical tool for monitoring the application of new skills, with one participant observing that "*Through coaching sessions, we observed teachers applying new classroom management techniques, resulting in better environments*" (Participant 10).

Ongoing performance reviews further demonstrate the long-term impact of HRD initiatives. Teachers consistently apply newly acquired strategies, leading to enhanced classroom outcomes and improved student engagement. One participant highlighted that "*We have seen noticeable improvements in teaching effectiveness and student engagement after staff participated in HRD programs*" (Participant 5). These observations align with research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), which found that sustained professional development improves teaching effectiveness and fosters higher student achievement. Performance reviews also indicate that HRD programs encourage continuous growth, ensuring that teachers remain equipped to address evolving educational challenges effectively.

Behavior and Skill Improvements

Behavior and skill improvements are key indicators of the success of HRD initiatives, reflecting the tangible benefits of professional development on both teachers, staff, and students. For instance, student feedback plays a crucial role in assessing the engagement and effectiveness of teachers' newly implemented strategies. As one participant noted, "*Student feedback indicates engagement and effectiveness of teachers' new strategies*" (Participant 4). Similarly, post-training assessments highlight significant skill retention and knowledge improvement among participants, demonstrating the lasting impact of HRD programs. "*Post-training assessments show skill retention and knowledge improvement*" (Participant 6). These findings align with research by Garcia and Weiss (2021), which emphasized that regular feedback from stakeholders and structured post-training evaluations are critical for reinforcing learning and promoting behavioral changes in educational settings.

Moreover, specialized training programs contribute to promoting wellness and collaboration, which translate to improved school environments. Training on mental health awareness, for instance, has resulted in wellness practices that reduce stress for both teachers and students. "*Training on mental health awareness led to wellness practices and reduced stress among teachers and students*" (Participant 13). Interactive workshops have also enhanced collaborative teaching practices and improved classroom dynamics. "*Interactive workshops have increased collaborative teaching practices and improved classroom dynamics*" (Participant 5). Regular coaching sessions post-training further sustain these teaching innovations, fostering long-term professional growth and the application of advanced instructional strategies. "*Regular coaching sessions post-training have helped sustain teaching innovations and foster professional growth*" (Participant 9). Studies by Ekins (2021) support these observations, highlighting that collaborative practices and ongoing mentorship amplify the positive outcomes of professional development by creating supportive environments for continued skill application.

In response to the findings of the study, a set of targeted recommendations was developed and transformed into SMART goals to enhance the implementation of human resource development initiatives within DepEd Northern Mindanao. These SMART goals integrate concrete actions, realistic budgetary allocations, and clear indicators

of success to ensure practical application and measurable progress. The table below outlines these goals, providing a structured roadmap that HRD units and Schools Division Offices can use to strengthen professional development systems, address existing gaps, and optimize outcomes for teachers and education personnel.

SMART Goal	Specific Actions	Budget Allocation	Measurable Success Indicators	Timeline
1. Strengthen leadership, wellness, digital literacy, peer mentorship, and advanced education programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct quarterly leadership trainings. ▪ Hold biannual wellness programs. ▪ Facilitate monthly digital literacy training. ▪ Institutionalize peer mentorship. ▪ Provide financial aid for advanced education. 	<p>Leadership Training: ₱150,000/yr</p> <p>Wellness Programs: ₱80,000/yr</p> <p>Digital Literacy: ₱120,000/yr</p> <p>Mentorship Materials: ₱50,000/yr</p> <p>Scholarships: ₱300,000/yr</p> <p>Total: ₱700,000/yr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 90% of school heads trained ▪ 75% staff attend wellness program ▪ 100 teachers certified in digital literacy ▪ Peer mentorship active in all districts ▪ 10 staff supported for advanced education 	12 months
2. Improve needs assessment and alignment with division goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct annual standardized needs-assessment surveys. ▪ Hold division-wide consultations annually. ▪ Train HRD specialists on advanced assessment tools 	<p>Surveys: ₱40,000/yr</p> <p>Consultations: ₱60,000/yr</p> <p>HRD Training: ₱100,000/yr</p> <p>Total: ₱200,000/yr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 95% school participation in assessments ▪ 100% PD programs aligned with division goals ▪ At least 20 HRD specialists trained 	6 months (full roll-out); annually sustained
3. Address financial limitations, staffing shortages, and resource gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request 20% increase in PD budget. ▪ Hire/designate 2 HRD support personnel. ▪ Procure training materials and digital equipment 	<p>PD Budget Increase: ₱500,000</p> <p>Staffing: ₱960,000/yr (2 personnel)</p> <p>Equipment: ₱350,000 (one-time)</p> <p>Total: ₱1,810,000 (Year 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20% reduction in delays due to staffing/resource issues ▪ 100% of trainings well-equipped ▪ HRD productivity increases by 30% 	12 months

<p>4. Streamline organizational processes and reduce policy barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Form policy review committee. ▪ Revise/simplify 5 HRD policies. ▪ Digitize HRD workflows. 	<p>Committee: ₦60,000/yr Digital System + Training: ₦200,000 Total: ₦260,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 30% reduction in processing time ▪ 50% increase in timely document submissions ▪ 5 revised policies implemented 	<p>12 months</p>
<p>5. Strengthen evaluation of HRD programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement standardized pre/post tests. ▪ Require outcome-based reporting from all trainers. ▪ Track RPMS-linked teacher performance improvements 	<p>Evaluation Tools: ₦50,000 Data Analytics: ₦70,000/yr Total: ₦120,000/yr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100% PD activities with pre/post tests ▪ 10% improvement in assessment results ▪ 80% of trained teachers improve RPMS indicators 	<p>6 months (implementation)</p>

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

HRD specialists implement a variety of practices to enhance staff development, including leadership training to build managerial skills, wellness support to foster resilience, digital literacy programs to improve technological competence, peer mentorship to encourage collaborative growth, and financial aid for further education to help employees advance their qualifications.

To assess and address the professional development needs of staff, HRD specialists rely on surveys and consultations to gather feedback, alongside observational and self-reflective methods to gain deeper insights. They prioritize needs based on urgency and ensure that development initiatives are aligned with the broader educational goals of the division.

However, HRD specialists face several challenges in program implementation. These include financial limitations that hinder the delivery of comprehensive training, staffing shortages that complicate scheduling and participation, limited access to essential resources needed for effective training, and organizational barriers such as rigid policies that obstruct smooth execution.

Despite these challenges, HRD specialists evaluate the effectiveness of their programs by conducting pre- and post-training assessments to track changes in skills, linking the outcomes of training to improvements in job performance, and observing how newly acquired skills are applied in practice to ensure continuous professional growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

DepEd Secretary may support policy changes that streamline the implementation of HRD programs, addressing systemic barriers such as rigid policies and ensuring that HRD initiatives align with the department's broader educational goals and priorities.

Regional Director may facilitate inter-division collaboration by promoting the sharing of best practices and resources, ensuring greater consistency and access to professional development opportunities across the region.

Schools Division Superintendent may prioritize the allocation of resources to HRD programs, ensuring sufficient staffing and materials to effectively deliver professional development initiatives and address identified staff needs.

HRD specialists may enhance their current practices by incorporating more frequent feedback mechanisms, such as follow-up surveys and consultations, to ensure that professional development programs are responsive to the evolving needs of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Future researchers may explore the long-term impacts of HRD programs on staff retention and performance, as well as investigate the effectiveness of different HRD strategies across diverse educational contexts to further refine and enhance HRD practices in the education sector.

LIMITATIONS

Despite its valuable insights, this study is bounded by several limitations. First, the geographic span is restricted to the Department of Education (DepEd) Northern Mindanao, which may limit the transferability of findings to other regions with different administrative structures or HRD contexts. Second, the sample composition consists of only 13 purposively selected HRD specialists, representing a small and specific group whose experiences may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives across all divisions or personnel levels. Lastly, the study was conducted within a limited time frame, which may have constrained the depth of data collection and hindered opportunities for prolonged engagement, follow-up interviews, or extended observation. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and applying them to broader HRD practices in the Philippine education system.

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