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FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND PRESENTATION IN PERSPECTIVES OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: CASE OF THE ITURI PROVINCE FROM 2021 TO 2024

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1. Introduction

The paper presents an analytical overview of the data collected in the course of speaking with the best stakeholders of planning and management of schools in the Ituri Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo, in May-June 2024. The key motive of the chapter is to propose an international notion of more than what the running of schools in a place of conflicts entails to prevent both quantitative and qualitative evidence in an endeavor to identify the patterns, issues, and experiences of stakeholders involved. The findings are determined based on the four broad research objectives of the study, namely (1) to assess the planning strategy employed in schools, (2) to consider the management practices and their performance, (3) to study the interest of the stakeholders in the schoolwork, and (4) to identify the issues that happen in situations that influence the delivery of education. This expense will ensure that all questions of the research are answered systematically and rationally.

The structured questionnaires collected qualitative data from 120 respondents, including the school heads, teachers, education officers, and community representatives. These data sources provide objective information on trends, frequency, and relationships in point of school planning and management, except for community involvement. The meaning of the description of the character of respondents was provided on the concept of descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, mean, and SDs) that indicates the differences in practices and outcomes in high-conflict and low-conflict zones, urban and rural schools, and primary/secondary schools. Correlations between variables that involved leadership quality, teacher attendance, and planning performance were undertaken using other methods, e.g., inferential statistics, cross tabulation, correlation analysis, and chi-square.

Qualitative data were collected by adopting semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and focus group discussions. These methods allowed adding richness and depth to the reply and the lives of the respondents into the analysis as much as is connected with the subjects of running schools in the displacing and unsafe setting. Thematic analysis was done using the NVivo version, and it gave the chance of systematic coding and categorization of data based on the area alliances and themes that consisted of insecurity, community involvement, gaps in supervision, teacher morale, resource constraints, and coping strategies. Qualitative and quantitative data triangulation were intended to show the pattern and make a contribution to the validity of final results, and provide a more holistic picture of work processes in the sphere of educational planning and management in Ituri.

The paper begins by presenting the demographics of the ones interviewed, such as their geographical locations and work functions at the levels of profession and experience. The goals of research are then considered independently in the passages over, of balancing the quantitative dispositions to explanations against the qualitative explanations in a bid to project the quantifiable goods and contingent reasons. The tables, figures, and charts are also available in a visual aid form to make sure that they can be easily understood and interpreted, and the direct quotes that were provided by the participants might add some originality and depth to the findings.

2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, 120 people participated, and this study was conducted in six territories of Ituri Province, i.e., Bunia, Djugu, Irumu, Mahagi, Aru, and Mambasa. These territories were selected to make sure that the geographic, socio-economic, and security diversity of the province is represented, and this directly affects educational planning and management. The population was defined in terms of four major groups of stakeholders, as they included school heads, teachers, education officers, and the members of the community (including parents and the local leaders), to capture both the decision-makers and players of the education sector.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Category

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School Heads	30	25.0
Teachers	50	41.7
Education Officers	20	16.7
Community Members	20	16.7
Total	120	100

The grouping of the respondents brings out the center of the role of teachers in the running of schools, and they comprise the majority of respondents at 41.7 percent, and the heads of schools at 25 percent. There was equality between education officers and community members, each holding 16.7 percent of the school management. This would be attributed to the focus of this study on institutional and community levels of school planning and governance.

Geographic Distribution: The participants represented in the sample consisted of urban and rural schools, and this was a manifestation of the opposite situation in the districts. The interviewees of the cities (primarily of Bunia and Mahagi) said that they were better placed to access resources and infrastructure, along with administrative control, despite the prevailing challenges - classroom overcrowding and budget constraints. Quite on the contrary, lack of teaching material, teacher shortage, lack of facilities, and protracted interference by insecurity were reported in the rural villages, in Djugu, Irumu, Aru, and Mambasa, which were said to have more functioning problems in the warring zones. This kind of geographical spread allowed the research to uncover the inequalities in the practices of planning and running, and solutions that were situation-specific.

Gender Representation: The participants were almost even (52-48 feminine and sex male, respectively). The involvement of women was particularly harsh in the spheres of the teacher and community members, which might be explained by the efforts to introduce the voices of women who bear, to a certain extent, the educational load in the conflict countries. The delivery of the gender-testable information also provided a certain understanding of disparities in perceptions towards being in the school, being a part of the community, and style of coping, specifically regarding the education of the girls and other teacher retention initiatives.

Professional Experience: The amount of experience was high and ensured high competence and context sensitivity among respondents. Teachers on their side had over 68 percent with a teaching experience of above five years, and had 75 percent of school heads and 70 percent of education officers with administrative or leadership experience of over five years. This kind of experience was critical in gaining credibility in the information on school planning and management practice and issues raised in the course of time, with amplified conflict and displacement.

Community Representation: The community of study was composed mostly of parents, one of whom represented the local council or parent in the parent-teacher union, and the school governance. Their participation offered helpful qualitative data on the community engagement, view of the quality of the provided education, responsibility, and reaction to such conflicting situations as teacher absenteeism, insecurity, and lack of resources. Their perceptions provided a very significant role in perceiving the limits of the management system of formal education and the local social process.

Informed Environment and Roles: The multidimensional professional/experience backgrounds of the respondents afforded a multiplexing view of how schools work. The school heads provided the commentary on strategic planning, resource allocation, and administration problems. Teachers offered information about the curriculum delivery, teaching problems, and survival tactics in insecure contexts. Education officers observed policy implementation and control, and liaised with provincial and local people, observed supporting systems, and noted people's participation in governance and sociocultural factors that influence school leadership.

3. Objective One: Planning Strategies Employed (2021–2024)

3.1 Key Planning Activities

The research aimed to identify four broad planning strategies that took place in schools of the Ituri Province in 2021–2024. These prove crucial regarding rendering the education institutions workable, more so within a warring setting where the assets, manpower, and structures are customarily derailed. The navigation entails needs evaluation, infrastructure planning, implementation of the teachers, and implementation of School Development Plans (SDP).

Needs Assessments

The objective of the needs assessment was to identify the resources required, the enrollment rates of students, and the teacher supply. However, it is reported that such assessments were performed occasionally and regularly, depending on outdated or unfinished data. Quantitative survey results revealed that only 42% of school heads had actually conducted formal needs assessments within the past two years, and those who had conducted needs assessments had the recognition that data did not reflect the present student population and infrastructure needs. Interviews disclosed that it was extremely challenging in schools where the displacement rate was high due to armed conflict and a high rate of population turnover, since, in such schools, it became impossible to record previous events. It has been at Djugu, where one Djeha was the school head:

“I find it hard to keep the list of students and teachers current, but the families are ever on the move, and you can hardly have better information to work with.”

Infrastructure Planning

Restrictions in terms of planning infrastructure were also limited. The recalled surveyed schools reported that less than half of the total schools surveyed had any form of systematized infrastructure planning, and the degree of things was negligible in most of the cases due to conflict, insecurity, and lack of funds. Through the checklists, observations made it known that there were no basic facilities in over 60 percent of schools in the rural regions, such as classes that were working, desks, and proper sanitation. The qualitative data had it that in urban schools, some of them made attempts to renovate/expand their schools, and in the rural schools, typically made attempts to do with the ad hoc precautions offered by the community, which involve temporary classrooms or community rooms.

Teacher Deployment

One huge issue emerged regarding the issue of teacher deployment. The system of distributing teachers was more often ineffective in considering the rural areas or the war-prone areas, and resulted in severe deficits of teachers in remote areas. The surveys revealed that less than 58 percent of the work was in the rural schools, with fewer than 50 percent of the teaching staff required in those schools, whereas the urban schools were better staffed, with frequent cases of absenteeism due to security problems. Interviews with education officers revealed that constant turnover of education staff and wastage of time transfers aggravated the education staffing state of affairs, particularly in the high-risk sections. One of the education officers has explained it as so:

“We are calculating our deployment at the provincial level, but the insecurity and the disheartening incentives continue to drive teachers to seek postings in the rural schools or the conflict schools.”

School Development Plans (SDP)

Very little SDP implementation was there. Only 34 percent of the schools had active SDPs, and even those that did often did not complete the plans and did not follow them properly. They tended to be short-term focused in the presence of SDPs, such as repairing the school or recruiting new teachers, rather than being strategic. Teacher and community participation in the focus group dialogues indicated that technical help was not provided, and funding and informal supervision limited SDP development. One of the teachers at Irumu has said:

“We write development plans because it is required, but there is no one to check whether we are implementing them or not, and most importantly, we can hardly receive any form of resources that can assist us in the implementation process.”

Summary of Key Findings

Evaluation of the planning strategies reveals that both the strategic and the operational planning are systematic challenges in the schools in the Ituri Province. Needs assessment, infrastructure planning, and teacher and SDP allocation are in theory, but they are ineffective due to conflicts, resources, and inefficiency in administration. Such constraints kill the prospect of providing a stable and quality education within schools and highlight the importance of relevance and responsiveness of planning strategies in a conflictual environment.

3.2 Quantitative Results

The quantitative research entailed the evaluation of the perceived campaign ability of the significant planning undertakings in the schools of Ituri Province between 2021 and 2024. The respondents rated each activity using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 rated as Very Ineffective and 5 as Very Effective. Among the planning activities that were assessed were needs assessment, infrastructure planning, deployment of teachers, and one School Development Plan (SDP). The aggregated scores of the mean and their interpretation are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Planning Activities in Schools

Planning Activity	Effectiveness (Mean Score)	Interpretation
Needs Assessment	2.7/5	Moderately effective
Infrastructure Planning	1.9/5	Poor
Teacher Deployment	2.4/5	Below average
School Development Plans	2.2/5	Below average

Needs Assessments

Needs assessments were found to be the best planning activity, with a mean score of 2.7. Although this comes in the moderately effective category, the score shows intermittency and incompleteness of these tests. The survey demonstrated that urban schools, particularly those in Bunia and Mahagi, had regular needs assessments of students once a year, and that the rural schools would utilize informal or outdated manuals. This gap could be significantly attributed to the constant expulsion of the population offered by militaristic declarations and the impossibility of getting stable data. Of interest to note, 42 percent of school heads reported having undertaken a formal needs assessment in the previous two years, and 65 percent acknowledged that the data collected was not typically premised on existing enrollment and infrastructure needs.

Infrastructure Planning

Infrastructure planning had the lowest score of 1.9, which constitutes poor effectiveness. The bad mark is a sign of the desperate conditions the schools end up in to maintain and renovate physical buildings in the face of constant demolition. The rural schools lacked working classes in more than 60 percent of them, but in other examples, the school was being run out of the umbrella or half of the half-gutted buildings. Another revelation that came out during interviews was that infrastructure planning was compromised due to a lack of finances, technical guidance, and security, making it difficult to make schools plan long-term development. This low score highlights the issue of the structural vulnerability of learning facilities in conflict-driven regions and underlines the significance of the specific interventions in the distribution of resources and delivery of infrastructure.

Teacher Deployment

The variable of teacher deployment scored average, or below average (2.4). The results suggest that there are still some grave challenges in enforcing a fair and timely contribution from the teachers, especially in rural and at-risk areas. The survey data revealed that half of the rural schools had fewer than 50 percent of the required teaching staff, with the urban schools being comparatively well-staffed but having frequent absenteeism problems due to security problems and transport difficulties. Education officers said that the following led to these staffing gaps: delay of transfers, lack of incentives to work in the rural areas, and unwillingness of teachers to work in areas vulnerable to conflicts.

School Development Plans (SDP).

The rating of school development plans was 2.2, and it was also below average. The SDPs existed in some schools; however, they were not necessarily created, implemented correctly, or monitored correctly. Less than three-fourths of all schools surveyed identified as having active SDP, and even those that did, they did not have the funds, technical support, and consistent oversight to do so. The focus group discussion indicated that teachers and school heads typically developed SDPs as a control and not a realistic strategic plan. One of the instructors of Irumu said:

“I write development plans since it is an obligation and barely get coached and supported to execute them, and security dilemmas will prevent us.”

District Comparisons Between Cultures.

A comparative analysis was made on urban and rural districts, with major differences noted. Urban schools had a higher score in all planning activities, particularly in the sphere of needs assessment (mean = 3.2) and teacher deployment (mean = 2.9) due to their better access to administration, infrastructure, and security. The rural schools, but primarily Djugu and Aru, scored significantly below, and it is evident that conflict, remote location, and lack of resources in the form of resource allocation influence the planning effectiveness.

Interpretations and Implications.

The overall necessities of the quantitative findings are that some of the planning processes, such as needs assessment, are medium and partly poor, and infrastructure planning, teacher deployment, and SDPs are average or poor. These results signify structural issues in the education sector of Ituri Province, which include disruption by conflict, unavailability of resources, insufficient administration, and poor national policy-local realities adaptation. The findings indicate the value of adaptive and situation-specific planning programs, strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems, and greater assistive measures of schools in the high-risk regions to improve academic results.

3.3 Qualitative Insights

The qualitative data present a finer view of the planning strategies in Ituri schools that need the quantitative ones. The data were collected through conducting semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and checklists of observation under which the participants were allowed to narrate problems, coping strategies, and circumstantial realities in their natural language. Some key themes that it raised were the emergency-driven preparation, the dependence on external players, data gaps, and the scarcity of resources.

Emergency-Driven Planning

The identical theme was developed using the notion that planning of schools in conflict areas is not strategic but reactive. Headteachers and teachers conclude that immediate crises such as destruction of the classrooms, teacher absenteeism, or students' sudden displacement can be the triggering factors for planning. To the regret of one of the head teachers of Djugu:

“It is only when an emergency arrives that we make plans. There’s no data. No budget. What we have not seen, how shall we plan?”

The school of thought reflects on the more general truth that chronic instability pushes school administrators to seek a short-term-oriented problem-solving strategy rather than long-term building. It was noted that most of the schools did not have a very detailed record of the enrollment of the students, teachers' attendance, and the state of the infrastructure; hence, the schools could not plan actively.

Reliance On Outside Agents.

Another theme was the immense utilization of the non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international agencies in the implementation of the district or provincial education plans. Education officers emphasized that such a plan for a district already exists, but since the government lacks strength and there is also a lack of capital, it has not implemented. One of the police in Bunia said:

“There is the district plan, yet it must be based on the NGOs rather than on the government.”

This dependency is a description of the breakdown of the planning authority and implies that it is hard to continue school development programs without outside help. Respondents also pointed out that NGO-initiated programs generally focus on urban centers or schools that are easily accessible at the cost of rural and high-risk populations.

Information Lapses and Infrequent Surveillance.

Unreliable data was one of the critical barriers to effective planning that was related to interviews. Teachers and school heads never ceased to grumble about creating up-to-date records of the students, tracking performance over time, and the infrastructure needs. Some rural schools made the collection even more difficult because the high incidence of dislocation due to conflict made the process challenging. One teacher from Irumu noted:

“We do not even know who is around or not, yet there are times when we are trying to make our bookings and families are moved, classrooms are burned up, and we are not even aware of who is where or who is not.”

The unavailability of correct data also had an impact on the weakness of monitoring and evaluation of School Development Plans (SDP). The majority of SDPs were not action plans but formalities with little follow-up by district authorities.

Resource Limiting and Financial Dilemmas.

The lack of resources became a popular problem, which influenced all fields of planning. There was a lack of budgets, teaching materials, and proper infrastructure in the two headteachers, as well as education officers who were identified, and these compromised the potential of strategic planning to a great extent. This was particularly true with the rural schools, in which the majority of them were either under temporary shelters or even shared classrooms. The respondents indicated that plans implemented, regardless of their quality, could barely be achieved due to financial limitations.

Planning Effectiveness Question Perceptions.

Other respondents stated showing marginal successes regardless of this. Schools with better administrative records and whose communities were well represented by school boards in urban areas of Bunia and Mahagi had moderately successful planning, particularly needs assessment and teacher scheduling. One of the education officers told him:

“The arrangement is better where learning committees are pursuing, and the educators are dedicated. It can hardly be safe in unsafe locations.”

These observations concur with the observations made through the quantitative research, as being able to prove that the planning activity is not the most functional, and they are not typically confined by a lack of conflict, scarcity of resources, or capacity in administration.

Generalization of the Qualitative Information.

In general, the qualitative data demonstrate that the emergency-based decision-making, dependency on external sources, the lack of data, and the limited resources affect the planning policies in Ituri schools. These findings provide scaling contextual explanations to the low-to-middle ranks of effectiveness scores, which were drawn in the quantitative analysis. They focus on adaptive planning, capacity building, and local support systems to promote planning in conflict-prone settings.

4. Objective Two: Effectiveness of Management Practices

4.1 Management Dimensions Assessed

The paper has tested the performance of school management practice in the Ituri Province, and its effectiveness is measured on four main areas that include supervision and inspection, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and teacher support and motivation. The dimensions are selected based on the fact that they play a vital role in determining that the schools are efficient, that they are responsible, and that the quality of education in schools is good, especially in the schools that are characterized by a lack of resources and strife.

Supervision and Inspection

Supervision and inspection are the proposed controlled observation of the school operations by the education officers or administrators of the school to fulfill the standards of curriculum, as well as the teaching methods and management policies. Ituri is likely to be affected by insecurity, restricted movement of education officers, and an inability to influence this job. Data on the quantitative and qualitative information indicate that the process of supervision is not a routine exercise, with rural schools being visited less frequently than the urban schools. The interviews have also given them information that reveals that the education officers tend to be more concerned in areas where there is security.

Record Keeping

Proper record keeping means maintaining lists of students in the school, books of attendance, teacher assignments and assignments, and financial records. Ituri represents a case of post-conflict where documentation is incomplete or sporadic, and hence it is impossible to track the student progress, teacher attendance, and resource allocation. The school visits indicated that more of the rural schools do not have standard record-keeping equipment or are torn apart when the school is in transit or dismantled.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

Monitoring and evaluation are organized examinations of the school programs, quality of teaching, and performance. Such management intervention is likely to steer the corrective measures and resource distribution and enhance the educational outcomes. M&E in Ituri has not been well-developed yet, and the schools' organization is not well-performed in the periodic review. In the focus group discussion, it was found that M & E functions are typically fulfilled, at most, once and only when it comes to NGO-based interventions, but not when it comes to routine activities of the institution. Planning loopholes and inefficient supervision and implementation of School Development Plans (SDPs) are not carried out without normal M&E.

Motivation and support of the teacher.

Among these, teacher support and motivation are the provision of teaching materials, mentoring, performance recognition, and professional development. The dimension plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance by ensuring that the institution possesses sound management in reducing teacher absenteeism and enhancing the quality of teaching and morale in a challenging workplace. In Ituri, a high level of low motivation among teachers is due to low salary, inquiries into the motivations of teaching in rural areas, and opportunities for professional development. The interview also gave information on the point that the support structures are present but limited by the scope of their coverage to the urban schools or the NGOs in which they are located.

Overviews of the Dimensions of Management.

The four-dimensional analysis will be able to give the overall map to investigate if the school management practices are efficient in Ituri. Supervision and inspection would help uphold standards of education, accountability, and planning would be achieved through record keeping, M&E would provide remedial measures, and maintaining instruction quality would be done through instructor maintenance. A combination of these dimensions is a building up of the administrative and human resource management dilemma that schools are facing as they are also straddling colliding, displacing, and poverty-stricken, lack of resource situations.

4.2 Management Practices Existence in the Quantitative Findings.

The understudy monitored the perceived efficacy of the following and the most significant school management practices of Ituri Province in 2021-2024. The ratings for each management dimension were calculated with a five-point Likert scale, where 1 was very ineffective and 5 was very effective, with the respondents being the school heads, teachers, education officers, and community representatives. The four management areas regarded included the supervision by the education officers, recordkeeping done by the schools, oversight and appraisal of the instructional practices, and assistance of the teachers. Table 4.3 summarizes the description of the average scores and the interpretations.

Table 3: Effectiveness of School Management Practices

Management Practice	Mean Score (out of 5)	Interpretation
Supervision by Education Officers	3.0	Average
Record-Keeping by Schools	2.6	Below average
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	2.3	Weak
Support for Teachers	2.1	Poor

Supervision by Education Officers

The average supervision is 3.0, which indicates the average effectiveness. This means that supervision may be regular or irregular and of a high or low standard inasmuch as education officers have oversight functions across districts and school types. The urban schools, particularly in Bunia and Mahagi, were regularly inspected and counselled, and those in Djugu, Irumu, and Aru were less often visited due to insecurity, logistical difficulties, and a shortage of staff to visit the district so often.

The results of the survey found that fifty percent of all school heads felt that the information on the visits was conducted on a regular basis and that no follow-up was done, thereby limiting its impact on the teaching and management practice. This has been affirmed through interviews, with one of the education officials saying:

“We are trying to cover all the schools, but the problem of insecurity and high costs of transport prevents us from covering rural schools regularly. We open schools, not because teaching is being done, and even chiefly through our oversight.”

One of the essential instruments of obligation maintenance, despite middle success, is the supervision that is important in assigning directions and identifying gaps in the school's functioning.

Record-Keeping by Schools

Record-keeping was rated 2.6, which depicts an average rating. The schools were many, and many could not maintain proper enrollment lists, attendance books, staff files, and financial reports. Checklists observing 2,000 rural schools indicated that 42 percent of schools had incomplete or noncurrent student files, and 37 percent had no teacher attendance or payroll files.

The interviews pinpointed a number of reasons that have contributed to poor record-keeping: changing of schools, loss of records in disputes, lack of administrative capacity among school staff, and lack of use of standardized record-keeping machines. Specifically, as one of the headteachers in Irumu claimed:

“In trying to modernize our students' registers, we find ourselves out of breath all the time, and sometimes we fail to ground ourselves in those studying. This makes the process of planning and distribution of resources extremely difficult.”

The low mark of record-keeping is serious, as it shows that it is a significant component of the planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Without such reliable records, the schools are unable to track the progress of the students, teacher performance, and accountability in the utilization of resources.

The Teaching Practice monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The average of M&E is 2.3, which indicates that M&E is not very effective. Schools were observed to have a low level of ability to be able to systematically observe the quality of teaching, the learning outcomes, or the performance of the program by the students. According to survey data, a lower percentage of schools, 28 percent, had regular lesson observations, and 25 percent, a lower proportion, had any formal observation of teacher practice.

The qualitative information showed that the M&E activities tend to be occasional and based on outside interventions. A separate discussion of the focus group revealed that, as long as programs are implemented by NGOs or international agencies, monitoring is being done effectively, but normal M&E in the government system practically does not exist, particularly in remote or war-prone areas. One teacher from Djugu noted:

“Most of the time, it is only monitored in the event of an NGO. Otherwise, no one is made aware of whether the quality of teaching is good, and we barely understand that we are not below the standards.”

There is also the absence of continuity in instruction, the loopholes in student learning, and the lack of correction to the schools and district, which can be attributed to the overall poor M&E structure.

Support for Teachers

The lowest mean in teacher support is 2.1, which portrays poor effectiveness. The respondents always cited low morale, which was attributed to delays in salaries, lack of career advancement, inadequate incentives to work in the rural assignments, and lack of teaching materials. The survey results also indicated that 60 percent of teachers in the rural schools have not received formal development of their profession during the past two years.

Interviews supported these results. One of the teachers in Aru said:

“It does not have mentoring, training, and incentives. Insecurity exacerbates our misfortunes, and we cannot be without the informal support of our peers.”

The lack has negative effects on the motivation of the teacher, attendance, and quality of teaching, making the situation difficult in conflict-oriented schools.

Comparative Analysis: Urban vs. Rural Schools

The mean scores compared between the urban schools and the rural schools had drastic differences. The urban schools have higher ratings in all aspects: supervising (3.4), record keeping (3.0), M and E (2.8), and teacher support (2.5), who reported good access to the administrative oversight, security, and resources. The rural schools were even lower: supervision (2.6), record-keeping (2.2), M&E (1.9), and teacher support (1.8). The situation was complicated with such conditions.

Such differences mean the need for a certain type of intervention and situation-dependent management mechanisms to ensure improvements in the system of school governance and achievements in rural and conflict-oriented areas.

Interpretation and Implications

The quantitative measures indicate that school management practice in Ituri Province is largely weak to mediocre, with a large disparity between urban and rural schools. Although education officer-based supervision is moderate, record-keeping, M&E, and support to the teachers are critical areas of concern. Weaknesses under these dimensions compromise the efficiency, poor accountability, and poor quality of education in the high-risk and resource-constrained localities.

These results support the need to have capacity-building programs between the school heads and the education officers, a system of standardized records and M&E systems, and a system of how to assist the teachers. These forms of management practices need to be reinforced so that schools that operate in conflict-affected environments in Ituri Province can become firmer and more productive.

4.3 Qualitative Insights on Management Practices

Besides the quantitative findings, the qualitative ones can supply a descriptive, contextual dissection of the management practices within Ituri schools as well. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations led to the revelation of certain intriguing themes: the lack of consistency in the area of supervision, the poor quality of record keeping, the lack of the proper level of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and the lack of teacher support.

Irregular Supervision

Among them was the fact that education officers in charge of schools also make infrequent and irregular visits. Supervision as practiced by the teachers was symbolic and only performed in those instances in which there were some circumstances to be addressed. One of Mahagi's teachers said,

"We are supervised, perhaps, once or twice a term. Most of the time, the inspectors fail to reach us because of a lack of security or fuel."

This observation is a symbol of the logistical and security problems that limit normal surveillance, discouraging the ability of education officers to provide directions, lay down standards, and support the administrations of the school to operate efficiently. This was also revealed by the heads of the schools that were interviewed, as they noted that the element of supervision is normally introduced to make certain that the school is operating rather than to survey the quality of teaching or administration within the school.

Poor Record-Keeping

The next giant issue that presented itself was record-keeping. Lots of schools had incomplete or disjointed records, too, usually due to a lack of standardized tools, limits to staff capacity, and conflict disruption. One of the community representatives of Irumu said:

“Records we have—we do not have standard records. Indeed, schools lack registers.”

It was found that rural schools frequently had no registers, attendance books, or financial records, and in most cases, the damaged ones were never replaced due to the resources. One of the reasons for systemic inefficiencies in the process of school administration is the discouragement of planning, monitoring, and evaluation initiatives by inaccurate data.

Ineffective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

Schools failed to conduct regular evaluations of teaching quality or student performance. This is because the concept of formal M&E was explained by the participants of a focus group mostly in cases when NGOs or programs financed by donors took over the schools and left them without sustainable and internally motivated monitoring instruments. This fact agrees with the quantitative data that M&E had an average score of 2.3, indicating low institutional capacity for measuring educational performance.

Inadequate Teacher Support

Teacher support was the weakest management practice. Teachers lamented the lack of professional training, lack of mentorship, low remuneration, and minimal returns of working in rural conflict-prone areas. This negatively influences teacher morale, teacher absenteeism, and retention due to the lack of any well-structured support systems. Interviewees said formal support was used in place of an informal network of their peers or community support. Because, as one of the teachers in Djugu informed me,

“The mentoring and training do not exist. It is not enough because we go through the experience together with the colleagues.”

Applicability of the Qualitative Findings.

Overall, the qualitative data can be used to explain the hidden reasoning behind the quantitative scores that have been observed. There is an inadequacy of security and a lack of logistic processes, failed records, a lack of standardization, and disrupted functioning. M and E are too weak (dependent on outside agencies) and open to the teachers. The combination of all this indicates that school management practices in Ituri are not sustainable for furthering quality education in the conflict situations.

Implications

The findings reveal that certain steps must be undertaken to make the schools effective, which can include building the capacity of school administrators, uniformity of the record-keeping system, formal M&E processes, and provision of a comprehensive teacher training module. This should be conducted to improve the accountability, the quality of teaching, and the quality of schools, which ought to operate within a vulnerable environment.

5. Objective Three: Stakeholder Perceptions on Planning and Management

5.1 Major Perceptions Identified

In the study, the exposition of the perception of different parties about school planning and management in Ituri Province included the school heads, teachers, education officers, parents, and community leaders. There were four

key themes that appeared at the end of the quantitative survey and qualitative interview, and the themes may be regarded as systemic problems, a number of operating constraints, processes in the impacted community in the conflict environment.

1. Weak Governance Structures

The school governance structures were another repetitive opinion that was presented by the respondents in regard to whether they are weak or inefficient. This entails low functioning of the school management committees, poorly defined roles in relation to the education officers, and a relative lack of coordination between provincial and district offices. According to some of the interviewees, decision-making authority is weak, often sluggish, and in some instances is tainted with politics. One of the education officials at Bunia wrote:

“There is poor governance on paper. The decision-making process is very slow, and different obligations fall through the cracks as no one is there to take them.”

This picture can be said to be a signal that there is a need for enhancing the administrative capacity and deeply rooted governance processes to ensure that the planning and management processes are properly implemented.

2. Minimal Community Engagement

The stakeholders had immense experience with the lack of parent and community involvement in the school governance. Parent-teacher association (PTA) is a nominal concept, but its part in decision-making, allocating, and overseeing resources is extremely negligible. The rural schools are particularly affected, where insecurity, displacement, and ignorance are the factors that prevent active involvement. Djugu, among other community chiefs, has noted:

“We would like to contribute, but still, we will not see one another frequently, and we do not know how it will be done. We are not much influenced by the schools until we have a crisis.”

Quantitative survey data revealed this when less than 30 percent of the participants felt that the involvement of the community was high in school planning or management.

3. Dependence on NGOs

Among the significant tendencies was the excessive reliance on the external agencies with references to planning, execution, and resource delivery. According to the stakeholders, the school operations and development plans would always hinge on NGOs, international donors, or humanitarian bodies. One of the Irumu headteachers wrote:

“We cannot afford to implement development plans without the assistance of the NGOs. The state only does so little, and in most cases we must wait till it comes to us externally.”

Such dependence breeds infirmities because the priorities of the NGO are not necessarily pegged on the needs of the locals, and aid is not necessarily timely and sustainable. It also suppresses the establishment of the locally based planning and management units that would be independent.

4. Unsatisfaction among Teachers.

In the complaints by teachers, they bemoaned disillusionment and frustration over the system of planning and management because they cited low morale, lack of incentive, and poor development in the profession. The conditions demotivate and encourage absenteeism and adversely affect the quality of instruction. A secondary school teacher of Aru said:

“We are expected to work on our plans and teach under hard conditions, but are badly coached, motivated, and compensated. We feel that our work is useless.”

However, the disenchantment phenomenon contributes to the instability in the staffing and dilutes the overall school management practices.

Stakeholder Perception Synthesis.

All these perceptions lead to the realization of the shortcomings in the system of governance, the absence of community involvement, excess reliance on NGOs, and the lack of interest among the teachers. They provide qualitative descriptions to justify identified lacks in planning and management practices, which had been suggested in previous sections. In order to address such issues, more attention needs to be paid to strengthening the local systems of governance, involvement of the communities, reduction in reliance on the outside, and enhancing the support system of teachers.

5.2 Thematic Coding Results

The analyzed qualitative data were the interviews and focus groups using the NVivo software to identify the prevalent trends and the central themes according to the understanding of the stakeholders about the school planning and management in Ituri Province. The result of the coding analysis revealed several themes that are common themes that suggest the challenges and dynamics of education governance in terms of conflicts. A summary of the most significant themes employed by the respondents can be seen in Table .4.

Table 4: Thematic Coding of Stakeholder Interviews

Theme	Frequency of Mention
Insecurity	41
Resource Constraints	38
Lack of Participation	33
Government Neglect	29
Success via NGOs	25

Insecurity

The theme of insecurity was the most prevalent, given that it was cited 41 times during the interviews. The stakeholders indicated that the future of bona fide military strife, militia intervention, and displacement has a dire adverse effect on school operation, planning, and management. The insecurity will hamper access to education officers, disrupt attendance at school, and instill fear in the members of the community, and therefore limit participation in school government. A teacher from Mahagi noted:

“The parents are afraid of attending meetings, as fighting occurs on the ground and the inspectors are rarely seen.”

This theme is made more dominant by the fact that conflict has produced a very high impact on the entire system of education, be it in administration efficiency or the outcome of acquisition.

Resource Constraints

The second theme was most often mentioned, as it was said 38 times, namely, resource constraints. The respondents said that the schools are plagued with persistent shortages of funds, teaching facilities, teaching resources, and human resources. Budgets are coming in on time or falling short, and the schools have always been habitually targeting external support to continue with their operations. The schoolmaster of one of these schools in the city of Irumu informed me:

The money is not there, not even to make plans, not even to have desks, books, and repairs. We only do what we can do with what we have.

This theme brings out the institutional problems that impact effective planning, administration, and learning.

Lack of Participation

Thirty-three respondents were those who had stressed no community and parental participation in school planning and school administration. The barriers include the fear due to the absence of security, the small amount of information about school committees, and the weak communication between the school and the local community. One of the village chiefs at Djugu was quoted as saying:

“Parents demand they be consulted on the decisions, although they are not invited to the meetings.”

This theme is a response to the quantitative report that the level of community participation is lower, which implies that there is a vast gap related to the practices of inclusion and involvement in community planning.

Government Neglect

The theme of government neglect was localized to 29 times among the stakeholders, since there was a consideration that governments of nations and provinces provide little or no support or oversight. This was complained of as a lack of supervision, fund distribution, and follow-ups to the development plans, as complained of by stakeholders. One of the education officers of Bunia said:

“There are also policies in place, but poor government implementation. The schools are left to make ends meet.”

This picture supports the fact that the government structure is low and may not always be able to assist in the management of schools at the same level.

Success via NGOs

However, 25 references gave cases where NGOs and outside agencies succeeded in carrying out the planning of schools, supplying resources, or assisting the teachers. According to the stakeholders, the NGO activity tends to fill in for the government by providing training, materials, and surveillance services. Comments from one of the head teachers in Aru noted:

“Without the help of NGOs, many of our plans will not be made public. They provide material resources, training, and supervision that the government lacks.”

Concerned as they were about dependency and sustainability, which they believe should be the long-term solutions, they were concerned that NGO input was valued.

Interpretation/Implications.

The outcomes of thematic coding prove that the conflict, resource scarcity, the absence of community engagement, bias in governance, and the dependency on foreign aid are the circumstances that characterize the school planning and management in Ituri. Insecurity and lack of resources are the most distinguishing problems, showing the structural, environmental inequality, which is a determinant of the provision of education. Despite the relevance of NGOs as a form of help, external actors are a challenge to sustainability and the creation of capacity in the area.

5.3 Voices from the Field

The interviews, as well as the focus groups with the stakeholders, have provided firsthand information on the lived experience of the school heads and teachers, as well as the community members, with regard to the planning and management of the Ituri Province. It is these voices that render the quantitative and thematic outcomes relevant to the real world, showing what underperforming governance, lack of resources, and the disruptions involved with the conflict in real life appear to look like.

The central and less input at the local level of planning. The central planning processes, which did not involve local stakeholders, were rather frustrating to most of the respondents. At Bunia, the head of a school had written:

"Communities have no say. In Kinshasa, planning is experienced, unlike in Bunia.

This statement indicates the absence of local realities in the national policy-making. Centralized planning does not consider the localized needs of schools in conflict or in rural areas, and the intervention impact does not realistically work or is adjusted incorrectly.

Dependence on NGOs in terms of resources and support. Ease of depending too much on NGOs to supply the required resources and infrastructure was also brought out by teachers. A teacher from Aru noted:

"NGOs have constructed and even provided the chalk for our latrines. The achievement of the government has not been very much."

This dependence shows once more the decisive role of the outside powers in ensuring the operation of the schools, but suggests the weakness and insufficiency of sustainable solutions on the local level simultaneously. The temporary relief is provided by the NGOs, and this leaves the schools with unequal aid and an absence of long-term government investments.

Burnout and Disenchantment within the Society.

The community members lamented their frustration and disinterest, which was occasioned by the non-accomplishment of delivery in terms of governance and supplying resources. Djugu, one of the members of the community, said:

"The parents are yearning to make their contribution; they believe that the schools belong now to the politicians."

This is a manifestation of the opinion that the local involvement is not functioning or is being replaced by politics. Such disillusionment renders it less probable to participate in school development committees and the PTA activities, disempowering any accountability and alternatives to community-based advances.

Synthesis and Implications

The voices of the field support the thematic and quantitative results that the weaknesses of governance, absence of involvement of the community, and reliance on the outside are the major obstacles to the planning and management of schools in Ituri. They reveal a culture of marginalization, resource scarcity, and stakeholder fatigue that goes into supporting continued learning disparities in the conflict-prone locations.

6. Fourth Objective: Problems and Suggestions.

6.1 Challenges Identified

The study has shown that there are a number of problems that have immense implications on the schools' planning and management in the Ituri Province in the next three years (2021-2024). The prioritization of the challenges on the

basis of intensity and frequency, as per the stakeholders, is reflective of structural and contextual impediments to effective educational governance. Table 4.5 presents the list of key concerns with their ranking of significance.

Table 5: Challenges Affecting School Planning and Management in Ituri Province

Challenge	Stakeholder Rank (1–5)
Insecurity	1
Lack of Funding	2
Low Staff Morale	3
Weak Monitoring Systems	4
Poor Communication Channels	5

Insecurity

The most critical challenge among them is insecurity, since it cuts across the school operations. This has restricted the movement of teachers owing to the ongoing armed conflict, militia groups, and even individual security concerns since the teachers are in movement and the supervisors do not visit the schools, since they have to be on the move as well, and the students do not attend school due to the insecurity. The stakeholders highlighted that the incentive that drives the temporary closure of the school and dislocation of the staff and students is insecurity, which is quite debilitating to the execution of the planning and management programs.

Djegu, one of the schoolteachers, told me:

“Whether or not we will have a safe school tomorrow, we do not always know. When you are not even sure that you will be able to attend classes, it is impossible to plan.”

This insecurity is so rampant that it leaves everyone insecure, and that environment is a killer of any other management undertakings.

Lack of Funding

In the second tier, there was a position of funding limitations. It is well known that over prolonged periods of time, schools are underfinanced, and this fact limits the formation of the infrastructure, the provision of teaching materials, and access to qualified employees. The most significant observation that most of the respondents raised is that the planned interventions are often put on hold due to budget deficits, as the projects stagnate, and also because of the widespread reliance on NGOs. Irumu had one of the headteachers, who said,

“We have the intention, yet there is never the money to carry out half of what we have in mind.”

The financial resources are unavailable, which renders the school development plans less possible and viable, and reduces the quality of schooling.

Low Staff Morale

Employee morale was also a significant issue since the respondents ranked it number three. The individual variables include the low salary and career development, the lack of an adequate level of appreciation, and the stress of operating in the conflict-prone regions. The result of poor morale is nurse attendance, engagement, and retention that ultimately produce negative effects on the results of students. A teacher in Aru observed:

“We work too hard and earn too little, and they do not even have anybody to support them. In these circumstances, it is hard to get motivated.”

Material rewards are also crucial in regard to making sure that the staff morale is addressed.

Weak Monitoring Systems

The fourth critical challenge was poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In many schools, there are no effective systems or processes to check the progress of the students, review the work of the teacher, or review the development plans. This follows since a poor M&E system obstructs accountability and evidence-based decisions and reduces the effectiveness of planning actions.

Education officials of one of the officers at Bunia wrote:

“No physical tools or systems are present to monitor schools, and thus isolated areas. We rely on the ad hoc visits that are insufficient.”

Monitoring systems should be strengthened so as to increase the levels of transparency, the allocation of resources, and the overall performance of the school.

Poor Communication Channels

The fifth and last in the rank of the stakeholders was poor communication among the stakeholders, such as the education authorities, school staff, parents, and NGOs. Failure to execute the plans in good time, repetitive efforts, and a lack of voices of locals in the decision-making process are all brought about by poor communication. One of the Djugu members has expounded:

“We do not have much to relate as to plans or meetings. We receive information after it is too late, and the decision is also taken.”

The communication channels should also be improved to make the planning process participatory and the community a stakeholder, and to ensure that there is a response to the emerging issues.

Synthesis of Challenges

Overall, the findings lead to the assumption that it is the multi-layered issues that limit the planning and management of schools in Ituri Province: environmental (insecurity), structural (funding, M&E), human resource-oriented (staff morale), and systemic (communication gaps). In all these combine to make a fragile and shaky educational environment, where planning is mostly a responsive and not an anticipative thing.

These complications necessitate addressing the challenges as a whole, which would presuppose the increase in security, the allocation of additional funds, the growth of human resources, the creation of efficient monitoring devices, and the promotion of effective communication and interaction with stakeholders.

6.2 Detailed Analysis of Challenges

Based on the spotlight on the stakeholder reactions, survey reports, and on-field observations, one can conceive the survey reports and field observations as an insinuation of the issues that vex school planning and management in the Ituri Province. The following will analyze these challenges, with a focus on their prevalence, effects, and causes.

Insecurity

Insecurity was noted to be the biggest challenge since it was experienced in virtually all aspects of school operations. Based on the reports given by the stakeholders, armed attacks and the activity of the militias usually lead to closure of schools, teacher displacement, and destruction of student attendance. In this case, the reports in these rural places,

such as Djugu and Irumu, established that weeks went by without some schools operating due to their insecurity. One school head explained:

“We are uninformed as to one safe day during a school year. The planning process is always interrupted by attacks despite the eradication of the risk. Students never resume.”

Such an overall sense of insecurity does not restrict the day-to-day administration, and in addition, the communities are not sufficiently certain to participate in the governance process. It indicates the importance of the need to incorporating security in educational planning and the need to adopt flexible contingency plans.

Budget Shortfalls

The insufficiency of funds constitutes one of the main hurdles to the planning and execution of any school development project. Based on survey data, it was found that the schools were not being allocated their annual budgetary allocations, and this required the administration to put their hand on emergency repairs and other necessary supplies instead of planning their strategies. Poor viability in the capital affects the renewal of infrastructure, procurement of learning materials, and adoption of qualified personnel. One of these headteachers of Mahagi has noted:

“When we have designs regarding desks, chalk, or whatever repairs we do it for, we never receive the money in time—or at all.”

Those findings indicate that the planning and management practice is undermined by financial instability that leads to further discontinuity of the NGOs and external donors to fund basic organizational practices.

Staff Morale

Another reason that was cited as having low morale for teachers was due to the delayed salary, there being no incentive programs, and the poor working conditions in war-torn areas. The majority of teachers also disclosed that they serve unpaid up to four months or even eight months, and it results in absenteeism and demotivation, and in extreme cases, they relocate to other states or to other jobs. One of the teachers in one of the secondary schools in Aru remarked:

“Teaching when you do not know whether you will be paid is very hard. The rest of us survive on the small contributions of society, which is not sustainable.”

The low staff morale directly influences the school's performance, the quality of instruction, and the performance of students. This issue, in turn, can be dealt with not only through financial channels but also through psychosocial support systems.

Synthesis of Detailed Analysis

The step-by-step analysis helps to point out that the problems in Ituri Province are not isolated, but they have been supporting each other. The security failure derails the school process, and the planning and budget deficit obstruct the successful implementation of the development process, as the lack of staff morale reduces the quality of education. All this will create a wobbly learning environment in which planning and management activities will never go unchallenged.

6.3 Participant Recommendations

The stakeholders came up with plausible recommendations on how the school planning and administration can address the problems plaguing the Ituri Province. Through these kinds of recommendations, it would be possible to see the short-term needs as well as the long-term policies of augmenting the strength and efficacy of the education system in the climate of conflict.

Decentralization and the Actual Power.

Some of the best recommendations were pertinent decentralization, in which the provincial and district governments would arrive at their own decision depending on context, including appropriate decisions on whom to hire, budget, and allocation of resources. One of the education officers at Bunia indicated:

“There should be decentralization and real power. Provincial leadership should rule when it comes to recruiting and spending.”

This is an allusion to the frustrations of the centrally based decision-making mechanisms in Kinshasa that do not even consider local realities such as the supply problem of teachers, the infrastructure needs of the rural areas, and the security politics. The local leaders should have some degree of autonomy and accountability, and this would assist in enhancing the effectiveness of the school planning and making it more responsive to new challenges.

Common Pedagogical Learning and Teacher Budget.

Even under the conditions of restraint, teachers said that continual professional development was needed. The Mahagi teacher suggested:

This implies that we are to be trained periodically; even through radio or via WhatsApp, they are to be educated.

Such a proposal ensures the worth of ingenious and adaptive instructional tools that can reach teachers in insecure or remote regions. There would be constant motivation that would enhance the quality of instructions, the motivation of the teachers, and the implementation of the school development plans. Infrastructure creation of safe learning environments. One of the headteachers at Djugu told me:

“Make schools safe zones. You cannot learn when you listen to gun-firing.”

New safety measures can be in the form of the liaison of regional security organs, community surveillance, and physical redesign to ensure they can establish secure learning environments. Safe environments are the basis of consistent attendance, effective teaching, participation, and meaningful involvement in the community.

Additional Recommendations

The additional recommendations that can be offered by the participants include:

- Also, improvement of community involvement—inclusion of parent-teacher associations as well as local leaders in decision-making and planning.
- The budgets are to be paid out systematically; resource distribution and accountability also need an upgrade and improvement.
- The NGOs should be strategically deployed as a form of temporary support, but at the same time, they should be able to develop a local capacity to run schools sustainably.

Synthesis

Together, the responses of the participants emphasize the need for multi-layered interventions based on the circumstances and context, yet aimed at governance, teacher capacity, security, and community involvement simultaneously. They have not existed in exclusion of recommendations, but the recommendations have been in line with overall findings of the research and have underlined the importance of planning and management being systematic, inclusive, and accountable to the reality of the conflict-ridden regions.

7. Visual Summary: District-Level Critical Indicators.

The table of the important indicators in the six districts of Ituri Province became a summary of the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative segments of this paper. These indicators can be internalized to achieve the effectiveness of school planning, management practices, stakeholder involvement, availability of resources, and security. Displaying this information comparatively, one can track the trends and disparities within districts, and locations of certain issues can be identified where they require interest-based intervention.

Table 6: Key Indicators of School Planning and Management by District

District	Planning Effectiveness (1–5)	Supervision & Management (1–5)	Community Engagement (1–5)	Resource Availability (1–5)	Security Impact (1–5)
Bunia	3.0	3.2	2.5	2.8	3.5
Djugu	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.8
Irumu	2.4	2.3	1.9	2.0	2.0
Mahagi	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.3
Aru	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.1
Mambasa	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.9

Legend:

1 = Very Low / Very Poor; 5 = Very High / Very Effective

Interpretation of Key Indicators

1. Planning Effectiveness

A city such as Bunia can be served better since the administration structure is more advanced and well supervised, and chances are that it would be closer to the provincial education departments. On the contrary, regions such as Mambasa and Djugu, which are rural, struggle to plan because there is limited access to plans, and plans are usually destroyed by the war and the lack of local decision-making ability. This distinction brings to the fore the importance of understanding the importance of plans based on the context, with the consideration of geographic and security-related constraints.

2. Supervision & Management Practices

Education officers cannot equally put schools under check. Procedural reporting systems and frequent inspections are experienced in the cities, and a shortage of these in the rural areas is causing problems with hassles in transportation, insecurity, and logistical nightmares. The total careless control in the high-conflict areas leads to breached record keeping, monitoring of teachers, and accountability of teachers, as attested by both the survey and interview paperwork.

3. Community Engagement

The involvement of the community was low in all the districts due to fear, lack of trust, and a history of being marginalized in the process of planning process. The fact is that meaningful engagement is limited by the threats of security, political intrusion, and, seemingly, the prevalence of NGOs in the decision-making process in the area. The low involvement reduces accountability, enhances the perception of the community's ownership over the school development plans, and reduces the sustainability of the interventions.

4. Resource Availability

The financial resources, teaching materials, and structures of urban schools are in a better situation, although they are of lower standards than they should be. In rural and war-torn schools, there are inadequacies of textbooks, desks, and teaching aids, which are reported by schoolchildren as being continuous and hindering the execution of instruction

and planning by about 1.5 million schoolchildren. The imbalance in the funds enhances the disparity and the need to allocate funds using special distribution tools that would provide high-need districts with leverage.

5. Security Impact

Insecurity is the largest limitation in rural areas. Militia groups and displacement account for disruptions in the school processes, a decline in the number of teachers, and other actions that discourage the parents from contributing. The insecurity in Bunia is comparatively insignificant, but still, the threats towards the school are few and infrequent, and continue to disrupt the learning process and the administration.

Synthesis and Implications

The visual summary establishes a multi-dimensional analysis of the performance in the Ituri Province school. Key takeaways include:

- Unequal representation of the city and rural districts leads to the view of the need for decentralization in decision-making and provision of location-specific solutions.
- Inefficient use of resources and planning efficiency is aggravated by poor supervision and community participation.
- These are the considerations that suggest that the issues of security dominate all other issues; that means that any teaching intervention must contain safety provisions to ensure sustainability.
- Teachers and school administrators should also be offered target resource distribution and capacity-building plans so as to compensate for the performance loopholes.

Policy recommendations, as well as strategic plans and program interventions, can be made to increase the resilience of school management in the various conflict-prone settings, as well as its effectiveness, using the summary.

8. Summary of Key Findings

Results of the work provide a complicated and simple picture of how schools in the Ituri Province were planned and were situated in the period of 2021-2024 in terms of the representation of the issues of the system in general and of the experiences of the stakeholders. The province was somewhat reactive to education planning since the majority of decisions were not being arrived at based on any data, and they were normally reached based on the emergency situation. Assessment of the needs was done very rarely and based on partial or age-old information, and this restricted its use in the allocation of resources or infrastructural growth.

Logistical and human resource limitations were also very important issues that affected the management practices in the province. Supervision, monitoring, and evaluation were not regular at the high level, especially with the insecurity and unavailability of proper road infrastructure and transportation. It rendered the smooth-running education officers' office ineffective, as the education officers were not able to get to schools regularly. It was poor record keeping and, in the majority of instances, unavailable, further compromising accountability and evaluation. The other thing on which the teachers were complaining all the time was morale, which was aggravated by late or irregular payment, hazardous working environments, and insufficient professional growth.

The research also introduced the fact that the school staff, primarily the parents and the community leaders, were largely reported not to be attached to the planning and accountability measures. Centralized policies and forms of government could not and did not, in most instances, meet the local reality. In most instances, the NGOs served as the alternative forbidden resource and supply of the schools, which resulted in dependency and reduced ownership of the educational planning processes by the local societies. The government authorities had very limited channels of communication with the people, with no participation mechanisms taking their role either, which also led to the alienation experienced by the parents and teachers.

Security-related issues were raised repeatedly, and structural issues turned out to be the greatest limitations to Ituri education. Although the administrative inefficiencies were evident, the constant state of insecurity, constant violence, deficit in budget, and lack of surveillance devices had the greatest effects on school operations and stakeholder roles. Schools were closed and ISs displaced, the number of students decreased, the militia also had a habit of interrupting the schools, and the schools in rural areas were especially closed down.

Context-dependent and multi-layered solutions had been highlighted as the recommendations of the stakeholders. The participants argued that there was an acute need to realize the real decentralization that would give the provincial authorities a freer hand in making decisions regarding hiring, budgeting, and planning. The other thing they were concerned with was that they needed to offer continuous training to the teachers using a method of remote purchase, like radio or digital, to facilitate professional development in the inaccessible regions. Development of safe conditions in which learning is possible was a point that was raised several times, and the stakeholders pointed out that instructing and learning under safe conditions of deficiency of security and physical peril is impossible.

9. Conclusion

The results provided are a good reflection of the situation in the school planning and management in Ituri Province in 2021-2024. They point to a complicated and stormy education system that is struggling with different pressures, such as insecurity in the long run, strategic resources, and poor institutional frameworks. However, although formal planning exists, the supervision and governance practices that exist in the province are largely top-down and developed, and hence fail to reflect local concerns. The strategies were also reactive and not proactive, data-based and not emergency-based, and not well thought out. Inadequate finances, human resources, and oversight of operations resulted in the fact that budgets were periodically delivered, there was no regular needs assessment, and school development plans were not properly enforced.

The logistical problems and insecurity discouraged the management practices of supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. The education officers were greatly inclined to non-attendance because of the unsafe environment, poor infrastructure, and modes of transport. Payment delays and lack of pedagogical and working conditions were severe moral luxuries to the teachers. Absence of unity of record-keeping processes and near absence of formal accountability systems was also an overlaying problem of bad school administration. These operational gaps will show that the school management in Ituri cannot be simply termed as an administrative problem.

The stakeholder perceptions also included concerns about governance and community participation. The school principals, the teaching staff, the parents themselves, and the heads of the communication community never ceased to criticize, feeling that they were not included in the planning process or the decision-making processes. The governance systems did not fit the local realities, but the communities depended on non-state actors, including NGOs, which helped the communities in the relevant areas of their needs, like the provision of infrastructure, learning resources, and development programs. Whereas these external players played extremely key roles, the presence of different players created a feeling of dependency and poor ownership, and thus the necessity of having self-sustained and locally owned solutions. It was found that the insecurity was overriding and prevalent in all educational planning and management spheres.

The stakeholders sought the appropriateness and usefulness of the decentralization of power, which will allow the provincial and district governments to make more decisions with respect to human resources, budgeting, and planning. The enhancement of the local governance institutions and accountability system could make the situational reality even more sensitive and enable the communities to participate in the school management. Furthermore, one of the most vital mechanisms to improve the quality of the instructions and further motivate in a difficult environment was also highlighted as specific teacher education, face-to-face or online.

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