

Improving School Heads' Timeliness in Report Submission Through Digital Scheduling and Weekly Accountability Huddles

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Abstract: *Delays in administrative report submission continue to challenge governance efficiency in public school systems. This qualitative action research examined how the integration of a digital scheduling system and weekly accountability huddles influenced school heads' reporting practices in the Division of Malaybalay City, Philippines. Using narrative inquiry, data were gathered from ten purposively selected school heads through interviews, focus group discussions, and review of submission records. Analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic approach. Prior to the intervention, participants associated delayed submissions with overwhelming administrative workload, shifting directives, limited clerical support, connectivity constraints, and competing operational demands. During implementation, clearer deadline visibility and structured peer monitoring enhanced compliance motivation, although infrastructure limitations remained evident in remote schools. Following implementation, participants described more consistent on-time submission, reduced deadline-related stress, and improved personal scheduling discipline. The findings suggest that combining technological structuring tools with routine peer accountability conversations can strengthen administrative reliability in decentralized education contexts. Sustained institutional reinforcement is necessary to maintain gains.*

Keywords— qualitative action research; narrative inquiry; school administration; accountability practices; digital scheduling; governance

1. INTRODUCTION

Efficient school governance relies heavily on the timely exchange of accurate administrative information. In decentralized education systems, school-level reports serve as essential inputs for planning, budgeting, and monitoring at higher administrative levels. When submissions are delayed, the consolidation of data is disrupted, decisions are postponed, and program implementation may slow down.

Within the Division of Malaybalay City, patterns of late report submission have persisted despite formal reminders and monitoring mechanisms. School heads occupy dual roles as instructional leaders and administrative managers, and the convergence of these responsibilities often places reporting tasks in competition with immediate school concerns. Particularly in geographically isolated areas, limited internet access and logistical barriers further complicate compliance. Current monitoring practices tend to emphasize deadline reminders and post-submission tracking. While these measures increase visibility of delays, they do not necessarily reshape habits, clarify planning systems, or cultivate shared responsibility among school leaders. Research on structured scheduling tools indicates that external deadline visualization supports forward planning and reduces reliance on memory (Villaruel, 2021). Likewise, studies on collaborative accountability demonstrate that regular peer interaction around shared responsibilities can reinforce professional commitment (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

This study draws from three complementary perspectives. First, social interdependence theory emphasizes that individuals are more likely to fulfill responsibilities when

progress is visible within a group context. Second, research on habit development suggests that repeated structured routines contribute to behavioral consistency over time (Lally et al., 2010). Third, change management literature underscores the importance of simple, observable practices that can be embedded into daily operations (Kotter, 2012). By integrating a digital scheduling platform with weekly accountability huddles, the intervention sought to address both the organizational structure of deadlines and the behavioral dimension of follow-through. This study therefore explored how school heads experienced this innovation and how it influenced their reporting practices.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative action research framework using narrative inquiry. Rather than measuring compliance statistically, the study aimed to understand how school heads interpreted and experienced changes in their reporting practices over time. Narrative inquiry was appropriate because it centers on participants' lived experiences within their specific institutional context.

Participants

Ten school heads were purposively selected from the Division of Malaybalay City. Participants represented both centrally located and geographically isolated schools to capture contextual variation. All were directly responsible for administrative reporting.

Intervention

The intervention consisted of two coordinated components:

1. A shared digital scheduling tool containing reporting deadlines and automated reminders.
2. Weekly accountability huddles in which school heads provided updates, discussed barriers, and reflected on progress.

The implementation period lasted approximately two months.

Data Collection

Data sources included:

- Pre-intervention interviews exploring prior challenges
- Documentation and observation of weekly huddles
- Post-intervention interviews and focus group discussions
- Review of submission logs for contextual triangulation

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was preserved through anonymization.

Data Analysis

Interview and discussion transcripts were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis process. Initial coding identified significant statements related to perceptions, challenges, and changes in practice. Codes were grouped into broader patterns and refined into themes that addressed the research questions. Credibility was enhanced through participant validation of interpretations and peer review of emerging themes.

3. Results and Discussion

Conditions Prior to the Intervention

Participants described several interconnected factors that contributed to delayed submissions.

Administrative Overextension. School heads reported that reporting tasks were frequently deferred due to urgent instructional and managerial concerns. This reflects broader findings that excessive task demands reduce administrative responsiveness (Dayagbil, 2018).

Evolving Reporting Requirements. Adjustments in formats and submission guidelines created uncertainty and occasional rework.

Limited Clerical Assistance. In many schools, report preparation was handled solely by the school head.

Connectivity Constraints. In remote locations, unstable internet and power interruptions affected timely communication.

Priority Conflicts. Immediate school-based issues often displaced documentation tasks.

These findings highlight that delayed reporting was shaped by systemic conditions rather than individual negligence.

Experiences During Implementation

The introduction of structured scheduling and weekly dialogue produced noticeable shifts.

Deadline Transparency. Participants emphasized that centralized digital scheduling reduced ambiguity and minimized forgotten deadlines.

Peer Visibility. Regular huddles made submission status visible within the group, encouraging follow-through.

Infrastructure Limitations. Despite structural improvements, unstable connectivity occasionally hindered participation.

Time Coordination Challenges. Scheduling huddles required adjustments amid ongoing school responsibilities.

Emotional and Professional Support. Participants valued the opportunity to exchange strategies and realize shared challenges.

The combined approach addressed both procedural clarity and motivational reinforcement.

Perceived Outcomes After Implementation

Following the intervention, school heads described several improvements.

Greater Consistency in Submission. Participants reported more disciplined adherence to reporting schedules.

Reduced Deadline Pressure. Advance reminders minimized last-minute urgency.

Improved Monitoring Flow. Coordination between schools and the division office became smoother.

Strengthened Personal Scheduling Habits. Participants indicated adopting proactive planning behaviors.

Shared Accountability Norms. Regular discussion normalized timely compliance as a collective expectation.

These outcomes align with research suggesting that structured reminder systems and collaborative accountability practices enhance organizational reliability (Ronda, 2021).

Conclusion

The findings indicate that integrating digital scheduling with routine accountability discussions can meaningfully strengthen reporting timeliness among school heads. By combining structural clarity with peer reinforcement, the intervention addressed both logistical and behavioral dimensions of compliance. Although infrastructure constraints remain in geographically isolated contexts,

embedding structured accountability practices within regular operations presents a practical and scalable approach to improving governance reliability in public school systems.

Continued institutional support, digital capacity enhancement, and reinforcement of shared accountability practices are recommended to sustain progress.

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REFERENCES

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