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Assessment of the Schools Disaster Preparedness Practices

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ABSTRACT

Disaster preparedness is concerned with mitigating the impact of disasters on human lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. This research assessed the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment, Contingency Planning, Communication System, and Capacity Building (4Cs) in the District of Panitan, Capiz. It included 209 of 455 participants: 99 elementary; 34 integrated; and 76 secondary school personnel. A modified 40-item questionnaire was used. The descriptive research design employing survey method was used. Statistical tools used were standard deviation, mean, percentage, and frequency. Kruskal Wallis H Test and Mann-Whitney U Test were used to determine significant difference between independent variables and extent of disaster preparedness practices of participants. Results revealed that the District of Panitan was highly prepared for disasters, in general and in terms of 4Cs, when grouped to school profile, and when categorized into school size, type, and location. As to school type, no a significant difference was found in the extent of disaster preparedness practices among schools in the District of Panitan as to Community Risk Assessment, Communication System, and Capacity Building. However, significant difference was found in Contingency Planning. When grouped to school size, significant difference found in the extent of disaster preparedness among schools as to 4Cs. When grouped into school location, no significant difference was found in the extent of disaster preparedness among schools in said District as to 4Cs. Thus, the extent of disaster preparedness provides holistic results essential for saving lives, minimizing damage, fostering resilience, and ensuring swift and effective response to emergencies.

Keywords: Disaster, Preparedness, Practices, Schools, Program, Contingency, and Management.

INTRODUCTION:

Effective disaster risk management involves a comprehensive approach to mitigating the impact of disasters before they occur and responding efficiently when they do happen. Its primary concern is to reduce or eliminate the vulnerability of all stakeholders within the school premises that are exposed to natural threats such as earthquakes, fire, floods, and storms, and avoiding the occurrence of new dangers, such as

landslides, and flash flood, etc. By addressing these concerns and implementing proactive measures, communities and governments can better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, ultimately reducing the loss of life, protecting livelihoods, and promoting sustainable development. The Disaster Risk Management is the full conceptual framework of systematic and interconnected measures before a

natural hazard occurs to prevent its negative impacts (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Typhoons Yolanda, (2013); Ursula, (2019); Agaton, (April 2022); Paeng, (October 2022) all caused unanticipated flooding in the Visayas region, especially in Capiz. Thus, in the midst of Tropical Storm Paeng's devastation, a state of calamity was declared across the entire province of Capiz. Furthermore, 20 people were killed in Western Visayas, while six more dead are unaccounted for (Marzan, 2022). Now is the time to enhance the school's capability in disaster preparedness in terms of Community Risk Assessment, Contingency Planning, Communication System, Capacity Building or 4Cs in Disaster Risk Management. Moreover, utilizing conventional and creative media to quickly and widely disseminate accurate information in a variety of languages is beneficial during emergencies (Backfried *et al.*, 2013).

The Division Memorandum No. 099 s. 2023 titled: Participation to the 1st Quarter Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) and Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (DRRMC) Memorandum No. 15, s. 2023, namely "Resumption of the Face-to-Face Conduct of NSED activities in school are strictly complied by all schools to enhance teachers' knowledge and capability to help and make their learners ready and able to survive in times of disaster. According to Lavilles and Hordista, (2024), by increasing student knowledge and getting them ready for emergencies, schools may be able to implement the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Program more effectively. Moreover, Dasgupta *et al.* (2020) argued that the three interrelated dimensions of disaster preparedness are emergency readiness and awareness, experiential learning, and exposure and training.

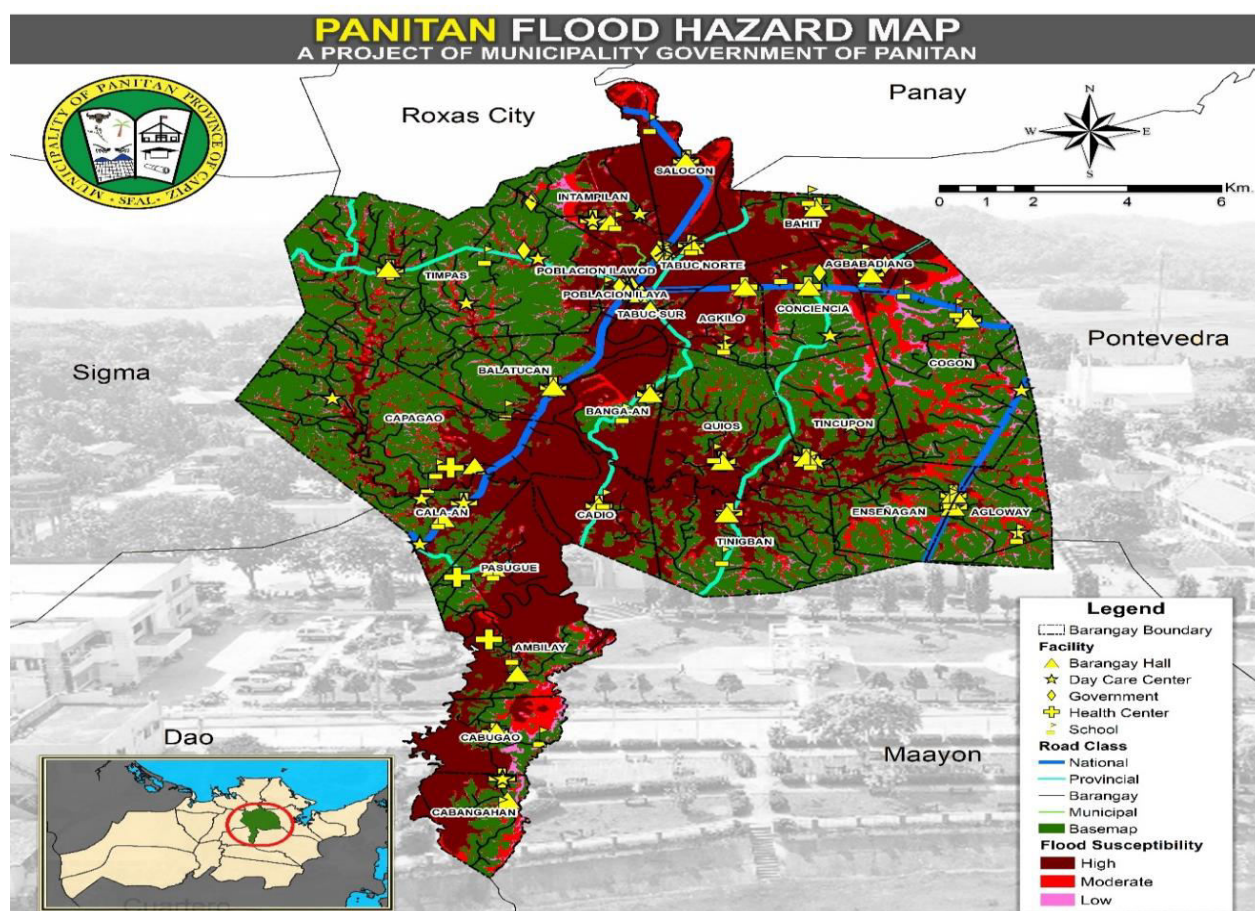


Fig. 1: Panitan flood hazard map illustrating the areas prone to flooding within the municipality. It categorizes areas into different flood zones based on the level of risk, ranging from high-risk flood zones, where flooding is possible to occur to low-risk zones, where flooding is less likely (Source: MDRRMO, Panitan).

The prevalence and severity of disasters, both natural and human-induced, underscore the critical need for effective disaster management, consequently, the main objective of this study was to provide mechanisms to develop, promote, execute, and coordinate a more effective and appropriate Disaster Preparedness Plan in the District of Panitan. This is done in accordance with DRRM and for all the people to be resilient in times of disaster, calamity, and emergency like what the residents experienced when Typhoons Yolanda, Ursula, Agaton, and Paeng hit Panay Island. These typhoons had devastating impact, specifically in Panitan, causing loss of lives, widespread destruction, and long-term economic and social consequences. The municipality continues to recover and rebuild in the years following the disaster, with efforts focused on improving resilience to future natural hazards. These were the main reasons that driven the researcher to conduct this current study.

Generally, this research ascertained the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of 4Cs (Community Risk Assessment, Contingency Planning, Communication System, and Capacity Building) in the District of Panitan, Capiz. Specifically, it aimed to determine the extent of disaster preparedness practices of the District of Panitan in general and in terms of 4Cs and when grouped according to school type, school size, and school location; find out if there is a significant difference in the extent of disaster preparedness practices among schools in the District of Panitan in terms of 4Cs and when grouped according to their school profile.

METHODOLOGY:

This study employed the descriptive-survey method of research. A descriptive study design seeks to provide a thorough and accurate description of a certain condition of affairs, according to Fraenkel *et al.* (2022). When conducting descriptive research in education, the survey approach is most frequently used. It allows researchers to compile a summary of the traits (preferences, behaviors, talents, and so on) of subjects, groups, or occasionally even physical environments like schools. This study covered school personnel (teaching and non-teaching) from public elementary, integrated, and secondary schools in the District of Panitan. It included 99 elementary school

personnel, 34 integrated school personnel, and 76 secondary school personnel for a total of 209 out of 455 participants. There were 21 elementary schools in the said district, four (4) integrated schools, and two (2) secondary schools covered in this study.

The stratified random sampling was used in the identification and selection of 209 participants from all public schools in the District of Panitan. The study utilized a modified 40-item questionnaire. Community Risk Assessment, Communication System, and Capacity Building categories were taken from Inter-national Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, 2020, and the remaining 10 questions for Contingency Planning category were adopted and modified researcher's made questions based from Department of Education (DepEd) Memorandum No. 071, s. 2021, Titled: Preparations for the Pilot Face-To-Face, Expansion and Transitioning to New Normal, 2021. The researcher thoroughly examined and assessed the questionnaire's structure to ensure that all of the items would be relevant to the study. The researcher further enhanced the questionnaire's content by reflecting on her real-world experiences as a former school Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Coordinator and the ideas of some DRRM Coordinators. The questionnaire was presented, revised, and corrected after the suggestions of the experts and the advisory committee. After the approval of the adviser, it was encoded for the final draft and copy. The statistical tools used to analyze and interpret the data were the frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Kruskal Wallis H Test, and Mann Whitney U Test. All inferential tests were set at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Extent of Disaster Preparedness Practices in General and in terms of 4Cs

Table 1 shows the extent of disaster preparedness practices of the District of Panitan in general and in terms of 4Cs. The result revealed that schools in the District of Panitan were highly prepared in general, as shown by the overall mean of 4.70 with a verbal interpretation of "highly prepared". Community Risk Assessment got the highest mean of 4.73, verbally interpreted as "highly prepared". This was followed by Contingency Planning with a mean of 4.72, Com-

munication System with 4.71, and Capacity Building with 4.62, verbally interpreted as “highly prepared”, respectively. This implies that schools are educated, trained, and skilled with the proper preparation, response, and action to mitigate the effect of disaster in school. The outcome supported the findings of Tizon and Comighud, (2020) about the program's efficacy in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM). Highly capable of handling risks in the event of a calamity are public schools. It was found out that the degree of capability among public school administrators and the state of DRRM implementation are significantly correlated.

Furthermore, it was also similar to Cruz and Ormilla’s, (2022) findings that although disaster preparedness

efforts are still being improved, those engaged in putting the DRRM program into practice are adequately equipped to handle the school facilities readiness. The staff of the school is aware of and knowledgeable about the program of DRRM and its activities. Additionally, there is a significant link exists between the degree of disaster readiness of elementary schools and the level of DRRM implementation, including safe learning environments and facilities, DRRM integration into curricula, and school risk reduction management. The degree of knowledge and comprehension among the individuals involved is directly and strongly related to the district's public elementary schools' implementation of DRRM.

Table 1: Extent of disaster preparedness practices among schools in the District of Panitan in general.

Components of 4Cs in Disaster Preparedness	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Community Risk Assessment	4.73	Highly Prepared
Contingency Planning	4.72	Highly Prepared
Communication System	4.71	Highly Prepared
Capacity Building	4.62	Highly Prepared
General Mean	4.70	Highly Prepared

Note. The mean was interpreted using the following scale: 4.21-5.00 Highly Prepared, 3.41-4.20 Prepared, 2.61-3.40 Moderately Prepared, 1.81-2.60 Slightly Prepared, 1.00-1.80 Least Prepared

Extent of Disaster Preparedness Practices of the Schools according to School Profile

Table 2 displays the disaster preparedness practices extent of schools according to school profile. The result revealed that elementary schools, integrated schools, and secondary schools were all highly prepared with mean scores of 4.75, 4.64, and 4.66, respectively. The same was true in terms of school size. Small schools got a mean of 4.79, medium schools got a mean of 4.65 and big schools got a mean of 4.65, all were verbally interpreted as “highly prepared.” Likewise, when the schools were categorized into school location, schools in upland and lowland were highly prepared with mean scores of 4.68 and 4.70, respectively.

The result implies that schools in the District of Panitan in terms of school type, school size, and school location are all equipped with the primary, necessary, and required skills and understanding towards emergencies and any other calamities either man-made or natural phenomenon because of the UniversePG | www.universepg.com

organized, systematic, and realistic mandatory of simultaneous drills that are done every quarter of the year. Moreover, the schools are doing unannounced disaster preparedness activities like earthquake drill, fire drill, first aid, and other related activities implemented through Division Memorandum 012, s. 2023, and DepEd Order No. 53, s. 2022. The result agreed with the findings of Cubillas *et al.* (2022) that the participants exhibited satisfactory compliance in the areas of risk reduction and resilience education, safe learning environments, disaster risk management, and enabling environments, as well as highly satisfying awareness in these domains.

Furthermore, the result also conformed to the result of (Cruz and Ormilla, 2022; Mallillin LLD., and Caday MAT., 2024). A strong correlation between the degree of disaster readiness of elementary schools and the degree of school Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) implementation, including safe learning environments and facilities, DRRM integration into curricula, and school risk reduction

management was found. Furthermore, the degree of knowledge and comprehension among the individuals involved is directly and strongly related to the district's public elementary schools' implementation of DRRM.

Table 2: Extent of disaster preparedness practices of schools according to school profile.

School Profile	N	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
School Type				
Elementary	99	4.75	.37	Highly Prepared
Integrated	34	4.64	.35	Highly Prepared
Secondary	76	4.66	.31	Highly Prepared
School Size				
Small	68	4.79	.30	Highly Prepared
Medium	83	4.65	.39	Highly Prepared
Large	58	4.65	.32	Highly Prepared
School Location				
Upland	55	4.68	.36	Highly Prepared
Lowland	154	4.70	.34	Highly Prepared

Difference in the Extent of Disaster Preparedness Practices when Schools are grouped according to School Type

Table 3 presents the result of a Kruskal-Wallis H test, examining differences in the extent of disaster preparedness practices for Community Risk Assessment across various school types. The result showed no significant difference among school types. Mean ranks for the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment were 112.20 for elementary schools, 95.04 for integrated schools, and 100.07 for secondary schools. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that whether schools were elementary, integrated, or secondary, their extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment did not differ significantly.

The table also presents the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning among different school types. A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning with a mean rank of 116.50 for elementary, 102.13 for integrated and 91.30 for secondary. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that school type affects the schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning. The result also revealed no significant difference in disaster preparedness practices

extent terms of Communication System among different school types with a mean rank of 113.98 for elementary, 95.07 for integrated, and 97.74 for secondary. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices as to Communication System is not affected by the different school types. As to Capacity Building, Kruskal-Wallis H test showed no significant difference in the extent of disaster preparedness practices among different school types with a mean of 113.32 for elementary, 93.71 for integrated, and 99.21 for secondary. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices as to Capacity Building was not affected by school types.

The Post hoc test indicated that the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning was significantly higher for elementary schools than for secondary schools. This means that elementary schools are more disaster resilient than secondary schools because elementary schools in terms of the number of personnel, learners, and area of concern are small and it is easy for the school to design a systematic and strategic plan of action, ensuring all stakeholders' safety, including the external and internal stakeholders, but did not differ

significantly between elementary schools and integrated schools, and secondary schools and integrated schools. The result conformed to that of the result of Arcegono *et al.* (2024). A high level of awareness among respondents was found, highlighting the importance of implementing programs such as budget

allocation for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) activities, student-led risk mapping, and collaboration with Local Government Units and Non-Governmental Organizations. Thus, DRRM and partnerships should be strengthened in secondary schools to improve their preparedness and resilience.

Table 3: Difference in 4Cs disaster preparedness practices when schools are grouped according to school type.

Variables	N	Mean	df	H-value	p-value	Remarks
Community Risk Assessment						
Elementary	99	112.20	2	3.012	0.222	ns
Integrated	34	95.04	2			
Secondary	76	100.07	2			
Contingency Planning						
Elementary	99	116.50	2	8.123	0.017	s
Integrated	34	102.13	2			
Secondary	76	91.30	2			
Communication System						
Elementary	99	113.98	2	4.403	0.111	ns
Integrated	34	95.07	2			
Secondary	76	97.74	2			
Capacity Building						
Elementary	99	113.32	2	3.919	0.141	ns
Integrated	34	93.71	2			
Secondary	76	99.21	2			

Legend: ns - not significant, s - significant

Difference in the Extent of Disaster Preparedness Practices when Schools are grouped according to School Size

Table 4 displays a Kruskal-Wallis H test, showing a statistically significant difference in disaster preparedness extent in terms of Community Risk Assessment among different school sizes with a mean rank of 126.40 for small schools, 93.77 for medium schools, and 95.97 for large schools. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that the extent of disaster preparedness practices of schools in terms of Community Risk Assessment is affected by school size. **Table 4** also presents the extent of disaster preparedness practices as to Contingency Planning among different school sizes. The result showed that there was a significant difference with a mean rank of 126.71 for small schools, 98.35 for medium schools, and 88.07 for large schools. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, it rejected the null hypothesis. This result implies that schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices in

terms of Contingency Planning is affected by the school size. Moreover, as to Communication System among different school sizes, a Kruskal-Wallis H test showed a significant difference in disaster preparedness practices extent of the school with a mean of 120.53 for small schools, 95.75 for medium schools, and 100.03 for large schools. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, rejected the null hypothesis. This result implies that school size affects the schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Communication System.

Table 4 also shows a statistically significant difference in disaster preparedness extent in terms of Capacity Building among different school sizes with a mean rank of 122.88 for small schools, 93.41 for medium schools, and 100.62 for large schools. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, it rejected the null hypothesis. It implies that whether the school is small or large, its extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Capacity Building is affected. The Post hoc test directed that the extent of disaster preparedness

practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment was significantly higher for small schools than for large schools. Also, the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment was significantly higher for small schools than for medium schools. This indicates that small schools are more effective in identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and prioritizing risks to ensure public safety since small schools built a more solid partnership among agencies concern in the pre-emptive disaster outcome and risk within school community, but do not differ significantly between medium and large schools. The result further revealed that the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning was significantly higher for small schools than for large schools. Also, the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning was significantly higher for small schools than for medium schools, implying that small schools are more proactive in formulating an effective, suited

and realistic contingency plan to mitigate the severe effect of disaster, but do not differ significantly between medium and large schools.

The Post hoc test indicated that the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Communication System was significantly higher for small schools than for medium schools. This implies that small schools establish an operative communication system to strengthen and fast emergency response, but do not differ significantly between large schools and medium schools, and large schools and small schools. Lastly, the Post hoc test, indicating that the extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Capacity Building was significantly higher for small schools than for medium schools. This implies that small schools have the ability to absorb change effectively through different training and seminar, but did not differ significantly between large schools and medium schools, and large schools and small schools.

Table 4: Difference in 4Cs disaster preparedness practices when schools are grouped according to school size.

Variables	N	Mean	df	H-value	p-value	Remarks
Community Risk Assessment						
Small	68	126.40	2	13.486	0.001	
Medium	83	93.77	2			s
Large	58	95.97	2			
Contingency Planning						
Small	68	126.71	2	14.826	0.001	s
Medium	83	98.35	2			
Large	58	88.07	2			
Communication System						
Small	68	120.53	2	7.152	0.028	s
Medium	83	95.75	2			
Large	58	100.03	2			
Capacity Building						
Small	68	122.88	2	9.697	0.008	s
Medium	83	93.41	2			
Large	58	100.62	2			

Legend: ns - not significant, s - significant

Difference in the Extent of Disaster Preparedness Practices when Schools are grouped according to School Location

Table 5 displays a Mann-Whitney U test, showing no statistically significant difference in disaster preparedness practices extent in terms of Community Risk Assessment between upland and lowland schools with

a mean rank of 110.24 for upland schools and 103.13 for lowland schools. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, whether the school is upland or lowland, its extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Community Risk Assessment is not affected. In addition, **Table 5** presents a Mann-Whitney U test, showing no statis-

tically significant difference in disaster preparedness practices extent in terms of Contingency Planning between the upland and lowland schools with a mean rank of 109.25 for upland schools and 103.48 for lowland schools. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, it accepted the null hypothesis. This implies that school location (upland or lowland) does not affect the schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Contingency Planning.

The result also revealed no statistically significant difference in disaster preparedness practices extent in terms of Communication System between upland and lowland schools with a mean rank of 102.73 for upland schools and 105.81 for lowland schools. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, it accepted the null hypothesis. Thus, whether the school is upland or lowland, its extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Communication System is not affected.

Lastly, Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant difference in disaster preparedness extent in terms of Capacity Building between upland and lowland schools with a mean of 104.22 for upland schools and 105.28 for lowland schools. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, it accepted the null hypothesis. This implies that school location (upland or lowland) does not affect the schools' extent of disaster preparedness practices in terms of Capacity Building. Conferring to Kanyasan *et al.* (2018), policy has been extensively dispersed and carried out at all levels and sectors in research locations, with the exception of some rural zones, despite all schools studied implemented fire prevention activities. Most students know how to respond appropriately when a fire occurs. A comprehensive school-based Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) program would be beneficial for enhancing students' DRR knowledge and practice.

Table 5: Difference in 4Cs disaster preparedness practices when schools are grouped according to school location.

Variables	N	Mean	df	U-value	p-value	Remarks
Community Risk Assessment						
Upland	55	110.24	2	3947.00	0.440	ns
Lowland	154	103.13	2			
Contingency Planning						
Upland	55	109.25	2	4001.50	0.529	ns
Lowland	154	103.48	2			
Communication System						
Upland	55	102.73	2	4110.00	0.739	ns
Lowland	154	105.81	2			
Capacity Building						
Upland	55	104.22	2	4192.00	0.909	ns
Lowland	154	105.28	2			

Legend: ns - not significant, s - significant

CONCLUSION:

The District of Panitan is highly prepared to meet disasters as a whole and in terms of Community Risk Assessment, Contingency Planning, Communication System, and Capacity Building. The schools in the said district possess the knowledge, expertise, and ability to prepare for, respond to, and minimize the impact of disasters on their sites. They are familiar with the fundamental principles and protocols required to provide a high degree of preparedness in an emergency or natural catastrophe, as evidenced by the

mandatory implementation of school hazard mapping and the simulation of a realistic and actual disaster scenario. They develop an effective communication system and other related practices because of a strong partnership to other government agencies concerning disaster response. And, as part of the contingency activities, the educators, students, and other stakeholders regularly engage in various enrichment activities related to disaster preparedness. The schools in the District of Panitan, regardless of school type,

size, or location, are all equipped with the primary, necessary, and required skills and understanding of emergencies and other calamities, whether man-made or natural, as a result of the organized, systematic, and realistic mandatory simultaneous drills that are conducted every quarter of the year. Furthermore, schools are doing unannounced disaster preparedness exercises such as earthquake drills, fire drills, first aid, and other related activities. Due to their high level of preparedness, the type, size, and location of the District of Panitan schools had no impact on the extent of their practices toward disaster preparedness. Considering Community Risk Assessment, Communication System, and Capacity Building, there was no discernible variation in the level of disaster preparedness measures throughout the District of Panitan's schools based on the type of school (elementary, integrated, and secondary). Conversely, there was a notable variation in the level of disaster readiness procedures among the District of Panitan schools with regard to contingency planning. Although there were no significant variations between elementary and integrated schools or between secondary and integrated schools, the District of Panitan's elementary schools had far more disaster preparedness measures than secondary schools in terms of Contingency Planning. When grouped according to school size (small, medium, large), 4Cs was affected by school size. When grouped according to school location (upland, lowland), 4Cs was not affected by school location.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author has declared no conflicts of interest.

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