



## The school and its stakeholders: partners in building a strong school community

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### Abstract

This study, which sought to shed light on how the stakeholders view the concept of partnership, the level of their participation in various school-initiated activities, and the schools' practices involving its stakeholders, was conducted because the partnership between the school and its stakeholders is geared toward a strong school community. It found that stakeholders have positive and high knowledge of the importance of partnership between the school and its stakeholders in achieving its goals. Their involvement is manifested and observed throughout the school community. More so, the level of stakeholders' participation can be affected by their perceptions of the concepts of partnership and the school's practices involving them.

**Keywords:** Community involvement, partnership, school management, stakeholders partnership

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### Introduction

A school that provides effective and efficient educational services to learners does not solely rely on the ability of its school personnel. Instead, it requires contribution from every stakeholder – internal and external. As per Pile and Gilchrist (2020) <sup>[1]</sup>, school stakeholders include students and their families, school personnel, and the local community, all of whom have the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to advance the educational system's objectives and foster the growth of our children both now and in the future.

Stakeholders are crucial to the management of schools because they work with the administrators to fulfill the responsibility of creating a supportive environment for teaching and learning (Pelayo, 2018) <sup>[2]</sup>. In connection, the involvement of stakeholders in schools and the ability of leaders to influence them may have an impact on academic performance outcomes. Their ability to maximize the utilization of the available material and human resources could potentially affect how well they perform (Gichohi, 2015) <sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, all stakeholders must collaborate meaningfully to build effective educational systems and learning environments. An effective partnership requires active interaction from all parties involved. Maintaining open and honest communication promotes fairness and respectful relationships among stakeholders. In the end, the connection and compassion developed through those positive connections lead to the attainment of educational goals and outcomes (Alomes, 2020) <sup>[4]</sup>.

In the Philippines, shared governance of schools is promoted through School-Based Management (SBM) as per the Republic Act No.9155, known as the "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001". It empowers key school stakeholders and enables their active engagement to continuously improve schools, enhancing learners' learning performances (Republic of the Philippines, 2001) <sup>[5]</sup>. As defined in DepEd Order No.45 series 2015, School-Based Management pertains to "the decentralization of decision-making authority from Central, Regional, and Division levels to the individual schools, with the intent of bringing together the School Heads, teachers, students as well as parents, the local government units, and the community at large in producing improved learning outcomes through effective schools" (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015) <sup>[6]</sup>. Furthermore, SBM is the government's strategy to increase school stakeholders' participation and decision-making in education, such as the community, other agencies, and parents (World Bank, n.d.) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Accordingly, burdens and issues could prevent schools from achieving their goals and mandates. Despite the current health crisis, schools are now consistently managed appropriately. This may be attributed to the effective engagement and harmonious cooperation of school stakeholders such as teachers, learners, parents, local government units, and non-governmental organizations. This paved for an opportunity to provide high-quality education to learners amidst a crisis (Nacino, 2022) <sup>[8]</sup>.

Like other public schools in the country, Lapu-Lapu Elementary School in the Schools Division of Palawan in the Philippines relies significantly on its internal and external stakeholders. The level of stakeholders' participation, however, was not identified. It is on this ground that this study was conducted.

### Statement of the Problem

The partnership between the school and its stakeholders is geared toward a strong school community, hence the conduct of this study which aimed to shed light on how the stakeholders view the concept of partnership, the level of their participation in various school-initiated activities, and the schools' practices involving its stakeholders. This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the stakeholders' perceptions on:
  - 1.1. the concept of stakeholder partnership; and
  - 1.2. School's practices involving stakeholders?
2. What is the level of participation of stakeholders in the different school-Initiated activities?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the stakeholders' level of participation and their perceptions of the concept of stakeholder partnership and school practices involving stakeholders?
4. What recommendations do stakeholders have to improve the school and stakeholders' partnership?

### Related Literature and Studies

The primary unit for enhancing education is the school, as represented by the collaboration of the principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community. The primary strategy for promoting and maintaining educational development is to transfer decision-making authority over school operations. Also, school stakeholders' involvement and participation contribute to better school management (Bruns, Filmer & Patrinos, 2011) <sup>[9]</sup>.

In the same way, every nation needs to develop the education sector continuously, yet the government has limited resources. They encounter challenges in offering high-quality educational services considering the diversity of people and communities. As a result, the private sector, including non-governmental groups, commercial businesses, and communities, is now more actively involved in the financing and administration of services (Mortera, 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>.

As the schools started to open their gates for face-to-face learning in a limited capacity, they have faced numerous issues and concerns. With this, the DepEd's Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) was put into effect, which outlines various actions that could be taken in the field and gives schools the freedom to choose the best course of action based on the needs of their students, the local community's health, and their resources (DepEd, 2020) <sup>[11]</sup>. In implementing BE-LCP, the collaboration between the school and its stakeholders played a vital role in

accomplishing its very purpose, ensuring that quality education is provided to learners safely and healthily (Hernando-Malipot, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. Peregrino *et al.* (2022) <sup>[13]</sup> found that limited support from the school stakeholders is one of the challenges encountered by the schools in Palawan, Philippines, in implementing BE-LCP in its first year of implementation. Despite the schools' efforts to enlist the help of their stakeholders, it has emerged that this is still a difficult task because there is little assistance provided or poor engagement of external stakeholders.

The likelihood that an improvement plan will be implemented increases when the people who perform the task actively participate in its planning. With this, the school must involve its stakeholders in preparing a school activity that depends on their assistance to succeed (Smith & Goodwin, 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>. Initiatives for school reform must involve all members of the school community, both internal and external. Stakeholders in schools are motivated to help in efforts to improve schools, and increased stakeholder involvement enhances school atmosphere and student engagement. Cooperation between the school and its stakeholders is encouraged to improve the school (Ice *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[15]</sup>. And as the agents in the community with the most appropriate and adequate resources, stakeholders have a hand and a more significant stake in assisting with the education of the young learners, and this involvement advocates a change. To support the overall growth and progress of the school via cooperation and shared responsibility, their role in creating the school improvement plan is essential. The individual schools can utilize the procedures for stakeholders' involvement as a guide for making their School Improvement Plans. Stakeholder interaction and participation are necessary throughout the process cycle, not only during the crafting phase (Nidao & Ancho, 2020) <sup>[16]</sup>.

Furthermore, the social relationships that exist or don't exist in a community impact students' school-community interaction. It was discovered that enhancing social capital's bridging and bonding capabilities develops trust and boosts student community involvement. It is implied that participating in the community while attending school serves as a foundation for other types of school-based community involvement (Preston, 2013) <sup>[17]</sup>.

In summary, stakeholders' participation in every school-initiated activity relevant to its improvement is necessary. The success of the school's goals and objectives toward an effective and healthy learning environment is due to the participation and collaboration of every member of the school stakeholders, namely the principal, teachers, students, parents, business organizations, government, and non-government organizations.

### Methodology

This study used quantitative and qualitative research methods to shed light on how the stakeholders perceive the idea of partnership, the extent of their involvement in different school-initiated activities, and the strategies used by the schools to involve their stakeholders. A total of fifty-two stakeholders were the main source of data needed to answer this research's questions. These stakeholders include four students, five teachers, thirteen community members, four alumni, seven government officials, eleven from the business sectors, and eight non-government organizations. A survey questionnaire developed by the researchers was used in gathering data. The questionnaire was composed of statements on the concept of stakeholder partnership, school practices involving stakeholders, and stakeholders' participation in the different school-Initiated activities. After

the respondents completed the questionnaire, they were interviewed to gather further qualitative data on how they see the school in terms of its strengths. In analyzing the collected data, the study employed mean and standard deviation in computing and analyzing the respondents' concept of stakeholders' partnership, school practices in partnership, and the level of stakeholders' participation in school-initiated activities, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation in analyzing the relationship between the stakeholders' level of participation and their perceptions of the concept of stakeholder partnership and school practices involving stakeholders. Meanwhile, narrative analysis was used to analyze the collected qualitative data.

## Results and Discussions

### Stakeholders' perceptions of the concept of stakeholder partnership

For parent-teacher partnerships to be successful, both parties

must recognize how crucially important the other is to the development of the learner (Mortera, 2015) <sup>[10]</sup>. Thus, the stakeholders' view on the concept of the partnership must be understood. Table 1 presents the respondents' perception of the concepts of school stakeholders' partnership. The composite mean of 4.44 shows that the respondents strongly agree with all the statements on the school stakeholders' partnership concepts, such as their roles of stakeholders as school partners, the expectations or requirements from stakeholders, and the importance of partnership. Individually taken, the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$ ) was found in "Representatives from various stakeholder groups who are involved in the partnership's emphasis on cooperation as they work toward a shared vision for students in our community". The result implies that school stakeholders have positive and high knowledge of the importance of partnership between the school and its stakeholders in achieving its goals.

**Table 1:** Concept on school stakeholders' partnership

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Working in a partnership is challenging for everyone involved.	4.33	.648	Strongly Agree
2. Working in a partnership demands spending time working together and getting to know others' perspectives	4.44	.608	Strongly Agree
3. It is essential to unilaterally form vision and mission to form partnership	4.40	.748	Strongly Agree
4. Everyone involved in the school agrees that outcomes, not programs, should be the main focus of the stakeholders' partnership	4.33	.734	Strongly Agree
5. Knowledge, skills and expertise of all the members of school stakeholders are needed to carry out its purpose	4.56	.608	Strongly Agree
6. Representatives from various stakeholder groups are involved in the partnership's emphasis on cooperation as they work toward a shared vision for students in our community.	4.58	.605	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	4.44		Strongly Agree

Scale: 1.00-1.80 - Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 - Disagree; 2.61-3.40 - Neither Disagree nor Agree; 3.41-4.20 - Agree; 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree

### Stakeholders' perceptions of the school's practices involving stakeholders

Table 2 presents the stakeholders' perceptions of the school practices on partnership. It can be noted that having a composite mean of 4.56, the stakeholders have a positive and strong agreement on the statements describing the school practices involving its partners. It can be noted that, although the computed mean per statement is almost the same, the

statement "The school and the stakeholders collaboratively define the structures, roles, and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the school's operations and development" garnered the highest mean score of 4.63 ( $\sigma = .525$ ), which means that stakeholders believed that the school and its stakeholders were able to work collaboratively based on their set structures, roles, and responsibilities.

**Table 2:** School Practices on partnership

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. The school invites representatives of every group of stakeholders to help in formulating school policy.	4.44	.608	Strongly Agree
2. The school involves various stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school operations and improvement.	4.50	.610	Strongly Agree
3. The school and the stakeholders collaboratively define the structures, roles, and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the school's operations and development.	4.63	.525	Strongly Agree
4. The school involves internal and external stakeholders in the implementation of its projects and programs.	4.56	.574	Strongly Agree
5. The school maintains open communication lines with its stakeholders for feedbacks and suggestions relevant to assure the efficient implementation of its projects and programs.	4.60	.569	Strongly Agree
6. The school informs its stakeholders of its needs, both financial and non-financial, for immediate support.	4.56	.608	Strongly Agree
7. The school makes its stakeholders feel that they are important part of the "school family".	4.56	.608	Strongly Agree
8. The school holds activities that appreciates and recognizes stakeholders' efforts, and supports to the school.	4.60	.569	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	4.56		Strongly Agree

Scale: 1.00-1.80 - Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 - Disagree; 2.61-3.40 - Neither Disagree nor Agree; 3.41-4.20 - Agree; 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree

The results in Table 2 are supported by the qualitative data gathered through interviews. The participants' responses during the interviews show that the school's strengths include being eager to invite and involve its stakeholders in their project or activities, maintaining a good relationship with

stakeholders, having open communication, and being supportive. Some of the participants' interview responses are shown in the table below. The participants were given code names to maintain confidentiality.

**Table 3:** Excerpts of the interview responses

Participant Number	Statements
1	“The school is eager to invite stakeholders for the project”
5	“They consider stakeholders as important entities to achieved & reach their goal”
7	“School has a strong partnership with all stakeholders. There is 100% involvement of stakeholders in all school projects”
13	“School received more achievements and recognition. The involvement of stakeholders made the school strong.”
14	“The school maintain open communication with stakeholders for feedbacks and suggestions for the project”
15	“They make stakeholders feel important”
25	“Good relationship between teachers and stakeholders”
49	“Good school leadership”
50	“Promotes teamwork among stakeholders”
32	“Good communication and planned activities”

### The level of participation of stakeholders in the different school-initiated activities

Table 4 shows the stakeholders' level of participation in various school-initiated activities. As shown in the Table, a composite mean of 4.41 denotes a very high level of stakeholders' participation in school-initiated programs and activities. This implies that the indicators used to determine

the stakeholders' participation are manifested and observed throughout the school community. It further suggests that stakeholders' participation should be sustained to achieve the school goals continuously. The result contrasts with Cabardo (2016) [18] findings, who found in his study that stakeholders are participating in school activities at a moderate level.

**Table 4:** Level of Participation

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Helped the school community find funding so that kids may compete in academic and extracurricular events.	4.19	.715	High
2. Volunteered in a variety of initiatives supporting schoolchildren's health and nutrition, such as school feeding programs and similar initiatives.	4.33	.760	Very High
3. Willingly offered assistance with some of the needed resources, including money, materials, and labor, for the school's upkeep projects like Brigada Eskwela.	4.40	.693	Very High
4. Helped persuade civically engaged and community-minded individuals to lend a hand to the school, especially during special events like teacher's month, scouting activities, and others.	4.38	.718	Very High
5. Actively took part in the various activities organized by the schools, including the PTA meetings, general assemblies, and family day events.	4.48	.700	Very High
6. Responded to the request of the school for urgent actions that require the involvement of stakeholders, such as the arrival of visitors and the conduct of evaluations connected to school-based management.	4.46	.641	Very High
7. Eagerly participated in volunteer activities that have relevance to the school's community (such as sports competitions that promote pleasant interactions between young people)	4.37	.768	Very High
8. Participated in school initiatives to reduce illiteracy in classrooms, particularly as a visiting mentor in the school's reading intervention and reading recovery programs.	4.56	.639	Very High
9. Participated in formulating school policies promoting learners' welfare and learning.	4.54	.670	Very High
Composite Mean	4.41		Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.80 - Very Low; 1.81-2.60 - Low; 2.61-3.40 - Moderate; 3.41-4.20 - High; 4.21-5.00 Very High

### Relationship between stakeholders' participation level and their perceptions of the concept of partnership and the school's practices involving stakeholders

The relationship between the stakeholders' level of participation and their perceptions of the concept of stakeholder partnership and school practices involving stakeholders is shown in Table 5. As shown in the Table, the computed values for the relationship between the stakeholders' level of participation and their perception of the

concept of partnership ( $r = .656$ ;  $p = .000$ ) and schools' practices involving stakeholders ( $r = .608$ ;  $p = .000$ ) denotes strong and significant relationships. These findings indicate that the level of stakeholders' participation can be affected by their perceptions of the concepts of partnership and the school's practices involving them. It also implies that the better perceptions the stakeholders have will increase their level of participation in various school-initiated activities.

**Table 5:** Relationship between the stakeholders' level of participation and their perceptions of the concept of stakeholder partnership and school practices involving stakeholders

Stakeholders' level of participation	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Perceptions on the Concept of Stakeholders Partnership	.565**	.000	Strong correlation
Perception on the Schools' Practices Involving Stakeholders	.608**	.000	Strong correlation

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Conclusions

This study, which sought to shed light on how the

stakeholders view the concept of partnership, the level of their participation in various school-initiated activities, and

the schools' practices involving its stakeholders, was conducted because the partnership between the school and its stakeholders is geared toward a strong school community. The findings revealed that school stakeholders have positive and high knowledge of the importance of partnership between the school and its stakeholders in achieving its goals. With this, the school could positively rely on its stakeholders in the implementation of its projects and activities. As for the stakeholders' perception of the school's practices that involve them, stakeholders believed that the school and its stakeholders could work collaboratively based on their set structures, roles, and responsibilities. In terms of the stakeholders' participation, the results showed that stakeholders' involvement is manifested and observed throughout the school community. Lastly, the level of stakeholders' participation can be affected by their perceptions of the concepts of partnership and the school's practices involving them. It also implies that the better perceptions the stakeholders have will increase their level of participation in various school-initiated activities. Given the findings above, it is recommended that stakeholders' participation should be sustained to achieve the goals of the school continuously. Since stakeholders have positive perceptions of the concepts of school partnership and the school's practices, the school must provide an avenue to work with the school collaboratively, leading to successful school development.

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