

# School Heads' Leadership Skills and Attitudes as Determinants of School-Community Partnership

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## ABSTRACT

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design focused mainly on exploring the relationship between the extent of school-community partnership and the school heads' leadership skills and attitudes towards school-community partnership. Respondents of the study include the nine (9) school heads, 101 teachers, 90 parents, and 56 local officials of Butuan City, Philippines. Results showed that the school heads exhibit satisfactory leadership skills and highly positive attitudes towards school-community partnerships. Moreover, there is a very high extent of partnership between the school and community in the conduct of school events. Additionally, the school heads' leadership skills and attitudes towards school-community partnerships both have significant, direct, and moderate relationships with the extent of school-community partnerships.

**Keywords** — School heads' leadership skills, School heads attitudes, descriptive-correlational research design, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

The school plays a vital role on the pupils' development necessary for their future success. Important for this development is to establish a very strong school-

community bond because accordingly, when school, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to perform better in schools (Sanders, 2014). The community, especially the parents and family members have essential roles in the child's education (Roekel, 2012). In fact, the role of the community has evolved. In the past, parents were merely volunteers in schools but have now become involved in a much more inclusive approach.

According to Petersen (2011), to address issues pertaining to health education, special education, and safety, interagency collaboration should be considered. That is, schools can collaborate with a variety of community partners including individuals, businesses, and formal and informal organization. Such collaboration is part of the administrative duties and responsibilities of school administrators.

Whence, the school heads shall perform duties relating to establishing school-community partnership. Barth (1990) highlighted that a good school reflects a good principal. This can be because, the principal, as the school leader, act as the dominant force behind successful schools. Additionally, Velsor and Orozco (2006) stated that the role of the principal is foremost in the development of positive school-home relationship. Therefore, it is with the principals and school heads' initiatives to create cooperative partnerships with stakeholders.

Habegger (2008) proposed the different roles of principals as follows: assuring instruction aligned to state academic content standards, maintaining continuous improvement in the building, designing instruction for student success, developing partnership with parents and community, and nurturing culture where each individual feels valued. Highlighting developing partnership as a role of principal, Steven and Epstein (2016) found out that creating more connections and greater cooperation among the school, family, and community contexts may improve student behaviour and school discipline. This means that strong school-community relation should be given priority to promote values formation among students.

In a study conducted by Nettles, Mucherah, and Jones (2000), findings demonstrate the importance of social resources in influencing the students. It was found out that access to social resources such as caring parents who are involved in in their children's schooling, participation in extracurricular activities, and supportive relationships with teachers have positive benefits for students' academic performance.

It is of importance that the school heads should possess the necessary leadership skills in building school-community partnership. They should be

encouraged and advised to always strategize ways of generating internal revenue for the school instead of always waiting for the government's provision (Bua and Adzongo, 2014). Okoroji and Ukpere (2014) cited Iwe (1991) that leadership qualities must imbue the following: prominence of personality; superiority of ability, knowledge, experience, resourcefulness and courage; and the ability to generate cooperation, stimulate initiatives, exert positive influence and inspire others. Also, Robinson (2010) suggested significance of interrelated leadership capabilities as to: using knowledge of leadership content, solving school-based problems, and establishing relational trust with staff, parents, and students. On the other hand, Sharma and Jain (2013) defined leadership as a process in which one influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent by applying leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills.

It is also important to note that school heads should possess the right attitudes in dealing with the stakeholders. Blank, Jacobson, and Melaville (2012) summarized strategies in building and continuing partnerships. Some of which include ensuring a common vision among all partners, establishing structured opportunities to engage stakeholders, and encouraging open dialogue about challenges and solutions. Moreover, Epstein (1995) asserted that one key of involving all parents is to establish an atmosphere wherein teachers, administrators, and families are all seen as valuing parental involvement.

## FRAMEWORK

With regards to the literature review, the following are the variables under investigation:

1. **Attitudes.** It refers to the school heads' feeling or way of thinking that affects or influences the school's stakeholders.
2. **Community Resources.** It refers to the publicly/privately owned material and human resources available in the community.
3. **Generation/Sourcing of Funds.** This refers to the strategy employed in school to raise funds for school projects, programs and activities.
4. **Leadership.** This refers to the ability of the school heads to lead and guide the school's stakeholders.
5. **Linkages.** This refers to the relationships and interactions between the school and the community.

6. **School-community partnership.** This refers to the bond established between the school and community in the implementation of school activities, programs, and projects.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With the premises enumerated above, this study determined the level of leadership skills among the school heads of primary schools in Butuan City, Philippines in terms of generation or sourcing of funds, participation in the school events and/or barangay celebration, linkage with stakeholders, and utilization of community resources. The school heads' level of attitude towards school-community partnership is also identified. The extent of school-community partnership is measured along with the pre-determined school activities and events such as Athletic Meet, Brigada Eskwela, Extra-Curricular Activities, Feeding Program, School Pahina, School Fund Raising, and Barangay Celebrations. Exploration on the relationship between the extent of school-community partnership and the school heads' leadership skills and attitude towards school-community partnership is made using correlational analysis.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were collected from the nine (9) elementary schools of Southeast Butuan District II, Butuan City Division, Philippines. The respondents of the study include the nine (9) school heads, 101 teachers, 90 parents, and 56 local officials. Focus group discussions were conducted among the parent-respondents while complete enumeration was done to the other remaining respondents. School heads were included in the study to obtain data pertaining to leadership and attitude of school heads. On the other hand, the same information was also taken from the teachers as they were under the supervision of their school heads. External stakeholders who became the immediate supporters of the school activities were also asked to participate in the said study. Said external stakeholders are the parents and the local officials.

The research questionnaire utilized in the study focused on three (3) areas. First, the school heads' leadership skills which is measured in terms of: Generation/Sourcing of Funds, Participation in School Events/Barangay Celebrations, Linkages with Stakeholders, and Utilization of Community Resources. Secondly,

the school heads' Level of Attitude towards Community Partnership. The third area is the extent of School-Community partnership in the conduct of school events.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the comprehensive discussions of the results and findings of the study. It has four (4) subsections outlined as follows: School Heads' Leadership Skills, School Heads' Level of Attitude towards School-Community Partnership, Extent of School-Community Partnerships, and the Relationship between the School Heads' Leadership Skills and Attitude on School-Community Partnership towards Extent of School-Community Partnership.

### **School Heads' Leadership Skills**

The school heads' leadership skills is measured in terms of generation and/or sourcing of funds, participation in school events and barangay celebration, linkage with stakeholders, and utilization of community resources. Table 1 below presents the school heads' leadership skills in executing different strategies in generating funds to finance school activities, programs and projects employed.

As depicted in Table 1 below, generally the school heads were moderately skilled in conducting strategies to generate funds. However, the school heads rarely posts their concerns on social media as well as tap alumni in the community. On other hand, the school heads manifest moderate skills in addressing their financial needs by attending to barangay sessions for budget and sending solicitation letters to prominent people and establishments. Such initiatives were made to finance school programs and projects that need immediate funding. Moreover, the school heads are very skilled in conducting fund raising activities. Said school fund raising activities include the monthly celebrations. For example, during the month of July wherein the school celebrates the Nutrition month, a conduct of money contest like the search for Nutri King and Queen was done. The school heads' leadership skills in terms of participation to school events and barangay celebration shall be from planning and designing of the activity to conducting evaluation of the concluded event.

Table 1. School heads' leadership skills in terms of generation/sourcing of funds

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Conduct fund raising activities	3.37	Always	Very skilled
Send solicitation letter to PTA / prominent people / establishments	2.61	Sometimes	Moderately skilled
Attend barangay sessions for budget	2.89	Sometimes	Moderately skilled
Post on social media the school's needs	2.14	Rarely	Fairly skilled
Tap alumni in the community and abroad	2.36	Rarely	Fairly skilled
Ask assistance from the City Councilors/ Mayor/Congressman	2.49	Rarely	Fairly skilled
Average weighted mean	2.64	Sometimes	Moderately skilled

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, No skill on it), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Fairly skilled), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Moderately skilled), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Very skilled)

Referring to Table 2 above, the school heads have full participation in the planning and designing phase of the activity. That is, the school heads were always involved in the planning and consultation of the activity, preparing of the budgetary requirements, and assigning of responsible persons or coordinators of the activity. Getting involved with the planning and designing phase of the activity encouraged the stakeholders' participation thereby empowering staffs for the assigned tasks.

Table 2. School heads' leadership skills in terms of participation in school events/ barangay celebration

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Conduct planning and consultation for the upcoming activity	3.64	Always	Full participation
Prepare budgetary and resource needs list for the upcoming activity	3.46	Always	Full participation
Empower staff by assigning coordinators in all/every activity	3.66	Always	Full participation
Send activity invitation/program matrix ahead of time to stakeholders in every activity	3.51	Always	Full participation

Require subordinates' perfect attendance in all school/barangay activities	3.56	Always	Full participation
Conduct after activity review in every activity	3.05	Sometimes	Moderate participation
Average weighted mean	3.48	Always	Full participation

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, None), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Fair participation), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Moderate participation), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Full participation)

Also, prior to the conduct of the activity, the school heads exhibit a full participation on sending invitation and program matrix to stakeholders as well as requiring the subordinates' perfect attendance in the activities. Furthermore, the school heads called for an after activity review to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the activity that will serve as bases for the preparation of the upcoming activity.

Table 3 tells us that the school heads exhibit at least an average linkage with stakeholders. In fact, four (4) of the six (6) indicators imply that the school heads have very strong linkages with stakeholders. This further means that they have always practiced the conduct of Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting or Assembly and the School Head Accomplishment Report on Education (SHARE).

Table 3. School heads' leadership skills in terms of linkages with stakeholders

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Conduct BOD Meetings/Assembly	3.38	Always	Very strong linkage
Conduct SHARE (School Head Accomplishment Report on Education)	3.72	Always	Very strong linkage
Attending in every community events	3.41	Always	Very strong linkage
Attend alumni homecoming held in school	2.68	Sometimes	Average linkage
Showcase school's needs and strength in social media	2.82	Sometimes	Average linkage
Invite community officials and prominent people during school activities	3.47	Always	Very strong linkage
Average weighted mean	3.25	Sometimes	Average linkage

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, No linkage), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Needs improvement), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Average linkage), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Very strong linkage)

The members of the school's Board of Directors include the Homeroom PTA presidents who are qualified to be elected in any position in the General PTA Officers. The General PTA President through the suggestion of the School Head shall call for a BOD meeting whenever the need arises or if there are any concerns that need decision from the board members. On the other hand, the school heads also have conducted the SHARE wherein they presented their planned programs and projects to the general assembly for the next school year and encouraged the stakeholders' active support.

Additionally, school heads were always present in almost all of the community activities together with the teachers. In return, they invited the local and prominent people to grace the school activities and events. The school heads also, as a form of building linkages with other stakeholders, sometimes attended Alumni Homecoming conducted in schools and showcased the school's needs and strengths in social media.

Generally, the school heads practiced average linkage in strengthening connections with different stakeholders. These formed linkages established partnerships with other support groups intended for school activities. Such established partnerships help the school encourage the community to take part in the successful conduct of school events and activities. Table 4 below entails the leadership skills of the school heads in terms of the utilization of community resources.

Table 4. School heads' leadership skills in terms of utilization of community resources

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Invite local officials to read stories to pupils	2.26	Rarely	Fair utilization
Invite professionals and practitioners in the community as resource speakers / trainers during significant school rites and skills competitions	2.91	Sometimes	Moderate utilization
Invite community athletes and coaches to train athlete pupils	3.04	Sometimes	Moderate utilization



Send requests for the use of facilities / event venue / amenities to be used for school events / trainings to community owners	3.18	Sometimes	Moderate utilization
Encourage the use of local materials / delicacies in school events	3.31	Always	Full utilization
Present in advance school project priorities / programs with budgetary needs to the stakeholders	3.49	Always	Full utilization
Average weighted mean	3.03	Sometimes	Moderate utilization

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, None), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Fair utilization), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Moderate utilization), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Full utilization)

Mainly, the school heads together with the stakeholders’ initiative always make use of the local delicacies and materials during school events. Local materials have been utilized for purposes of decorations during school programs and serving local delicacies to visitors. Delicacies were prepared by the people in the community. This initiative is a good practice of community linkage.

On the other hand, to maximize the resources available in the community, school heads sometimes invited professionals and practitioners to take part as resource speakers and community athletes and coaches to train pupils. Usually, invitation of resource speakers was made during graduation programs. Also, prior to and during the athletic trainings and skills competitions, expertise of the community athletes and coaches were asked. During this time also, the school heads sent a request from community owners on the utilization of facilities, event venues, and amenities to be used for school events and trainings. Some of the facilities being deemed for use were the swimming pool and basketball court.

School heads rarely invited local officials to read stories to pupils. Accordingly, this initiative is not usually done by the schools because local officials have hectic schedules and numerous tasks to perform. However, for instances that this initiative has been made, local officials done such to show to the pupils of their interest to help community children how to read.

**School Heads’ Level of Attitude towards School-Community Partnership**

The school heads’ attitude towards school-community partnership should be made evident by how the school heads motivate the different stakeholders to

take part in the school activities and events, how they deal and interact with the stakeholders, how they value the efforts and the initiatives of the stakeholders, and how they extend a helping hand towards others. Table 5 below depicts that the school heads have a highly positive attitude towards school-community partnership across all indicators.

Table 5. School heads' level of attitude towards school-community partnership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Actively and highly motivated to participate in community projects such as literary assistance project for out of school children and house campaign for healthful practices	3.43	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Exhibits strong spirit of cooperation as well as sharing of expertise and material during barangay/community activities	3.49	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Is always ready to extend helping hands volunteered in times of barangay activities and calamities	3.54	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Values community partners by honoring them through giving of plaques of appreciation.	3.41	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Models the showing of respect and self- discipline.	3.54	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.	3.54	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Involves parents and community partners in the school planning for the improvement of school.	3.59	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Values human community resource by inviting them to be a resource speaker during significant school rites and trainers during athletic/skills competition	3.43	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Opens school for a wide variety of community events/purposes	3.43	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Allows community volunteers become common sights in school academic and social development.	3.43	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude

Constantly seeks out ways to involve parents and community in the activities and goals in school.	3.57	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Is calm, friendly and wears a welcoming smile to stakeholders and welcomes criticisms and suggestions.	3.49	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Manifests strong feeling of togetherness in community affairs.	3.45	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Makes home visits and establish a shared knowing and respect where all parties listen to her ideas.	3.29	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Markets school by keeping community updated on school successes.	3.42	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Earns the goodwill, respect and confidence of the public in the professional and personal services of the school.	3.49	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Connects to all members of the community.	3.44	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Is willing to tell the bad news along with the good of the school to the stakeholders.	3.32	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Always sought and obtained needed resources to implement school programs and projects.	3.47	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Is transparent in the use of community resources.	3.46	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude
Average Weighted Mean	3.46	Strongly Agree	Highly positive attitude

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, Highly negative attitude), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Moderately negative attitude), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Moderately positive attitude), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Highly positive attitude)

Strongly agree responses across indicators 1, 15, 16, 18, and 20 suggests that the school should have presented itself presentable by earning the goodwill, respect and confidence of the public, attractive for support either in financial or material forms, transparent of the current status of the school, and is open to inform the desired and desired public of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Whence, motivated the community to get involved in the activities of the school. Such positive attitude improved the school-community partnership.

Open-mindedness and valuing the efforts of others are somehow helpful in strengthening the bond of school and community. Indicators 4, 8, and 14

mean that the school heads highlighted the importance of the human resources available in the community thereby having requested their expertise during school activities. It can also be implied that the school should have established an avenue where one shared what he or she knows. With these, a highly positive attitude of the school heads towards valuing community partners through giving of plaques of appreciation is observed.

How the school heads interact with the stakeholders also strengthen the school-community partnership. Table 5 clearly tells that the school heads exhibited highly positive attitudes in dealing with others. Indicators 2, 6, 7, and 11 for example, mean that the school heads were initiating efforts to make the parents and community partners get involved in school activities and events. The dignity of the school as manifested by the school heads shall be preserved at all times. The strongly agree responses for indicators 5, 12, 13, and 17 mean that the school heads should set themselves as exemplary models of respect, self-discipline, open-mindedness, and hospitality.

On the other hand, it should be noted also the school must also serve as a helping hand for others. The school heads have highly positive attitudes on having a spirit of volunteerism during the times of barangay activities and calamities. That is, the school heads strongly agreed that the school and community should be working hand in hand for the success of the conduct of activities. To determine the extent to which the school and community have shared efforts in realizing their programs and projects, Table 6 is provided below.

### **Extent of School-Community Partnership**

The extent of school-community partnership should be observed in the activities and events conducted by the school. Table 6 below identified the activities for which the school and community have shared efforts in attaining the school's desired objectives. The activities include the Athletic Meet, Brigada Eskwela, Extra-curricular activities, Feeding Program, School Pahina, school Fund Raising, and Barangay Celebrations.

Table 6. Extent of school-community partnership across school events and barangay celebrations

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Athletic Meet	3.41	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
Brigada Eskwela	3.5	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
Extra-Curricular Activities	3.36	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
Feeding Program	3.54	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
School Pahina	3.35	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
School Fund Raising	3.47	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
Barangay Celebrations	3.39	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership
Average Weighted Mean	3.44	Extremely High	Very Strong Partnership

Verbal Description, Interpretation: 1.0-1.75 (Never, Poor partnership), 1.76-2.50 (Rarely, Fair partnership), 2.51-3.25 (Sometimes, Moderately strong partnership), 3.26-4.00 (Always, Very strong partnership)

Results derived from Table 6 entails that the school and community have very strong partnerships across all identified school activities and barangay celebrations.

### **Relationship on the School-Community Partnership**

The relationship between the extent of school-community partnership and the school heads' leadership skills and attitude towards school-community partnership is exhibited in Table 7. It says that there is a significant relationship between the school heads' leadership skills and the extent of school-community partnership with  $p$ -value = 0.000. Moreover, Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.431 suggests for a direct moderate relationship between the school heads' leadership skills and extent of school-community partnership. It means that the more skilled the school head is in his or her leadership, the stronger the school-community partnership is. This means that in order to strengthen the school-community partnership, the school head should manifest a better leadership skill.

Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between the school heads' attitude on and the extent of school-community partnership ( $p$ -value = 0.000). A correlation coefficient of 0.522 implying a direct relationship means that a more positive attitude towards school-community partnership of school heads, the better the bond of school and community is. That is, maintaining better relations with stakeholders strengthen the school-community partnership.

Table 7. Relationship between the extent of school-community partnership and the school heads' leadership skills and attitude towards school-community partnership

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient <sup>A</sup> ( )	P-value <sup>B</sup>	Remarks <sup>C</sup>
School Heads' Leadership Skills	Extent of School-Community Partnership	0.431	0.000	Direct Moderate Relationship
School Heads' Attitude on School-Community Partnership	Extent of School-Community Partnership	0.522	0.000	Direct Moderate Relationship

<sup>A</sup>Pearson Correlation <sup>B</sup>Tested at 0.05 level of significance <sup>C</sup>Qualitative interpretation of the absolute value of the correlation coefficient: 0.00-0.20 (Very Weak), 0.21-0.40 (Weak), 0.41-0.60 (Moderate), 0.61-0.80 (Strong), and 0.81-1.00 (Very strong)

## CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions derived from the results and findings:

1. The school heads exhibit satisfactory leadership skills wherein they are moderately skilled in terms of generation or sourcing of funds, fully engaged in and involved in school events or barangay celebrations, have established at least an average linkage level with stakeholders, and have demonstrated moderate level of use of community resources;
2. The school heads exhibit highly positive attitudes towards school-community partnerships pertaining to: motivation of stakeholders' involvement in school events and activities; valuing the efforts, initiatives and knowledge of community experts and/or stakeholders; proper dealing and interaction with stakeholders; and promotion of the spirit of volunteerism during the time of activities and calamities;
3. There is a very high extent of partnership between the school and community in the conduct of the school activities and barangay events; and
4. The school heads' leadership skills and attitudes towards school-community partnership are determinants of the extent of school-community partnership. That is, the school and community relation is strengthened when the school heads exhibit better leadership skills and positive attitude towards school-community partnership.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To improve the school heads' leadership skills, they should: connect themselves to other stakeholders such as alumni and local officials either through social media or personal; continue to be participative in school events and activities; and establish better linkages with alumni;
2. The school heads shall maintain their highly positive attitudes towards school-community partnerships to attract the stakeholders' involvement;
3. The school heads shall persevere in maintaining the very strong school-community partnership across identified school events and barangay celebrations; and
4. The school heads should exhibit better leadership skills and positive attitudes towards school-community partnership to strengthen the relations between the school and community.

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