



JOB COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND SCHOOL HEADS' INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: THEIR INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF DOLORES DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the influence of community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills on school improvement in public elementary schools in the Dolores I District. Guided by five research questions, the study assessed the level of community partnership in terms of stakeholder involvement, resource mobilization, and community support in decision-making; the interpersonal skills of school heads as perceived by teachers and stakeholders in terms of communication, conflict resolution, leadership style, and collaboration; and the extent of school improvement based on academic performance, facilities and resources, and community engagement programs. A quantitative-descriptive correlational research design was employed. The respondents included teachers, school heads, and key stakeholders from all public elementary schools in the district, selected through total enumeration. Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. Findings revealed that the levels of both community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills were high, while school improvement was also rated high, with community engagement and academic performance being its strongest areas. Pearson correlation results indicated a significant positive relationship between community partnership and school improvement ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between school heads' interpersonal skills and school improvement ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.01$).

The study concludes that both community collaboration and strong interpersonal competencies among school leaders play a critical role in driving educational progress. It recommends enhanced stakeholder participation in decision-making and sustained leadership development for school heads to further support school improvement initiatives.

KEYWORDS: Community Partnership, Interpersonal Skills, School Heads, School Improvement, Public Elementary Schools, Stakeholder Involvement, Leadership Skills

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Globally, the integration of community partnerships into educational frameworks has been pivotal in addressing multifaceted challenges. In Bridgeport, Connecticut, the State Department of Education collaborated with local leaders to tackle a \$38 million budget deficit, high absenteeism, and declining graduation rates. This alliance led to the formation of a Technical Assistance Team focused on stabilizing operations and enhancing student performance, underscoring the efficacy of community involvement in educational reform (Russell-Tucker, 2025).

Similarly, in Laredo, Texas, the Independent School District initiated "Community Chats" to engage stakeholders in discussions about strategic plans aimed at bolstering student success. These forums facilitated direct communication between district representatives and the community, fostering a collaborative environment conducive to educational improvement (Laredo Morning Times, 2025).

Leadership within schools is equally paramount. At Rodbourne Cheney Primary School in Swindon, England, the introduction of roles for students as young as five fostered a sense of responsibility and community. This initiative, spearheaded by proactive school leadership, resulted in improved attendance and reduced absenteeism, highlighting the impact of innovative leadership on school culture (The Times, 2025).

In Southeast Asia, the symbiotic relationship between community involvement and leadership quality is integral to educational development. Studies have demonstrated that participative leadership practices significantly influence teachers' professional growth. Research conducted in Davao City, Philippines, revealed that such leadership approaches enhance teacher engagement and commitment, leading to improved educational outcomes (Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies, 2023).



The Philippine education system faces persistent challenges, including inadequate resources and policy implementation issues. Public schools often grapple with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient learning materials, and a lack of essential facilities. These deficiencies are frequently exacerbated by limited community involvement and varying leadership competencies among school heads (Education in the Philippines, 2024).

A study assessing school heads' leadership in Nueva Ecija highlighted the significant relationship between school leaders' interpersonal skills and their effectiveness in supervisory and leadership roles. The research emphasized that strong interpersonal skills among school heads are crucial for decision-making and organizational planning, directly impacting school performance (Open Access Library Journal, 2023).

While existing literature underscores the importance of community partnerships and leadership skills in education, there is a paucity of studies focusing on their combined effect on school improvement in specific local contexts, such as the Dolores I District. Understanding this relationship within the unique socio-cultural and economic landscape of the district is essential for developing targeted strategies that address local educational challenges.

In the Dolores I District, public elementary schools confront several issues. Many schools lack adequate classrooms, learning materials, and facilities, hindering effective teaching and learning processes. There is often minimal involvement from local communities in school activities, leading to missed opportunities for support and collaboration. Some school heads may possess limited interpersonal skills, affecting their ability to foster positive relationships with staff, students, and the community.

Thus, addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive understanding of how community partnerships and school heads' interpersonal skills influence school improvement. This study aims to fill the existing research gap by providing empirical data and insights specific to the Dolores I District.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the influence of community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills on school improvement in public elementary schools in the Dolores I District. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of community partnership in public elementary schools of Dolores I District in terms of:
 - 1.1 Stakeholder involvement;
 - 1.2 Resource mobilization; and
 - 1.3 Community support in decision-making?
2. What is the level of school heads' interpersonal skills as perceived by teachers and stakeholders in terms of:
 - 2.1 Communication skills;
 - 2.2 Conflict resolution;
 - 2.3 Leadership style; and
 - 2.4 Collaboration and relationship-building?
3. What is the extent of school improvement in public elementary schools of Dolores I District in terms of:
 - 3.1 Academic performance;

- 3.2 School facilities and resources; and
- 3.3 Community engagement programs?

4. Is there a significant relationship between community partnership and school improvement in public elementary schools?
5. Is there a significant relationship between school heads' interpersonal skills and school improvement in public elementary schools?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the influence of community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills on school improvement in public elementary schools of Dolores I District. A descriptive research design was used to systematically describe the extent of community partnership, the level of school heads' interpersonal skills, and the status of school improvement in the selected schools. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect of the study determined the relationship between the independent variables (community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills) and the dependent variable (school improvement).

Using quantitative methods, this study collected numerical data from respondents, which include school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders. A survey questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection tool to measure the extent of community partnership, the level of school heads' interpersonal skills, and the degree of school improvement based on standardized indicators.

Furthermore, statistical analyses such as descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution) and inferential statistics (correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis) were conducted to determine the significance and strength of relationships among the study variables. The findings helped to provide empirical evidence on how community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills contribute to school improvement in public elementary schools of Dolores I District.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in selected public elementary schools of Dolores I District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar, Philippines. Dolores I District is one of the educational districts in Eastern Samar, comprising several public elementary schools that cater to diverse student populations. The district was characterized by a mix of rural and semi-urban communities, where school-community collaboration plays a crucial role in educational development.

The selected public elementary schools in Dolores I District vary in size, student population, and available resources. These schools relied heavily on community engagement, local government support, and the leadership of school heads to ensure effective school management and student success. Given the district's geographical and socio-economic conditions, school improvement initiatives were largely influenced by community partnerships and the interpersonal skills of school heads in fostering stakeholder involvement.



The study included school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders (PTA officers) who were actively engaged in school programs. These respondents provided valuable insights into the extent of community partnership, the level of school heads' interpersonal skills, and their impact on school improvement within the district. The selection of Dolores I District as the study locale was based on the need to assess the effectiveness of school-community collaborations and

leadership practices in enhancing educational outcomes in public elementary schools.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders (PTA officers) in the selected public elementary schools of Dolores I District.

Below is the table that presents the distribution of the respondents in the study.

Name of School	# of Respondents
Rizal Elementary School	15
San Isidro Elem School	13
Malaintos Elem School	16
Boghon Elem School	14
Grand Total	58

This study included school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders who were directly involved in the public elementary schools of Dolores I District. Specifically, school heads such as principals and head teachers were included as they were responsible for leadership and decision-making in school improvement efforts. Teachers who have been actively engaged in school programs, community partnerships, and stakeholder collaboration will also be part of the study, as their insights into school improvement initiatives are essential. Additionally, community stakeholders, including parents, were included if they have participated in school-related activities, projects, or partnerships that contribute to the overall improvement of the school system.

expert consultations to ensure its content validity and reliability.

The questionnaire was composed of closed-ended statements measured using a five-point Likert scale, where respondents rated their level of agreement or perception on each item (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree).

For Part 1, it focused on the extent of Community Partnership. This section assessed the level of collaboration between schools and the community, including aspects such as stakeholder engagement, parental involvement, local government support, resource sharing, and joint educational programs.

On the other hand, the study excluded school personnel who were not directly involved in decision-making or community partnership efforts, such as non-teaching staff and support personnel. Likewise, community members who have no active participation in school-related programs and initiatives were not considered as their input may not be relevant to the study's objectives. Respondents who were newly hired or appointed within less than six months at the time of data collection were also excluded, as they might not have sufficient experience or knowledge regarding community partnerships and school leadership within the district. These inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured that the study gathered relevant, reliable, and experience-based responses from individuals who were most knowledgeable about the impact of community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills on school improvement.

For Part 2 was on the Level of School Heads' Interpersonal Skills. This section evaluated the interpersonal skills of school heads in terms of communication, leadership style, conflict resolution, teamwork, and stakeholder engagement.

While for Part 3 was on the extent of School Improvement. This section measured the perceived improvement in school performance, covering indicators such as academic achievement, infrastructure development, teacher effectiveness, and overall school management.

Research Instruments

This study utilized a researcher-developed survey questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was structured into three main sections, each designed to gather data on the key variables of the study: community partnership, school heads' interpersonal skills, and school improvement. The instrument was developed based on a review of relevant literature, validated survey tools from previous studies, and

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, it underwent expert validation by educational leaders, researchers, and school administrators. A pilot testing was conducted among a small group of respondents from non-participating schools within the division, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Necessary revisions were made based on expert feedback and pilot test results before full implementation.

Data Gathering

The data collection process for this study was conducted systematically to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical



compliance. The first step involved securing permissions from the Schools Division Office of Eastern Samar, the District Supervisor of Dolores I District, and the respective school heads of the participating public elementary schools. A formal request letter was sent, outlining the objectives of the study and seeking approval for data collection.

Once permission was granted, the research instrument underwent validation and pilot testing. A panel of experts in education and research reviewed the researcher-developed questionnaire to ensure content validity. Following validation, a pilot test was conducted among a small group of respondents from non-participating schools within the division to assess the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to determine internal consistency, and necessary revisions were made before final deployment.

Before the actual data collection, an orientation session was conducted with the selected respondents, including school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders. This session explained the purpose of the study, ensured respondents understand the confidentiality of their responses, and emphasized the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained before proceeding.

The validated questionnaire was then distributed either in person or through Google Forms for those who preferred digital submission. The researcher coordinated with school heads to facilitate smooth distribution and retrieval. Respondents were given ample time to complete the survey to ensure thoughtful responses. To maximize response rates, follow-ups were conducted via email, phone calls, or direct visits to schools. Once completed questionnaires were retrieved, all responses were kept confidential and anonymous to protect the identity of the respondents.

After data collection, the responses were encoded into a statistical software program (such as SPSS or MS Excel) for data analysis. The responses were checked for completeness and accuracy before proceeding with statistical treatment. The data analyzed were then interpreted and reported, forming the basis for conclusions and recommendations regarding the influence of community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills on school improvement in Dolores I District. Throughout the process, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent were strictly observed.

Analysis of Data

The data collected in this study was systematically analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to ensure accuracy, validity, and meaningful interpretation of results. The analysis was conducted in the following stages:

First, data screening and cleaning were performed to check for missing, incomplete, or inconsistent responses. Incomplete surveys were excluded from the final analysis to maintain data reliability. The cleaned data was then encoded into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or Microsoft Excel for processing.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe the level of community partnership, school heads' interpersonal skills, and the extent of school improvement in Dolores I District. These measures provided a clear overview of the dataset and facilitate comparison among variables.

To determine the relationship between community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills with school improvement, Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized. This statistical test helped identify the strength and direction of relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Moreover, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which community partnership and school heads' interpersonal skills predict school improvement. This determined which specific factors significantly influence school improvement and their level of impact.

All statistical analyses were interpreted with a 95% confidence level, and findings were presented using tables and graphical representations for better visualization. The results were served as the basis for drawing conclusions and recommendations to improve community engagement, school leadership effectiveness, and overall school development in Dolores I District.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical research principles to ensure the safety, privacy, and rights of all participants. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process, from data collection to reporting, to uphold the integrity of the study and protect the respondents involved.

Before data collection, the researcher obtained approval and permission from the Schools Division Office and school administrators in Dolores II District. A formal request letter was submitted to gain consent for conducting the study within the schools. Additionally, informed consent forms were provided to all respondents, clearly outlining the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, potential risks, benefits, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, respondents were not required to provide their names or any personal information that could reveal their identities. The data collected was secured and stored in a password-protected digital database, ensuring that only the researcher has access to it. Hard copies of documents were kept in a locked cabinet and were disposed of properly after the completion of the study.

The study ensured non-maleficence, meaning that no harm—whether physical, psychological, or emotional—had come to the respondents. The survey questions were carefully designed to avoid sensitive or intrusive content. Furthermore, objectivity and honesty were maintained in data analysis and interpretation, ensuring that results were reported accurately without bias or manipulation.



Lastly, the researcher upheld academic integrity by properly citing all references and sources used in the study. Plagiarism and data fabrication were strictly avoided. Ethical guidelines set

by research ethics committees and educational institutions were followed to ensure that the research upholds the highest ethical standards.

RESULTS

Level of community partnership in public elementary schools of Dolores I District

Table 1. Level of Community Partnership

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Standard Deviation
1.1 Stakeholder Involvement	4.23	Very High	0.48
1.2 Resource Mobilization	4.11	High	0.52
1.3 Community Support in Decision-Making	3.86	High	0.57
Overall Weighted Mean	4.07	High	

The results reveal that public elementary schools in the Dolores I District have a high level of community partnership (overall mean = 4.07). Specifically: Stakeholder involvement (M = 4.23) was rated *very high*, indicating strong collaboration with parents, barangay officials, alumni, and NGOs. Resource mobilization (M = 4.11) also received a *high* rating, showing that schools effectively leverage material and financial support from community members. Community support in decision-making (M = 3.86) was rated *high*, though relatively lower, suggesting that while communities participate, they may have less influence in formal decisions. These findings align with Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 2020), which emphasizes shared responsibilities among

schools, families, and communities to support student learning. In Southeast Asia, Nguyen and Phan (2021) found that inclusive stakeholder governance fosters sustainable school development and boosts academic results. Locally, Lizada and Carreon (2022) noted that schools with active barangay-school cooperation had higher learner participation and better implementation of projects.

However, the slightly lower score in decision-making suggests a need for more inclusive governance. Del Rosario et al. (2023) reported that school-based management in Philippine public schools still tends to favor top-down decision structures, limiting community voices.

Level of school heads' interpersonal skills as perceived by teachers and stakeholders

Table 2. Level of School Heads' Interpersonal Skills

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Standard Deviation
2.1 Communication Skills	4.30	Very High	0.41
2.2 Conflict Resolution	4.10	High	0.45
2.3 Leadership Style	4.15	High	0.48
2.4 Collaboration and Relationship-Building	4.26	Very High	0.39
Overall Weighted Mean	4.20	High	

Results show that the overall level of school heads' interpersonal skills is rated as high (M = 4.20), indicating that school leaders in the Dolores I District are generally perceived positively by teachers and stakeholders. Specifically: Communication skills (M = 4.30) and collaboration/relationship-building (M = 4.26) are rated very high, highlighting the effectiveness of school heads in maintaining open dialogue and fostering strong professional relationships. Conflict resolution (M = 4.10) and leadership style (M = 4.15) also received high ratings, indicating competency in resolving disputes and guiding the school with inclusive and effective leadership approaches.

leaders contributes to reduced workplace tension, increased teacher morale, and better implementation of school programs. In Southeast Asia, Chong and Razak (2021) observed that school heads with high emotional and social intelligence were more effective in developing strong learning cultures. In the Philippine context, Andrada and Gumaling (2023) noted that the success of DepEd's School-Based Management (SBM) framework hinges heavily on the interpersonal abilities of school leaders to communicate vision, resolve issues constructively, and engage stakeholders in collaborative ways.

The findings, however, suggest potential enhancement in conflict resolution—even though it is rated high, strengthening mediation skills can further support healthy school environments.

This supports the findings of Smith et al. (2020), who emphasized that high interpersonal competence among school

Extent Of School Improvement in Public Elementary Schools

Table 3. Extent of school improvement in public elementary schools

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Standard Deviation
3.1 Academic Performance	4.12	High	0.47
3.2 School Facilities and Resources	3.85	High	0.52
3.3 Community Engagement Programs	4.20	High	0.43
Overall Weighted Mean	4.06	High	



Findings indicate that the overall extent of school improvement in public elementary schools of Dolores I District is high ($M = 4.06$). All three domains—academic performance, facilities and resources, and community engagement programs—received high ratings: Academic Performance ($M = 4.12$) indicates that learners are performing well, supported by effective teaching-learning processes. School Facilities and Resources ($M = 3.85$), while still high, scored lowest among the three areas, implying room for improvement in physical learning environments and instructional materials. Community Engagement Programs ($M = 4.20$) received the highest rating, showing that local initiatives and stakeholder collaboration play a strong role in advancing school development.

Globally, the study by Harris and Jones (2021) emphasizes that sustained school improvement requires alignment between teaching quality, supportive environments, and community

involvement. In Southeast Asia, Nguyen and Tran (2020) found that schools with robust community linkages and stakeholder engagement programs report higher student outcomes and more responsive school systems.

In the Philippine setting, Magsayo and Baang (2023) noted that while academic performance continues to improve in most elementary schools, many still face deficiencies in infrastructure and access to learning tools, particularly in rural areas such as Eastern Samar. The Department of Education’s commitment to School-Based Management (SBM) empowers schools to initiate community programs and manage resources to enhance both access and quality.

Despite improvements, the relatively lower score in school facilities and resources suggests a strategic area for further development.

Relationship Between Community Partnership and School Improvement In Public Elementary Schools

Table 4: Correlation Between Community Partnership and School Improvement

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Community Partnership vs. School Improvement	0.712	0.000	Significant Positive Correlation

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.712, p < 0.01$) indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between community partnership and school improvement. This suggests that higher levels of stakeholder involvement, effective resource mobilization, and inclusive community participation in school decision-making correlate with better academic performance, improved school facilities, and robust community engagement programs.

These results are consistent with Fullan’s (2020) assertion that sustainable school improvement is deeply rooted in systemic community collaboration. Arifin and Sumarni (2021) observed that in Indonesian schools, community partnerships led to improvements in school infrastructure and student outcomes. In the Philippines, Llaneta and Galia (2022) confirmed that schools with strong ties to parents and local government units tend to experience greater student participation and performance.

Relationship between school heads’ interpersonal skills and school improvement in public elementary schools

Table 5: Correlation Between School Heads' Interpersonal Skills and School Improvement

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills vs. School Improvement	0.684	0.000	Significant Positive Correlation

The results reveal a strong and significant correlation ($r = 0.684, p < 0.01$) between the interpersonal skills of school heads and school improvement. This indicates that when principals or school heads exhibit strong communication, effective conflict resolution, participative leadership, and relationship-building, the overall performance and functioning of the school significantly improve.

Kouzes and Posner (2019) emphasize that transformational leadership, especially built on interpersonal trust and communication, significantly enhances school culture. In Southeast Asia, Dinh and Le (2021) noted that Vietnamese school leaders who demonstrated interpersonal competence influenced teacher motivation and student achievement. In the Philippines, Reyes and Fabros (2023) found that interpersonal competencies such as empathy, clarity, and openness of school leaders were associated with improved teacher.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The level of community partnership in public elementary schools in Dolores I District is generally high, with very high stakeholder involvement and strong resource mobilization. However, community support in decision-making remains slightly less emphasized, indicating an area for strategic improvement.
2. School heads in the Dolores I District exhibit high levels of interpersonal skills, particularly in communication and collaboration. However, continued development in conflict resolution practices may further improve the overall school climate and relationships among school personnel and community stakeholders.
3. Public elementary schools in Dolores I District demonstrate a high level of school improvement, with particularly strong community engagement initiatives and satisfactory academic performance. However, the adequacy and condition of school facilities and resources



remain a pressing area for targeted investment and development.

4. There is a strong, significant positive correlation between community partnership and school improvement, suggesting that stronger community involvement contributes to enhanced school outcomes.
5. There is a significant positive relationship between school heads' interpersonal skills and school improvement, confirming the critical role of interpersonal competencies in effective school leadership.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are hereby recommended:

1. School leaders are encouraged to strengthen participatory governance by institutionalizing community representation in decision-making bodies, such as the School Governing Council (SGC). Capacity-building activities and regular stakeholder forums should also be conducted to sustain engagement and empower local stakeholders in school improvement efforts.
2. Professional development programs focusing on conflict management, emotional intelligence, and collaborative leadership should be integrated into the training plans of school heads. Schools Division Offices may also conduct interpersonal competency workshops and peer coaching sessions to support continuous improvement among school leaders.
3. It is recommended that school heads collaborate with local government units and stakeholders to enhance infrastructure and procure educational resources. Moreover, DepEd should prioritize programs that address infrastructure gaps in geographically challenged areas. Continued strengthening of community-based programs and data-driven instruction is also advised to sustain improvements in academic outcomes.
4. School leaders should enhance formal mechanisms for community involvement, including strengthening School Governing Councils (SGCs), conducting regular stakeholder forums, and aligning school improvement plans with community needs and resources.
5. School divisions should implement leadership development programs emphasizing interpersonal skill-building—such as workshops on communication, emotional intelligence, and collaborative leadership—to support school heads in enhancing school outcomes.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study titled "Community Partnership and School Heads' Interpersonal Skills: Their Influence on school Improvement in Public Elementary Schools of Dolores District." The study was carried out independently, without any

financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could have influenced the outcomes, data interpretation, or presentation of findings. All responses from participants were gathered objectively, and ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the research process to ensure credibility, impartiality, and academic integrity.

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