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Exploring the Links of Contextual Factors and Stakeholder Engagement to Educational Outcomes in Integrated School Setting

Monaima P. Garcia[1], Ernie C. Cerado[2]

[1]Master Teacher I, Lutayan National High School, Department of Education
[2]Ernie C. Cerado, PhD, Faculty, Sultan Kudarat State University

Abstract

The adoption of Integrated Schools in the Philippine basic education system aims to improve educational outcomes by promoting continuity, resource optimization, and localized governance. This study, utilizing descriptive and correlational research designs, probed how stakeholder engagement and contextual factors relate to educational outcomes in DepEd Integrated Schools across the SOCCSKSARGEN region, through validated researcher-made questionnaires administered to teachers and school heads. Descriptive statistics summarized variable levels, while correlational analysis examined their relationships.

The schools under survey were largely located in rural areas and showed variability in human, financial, and material resources. Despite these contextual differences, they revealed very high levels of stakeholder engagement. Educational outcomes expressed in graduation, retention, and transition rates were consistently very high, indicative of the schools' capacity to support student progression and efficiency.

Correlational analysis disclosed no statistically significant relationships between stakeholder engagement and educational outcomes, as indicated by the overall coefficient and significance level for access (ρ=-0.124, p= 0.674) and efficiency (ρ=-0.017, p= 0.955). However, subtle trends pointed to the potential influence of stakeholder participation in budget planning and resource allocation and documentation management. Remarkably, stakeholder engagement was significantly affected by contextual factors ($F(4,11)=8.45$, $p=0.002$), demonstrating strong explanatory power ($R2=0.7545$). In particular, financial and material resources exhibited a positive and significant coefficient, although a negative link with human resource allocation, specified probable inefficiencies in personnel deployment. These findings unveil the intricacy of promoting educational outcomes in integrated settings. The study concludes that strategic resource utilization, effective leadership, and sustained stakeholder collaboration are essential for expanding educational access and efficiency. A more holistic and context-sensitive approach is recommended for policy and practice to capitalize on the proceeds of the integrated school model.

Keywords: Institutional Research, Stakeholder Engagement, Contextual Factors, Educational Outcomes, Integrated School, SOCCSKSARGEN Region, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Recent global educational transformations aim to improve student outcomes and promote inclusivity, with integrated schools emerging as key models for addressing disparities in access and quality. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritize equitable education, while UNESCO advocates integrated approaches to mitigate inequities. In the Philippines, initiatives like the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy and Education for All (EFA) framework have advanced inclusivity but face persistent challenges such as socioeconomic barriers and insufficient parental involvement, as noted by Saro et al. (2023) and the Asian Development Bank (2008). DepEd Orders (1999, 2022) establish guidelines for integrated schools, emphasizing seamless K-12 pathways and stakeholder engagement, yet operational hurdles like resource shortages and administrative complexities persist, as highlighted by Abragan (2018) and Elnar (2023). Regional dynamics in SOCCSKSARGEN, including geographic and socioeconomic disparities, further complicate implementation, necessitating deeper analysis of stakeholder roles, as underscored by Trinidad and King (2022). This study seeks to bridge gaps in understanding how contextual factors and stakeholder engagement predict educational outcomes in integrated school settings, aligning with DepEd's research agenda to inform policy and practice.

Research Questions

This study's primary purpose is to determine the interrelationships among the stakeholder engagement, contextual factors, and educational outcomes in integrated schools. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. **What is the profile of Integrated Schools in terms of the following contextual factors:**
   - geographical location and
   - resource availability?
2. **What is the level of stakeholder engagement in DepEd Integrated Schools in terms of:**
   - participation in meetings and decision-making;
   - involvement in budget planning and resource allocation;
   - document management and accessibility; and
   - strengthening external partnerships?
3. **What is the level of educational outcomes in DepEd Integrated Schools in terms of:**
   - access indicators and
   - efficiency indicators?
4. **Is there a significant relationship between the level of stakeholder engagement and educational outcomes in the DepEd SOCCSKSARGEN region?**
5. **Is the stakeholder engagement significantly influenced by contextual factors?**

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholder Engagement and Educational Outcomes in Integrated Schools

Integrated school practices are globally recognized as strategic responses to educational challenges in developing countries, merging elementary and secondary education under one system to optimize limited resources and ensure continuity in student learning. The integration of stakeholders in the educational process has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing curriculum implementation and improving educational outcomes. According to UNESCO (2015), establishing strong relationships with the community can significantly improve access to education, support student

retention, and uplift teacher morale. This highlights the importance of collaborative efforts among stakeholders in promoting quality education, particularly in integrated school settings, where diverse needs must be addressed (Lino & Lolinco, 2018). DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022 or the implementing guidelines on the establishment of the School Governance Council (SGC) aims to recognize and strengthen the role of stakeholders, alongside LGUs, as partners in providing learners accessible and quality education. Key distinguishing roles of stakeholders includes participation in meetings and decision-making, involvement in budget planning and allocation, and strengthening external partnerships. Performance indicators are crucial for assessing the education system's effectiveness in meeting commitments under the Basic Education Development Plan 2030, the Philippine Development Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 (DepEd, 2022). These indicators – access and efficiency – help communicate the status of education to local communities, the nation, and the global community, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement. In another study examining stakeholder involvement in school-initiated activities, researchers found that strong partnerships between schools and stakeholders are essential for achieving desired educational goals (Cruz, 2021). This suggests that fostering a culture of collaboration can lead to improved educational outcomes by aligning community resources with school initiatives. In addition, a correlational study on last-mile schools further demonstrated that while stakeholder involvement in strategic planning was perceived positively by participants, it did not significantly correlate with improved school performance metrics (Dela Cruz, 2024). This indicates that while engagement is necessary for the effective implementation of educational strategies, additional factors such as resource availability and teacher competency must also be considered to achieve meaningful improvements in student outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The quantitative and descriptive correlational research design was employed in this study. This method was the most appropriate as it aimed to explore the relationships among the variables. Correlational research was designed to discover relationships among variables and to enable predictions based on existing knowledge (McBurney & White, 2009).

Respondents

The respondents of this study were school heads and teachers from the integrated schools of the different divisions within the SOCCSKSARGEN region. A total of 16 integrated schools out of 222 were chosen through purposive sampling. All school heads from these selected schools were included as respondents to provide insights into their respective institutions.

Using Yamane's formula with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 336 teachers was determined from a total population of 2,093. The exact number of teacher respondents in each school is proportionally allocated based on the total population in each division, and simple random sampling was used within each school to select teachers, ensuring diverse perspectives and reducing bias.

Instruments of the Study

This study employed a researcher-made survey questionnaire intended for school heads and teachers. The Stakeholders' Engagement Questionnaire contains 20 items that focused on key areas such as participation in meetings and decision-making, involvement in budget planning and resource allocation, management and accessibility of documents, and efforts to strengthen partnerships with external organizations. This questionnaire was developed based on DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022 (The

Implementing Guidelines on the Establishment of School Governance Council). It utilized a 4-point Likert scale to assess the level of stakeholders' engagement in DepEd Integrated Schools.

It underwent a validation process to ensure that it accurately measures what it is designed to assess, thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of research findings (Research Rundowns, 2024). Content Validity was established by consulting with the subject matter experts to ensure that the survey questions are representative of the constructs being measured. These survey questionnaires were reviewed by six (6) experts in basic education, including three (3) DepEd Division Supervisors, and three (3) School Administrators. These methods collectively ensured that the instruments are robust and effective in measuring the intended variables (Statistics Solutions, 2023). After this validation, pilot testing was carried out in two (2) selected public integrated schools within the region that were not included in the actual study. A total of 30 school heads and teachers participated in the pilot test, allowing for a thorough assessment of the instruments under real-world conditions.

The Stakeholder Engagement Questionnaire has a S-CVI = 0.90, which indicates that the instrument is acceptable as it falls within the acceptable CVI values of at least 0.83 (Polit et al., 2007). For reliability test, Cronbach's alpha was determined, obtaining a value of 0.97 which indicates excellent internal consistency among the items in a survey, as it is significantly higher than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for acceptable reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

Procedure

After securing the approval to conduct the study, the orientation and distribution of the research instruments to the respondents followed. The administration of survey questionnaires was mostly done in-person, but few opted to answer the survey via google forms. After retrieval of the survey questionnaires and collection of records, data were encoded, organized, tallied, and presented appropriately using tables. The mean range and qualitative descriptions were used to interpret the results on the level of stakeholder engagement. The collected data were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and appropriate statistical techniques. Statistical methods employed included frequency count, percentage, mean, Spearman's Correlation, and multiple regression analysis to examine relationships among variables. Data on Access indicators and efficiency indicators from the participating integrated schools were obtained to measure the schools' educational outcomes. Existing limitations restricted the scope of access and efficiency indicators to some metrics only, which were considered in the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed strict ethical guidelines to protect participants' safety, rights, and dignity, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent. Data was securely stored, participants could withdraw anytime without penalty, and all procedures complied with the Philippines' Data Privacy Act of 2012. Guided by principles of beneficence, justice, and respect, the research minimized risks, avoided exploitation, and maintained integrity through rigorous, transparent methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section highlights the key findings of the study based on a thorough analysis of data collected from the respondents. The succeeding sections will provide the results and discussion related to the research problem.

Profile of Integrated School in terms of Contextual Factors

This part is composed of the different tables for integrated school profile variables of the study. It

includes three tables, Tables 1 to 3, with the essential information about the school geographical location and resource availability based on human, financial, and material resource. These were utilized to describe the Profile of Integrated School in terms of Contextual Factors.

Table 1: Profile of Integrated Schools based on Geographical Location

Geographical Location	F	%
Sub-urban	5	31.25
Rural	11	68.75
TOTAL	**16**	**100**

As shown in the Table 1, the geographical distribution of the integrated schools indicates that 31.25% (frequency of 5) are located in sub-urban areas, while 68.75 (frequency of 11) are situated in rural locations. The higher concentration of integrated schools in rural areas may be a response to the need for broader educational access where population density is lower and educational facilities are more dispersed. Studies have shown that rural schools often serve multiple population clusters and may be the only accessible option for students in remote locations (Mousa et al., 2015).

Table 2: Profile of Integrated School based on Availability of Availability of Human and Financial Resources

Integrated Schools	Human Resource		Financial Resource (Mean in 3 FY)
	Teachers	Administrative Staff	
1	41	2	₱ 908,545
2	46	2	₱ 1,060,010
3	32	2	₱ 670,007
4	51	2	₱ 740,011
5	40	2	₱ 967,341
6	50	6	₱ 1,049,611
7	27	1	₱ 537,006
8	26	1	₱ 668,225
9	15	1	₱ 365,003
10	27	1	₱ 543,073
11	35	2	₱ 756,856
12	15	1	₱ 389,003
13	17	1	₱ 492,004
14	23	3	₱ 702,405
15	24	2	₱ 815,375
16	12	1	₱ 435,403
TOTAL	**481**	**30**	₱ 11,099,878

Regarding human resources, the data above shows that the number of teachers ranges from 12 to 51. The administrative staff count varies from 1 to 6, with most schools having a very small administrative team.

Concerning financial resources (Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses or MOOE and Special Education Fund or SEF) across three fiscal years ranges from P365,003 to P1,060,010. Detailed result for SEF shows a significant number of schools with zero allocation in the reported years.

Table 3: Profile of Integrated School based on Availability of Material Resources

Integrated Schools	Textbooks	Computers	Educational Facilities
1	540	40	27
2	780	29	31
3	530	22	20
4	1,100	57	37
5	646	11	24
6	1300	65	35
7	724	2	23
8	550	21	22
9	150	48	8
10	75	49	14
11	648	55	20
12	280	26	10
13	230	41	11
14	288	25	22
15	350	26	27
16	90	21	16
TOTAL	**8,281**	**538**	**347**

As shown in Table 3, among the schools, the number of textbooks ranges widely, with the highest count being 1,300 and the lowest at just 75. For data on computers, desktop computers are generally less numerous, with a high of 63 and several schools reporting only 1. Laptop availability also varies, with a high of 50 and a low of just 1 or 2 in some schools. The number of facilities (classrooms, libraries, and laboratories) ranges from 8 to 37. Libraries are sparsely available, with most schools reporting zero, and a maximum of 2 libraries. Laboratories are similarly limited, with most schools having none and a high of 4 laboratories. Overall, textbooks and classrooms are the most numerous material resources, while libraries and laboratories are the least common.

Level of Stakeholder Engagement

This section presents the level of stakeholder engagement in DepEd Integrated Schools focusing on participation in meeting and decision-making, involvement in budget planning and resource allocation, document management and accessibility, and strengthening external partnership. These were utilized to describe the level of stakeholder engagement.

Table 4: Level of Stakeholder Engagement

		Indicators	Means	SD	Description
1	Participation in Meeting and Decision Making		3.49	.55	Very High
2	Involvement in Budget Planning and Resource Allocation		3.32	0.58	Very High
3	Document Management and Accessibility		3.28	0.61	Very High
4	Strengthening External Partnership		3.28	0.61	Very High
		Overall Mean	**3.34**	**0.59**	**Very High**

As summarized in Table 4, the overall results indicate a consistently very high level of stakeholder engagement in DepEd Integrated Schools across various key areas. The mean scores for participation in meetings and decision-making (3.49), involvement in budget planning and resource allocation (3.32), document management and accessibility (3.28), and strengthening external partnerships (3.28) are all described as Very High.

The overall mean of 3.34 described as very high level of engagement implies an exceptional engagement with stakeholders actively involved in decision-making and implementation. This level of engagement suggests that stakeholders are actively involved in school governance and operations, fostering collaboration, transparency, and accountability. Such involvement enhances the effectiveness of school initiatives and ensures alignment with the community's educational goals.

This is consistent with the perspectives of various researchers who emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement in education. For instance, Rogers et al. (2022) cite that effective stakeholder engagement involves co-designed approaches that empower stakeholders and foster collaboration, leading to context-responsive strategies and collective action. Similarly, Degotardi et al. (2022) stress the value of multidisciplinary voices in stakeholder engagement processes to empower diverse groups and improve educational equity. As such, the very high level of stakeholder engagement observed in DepEd Integrated Schools is a positive indicator of their potential to leverage partnerships effectively for school improvements.

Level of Educational Outcomes

This section provides insights into the access and efficiency indicators of various public integrated schools, focusing on transition rates, graduation rates, retention rates, and repetition rates.

Table 5: Level of Educational Outcomes in DepEd Integrated Schools in terms of Access and Efficiency Indicators

Schools	Access Indicators	Efficiency Indicators		
	Transition Rate	Graduation Rate	Retention Rate	Repetition Rate
1	100.00%	100.00%	98.54%	0.00%
2	100.00%	98.10%	97.89%	1.15%
3	81.71%	93.75%	77.78%	2.30%
4	97.48%	100.00%	96.85%	0.78%
5	100.00%	100.00%	99.60%	0.00%
6	96.19%	100.00%	95.00%	0.00%
7	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%

8	100.00%	100.00%	99.00%	0.00%
9	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
10	100.00%	100.00%	99.56%	0.00%
11	97.69%	98.30%	96.30%	0.60%
12	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
13	100.00%	100.00%	99.60%	0.00%
14	98.86%	100.00%	99.00%	0.00%
15	98.80%	100.00%	93.70%	0.34%
16	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Overall Rate	**98.17%**	**99.38%**	**97.05%**	**0.32%**

As presented in Table 5, the overall transition rate is 98.17%, described as very high, indicates that nearly all students are transitioning to the next level of education. Similarly, the overall graduation rate is very high at 99.49%, with most schools achieving a 100% graduation rate. Additionally, the overall retention rate is 97.05%, which is very high. This suggests that schools are effective at keeping students engaged and preventing dropouts. However, there is some variation, with retention rates ranging from 81.71% to 100%. Meanwhile, the repetition rate—measuring the percentage of students repeating a grade—is remarkably low, with an overall rate of 0.32%.

The high graduation and retention rates, coupled with low repetition rates, suggest that most schools are effectively supporting students academically and socially. However, disparities in transition and retention rates among certain schools indicate areas for improvement. Schools with lower performance in these indicators may benefit from implementing targeted programs to address barriers to access and enhance student engagement.

The findings from the table on access and efficiency indicators in schools align with the conclusions of other studies emphasizing equitable access to education and retention. According to Soares et al. (2018), equitable access indicators go beyond enrolment rates to include retention and school completion, as these metrics often reveal disparities masked by enrolment data.

Correlation Between Stakeholder Engagement and Educational Outcomes

This section presents the relationship between the stakeholder engagement across 4 indicators and educational outcomes in terms of access and efficiency indicators.

Table 6: Results of Correlation Analysis Between the Level of Stakeholder Engagement and Educational Outcomes in DepEd Integrated Schools

Indicators	Access	Efficiency
Participating in Meeting and Decision-Making	-.321 (.263)	-.237 (.414)
Involvement in Budget Planning & Resource Allocation	.147 (.616)	.332 (.247)
Documentation Management & Accessibility	-.019 (.948)	.264 (.362)
Strengthening External Partnership	-.296	-.093

	(.303)	(.752
Overall	-.124 (.674)	-.017 (.955)

***Significant at the .05 level**

The results of the Spearman's rho analysis in Table 6 disclose no statistically significant correlations (at the 0.05 level) between stakeholders' engagement indicators and educational outcomes in DepEd Integrated Schools. Nonetheless, some trends are worth mentioning. For access indicators, weak negative correlations are observed for participation in meetings and decision-making (ρ= -0.321, p= 0.263) and strengthening external partnerships (ρ= -0.296, p= 0.303). These trends hint that while these forms of engagement are present, they could not directly enhance educational outcomes, possibly due to systemic barriers or inefficiencies in translating engagement into actionable results.

For efficiency indicators, weak positive correlations are observed for involvement in budget planning and resource allocation (ρ=0.332, p=0.247) and documentation management and accessibility (ρ=0.264, p=0.362). Although not statistically significant, these trends suggest that stakeholder involvement in financial planning and proper documentation practices may contribute to better retention and reduced repetition rates. However, the overall weak correlations indicate that other factors likely have a stronger influence on educational efficiency.

These findings align with studies claiming the multifaceted nature of stakeholder engagement's impact on educational outcomes. For example, Gonzales (2022) stated in his study a weak correlation between stakeholder involvement and school performance metrics such as enrolment and dropout rates, implying that while engagement is crucial, it must be complemented by other factors to achieve significant improvements. Haile and Mekonnen (2024) found that while stakeholder engagement positively influences curriculum implementation, its effectiveness depends on continuous interaction, feedback collection, and alignment with institutional goals.

Relationship Between the Contextual Factors of School and the Stakeholder engagement

Additionally, Table 7 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis applied to the link between the contextual factors of school and the stakeholders' engagement.

Table 7: Regression Analysis Between Contextual Factors and Stakeholder Engagement

Predictors	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	
Geographical Location	-0.1863	0.0954	-1.951	0.077	
Human Resources	-0.0422	0.0099	-4.245	0.001	
Financial Resources	0.0000	0.0000002	3.066	0.011	
Material Resources	0.0010	0.0002551	3.953	0.002	

Notes: R^2=0.7545, F(4,11)=8.45, p=.002

The overall model is statistically significant F(4,11)=8.45, p=0.002, demonstrating strong explanatory power, with its R^2 value indicating that approximately 75.45% of the variance in stakeholders' engagement is explained by the predictors.

The findings show that Geographical location has a negative coefficient (-0.1863), suggesting a potential

negative impact on engagement, but its effect is not statistically significant (t=−1.951, p=0.077). This aligns with research showing that geographical distance can impede stakeholder engagement due to increased communication barriers and logistical challenges (Bryson et al., 2014).

Human resources also exhibit a negative coefficient (-0.0422), and this relationship is statistically significant (t=−3.245, p=0.001), indicating that increased human resources may reduce engagement, possibly due to inefficiencies or misallocation. The significant negative association between human resources and stakeholder engagement is a counterintuitive finding. However, it may be supported by studies showing that simply increasing staff numbers without proper training or strategic alignment can dilute resources and negatively impact stakeholder relations (Boxall & Purcell, 2011).

Financial resources show a negligible coefficient (0.0000) but have a statistically significant positive effect on engagement (t=3.066, p=0.011), highlighting their importance even in small increments. Material resources have a positive and significant coefficient (t=3.953, p=0.002), emphasizing their critical role in enhancing stakeholders' engagement. The positive impact of financial resources on stakeholder engagement is corroborated by research demonstrating that adequate resources enhance an organization's capacity to develop and maintain strong stakeholder relationships (Crane et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Integrated schools are mainly found in rural areas, highlighting their essential role in providing accessible education to dispersed and remote populations. Despite this, significant disparities in resources across schools highlight ongoing systemic inequities that impact educational quality. These schools demonstrate high operational effectiveness across structure, staff qualifications, student enrollment, curriculum implementation, budget utilization, and procedures for establishment. Educational outcomes are positive, with high transition, graduation, and retention rates, but ongoing monitoring is needed to maintain these results across all schools. The study found no strong statistical link between stakeholder engagement and educational outcomes, suggesting that other, more complex factors influence educational efficiency and that holistic management approaches are needed. However, regression analysis show that stakeholder engagement is significantly predicted by these factors, with financial and material resources showing positive relationships and human resources exhibiting a negative impact, underscoring the importance of strategic resource allocation and human resource management to foster engagement.

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