

# **Kadtabanga: Exploring the Challenges in School-Community Involvement in the Lens of School Heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun**

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study explores the challenges in school-community involvement, locally termed "Kadtabanga," as experienced by seven purposively selected public elementary school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun, Maguindanao del Sur, Philippines, during School Years 2020–2023. Using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions analyzed through thematic analysis, the study identified current practices such as effective communication, regular stakeholder meetings, and active parental involvement. Key challenges include weak community participation, resource limitations, and inconsistent engagement efforts. However, cultural alignment between schools and communities facilitated collaboration. School heads address these challenges through collaborative decision-making, shared vision-building, and active listening. Perceived impacts on students include enhanced learning, improved school performance, and transformative community partnerships. Recommended strategies include multi-channel communication, leadership training, policy support, and stronger partnerships with local government units and NGOs. The study concludes that while school-community involvement significantly benefits student outcomes, sustained institutional support and professional development for school heads are essential for long-term success.

**Keywords:** *Kadtabanga, school-community involvement, school heads, challenges, community engagement, parental participation, Maguindanao del Sur, BARMM, thematic analysis, educational management*



## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The relationship between schools and their surrounding communities is essential in shaping learners. This partnership is important in addressing various academic and social issues faced by schools by schools, as it encourages parental management, resource sharing, and community participation. However, despite its recognized importance, school Community involvement remains a challenge in many regions

Globally, the significance of school-community partnerships has been widely recognized as a critical component of effective educational. The (UNESCO, 2021) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization emphasizes that strong community engagement contributes to student retention, holistic development, and improved academic outcomes. However, challenges such as poverty, parental illiteracy, and lack of awareness hinder effective collaboration (Epstein,2018). Furthermore, research highlights that in many developing countries, the gap between schools and communities persists due to cultural barriers, inadequate policies and minimal government support (Henderson & Mapp, 2019). These global challenges reflect the need for localized interventions to strengthen the partnership between schools and their communities.

At the national level, the Philippine education system has continuously sought to strengthen school-community relations through policies and programs under the Department of Education (DepEd). The implementation of Republic Act 9155, also known as the Governance Of Basic Education Act of 2001, emphasizes the decentralization of school management, promoting local stakeholder participation in decision-making (DepEd, 2020). However, studies indicate that school heads still struggle with engaging parents and community members due to economic hardships, lack of awareness, and limited government funding (Pascua & Mangawang, 2021). Moreover, research by Bernardo (2019) underscores that many parents in the Philippines face difficulties attending school events and meetings due to employment constraints, leading to weak school-community ties and reduced parental involvement in student learning.

Locally, in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), particularly in Maguindanao del Sur, challenges in school-community engagement are further exacerbated by socio-political factors, poverty, and cultural norms. A study by Rasul (2022) indicates that school conflicts in conflict affected areas often experience a lack of parental involvement due to security concerns and displacement. Similarly, the Bangsamoro Development Plan (2021) highlights that poverty remains a significant barrier, as many parents prioritize livelihood over school participation. Additionally, research by Abubakar (2020) reveals that traditional practices and community structures in BARMM influence how schools and local stakeholders interact, sometimes leading to limited collaboration between educators and parents. These local challenges call for context specific strategies that address the unique socio-cultural dynamics affecting school-community involvement.

Despite extensive research on school-community partnerships, gaps remain in understanding the specific challenges faced by the school heads in fostering meaningful engagement. While existing studies highlight economic and cultural barriers, there is limited research on how administrators navigate these issues in conflict -affected and poverty-stricken areas (Garcia,2021). Additionally, previous literature focuses primarily on parental involvement from perspective of teachers and policymakers, with minimal emphasis on the direct experiences of school heads (Santos, 2020) is need for studies that explore innovative and adaptive strategies

that school leaders implement to bridge the gap between schools and communities. Addressing these research gaps can provide valuable insights into developing targeted interventions that strengthen school-community partnerships.

Given these challenges and research gaps, this study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of school heads in managing school-community involvement programs within the Municipality of General Salipada K. Pendatun. By identifying the specific barriers they encounter and strategies they employ, this research seeks to contribute to policy recommendations and practical solutions that enhance collaboration between schools and their communities. Furthermore, the findings will provide valuable insights into how socio-economic, cultural, and structural factors influence school-community engagement, ultimately supporting educational development.

The goal of this research is to aim investigating the challenges of school community involvement through the lens of school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun, Division Maguindanao Del Sur, during the School Year 2020-2023. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current practices of school heads in fostering school-community partnerships “kadtabanga”?;
2. What challenges do school heads encounter in engaging with the community?;
3. How do school heads address these challenges to sustain involvement?; on student outcomes?;
4. What strategies can be recommended to enhance the involvement of school heads?;
5. What is the perceived impact of school-community involvement on students’ outcome?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study will provide insights into the complexities of school-community relationships and offer potential solutions to empower school leaders to strengthen their partnerships with the community.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

The focus is on selected public-school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun, examining their challenges in school-community involvement in the activities and partnerships from 2020 to 2023. It delimits itself to school heads’ leadership practices, community engagement efforts, and the perceived outcomes on students. Factors such as parents, teachers, stakeholders, and other people and organizations that are invested in the school involvement and student perspectives are considered indirectly through the lens of school heads’ reports.

In the same manner, it targets on teacher heads and does not include perspectives from school principals or district supervisors, as their roles and experiences may differ.

Findings aim to provide a clear and specific analysis of the challenges in school-community relations from the perspective of teacher heads, leading to practical recommendations for improvement.



## II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methods and explains the analysis method and processes used.

### Research Design

This research used qualitative methodology, with the findings integrated to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under investigation. The qualitative component elucidates the contextual challenges and strategies employed by school heads. According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative research design should align with the nature of research problem, the philosophical worldview of the researcher, and the specific qualitative approach chosen, such as phenomenology, ethnography, or case study. He emphasizes that qualitative designs are flexible and focus on exploring meanings, understanding, experiences, and interpreting human behavior in context. This study adopts a qualitative design to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of school heads regarding school-community involvement.

This approach is well-suited for addressing the complexity of the study objectives, as it captures both measurable outcomes and the intricate dynamics of leadership practices in culturally and economically diverse settings. By leveraging the complementary strengths of the qualitative method, the study ensures depth and breadth in its findings.

### Participants of the Study

Participants consisted of seven public school heads from elementary schools purposively selected from General Salipada K. Pendatun municipality. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to ensure the participants have direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). The strategy ensured a diverse representation of educational contexts across the municipality.

### Qualifications of Participants

Participants in this study were school heads who met specific qualifications. Each participant had a minimum of three years of leadership experience and involvement in partnership programs. They actively participated in at least one school-community initiative and held leadership positions at the elementary level. Additionally, they possessed extensive experience and deep insights into school-community partnerships.

### Research Instrument

The research used a semi-structured interview as an investigative instrument during in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Its purpose was to investigate the challenges in school-community involvement through the lens of school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun, Division of Maguindanao Del Sur, during the school year 2021-2023.

The interview questions contained twenty questions, and the guide comprised three questions for each problem statement.

The validity and accuracy of this tool were authenticated through an evaluation process conducted by a panel of experts who are masters in the development of relevant research instruments.



### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Data-gathering procedure followed a systematic process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the collected information and obtain relevant data for the study.

First, the researcher got approval from the Schools Division Office of Maguindanao Del Sur and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) to conduct the study among selected school heads.

Upon approval, the researcher distributed the research instrument as interview guides to the participants. The survey questionnaire will be the primary tool to gather data regarding the challenges in school-community involvement through the lens of school heads.

Before the interviews, the researcher scheduled them at the participant's most convenient time. The researcher personally administered the survey questionnaire to ensure clarity of instructions. All gathered information were carefully encoded, organized, and validated before proceeding to data analysis and interpretation.

Ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the data gathering.

### **Data Analysis**

The study aimed to examine the specific challenges, contributing factors, and potential solutions related to challenges in school-community involvement through the lens of school heads.

To obtain this objective, the study employed thematic analysis, which is used to systematically examine patterns (themes) across a data set. This approach helps researchers interpret meaning from participants' experiences, perceptions, and narratives. Braun & Clarke (2006) describe it as a way to derive deeper insights from the interview data.

Gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within the data. The recorded interviews were transcribed, organized, and carefully reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses. Significant statements, phrases, and ideas related to the challenges in school-community involvement were coded and categorized into meaningful units. Similar codes were grouped to form broader themes from the participants' narratives.

Data analysis process was guided by the study's research questions, ensuring that the identified themes directly addressed the study's objectives. The final themes were interpreted to provide a deeper understanding of challenges encountered by school heads in fostering school-community involvement.

This section presents and discusses the findings. The emerging theme construed from the challenges of school-community involvement through the lens of school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun is presented successively.

After gathering the data, the researcher analyzes the data on the experiences of school heads using thematic analysis. The researcher utilizes this data analysis to determine school heads' challenges. Steps in conducting Thematic Analysis include identifying significant statements, formulating initial themes, identifying clustered themes, and selecting the emerging themes.



Fifteen (15) emerging themes were articulated through arduous procedural data analysis and interpretation. There were 99 initial themes and 38 clustered themes.

Fourteen (14) emerging themes are the following: (1) Effective and Strategic Communication, (2) Participation in Diverse Engagement, (3) Fostering Strong Partnership Empowerment, (4) Weak Engagement and Resources Constraints, (5) Shared Community Values and Collaborations, (6) Resource Limitations, (7) Sustained Transparency and Development (8) Collaborative Leadership and Shared Accountability, (9) Sensitivity and Concern with Stakeholders, (10) Stakeholders Support for Education, (11) Intensified Teacher and Community Support, (12) Holistic Community Partnership in Education, (13) Stakeholders Strong Engagement and Trust Cultivation, (14) Competency Development and School Community Networking, and lastly (15) Professional Development and Adequate Resource Support.

### III. SUMMARY

This section presents the major findings of the study based on the analysis of the data gathered. The following are the significant results based on the interview conducted, and the FGD transcribed using thematic analysis methods. This study examined the practices, challenges, strategies, and impact of school-community involvement as experienced by the school heads in General Salipada K. Pendatun.

Current practices of school Heads initiate effective communication as the foundation for school-community partnerships. Regular meetings with stakeholders serve as the primary technique for engaging community members. Active community and parental involvement is encouraged through school initiatives.

Challenges experienced in community engagement and low community participation remain a key barrier, making engagement efforts inconsistent.

Cultural alignment is not an issue between the school and the community because they share the same culture, and collaboration is smooth. Resource limitations hinder the sustainability of partnerships.

School heads direct these challenges by collaborative decision-making and promote a shared vision for long-term partnerships.

Perceived impact of school-community involvement in students outcomes. Transformative community partnerships contribute to school success. Community engagement enhances student learning through support and resources.

Recommended strategies to enhance school-community involvement. Strengthen school-community relationships through clear and consistent communication. Providing leadership training and development training for school heads to engagement strategies. Institutional and policy support is essential to reinforce school heads, efforts.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATION

#### Conclusions

In light of the study's findings, the following conclusions were drawn: school-community involvement is essential for fostering student success and improving school performance. School Heads actively apply strategies such as communication, stakeholder meetings, and parental involvement, but challenges such as low participation and limited resources hinder these efforts. School heads employ shared vision-building collaboration and active listening to sustain engagement. The study highlights that strong partnerships between schools and communities



lead to better outcomes, enhanced learning experiences, and a culture of cooperation. However, policy and institutional support remain pivotal for sustaining these efforts

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations enhance school-community involvement and support school heads,

1. Build up communication and engagement strategies. Develop multi-channel communication approaches to social media, community meetings, and letters;
2. Expand Community Participation and Collaboration. Implement incentive programs for community and parental involvement. Foster co-leadership opportunities where community members actively contribute to decision-making;
3. Direct Resource Limitations. Strengthen partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and government agencies to secure additional funding and support. Advocate for the Department of Education (DepEd) Local Government unit (LGU) in resource allocation;
4. Give Professional Development to School Heads. Offer training programs in leadership, conflict resolution, and community engagement. Organize peer-learning forums where school heads share best practices;
5. Enhance Policy and Institutional Support. Develop policies that mandate community engagement initiatives in schools. Establish a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of school-community partnership;
6. Future researcher may strengthen parental education and awareness programs.

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