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FOSTERING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN RURAL SETTINGS: STRATEGIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN MACO NORTH DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Through a qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher aimed to uncover the experiences, coping strategies, and school-community partnership framework pertaining to fostering school-community partnerships in the rural settings from the perspective of elementary school teachers. The study's participants were ten (10) elementary school teachers from schools situated within Maco North District. The lived experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnership encompassed building strong partnerships, overcoming engagement barriers, and navigating resource limitations. Meanwhile, the themes for the coping strategies included effective communication, cultivating connections, and proactive engagement. Ultimately, the themes under school-community partnership framework designed to strengthen the stakeholders' engagement includes effective communication for trust and clarity, culturally responsive inclusion system, and collaborative partnerships. The findings demonstrated that strong school–community partnerships required intentional relationship-building. The efforts to create inclusive and supportive environments enhanced student success and sustained collaborative, student-centered partnerships.

KEYWORDS: *School-Community Partnerships, Rural Settings, Elementary School*

INTRODUCTION

As a teacher in a rural community, I have firsthand experience with the challenges of implementing School-Based Management (SBM), particularly in strengthening school-community partnerships. Many parents are preoccupied with meeting their families' daily needs, which limits their participation in school activities and involvement in their children's education. This often creates a disconnect between the support learners receive at school and at home, affecting their motivation and academic performance. Despite these realities, I believe SBM plays an important role in fostering collaboration, shared responsibility, and stronger relationships between schools, parents, and the community to better support learners' growth and success.

But I have also seen the power of community partnerships in addressing these challenges. Working together with local organizations, businesses, and families, we can create opportunities for students to access resources, mentorship, and real-world experiences that enrich their learning. Without collaborative efforts, existing educational disparities may worsen, hindering students' academic progress. It is crucial for stakeholders to work together to provide students with necessary support, resources, and opportunities to succeed. Hence, urgency to strengthen school-community partnerships in rural areas demands immediate attention.

In the global context, Afriyanti, Viona, and Efriyida (2020) stated that education is not only determined by the teaching and learning process in the classroom but also by a conducive educational environment. This environment includes both physical aspects such as facilities and infrastructure, as well as non-physical aspects such as social interaction and support from various stakeholders. In an effort to create a quality educational environment, the role of schools cannot stand alone. Strong synergy and partnerships are needed between schools and communities, be it parents, community leaders, local organizations, or local governments.

Similarly, school-community partnership and its implementation led to increased access to mental health services, improved school climate, and decreased discipline referrals. However, it also identified barriers to implementation, such as initial resistance from educators and the need for sustainable funding (Butcher et al., 2022).

Additionally, Sarah, Ismanto, and Sanoto (2023) identifies key issues of school-community partnerships, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient support from district and school administrators. These challenges hinder the development of strong partnerships between schools and communities. Inconsistent engagement across institutions and lack of systematic approaches to partnership can lead to fragmented and ineffective collaboration.

In the national context, Ramos and Revilla (2022) noted the difficulties in public-private partnerships, particularly in distance learning programs. They highlight issues in partnership effectiveness, resource mobilization, and program implementation. They also have investigated community outreach challenges in higher education institutions. They note that time constraints are a significant obstacle.

On the other hand, Babia and Cotejo (2021) have identified problems like limited resources, miscommunication, and sustainability of interest in community-based projects. These studies underscore the need for sustainable plans and policy innovations to support partnership efforts in education.

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Rural school leaders lead in forging these partnerships, including guiding force, cheerleaders, network champions, and setting clear expectations and shared accountability. However, the need for sustainable partnerships needs to be emphasized to address challenges like community isolation, negative sociocultural environments, and limited resources (Mejica and Mohammad, 2021).

In Mindanao, De Jesus (2025) explored the challenges faced by indigenous people (Lumad), she highlights that principal leadership plays a significant role in building school-community partnerships, which can enhance student achievement, teacher engagement, and school development. Effective school-community partnerships require strong leadership skills, including good communication, organizational, decision-making, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills. By fostering strong partnerships, schools can tap into community resources, expertise, and support, ultimately improving educational outcomes and community development.

In the Division of Davao de Oro, schools in far-flung areas face significant challenges in delivering quality education due to limited resources and support. To overcome these hurdles, teachers are compelled to be resourceful and innovative. Building strong relationships with the local community becomes crucial in this context, as it can help alleviate some of the burdens and expand opportunities for children's growth and learning. By fostering partnerships with the community, schools can tap into local expertise, resources, and support, ultimately enriching the educational experience for students and promoting more holistic development.

By investing in partnership, the Division of Davao de Oro underscores its commitment to nurturing a culture of excellence and innovation in education. With this, I hope that this investigation enlightens the identified sector of the academe. This includes the Department of Education, educational leaders, school heads, teachers, other stakeholders, and future researchers.

Objectives of the Study

The ultimate goal of this investigation was to gain a deeper understanding of the complex and dynamic partnership between school and community, shedding light on the challenges, strategies, and educational insights that emerge from their interactions. The school-community partnerships in rural area that cultivates competence among teachers. Through examining the experiences and partnership strategies of teachers, the inquiry hopes to better our inkling of the dynamics presumed in dealing with school-community partnerships.

The findings of this phenomenological inquiry have the potential to inform the development of effective partnership or collaborative programs, improve outcomes for new connections and partnerships and shape professional development initiatives that enhance teacher competence and success. In shedding light on the struggles and triumphs of elementary school teachers in fostering partnership with the school and community, this study can contribute to the creation of more effective support systems that fosters partnership and collaboration for the success of the community, the school, and the students.

Research Questions

This study tried to uncover the experiences and strategies employed by elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnerships in rural settings. This study was carried out, and the researcher aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Elementary School Teachers in fostering school-community relationships in rural settings?
2. How do teachers cope with the challenges in fostering relationship between school and community?
3. What school community partnership framework can be designed to strengthen stakeholders' engagement?

RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This section presents the review of literature and studies aligned with the introductory concepts of the research. It highlights scholarly works and empirical findings on three major areas: the lived experiences of elementary school teachers, the strategies they employ to foster meaningful teacher-learner connections, and the frameworks of school-community partnerships that support educational engagement. These thematic strands provide the conceptual foundation for the study and establish the scholarly context in which the present investigation is situated.

Experiences of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering School-Community Partnership

School-community partnerships are vital for student growth, especially in rural areas where resources are limited. Teachers' experiences highlight both the benefits and challenges of fostering these connections. Building trust and collaboration with parents, local organizations, and community members creates supportive ecosystems that enhance student outcomes (Epstein, 2009; Sander, 2022). Effective communication through newsletters, social media, and community bulletins sustains engagement and fosters collective responsibility (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021).

Challenges include limited resources, conflicting priorities, and low participation rates. Rural schools often struggle with inadequate funding and personnel, requiring teachers to adopt creative strategies such as in-kind support from local organizations (Barley & Beesley, 2021; Giampietro & Romiti, 2025). Misaligned priorities between academic and social goals can strain partnerships, making collaborative goal-setting and cultural responsiveness essential (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Ishimaru, 2014). Low participation, often due to logistical barriers or lack of awareness, can be addressed through flexible scheduling, tailored initiatives, and proactive engagement (Henderson et al., 2021; Musa, 2025).

In sum, teachers' experiences reveal that fostering school-community partnerships requires trust-building, communication, creativity, and sustained effort. Despite challenges, these partnerships remain crucial for enhancing student success and strengthening community support.

Coping Strategies of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering Relationship between School and Community

Despite challenges, elementary school teachers adopt practical

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strategies to sustain school-community partnerships. One key approach is resource leveraging, where teachers integrate digital tools and collaborate with local businesses and organizations to expand learning opportunities and address non-academic barriers (Divino et al., 2025; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2022). By maximizing available resources, educators enrich student engagement and promote inclusivity.

Another strategy is collaborative planning, which involves shared goal-setting, resource allocation, and open dialogue with community stakeholders. This fosters trust, cultural responsiveness, and adaptability, ensuring partnerships remain relevant and supportive of student needs (Sanders, 2021; Daramola & Marsh, 2022).

Finally, effective communication and outreach sustain partnerships by maintaining transparency and responsiveness. Teachers employ newsletters, social media, and face-to-face meetings to strengthen trust and encourage participation, while outreach to local organizations builds meaningful connections (Jimenez-Rosado, 2025; Schooling Stories, 2024).

In sum, teachers cope with partnership challenges by leveraging resources, engaging in collaborative planning, and prioritizing communication. These strategies highlight their resilience and commitment to fostering strong school-community relationships that enhance student success.

School-Community Partnership Frameworks

From teachers' narratives, three key frameworks emerge in fostering school-community partnerships. First is social responsibility, where educators encourage civic engagement through service-learning projects and community-based initiatives. This approach helps students apply academic skills to real-world issues, develop empathy, and strengthen their role as active citizens (Benavides, 2022; Afrianti et al., 2024).

Second is collaboration and teamwork, which emphasize shared vision, trust, and joint planning with community stakeholders. Effective collaboration requires clear communication, cultural responsiveness, and mutual respect, enabling schools and communities to co-create initiatives that enhance student learning and community engagement (Harris & Jones, 2022; Friend & Cook, 2021).

Third is commitment to student success, where teachers prioritize equity, inclusivity, and culturally responsive practices. By partnering with community organizations, educators provide mentorship, enrichment opportunities, and real-world experiences that address diverse student needs and promote holistic development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Codilla, 2022).

In sum, these frameworks—social responsibility, collaboration, and commitment to student success—guide teachers in building strong, sustainable partnerships that improve student outcomes and foster community growth.

Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979, as cited in Cherry, 2023), which explains human development through five interconnected systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. In the context of school-community partnerships, the mesosystem highlights the importance of home–school interactions, underscoring how collaboration among families, schools, and communities strengthens student learning and well-being.

Complementing this, Epstein's School-Family-Community Partnership Model (2009, as cited in Vance, 2024) emphasizes overlapping spheres of influence, where schools, families, and communities share responsibility for student success. The model advocates inclusive practices, parental involvement, and collaborative strategies to overcome barriers and create supportive environments.

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens: Bronfenbrenner situates student development within broader ecological contexts, while Epstein specifies the roles and collaborative practices of stakeholders. Integrating these perspectives enables educators and policymakers to design effective partnerships that promote academic achievement, social growth, and holistic student development.

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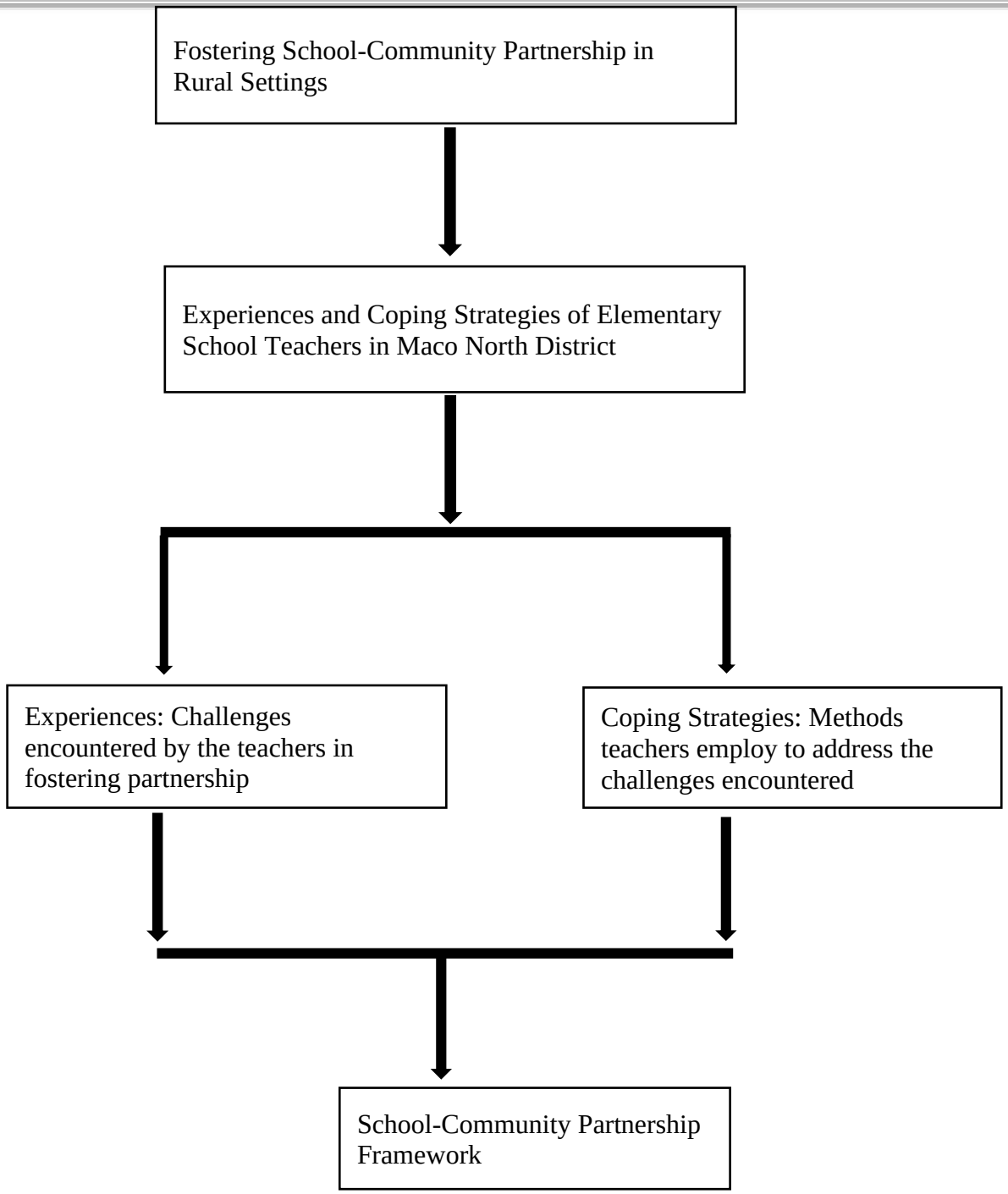


Figure 1. ***Conceptual Framework of the Study***

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METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the specific objectives of the study by outlining the systematic procedures and methodology employed in phenomenological design. It explains the chosen research approach and clarifies the role of the researcher throughout the implementation. The discussion is comprehensive, presenting the processes and selection standards applied. Finally, it details the methods of data collection and analysis, along with the strategies used to uphold ethical standards during the study.

Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

The study is guided by key philosophical assumptions that shape qualitative inquiry: ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and rhetorics. These assumptions provide the foundation for understanding the research design and approach.

Ontology. Acknowledges multiple realities, recognizing the diverse and subjective experiences of teachers in fostering school-community partnerships. Each narrative contributes to a multifaceted understanding of their lived realities (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

Epistemology. Emphasizes close researcher-participant interaction. By engaging directly with teachers, the study captures authentic insights into their challenges and strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

Axiology. Highlights the researcher's values. Integrity, respect, and ethical sensitivity guided the treatment of participants' narratives, ensuring transparency and truthfulness.

Methodology. Refers to the strategic plan of action. In-depth interviews were employed to capture the complexity of teachers' experiences in rural school-community partnerships (Crotty, 2020).

Rhetorics. Involves the use of clear, respectful, and persuasive language. The study employed formal academic writing while valuing participants' voices to ensure meaningful interpretation (Beqiri, 2021).

Overall, these philosophical assumptions provided coherence to the research process, ensuring that the study remained rigorous, ethical, and grounded in the lived experiences of elementary school teachers.

Qualitative Assumptions

This study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences and strategies of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community relationships in rural settings. Guided by phenomenology, the goal was to capture the essence of teachers' roles and highlight their unique perspectives and lived realities (Neubauer et al., 2022).

To grasp the depth and complexity of these narratives, the investigation relied on in-depth interviews, reflective dialogues, and thematic analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to move beyond surface-level observation, interpreting teachers' perceptions, challenges, and strategies to construct a comprehensive understanding of how they build and sustain school-community partnerships.

Design and Procedure

This study employed a **qualitative phenomenological design** to explore the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnerships in rural settings. Qualitative research, characterized by verbal rather than statistical analysis, was most appropriate for capturing the depth and complexity of these experiences (Hammersley, 2023).

Phenomenology, as noted by Aspers (2009, cited in Aspers & Corte, 2021), emphasizes communicating participants' viewpoints and analyzing the significance of their lived realities. Guided by this approach, the study sought to describe and interpret teachers' strategies and challenges, reducing individual accounts into shared themes that reflect the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2023).

Data were collected from participants with direct experience of the phenomenon, ensuring rich, authentic narratives. These accounts were then analyzed to construct detailed descriptions that illuminate how teachers build and sustain school-community partnerships.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical reflections are essential as they encompass the principles and guidelines that governed my conduct as a researcher. These standards ensured that the investigation was carried out responsibly, that participants were treated with respect, and that the information generated was dependable and accurate. To protect participants, uphold scientific integrity, and foster trust within the research community, I adhered to established ethical standards throughout the study (Resnik, 2020).

Social value. This concerns the benefits and positive outcomes that research can contribute to society, such as addressing challenges or improving quality of life. In this study, I evaluated the public value of the investigation by recognizing its potential impact on the broader community. The findings are expected to inform educational practices, guide decision-making, support teachers, empower students, and strengthen collaboration between schools and communities.

Informed Consent. This refers to a participant's voluntary agreement to take part in a study after being provided with sufficient information about its purpose, methods, potential risks, and benefits. In this investigation involving teachers, it was my responsibility to ensure that participants fully understood the study and their rights before participation. Clear explanations allowed them to make informed decisions, thereby safeguarding their liberty and dignity. All participants were explicitly informed of their rights, respecting their autonomy and acknowledging their expertise and contributions to the field of education.

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Vulnerability. Vulnerability in research refers to the potential risk of harm or coercion that participants may face due to factors such as age, cognitive ability, or socioeconomic status. As a researcher, it was imperative to acknowledge these risks and implement safeguards to protect participants. Measures included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and clearly explaining their rights and procedures in accessible terms. Research methods were adapted to minimize adverse effects, with priority given to the well-being and dignity of elementary school teachers throughout the study.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety. In research, it is essential to evaluate potential risks and benefits while implementing measures that safeguard participants' well-being. This study carefully considered possible disadvantages and advantages of participation, ensuring that teachers were protected throughout the process. Safety and dignity were prioritized by fostering a respectful and trustworthy environment that valued their contributions to education. These measures upheld ethical standards and ensured participants' welfare from the beginning to the conclusion of the investigation.

Privacy and Confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality in research involve safeguarding participants' personal information and ensuring that their identities remain protected unless explicit consent for disclosure is provided. In this study, strict protocols were followed to secure participants' data, including anonymizing responses, securely storing information, and restricting access to authorized personnel only. These measures preserved the trust of elementary school teachers and reinforced the credibility and validity of the research.

Justice. It refers to the fair distribution of both the benefits and burdens across different groups in society. In this study, I strived to promote equity by ensuring that the advantages of the findings were accessible to all stakeholders. This approach fostered fairness throughout the research process, guaranteeing that no group carried an undue burden or was excluded from the potential benefits of the study's outcomes.

Transparency. Transparency in surveys ensures integrity at every phase of the investigation, from its design and execution to the reporting of results. In the context of this study, I only included truthful information about the investigation process and relied on the narratives of the participants regarding fostering school-community partnerships in rural areas. In this study, I ensured that all stakeholders, including educators and policy makers, had access to reliable and comprehensible information.

The Qualification of a Researcher. As a researcher, my academic preparation in education, along with the various trainings and seminars I have attended, has equipped me with the essential knowledge and skills to conduct this study effectively. These include research-related training, data analysis workshops, and seminars on qualitative methodologies and classroom-based inquiry, which strengthened my ability to gather, analyze, and interpret data systematically. Drawing from these learning experiences, I was able to engage meaningfully with participants and ensure that their narratives were carefully and accurately represented. Ultimately, I applied both my formal education and professional development experiences to better understand the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnerships in rural settings.

The Adequacy of Facilities. This focuses on the presence and suitability of the imperative resources, tools, and infrastructure required to run a survey efficiently and securely. In this survey, I guaranteed to be sought comfortable and available facility for conducting the investigation. This facilitated the creation of credible information from the participants. Obtaining the right facilities secures that the data point assemblage and analysis processes were conducted under conditions that uphold the highest standards of investigation integrity and safety.

Community Involvement. This incorporates the dynamic involvement and active engagement of community members, stakeholders, or the intended beneficiaries of the study, from planning to sharing investigation outcomes. In this study, I plighted the community to assure the investigation's contextuality, acceptability, and likely impact.

On top of that, in this study, the involvement of the community was key in having and in-depth examination of the phenomenon and to understand the complexities of fostering school-community partnerships in rural area.

Plagiarism and Fabrication. Researchers may strictly follow the rationale of academic honesty and integrity. This entails giving proper credit to the work of others, presenting original contributions, and verifying the accuracy and authenticity of data. In this study, I employed tools like plagiarism detectors and maintained thorough documentation of my research procedures to ensure that my work was devoid of plagiarism and that all data and discoveries were authentic and reliable. By upholding these principles, I enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research community.

Research Participants

Qualitative studies require fewer participants than quantitative research, with the number sufficient to reach saturation—the point at which no new insights emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 2017, as cited in Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) suggests five to twenty-five participants, while Subedi (2021) cautions that larger samples may hinder in-depth exploration. As Patton (2002, cited in Mullet, 2018) notes, sample size is best determined by time, resources, and study objectives.

This study involved ten elementary school teachers from Elizalde and Panibasan Elementary Schools in the Maco North District, with five participants from each school engaged in in-depth interviews. Teachers were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as teaching experience, rural school setting, advisory class responsibilities, community collaboration, and willingness to share insights. This approach ensured authentic findings grounded in the lived experiences of teachers (Creswell, 2023; Marshall, 2022).

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide, validated by experts, was employed to collect data from elementary school teachers. Basic information such as grade level handled and teaching experience was obtained, while the main questions focused on teachers' experiences and strategies in fostering

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school-community relationships in rural settings, as well as the lessons they learned. Follow-up questions were used to deepen understanding, enabling the collection of rich and meaningful perspectives during the in-depth interviews.

Role of the Researcher

As the primary facilitator of this investigation, I was responsible for ensuring that the research process was conducted fairly, objectively, and without bias or external influence. I cultivated an environment of openness and honesty, encouraging teachers to share authentic experiences while maintaining impartiality to safeguard the integrity of the study. By upholding objectivity, I generated trustworthy insights that can inform evidence-based practices.

My academic preparation and training in qualitative methods equipped me with the knowledge to design, conduct, and analyze interviews systematically. This proficiency allowed me to examine complex social phenomena and capture the nuanced experiences of elementary school teachers, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings.

As a data collector, I gathered information through interviews and observations, ensuring accurate documentation, secure storage, and anonymization to protect participants' identities. I adhered to ethical standards, safeguarding privacy and maintaining the credibility of the research.

Finally, as a data analyst and communicator, I employed rigorous qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis to identify patterns and meaningful insights. I presented the findings clearly and coherently, ensuring they were accessible and useful to the academic community and practitioners in education.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study followed a systematic procedure to ensure accuracy and objectivity. Endorsements were first secured from key stakeholders, including the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges, the Division Superintendent, and the school principals, through formal letters outlining the research objectives and methodology. After receiving approval from the Schools Division Superintendent in December 2025, I sought permission from the school heads of the target institutions in January 2026.

With institutional approval in place, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Interviews were then conducted in the third week of January 2026 using a semi-structured guide to promote consistency and depth. Audio recordings and field notes were used to capture responses, which were transcribed in early February 2026 to preserve the richness and accuracy of participants' narratives.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, I employed coding and thematic content analysis to organize transcripts into categories, subcategories, and themes. This process allowed me to identify patterns and connections that directly addressed the research objectives, ensuring that the findings reflected participants' authentic experiences and perspectives.

The study utilized Creswell's thematic analysis approach, which involves familiarization, coding, generating and reviewing themes, defining and naming them, and producing the final report (Caulfield, 2020). Through repeated reading and systematic interrogation of transcripts, themes emerged naturally from the data, preserving its integrity (Dawadi, 2020).

To deepen the analysis, I also applied Colaizzi's phenomenological method, which follows seven steps: familiarization, identifying significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, developing an exhaustive description, producing a fundamental structure, and seeking participant validation (Morrow et al., 2021). This rigorous framework ensured that the analysis remained grounded in participants lived experiences, while verification enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of a study is about how reliable, sensible, and authentic the research results are, ensuring that the conclusions are trustworthy and accurate. In qualitative research, factors like credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are often used to evaluate how reliable the study is. These considerations are further described below, according to Guba (1981).

Credibility. Building credibility entails proving that the results are accurate. Credibility is important for this study because it evaluates if the results accurately represent the realities and experiences and strategies of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community relationships in rural settings, I conversed with the participants for a long time in order to gain a thorough understanding of their experiences and to increase my credibility. I gave the participants a preliminary version of the findings as part of member checking.

Transferability. The degree to which the results of this study can be used in different situations or with different populations is referred to as transferability. While the particular insights are closely linked to the experiences and strategies of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community relationship in rural settings, I gave thorough explanations of the research context and methodology. The survey's transferability was boosted seeing that this thorough, rich narrative enables others, in addition to educators, education administrators, and researchers, to assess how well the consequence applies to comparable contexts or populations.

Confirmability. Deals with the investigation's objectivity by making trusted that the respondents, not my personal prejudice or biases, mold the findings. I saved a thorough audit trail that details every step of the investigation process, from data collection to data analysis decisions, with the aim of guaranteeing confirmability. This methodological transparency made it possible for other researchers to evaluate the investigation's objectivity by following the study's development and going over the choices made.

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Dependability. Proving that the study results is reliable and repeatable in similar situations. Dependability in this survey was attained through persevering documentation of the entire investigation procedure, along with the methods used for data collection and analysis. By ensuring that other researchers can duplicate the investigation and possibly produce uniform results, such documentation validates the dependability of the survey. By adhering to these standards, the research offered valid and trustworthy conclusions regarding the experiences and strategies of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community relationships in rural settings. This methodology raised the survey's standing in the educational community and brought insightful information for upcoming studies and instructional design.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter answers the research questions presented in Chapter 1. The results and discussion cover three areas: (a) the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnership (b) their coping strategies for fostering school-community partnerships, and (c) the school-community partnership framework to strengthen stakeholders' engagement.

The Lived Experiences of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering School Community Partnership

Theme 1: Building Strong Partnerships. Teachers emphasized that relationships built on trust and collaboration with parents are essential. One participant shared, "Teaching in a rural setting we often know the families personally since we live in a small town. It helps me to enable to trust more quickly and communicate in relevant ways" (IDI-I6). Another added, "My experience in fostering school-community partnership in rural setting involve building strong relationships with parents and local leaders through open communication and shared activities" (IDI-I5). These accounts highlight how teachers serve as bridges between the school and the community, nurturing collaboration through trust and shared responsibility.

Theme 2: Engagement Barriers. Teachers reported difficulties in sustaining parental and community involvement due to limited transportation, poor communication, and lack of support. One participant explained, "I often struggle to organize program or events because funding, materials and transportation are limited" (IDI-I5). Another noted, "One of the challenges I've experienced previously is the lack of communication to parents" (IDI-I1). These barriers hinder participation in school activities and weaken partnership efforts.

Theme 3: Resource Limitations. Scarcity of resources and funding emerged as a major challenge. Teachers described how they coped by organizing donations and fund-raising activities. One participant stated, "As teacher in elementary school, one common experience is resource scarcity driving collaboration" (IDI-I7). Another shared, "My experience in fostering a school-community in a rural setting began in my barangay school with very limited funds and learning materials. To address this, I collaborated with parents and PTA officials to organize voluntary donations and fund-raising activities" (IDI-I8). These experiences show how resource limitations can strengthen collaboration and collective action despite financial constraints.

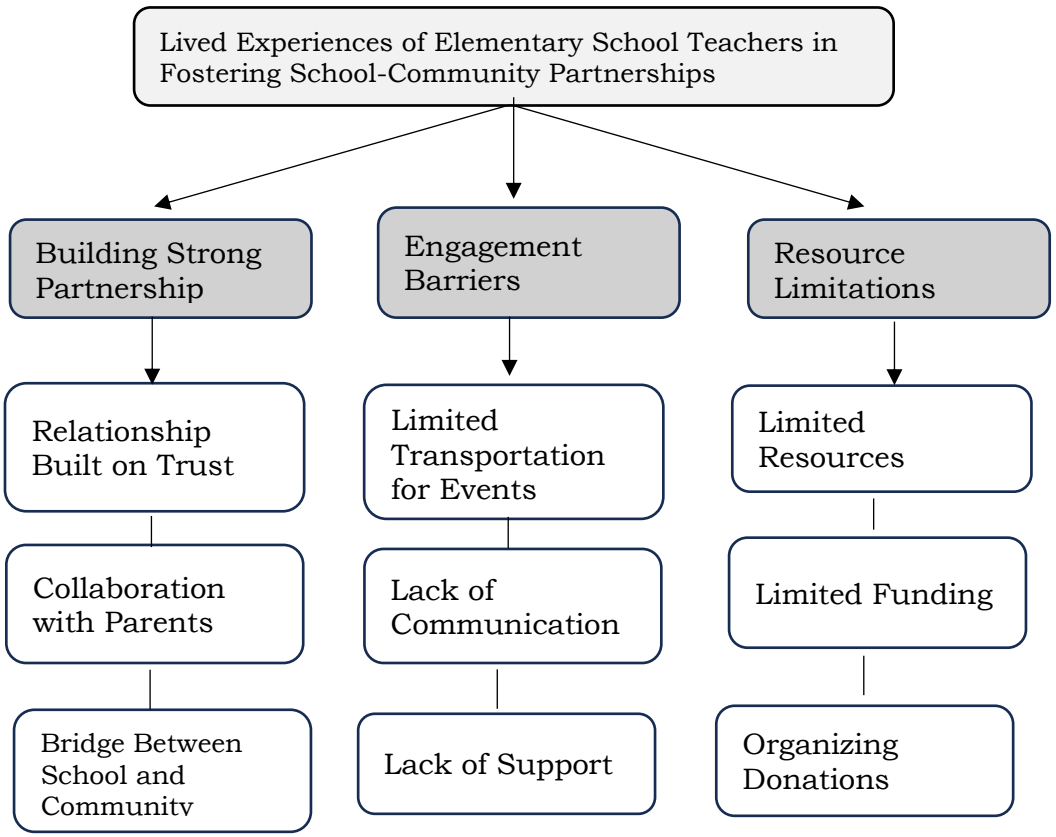


Figure 3. ***Lived Experiences of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering School Community Partnerships***

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Coping Strategies of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering School-Community Partnerships in Rural Setting

The findings of this study informed the development of a framework that strengthens stakeholder engagement in rural school-community partnerships. This framework integrates teachers' lived experiences, their coping strategies, and the challenges they encountered, highlighting practical approaches for sustaining collaboration.

Theme 1: Collaborative Leadership. Strong leadership and shared decision-making are essential. Teachers emphasized their role as bridges between school and community, working with parents, barangay officials, and local leaders. This collaborative leadership fosters inclusivity and collective responsibility.

Theme 2: Communication and Trust-Building. Open dialogue, transparency, and consistent communication emerged as central strategies. Teachers noted that good communication builds trust, which in turn encourages parents and stakeholders to actively participate in school initiatives.

Theme 3: Resource Mobilization. Scarcity of resources in rural schools requires creative solutions. Teachers organized fund-raising activities, sought donations, and partnered with local organizations to sustain programs. Resource mobilization strengthens engagement and ensures continuity of school activities.

Theme 4: Flexibility and Adaptability. Teachers coped with challenges by adjusting plans, modifying activities, and engaging in community life. Flexibility ensures that partnerships remain responsive to the needs of learners and stakeholders.

Theme 5: Sustained Engagement. Continuous involvement of parents, barangay officials, and local organizations through activities such as Brigada Eskwela, PTA meetings, and community programs builds ownership and accountability. Sustained engagement creates a supportive ecosystem for learners.

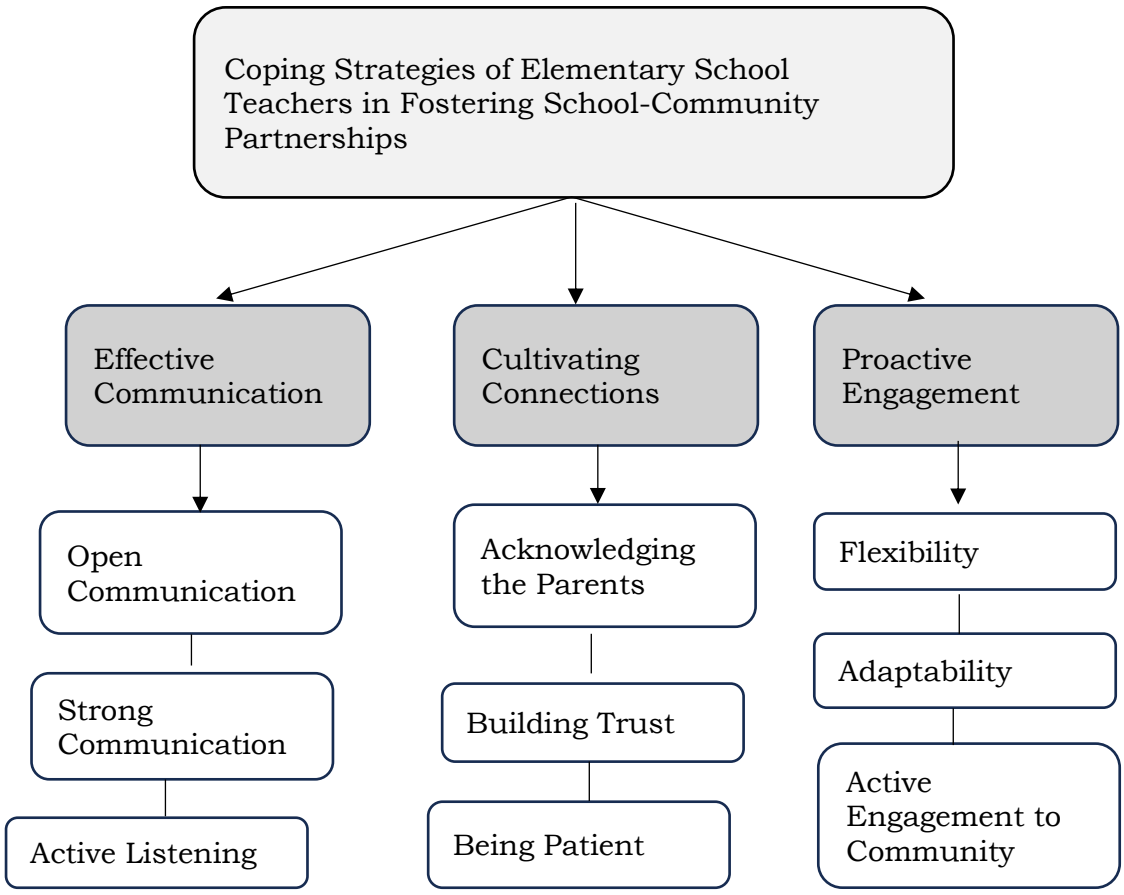


Figure *4. Coping Strategies of Elementary School Teachers in Fostering School Community Partnerships*

School Community Partnership Framework

Theme 1: Communication for Trust and Clarity. Teachers emphasized that proper communication, transparency, and multiple channels are essential for building trust. One participant noted, *"The key lessons learned are that building trust and open communication are essential for successful school-community partnership"* (IDI-I2). Another added, *"Transparency should always be exercised"* (IDI-I3). Clear and consistent communication fosters ownership, prevents misunderstandings, and strengthens collaboration.

Theme 2: Culturally Responsive Inclusion System. Inclusive practices that respect diverse cultures and promote participation were highlighted. A teacher shared, *"Understand the diverse culture and beliefs of every individual"* (IDI-I1). Another emphasized, *"Promote regular communication, shared*

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decision-making, and inclusive activities that involve parents and local stakeholders" (IDI-I9). By valuing diversity and creating inclusive activities, schools build trust and ensure that all stakeholders feel respected and involved.

Theme 3: Collaborative Partnerships. Trust-building mechanisms, shared decision-making, and resource-sharing protocols emerged as vital. One participant explained, *"School-community partnerships succeed when leadership is relational, policies are flexible, resources and training are available, communication is two-way, and ownership is shared"* (IDI-I4). Another stressed, *"Let the community be involved in the school activities. Strengthen the relationship by building trust, transparency, and consistency"* (IDI-I1). Collaborative partnerships enable schools to leverage community expertise, share resources, and sustain long-term engagement.

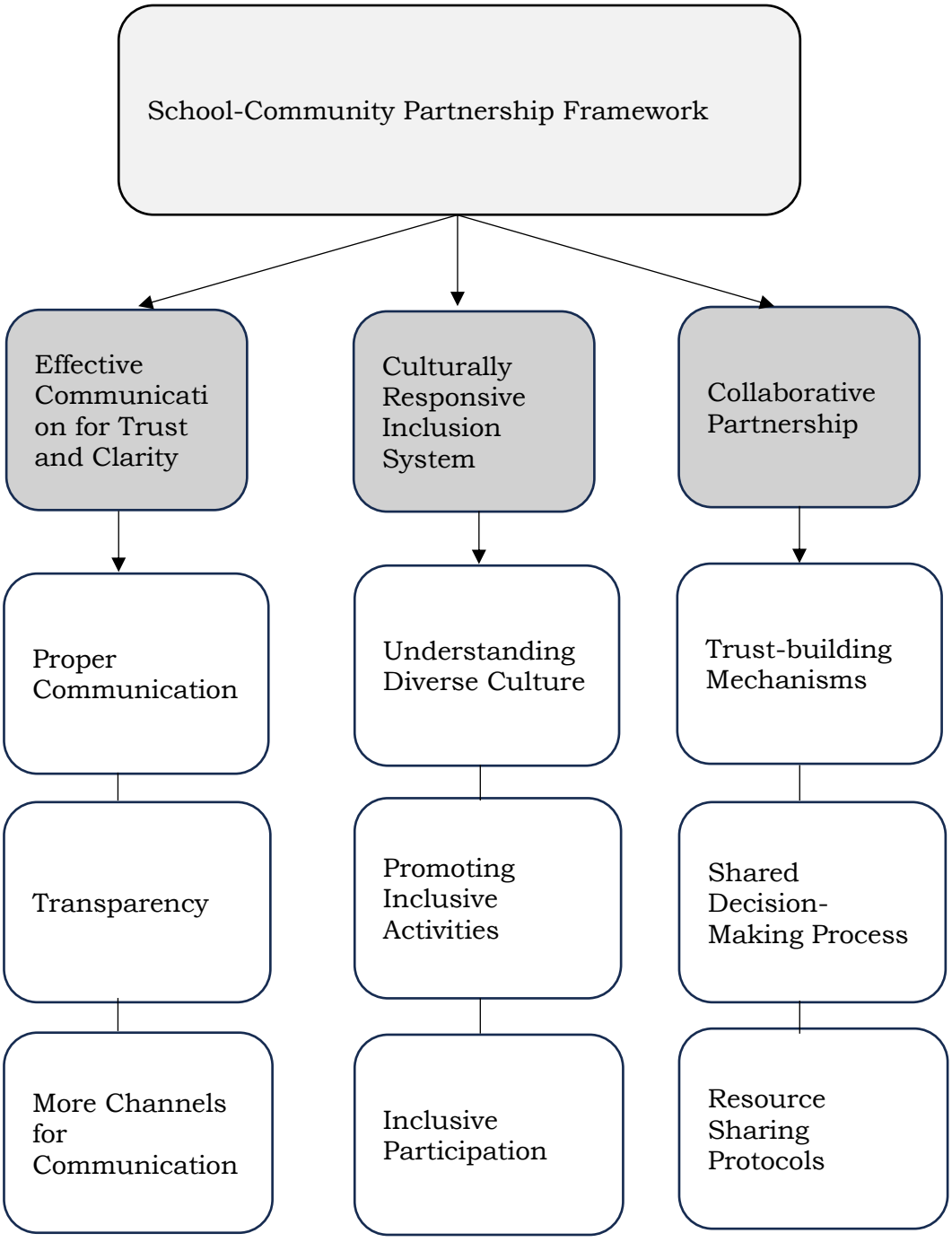


Figure 5. *School-Community Partnership Framework*

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences and coping strategies of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnerships. It also highlighted the school-community partnership framework designed to strengthen stakeholders' engagement.

1. The study revealed that the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school-community partnerships encompass building strong partnerships, addressing engagement barriers, and managing resource limitations.
2. To overcome these challenges, the study identified coping strategies employed by teachers, namely effective communication, cultivating connections, and proactive engagement.
3. The school-community partnership framework designed to strengthen stakeholders' engagement encompasses effective communication for trust and clarity, a culturally responsive inclusion system, and collaborative partnerships.

Implications

The study yielded the following implications:

1. The experiences of elementary school teachers in fostering school–community partnerships show that building strong and sustainable relationships requires trust, open communication, and active collaboration among stakeholders. Despite challenges such as limited resources and varying levels of community participation, teachers continue to use innovative and inclusive strategies to strengthen partnerships and support learners' success.
2. On the other hand, the coping strategies employed by teachers include maintaining clear and consistent communication, building strong relationships with stakeholders, and adapting to the changing needs of students and the community. These strategies highlight the importance of collaboration, flexibility, and trust in sustaining meaningful and student-centered school–community partnerships despite existing challenges.
3. The school–community partnership framework emphasizes effective communication for trust and clarity, culturally responsive inclusion systems, and collaborative partnerships as essential components in fostering strong relationships between schools and communities. These elements promote mutual understanding, active stakeholder participation, and shared responsibility.

Future Directions

Based on these findings, the study offered the following recommendations:

1. School administrators may deepen their understanding of school-community partnerships that enable them to implement more intentional, responsive, and structured strategies to support beginning teachers in engaging families, local organizations, and community stakeholders effectively.
2. Teachers can reflect on their experiences. They could adopt more intentional and responsive approaches to engaging families, local organizations, and community stakeholders, strengthening collaboration, supporting student learning, and creating a more connected and supportive school environment.
3. For community stakeholders, understanding these experiences can guide more effective collaboration, helping them provide targeted support, share resources, and actively participate in initiatives that enhance student learning and strengthen the school-community connection.
4. Future researchers can explore innovative models, assess the long-term impact of partnerships on student outcomes, and identify best practices for supporting beginning teachers in diverse rural contexts.

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