

Leadership Practices and Public Relations Skills as Correlates of School Engagement in the Department of Education Partnerships Database System (DPDS) in Region XII

Dr. Sadam M. Musa 

Authors Information:

Sultan Kudarat State University, ACCESS
Campus, Tacurong City, Philippines

Correspondence:

sadamusa@sksu.edu.ph

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Abstract. School partnerships enhance public education through trust, collaboration, and active engagement, all of which are influenced by principals' leadership practices and public relations skills. This study examined the relationship between Principals' leadership practices, public relations skills, and school engagement through the Department of Education Partnership Database System (DPDS) in public secondary schools in Region XII. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 36 principals and 296 teachers via validated surveys and DPDS records and analyzed using means, standard deviations, Spearman's rho, and the Mann-Whitney U test. Findings revealed that both principals and teachers rated the extent of leadership practices and public relations skills as very high, with school engagement through DPDS also very high. Leadership practice dimensions were strongly interrelated but showed only a weak relationship with DPDS engagement, while public relations skills exhibited strong internal coherence with similarly weak links to engagement. Comparative analysis indicated no significant differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and public relations skills. The study highlights the need to strengthen instructional leadership, expand communication and stakeholder outreach, and actively engage partners to enhance institutional effectiveness, partnership quality, and collaborative school environments in Region XII.

Keywords: Department of Education Partnership Database System (DPDS); leadership practices; public relations skills; school engagement; school partnerships.

Introduction

School partnerships play a vital role in strengthening public education through shared governance, transparency, and resource mobilization, where school heads' leadership practices and public relations skills are crucial in fostering trust, collaboration, and effective engagement, especially in digital systems like the DPDS (Cuyegkeng, 2024). Globally, education systems continue to face challenges in achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes, with leadership identified as a key determinant of school effectiveness, although gaps remain in strategic alignment, instructional focus, communication, and sustainability of partnerships (Leithwood et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2024; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2021; Kujala et al., 2022). In the Philippine context, the DPDS serves as the official platform for partnership documentation, guided by national policies and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, yet its effectiveness depends heavily on leadership capacity and public relations competencies (DepEd, 2019; Cuyegkeng, 2024). In Region XII, variations in leadership practices contribute to differences in LGU and stakeholder engagement, affecting DPDS utilization and partnership outcomes (Maturan, 2025; Josol, 2025). Despite existing studies on leadership and partnerships, there remains limited research directly examining leadership practices and public relations skills as correlates of DPDS-based school engagement, particularly in relation to SDG 4. Hence, this study investigates how these variables influence DPDS engagement in Region XII to provide evidence for strengthening leadership practice, stakeholder participation, and sustainable school-community partnerships.

Research Questions

This study examined the relationship between leadership practices and public relations skills as correlates of school engagement in the DepEd Partnerships Database System (DPDS) in Region XII. It answered the following questions;

1. What is the extent of leadership practices exhibited by principals as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1. leading strategically;
 - 1.2. managing school operations and resources;
 - 1.3. focusing on teaching and learning;
 - 1.4. developing self and other; and
 - 1.5. building connections?
2. What is the extent of public relations skills exhibited by the principal as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 communication process;
 - 2.2 influence of communication;
 - 2.3 formation of the institution's image; and
 - 2.4 audience reached?
3. What is the level of school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 school/community learning center partner;
 - 2.2 partners' contribution;
 - 2.3 partnership agreement;
 - 2.4 partners sustainability; and
 - 2.5 partners' satisfaction and trust?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of leadership practices exhibited by the principal and the school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of public relations skills of the principal and the school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal?
6. Is there a significant difference between the perception of teachers and principals on the leadership practices and public relations skills of the principal?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the extent of principals' leadership practices and public relations skills and their relationship with school engagement in the Department of Education Partnerships Database System (DPDS) among large and very large public senior high schools in Region XII, focusing on leadership in strategy, operations, teaching and learning, professional development, and connections, as well as public relations in communication, influence, institutional image, and audience reach, and how these relate to partnership engagement in terms of partners, contributions, agreements, sustainability, and satisfaction and trust, based on the responses of principals and teachers during the data collection period.

Literature Review

Leadership Practices of the Principal

Recent literature highlights diverse areas of school leadership, including digital leadership, system leadership, and data-driven practices, yet limited studies examine their connection to educational systems such as the DepEd Partnerships Database System (DPDS). Grounded in the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), leadership is structured across five domains: leading strategically, managing operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. Research consistently shows that these practices significantly influence school climate, stakeholder engagement, and student outcomes, ranking second only to classroom teaching in impact (UNESCO, 2024). Effective leaders demonstrate clear vision, strong communication, collaboration, and people-centered approaches, fostering inclusive, high-performing school environments and sustainable partnerships.

Leading Strategically

Strategic leadership enables school heads to set direction, align resources, and sustain long-term goals. Studies show it strengthens stakeholder engagement, adaptability, and school effectiveness through planning, monitoring, and ethical decision-making (Nacionales, 2024; Bergh & Fairbank, 2024; Carvalho, 2021). It ensures that partnerships and school initiatives are aligned with institutional priorities and sustainability goals.

Managing School Operations and Resources

Effective operational management ensures efficiency, accountability, and equitable resource distribution. Research links strong resource management to improved teacher performance, school

outcomes, and organizational effectiveness (Aquino, 2021; Valenzuela & Buenvinida, 2021). Transparent budgeting, stakeholder involvement, and data-driven decisions enhance school climate and program implementation.

Focusing on Teaching and Learning

Instructional leadership directly impacts teaching quality and student achievement. Leaders who support curriculum implementation, teacher development, and data-informed instruction significantly improve learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2018). Collaboration, professional learning communities, and continuous improvement are key drivers of instructional success.

Developing Self and Others

This domain emphasizes continuous professional growth, mentoring, and capacity-building. Evidence shows that coaching, professional development, and collaborative learning improve teacher effectiveness, motivation, and student outcomes (Kraft et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Leaders who model learning foster a culture of sustained improvement and organizational resilience.

Building Connection

Building strong relationships with stakeholders, including parents, communities, and partners, enhances collaboration, trust, and resource mobilization. Research highlights that effective communication, networking, and formal partnership systems like DPDS strengthen school-community engagement and sustainability (Epstein, 2018; Daly et al., 2019). Trust and transparency are essential for maintaining long-term partnerships and improving school outcomes.

Public Relations (PR) Skills

Public relations skills are a vital component of effective school leadership, enabling strong stakeholder engagement, trust-building, and sustainable partnerships. Grounded in theories such as Excellence Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model, PR practices emphasize two-way communication, transparency, and inclusive engagement. Research shows that effective communication, audience targeting, and ethical messaging enhance collaboration, institutional credibility, and adoption of systems like DPDS. Overall, PR competencies extend beyond information sharing to relational practices that strengthen partnerships, stakeholder trust, and school effectiveness.

Communication Process

Effective communication ensures clarity, transparency, and stakeholder alignment. Studies show that accurate, adaptive, and well-structured communication fosters trust, improves collaboration, and supports informed decision-making (Kujala et al., 2022; Sutherland, 2017; Deegan, 2019). Active listening and audience-centered approaches further enhance engagement and organizational effectiveness.

Influence of Communication

Communication serves as a tool for motivating and influencing stakeholders. Research indicates that clear and strategic communication improves teacher performance, strengthens commitment, and enhances school climate (Bush, 2020; Nasution & Sri, 2025). Digital communication tools further amplify coordination, participation, and collaboration within the school community.

Formation of the Institution's Image

PR skills shape a school's public image by promoting transparency, ethical communication, and recognition of achievements. Studies highlight that consistent messaging and proactive engagement strengthen institutional credibility, stakeholder trust, and community support (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ungar & Shamir-Inbal, 2022).

Audience Reached

Reaching diverse stakeholders through inclusive and multi-channel communication is essential for engagement and accountability. Research shows that digital platforms, feedback mechanisms, and targeted outreach improve participation, trust, and program effectiveness (Decir & Paglinawan, 2024; Saraih et al., 2022).

Level of School Engagement via DPDS by the Principal

School engagement through the DepEd Partnerships Database System (DPDS) reflects how effectively principals mobilize and sustain partnerships across five dimensions: partners, contributions, agreements, sustainability, and satisfaction and trust. As a centralized platform, DPDS ensures transparency,

accountability, and alignment of partnerships with school goals, enabling systematic monitoring and improved stakeholder involvement (DepEd Misamis Oriental/OU-LAPP 645, 2019; ICTS User Support/DepEd, 2022).

School and Community Learning Center Partners

Engagement begins with activating diverse partners such as parents, LGUs, NGOs, and private organizations through structured programs like Brigada Eskwela and Adopt-a-School. Effective schools maintain updated partner profiles, involve stakeholders in planning and implementation, and apply processes such as needs assessment and monitoring. Strong leadership, communication, and formalized engagement systems enhance collaboration, resource generation, and shared responsibility (DepEd, 2019; Nacionales, 2024; Rosales & Alzola, 2025).

Partners' Contributions

This dimension emphasizes mobilizing and documenting financial, in-kind, and service contributions through DPDS. Sustainable impact requires integrating resources into long-term development plans rather than relying on short-term donations. Transparency, inclusive decision-making, and formal documentation strengthen accountability, equitable resource allocation, and stakeholder trust (Mendoza, 2020; Sarmiento & Oracion, 2019; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2021; UNICEF, 2025).

Partnership Agreements

Formal agreements such as MOAs and MOUs serve as the legal and operational backbone of partnerships by defining roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms. These agreements protect continuity despite leadership or political changes, while DPDS supports tracking compliance, renewal, and alignment with governance standards (DepEd, 2019; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Buso et al., 2025).

Partners' Sustainability

Sustainability requires long-term, system-oriented partnerships supported by shared goals, continuous communication, monitoring, and diversified funding. Leadership, teacher involvement, and institutional routines embed partnerships into school operations, while evaluation systems, policy alignment, and environmental and risk-preparedness initiatives strengthen long-term impact and resilience (UNESCO, 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Villanueva, 2021; UNICEF, 2021).

Partners' Satisfaction and Trust

Satisfaction and trust are built through transparent communication, consistent delivery, recognition of contributions, and inclusive decision-making. DPDS enhances visibility and accountability, while structured feedback, equitable partnership design, and outcome-based reporting reinforce stakeholder confidence. Strong relational trust sustains collaboration and improves educational outcomes (Brookings, 2025; Gross et al., 2015; DepEd, 2025; Oakes et al., 2023).

Leadership Practices and School Engagement

Leadership practices are central to school functioning and stakeholder engagement, viewed not only as managerial tasks but as relational, influence-driven processes that shape school–community connections. Effective leaders demonstrate strategic direction, resource management, instructional support, and relationship-building to sustain partnerships and improve outcomes. Research shows that leadership fosters stakeholder participation when it promotes collaboration and shared decision-making, contributing to supportive conditions for teacher involvement and collective action (Leithwood et al., 2020). It is also more strongly linked to internal processes, such as teacher collaboration and instructional improvement, than to external engagement (Murphy & Louis, 2018). In partnership contexts, leadership practices enhance sustainability when characterized by openness, transparency, and adaptability, which build trust and participation among stakeholders (Harris et al., 2022). However, leadership alone is insufficient to ensure high engagement in digital systems, as factors such as communication, system usability, and stakeholder readiness also play significant roles.

Public Relations Skills and School Engagement

Public relations skills are increasingly recognized as essential competencies for school leaders, particularly in managing relationships with diverse stakeholders. These include effective communication, audience engagement, image building, and influencing perceptions, all of which help bridge the gap between schools and their communities. Research shows that communication competence enhances stakeholder trust, participation, and collaboration, with transparent and consistent communication strengthening relationships and supporting organizational goals (Kujala et al., 2022). It also plays a key role in aligning stakeholder

expectations and fostering cooperation (Sutherland, 2017). In school contexts, strong public relations practices are associated with increased parental involvement and stronger community partnerships, as open and responsive communication promotes higher levels of engagement (Epstein, 2018). However, communication alone does not guarantee strong engagement outcomes, especially when structural or technological challenges are present.

Leadership, Communication, and School Engagement

The integration of digital systems such as the Department of Education Partnerships Database System (DPDS) has added new dimensions to school engagement, where participation depends not only on leadership and communication but also on users' perceptions of system usefulness and ease of use, consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model. Studies show that leadership practices and communication strategies shape stakeholder perceptions and readiness, thereby influencing technology adoption (Teo et al., 2019). Leaders who provide clear guidance, training, and support are more likely to encourage system use, while effective communication helps stakeholders understand the system's value and increases participation. However, engagement in digital systems often remains moderate or uneven due to contextual factors such as limited training, varying digital competence, and inconsistent communication practices. This suggests that leadership and communication must work together to achieve effective and sustained digital engagement.

Perception Between Principals and Teachers

Differences in perception between school heads and teachers are common and stem from their distinct roles and experiences, with school heads viewing leadership from a strategic and administrative lens while teachers experience it in daily practice. Research indicates that these gaps can be minimized through effective communication and collaborative practices, as shared decision-making and open dialogue promote greater alignment (Harris et al., 2022). Active teacher involvement in planning and implementation also reduces perceptual differences (Fisher, 2021). Nevertheless, some variation in perception is expected due to the complexity of school leadership. In digital systems like DPDS, such differences may further result from unequal access, varying levels of involvement, and differing familiarity with the system.

Digital school systems adoption.

Recent studies emphasized that the adoption of digital school systems improves administrative efficiency, stakeholder communication, data management, and institutional decision-making in educational settings. Grepon et al. (2022) found that e-school systems enhanced records management and operational efficiency in Philippine educational institutions through centralized digital processes. Similarly, Sosa-Díaz et al. (2022) highlighted that effective digital integration in schools depends on leadership, strategic planning, and stakeholder collaboration. More recent studies showed that integrated school management systems strengthen accessibility, coordination, and governance in schools (Grepon et al., 2025), while digital governance initiatives in Philippine school divisions improved transparency and operational effectiveness despite infrastructure and digital literacy challenges (Dacer et al., 2025). Moreover, the implementation of learning management systems was associated with stronger school leadership practices and improved organizational processes in secondary schools (Malabanan, 2025).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between principals' leadership practices, public relations skills, and school engagement through the Department of Education Partnership Database System (DPDS). The descriptive component was used to determine the extent of leadership practices, public relations skills, and school engagement demonstrated by school heads in public senior high schools in Region XII. Meanwhile, the correlational component examined the degree of relationship among the identified variables without manipulating them. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically investigate naturally occurring relationships among variables within the educational setting. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive-correlational research is effective in describing existing conditions and exploring relationships among variables in a real-world context.

Sampling Design

The study utilized complete enumeration for principal respondents and stratified random sampling for teacher respondents. Complete enumeration was applied because all qualified principals assigned to large and very large public senior high schools in Region XII were included in the study. For teachers, stratified

random sampling ensured proportional representation across the eight school divisions in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region. The sample size for teacher respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, resulting in 296 teacher respondents from a population of 1,794 teachers. In addition, 36 principals participated in the study through complete enumeration. This sampling procedure ensured representativeness and minimized sampling bias.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in public senior high schools classified as large and very large within the SOCCSKSARGEN Region (Region XII), Philippines. The region comprises the divisions of Cotabato, General Santos City, Kidapawan City, Koronadal City, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Tacurong City. The locale was selected because it provided diverse educational environments, including urban and rural settings, which allowed a broader examination of leadership practices, public relations skills, and school engagement across varying school contexts.

Research Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 36 school principals and 296 senior high school teachers from identified large and very large public senior high schools in Region XII. Principal respondents occupied plantilla positions and were officially assigned as school heads, while teacher respondents held regular and permanent teaching positions under the supervision of the participating principals. The inclusion of both principals and teachers enabled a comprehensive assessment of leadership practices and public relations skills from both self-evaluation and subordinate perspectives. Teachers were included because they directly interacted with school heads and possessed firsthand observations regarding leadership behaviors and school engagement practices.

Research Instrument

The study utilized structured survey questionnaires composed of three major components: leadership practices, public relations skills, and school engagement. The leadership practices instrument was adapted from DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020, as cited by Dellomas and Deri (2022), covering domains such as leading strategically, managing school operations, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. The public relations skills and school engagement instruments were researcher-developed based on related literature and the Department of Education Partnership Database System (DPDS). These instruments measured communication processes, institutional image formation, audience reach, partnership contributions, sustainability, and stakeholder satisfaction. To establish content validity, the instruments underwent expert validation using the ABC Content Validation Framework proposed by Yusoff (2019), focusing on adequacy, believability, and clarity. Reliability testing was conducted through pilot testing using Cronbach's alpha to determine internal consistency.

Data-Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Graduate School Dean and obtained permission from the Department of Education Region XII and the respective School Division Offices. After approval, formal communication letters were sent to participating school heads. The researcher ensured adherence to ethical standards throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality of responses. Informed consent was secured before administering the questionnaires. Designated school coordinators assisted in distributing and retrieving the research instruments. After retrieval, the responses were organized, encoded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the extent of leadership practices exhibited by principals as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of: leading strategically; managing school operations and resources; focusing on teaching and learning; developing self and others; and building connections?

Table 1. Extent of Leadership Practices of Principals in terms of Leading Strategically

Leading Strategically	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 School head communicates the DepEd vision, mission, and core values to the wider school community to ensure shared understanding and alignment of school policies, programs projects and activities.	4.75	0.44	Very High Extent	4.76	0.49	Very High Extent
2 School head develops and implements with the planning team school plans aligned with institutional goals and policies.	4.58	0.55	Very High Extent	4.75	0.47	Very High Extent
3 School head undertakes policy implementation and review in the school to ensure that operations are consistent with national and local laws, regulations and issuances.	4.61	0.60	Very High Extent	4.73	0.51	Very High Extent
4 School head utilizes relevant research findings from reliable sources in facilitating data-driven and evidence-based innovations to improve school performance.	4.50	0.70	Very High Extent	4.68	0.56	Very High Extent
5 School head implements programs in the school that support the development of learners.	4.72	0.51	Very High Extent	4.74	0.52	Very High Extent
6 School head utilizes learner voice, such as feelings, views and/or opinions to inform policy development and decision-making towards school improvement.	4.36	0.99	Very High Extent	4.68	0.62	Very High Extent
7 School head utilizes available monitoring and evaluation processes and tools to promote learner achievement.	4.67	0.53	Very High Extent	4.72	0.51	Very High Extent
Section Mean	4.60	0.65	Very High Extent	4.72	0.53	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high level of strategic leadership, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.60 (SD = 0.65) for school heads and 4.72 (SD = 0.53) for teachers, indicating strong alignment of school goals with national education policies and a shared commitment to institutional objectives. Overall, principals exhibit effective leadership through clear goal setting, systematic planning, and continuous monitoring, which strengthen accountability and support school improvement. However, there is still a need to enhance participatory planning, stakeholder involvement, and learner input to improve collaboration and adaptability. These findings align with studies by Leithwood et al. (2020) and Robinson et al. (2018), which highlight the importance of vision-driven and evidence-based leadership in improving school outcomes. Likewise, Hallinger and Kovačević (2019) and Harris and Jones (2020) emphasize that systematic planning and inclusive decision-making promote effective and sustainable school improvement, although stronger strategic foresight remains necessary.

Table 2. Extent of Leadership Practices of Principals in terms of Managing School Operations and Resources

Managing School Operation and Resources	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 School head utilizes school data and information using technology, including ICT, to ensure efficient and effective school operations.	4.69	0.52	Very High Extent	4.72	0.52	Very High Extent
2 School head manages finances adhering to policies, guidelines, and issuances in allocation, procurement, disbursement, and liquidation aligned with the school plan.	4.56	0.65	Very High Extent	4.71	0.52	Very High Extent
3 School head oversees school facilities and equipment in adherence to policies, guidelines and issuances on acquisition, recording, utilization, repair and maintenance, storage and disposal.	4.56	0.65	Very High Extent	4.71	0.55	Very High Extent
4 School head supervises staffing such as teaching load distribution	4.58	0.60	Very High Extent	4.72	0.54	Very High Extent

	and grade level and subject area assignment in adherence to laws, policies, guidelines and issuances based on the needs of the school.						
5	School head ensures school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency to ensure continuous delivery of instruction.	4.72	0.51	Very High Extent	4.75	0.49	Very High Extent
6	School heads manage emerging opportunities and challenges to encourage equality and equity in addressing the needs of learners, school personnel and other stakeholders.	4.53	0.74	Very High Extent	4.73	0.52	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.61	0.62	Very High Extent	4.72	0.53	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high level of effectiveness in managing school operations and resources ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.62$; $M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.53$), indicating strong competence in ensuring efficient school functioning through effective oversight of systems, financial management, staffing, safety, and data utilization. While these practices support smooth program implementation and optimal use of resources, the findings also highlight the need to further improve equity in resource distribution, infrastructure management, and transparency to strengthen accountability and inclusivity. These results are consistent with studies by Aquino (2021), Valenzuela and Buenvinida (2021), Caldwell (2017), Soriano and Mendez (2018), and Marquez et al. (2021), which collectively emphasize that effective, transparent, and participatory resource management enhances teacher performance, equity, school climate, and overall institutional effectiveness.

Table 3. Extent of Leadership Practices of Principals in terms of Focus on Teaching and Learning

Focus on Teaching and Learning		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	School head assists teachers in the review, contextualization and implementation of learning standards to make the curriculum relevant for learners.	4.50	0.65	Very High Extent	4.72	0.55	Very High Extent
2	School head provides technical assistance to teachers on teaching standards and pedagogies within and across learning areas to improve their teaching practice.	4.58	0.65	Very High Extent	4.71	0.56	Very High Extent
3	School head uses validated feedback obtained from learners, parents and other stakeholders to help teachers improve their performance.	4.50	0.70	Very High Extent	4.67	0.60	Very High Extent
4	School head utilizes learning outcomes in developing data-based interventions to maintain learner achievement and attain other performance indicators.	4.58	0.65	Very High Extent	4.72	0.53	Very High Extent
5	School head provides technical assistance to teachers in using learner assessment tools, strategies and results consistent with curriculum requirements to ensure accountability in achieving higher learning outcomes.	4.61	0.60	Very High Extent	4.73	0.53	Very High Extent
6	School head manages a learner-friendly, inclusive and healthy learning environment.	4.61	0.77	Very High Extent	4.69	0.61	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.56	0.67	Very High Extent	4.71	0.56	Very High Extent

The results indicate that principals demonstrate a very high extent of leadership practices focused on teaching and learning ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.67$; $M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.56$), showing strong emphasis on instructional leadership through curriculum support, pedagogical improvement, and learner-centered practices. This suggests that school leaders effectively enhance teaching and learning by promoting curriculum contextualization, assessment literacy, and teacher professional development, which encourage reflective practice, data-informed instruction, and collaboration among educators, ultimately improving student

learning outcomes. However, the findings also point to the need for strengthening participatory feedback systems involving learners, parents, and other stakeholders to further support shared accountability and continuous instructional improvement. These results align with studies by Leithwood et al. (2020) and Robinson et al. (2018), which highlight the importance of instructional leadership and teacher support in improving student achievement, as well as Muhammad (2023), Mestry (2017), Shava and Heystek (2018), and Nguyen et al. (2023), which collectively emphasize that strong instructional leadership, continuous professional development, and collaborative learning environments enhance teaching quality and learner outcomes.

Table 4. Extent of Leadership Practices of Principals in terms of Developing Self and Others

Developing Self and Others	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 School head set personal and professional development goals based on self-assessment aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads.	4.64	0.64	Very High Extent	4.76	0.54	Very High Extent
2 School head applies professional reflection and learning to improve one's practice.	4.56	0.65	Very High Extent	4.78	0.48	Very High Extent
3 School heads participate in professional networks to upgrade knowledge and skills and to enhance practice.	4.64	0.59	Very High Extent	4.74	0.53	Very High Extent
4 School head implements the performance management system with a team to support the career advancement of school personnel, and to improve office performance.	4.61	0.55	Very High Extent	4.74	0.50	Very High Extent
5 School head implements professional development initiatives to enhance strengths and address performance gaps among school personnel.	4.58	0.55	Very High Extent	4.73	0.51	Very High Extent
6 School head provides opportunities to individuals and teams in performing leadership roles and responsibilities.	4.58	0.60	Very High Extent	4.73	0.53	Very High Extent
Section Mean	4.60	0.59	Very High Extent	4.75	0.51	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high extent of leadership practices in developing self and others ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.59$; $M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.51$), indicating strong commitment to professional growth, reflective practice, and capacity building among school personnel. This suggests that school leaders effectively cultivate a professional learning culture through goal setting, participation in professional networks, performance management, and support for staff development, fostering continuous improvement and collaborative growth. However, the findings also indicate the need to further strengthen structured mentoring programs and expand opportunities for distributed leadership to enhance succession planning and collective school competence. These results are supported by Le et al. (2022), who emphasized that transformational leadership promotes teacher growth through vision-setting and modeling best practices, and by Robinson et al. (2018), who highlighted the importance of coaching and professional development in improving instructional quality. Similarly, Muhammad (2023), Naidoo and Mestry (2019), Dellomas et al. (2022), Guo et al. (2023), Villanueva (2022), and Hoque (2020) collectively affirm that sustained professional development, performance management, mentoring, and strong leadership practices significantly enhance teacher performance and overall school effectiveness.

Table 5. Extent of Leadership Practices of Principals in terms of Building Connections

Building Connections	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 School head builds constructive relationships with authorities, colleagues, parents and other stakeholders to foster an enabling and supportive environment for learners.	4.58	0.60	Very High Extent	4.72	0.55	Very High Extent
2 School head manages school organizations, such as learner organizations, faculty clubs and parent-teacher associations, by applying relevant policies and guidelines to support the attainment of institutional goals.	4.44	0.65	Very High Extent	4.74	0.52	Very High Extent

3	School head exhibits inclusive practices, such as gender sensitivity, physical and mental health awareness and culture responsiveness, to foster awareness, acceptance and respect.	4.61	0.60	Very High Extent	4.75	0.49	Very High Extent
4	School head communicates effectively in speaking and writing to teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders, through positive use of communication platforms, to facilitate information sharing, collaboration and support.	4.56	0.69	Very High Extent	4.74	0.54	Very High Extent
5	School head implements professional development initiatives to enhance strengths and address performance gaps among school personnel.	4.67	0.53	Very High Extent	4.74	0.51	Very High Extent
6	School head provides opportunities to individuals and teams in performing leadership roles and responsibilities.	4.50	0.65	Very High Extent	4.68	0.57	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.56	0.62	Very High Extent	4.73	0.53	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high extent of leadership in building connections ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.62$; $M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.53$), indicating strong and consistent efforts to establish collaborative relationships with teachers, learners, parents, and other stakeholders. This reflects their ability to foster a supportive and inclusive school environment where collaboration, participation, and shared responsibility are actively promoted. While the findings highlight strong stakeholder engagement, they also suggest that expanding shared leadership opportunities and increasing participation in decision-making may further strengthen collaboration and empower school personnel. These results are supported by Nacionales (2024), who emphasized the importance of strong stakeholder networks in creating supportive school environments, and by Rosales and Alzola (2025), who highlighted that inclusive leadership practices enhance school culture and relationships. Similarly, Aquino et al. (2021) found that stakeholder engagement improves teacher performance and school cohesion, while Hafeez et al. (2022) emphasized that shared leadership and collaboration strengthen trust, teamwork, and overall school performance.

Table 6. Summary of Leadership Practices of the Principals

Indicators		Principal			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Leading Strategically	4.60	0.65	Very High Extent	4.72	0.53	Very High Extent
2	Managing School Operation and Resources	4.61	0.62	Very High Extent	4.72	0.53	Very High Extent
3	Focus on Teaching and Learning	4.56	0.67	Very High Extent	4.71	0.56	Very High Extent
4	Developing Self and Others	4.60	0.59	Very High Extent	4.75	0.51	Very High Extent
5	Building Connections	4.56	0.62	Very High Extent	4.73	0.53	Very High Extent
Grand Mean		4.59	0.63	Very High Extent	4.73	0.53	Very High Extent

The findings show that principals exhibit overall leadership practices to a very high extent, as reflected in the grand mean scores of 4.59 ($SD = 0.63$) for principals and 4.73 ($SD = 0.53$) for teachers, indicating strong and consistent performance across strategic leadership, operational management, instructional support, professional development, and stakeholder engagement. This suggests that school leaders apply a balanced leadership approach that integrates efficient administration with sustained support for teacher development and collaboration, contributing to effective school operations and continuous improvement. However, the slightly lower (though still very high) ratings in instructional leadership and stakeholder engagement indicate the need to further enhance classroom-level support and strengthen partnerships with external stakeholders to improve teaching quality and school-community collaboration. These results are supported by Dellomas et al. (2022), who emphasized strong alignment of school leadership practices with professional standards, and by Le et al. (2022), who highlighted that transformational leadership enhances teacher motivation and school culture through clear direction and role modeling. Similarly, Guo et al. (2023), Kraft et al. (2018), and Villanueva (2022) collectively emphasize that sustained professional development, instructional coaching, and integrated leadership practices significantly improve teacher competence, instructional quality, and overall school effectiveness. Overall, the findings imply that while principals are highly effective in administrative and developmental roles, further refinement is needed to strengthen their direct influence on instruction and collaborative school improvement efforts.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of public relations skills exhibited by the principal as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of: communication process; influence of communication; formation of the institution's image; and audience reached

Table 7. Extent of Public Relations Skills of the Principals in terms of the Communication Process

Communication Process		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school head communicates school goals, policies, and procedures to all stakeholders.	4.64	0.53	Very High Extent	4.73	0.51	Very High Extent
2	The school head ensures that all information communicated to teachers, parents, and staff is accurate, complete, and systematically verified.	4.56	0.69	Very High Extent	4.72	0.51	Very High Extent
3	The school head selects and utilizes appropriate communication channels (e.g., meetings, memos, online platforms) to ensure the timely delivery of information.	4.56	0.69	Very High Extent	4.69	0.56	Very High Extent
4	The school head listens actively and responds appropriately to stakeholders' concerns.	4.56	0.73	Very High Extent	4.68	0.57	Very High Extent
5	The school head encourages open and two-way communication within the school community.	4.53	0.73	Very High Extent	4.70	0.56	Very High Extent
6	The school head demonstrates adaptability in communication by adjusting his/her style according to the audience and contextual demands (e.g., students, teachers, parents, and external partners).	4.56	0.73	Very High Extent	4.69	0.57	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.56	0.69	Very High Extent	4.70	0.55	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high extent of public relations skills in the communication process, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.56 (SD = 0.69) for principals and 4.70 (SD = 0.55) for teachers, indicating strong and consistent communication practices within the school community. This suggests that principals effectively promote transparency, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement by ensuring accurate information sharing, using appropriate communication channels, and adapting messages to different audiences. These practices help build trust, strengthen relationships, and support a shared understanding of school goals and policies. However, enhancing active listening and more flexible communication approaches may further improve stakeholder participation and responsiveness. These findings are supported by Kujala et al. (2022), who emphasized that effective communication fosters trust and stakeholder engagement, and by Sutherland (2017), who noted that transparency in communication strengthens organizational credibility. Similarly, Deegan (2019), Proff et al. (2025), Houry et al. (2019), and Fisher (2021) collectively highlight that effective, transparent, and adaptive communication systems enhance coordination, trust, and stakeholder participation in organizations.

Table 8. Extent of Public Relations Skills of Principal in terms of Influence of Communication

Influence of Communication		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school head communication skills helps build trust between the school and stakeholders.	4.64	0.54	Very High Extent	4.70	0.54	Very High Extent
2	The school head uses communication to motivate teachers, staff, and students toward school goals.	4.64	0.54	Very High Extent	4.71	0.54	Very High Extent
3	The school head handles sensitive issues in a manner that reduces misunderstanding and conflict.	4.64	0.59	Very High Extent	4.71	0.53	Very High Extent
4	The school head communication skills promotes a positive and collaborative school climate.	4.56	0.73	Very High Extent	4.69	0.57	Very High Extent
5	The school head uses clear and persuasive communication to	4.61	0.55	Very High Extent	4.69	0.55	Very High Extent

influence stakeholder support (e.g., parents, LGUs, and community partners).

Section Mean	4.62	0.60	Very High Extent	4.70	0.54	Very High Extent
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The results indicate that principals demonstrate a very high extent of leadership in the influence of communication, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.62 (SD = 0.60) for school heads and 4.70 (SD = 0.54) for teachers, showing strong communication competence that goes beyond information sharing to shaping attitudes, behaviors, and commitment among stakeholders. This suggests that principals effectively use communication to resolve conflicts, motivate school personnel, and align stakeholders toward shared goals, thereby strengthening organizational cohesion and collaboration. However, there is still room to further enhance participatory dialogue and collaborative engagement to deepen trust and shared responsibility within the school community. These findings are supported by Bush (2020), who emphasized the critical role of communication in effective educational leadership and goal attainment, and by Nasution and Sri (2025), who found that leadership communication positively influences school climate, teacher motivation, and performance. Similarly, Neiroukh et al. (2024) highlighted that communication competence, including digital communication, improves coordination and engagement, while Redondo-Sama et al. (2025) emphasized that effective communication fosters collaboration and shared decision-making in learning communities.

Table 9. Extent of Public Relations Skills of the Principals in terms of Formation of the Institution's Image

Formation of the Institution's Image		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school head highlights school achievements, programs, and success stories to the public.	4.56	0.55	Very High Extent	4.75	0.50	Very High Extent
2	The school head effectively uses communication in public and community events to motivate teachers, staff, and students toward the attainment of school goals.	4.58	0.55	Very High Extent	4.76	0.50	Very High Extent
3	The school head maintains ethical standards when communicating on behalf of the school.	4.67	0.53	Very High Extent	4.76	0.52	Very High Extent
4	The school head addresses issues or misinformation promptly and accurately to protect the school's reputation.	4.64	0.59	Very High Extent	4.78	0.47	Very High Extent
5	The school head develops strategies that promote credible and trustworthy institutional image.	4.64	0.54	Very High Extent	4.76	0.48	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.62	0.55	Very High Extent	4.76	0.49	Very High Extent

The results show that principals demonstrate a very high extent of public relations skills in forming the institution's image, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.62 (SD = 0.55) for school heads and 4.76 (SD = 0.49) for teachers, indicating consistent efforts to project a credible, professional, and trustworthy school identity. This suggests that principals effectively strengthen institutional reputation through ethical communication, timely responses to concerns, and strategies that enhance public trust. These practices build confidence among teachers, students, parents, and the wider community, thereby sustaining support and strengthening partnerships. The findings are supported by Leithwood et al. (2020), who emphasized that leadership communication significantly shapes stakeholder perceptions and institutional reputation, and by Herbst (2021), who highlighted that strategic engagement and consistent communication improve school image and community partnerships. Similarly, Ungar and Shamir-Inbal (2022) noted that proactive and transparent communication helps maintain credibility and sustain public trust in educational institutions.

Table 10. Extent of Public Relations Skills of the Principals in terms of Audience Reached

Audience Reached		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school head consistently communicates effectively with all major school stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and community leaders).	4.56	0.60	Very High Extent	4.68	0.54	Very High Extent

2	The school head ensures that communication materials are accessible and understandable to diverse groups.	4.58	0.55	Very High Extent	4.70	0.51	Very High Extent
3	The school head utilizes digital platforms (social media, group chats, websites) to reach a wider audience.	4.61	0.55	Very High Extent	4.66	0.57	Very High Extent
4	The school head systematically monitors stakeholders' receipt and understanding of shared information through formal feedback mechanisms.	4.61	0.55	Very High Extent	4.66	0.57	Very High Extent
5	The school head provides communication opportunities for stakeholders who have limited access to digital tools.	4.56	0.55	Very High Extent	4.65	0.56	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.58	0.56	Very High Extent	4.67	0.55	Very High Extent

The results indicate that principals demonstrate a very high extent of public relations skills in terms of audience reach, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.58 (SD = 0.56) for principals and 4.67 (SD = 0.55) for teachers, suggesting that school leaders effectively engage a wide range of stakeholders through accessible, inclusive, and well-coordinated communication. This implies that principals utilize multiple communication channels, monitor feedback, and ensure clarity in disseminating information, thereby promoting transparency, trust, and active participation in school programs and initiatives. These practices strengthen the connection between the school and its stakeholders and support more collaborative school engagement. The findings are supported by Decir and Paglinawan (2024), who found that effective communication enhances stakeholder engagement in school improvement efforts, and by Sariah et al. (2022), who emphasized that the use of digital platforms improves information dissemination and organizational coordination. Similarly, Aquino (2025) highlighted that inclusive communication practices foster trust, transparency, and stronger relationships within the school community.

Table 11. Summary of Public Relations Skills as Exhibited by Principals

Domain		Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Communication Process	4.56	0.69	Very High Extent	4.70	0.55	Very High Extent
2	Influence of Communication	4.62	0.60	Very High Extent	4.70	0.54	Very High Extent
3	Formations of the Institution's Image	4.62	0.55	Very High Extent	4.76	0.49	Very High Extent
4	Audience Reached	4.58	0.56	Very High Extent	4.67	0.55	Very High Extent
Grand Mean		4.59	0.61	Very High Extent	4.71	0.54	Very High Extent

The findings reveal that principals demonstrate public relations skills to a very high extent, with a grand mean of 4.59 (SD = 0.61) for principals and 4.71 (SD = 0.54) for teachers, indicating consistent and effective communication practices within the school community. This suggests that principals serve as strong communicators and image builders who actively influence stakeholder perceptions, strengthen institutional identity, and foster trust, credibility, and engagement. However, the slightly lower ratings in the communication process and audience reach indicate that there is still room to improve inclusivity and expand stakeholder engagement to ensure broader participation in school initiatives. This implies that while public relations practices are highly effective, continuous refinement is needed to make communication more accessible and participatory across all stakeholder groups. Teachers tended to rate these skills slightly higher than principals, particularly in institutional image building, while principals identified influence of communication and institutional image as their strongest areas, with all domains still rated at a very high level. These findings are supported by Leithwood et al. (2020), who emphasized that school leadership significantly shapes stakeholder perceptions and institutional reputation through consistent communication of goals and achievements, thereby strengthening trust and reinforcing a positive school image.

Research Question 3: What is the level of school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal as assessed by themselves and teachers in terms of: school/community learning center partner; partners' contribution; partnership agreement; partners sustainability; and partners' satisfaction and trust?

Table 12. Level of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by the Principals in terms of School/Community Learning Center Partners

	School/Community Learning Center Partners	Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school maintains a sufficient number of external partners whose support meets the school's program needs.	4.62	0.56	Very High	4.62	0.56	Very High
2	The public and private sectors consistently provide meaningful support to the school.	4.65	0.56	Very High	4.65	0.56	Very High
3	Public/Private sectors partners (e.g., local government units, national agencies) get involved in school programs.	4.65	0.60	Very High	4.65	0.60	Very High
4	"The Very High Extent of engagement and collaboration with civil society organizations (e.g., NGOs, community groups) is manifested in school programs.	4.67	0.55	Very High	4.68	0.55	Very High
5	The level of support from international organizations and other external partners is adequate for the school's needs.	4.60	0.62	Very High	4.61	0.63	Very High
Section Mean		4.64	0.50	Very High	4.64	0.58	Very High

The results indicate that school engagement through the DepEd Partnerships Database System (DPDS) in terms of partnership agreements is demonstrated to a very high extent, as reflected in identical section means of 4.64 (SD = 0.50) for principals and 4.64 (SD = 0.58) for teachers, suggesting strong and consistent implementation of formal collaborations with external stakeholders. This implies that principals actively establish, manage, and monitor partnership agreements to support school programs, ensure accountability, and sustain collaborative efforts that enhance institutional outcomes. Through these formalized arrangements, school leaders strengthen shared responsibility, optimize external support, and improve program implementation, although expanding the number and scope of agreements may further enhance resource access and institutional support systems. These findings are supported by Epstein (2018), who emphasized that structured school–family–community partnerships contribute significantly to school improvement when systematically implemented, by principals (2023), who highlighted that effective partnerships require active monitoring and implementation to achieve meaningful outcomes, and by Qaralleh (2021), who noted that expanding formal partnerships increases access to resources and strengthens community engagement in schools.

Table 13. Level of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by the Principals in terms of Partners' Contributions

	Partners' Contributions	Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	The financial support received from partners has been substantial to the operations of the school.	4.61	0.61	Very High	4.63	0.61	Very High
2	The level of financial support provided by partners to the school is sufficient to the needs of the school.	4.61	0.64	Very High	4.62	0.65	Very High
3	The Very High Extent of equipment or technology contributions received from partners is visible and usable.	4.60	0.64	Very High	4.59	0.65	Very High
4	The level of facilities or infrastructure assistance provided by partners is being utilized by the school.	4.64	0.59	Very High	4.65	0.59	Very High
5	The Very High Extent of partners' contributions in the form of volunteer services, training, or development support is substantial.	4.65	0.60	Very High	4.66	0.60	Very High
Section Mean		4.62	0.51	Very High	4.63	0.62	Very High

The results show that school engagement through DPDS in terms of partners' contributions is at a very high extent, with mean scores of 4.62 (SD = 0.51) for principals and 4.63 (SD = 0.62) for teachers, indicating strong mobilization of external support for school programs and operations. This suggests that school leaders effectively harness financial, material, and human resources from partners, ensuring their

proper utilization through collaboration, transparency, and active engagement, which strengthens program implementation and sustains school–community partnerships. However, there remains an opportunity to further optimize contributions, particularly in technology and equipment support, to enhance operational efficiency. These findings are supported by Kakungulu (2024), who emphasized that meaningful engagement with community partners improves educational outcomes beyond financial assistance, and by Gross et al. (2015), who noted that partnerships are most effective when stakeholders are actively involved in volunteer work, training, and program development. Similarly, Epstein and Sheldon (2016) highlighted that partnership impact on student achievement depends on active participation rather than formal agreements alone, while Celaje (2025) emphasized that collaboration with community organizations strengthens equity, inclusion, and educational quality through shared initiatives and volunteer engagement.

Table 14. Level of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by the Principals in Terms of Partnership Agreements

Partnership Agreements	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 The school entered into several formal partnership agreements this year	4.59	0.63	Very High	4.61	0.62	Very High
2 The signed partnership agreements have been fully completed to a satisfactory Very High Extent.	4.62	0.61	Very High	4.63	0.61	Very High
3 The ongoing implementation of signed partnership agreements is satisfactory.	4.65	0.60	Very High	4.67	0.59	Very High
4 The degree to which pending agreements are actively being processed or followed up.	4.63	0.61	Very High	4.62	0.62	Very High
5 The partnership agreements are effective in contributing to the implementation of school programs.	4.65	0.59	Very High	4.66	0.58	Very High
Section Mean	4.63	0.50	Very High	4.64	0.60	Very High

The results indicate that school engagement through DPDS in terms of partnership agreements is at a very high extent, as shown by the mean scores of 4.63 (SD = 0.50) for principals and 4.64 (SD = 0.60) for teachers, suggesting that principals effectively establish and manage formal partnerships to support school programs and sustain external assistance. This implies that school leaders ensure that agreements with external stakeholders are properly implemented and monitored, thereby strengthening program delivery and maintaining long-term collaboration. While this reflects strong partnership management, it also suggests room for further expansion of formal agreements to enhance resource access and community involvement. These findings are supported by Epstein (2018), who emphasized the importance of structured school family community partnerships in improving school outcomes, and by Hands (2023), who noted that partnerships are most effective when actively implemented and monitored. Similarly, Qaralleh (2021), Ngobeni (2024), and Gross et al. (2015) highlight that systematic management, expansion of partnerships, and formal agreements strengthen accountability, shared responsibility, and the effectiveness of schoolcommunity collaboration.

Table 15. Level of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by the Principals in terms of Partners' Sustainability

Partners' Sustainability	Principals			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1 The school's active partnerships are sustained for an adequate period of time.	4.69	0.56	Very High	4.70	0.56	Very High
2 The level of continuity in partner support over the years.	4.62	0.59	Very High	4.63	0.58	Very High
3 The Very High Extent to which partners maintain long-term engagement with school programs.	4.65	0.59	Very High	4.66	0.58	Very High
4 The degree of consistency in contributions or support from partners over time.	4.65	0.60	Very High	4.67	0.58	Very High
5 The overall sustainability of partnerships in supporting school initiatives.	4.63	0.61	Very High	4.64	0.61	Very High
Section Mean	4.65	0.48	Very High	4.66	0.58	Very High

The results show that school engagement via DPDS in terms of partners' sustainability is at a very high extent, as reflected in the mean scores of 4.65 (SD = 0.48) for principals and 4.66 (SD = 0.58) for teachers, indicating that principals effectively sustain long-term partnerships that support school programs and initiatives. This suggests that school leaders are successful in maintaining stable and continuing collaborative relationships through consistent engagement, communication, and monitoring of partner involvement, thereby ensuring ongoing support for school development. The findings are supported by Ngobeni (2024), who emphasized that sustained partnerships require deliberate planning and continuous engagement, and by Billét et al. (2024), who found that long-term collaboration depends on active implementation and adaptive leadership. Similarly, Tejada (2025), Haight et al. (2024), and De Jesus (2025) highlight that sustained leadership support, clear communication, and proactive management are key to maintaining effective and lasting school–community partnerships.

Table 16. Level of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by Principals in terms of Partners' Satisfaction & Trust

	Partners' Satisfaction & Trust	Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Partners are satisfied with the school's partnership management.	4.67	0.56	Very High	4.69	0.56	Very High
2	The Very High Extent to which partners are satisfied with the school's communication and coordination with them.	4.70	0.55	Very High	4.71	0.55	Very High
3	The level of responsiveness of the school to partners' needs and concerns.	4.67	0.57	Very High	4.68	0.57	Very High
4	Partners have a high level of trust in the school's leadership.	4.69	0.56	Very High	4.70	0.55	Very High
5	Partners feel confident in the school's decision-making and management practices.	4.66	0.55	Very High	4.67	0.54	Very High
	Section Mean	4.68	0.45	Very High	4.69	0.56	Very High

The results indicate that school engagement through DPDS in terms of partners' satisfaction and trust is at a very high extent, as shown by the mean scores of 4.68 (SD = 0.45) for principals and 4.69 (SD = 0.56) for teachers, suggesting that principals successfully foster strong satisfaction and trust among external partners that support sustained collaboration for school programs. This implies that school leaders effectively build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders through responsive communication, ethical leadership, and consistent engagement, which strengthen cooperation and long-term support for school initiatives. These findings are supported by Debnath (2025), who emphasized that open communication and collaborative leadership enhance stakeholder engagement and commitment, and by Pilpil et al. (2023), who found that effective coordination and communication are closely linked to stakeholder satisfaction. Similarly, Dederling and Nagera (2025), Dederling and Pietsch (2025), and Nagera and Marmol-Dado (2026) highlight that transparency, consistency, and ethical decision-making strengthen trust and participation, while Cabriga and Ching (2024) emphasized that sustained collaboration and reliable follow-through by school leaders are essential for maintaining effective and lasting partnerships.

Table 17. Summary of School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System as Applied by the Principals

	Factors	Principals			Teachers		
		Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	School/Community Learning Center Partners	4.64	0.50	Very High	4.64	0.58	Very High
2	Partners' Contributions	4.62	0.51	Very High	4.63	0.62	Very High
3	Partnership Agreements	4.63	0.50	Very High	4.64	0.60	Very High
4	Partners' Sustainability	4.65	0.48	Very High	4.66	0.58	Very High
5	Partners' Satisfaction & Trust	4.68	0.45	Very High	4.69	0.56	Very High
	Grand Mean	4.64	0.40	Very High	4.65	0.59	Very High

The results show that school engagement via DPDS across the five key factors is at a very high extent, with a grand mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.40) for principals and 4.65 (SD = 0.59) for teachers, indicating that school leaders are highly effective in managing and sustaining school–community partnerships that support school programs and initiatives. This suggests that principals excel in building strong relationships characterized by

trust, satisfaction, and consistent engagement with stakeholders, which are essential for sustaining collaboration and support. However, while relational aspects are highly developed, the findings also point to the need for further strengthening the mobilization and optimization of partner contributions to fully maximize external support in terms of resources and active involvement. Enhancing structured engagement strategies, partnership agreements, and contribution tracking systems may further improve the balance and effectiveness of collaborations. These findings are supported by Ngoben (2024) and Qaralleh (2021), who emphasized the importance of sustained and proactive leadership in establishing effective school–community partnerships, and by Hands (2023), who highlighted that continuous communication and monitoring are key to successful collaboration. Likewise, Gross et al. (2015) and Epstein (2018) stressed that well-managed, formalized partnerships enhance accountability, resource sharing, and overall school improvement outcomes.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the extent of leadership practices exhibited by the principal and the school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal?

Table 18. Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix of Leadership Practices and School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System

		Leading Strategically	Managing School Operation and Resources	Focus on Teaching and Learning	Developing Self and Other	Building Connection	Leadership Practices
Leading Strategically	Spearman's rho	—					
	p-value	—					
Managing School Operation and Resources	Spearman's rho	0.73	—				
	p-value	< .001	—				
Focus on Teaching and Learning	Spearman's rho	0.576	0.65	—			
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—			
Developing Self and Others	Spearman's rho	0.492	0.563	0.698	—		
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—		
Building Connections	Spearman's rho	0.483	0.538	0.668	0.63	—	
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
Leadership Practices	Spearman's rho	0.769	0.819	0.84	0.788	0.796	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—
School Engagement	Spearman's rho	0.142	0.151	0.171	0.177	0.126	0.158
	p-value	0.009	0.006	0.002	0.001	0.022	0.004

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

The Spearman's Rho results show that leadership practices are strongly and positively interrelated, with significant moderate to strong correlations among all dimensions—Leading Strategically ($\rho = 0.769$), Managing School Operations and Resources ($\rho = 0.819$), Focusing on Teaching and Learning ($\rho = 0.840$), Developing Self and Others ($\rho = 0.788$), and Building Connections ($\rho = 0.796$), all at $p < .001$. This indicates that the different aspects of leadership function as an integrated system, where strength in one area is associated with strength in others. In contrast, the relationship between leadership practices and DPDS-based school engagement is weak but significant ($\rho = 0.158$, $p < .004$), with similarly low correlations across dimensions ($\rho = 0.126$ to 0.177), suggesting that while leadership is positively related to DPDS engagement, it is not a strong predictor of it. This implies that DPDS utilization is influenced by other factors beyond leadership practices, such as system features, policy requirements, or technical and institutional constraints, and that improving engagement may require not only strong leadership but also better system support, training, and integration. These findings align with Bush (2020) and Day et al., who emphasized that leadership practices are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as well as with Leithwood et al. (2020) and Murphy and Louis (2018), who noted that leadership primarily strengthens internal school capacities, while external systems like digital platforms are also shaped by contextual and structural factors. Overall, the results indicate that leadership is a cohesive construct with strong internal linkages, but its connection to

DPDS engagement is limited, highlighting the influence of broader organizational and technological conditions.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between the extent of public relations skills of the principal and the school engagement via DPDS applied by the principal?

Table 19. Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix of Public Relations Skills and School Engagement via Department of Education Partnerships Database System

		Communication Process	Influence of Communication	Formation of the Institution's Image	Audience Reached	Public Relation Skills
Communication Process	Spearman's rho	—				
	p-value	—				
Influence of Communication	Spearman's rho	0.664	—			
	p-value	< .001	—			
Formation of the Institution Image	Spearman's rho	0.483	0.577	—		
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—		
Audience Reached	Spearman's rho	0.53	0.552	0.519	—	
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
Public Relation Skills	Spearman's rho	0.767	0.829	0.74	0.817	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—
School Engagement	Spearman's rho	0.167	0.173	0.163	0.203	0.205
	p-value	0.002	0.002	0.003	< .001	< .001

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

The Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix (Table 19) shows a generally significant positive relationship among the variables ($p < 0.05$), indicating that public relations skills and DPDS-based school engagement are related but differ in strength. Strong correlations were observed among public relations components, particularly Influence of Communication ($\rho = 0.829$, $p < .001$) and Audience Reached ($\rho = 0.817$, $p < .001$), followed by Communication Process ($\rho = 0.767$, $p < .001$) and Formation of Institutional Image ($\rho = 0.740$, $p < .001$), suggesting that effective communication, stakeholder influence, and audience reach are central to strong public relations performance. In contrast, the relationship between public relations skills and DPDS engagement is weak but significant ($\rho = 0.205$, $p < .005$), with similarly low correlations across dimensions ($\rho = 0.163-0.203$), indicating that while communication competence is linked to DPDS involvement, it is not a strong predictor of its utilization. This implies that public relations skills function as an integrated communication system within schools, but DPDS engagement is influenced by other factors such as technological capacity, system usability, and administrative or policy requirements. Thus, improving DPDS participation may require not only strong communication practices but also enhanced digital support, training, and institutional integration. These findings are consistent with Nasution and Sri (2025) and Neiroukh et al. (2024), who emphasized that communication strengthens trust and coordination but does not automatically translate into digital system use, as well as Sariah et al. (2022), Jack (2023), and Redondo-Sama et al. (2025), who noted that while public relations enhances stakeholder relationships and institutional image, digital engagement depends more on system readiness and organizational infrastructure.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference between the perception of teachers and principals on the leadership practices and public relations skills of the principal?

Table 20. Results of Independent Samples T-Test Using Mann-Whitney U for the Perceptions of Teachers and Principals on Leadership Practices and Public Relations Skills

Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	Mann-Whitney U	p	Effect Size (Rank Biserial Correlation)
Leadership Practices							
Principals	36	4.59	4.85	0.63	5238	0.868	0.0169
Teacher	296	4.73	4.83	0.53			
Public Relations Skills							
Principals	36	4.59	4.93	0.61	5128	0.711	0.0376
Teacher	296	4.71	4.81	0.54			

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

The results show a comparison of principals' and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and public relations skills, with both groups rating these areas at a very high extent. For leadership practices, principals recorded a mean of 4.59 (SD = 0.63, Median = 4.85) while teachers reported a slightly higher mean of 4.73 (SD = 0.53, Median = 4.83). Similarly, for public relations skills, principals obtained a mean of 4.59 (SD = 0.61, Median = 4.93) and teachers a mean of 4.71 (SD = 0.54, Median = 4.81). However, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant differences between the two groups for leadership practices ($U = 5238$, $p = 0.868$) and public relations skills ($U = 5128$, $p = 0.711$), with negligible effect sizes (Rank Biserial Correlation = 0.0169 and 0.0376), indicating that the observed variations are statistically insignificant. This suggests that principals and teachers share highly consistent perceptions of leadership and communication practices within schools, reflecting a common understanding of how these practices are implemented and experienced. Such alignment implies strong organizational coherence, effective communication, and shared interpretation of leadership quality across stakeholders, which may contribute to trust, coordination, and smoother school functioning. These findings are supported by Leithwood et al. (2020), who emphasized that strong school leadership is typically recognized similarly across stakeholders in well-functioning school environments, and by Murphy and Louis (2018), who noted that effective leadership fosters shared understanding and consistent evaluations of leadership quality. Likewise, Nasution and Sri (2025) and Redondo-Sama et al. (2025) highlighted that clear communication and coordinated leadership practices promote aligned stakeholder perceptions and strengthen organizational trust and coherence.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to established ethical standards and research protocols involving human participants. Prior to the conduct of the study, ethical clearance was secured from the appropriate institutional ethics review authority to ensure compliance with accepted ethical principles and research regulations. In addition, formal approval and permission to conduct the study were obtained from the Department of Education (DepEd) Region XII and the respective School Division Offices. The study complied with the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in accordance with recognized research ethics guidelines. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were fully informed regarding the purpose, procedures, benefits, and nature of their involvement before data collection commenced. Written informed consent was secured from all participants prior to the administration of the survey questionnaires. To protect the privacy and rights of the participants, strict confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. No names or personally identifiable information were disclosed in any part of the research report, data analysis, or presentation of findings. Codes and numerical identifiers were used in place of participants' identities to ensure anonymity. Participants were also informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty or negative consequences. All collected data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel. The information gathered was used solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, the study complied with the provisions of the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring the responsible handling, protection, and disposal of all research data obtained during the conduct of the study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that principals demonstrate a high level of leadership, particularly in managing school operations and developing personnel, although instructional leadership and external linkages need further strengthening to better support teaching and partnership development. Similarly, public relations skills are highly evident, especially in influencing communication and maintaining

a positive institutional image, but improvements are still needed in communication processes and audience reach to ensure clearer and more inclusive stakeholder engagement. Schools exhibit high engagement in the DPDS, particularly in terms of partner satisfaction and trust, yet partners' contributions remain relatively lower, indicating the need to further enhance stakeholder participation and resource support. Moreover, both leadership practices and public relations skills show only weak relationships with school engagement, suggesting that other contextual factors may also influence DPDS outcomes. Lastly, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding leadership practices and public relations skills, indicating a shared understanding of leadership effectiveness in schools.

Reccomendations

The Department of Education may strengthen leadership development programs by prioritizing instructional leadership and partnership-building competencies in training initiatives for school heads. Given that the findings revealed relatively lower emphasis on focus on teaching and learning as well as building connections, leadership enhancement programs should incorporate mentoring, instructional supervision, stakeholder collaboration, and community engagement strategies aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). School principals may also adopt more strategic and inclusive communication systems to improve stakeholder reach and engagement. Although public relations skills were rated very highly, audience reach and communication processes showed comparatively lower ratings; thus, school leaders may utilize multi-platform communication channels such as digital portals, social media platforms, community assemblies, and stakeholder feedback systems to ensure timely, transparent, and accessible dissemination of information. In addition, the Department of Education and school administrators may strengthen the implementation and utilization of the Department of Education Partnership Database System (DPDS) by integrating it more closely with school leadership and partnership initiatives, as leadership practices and public relations skills demonstrated only weak relationships with DPDS engagement. School leaders may further establish sustainable stakeholder engagement and partnership programs to address the relatively lower ratings in partners' contributions through institutionalized partnership appreciation programs, collaborative planning activities, resource mobilization initiatives, and regular stakeholder consultations to encourage stronger participation and long-term commitment among community partners. Policymakers and educational leaders may also provide continuous capacity-building programs on digital governance, partnership management, and data management systems to enhance schools' readiness and effectiveness in implementing digital engagement platforms such as DPDS. Schools may likewise strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for partnership and engagement initiatives by regularly assessing stakeholder satisfaction, communication effectiveness, and partnership sustainability to identify implementation gaps and support evidence-based improvements in school-community collaboration programs. Finally, future researchers may explore additional variables that could influence school engagement through DPDS, such as technological readiness, organizational culture, digital literacy, stakeholder motivation, and policy support, and may consider using mixed-methods or qualitative approaches to gain deeper contextual understanding, while expanding the study to other regions and school classifications to improve generalizability of findings.

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