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BEYOND COMMUNICATION: THE ROLE OF HOME–SCHOOL COLLABORATION IN SHAPING STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN A RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences, challenges, and perceived contributions of home–school collaboration in supporting the behavioral development of elementary pupils in a rural public school in Kapangan, Benguet, Philippines. Using a qualitative case study design, the study involved fifteen participants composed of five parents, five teachers, and five school heads. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings related to home–school collaboration and pupil behavior. The findings revealed that home–school collaboration was experienced as meaningful and relationship-centered, characterized by open communication, mutual partnership, consistency, care, and active involvement. Despite the positive practices observed, participants identified several challenges affecting collaboration, including geographical distance, limited time, inadequate access to communication technologies, and external influences affecting pupils' behavior. Participants further perceived that home–school collaboration contributed significantly to pupils' moral development, discipline, and positive behavioral growth through shared guidance, coordinated discipline practices, positive role modeling, and continuous support from both home and school environments. Pupils were observed to demonstrate improved obedience, respectfulness, responsibility, self-discipline, and emotional maturity over time. The study concluded that effective home–

school collaboration, even within the limitations of rural settings, plays a vital role in promoting positive behavioral development among elementary pupils when grounded in trust, shared values, and consistent support. The findings emphasize that the quality of collaboration and alignment between parents and schools are more important than the frequency of communication or access to technology. The study recommends the strengthening of flexible and context-sensitive partnership strategies and encourages further research on home–school collaboration across diverse educational settings to better understand its long-term impact on children’s behavioral development.

KEYWORDS: behavioral development, elementary education, home–school collaboration, parental involvement, rural education, and pupil discipline.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational settings, parent–teacher relationships continue to experience major changes influenced by evolving social and educational realities. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered traditional forms of parental involvement that were once centered on face-to-face interactions such as school visits, PTA meetings, and classroom observations. These forms of engagement have gradually expanded into online communication platforms, social media groups, and messaging applications that allow more immediate interaction between homes and schools. Despite these developments, the shift toward digital and flexible collaboration has not been equally experienced across all communities. Studies indicate that although communication between parents and teachers has become more frequent, the quality and consistency of such interactions are not always sustained or meaningful (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Many parents still participate minimally due to demanding work schedules, limited technological skills, and the belief that schools bear the primary responsibility for shaping children’s behavior (Wang, 2025). Likewise, teachers often struggle with heavy administrative responsibilities and limited time, which restrict opportunities for deeper and more authentic engagement with families. As a result, some school–family partnerships remain compliance-oriented rather than genuinely collaborative. Recent international evidence further highlights the importance of parental involvement in promoting both the academic achievement and behavioral development of learners. Findings from post-pandemic analyses of PISA 2022 revealed that although parental engagement in student learning declined between 2018 and 2022, education systems that sustained strong family involvement demonstrated more stable academic performance and

improved student well-being. These studies also emphasized that positive disciplinary climate and school safety are strongly associated with supportive relationships among parents, teachers, and learners (OECD, 2023; OECD, 2024).

In various regions of Latin America and Africa, researchers have observed that parent–teacher partnerships are heavily shaped by socioeconomic conditions and cultural expectations. In Brazil, García and Melo (2024) reported that parents from low-income households often desire greater involvement in their children’s education but encounter barriers such as unstable employment, financial pressures, and limited access to communication systems used by schools. Similarly, studies conducted in Kenya by Oketch and Mugambi (2023) revealed that many parents still view school involvement primarily as a response to student misbehavior or disciplinary concerns rather than as a continuous process of developmental support. These findings suggest that long-standing social structures, cultural beliefs, and economic inequalities continue to influence how schools and families interact, often resulting in passive forms of participation instead of shared responsibility and active collaboration.

In several Asian and European countries, the use of digital technologies has created new avenues for communication and collaboration between parents and teachers, although various concerns continue to emerge. In South Korea, Park and Lee (2025) reported that the growing dependence on mobile applications and online school portals improved real-time communication between families and schools. However, the same platforms also intensified parental stress and anxiety, particularly regarding students’ academic performance and progress. Similarly, studies conducted in Finland and Spain by Koski (2024) and Martínez-Ruiz (2023) revealed that some teachers have become increasingly concerned about “hyper-involvement,” wherein excessive parental monitoring and constant communication place pressure on teachers and interfere with classroom independence and decision-making. These findings suggest that while transparency and accessibility are important in parent–teacher communication, maintaining mutual trust and healthy boundaries is equally essential to ensure that collaboration remains constructive rather than intrusive.

Across North America, Australia, and Pacific regions, emerging approaches to family–school partnerships increasingly emphasize empowerment, cultural responsiveness, and shared participation in educational decision-making. In the United States, Henderson and Mapp (2023) explained that effective parental engagement is not determined solely by how often

schools communicate with families but by the quality of relationships built on trust, respect, and shared educational goals. Likewise, studies in Australia and Fiji by Thompson (2024) and Ravonu (2023) highlighted that culturally responsive collaboration—particularly those that acknowledge Indigenous traditions, communal values, and family leadership roles—positively influences student behavior, attendance, resilience, and overall well-being. These regional perspectives demonstrate that meaningful parent–teacher partnerships flourish when schools treat families as equal stakeholders and recognize the value of their cultural knowledge, experiences, and contributions to learner development.

At the same time, existing literature continues to show that structured and consistent parent–school partnerships contribute significantly to reducing aggressive behaviors and strengthening prosocial attitudes among learners by reinforcing similar expectations and guidance at home and in school (Wang, 2025). International monitoring reports also emphasize that educational recovery efforts and the effective integration of technology are most successful when grounded in trusting relationships between schools and families that prioritize students’ socio-emotional growth and learning needs (UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, recent scholarship identifies essential characteristics of effective partnerships, including shared responsibility, open two-way communication, and collaborative action, which may serve as guiding principles adaptable across different educational and cultural contexts (Anazia, 2025; Erkenbrack, 2025).

In the Philippines, parental involvement has been formally recognized as an important component of the educational process through various national policies and programs. DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2022 revised the PTA Operating Manual to strengthen collaboration between schools and families, while Republic Act No. 11908 institutionalized the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) Program to help parents develop competencies in child development, discipline, and academic support (DepEd, 2022a; RA 11908, 2022). These policies emphasize the shared responsibility of parents and schools in promoting learners’ holistic growth and behavioral development. Studies conducted across different regions of the country support these policy directions and demonstrate the positive influence of parent–teacher collaboration on student behavior and school adjustment.

In Mindanao, studies by Ladera (2023), Usman (2024), and Mangondaya (2025) found that strong parent–teacher partnerships contribute to improved student discipline and behavior. However, parental participation often varies due to livelihood responsibilities, financial

constraints, and limited access to digital communication tools. In the Visayas, researchers such as Reyes and Boholano (2023), Abaquita (2024), and Seat (2024) observed that although many parents acknowledge the importance of school involvement, participation frequently becomes situational or reactive, particularly during instances of student misbehavior or academic concerns. Similarly, studies conducted in Luzon by Pascual (2023), Sarmiento (2024), and Rivera (2025) emphasized that effective behavioral support among learners requires regular communication, mutual understanding, and culturally appropriate collaboration practices between schools and families. These regional findings align with broader national studies showing that parental engagement positively affects student conduct and classroom behavior while also highlighting the need for more in-depth qualitative research that explores the actual relational experiences behind parent–school partnerships beyond numerical survey data (Dela Cruz, 2025; Sakaue, 2023).

Despite the presence of institutionalized policies and structured engagement programs, parent–teacher collaboration in many communities continues to encounter both opportunities and challenges. While the Parent Effectiveness Service and the revised PTA Guidelines provide formal mechanisms for participation, the realities experienced within schools and communities are often more complex. In several schools across the Cordillera region, including communities in Benguet, teachers commonly observe that parental involvement becomes more active during disciplinary situations but less visible in preventive guidance, mentoring, and continuous behavioral monitoring. Local studies conducted by Dominguez (2024), Carantes (2023), and Balanay (2025) revealed that economic difficulties, generational differences, and cultural expectations often affect the consistency of collaboration between parents and schools.

Nevertheless, there are also notable examples of successful collaboration within communities that value *binnadang* or collective cooperation and shared responsibility. In some rural schools, community-centered initiatives grounded in mutual support and cultural solidarity have contributed to improvements in student discipline, behavior, and overall school climate. These contrasting experiences demonstrate the importance of documenting authentic and context-based narratives of home–school collaboration, including its challenges, adjustments, and successes, in order to better understand how children’s behavioral development is shaped through the combined influence of both home and school environments.

Within Kapangan, Benguet, home–school collaboration exists within a unique cultural environment influenced by Cordilleran values such as inayan (moral restraint, respect, and accountability) and binnadang (community cooperation and mutual assistance). Although national educational policies and DepEd guidelines govern school operations, local realities such as agricultural livelihoods, remote geographical locations, and culturally diverse communities significantly influence how parents and schools interact, communicate expectations, and manage children’s behavior and discipline. Despite the richness of these local cultural practices, limited qualitative studies have explored how home–school collaboration is experienced in everyday situations within rural communities in Kapangan. Existing local studies often focus more on the level of parental participation rather than on the actual day-to-day coordination and shared responsibilities between parents and teachers in shaping children’s behavioral development. This gap reflects broader international calls for deeper and context-based descriptions of collaborative practices and their underlying processes (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023), while also supporting national educational reforms (DepEd, 2022a; RA 11908, 2022) that emphasize the importance of culturally grounded and locally responsive implementation in highland public schools.

From an educational management perspective, the convergence of global research findings, national policy directions, and the distinct cultural realities of Benguet highlights the need to examine how elementary schools and families in Kapangan collaboratively support the behavioral development of children in actual practice. This study therefore investigates the existing forms of partnership, the challenges encountered in sustaining collaboration, and the conditions that enable effective parent–teacher relationships while centering the lived experiences of parents, teachers, and school heads. Through this inquiry, the study seeks to address the need for grounded qualitative evidence and contribute to narrowing the gap between policy expectations and the realities of school-level implementation within rural Cordilleran communities.

The findings of the study may provide significant benefits to various stakeholders within and beyond the educational community. Elementary pupils may benefit from a more consistent and supportive behavioral guidance system that strengthens discipline, respect, responsibility, empathy, and self-regulation through aligned expectations between home and school. Teachers may gain deeper understanding of parental perspectives, cultural influences, and community realities, allowing them to develop more responsive classroom management and

child development strategies. Parents and guardians may become more aware of their role as active partners in supporting children's behavioral formation, encouraging stronger communication and collaboration with schools. School heads may utilize the findings in designing evidence-based family engagement programs and culturally responsive behavioral policies. Likewise, DepEd officials and educational policymakers may use the qualitative evidence generated by the study to strengthen the implementation of existing programs such as the Parent Effectiveness Service (RA 11908, 2022) and the revised PTA Guidelines (DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2022). Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the development of a stronger culture of shared responsibility between homes and schools in promoting the moral and behavioral growth of elementary learners in Kapangan, Benguet.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences, perceptions, and practices of parents, teachers, and school heads regarding home-school collaboration and its influence on the behavioral development of elementary pupils in selected public elementary schools in Kapangan, Benguet. The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences and the social realities surrounding parent-school partnerships within a rural Cordilleran context. The study involved fifteen (15) purposively selected participants composed of five (5) parents, five (5) teachers, and five (5) school heads who were directly involved in pupil development and home-school collaboration activities. Selection of participants was based on their active involvement in behavioral guidance, parent engagement, and school-community interactions, ensuring the collection of rich and meaningful data. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data-gathering method, utilizing open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives regarding communication practices, collaboration experiences, challenges encountered, and the perceived influence of home-school partnerships on children's behavior. The interview guide underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

Prior to data gathering, the researcher secured permission from the appropriate educational authorities and obtained informed consent from all participants, ensuring that participation was voluntary and confidential. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through accessible communication platforms depending on participants' availability and contextual

considerations. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented by field notes to capture important observations and nonverbal cues. After data collection, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). Through repeated reading of the transcripts, significant statements and recurring ideas were coded and organized into themes and subthemes that reflected the participants' shared experiences and perspectives on home-school collaboration and behavioral development. To strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of responses across participant groups. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, privacy protection, voluntary participation, and proper acknowledgment of all scholarly sources and AI-assisted language refinement tools were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Home-School Collaboration in Supporting Student Behavior

The findings revealed that home-school collaboration played a significant role in supporting the behavioral development of secondary students in a rural public school in Kapangan, Benguet. Based on interviews with five teachers and five parents, four major themes emerged: communication, partnership, consistency, and care. Participants emphasized that although communication between parents and teachers was often affected by weak mobile signal, geographical distance, and livelihood demands, it remained essential in guiding student behavior. Teachers commonly relied on meetings, written notices, and personal follow-ups, while parents appreciated efforts made by schools to keep them informed about their children's conduct. Both groups also viewed behavioral guidance as a shared responsibility, recognizing that students responded more positively when parents and teachers worked together in reinforcing discipline and values. These findings corroborate the studies of Epstein (2018) and Jeynes (2018), which emphasized that collaborative partnerships between families and schools strengthen students' behavioral adjustment, engagement, and accountability. Similarly, Garbacz et al. (2021) highlighted that relationship-based communication remains effective in rural and low-resource schools where access to technology and regular interaction may be limited.

The study further showed that consistency and care were significant factors in promoting positive student behavior. Parents and teachers stressed the importance of implementing

similar rules and expectations at home and in school to strengthen students' self-discipline, responsibility, and understanding of appropriate behavior. Participants also highlighted that discipline became more effective when delivered with patience, empathy, and understanding rather than harsh punishment. Teachers considered students' personal and family situations before imposing corrective measures, while parents observed that children responded more positively when they felt respected and cared for by teachers. These findings support the works of Noddings (2013) and Wentzel (2017), which emphasized that caring and relationship-centered approaches to discipline foster socio-emotional development and positive behavioral outcomes among learners. Furthermore, studies by Gregory and Fergus (2017) and Hafen et al. (2020) affirmed that compassionate and context-sensitive disciplinary practices contribute to improved student behavior, stronger teacher–student relationships, and a more conducive learning environment. Overall, the findings suggest that meaningful home–school collaboration grounded in communication, shared responsibility, consistency, and care plays a vital role in fostering positive behavioral growth among students, particularly in rural and resource-limited educational settings.

Challenges Affecting Home–School Collaboration in Promoting Positive Student Behavior

The findings revealed that although parents, teachers, and school heads strongly valued home–school collaboration, several contextual challenges affected its effectiveness in promoting positive student behavior in a rural public secondary school in Kapangan, Benguet. Four major themes emerged from the analysis: distance, time constraints, access limitations, and student factors. Geographical distance was identified as a significant barrier because many families lived far from the school, making attendance in meetings and immediate follow-up on behavioral concerns difficult due to transportation challenges, travel time, and livelihood demands. Participants also emphasized that both parents and teachers struggled with limited time, as parents were occupied with farming and household responsibilities while teachers managed heavy workloads and administrative tasks. In addition, weak mobile signal and limited internet connectivity hindered timely communication, causing delays in behavioral interventions and reducing opportunities for consistent monitoring of students. These findings corroborate the studies of Azano and Stewart (2015) and Sheldon and Jung (2019), which highlighted that geographical isolation and limited communication infrastructure weaken sustained family–school partnerships in rural communities. Similarly, Kim and Hill (2020) and Garbacz et al. (2021) emphasized that

time poverty and communication barriers continue to affect the quality and consistency of home–school collaboration in low-resource settings.

The study further revealed that student-related factors such as adolescence, peer influence, emotional struggles, and resistance to authority also affected the success of collaborative behavioral guidance. Teachers, parents, and school heads observed that some students were more influenced by peers than by parental or teacher guidance, making behavioral interventions more challenging despite coordinated efforts between home and school. Participants stressed the importance of balancing discipline with empathy, emotional support, and understanding to effectively guide learners during adolescence. These findings support the works of Wentzel (2017) and Steinberg (2019), which emphasized that adolescent behavior is strongly shaped by peer relationships and socio-emotional development. Recent studies by O'Connor et al. (2022) and Wang and Degol (2023) likewise affirmed that effective behavioral support among adolescents requires collaborative, developmentally responsive, and emotionally supportive approaches involving both families and schools. Overall, the findings demonstrate that while home–school collaboration remains essential in promoting positive student behavior, its effectiveness in rural communities is influenced by interconnected structural, contextual, and developmental challenges that require flexible, culturally responsive, and context-sensitive strategies.

Contribution and Collaboration to Students' Moral Formation, Discipline and Overall Growth

The findings revealed that home–school collaboration significantly contributed to students' moral formation, discipline, and overall behavioral growth in a rural public secondary school in Kapangan, Benguet. Four major themes emerged from the interviews with teachers, parents, and school heads: moral guidance, discipline support, role modeling, and behavioral growth. Participants emphasized that shared values between home and school strengthened students' understanding of respect, responsibility, honesty, and accountability. Teachers observed that moral lessons became more meaningful when reinforced by parents at home, while parents acknowledged the role of teachers and school leaders in shaping their children's character. Participants also highlighted those consistent disciplinary practices between home and school improved students' self-control and sense of accountability. These findings corroborate the studies of Berkowitz and Bier (2022) and Thornberg and Oğuz (2022), which emphasized that moral development becomes more effective when families

and schools collaboratively reinforce shared values and behavioral expectations. Likewise, Gregory et al. (2022) and Wang and Degol (2022) affirmed that coordinated disciplinary practices between parents and schools contribute to improved classroom behavior, self-regulation, and positive school climate among adolescents.

The study further revealed that role modeling and sustained collaboration played crucial roles in promoting students' behavioral growth. Teachers, parents, and school heads recognized that students closely observe and imitate the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by adults both at home and in school. Participants emphasized that positive examples set by teachers, parents, and school leaders reinforced respectful conduct, discipline, and social responsibility among students. Moreover, sustained collaboration between home and school was perceived to contribute to long-term improvements in students' emotional maturity, responsibility, and respectful behavior. Teachers and parents noted that continuous guidance and support gradually led to positive behavioral changes among learners. These findings support the works of Cruz (2022) and Thornberg (2022), which highlighted adult role modeling as a critical influence on adolescents' moral and behavioral development. Furthermore, studies by Garbacz et al. (2023), Sheridan et al. (2022), and Lapsley and Narvaez (2023) confirmed that relationship-based collaboration and consistent adult modeling foster students' socio-emotional growth, resilience, and long-term behavioral adjustment, particularly in rural and low-resource educational settings. Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective home-school collaboration grounded in shared values, coordinated discipline, positive role modeling, and continuous support creates a cohesive environment that nurtures students' holistic moral and behavioral development.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that home-school collaboration played a significant role in supporting the behavioral development of secondary students in Kapangan, Benguet. The experiences of parents and teachers revealed that collaboration was strengthened by shared values, mutual trust, and collective responsibility in guiding students' behavior. Despite the positive partnerships observed, collaboration was also challenged by geographical distance, limited time, poor communication access, and student-related factors associated with adolescence and peer influence in rural communities. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrated that consistent guidance, aligned expectations, and positive role modeling from both home and school contributed to students' moral formation, discipline, self-regulation, and overall

behavioral growth. Overall, the study affirmed that meaningful and sustained collaboration between families and schools creates a supportive environment that nurtures students' positive character development even within resource-limited rural settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that schools strengthen and sustain home–school collaboration through regular face-to-face communication activities, community-based consultations, and culturally responsive partnership programs that reinforce shared responsibility among parents, teachers, and school leaders. Schools are likewise encouraged to adopt flexible and low-cost communication strategies, such as clustered meetings, written updates, and localized coordination practices, to address challenges related to distance, time constraints, and limited communication access in rural areas. Parents and teachers should continue modeling positive behavior and implementing consistent disciplinary practices to further support students' moral and behavioral development. Future researchers may also conduct longitudinal and comparative studies across different rural and urban school contexts to deepen understanding of the long-term effects of home–school collaboration on students' behavioral growth and socio-emotional development.

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