

Staff-Family Partnership and Teamwork Skills as Predictors of Sense of Community in Public Schools

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Abstract. The sense of community in public schools is a vital component for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for students, teachers, and families. This study investigated whether staff-family partnership and teamwork skills predict sense of community in public schools. A quantitative method was used in the survey with 300 senior high students from grades 11 to 12 in a large public secondary school within the Division of Davao Oriental, specifically Cateel 1 and 2 District, as respondents. Results showed that the level of staff-family partnership is often manifested, as are teamwork skills and a sense of community. These findings highlight a strong sense of belonging among school members. Notably, the relationships between staff-family partnership and sense of community, as well as teamwork skills and sense of community, were found to be significant. On the other hand, both staff-family partnership and teamwork skills could significantly predict the sense of community. In addition, among the predictors, leadership had the highest standardized beta, suggesting that it has the most decisive influence on sense of community. Also, 72.4% of the variation of sense of community could be attributed to the combined impact of the variables being investigated. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts should be made to improve professional care by providing professional development programs, strengthening communication through regular student-staff-family dialogues, and prioritizing leadership development by providing leadership training.

Keywords: Leadership; Sense of community; Staff-family partnership; Teamwork skills.

1.0 Introduction

The sense of community in public schools is crucial for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for students, teachers, and families. However, several challenges threaten this sense of community (Osterman, 2023). The growing reliance on digital platforms for communication can reduce face-to-face engagement, weakening bonds typically formed through school events and activities (Kahu et al., 2022). Additionally, exclusionary practices can lead to social fragmentation, as marginalized students may struggle to feel a sense of belonging (Saraví et al., 2019). Further, economic inequality exacerbates divisions, leading to social tensions and a lack of cohesion (Wilkinson, 2020). Lastly, by failing to acknowledge and value different identities and customs, cultural homogenization can weaken the community and make it more difficult for children to interact with their peers and the school environment (Mohyeddin, 2024).

This study is anchored in multiple theoretical perspectives that frame the role of relationships and collaboration in building school communities. The Sociological Theory of Auguste Comte positions schools as essential social

institutions that maintain order, unity, and social progress through shared norms and structured interactions. From this perspective, fostering a sense of community within schools contributes to the development of a stable and cohesive society. Complementing this is Tuckman's Team Building Model (1965), which outlines the developmental stages—forming, storming, norming, and performing—that characterize effective team dynamics. This theory underscores the value of teamwork skills in enhancing group cohesion and cooperation among students. Lastly, the Sense of Community Index Theory developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) provides a foundational framework for assessing school communities. Their model identifies four key elements of a strong community: membership, influence, integration, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. These constructs guide the present study's understanding of how individuals experience belonging and connectedness within the school setting.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, the sense of community in public schools remains undeniably essential. Research consistently shows that strong school communities are linked to improved academic achievement, increased student retention, greater teacher morale, and higher levels of parental involvement (Saadu, 2023). A strong sense of ownership and connection within the school community fosters a positive learning environment, supports social-emotional development, and enhances overall student well-being, all of which are critical for student success and achievement. Bryan et al. (2020) emphasize that integrating a strong sense of community into public schools, along with active family partnerships, is vital for enriching the educational experience. In such environments, students not only excel academically but also develop essential life skills. Moreover, parental involvement is a key factor influencing student achievement, with research showing that it has a positive impact on children's academic performance from early childhood through adolescence and beyond (Şengönül, 2022). These findings highlight the critical role that a strong sense of community plays in shaping student success and overall educational outcomes.

Related literature also emphasizes the interconnected roles of family partnerships and teamwork skills in fostering a strong school community. In the study of Smith et al. (2019) it revealed that active family partnerships strongly influence the development of a strong sense of community in educational institutions, as interactions between schools and families provide inclusive and supportive environments, for the academic experience of students, social-emotional development, and overall sense of self, is enhanced. On the other hand, a study by Zainuri and Huda (2023) revealed that teamwork skills play a crucial role in fostering a strong sense of community in public schools. When students are equipped with practical teamwork skills, they are better able to collaborate, communicate, and resolve conflicts with their peers (Deep et al., 2019). This collaborative spirit enhances their sense of belonging and connection within the school community, and as the students work together successfully, they build trust, mutual respect, and shared goals, which are key components of a strong community

However, a review of the literature reveals a significant research gap. While there is growing recognition of the importance of family partnerships and teamwork skills in promoting a favorable educational climate, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the extent to which these two factors jointly predict the development of a sense of community within public schools. Moreover, no known studies have specifically examined the combined influence of family partnerships and teamwork skills on the sense of community, particularly within the context of public schools. In light of this, the present study seeks to investigate whether family partnerships and teamwork skills serve as significant predictors of the sense of community among public schools in Cateel, Davao Oriental.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to determine whether family partnerships and teamwork skills predict the sense of community among public schools in Cateel, Davao Oriental. By exploring this relationship, the study seeks to inform school leaders and stakeholders of the key relational factors that contribute to a supportive and connected school environment. Furthermore, this research aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education, by promoting inclusive and collaborative learning environments; SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, by strengthening stakeholder engagement; and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, by supporting students' and educators' social and emotional health. Through its findings, this study aims to contribute both to the academic discourse and to practical efforts that enhance the educational climate in public schools.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research is a methodological

approach used to systematically gather information that characterizes a particular phenomenon, situation, or group. It is instrumental in addressing the "what," "when," "where," and "how" aspects of a research problem, rather than exploring the underlying reasons or causes (Chaudhari, 2022). At the same time, a correlational research design examines the relationships between variables without the researcher being able to manipulate or control any of them. The degree and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables is reflected in a correlation (Bhandari, 2022). In this study, a descriptive research design was used to describe the level of family partnership, teamwork skills, and sense of community. Correlational research design was employed to investigate the relationships between staff-family collaboration, sense of community, and teamwork skills, as well as the relationship between teamwork skills and sense of community.

2.2 Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents of the study consisted of senior high school students from Grades 11 and 12 enrolled in three large public secondary schools located within the Cateel 1 and 2 Districts under the Division of Davao Oriental. For confidentiality and research ethics, the names of the schools are anonymized and referred to as School X, School Y, and School Z. Only students enrolled for the Academic Year 2024–2025 in the identified schools were considered as part of the sampling frame.

To ensure appropriate representation of both grade levels, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was first divided into two strata: Grade 11 and Grade 12. From each stratum, a proportionate number of respondents were randomly selected. Specifically, the sample comprised 153 students from Grade 11 and 147 students from Grade 12, yielding a total of 300 respondents. This method was chosen to ensure that each grade level was adequately represented in the sample, thus allowing for meaningful subgroup comparisons and minimizing potential bias associated with simple random sampling.

2.3 Research Instrument

The research instruments used in the study were in the form of adapted questionnaires. For Staff-Family Partnership, the questionnaire was adapted from Jang et al. (2021) titled "Development and validation of the Scale for Staff-Family Partnership in Long-term Care" with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.90. The questionnaire has four indicators: encouragement to participate in care, family trust and support, collaborative relationships and communication, and professional care. Similarly, to assess teacher/staff empowerment in terms of six indicators, adaptability, communication, coordination, decision-making, interpersonal skills, and leadership, the researcher adapted the Teamwork skills questionnaires from Marshall et al. (2006) titled "Teamwork skills: Assessment and instruction. In *Innovations in instructional technology*" with Cronbach alpha value of 0.95. Lastly, the Sense of Community questionnaire was adapted from Sayer et al. (2013), titled 'Investigating Sense of Community in Primary Schools,' which reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. The indicators used to measure the dependent variable included valued membership and social support. The questionnaire items were modified to align with the specific objectives of the current research. Furthermore, to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey questionnaire, it underwent expert validation by three experts from the University of Mindanao and one external validator. A pilot test was also conducted to assess its suitability for the intended context. The results indicated acceptable internal consistency, with an overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.89.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Before the conduct of this study, the researcher asked for approval from the school's division superintendent of the division of Davao Oriental to conduct the study. The approval of the school's division superintendent in a form of endorsement was forwarded to the Principals of School X, Y, and Z. Upon receiving permission from the respective school heads, the researcher proceeded with the preliminary steps, including orienting the respondents on the study's objectives and assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaires were then administered to the selected students, and the researcher personally retrieved the completed forms to ensure that all items were answered correctly. A certificate of appearance was obtained from each school as evidence of the researcher's presence during data collection. The responses were tallied and subsequently forwarded to a statistician for data analysis. The entire data collection process spanned approximately six weeks, from November to December 2024.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

To interpret and analyze the data, the researcher utilized the following statistical tools: The Mean was used to determine the level of family partnership, teamwork skills, and sense of community, addressing research

objectives 1, 2, and 3. Pearson's r was used to determine if there are significant relationships between family partnership and sense of community, as well as between teamwork skills and sense of community, addressing research objective 4. Regression analysis was employed to determine which, between family partnership and teamwork skills, significantly predicts the sense of community.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, strict ethical considerations were observed, especially given that some of the respondents were minors. Before data collection, the researcher secured research ethics clearance from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC). The researcher prioritized obtaining informed consent from all adult respondents and securing assent from minors, while also obtaining permission from their parents or legal guardians. This approach reflects a commitment to ethical research practices that emphasize voluntary participation, transparency, and the ability to make informed decisions. Special attention was given to ensuring that all respondents, including minors, fully understood the objectives of the study, the significance of their contributions, and how their feedback would be managed, evaluated, and protected.

In addition, the researcher strictly adhered to the principles of privacy and confidentiality as outlined by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 of the Philippines (Republic Act 10173). Accordingly, respondents' records were kept confidential, with any identifiable information remaining private unless disclosure is necessary to protect their rights or welfare. Furthermore, no personal data was shared with the data analysts.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Staff-Family Partnership

The level of staff-family partnership refers to the degree of collaboration, communication, and mutual support between school personnel and families. Presented in Table 1 is the level of staff-family partnership, which revealed an overall Standard Deviation of 0.59 and a total mean rating of 4.09, labeled as High. The high level of staff-family partnership can be closely attributed to the strong sense of community and family-oriented culture that characterizes the Cateelenos, who are known for their close-knit relationships and collective spirit.

Table 1. Level of Staff-Family Partnership

Indicator	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Encouragement to Participate in Care	0.72	4.02	High
Family's Trust and Support	0.62	4.18	High
Collaborative Relationship and Communication	0.69	4.17	High
Professional Care	0.74	3.99	High
Overall	0.59	4.09	High

This cultural orientation, which highly values mutual support, trust, and cooperation within families and the broader community, naturally extends into school environments where collaboration between staff and families is seen as vital to student well-being and success (Pusztai et al., 2024). It can also be viewed from the table that the indicator family's trust and support gained the highest mean score of 4.18, described as High. On the other hand, professional care garnered the lowest mean score of 3.99, still described as High.

The high-level rating of the family's trust and support suggests that a collaborative and supportive school environment is being cultivated. This implies that the school recognizes and values the role of families in fostering a sense of community. Additionally, maintaining open communication, encouraging parental involvement, and promoting shared decision-making can enhance the overall sense of community within the public schools. The result aligns with the result of Houry et al. (2019), emphasizing that trusting relationships between families and school professionals lead to positive outcomes for students, including improved learning and behavior. Moreover, the indicator with the highest level is professional care. This suggests that there is room for improvement in how staff members demonstrate professionalism, empathy, and attentiveness in their interactions with families. The result is congruent with the study of Sun et al. (2023), which revealed that teachers who exhibit empathy can better share emotions with students, leading to improved understanding and support. The results also align with the study of Zhang (2022), which shows that empathic teachers can foster better rapport with students, leading to increased self-confidence and participation in educational contexts.

3.2 Level of Teamwork Skills

The level of Teamwork Skills refers to the degree to which individuals effectively collaborate with others to achieve shared goals. Presented in Table 2 is the level of teamwork skills as measured by six indicators, namely: adaptability, communication, coordination, decision making, interpersonal skills, and leadership.

Table 2. *Level of Teamwork Skills*

Indicator	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Adaptability	0.63	4.12	High
Communication	0.63	4.30	Very High
Coordination	0.62	4.20	Very High
Decision Making	0.56	4.29	Very High
Interpersonal Skills	0.65	4.27	Very High
Leadership	0.63	4.22	Very High
Overall	0.54	4.23	Very High

Based on the result, the level of teamwork skills is very high, with an overall mean of 4.23. This signifies that the level of teamwork skills is always manifested. The very high level of teamwork skills observed among public schools in Cateel can be attributed to the deeply ingrained cultural values of cooperation, bayanihan (community spirit), and collective responsibility that define the Cateelenos.

Moreover, the result suggests an intense collaborative atmosphere in the school environment. High teamwork skills indicate that employees in public schools can manage conflicts constructively, fostering a more harmonious workplace with minimal disruptions due to misunderstandings or disagreements. The result is congruent with the study of De Prada et al. (2022), which highlighted that effective teamwork is crucial for students' academic success and personal development, emphasizing the importance of fostering collaborative environments in educational settings.

Further, among the six (6) indicators, communication garnered the highest mean of 4.30, indicating a very high level. This suggests that communication skills are consistently demonstrated among stakeholders in the school. This result aligned with the study of Salamondra (2021), indicating that when school administrators and teachers engage in open, empathetic communication, it fosters a supportive and collaborative school climate.

3.3 Level of Sense of Community

The level of Sense of Community refers to the degree to which individuals feel a sense of belonging, mutual support, and connection within a group or environment. Presented in Table 3 is the level of understanding of community as measured by two indicators, namely valued membership and social support. The result revealed an overall Standard Deviation of 0.52 and a total mean rating of 4.26, labeled as Very High. The very high level of sense of community observed among public school stakeholders in Cateel can be closely linked to the strong cultural values of solidarity, mutual support, and close interpersonal relationships that are characteristic of the Cateelenos.

Table 3. *Level of Sense of Community*

Indicator	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Valued Membership	0.55	4.43	Very High
Social Support	0.67	4.14	High
Overall	0.52	4.26	Very High

It can also be observed from the table that the indicator valued membership achieved the highest mean score of 4.43, labeled as Very High, compared to social support, which had a mean score of 4.14, described as High. The very high level of social support implied that respondents feel a strong sense of belonging and recognition within their school community. This indicated that individuals perceive themselves as necessary and appreciated members of their community, which can enhance motivation, engagement, and commitment to the institution. However, while social support is still rated positively, a slightly lower mean score suggests that there may be areas for improvement in fostering interpersonal connections and assistance among community members. This is by the study by Haim-Litevsky et al. (2023), who found a significant association between sense of belonging and well-being, suggesting that a strong sense of community can enhance overall life satisfaction and engagement in daily activities. The result is similar to that of Mellinger et al. (2023), who found a high mean score for valued membership in the study, as feeling valued is a core component of belonging.

3.4 Correlation between Staff-Family Partnership and Sense of Community

Staff-family partnership encourages a strong sense of community by fostering open communication, shared decision-making, and the involvement of students' families in educational experiences. Table 4 presents the correlation between the staff-family partnership and the sense of community. As shown in the table, the correlation yielded an overall $r = .600$, $p < .001$, indicating a significant relationship between staff-family partnership and sense of community. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between staff-family collaboration and sense of community is rejected.

Table 4. Significance of the Relationship between Staff-Family Partnership and Sense of Community

Staff-Family Partnership	Sense of Community		Overall
	Valued Membership	Social Support	
Encouragement to Participate in Care	0.400**	0.401**	0.524**
Family's Trust and Support	0.413**	0.355**	0.496**
Collaborative Relationship and Communication	0.441**	0.396**	0.523**
Professional Care	0.424**	0.361**	0.506**
Overall	0.491**	0.443**	0.600**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

It can also be seen from the table that staff-family partnership is significantly correlated with sense of community, as indicated by $p < .001$. The correlation coefficients for the components of staff-family partnership were as follows: encouragement to participate in care ($r = .524$), family's trust and support ($r = .496$), collaborative relationship and communication ($r = .523$), and professional care ($r = .506$). Moreover, the data revealed that a sense of community is positively associated with staff-family partnership. Specifically, the indicators of sense of community yielded the following correlation values: valued membership ($r = .491$) and social support ($r = .443$), with $p < .001$ for both. Thus, the two variables are significantly associated. This implies that there is a positive link between staff-family partnership and sense of community. This means that staff-family collaboration has something to do with the sense of community.

The correlation between the staff-family partnership and sense of community revealed a significant relationship. The significant correlation between staff-family partnership components and sense of community underscores the vital role of shared responsibility in fostering a supportive environment. This result is in congruence with the study of Sriram et al. (2020), which revealed that a strong sense of community in schools predicted students' well-being, reinforcing the idea that community dynamics are influenced by teamwork and collaboration. Thus, Jang (2020) emphasizes that effective partnerships are characterized by collaborative processes that empower both staff and families, leading to improved outcomes in care environments.

On the other hand, Boyd et al. (2020) revealed that a strong sense of community is linked to better performance and satisfaction in various settings, including educational institutions, where students feel valued and connected to their peers and teachers. The result aligned with McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community Index Theory, reinforcing that a strong staff-family partnership enhances a sense of community by promoting belonging, influence, support, and shared experiences. This suggests that schools can strengthen their sense of community by fostering active collaboration and engagement between staff and families.

3.5 Correlation between Teamwork Skills and Sense of Community

As people collaborate to achieve a common goal while fostering support and a sense of belonging, teamwork abilities become crucial for building a strong sense of community. Table 5 presents the correlation between teamwork and sense of community. As shown in the table, teamwork skills are positively correlated with measures of sense of community, with an overall $r = .770$, $p < .001$, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship.

The results indicate that teamwork skills have a significant positive relationship with sense of community, as evidenced by $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between teamwork skills and understanding of the community is rejected. Further analysis revealed the following correlation coefficients for teamwork skill indicators: adaptability ($r = .559$), communication ($r = .593$), coordination ($r = .597$), decision-making ($r = .681$), interpersonal skills ($r = .736$), and leadership ($r = .828$), all significant at $p < .001$. Additionally, the components of sense of community showed positive correlations with

teamwork skills: valued membership ($r = .632$) and social support ($r = .436$), also with $p < .001$. These findings suggest that individuals with strong teamwork skills tend to experience a greater sense of belonging and value within their school community. This further indicates that effective teamwork contributes to stronger interpersonal relationships and support systems. Overall, the significant correlation between teamwork skills and sense of community implies that enhancing collaborative competencies may foster a more cohesive and supportive educational environment.

Table 5. *Significance of the Relationship between Teamwork Skills and Sense of Community*

Staff-Family Partnership	Sense of Community		
	Valued Membership	Social Support	Overall
Adaptability	0.460**	0.323**	0.559**
Communication	0.519**	0.276**	0.593**
Coordination	0.472**	0.371**	0.597**
Decision Making	0.553**	0.413**	0.681**
Interpersonal Skills	0.659**	0.414**	0.736**
Leadership	0.610**	0.466**	0.828**
Overall	0.632**	0.436**	0.770**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result of the study confirmed the study of Chatterjee and Correia (2019) that a moderate positive correlation exists between learners' sense of community and their success in team development, suggesting that effective teamwork enhances the feeling of community among participants. In addition, Howell et al. (2023) explained that higher teamwork scores were associated with better provider experiences and lower burnout, suggesting that effective teamwork contributes to a supportive community environment. Lastly, the result was further confirmed by the study of Sriram et al. (2020), which indicated that a strong sense of community within schools was a significant predictor of students' well-being, highlighting the role of teamwork and collaboration in shaping community dynamics.

The result also affirmed Tuckman's (1965) Team Development Model, which outlines the stages of team formation—forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning—by demonstrating that teamwork skills are significantly correlated with a sense of community. The strong correlations between leadership ($r = 0.828$), interpersonal skills ($r = 0.736$), and decision-making ($r = 0.681$) suggest that as teams progress through these stages, they develop stronger relationships, coordination, and shared purpose, ultimately fostering a highly cohesive and engaged community. The findings align with Tuckman's model, particularly in the norming and performing stages, where effective communication, collaboration, and trust contribute to a more unified and productive environment. This reinforces the idea that well-developed teamwork skills are essential for building a strong sense of community, as individuals work together towards common goals while fostering mutual support and shared belonging.

3.6 Predictors of Sense of Community

This section presents the results identifying the predictors of sense of community among public schools. As shown in Table 6, the model significantly predicts sense of community, as indicated by $F = 193.36$, $p < .001$. This result implies that the overall model is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that staff-family partnership and teamwork skills do not significantly predict sense of community is rejected.

Table 6. *Significance of the Influence of Staff-Family Partnership and Teamwork Skills Indicators towards Sense of Community*

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Beta	SE	Standardized Beta	t	P
Constant	1.165	.123		9.460	.000
Leadership	.540	.042	.664	12.819	.000
Collaborative Relationship and Communication	.116	.028	.154	4.203	.000
Interpersonal Skills	.180	.044	.227	4.069	.000
Communication	.101	.040	.124	2.522	.012
R = 0.851					
R ² = 0.724					
F = 193.36					
Sig. = 0.000					

The data also revealed that when leadership, collaborative relationship, communication, interpersonal skills, and sense of community were regressed on sense of community, the model yielded $r^2 = .724$. This indicates that these variables can explain 72.4% of the variance in sense of community, while the remaining 27.6% is attributed to other factors. Among the predictors, leadership had the highest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .664, p < .001$), suggesting it had the most decisive influence on sense of community. This was followed by interpersonal skills ($\beta = .227, p < .001$), collaborative relationship and communication ($\beta = .154, p < .001$), and communication ($\beta = .124, p = .012$), all of which showed statistically significant positive relationships. These findings highlight the importance of fostering leadership, teamwork, and communication skills in enhancing the sense of community within educational settings.

The results highlighted that strong leadership, effective communication, interpersonal skills, and collaborative staff-family relationships are key contributors to fostering a sense of community. These elements promote connection, shared responsibility, and mutual support, which are the core principles of the Sense of Community Theory by McMillan and Chavis (1986), emphasizing their importance in creating a positive and inclusive environment. Additionally, these results reinforced the theory's components: leadership and interpersonal skills enhance membership and influence; collaborative efforts and effective communication promote integration and fulfillment of needs; and together, these foster a stronger emotional connection within the community. This highlighted the importance of cultivating these skills and partnerships to build a more cohesive and supportive school environment. The results are also consistent with several studies, such as that of Schuldt and Gabel (2023), who emphasized that leadership styles play a significant role in fostering community bonds, and Curado et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of organizational communication in building trust, promoting social exchange, and strengthening collective identity.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, several conclusions were drawn regarding the dynamics of staff-family partnership, teamwork skills, and the sense of community among school stakeholders. The study concluded that a high level of staff-family collaboration exists within the school context, particularly in the area of family trust and support, which fosters a collaborative and nurturing environment. Nevertheless, there is a notable need to enhance professional care practices to strengthen these partnerships further.

In addition, the results revealed that stakeholders possess very high levels of teamwork skills, especially in communication, which significantly contributes to a strong sense of community within the school. The sense of community was found to be very prominent among members, indicating a deep feeling of belonging and mutual support. Statistically significant relationships were observed between staff-family partnership and sense of community, as well as between teamwork skills and sense of community, suggesting that both relational and collaborative elements are crucial to cultivating a positive school culture. Furthermore, leadership, cooperative relationships, communication, interpersonal skills, and communication were identified as significant predictors of the sense of community, accounting for a substantial portion of its variance. These findings align with McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community Theory, emphasizing that shared emotional connections, membership, influence, and fulfillment of needs are fostered through strong partnerships and effective collaboration. Additionally, the results support Tuckman's (1965) Team Development Model by affirming the role of structured team processes in achieving high-functioning group dynamics. Thus, this study highlights the importance of strengthening relational and communication competencies within the school to reinforce a more engaged, connected, and supportive educational environment.

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the sense of community in public schools: The study identified key areas for improvement in public schools. Professional care, the lowest-rated component of staff-family partnership, suggests a need for enhanced staff training, clear caregiving protocols, and stronger communication with families. In teamwork skills, adaptability scored lowest, indicating the importance of training on flexibility, change management, and problem-solving. Although the overall sense of community was very high, social support lagged, highlighting the need for peer support initiatives, mental health programs, and inclusive practices. Given the significant positive correlations between staff-family partnership, teamwork skills, and sense of community, schools are encouraged to strengthen collaboration, open communication, and shared decision-making to foster a more supportive and connected school culture. For future research, researchers may explore other potential predictors of sense of community, such as school leadership styles, student engagement, and cultural factors. Comparative studies across different

regions or school types may also provide broader insights. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups could deepen understanding of stakeholder experiences and perspectives regarding school community dynamics.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1 conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, developed the instruments, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Author 2 provided guidance throughout the research process, offered critical feedback on the study design and data interpretation, and reviewed and revised the manuscript for intellectual content. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript and are accountable for its content.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the completion and publication of this manuscript.

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