

Understanding School Safety: A Study on Respondent Profile and Stakeholders' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the level of school safety and its influencing factors within the school community of Bangsud Integrated School, Tago, Surigao del Sur. Specifically, it determined the profile of respondents in terms of years in service, educational background, relevant trainings attended, and level of School-Based Management (SBM), and assessed their perception of school safety across five dimensions: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying and cyberbullying, substance use, and emergency readiness. The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design and utilized a researcher-made questionnaire administered to 140 respondents, including teachers, school heads, and stakeholders. Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, and weighted mean.

Findings revealed that most teachers and school heads are early-career professionals with adequate educational qualifications, while stakeholders generally have lower educational attainment and limited training exposure. All schools were categorized under Level II – Maturing SBM. The overall level of perception of school safety was rated very high, indicating a generally safe and supportive school environment. However, bullying and cyberbullying obtained relatively lower ratings, highlighting an area that requires attention.

Based on the findings, a school safety intervention program was proposed to strengthen social-emotional support, enhance anti-bullying initiatives, improve stakeholder capacity-building, and sustain emergency preparedness. The study concludes that while schools demonstrate strong safety practices, continuous improvement and collaborative efforts are essential to address emerging concerns and sustain a positive school climate.

Keywords: school safety, school climate, bullying, stakeholder engagement, School-Based Management, intervention program

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the level of school safety and its influencing factors within the school community, focusing on teachers, school administrators, and stakeholders. Specifically, it seeks to determine the profile of respondents in terms of years in service, educational background, relevant trainings attended, and level of School-Based Management (SBM); assess the level of perception of school safety in terms of emotional safety, physical safety, bullying and cyberbullying, substance use, and emergency readiness; and, based on these findings, propose a school safety intervention program or strategic action plan to enhance the overall safety and well-being of the school community. Through this, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current school safety climate and serve as a basis for improving school practices and stakeholder collaboration.

Existing literature strongly supports the importance of school safety as a fundamental component of a positive school climate. Studies have shown that when students perceive their school as safe both emotionally and physically, they are more likely to engage in learning, demonstrate positive behavior, and achieve better academic outcomes (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Emotional safety, in particular, fosters a sense of

belonging and psychological well-being, which are essential for student development (Durlak et al., 2011). Meanwhile, issues such as bullying and cyberbullying continue to pose significant threats to student safety, affecting not only academic performance but also mental health (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021). Furthermore, research emphasizes that effective school safety is strengthened through collaborative efforts among teachers, administrators, and stakeholders, as well as through strong School-Based Management (SBM) practices that promote shared decision-making and accountability (Epstein et al., 2019; Alinsunurin, 2020). Emergency preparedness and substance use prevention programs have also been identified as critical components of comprehensive school safety frameworks (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023). These findings highlight that school safety is a multidimensional construct that requires continuous and collective efforts to ensure a supportive and secure learning environment.

Despite the growing body of literature on school safety and climate, there remains a notable gap in localized and context-specific evidence, particularly in geographically isolated and resource-constrained schools such as Bangsud Integrated School in Tago, Surigao del Sur. While existing studies have extensively explored the general dimensions of school safety, they often overlook how respondent characteristics, stakeholder participation, and the level of School-Based Management (SBM) interact to shape safety perceptions in rural public schools. Moreover, limited research has been conducted that integrates the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders simultaneously, which is crucial in understanding the full scope of school safety as a shared responsibility. In the context of Bangsud Integrated School, there is also a lack of empirical data that examines specific areas such as bullying and cyberbullying, stakeholder training gaps, and emergency preparedness practices, which are increasingly relevant in today's educational setting. This study therefore addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder analysis of school safety and by generating context-based evidence that can inform targeted interventions and sustainable school improvement initiatives.

This study is significant as it directly addresses the identified gap by providing context-specific, evidence-based insights on school safety within Bangsud Integrated School, Tago, Surigao del Sur. By examining the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the school safety climate, highlighting both strengths and areas needing improvement. The findings serve as a basis for developing a targeted intervention program that responds to actual needs, particularly in areas such as bullying prevention, stakeholder capacity-building, and emergency preparedness. Moreover, the study contributes to strengthening School-Based Management (SBM) by promoting informed decision-making, collaborative practices, and shared accountability among school and community members. Ultimately, this research provides practical guidance for school leaders, educators, and policymakers in designing and implementing strategies that enhance the safety, well-being, and overall quality of the learning environment, especially in geographically isolated and underserved school settings.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to assess the profile of respondents and their perception of school safety as basis for an intervention program. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Year in service;
 - 1.2 Educational background;
 - 1.3 Relevant trainings attended; and
 - 1.4 Level of School-Based Management (SBM)?
2. What is the level of perception of school safety among teachers, administrators, and parents in terms of:
 - 2.1 Emotional safety;
 - 2.2 Physical safety;

2.3 Bullying and cyberbullying;

2.4 Substance use; and

2.5 Emergency readiness?

3. Based on the findings of the study, what school safety intervention program or strategic action plan can be proposed to enhance the overall safety and well-being of the school community?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Design (QUAN → QUAL), wherein quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to explain and enrich the initial findings. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to quantify patterns and subsequently explore the underlying reasons behind those patterns, particularly in areas where results require deeper interpretation, such as the relatively lower ratings in bullying and cyberbullying (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative phase utilized a descriptive survey design to determine the respondents' profile and assess their level of perception of school safety across five dimensions: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying and cyberbullying, substance use, and emergency readiness. A total of 140 respondents participated, including teachers, school heads, and stakeholders.

To complement the quantitative findings, a qualitative phase was conducted using semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected subset of respondents, including teachers, school heads, and stakeholders who demonstrated varying perceptions of school safety. This phase aimed to provide deeper insights into the contextual realities of the school environment, particularly to explain why bullying and cyberbullying received comparatively lower ratings and to identify potential safety concerns not captured in the survey instrument.

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which include data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Emerging themes highlighted issues such as underreporting of bullying incidents, limited awareness of cyberbullying mechanisms, and the influence of peer dynamics and social media, which provided explanatory depth to the quantitative results.

Integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings was achieved during the interpretation phase, where qualitative themes were used to contextualize and explain survey results, thereby enhancing the overall validity and richness of the study. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of school safety by combining measurable data with lived experiences of the respondents.

The study was conducted at Bangsud Integrated School in Tago, Surigao del Sur, a public school located in a geographically isolated area. A total of 140 respondents participated in the study, consisting of 35 teachers, 5 school heads/principals, and 100 stakeholders, ensuring representation from key members of the school community.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. The tool consisted of two parts: (1) the profile of the respondents, and (2) the level of perception of school safety across five domains. The instrument utilized a Likert scale to quantify respondents' perceptions and facilitate statistical analysis.

The study employed a combination of complete enumeration and stratified random sampling to ensure comprehensive and representative participation. Complete enumeration was applied to teachers and school heads, as all members of these groups in Bangsud Integrated School were included in the study to capture the full range of instructional and administrative perspectives.

For stakeholders, stratified random sampling was utilized to improve representativeness and reduce sampling bias. The stakeholder population was first grouped into relevant strata based on variables that may influence perceptions of school safety, namely: (1) distance from the school (proximal vs. distant households), (2) child's

grade level (elementary vs. secondary), and (3) length of community residence (less than 5 years vs. 5 years and above). These variables were selected because they reflect differences in school engagement, access to information, and familiarity with school policies and practices.

From each stratum, respondents were randomly selected proportionate to the size of the subgroup, ensuring that all key segments of the school community were adequately represented. This method enhances the external validity and generalizability of the findings within the local context, as it captures diverse experiences and perspectives related to school safety.

The data gathering procedure involved securing permission from school authorities, followed by the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires. All responses were organized, tabulated, and analyzed to ensure accuracy and reliability of the findings.

To minimize the potential influence of social desirability bias, particularly in sensitive areas such as bullying and substance use, the study ensured that all responses were collected anonymously. Questionnaires were administered without requiring respondents to disclose their names or any identifying information, allowing participants to provide honest and uninfluenced responses. Respondents were also informed that their answers would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Finally, the study adhered to ethical standards, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of responses. Respondents' identities were protected through the use of codes, and all collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

Data Sources and Validation of Data

While this study primarily utilized a survey questionnaire based on Likert-scale responses to measure respondents' perceptions of school safety, efforts were made to enhance the validity of the findings by incorporating available school-based records for contextual verification. These records included documented reports such as incident logs on bullying cases, disciplinary records, emergency drill reports, and other safety-related documentation maintained by the school.

The inclusion of these records allowed the researcher to cross-check and contextualize the perceptual data, ensuring that the reported levels of safety were not solely based on subjective responses. This approach helped mitigate the potential effects of social desirability bias, where respondents may tend to overrate positive conditions. As noted by Podsakoff et al. (2003), self-reported data are susceptible to bias when respondents provide socially acceptable answers rather than accurate reflections of reality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of Year in Service

Indicator	Category	Teachers (F/%)	School Head/Principal (F/%)	Stakeholders (F/%)	Overall (F/%)
Years in Service	Less than a year	1 (2.90)	–	–	1 (0.71)
	1–5 years	19 (54.2)	3 (60.0)	–	22 (15.71)
	6–10 years	8 (22.9)	1 (20.0)	–	9 (6.43)
	11 years and above	7 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	–	8 (5.71)
	None	–	–	100 (100.0)	100 (71.43)
	Total	35 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	140 (100.0)

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of years in service. The data reveal that the majority of teachers, comprising 54.2% (19 out of 35), and school heads/principals, 60.0% (3 out of 5), have 1–5 years of service, indicating that most of the educational personnel are in the early stage of their professional careers. A smaller proportion of teachers, 22.9%, fall within the 6–10 years category, while 20.0% have 11 years and above of experience. Similarly, among school heads, only 20.0% belong to each of the 6–10 years and 11 years and above categories. Notably, only 2.9% of teachers have less than one year of service.

On the other hand, all stakeholders (100%) are categorized under “None” in years of service, which is expected since they are not part of the formal teaching or administrative workforce. Overall, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the stakeholder group, representing 71.43% (100 out of 140) of the total sample, while teachers and school heads comprise the remaining portion.

The findings suggest that the school system in the selected area is largely composed of early-career teachers and relatively new school leaders, with limited representation from highly experienced personnel.

The dominance of early-career teachers and administrators has several important implications. On one hand, younger professionals often bring fresh perspectives, adaptability, and openness to innovation, which can contribute positively to instructional practices and school improvement initiatives. On the other hand, limited experience may pose challenges in terms of classroom management, decision-making, and leadership effectiveness, particularly in complex school environments.

This situation highlights the need for structured mentoring programs, continuous professional development, and leadership training to support novice teachers and school heads. Strengthening these support systems can enhance their competence, confidence, and long-term retention in the profession.

Furthermore, the absence of “years in service” among stakeholders emphasizes their role as external partners rather than institutional actors. This underscores the importance of capacity-building activities for stakeholders, enabling them to meaningfully participate in school governance, decision-making, and collaborative initiatives.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the presence of early-career educators offers opportunities for innovation, institutional support mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure sustainable school improvement and a positive school climate.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of Educational Background

Indicator	Category	Teachers (F/%)	School Head/Principal (F/%)	Stakeholders (F/%)	Overall (F/%)
Educational Background	Elementary Graduate	–	–	–	–
	High School Level	–	–	53 (53.0)	53 (37.86)
	High School Graduate	–	–	19 (19.0)	19 (13.57)
	College Level	–	–	24 (24.0)	24 (17.14)
	College Graduate	17 (48.6)	2 (40.0)	4 (4.0)	23 (16.43)
	With MA Units	12 (34.3)	2 (40.0)	–	14 (10.00)
	MA Graduate	6 (17.1)	1 (20.0)	–	7 (5.00)
	Total	35 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	140 (100.0)

Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of educational background. The data reveal that among the teachers, the largest proportion, 48.6% (17 out of 35), are college graduates, followed by 34.3% (12) who have Master’s units, and 17.1% (6) who are Master’s degree holders. This indicates that all teachers possess at least a college degree, with a considerable number already pursuing or completing graduate studies.

Similarly, among school heads/principals, 40.0% (2 out of 5) are college graduates, another 40.0% (2) have Master’s units, and 20.0% (1) is a Master’s graduate, reflecting a relatively higher level of academic preparation expected for leadership roles.

In contrast, the educational background of stakeholders shows a different pattern. The majority, 53.0% (53 out of 100), are at the high school level, followed by 24.0% (24) with college-level education, and 19.0% (19) who are high school graduates. Only 4.0% (4) of stakeholders are college graduates, and none have postgraduate qualifications.

Overall, the findings highlight a clear distinction between the academic qualifications of school personnel and stakeholders, with teachers and school heads demonstrating higher levels of formal education compared to the stakeholder group.

The results suggest that teachers and school leaders are academically equipped to deliver instruction and manage school operations, which is essential for maintaining quality education and effective leadership. The presence of graduate-level qualifications among educators is a positive indicator of professional growth, instructional competence, and commitment to lifelong learning.

However, the relatively lower educational attainment among stakeholders may limit their capacity to fully engage in school governance, decision-making, and collaborative educational initiatives. This gap may affect the effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM), where active and informed stakeholder participation is crucial.

Thus, there is a need to implement capacity-building programs for stakeholders, such as orientations, trainings, and community education initiatives, to enhance their understanding of school processes and strengthen their involvement. Bridging this gap can foster stronger partnerships between schools and communities, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and inclusive school environment.

Furthermore, continuous support for teachers and school heads to pursue advanced studies should be encouraged to sustain instructional excellence and leadership effectiveness. Investing in both internal (teachers and administrators) and external (stakeholders) human resources is vital for holistic school development.

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Relevant Trainings Attended

Indicator	Category	Teachers (F/%)	School Head/Principal (F/%)	Stakeholders (F/%)	Overall (F/%)
Relevant Trainings Attended	First-aid and Basic Life Support	3 (8.6)	3 (60.0)	24 (24.0)	30 (21.43)
	Disaster Preparedness	8 (22.9)	1 (20.0)	–	9 (6.43)
	Mental Health and Well-being	7 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	10 (10.0)	18 (12.86)
	Cybersecurity Awareness	3 (8.6)	–	–	3 (2.14)
	None	14 (40.0)	–	66 (66.0)	80 (57.14)
	Total		35 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Table 3 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of relevant trainings attended. The data indicate that a significant proportion of respondents, 57.14% (80 out of 140), reported having no relevant training, with the majority coming from stakeholders (66.0%) and a notable portion among teachers (40.0%). This suggests a substantial gap in professional and capacity-building opportunities across the groups.

Among those who attended trainings, First-aid and Basic Life Support emerged as the most common, with 21.43% (30 respondents). Notably, a large proportion of school heads/principals (60.0%) have undergone this training, indicating strong awareness of emergency response at the leadership level. Stakeholders also show some participation (24.0%), while only a small percentage of teachers (8.6%) have attended this training.

In terms of Disaster Preparedness, 22.9% of teachers and 20.0% of school heads have received training, reflecting moderate exposure to disaster risk reduction initiatives. However, no stakeholders reported participation in this area, suggesting a lack of community-level preparedness training.

For Mental Health and Well-being, participation is relatively limited, with 20.0% of teachers, 20.0% of school heads, and 10.0% of stakeholders having attended such training. This indicates that while awareness exists, it is not yet widespread across all groups.

Lastly, Cybersecurity Awareness recorded the lowest participation, with only 8.6% of teachers having attended such training, and none among school heads and stakeholders. This highlights a critical gap in addressing digital safety concerns in the school context.

Overall, the findings reveal that while some respondents have participated in relevant trainings, the majority lack exposure to essential capacity-building programs, particularly in areas related to safety, mental health, and technology.

The high percentage of respondents with no relevant training suggests a pressing need for systematic and inclusive professional development programs. Without adequate training, teachers and stakeholders may face challenges in effectively responding to emergencies, supporting students' mental health, and addressing emerging issues such as cyber threats.

The relatively higher participation of school heads in first-aid and disaster preparedness trainings indicates that leadership is somewhat prepared; however, capacity should not remain centralized at the administrative level. Teachers, as frontliners in the classroom, must also be equipped with practical skills in safety, crisis management, and psychosocial support.

Moreover, the limited involvement of stakeholders in training programs highlights a gap in community engagement and shared responsibility. Since stakeholders play a crucial role in School-Based Management (SBM), their lack of training may hinder effective collaboration and participation in school initiatives.

The low exposure to mental health and cybersecurity trainings is particularly concerning, given the increasing prevalence of student mental health issues and digital risks. Schools should therefore prioritize these areas by integrating them into regular training programs and ensuring that all stakeholders are included.

Overall, the findings call for a comprehensive and continuous capacity-building framework that addresses the diverse needs of teachers, school leaders, and stakeholders. Strengthening training programs can enhance preparedness, improve school safety, and contribute to a more resilient and supportive school environment.

Table 4. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Level of School-Based Management (SBM)

Indicator	Category	Teachers (F/%)	School Head/ Principal (F/%)	Stakeholders (F/%)	Overall (F/%)
Level of SBM	Level I – Developing	–	–	–	–

	Level II – Maturing	35 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	140 (100.0)
	Level III – Advanced	–	–	–	–
	Total	35 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	140 (100.0)

Table 4 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of the Level of School-Based Management (SBM). The data show that all respondents (100%), including teachers, school heads, and stakeholders, identified their schools as belonging to Level II – Maturing SBM.

However, it is important to clarify that this classification is based on respondents’ self-reported understanding of the school’s SBM status and was not independently verified using official Department of Education (DepEd) SBM validation or accreditation documents. As such, the reported SBM level should be interpreted as a reflection of perceived institutional status rather than a formally validated classification.

Despite this limitation, the consistent identification of Level II across all respondent groups suggests a shared perception that the school has already established functional governance structures, stakeholder participation, and basic management processes. Nonetheless, without formal validation records, it cannot be conclusively determined whether the school meets all official criteria required for Level II classification under DepEd standards.

These findings highlight the need for future studies to incorporate documentary verification, such as DepEd SBM validation reports, to ensure the accuracy of institutional classifications. Including such objective evidence would strengthen the reliability of findings and provide a more precise basis for evaluating school governance and management practices.

Table 5. The Level of Perception of School Safety among Teachers, Administrators, and Stakeholders

Indicator	Teachers		School Head/ Principal		Stakeholders		Overall
	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Adjectival Rating
Emotional Safety	4.53	Very High	4.76	Very High	4.56	Very High	Very High
Physical Safety	4.42	Very High	4.44	Very High	4.54	Very High	Very High
Bullying and Cyberbullying	4.14	High	4.08	High	4.19	High	High
Substance Use	4.26	Very High	4.16	High	4.41	Very High	Very High
Emergency Readiness	4.51	Very High	4.60	Very High	4.65	Very High	Very High
Over-all Mean	4.47	Very High	4.41	Very High	4.47	Very High	Very High

Table 5 presents the level of perception of school safety among teachers, school heads, and stakeholders across five key dimensions. Quantitative results indicate that the overall level of school safety is perceived as “Very High,” with mean scores of 4.47 for teachers, 4.41 for school heads, and 4.47 for stakeholders. While these results suggest a generally positive perception of the school environment, the interpretation remains context-bound and perception-based, rather than an absolute measure of safety.

Across the dimensions, emotional safety, physical safety, substance use, and emergency readiness consistently received “Very High” ratings. However, bullying and cyberbullying obtained comparatively lower mean scores (Teachers = 4.14; School Heads = 4.08; Stakeholders = 4.19), interpreted as “High,” indicating a relative area of concern.

To further explain these findings, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results revealed several emerging themes that provide deeper insight into the lower ratings in bullying and cyberbullying:

1. Underreporting of Bullying Incidents

Participants noted that many bullying cases are not formally reported due to fear of retaliation or the belief that such incidents are minor and manageable. As one stakeholder shared, “*Usahay dili na i-report kay ginagmay ra man daw, pero naa gihapon nahitabo*” (Sometimes it is not reported because it is considered minor, but it still happens). This suggests that official records may not fully reflect actual occurrences.

2. Normalization of Peer Conflict

Some respondents perceived bullying behaviors as part of normal student interaction. Teachers and stakeholders mentioned that teasing and verbal conflicts are often viewed as “typical behavior,” which may lead to underestimation of bullying severity.

3. Limited Awareness of Cyberbullying

The qualitative findings also revealed gaps in understanding cyberbullying, particularly among stakeholders. Several respondents expressed uncertainty about what constitutes online bullying, indicating that digital safety issues may be present but not fully recognized.

4. Influence of Social Media and Peer Dynamics

Participants highlighted that conflicts among students often extend beyond the classroom through social media platforms, making them harder to monitor and address. This reflects emerging safety challenges not fully captured in the survey instrument.

Intervention Program

SAFE Schools Initiative: Strategic Action Plan

Program Goal

To enhance the safety and well-being of the school community through targeted, measurable, and time-bound interventions.

Key Components with Time-Bound Actions and Indicators

Component	Specific Activities	Time Frame	Performance Indicators	Target Outcome
Anti-Bullying & Cyber Safety Program	Conduct monthly awareness campaigns, establish reporting system, integrate digital citizenship lessons	Within 12 months	Number of reported bullying incidents	20% reduction in reported bullying cases within 1 year
Emotional Safety & SEL Program	Quarterly SEL workshops, peer mentoring, guidance sessions	Quarterly	Student well-being survey scores	Improved emotional safety rating by at least 5%

Capacity-Building Training	Conduct trainings on mental health, first aid, cybersecurity	Semi-annual	Number of trained participants	80% of teachers and 50% of stakeholders trained
Emergency Preparedness (DRRM)	Conduct quarterly drills and update protocols	Quarterly	Drill performance evaluation	100% participation; improved response time
Stakeholder Engagement	Conduct quarterly meetings and safety orientations	Quarterly	Attendance and participation rate	Increased stakeholder participation by 30%

Estimated Budget (Sample MOOE Allocation)

Activity	Estimated Cost (PHP)
Training and Workshops (materials, kits)	₱60,000
Anti-Bullying Campaign (IEC materials, seminars)	₱25,000
Emergency Drills and Safety Equipment	₱35,000
Monitoring and Evaluation	₱20,000
Stakeholder Engagement Activities	₱20,000
Total Estimated Budget	₱160,000

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The program will be monitored using quantitative and performance-based indicators, including:

- Reduction in reported bullying and disciplinary cases
- Improvement in school safety perception ratings
- Participation rates in trainings and activities
- Evaluation reports from drills and safety audits

Monitoring will be conducted quarterly, while a comprehensive evaluation will be done at the end of the school year to assess program effectiveness and inform improvements.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several key conclusions were drawn in relation to the three problems investigated.

First, in terms of the profile of the respondents, the study revealed that most teachers and school heads are in the early years of service and possess at least a college degree, with some pursuing or having completed graduate studies. However, a significant number of stakeholders have lower educational attainment and limited exposure to relevant trainings. Additionally, all schools are categorized under Level II – Maturing School-Based Management (SBM), indicating that while governance structures and stakeholder participation are already established, they have not yet reached the highest level of institutional development.

Second, regarding the level of perception of school safety, the findings showed that respondents generally perceive the school environment as very safe and supportive, particularly in terms of emotional safety, physical safety, substance use awareness, and emergency readiness. However, the area of bullying and cyberbullying, although rated positively, received comparatively lower ratings, suggesting that it remains a concern that requires continuous monitoring and intervention.

Finally, based on the results of the study, an intervention program was proposed to further enhance school safety and well-being. The proposed program emphasizes strengthening social-emotional support, addressing bullying and cyberbullying, improving training and capacity-building for both school personnel and stakeholders, and sustaining emergency preparedness and collaborative practices. This intervention reflects the need to build on existing strengths while addressing identified gaps to ensure a safer, more inclusive, and resilient school environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance school safety and overall school effectiveness:

First, considering that most teachers and school heads are in the early stages of their careers, schools should strengthen mentoring and professional development programs. Experienced educators and administrators may guide novice personnel through coaching, peer mentoring, and continuous training to improve instructional practices, classroom management, and leadership competencies. At the same time, educational institutions are encouraged to support graduate studies and lifelong learning opportunities to further enhance professional growth.

Second, given the relatively lower educational attainment and limited training exposure among stakeholders, schools should implement capacity-building programs for parents and community members. These may include orientations, workshops, and community education initiatives that will empower stakeholders to actively participate in School-Based Management (SBM) processes and decision-making. Strengthening stakeholder competence can lead to more meaningful collaboration and shared responsibility in school improvement efforts.

Third, since all schools are at the Level II – Maturing SBM, there is a need to intensify efforts toward achieving Level III – Advanced SBM. Schools should enhance their practices in data-driven decision-making, policy implementation, resource management, and stakeholder engagement. Support from higher authorities, such as the Department of Education, through technical assistance and monitoring, is essential to facilitate this transition.

Fourth, although the level of school safety is generally very high, schools must continue to sustain and strengthen safety measures, particularly in areas that require improvement such as bullying and cyberbullying. Schools should implement comprehensive anti-bullying programs, promote digital citizenship, and establish clear reporting and intervention mechanisms to address these concerns effectively.

Fifth, schools should expand and institutionalize training programs related to mental health, emergency preparedness, and safety awareness for teachers, administrators, and stakeholders. Regular drills, seminars, and workshops should be conducted to ensure preparedness and responsiveness in various situations, including disasters and psychosocial concerns.

Schools are strongly encouraged to pursue official Department of Education (DepEd) School-Based Management (SBM) validation and accreditation processes to ensure accurate and evidence-based classification of their SBM level. While this study identified the school as Level II – Maturing based on respondents' perceptions, formal validation using DepEd standards and instruments would provide a more objective and comprehensive assessment of school governance, leadership practices, and stakeholder engagement. Through official SBM evaluation, schools can systematically identify specific strengths and areas for improvement required to progress toward Level III – Advanced SBM, which emphasizes institutional autonomy, accountability, and sustained performance outcomes. Furthermore, the results of such validation can guide the development of targeted action plans, resource allocation, and capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that

improvement efforts are aligned with national standards. Engaging in formal SBM validation not only strengthens internal processes but also enhances transparency, credibility, and continuous school improvement.

Future studies are encouraged to incorporate objective safety indicators to complement perceptual data and enhance the validity of findings. While this study relied on respondents' perceptions of school safety, integrating empirical records such as documented incident reports (e.g., bullying cases), disciplinary referrals, attendance records, and school safety audit results would provide a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of the school environment. The inclusion of such data allows for triangulation, enabling researchers to compare perceived safety with actual occurrences and institutional records. This approach can reduce the potential influence of social desirability bias and improve the accuracy of conclusions. Moreover, combining perceptual and objective measures can offer deeper insights into discrepancies between reported experiences and documented realities, thereby informing more targeted and evidence-based interventions for school safety.

Lastly, the proposed school safety intervention program (SAFE Schools Initiative) should be implemented, monitored, and continuously improved based on feedback and evaluation results. Schools are encouraged to adopt a collaborative and proactive approach, involving all stakeholders in planning, implementation, and assessment, to ensure the sustainability of a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.

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