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ENHANCING STAKEHOLDER TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how transparency and accountability in school governance relate to stakeholder trust and confidence in public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District of the Schools Division Office of Bataan during School Year 2026–2027. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used. Data were obtained from 204 purposively selected respondents composed of 68 teachers, 68 parent representatives, and 68 community leaders from 68 public elementary schools. A researcher-developed, expert-validated questionnaire measured transparency in decision-making, financial management, and communication; accountability in school performance, policy compliance, and responsibility to stakeholders; and trust and confidence in integrity, competence, reliability, and openness. Descriptive statistics, Spearman's rho, and multiple linear regression were used. Transparency was evident ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.21$), accountability was evident ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.18$), and respondents agreed that school leaders inspired trust and confidence ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.22$). Transparency ($r_s = .193$, $p = .006$) and accountability ($r_s = .176$, $p = .012$) each had a significant weak positive relationship with trust and confidence. The combined regression model was significant, $F = 3.73$, $p = .026$, but explained only 3.6% of the variance. Neither transparency nor accountability made a significant unique contribution at the .05 level. The findings support a governance enhancement framework emphasizing participatory decision-making, accessible financial disclosure, consistent service delivery, documented accountability, and structured stakeholder feedback.

Keywords: *governance, transparency, accountability, stakeholder trust, stakeholder confidence, public elementary schools*

INTRODUCTION

School governance determines how educational institutions make decisions, manage resources, communicate priorities, and remain answerable to the communities they serve. In public elementary schools, effective governance requires more than administrative compliance. It requires openness, responsible leadership, and meaningful participation by teachers, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Transparency and accountability therefore operate as central conditions for cultivating confidence in school leadership.

Transparency refers to the timely, clear, and accessible disclosure of information concerning decisions, finances, programs, and performance. Accountability refers to the obligation of school leaders to explain and justify their actions, comply with policy, and accept responsibility for results. Transparency reduces information asymmetry, while accountability provides answerability and the possibility of evaluation (Bovens, 2007; Cucciniello et al., 2021; Hood, 2006). In education, these principles become credible when stakeholders can understand information, participate in governance, and observe whether commitments lead to consistent outcomes.

The study is anchored in Stakeholder Theory, Accountability Theory, and Transparency Theory. Stakeholder Theory emphasizes that institutions must recognize and balance the interests of groups affected by organizational decisions (Freeman, 1984). Accountability Theory explains the relationship through which leaders report, justify conduct, and become subject to evaluation (Bovens, 2007). Transparency Theory highlights openness, information accessibility, and procedural clarity as safeguards against ambiguity and misuse of authority (Hood, 2006). Together, these theories explain why inclusive, visible, and answerable governance can influence trust.

Philippine public schools operate within a framework of shared governance and ethical public service. Republic Act No. 9155 decentralizes authority and promotes shared governance, while Republic Act No. 6713 requires integrity, professionalism, responsiveness, and accountability among public officials. School-Based Management, School Governance Councils, Parent-Teacher Associations, School Improvement Planning, School Report Cards, and financial reporting mechanisms provide formal avenues for participation and disclosure.

Studies associate participatory decision-making, transparent financial management, open communication, ethical leadership, and performance monitoring with stronger stakeholder engagement and institutional credibility (Hallinger, 2022; Leithwood et al., 2021; OECD, 2023; Santiago & Bautista, 2023). Trust, however, is multidimensional. It depends not only on disclosure and compliance but also on integrity, competence, reliability, fairness, responsiveness, and service quality (Jederlund & von Rosen, 2022; Molina & Lamb, 2022; Payne et al., 2022).

A gap remains because transparency, accountability, and stakeholder trust are often studied separately, and limited local evidence simultaneously examines their

dimensions among teachers, parents, and community leaders. This study addressed that gap by determining their levels, testing their relationships, evaluating predictive influence, and using the findings as the basis for a School Governance Enhancement Framework for public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District of Bataan.

Research Questions

This study aimed to examine how transparency and accountability practices in school governance influence stakeholder trust and confidence among public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District in the Schools Division Office of Bataan during the School Year 2026–2027.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the level of transparency in school governance be described in terms of:
    1.1 decision-making process;
    1.2 financial management practices; and
    1.3 communication mechanism?
2. What is the level of accountability in school governance in terms of the following dimensions:
    2.1 school performance;
    2.2 policy compliance; and
    2.3 responsibility to stakeholders?
3. What is the level of stakeholder trust and confidence in terms of?
    3.1 integrity;
    3.2 competence;
    3.3 reliability; and
    3.4 openness?
4. Is there a significant relationship between transparency in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence?
5. Is there a significant relationship between accountability in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence?
6. To what extent do transparency and accountability significantly predict stakeholder trust and confidence?
7. Based on the results and findings, what School Governance Enhancement Framework may be developed?

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between transparency in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence.
2. There is no significant relationship between accountability in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Locale

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational methodology to assess the degree of transparency and accountability in school governance and its correlation with stakeholder trust and confidence in public elementary schools within the Third Congressional District of the Schools Division Office of Bataan. No variable was manipulated, and responses were obtained from participants in their natural school setting.

Respondents and Sampling

The study covered 68 public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District of the Schools Division Office of Bataan during School Year 2026-2027. Purposive sampling identified 204 respondents with direct knowledge of school governance: 68 teachers with leadership or governance experience, 68 parent representatives serving as School Parent-Teacher Association presidents, and 68 community leaders participating in a School Governance Council, barangay council, or local school board. The equal allocation ensured representation across the three stakeholder groups.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Respondent Group	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers	68	33.33%
Parents	68	33.33%
Community leaders	68	33.33%
Total	204	100.00%

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire developed based on the study objectives, theoretical framework, and literature on educational governance. The instrument consisted of three parts: transparency in school governance, accountability in school governance, and stakeholders' trust and confidence. Content validation was conducted by specialists in graduate research, educational supervision, and school administration, who assessed the relevance, clarity, alignment, and contextual appropriateness of the items. A pilot test involving respondents outside the main sample was conducted to assess internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .903, indicating excellent internal consistency. The first two parts used a four-point scale ranging from Highly Evident (4) to Not Evident (1), while the third used a four-point scale from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Data Gathering and Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured authorization from the appropriate university, Schools Division Office, and participating schools. After coordination with school heads and designated contacts, eligible respondents received an explanation of the study, consent information, and instructions for answering the questionnaire. Completed forms were checked, coded, tabulated, and prepared for analysis. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could decline without penalty.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the levels of transparency, accountability, and stakeholders' trust and confidence. Spearman's rank-order correlation was employed to determine the relationships between transparency and trust and confidence and between accountability and trust and confidence. Multiple linear regression was used to examine the joint and individual predictive contributions of transparency and accountability to stakeholders' trust and confidence.

Scope and Limitations

` The study focused on transparency and accountability in school governance and their relationships with stakeholders' trust and confidence in public elementary schools in the Third Congressional District of the Schools Division Office of Bataan during School Year 2026–2027. It covered transparency in decision-making, financial management, and communication; accountability in school performance, policy compliance, and responsibility to stakeholders; and trust and confidence in integrity, competence, reliability, and openness.

The findings were limited to the specified geographical and educational context and may not be generalizable to other school divisions or educational levels. Because the study relied on questionnaire responses, the findings may reflect respondents' perceptions and potential response bias. In addition, the correlational design identified statistical relationships but did not establish cause-and-effect relationships.

RESULTS

Part I. Level of Transparency

Part I describes the level of transparency in school governance in terms of decision-making process; financial management practices; and communication mechanism.

Table 1. Level of Transparency

Indicators	Mean	SD	DI
1. School leaders engage stakeholders in key decision-making processes.	3.07	0.65	Evident
2. Decisions are communicated clearly to teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.	3.02	0.67	Evident
3. Stakeholders have opportunities to share their perspectives before decisions are finalized.	2.97	0.63	Evident
4. School policies and programs are discussed openly in meetings and consultations.	3.00	0.65	Evident
5. Decisions are informed by clear data and the needs of the school.	3.03	0.72	Evident
6. The school's decision-making process is transparent and straightforward.	3.03	0.66	Evident
7. Stakeholders are kept informed about the rationale for major school decisions.	3.06	0.74	Evident
8. School leaders promote collaborative decision-making with teachers and stakeholders.	3.04	0.66	Evident
Decision-Making Processes	**3.03**	**0.29**	**Evident**
1. The school disseminates transparent information regarding budget allocation and expenditures.	2.98	0.68	Evident
2. Financial reports are distributed to stakeholders on a regular basis.	2.99	0.71	Evident
3. School funds are allocated and expended in alignment with established programs and institutional priorities.	3.01	0.68	Evident
4. Stakeholders receive information regarding the utilization of school funds, such as the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE).	2.99	0.64	Evident
5. All financial transactions are systematically documented and accurately recorded.	3.05	0.65	Evident
6. The school provides opportunities for stakeholders to inquire about financial matters.	3.00	0.62	Evident
7. Budget planning processes include consultation with relevant stakeholders.	3.09	0.64	Evident
8. Financial decisions are communicated transparently to the school community.	3.12	0.67	Evident
Financial Management Practices	**3.03**	**0.29**	**Evident**
1. School leaders disseminate timely updates regarding school programs and activities.	3.01	0.73	Evident
2. Communication between the school and stakeholders remains clear and accessible.	3.06	0.70	Evident
3. Essential information is communicated through meetings, reports, or digital platforms.	3.07	0.68	Evident
4. Stakeholders receive regular updates on school performance and achievements.	3.05	0.71	Evident
5. The school offers structured opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback.	3.11	0.65	Evident
6. Concerns raised by stakeholders are addressed in a timely manner.	3.16	0.69	Evident
7. Communication channels, such as meetings, chat groups, and notices, function effectively.	3.12	0.66	Evident
8. The school fosters open and transparent communication with all stakeholders.	3.10	0.69	Evident
Communication Mechanisms	**3.09**	**0.33**	**Evident**
Overall	**3.05**	**0.21**	**Evident**

Legend: 3.25-4.00 Highly Evident; 2.50-3.24 Evident; 1.75-2.49 Slightly Evident; 1.00-1.74 Not Evident

The level of transparency in school governance was assessed in terms of decision-making processes, financial management practices, and communication mechanisms. Overall, the findings indicate that transparency in school governance was evident, with an overall mean of M=3.05and a standard deviation of SD=0.21. This result suggests that respondents generally perceived their schools as practicing transparent governance

through stakeholder involvement, open financial practices, and accessible communication channels.

Transparency in decision-making processes was evident, with a composite mean of M=3.03and SD=0.29. This indicates that school leaders generally involved stakeholders and communicated important decisions in an open and understandable manner.

Among the indicators, the highest-rated item was the engagement of stakeholders in key decision-making processes (M=3.07, SD=0.65), followed by keeping stakeholders informed about the rationale for major school decisions (M=3.06, SD=0.74). School leaders were also perceived to promote collaborative decision-making with teachers and other stakeholders (M=3.04, SD=0.66).

The lowest-rated item, although still interpreted as evident, was the opportunity for stakeholders to share their perspectives before decisions were finalized (M=2.97, SD=0.63).

Financial management practices were likewise rated as evident, with a composite mean of M=3.03and SD=0.29. The result indicates that schools generally practiced transparency in budgeting, fund allocation, financial documentation, and the communication of financial decisions.

The highest-rated indicator was the transparent communication of financial decisions to the school community (M=3.12, SD=0.67). This was followed by stakeholder consultation in budget-planning processes (M=3.09, SD=0.64) and the systematic documentation and accurate recording of financial transactions (M=3.05, SD=0.65).

The lowest-rated item was the dissemination of transparent information regarding budget allocation and expenditures (M=2.98, SD=0.68). Although this remained evident, the finding implies that schools could improve the accessibility, clarity, and regularity of budget and expenditure information provided to stakeholders.

Communication mechanisms obtained the highest composite mean among the three dimensions, M=3.09, SD=0.33, and were interpreted as evident. This finding shows that schools generally maintained open, clear, and accessible communication with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

The highest-rated indicator was the timely response to concerns raised by stakeholders (M=3.16, SD=0.69). This was followed by the effective functioning of communication channels—including meetings, chat groups, and notices—(M=3.12, SD=0.66), as well as the provision of structured opportunities for stakeholders to give feedback (M=3.11, SD=0.65).

The lowest-rated item was the timely dissemination of updates regarding school programs and activities (M=3.01, SD=0.73); nevertheless, it was still rated as evident.

This suggests that schools may enhance transparency by ensuring that updates are disseminated more consistently and promptly across all stakeholder groups.

The findings indicate that transparency is present across decision-making, financial management, and communication, but its implementation appears stronger in responding to stakeholder concerns than in involving stakeholders before decisions are finalized. Communication mechanisms obtained the highest dimension mean (M = 3.09), while decision-making and financial management both obtained M = 3.03. The comparatively lower ratings for opportunities to share perspectives before final decisions (M = 2.97) and dissemination of budget and expenditure information (M = 2.98) suggest that transparency may function more as information disclosure than as full participatory governance. Thus, schools may strengthen transparency by institutionalizing pre-decision consultations, publishing simplified budget and MOOE reports, documenting stakeholder recommendations, and providing regular updates through accessible communication channels.

Recent literature supports the importance of moving from procedural disclosure toward meaningful participation. Tayanes et al., (2025) concluded that genuine stakeholder engagement emerges through reflective dialogue, shared agency, distributed leadership, institutional trust, and equitable transparency mechanisms. Soria and Rubio (2025) likewise found that school leaders actively practiced transparency and accountability in resource management, liquidation reporting, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Lopez and Bauyot (2025) further identified active collaboration, clear communication, resource allocation, and adaptability as important conditions for sustaining school-based programs. These studies support the present finding that transparent governance becomes more credible when stakeholders receive understandable information and participate before, during, and after school decisions.

Part II. Level of Accountability

Part II describes the level of accountability in school governance in terms school performance; policy compliance; and responsibility to stakeholders.

Table 2. Level of Accountability

Indicators	Mean	SD	DI
1. School leaders consistently monitor student performance and assess learning outcomes.	3.06	0.70	Evident
2. The school establishes explicit and quantifiable performance targets.	3.13	0.63	Evident
3. School leaders utilize data-driven approaches to enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning.	3.16	0.69	Evident
4. Performance outcomes are communicated to teachers and relevant stakeholders.	3.26	0.67	Evident
5. School leaders oversee the effective implementation of school improvement plans.	3.16	0.66	Evident
6. The school conducts routine evaluations of its programs and activities.	3.18	0.69	Evident
7. Teachers receive guidance and support to enhance their professional performance.	3.18	0.66	Evident
8. School leaders are accountable for attaining school performance objectives.	3.20	0.62	Evident

School Performance	**3.17**	**0.31**	**Evident**
1. School leaders consistently act with honesty in performing their duties.	3.29	0.64	Evident
2. All school activities and programs are implemented in accordance with established rules and regulations.	3.15	0.62	Evident
3. School leaders ensure that teachers and staff consistently comply with school policies.	3.19	0.60	Evident
4. Required reports and documents are submitted to relevant authorities within designated timelines.	3.24	0.65	Evident
5. School leaders actively promote ethical conduct and professionalism among all members of the school community.	3.23	0.59	Evident
6. Compliance with institutional policies is systematically monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.	3.10	0.65	Evident
7. School leaders address policy violations promptly and in accordance with established procedures.	3.03	0.68	Evident
8. The school maintains comprehensive documentation of its operations and activities.	3.02	0.64	Evident
Policy Compliance	**3.16**	**0.28**	**Evident**
1. School leaders incorporate stakeholder needs and concerns into the decision-making process.	3.06	0.64	Evident
2. Stakeholders are provided with opportunities to participate in school activities and programs.	3.06	0.63	Evident
3. School leaders address stakeholder concerns and feedback in a timely manner.	3.08	0.64	Evident
4. The school sustains effective partnerships with parents and the broader community.	3.04	0.62	Evident
5. Stakeholders actively participate in school planning and evaluation processes.	2.99	0.64	Evident
6. School leaders consistently demonstrate fairness and respect when engaging with stakeholders.	2.98	0.67	Evident
7. The school establishes mechanisms that enable stakeholders to express their concerns.	3.09	0.67	Evident
8. School leaders demonstrate a commitment to advancing the best interests of the school community.	3.15	0.63	Evident
Responsibility to Stakeholders	**3.06**	**0.31**	**Evident**
Overall	**3.13**	**0.18**	**Evident**

Legend: 3.25-4.00 Highly Evident; 2.50-3.24 Evident; 1.75-2.49 Slightly Evident; 1.00-1.74 Not Evident

The level of accountability in school governance was assessed in terms of school performance, policy compliance, and responsibility to stakeholders. Overall, accountability was rated at a high level, with an overall mean of M=3.13and a standard deviation of SD=0.18. This finding indicates that respondents generally perceived school leaders as accountable in monitoring performance, complying with institutional policies, and responding to stakeholder needs and concerns.

Accountability in terms of school performance obtained the highest composite mean among the three dimensions, M=3.17, SD=0.31. This result suggests that school leaders were highly accountable for monitoring student outcomes, implementing school improvement initiatives, using data to guide instructional decisions, and achieving school performance targets.

The highest-rated indicator was the communication of performance outcomes to teachers and relevant stakeholders (M=3.26, SD=0.67). This was followed by school leaders' accountability for attaining school performance objectives (M=3.20, SD=0.62). Routine evaluation of school programs and activities and the provision of guidance and

support to teachers both obtained a mean of M=3.18, with standard deviations of SD=0.69and SD=0.66, respectively.

The lowest-rated indicator was the consistent monitoring of student performance and assessment of learning outcomes (M=3.06, SD=0.70). Nevertheless, this item still reflected a high level of accountability.

Accountability in terms of policy compliance was also rated at a high level, with a composite mean of M=3.16and SD=0.28. The highest-rated indicator was that school leaders consistently acted with honesty in performing their duties (M=3.29, SD=0.64). Other highly rated indicators included the timely submission of required reports and documents to relevant authorities (M=3.24, SD=0.65), the promotion of ethical conduct and professionalism within the school community (M=3.23, SD=0.59), and the enforcement of teacher and staff compliance with school policies (M=3.19, SD=0.60).

The lowest-rated indicator was the maintenance of comprehensive documentation of school operations and activities (M=3.02, SD=0.64), closely followed by the prompt handling of policy violations according to established procedures (M=3.03, SD=0.68).

Responsibility to stakeholders received the lowest, though still high, composite mean among the dimensions, M=3.06, SD=0.31. The finding indicates that school leaders generally demonstrated accountability by considering stakeholder concerns, providing opportunities for involvement, establishing feedback mechanisms, and working toward the best interests of the school community.

The highest-rated indicator was school leaders' commitment to advancing the best interests of the school community (M=3.15, SD=0.63). This was followed by the establishment of mechanisms that enable stakeholders to express concerns (M=3.09, SD=0.67) and the timely response to stakeholder concerns and feedback (M=3.08, SD=0.64).

The lowest-rated indicator was the consistent demonstration of fairness and respect in engaging with stakeholders (M=2.98, SD=0.67), followed by stakeholder participation in school planning and evaluation processes (M=2.99, SD=0.64).

The findings show that accountability is evident in school performance, policy compliance, and responsibility to stakeholders, with the strongest emphasis on performance monitoring and institutional compliance. School performance obtained the highest dimension mean (M = 3.17), followed by policy compliance (M = 3.16), while responsibility to stakeholders received the lowest mean (M = 3.06). The pattern suggests that formal accountability mechanisms, such as communicating outcomes, meeting targets, submitting reports, and promoting ethical conduct, are more established than relational accountability practices. Lower ratings for comprehensive documentation, prompt handling of violations, stakeholder participation in planning and evaluation, and fairness in stakeholder engagement indicate areas requiring more consistent implementation. Accountability may therefore be strengthened through complete records,

clear grievance procedures, documented response timelines, and stakeholder representation in planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

The result is consistent with Miranda and Lugo (2026), who found very high implementation of governance and accountability under School-Based Management alongside very high stakeholder participation in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Maligro (2026) similarly concluded that participatory leadership, accountability, transparency, and collaborative resource management contribute to institutional effectiveness, while noting continuing challenges involving uneven implementation and documentation overload. Soria and Rubio (2025) also emphasized accountability in resource management, financial liquidation, and conflict resolution. These studies support the present result by showing that accountability requires both compliance with formal requirements and demonstrable responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Part III. Level of Trust and Confidence

Part III describes the level of stakeholder trust and confidence in terms of integrity; competence; reliability; and openness.

Table 3. Level of Trust and Confidence

Indicators	Mean	SD	DI
1. School leaders consistently demonstrate honesty in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.	2.99	0.68	Agree
2. School leaders uphold ethical standards in decisions that impact the school community.	3.10	0.65	Agree
3. School leaders demonstrate fairness in interactions with teachers, parents, learners, and community members.	3.12	0.64	Agree
4. I trust school leaders to make decisions that serve the best interests of learners and the school.	3.13	0.59	Agree
5. School leaders honor their commitments with sincerity and honesty.	3.17	0.65	Agree
6. School leaders act consistently with their stated values and commitments.	3.20	0.64	Agree
7. I believe school leaders can be trusted to make ethical decisions.	3.13	0.64	Agree
8. Overall, I view school leaders as individuals of high integrity.	3.08	0.68	Agree
Integrity	**3.12**	**0.29**	**Agree**
1. School leaders demonstrate the requisite knowledge to manage the school efficiently.	3.03	0.68	Agree
2. School leaders exhibit competence in addressing school-related challenges.	3.06	0.68	Agree
3. School leaders implement programs that enhance school performance effectively.	3.09	0.61	Agree
4. School leaders make informed decisions that reflect the needs of the school community.	3.09	0.64	Agree
5. School leaders demonstrate the capacity to respond effectively to emerging challenges.	3.11	0.64	Agree
6. I am confident in the leadership capabilities of the school head.	3.03	0.61	Agree
7. School leaders coordinate effectively with teachers, parents, and community stakeholders.	3.06	0.58	Agree
8. Overall, I am confident in the school's leadership.	3.02	0.65	Agree
Competence	**3.06**	**0.33**	**Agree**
1. School leaders reliably fulfill their duties and responsibilities.	3.06	0.60	Agree
2. School leaders reliably implement school policies.	2.99	0.64	Agree

3. The school reliably provides quality educational services to stakeholders.	2.89	0.63	Agree
4. School leaders address stakeholders' concerns promptly and appropriately.	2.98	0.66	Agree
5. I trust school leaders to make responsible decisions, even in challenging situations.	3.00	0.64	Agree
6. School leaders reliably honor their commitments and promises.	3.01	0.67	Agree
7. The school implements its programs and services with consistency.	2.96	0.69	Agree
8. Overall, I find the school's leadership dependable and reliable.	3.04	0.66	Agree
Openness	**2.99**	**0.34**	**Agree**
1. School leaders actively encourage stakeholders to share their opinions and concerns.	2.89	0.59	Agree
2. I am comfortable raising concerns with school leaders.	3.00	0.67	Agree
3. School leaders listen carefully to stakeholder suggestions.	3.00	0.61	Agree
4. School leaders consider stakeholder input when making decisions.	2.98	0.65	Agree
5. School leaders are approachable when stakeholders need assistance or clarification.	3.10	0.66	Agree
6. I feel respected in my communications with school leaders.	3.00	0.66	Agree
7. School leaders foster open communication and mutual respect among stakeholders.	3.06	0.65	Agree
8. Overall, I trust and am confident in the school's leadership's openness.	3.06	0.63	Agree
Openness	**3.02**	**0.33**	**Agree**
Overall	**3.04**	**0.22**	**Agree**

Legend: 3.25-4.00 Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24 Agree; 1.75-2.49 Disagree; 1.00-1.74 Strongly Disagree

Stakeholder trust and confidence in school leadership were assessed in terms of integrity, competence, reliability, and openness. Overall, stakeholder trust and confidence were rated at a high level, with an overall mean of M=3.04and a standard deviation of SD=0.22. This finding suggests that respondents generally viewed school leaders as ethical, capable, dependable, and open in their dealings with teachers, parents, learners, and community members.

Integrity obtained the highest composite mean among the four dimensions, M=3.12, SD=0.29, indicating a high level of trust in the ethical character and values of school leaders. Respondents generally perceived school leaders as honest, fair, sincere, and guided by ethical principles in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The highest-rated indicator was that school leaders act consistently with their stated values and commitments (M=3.20, SD=0.64). This was followed by the perception that school leaders honor their commitments with sincerity and honesty (M=3.17, SD=0.65). Respondents also trusted school leaders to make decisions that serve the best interests of learners and the school (M=3.13, SD=0.59) and believed that school leaders could be trusted to make ethical decisions (M=3.13, SD=0.64).

The lowest-rated indicator was the consistent demonstration of honesty in fulfilling duties and responsibilities (M=2.99, SD=0.68).

Competence was rated at a high level, with a composite mean of M=3.06and SD=0.33. This result indicates that respondents generally had confidence in school leaders' knowledge, decision-making ability, problem-solving skills, and capacity to manage school operations effectively.

The highest-rated indicator was the capacity of school leaders to respond effectively to emerging challenges (M=3.11, SD=0.64). This was followed by the effective implementation of programs that enhance school performance (M=3.09, SD=0.61) and the ability of school leaders to make informed decisions that reflect the needs of the school community (M=3.09, SD=0.64).

The lowest-rated indicator was respondents' overall confidence in the school's leadership (M=3.02, SD=0.65), closely followed by confidence in the leadership capabilities of the school head (M=3.03, SD=0.61).

Reliability was rated at a moderately high level, with a composite mean of M=2.99and SD=0.34. This indicates that respondents generally perceived school leaders as dependable in carrying out their responsibilities, implementing policies, honoring commitments, and responding to stakeholder concerns. However, reliability received the lowest rating among the dimensions, suggesting that it may require greater attention.

The highest-rated indicator was the overall perception that school leadership is dependable and reliable (M=3.04, SD=0.66), followed by the reliable fulfillment of duties and responsibilities (M=3.06, SD=0.60). School leaders were also perceived to honor their commitments and promises (M=3.01, SD=0.67) and make responsible decisions even in challenging situations (M=3.00, SD=0.64).

The lowest-rated indicator was the school's reliable provision of quality educational services to stakeholders (M=2.89, SD=0.63). The consistent implementation of school programs and services was also rated relatively lower (M=2.96, SD=0.69).

Openness was rated at a high level, with a composite mean of M=3.02and SD=0.33. This result indicates that school leaders were generally viewed as approachable, respectful, and willing to communicate openly with stakeholders.

The highest-rated indicators were the approachability of school leaders when stakeholders need assistance or clarification (M=3.10, SD=0.66), the fostering of open communication and mutual respect among stakeholders (M=3.06, SD=0.65), and respondents' overall trust and confidence in the openness of school leadership (M=3.06, SD=0.63).

The lowest-rated indicator was the active encouragement of stakeholders to share their opinions and concerns (M=2.89, SD=0.59).

The findings indicate that stakeholder trust and confidence are generally positive but remain conditional on the consistency of leadership behavior and service delivery. Integrity received the highest dimension mean (M = 3.12), suggesting that stakeholders place considerable value on ethical conduct and alignment between stated values and actions. Reliability received the lowest mean (M = 2.99), with particularly lower ratings for the reliable provision of quality educational services (M = 2.89) and consistent program implementation (M = 2.96). Active encouragement of stakeholder opinions also received M = 2.89. This pattern implies that ethical intentions and approachability alone may not

fully sustain confidence unless commitments are translated into dependable services, consistent programs, and visible opportunities for stakeholder voice.

The 2024 Philippine Trust Study reported that trust is increasingly earned through transparency, competence, ethical behavior, measurable outcomes, and consistent performance (EON Group & Ateneo de Manila University, 2024). Maligro (2026) likewise identified accountability, transparency, participatory leadership, and collaborative governance as contributors to institutional effectiveness. Cruzat et al., (2022) found that stakeholder participation is influenced by perceptions of partnership and by school practices that involve the community. These findings support the present result by indicating that stakeholder trust is strengthened when integrity is accompanied by reliable service delivery, competent action, consistent implementation, and authentic participation.

Part IV. Relationship Between Variables

Part IV presents the degree of relationship between transparency in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence.

Table 4. Relationship between Variables

Variables	r	Sig.	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Transparency →Trust and Confidence	0.193**	.006	Reject	Significant

at .05 level of Significant

Spearman Rho correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between transparency in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence. Results revealed a statistically significant positive, weak correlation between transparency and stakeholder trust and confidence, r=.193, p=.006. This finding indicates that greater transparency in school governance was associated with higher levels of stakeholder trust and confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between transparency in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence was rejected.

The statistically significant but weak positive relationship between transparency and stakeholder trust and confidence (r = .193, p = .006) indicates that more transparent governance is associated with slightly higher trust. The weak magnitude suggests that transparency contributes to trust but is not sufficient by itself. Stakeholders may receive information about decisions, finances, and school activities without necessarily experiencing consistent service delivery, meaningful participation, fairness, or competent problem resolution. Accordingly, transparency should be viewed as one component of trust formation and should be reinforced by responsiveness, reliability, ethical conduct, and demonstrated results. The correlational design does not establish causation.

This interpretation is consistent with the 2024 Philippine Trust Study, which identified transparency, competence, ethical behavior, and consistent performance as interrelated drivers of institutional trust (EON Group & Ateneo de Manila University, 2024). Tayanes et al. (2025) also emphasized that institutional trust develops when transparency mechanisms are combined with shared agency, dialogue, and distributed leadership. Soria and Rubio (2025) found that transparency and accountability practices were closely linked to strategies used in delivering educational services. These studies support the conclusion that disclosure can contribute to trust, but stronger confidence is more likely when transparent information is accompanied by participation and observable performance.

Part V. Relationship Between Variables

Part V presents the degree of relationship between accountability in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence.

Table 5. Relationship Between Variables

Variables	r	Sig.	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Accountability →Trust and Confidence	0.176*	.012	Reject	Significant

at .05 level of Significant

A Spearman Rho correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between accountability in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence. The analysis revealed a statistically significant, weak positive correlation between accountability and stakeholder trust and confidence, r=.176, p=.012. This finding indicates that higher perceived accountability in school governance was associated with higher stakeholder trust and confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between accountability in school governance and stakeholder trust and confidence was rejected.

The significant but weak positive relationship between accountability and stakeholder trust and confidence (r = .176, p = .012) indicates that stronger perceptions of accountability are associated with slightly higher stakeholder trust. The small coefficient suggests that monitoring performance, complying with policies, and responding to stakeholders contribute to confidence, but other factors may have greater influence. Trust may also depend on the quality and consistency of educational services, leadership competence, interpersonal fairness, prior experiences, communication, and the extent to which commitments produce visible outcomes. The relationship should therefore be interpreted as meaningful but limited, and it does not demonstrate that accountability alone causes stakeholder trust.

The finding aligns with the 2024 Philippine Trust Study, which emphasized that institutional trust increasingly depends on proof, measurable outcomes, competence, consistent behavior, and ethical practice (EON Group & Ateneo de Manila University, 2024). Miranda and Lugo (2026) found that strong stakeholder participation supports effective governance and accountability within the School-Based Management framework. Tantan-Garcia (2026) also reported a significant positive relationship between stakeholder engagement and school performance. Together, these studies suggest that accountability is more likely to strengthen trust when stakeholders can observe results, participate in governance processes, and verify that leaders respond consistently to school and community needs.

Part VI. Regression Analysis

Part VI presents the extent do transparency and accountability significantly predict stakeholder trust and confidence.

Table 6. Variables as Predictor of Stakeholders Trust and Confidence

Dependent	Predictors	B	SE	t	Sig.	R^2	F	Sig.	Remarks
Stakeholders' Trust and Confidence	(Constant)	2.21	0.31	7.20	<.001	.036	3.73	.026	
	Transparency	0.11	0.08	1.42	0.158				Do not Reject (Not Significant)
	Accountability	0.16	0.09	1.76	0.081				Do not Reject (Not Significant)

at .05 level of Sig.

F=3.73,p=.026B=0.11,p=.158B=0.16,p=.081A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether transparency and accountability predicted stakeholders' trust and confidence. The regression model significantly predicts stakeholders' trust and confidence, , although it explains only 3.6% (R^2 = .036) of the variance. At the individual level, transparency () and accountability () do not significantly predict stakeholders' trust and confidence. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the individual predictors are not rejected.

The regression model was statistically significant, F = 3.73, p = .026, but explained only 3.6% of the variance in stakeholder trust and confidence (R^2 = .036). This indicates that transparency and accountability, when considered together, have a statistically detectable but limited association with trust. Neither transparency (B = 0.11, p = .158) nor accountability (B = 0.16, p = .081) made a significant unique contribution at the .05 level after controlling for the other predictor. The results may reflect overlap between the two governance dimensions because transparent practices often operate alongside accountability mechanisms. More importantly, approximately 96.4% of the variance remains unexplained, indicating that trust is likely shaped by additional factors such as

leadership competence, integrity, reliability, service quality, fairness, communication experience, school climate, and stakeholder involvement.

The limited explanatory power of the model is consistent with literature presenting trust as a multidimensional outcome. The 2024 Philippine Trust Study identified transparency, competence, ethical behavior, good intentions, and consistency as distinct but related trust drivers (EON Group & Ateneo de Manila University, 2024). Tayanes et al. (2025) similarly emphasized dialogue, shared agency, equity, and distributed leadership in the development of institutional trust. Octavio (2026) found that program management and stakeholder engagement were significantly related to organizational performance, while Maligro (2026) highlighted participatory leadership and collaborative resource management alongside transparency and accountability. These studies support the inference that future models should include leadership competence, integrity, reliability, stakeholder participation, service quality, and communication responsiveness to explain stakeholder trust more comprehensively.

Conclusions

Transparency, accountability, and stakeholder trust and confidence were all rated favorably. Communication mechanisms were the strongest transparency dimension, while school performance was the strongest accountability dimension. Integrity received the highest trust rating, whereas reliability received the lowest. The descriptive results indicate that schools already possess important governance strengths but need to improve early stakeholder participation, dissemination of financial information, comprehensive documentation, fairness in engagement, consistency of services, and invitations for stakeholders to express views.

Transparency and accountability demonstrated statistically significant but weak positive relationships with stakeholder trust and confidence, suggesting that open and accountable governance is associated with higher trust. However, the regression model explained only 3.6% of the variance, and neither variable emerged as a statistically significant unique predictor when both were considered simultaneously. These findings suggest that transparency and accountability alone may not sufficiently explain stakeholder trust, highlighting the potential importance of other institutional and relational factors that warrant further investigation.

The central implication is that schools should maintain governance compliance while fostering trust through meaningful stakeholder participation, relevant information, consistent commitment fulfillment, equitable treatment, reliable services, and responsive action on feedback.

Recommendations

School heads may provide more opportunities for teachers, parents, and community representatives to share their ideas and concerns during school planning and decision-making. Involving stakeholders before decisions are finalized can help them feel that their opinions are valued and that they have a meaningful role in school improvement.

Schools may improve the way they share information about budget allocation and expenditures with stakeholders. Presenting financial information clearly and through appropriate communication channels can help parents, teachers, and community members better understand how school funds are managed and used to support learners and school programs.

School heads and teachers may continue to promote respectful communication and fair treatment in their interactions with parents and community representatives. Listening to concerns, considering different perspectives, and providing opportunities for stakeholders to participate in school planning and evaluation can help strengthen their confidence in school governance.

Schools may give closer attention to the consistent delivery of educational services and implementation of school programs. Keeping stakeholders informed about school activities, addressing concerns appropriately, and considering feedback when reviewing school practices can help build confidence in the school's ability to meet its responsibilities.

Since communication received the highest rating among the transparency dimensions, schools may continue their existing efforts to keep stakeholders informed about school programs, activities, and important decisions. At the same time, school leaders may look for ways to make information more timely, clear, and accessible, particularly regarding financial matters and opportunities for stakeholder participation.

School heads and concerned education officials may use the results as a basis for identifying practices that are working well and areas that need further attention. Discussions with teachers, parents, and community representatives may help schools determine which improvements are most appropriate to their local needs. Any proposed School Governance Enhancement Framework should be guided by the study's findings and the actual conditions of the schools.

Future researchers may explore other factors that could help explain why stakeholders differ in their levels of trust and confidence in school governance. They may also consider conducting similar studies in other school settings to determine whether comparable patterns emerge. Future studies should clearly report the number of respondents, sampling procedures, instrument validation and reliability results, ethical procedures, and statistical methods to help readers assess the credibility of the findings.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher sought appropriate administrative permission and obtained informed consent from all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to refuse or withdraw without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained through non-identifying codes and secure data handling consistent with data privacy principles. The study safeguarded participant well-being,

avoided coercion, and used the information solely for research. The researcher declares no conflict of interest, avoided plagiarism and data fabrication, and interpreted findings without deliberate bias. Artificial intelligence-assisted language and formatting support was used in preparing the manuscript; responsibility for verifying the accuracy, originality, citations, analyses, and final content remains with the researcher.

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