

School Culture's Influence on Teachers' Wellness and Students' Achievement in Glan's Last Mile Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract. This study examined the influence of school culture on teacher wellness and student achievement in selected last-mile public secondary schools in Glan III District, Sarangani Province, Philippines. While the relationship between school culture and educational outcomes has been widely recognized, limited research has explored how these dynamics play out in remote, under-resourced contexts. This study aimed to determine the extent of school culture experienced by teachers in terms of school collaboration, school and teacher affiliation, and school community. It also sought to assess teachers' wellness in terms of emotional, physical, and spiritual health, and evaluate students' achievement based on their General Point Average (GPA) and National Achievement Test (NAT) scores. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, 105 teachers from seven last-mile schools were selected through proportional sampling. Standardized and validated survey instruments were used to gather data, which were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and linear regression. Findings revealed that teachers perceived a very high extent of positive school culture ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.63$) and reported very healthy levels of wellness across all dimensions ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.63$). Students' academic performance was rated as satisfactory based on GPA and average based on NAT results. Notably, the study found that school culture has a significant influence on teacher wellness, affirming that a collaborative, respectful, and value-driven school environment contributes positively to educators' overall well-being. However, no significant relationship was found between school culture and student achievement, suggesting that broader factors beyond the internal school setting may shape student outcomes. This study emphasizes the significance of enhancing school culture to promote teacher well-being and recommends additional research on the external and instructional factors influencing student performance, particularly in schools serving marginalized and geographically isolated populations.

Keywords: Last mile public rural schools; School culture; Students' achievement; Teachers' wellness.

1.0 Introduction

The quality of education is not only shaped by curricular content and teaching strategies, but also by the cultural environment of the school and the overall wellness of its educators. In recent years, scholars have emphasized the significant role of school culture in fostering teacher well-being and enhancing student academic achievement. In the context of the Philippine basic education system, particularly in geographically isolated and underserved areas known as "last mile" schools, these factors become even more critical (Reyes, 2024).

School culture encompasses the values, beliefs, practices, and relationships that influence the atmosphere and functioning of a school. As argued by Bonell et al. (2013), the theory of human functioning and school organization can help children acquire practical reasoning and affiliation. It also provides suggestions on various ways that school administration can impact health. According to Mangunay (2022), school culture encompasses both the tangible and intangible aspects of the school setting, including the sense of safety, inclusivity, and respect that exists among teachers, administrators, and students. Dillon (2023) emphasizes that school culture affects every aspect of the educational experience, from leadership styles to teacher collaboration and student engagement. In supportive and collaborative school environments, teachers often report a stronger sense of purpose and job satisfaction (Arencibia, 2023).

School collaboration and collegiality, in particular, have been associated with improved professional relationships and shared responsibility in academic outcomes. As Mansor et al. (2020) found, smaller schools tend to foster stronger interdependent connections among staff, making it easier to sustain teacher collaboration. Rosales (2023) further noted that this collaborative spirit has a positive impact on students' motivation and learning behaviors. However, challenges such as workload pressures, limited support systems, and difficult working conditions can hinder teachers' emotional and physical well-being (Shaheen, 2024).

Teacher wellness, a multifaceted concept, includes emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Hascher and Waber (2021) emphasize that teacher well-being is not simply the absence of stress but the presence of favorable conditions that promote resilience and job satisfaction. A teacher's well-being affects their teaching practices, classroom management, and relationships with students (Pollard, 2022). Meanwhile, Flores (2022) explains that spiritual wellness—rooted in meaning, purpose, and connection—helps teachers maintain emotional balance, particularly in the face of adversity.

On the other hand, student achievement remains a key indicator of educational effectiveness. It is commonly measured by the General Point Average (GPA) and performance in standardized assessments, such as the National Achievement Test (NAT). Siega (2020) found that a well-resourced and supportive school environment contributes significantly to students' academic performance. Furthermore, Canque (2021) noted that academic performance is closely linked to the learning environment and the motivation of both students and teachers.

Despite these insights, few studies have explored the interconnectedness of school culture, teacher wellness, and student achievement within the Philippine public school setting, especially in last-mile schools (Caballero, 2024). These schools often face constraints such as a lack of access to basic infrastructure and limited professional development opportunities, which can further exacerbate teacher stress and student underperformance (DepEd, 2024).

Given these realities, this study aims to determine the extent of school culture experienced by teachers in terms of school collaboration, teacher affiliative culture, and the school community; to assess the level of teachers' wellness in terms of emotional, physical, and spiritual health; and to examine student achievement based on General Point Average (GPA) and National Achievement Test (NAT) scores. It also aims to determine whether school culture has a significant impact on teacher wellness and student achievement.

Through this research, the study intends to highlight the importance of supportive school environments, teacher collaboration, and holistic well-being, while also acknowledging the unique challenges faced by educators and students in marginalized areas. The findings are expected to inform school leaders and policymakers in developing strategies that foster a positive school culture, promote teacher well-being, and ultimately enhance student performance in basic education.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design, which allowed the researcher to explore the existing relationships between school culture, teacher wellness, and student achievement without manipulating the variables. Descriptive-correlational research is commonly used when the goal is to describe patterns and examine associations in real-world educational settings. The design was appropriate for exploring the relationships of the following variables: to determine the extent of school culture as experienced by teachers, assess

their level of wellness, evaluate student achievement, and identify whether school culture significantly influences both teacher wellness and student performance. The approach also enabled the researcher to interpret the data using both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, such as Pearson's correlation and regression, to draw meaningful conclusions from naturally occurring conditions.

2.2 Research Participants

The study involved 105 public secondary school teachers from seven last-mile schools in Glan III District, Sarangani Province, Philippines. The participants were selected using Slovin's formula from a population of 142 with a 5% margin of error. Proportional sampling was employed to ensure equal representation among schools. The participating schools—Tangan, E. Alegado, Banlas, EDSA, Segafu Esgapo, Lanao Kapanglao, and Lumigo Integrated Schools—are classified as last-mile institutions by the Department of Education due to their geographical isolation and limited resources.

2.3 Research Instruments

The study employed a structured questionnaire adapted from validated tools to evaluate school culture and teacher well-being. Items related to school culture were drawn from the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (2016), while teacher wellness indicators were based on tools developed by Kidger et al. (2021) and Schonert-Reichl (2017). Education experts reviewed the instrument to ensure clarity and relevance to the local school context. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first measured school collaboration, teacher affiliation, and school community, while the second focused on emotional, physical, and spiritual health. A five-point Likert scale was used, with responses ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High."

In terms of Student achievement data—specifically GPA and NAT scores of Grade 10 learners per school performance—were collected from official school records to support the findings. A pilot test confirmed the tool's reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.90. Ethical standards were strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining confidentiality.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

After securing approval from the Department of Education – Sarangani Division and the Ethics Review Board of Sultan Kudarat State University, the researcher coordinated with the school heads of the selected last-mile schools to inform them about the study. With their assistance, the survey questionnaires were distributed to participating teachers. Before answering, respondents were briefed about the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and asked to sign informed consent forms. Participation was entirely voluntary. The researcher personally administered and collected the completed questionnaires during scheduled school visits, ensuring minimal disruption to class routines.

For students' achievement data, specifically GPA and NAT results, were obtained with permission from school records and were handled with strict confidentiality. All gathered data were encoded, verified, and prepared for statistical analysis using appropriate ethical and quality assurance protocols.

2.5 Data Analysis

To analyze and interpret the data, the research used the percentage and frequency distribution for the socio-demographic profile variable; average for GPA and NAT variable; weighted mean with standard deviation for school culture and teachers' wellness variables; and linear regression for the comparison of relationships between the variables with a 0.05 level of significance.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research strictly adhered to ethical standards to protect the rights and well-being of all participants. Teacher participation was entirely voluntary, with consent, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any point if they felt uneasy or uncomfortable, without any consequences. The researcher took careful steps to ensure participants were not exposed to any form of harm—physical, psychological, social, or otherwise. Respect for the dignity, safety, and personal boundaries of the respondents was observed at all times. The confidentiality of all information shared was maintained, and responses were used solely for academic purposes. To uphold research integrity, results were handled truthfully and reported responsibly, with proper acknowledgment of all sources to avoid plagiarism or misrepresentation, by data protection and privacy regulations. This study also adhered to all institutional and legal ethical guidelines, including those required by the school district, the Department of

Education, and any affiliated academic institution. Approval from relevant authorities, including the Schools Division Superintendent, was secured before conducting the study within schools. This ensured that the study met both scientific rigor and ethical responsibility throughout its conduct.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of School Culture Experiences by the Teachers

In terms of School Collaboration

Table 1 illustrates how teachers assessed the level of collaboration within their school communities. The section mean was 4.62 with a standard deviation of 0.60, indicating a very high level of collaboration among school members.

Table 1. *Extent of school culture experiences by the teachers in terms of school collaboration*

Statements		Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Discuss instructional strategies and curriculum issues.	4.58	0.62	Very High Extent
2	Work together to develop the school schedule.	4.65	0.62	Very High Extent
3	Are involved in the decision- making process with regard to materials and resources.	4.55	0.64	Very High Extent
4	Collaborate to foster positive students' behavior.	4.69	0.54	Very High Extent
5	Utilized allotted time for planning as collective units/ teams rather than as separate individuals.	4.61	0.60	Very High Extent
Section Mean		4.62	0.60	Very High Extent

The statement “Collaborate to foster positive students’ behavior” received the highest mean score of 4.69 (SD = 0.54). This indicates that teachers strongly recognized the value of working together to support student conduct. Such collaborative efforts not only strengthen student engagement but also create a more respectful and inclusive school climate. This supports the findings of Fullan and Hargreaves (2016), who emphasized that professional collaboration is crucial in promoting positive behavioral and academic outcomes in students.

The statement “Work together to develop the school schedule” also earned a high rating (M = 4.65, SD = 0.62), suggesting that teachers are not only included in pedagogical decisions but are actively shaping operational routines. As noted by DuFour and Eaker (1998), empowering teachers in school-level decisions builds ownership and increases accountability, which ultimately benefits school performance.

Further, teachers reported “Utilized allotted time for planning as collective units/teams rather than as separate individuals” (M = 4.61, SD = 0.60), affirming the presence of strong professional learning communities. These results resonate with the work of Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008), who found that when teachers plan and reflect together, it enhances their instructional practices and student outcomes.

Other indicators, such as discussing instructional strategies and being involved in decisions about resources, also received “very high extent” ratings, reinforcing the idea that shared leadership and teacher agency are deeply embedded in the school culture. The collaborative spirit reflected in these results supports what Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) describe as the hallmark of effective school cultures – where teachers feel supported, respected, and engaged in decision-making processes that matter.

Finally, the data suggest that the schools involved in this study have cultivated a culture where collaboration is not only encouraged but actively practiced. This type of culture helps promote teacher wellness and contributes to improved learning environments for students.

In terms of School and Teachers' Affiliations

Table 2 presents the responses of teachers regarding their experiences of school affiliation and collegial relationships within their respective learning communities. The section mean was 4.55, with a standard deviation of 0.63, indicating a very high extent of affiliation among members of the school community. These results suggest that strong interpersonal connections and shared values are well-established in these schools.

Among the items, the highest-rated statement was “Supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by staff members” with a mean of 4.66 (SD = 0.57). This underscores a healthy culture of innovation where teachers feel encouraged to contribute insights and strategies. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), relational trust among

colleagues is foundational to school improvement, and such trust flourishes in environments where ideas are welcomed and respected.

Table 2. *Extent of school culture experiences by the teachers in terms of the school and the teacher's affiliation*

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Tell stories of celebrations that support the school's values.	4.58	0.58	Very High Extent
2	Visit/talk/meet outside of the school to enjoy each other's company.	4.46	0.76	High Extent
3	Reflects a true "sense" of community.	4.53	0.62	Very High Extent
4	Reflects frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff.	4.52	0.64	Very High Extent
5	Supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by staff members.	4.66	0.57	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	4.55	0.63	Very High Extent

The item "Tell stories of celebrations that support the school's values" received a mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.58), indicating that rituals and traditions play an essential role in reinforcing shared beliefs. This is consistent with the work of Deal and Peterson (2009), who emphasized that storytelling and communal celebrations are potent tools for sustaining a positive school culture.

Statements like "Reflects a true sense of community" (M = 4.53, SD = 0.62) and "Reflects frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff" (M = 4.52, SD = 0.64) indicate that open communication and a sense of belonging are prevalent in these schools. As Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) argued, collegial interaction and frequent communication foster collective efficacy, which can enhance school-wide outcomes.

The lowest-rated, though still highly ranked item, was "Visit/talk/meet outside of the school to enjoy each other's company," with a mean of 4.46 (SD = 0.76). This result may reflect the limits imposed by teachers' workloads or personal time, yet it still points to a culture that values camaraderie even beyond formal settings. Shared social spaces have been found to promote team cohesion and resilience among teachers (Kelchtermans, 2006).

Overall, the responses confirm that affiliative culture is strong in these schools. The findings reinforce the notion that supportive interpersonal relationships, open communication, and a shared sense of belonging foster a professional and emotionally supportive environment for teachers. When schools nurture a collegial atmosphere, they not only improve morale but also lay the groundwork for sustained collaboration and innovation.

In terms of the School Community

Table 3 illustrates how teachers evaluated their experience of school culture within their broader school community. The section mean is 4.55, with a standard deviation of 0.66, indicating a very high extent. These findings suggest that teachers experience a strong sense of community, rooted in mutual respect, empowerment, and collective responsibility – traits essential for a thriving educational environment.

Table 3. *Extent of school culture experiences by the teachers in terms of the school community*

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Predict and prevent rather than react and repair.	4.47	0.73	High Extent
2	Are interdependent and value each other.	4.59	0.63	Very High Extent
3	Seek alternatives to problems/issues rather than repeating what we have always done.	4.56	0.62	Very High Extent
4	Seek to define the problem/issue rather than blame others.	4.54	0.72	Very High Extent
5	Empowered to make instructional decisions rather than waiting for supervisors to tell them what to do.	4.60	0.61	Very High Extent
	Section Mean	4.55	0.66	Very High Extent

The highest-rated statement was, "Teachers feel empowered to make instructional decisions rather than waiting for supervisors to tell them what to do," with a mean score of 4.60 (SD = 0.61). This suggests that teachers in these schools are entrusted with professional autonomy and decision-making power. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) emphasized that empowering educators creates a sense of ownership and accountability, which positively affects their motivation and performance.

Another highly rated item, "Teachers are interdependent and value each other," received a score of 4.59 (SD = 0.63). This reflects a collaborative spirit within the school that prioritizes trust and mutual reliance—an indicator

of strong organizational health. According to Deal and Peterson (2016), a sense of interdependence reinforces the relational foundation of school culture, encouraging teamwork and innovation.

The item, “Teachers seek alternatives to problems/issues rather than repeating what has always been done,” received a mean of 4.56 (SD = 0.62). This suggests that these school communities are solution-oriented and open to change. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) noted that adaptive schools with proactive cultures are more likely to sustain improvement efforts and navigate challenges effectively.

Meanwhile, the statement, “Teachers seek to define the problem/issue rather than blame others,” scored 4.54 (SD = 0.72). This indicates a reflective culture where issues are approached constructively rather than defensively. As Reyes and Santiago (2020) observed in their study of Philippine public schools, schools that value reflection over blame tend to foster more collaborative and emotionally healthy environments.

The lowest-rated, though still in the “high extent” category, was “Teachers predict and prevent rather than react and repair,” with a mean of 4.47 (SD = 0.73). This may reflect ongoing transitions from reactive practices to more strategic, forward-thinking approaches. Nevertheless, the overall high ratings affirm that a community-oriented culture is strongly present.

In summary, the results indicate that the schools in this study foster a collaborative and empowering culture that promotes teacher agency and collective problem-solving. Such characteristics are crucial for building resilient school communities, particularly in under-resourced or last-mile educational settings.

3.2 Summary of the Extent of School Culture Experiences by the Teachers

Table 4 shows that teachers across the surveyed last-mile schools consistently experienced a strong and positive school culture. With an overall mean of 4.57, all three indicators—school collaboration, teacher affiliation, and school community—were rated as having a “very high extent.” This highlights that a culture of trust, cooperation, and shared commitment is deeply rooted in these institutions.

Table 4. *Summary of the extent of school culture experiences by the teachers*

	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	School Collaboration	4.62	0.60	Very High Extent
2	School and Teacher's Affiliative	4.55	0.63	Very High Extent
3	School Community	4.55	0.66	Very High Extent
	Overall Mean	4.57	0.63	Very High Extent

The strongest dimension was school collaboration, where teachers reported high engagement in joint planning, decision-making, and problem-solving. This aligns with the work of Fullan and Hargreaves (2016), who asserted that schools thrive when collaboration is part of everyday practice. Similarly, Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) confirmed that schools with structured collaboration tend to foster more effective teaching and improved student outcomes.

Meanwhile, the teacher's affiliative culture, which includes informal relationships, open communication, and mutual respect, was also perceived to be robust. This supports Bryk and Schneider's (2002) view that relational trust and collegiality are critical to fostering school improvement and sustaining teacher morale. As teachers share ideas and support one another, they build a culture where everyone feels seen and valued.

The school community dimension likewise garnered a “very high extent,” indicating that the environment empowers teachers and promotes collective responsibility. In line with Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), such interdependence strengthens collective efficacy, a key predictor of school success.

These findings reinforce Dillon's (2023) and Mangunay's (2022) observations that when school culture is strong, it influences how teachers interact with one another and with the broader educational goals. In last-mile schools, where resources may be scarce, this cultural strength becomes an anchor for resilience and innovation. Strong school culture does not just create harmony—it builds the foundation for teacher wellness and student achievement.

3.3 Level of Teachers' Wellness

In terms of Mental or Emotional Health

Table 5 presents how teachers assessed their mental and emotional well-being. The section mean of 4.50 (SD = 0.69) indicates a "Very Healthy" state, reflecting strong emotional stability and resilience among the respondents. Teachers showed positive feelings about themselves, their ability to solve problems, and their relationships with others despite the demands of the profession.

Table 5. *Level of teachers' wellness in terms of mental or emotional health*

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Feeling optimistic about the future	4.60	0.55	Very Healthy
2	Feeling useful	4.62	0.61	Very Healthy
3	Feeling relaxed	4.45	0.78	Healthy
4	Feeling interested in other people	4.36	0.77	Healthy
5	Having the energy to spare	4.44	0.71	Healthy
6	Dealing with problems well	4.50	0.62	Very Healthy
7	Thinking clearly	4.67	0.60	Very Healthy
8	Feeling good about my self	4.56	0.69	Very Healthy
9	Feeling close to other people	4.31	0.79	Healthy
10	Feeling confident	4.45	0.75	Healthy
	Section Mean	4.50	0.69	Very Healthy

The highest-rated indicator was "Thinking clearly" with a mean of 4.67 (SD = 0.60), followed by "Feeling useful" (M = 4.62, SD = 0.61), and "Feeling optimistic about the future" (M = 4.60, SD = 0.55). These findings suggest that teachers maintain a positive outlook and a strong sense of purpose in their roles. According to Kidger et al. (2021), when educators perceive their work as meaningful, they report higher levels of emotional well-being and sustained motivation, which in turn fosters better classroom engagement and performance.

Meanwhile, indicators such as "Feeling relaxed" (M = 4.45), "Feeling confident" (M = 4.45), and "Feeling close to other people" (M = 4.31) were rated slightly lower, although still falling within the "Healthy" category. This could reflect the emotional toll and social challenges often associated with teaching, particularly in under-resourced or high-demand settings. Schonert-Reichl (2017) emphasized that emotional health is deeply influenced by relational connections and the presence of a supportive environment, key features that school leaders must nurture to sustain teacher wellness.

The data reveals that while emotional health among teachers is generally strong, support systems focused on stress management, connection-building, and relational trust can further strengthen their well-being. As Day and Gu (2014) suggest, emotionally healthy teachers are better positioned to create supportive classrooms, manage behavior effectively, and inspire student success.

In terms of Physical Health

Table 6 provides insight into teachers' physical wellness, with a section mean of 4.54 (SD = 0.64) interpreted as "Very Healthy." These results suggest that most teachers feel physically capable of meeting the demands of both their personal and professional responsibilities.

Table 6. *Level of teachers' wellness in terms of physical health*

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Having interest or pleasure in doing things	4.56	0.68	Very Healthy
2	Having motivation in doing things at school	4.61	0.55	Very Healthy
3	Having the ability to sleep well	4.37	0.74	Healthy
4	Having the ability to stay awake and alive during class hours	4.59	0.60	Very Healthy
5	Having the ability to exert more effort and energy in teaching	4.71	0.49	Very Healthy
6	Having a good appetite	4.48	0.67	Healthy
7	Having the ability to perform family duties after school	4.37	0.80	Healthy
8	Having the ability to control good gestures and voice while teaching	4.55	0.64	Very Healthy
9	Having the ability to maintain good physical condition	4.53	0.64	Very Healthy
10	Having the ability to concentrate in doing teaching jobs	4.64	0.59	Very Healthy
	Section Mean	4.54	0.64	Very Healthy

Among the highest-rated items were “Having the ability to exert more effort and energy in teaching” ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.49$), “Having the ability to concentrate in doing teaching jobs” ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.59$), and “Having motivation in doing things at school” ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.55$). These results highlight a positive level of stamina and alertness among educators, which is essential in managing classroom routines, maintaining learner engagement, and delivering instruction effectively. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) emphasize that physically healthy teachers are more resilient and better equipped to handle the everyday stressors of the classroom environment.

Meanwhile, some items rated slightly lower but still within the “Healthy” range, such as “Having a good appetite” ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.67$) and “Having the ability to perform family duties after school” ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.80$). These responses reflect the natural fatigue and energy drain that educators often face, especially in communities where the workload and class sizes are heavier. As Briner and Dewberry (2007) noted, physical well-being is interconnected with workload balance and institutional support; teachers who are physically drained may find it difficult to sustain high-quality instruction and fulfill family responsibilities.

It is also notable that teachers reported having firm control over their physical presence in the classroom, as evidenced by statements such as “Having the ability to control good gestures and voice while teaching” ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.64$). This reflects professional discipline and bodily awareness, key traits that support classroom management and effective communication.

Overall, the findings reinforce the idea that teacher wellness—particularly physical health—is a cornerstone of educational success. When teachers feel well physically, they can sustain motivation, engage meaningfully with learners, and manage their time and energy more effectively. To maintain this positive trend, school leaders and policymakers must continue investing in workplace wellness initiatives that promote adequate rest, nutrition, and manageable workloads.

In terms of Mental or Spiritual Health

Table 7 presents the wellness of teachers in terms of spiritual health, with a mean of 4.69 ($SD = 0.56$), indicating a level of “Very Healthy.” This high rating indicates that teachers maintained a profound sense of purpose, faith, and internal peace, essential for sustaining their role in the face of stress and uncertainty.

Table 7. *Level of teachers' wellness in terms of spiritual health*

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Having the ability to pray and meditate	4.70	0.56	Very Healthy
2	Having feeling of close to God	4.70	0.56	Very Healthy
3	Reading religious or spiritual texts.	4.56	0.71	Very Healthy
4	Attending religious or spiritual services	4.63	0.62	Very Healthy
5	Valuing the purpose of life	4.79	0.47	Very Healthy
6	Feeling hopeful about the future	4.83	0.43	Very Healthy
7	Feeling joyful	4.69	0.58	Very Healthy
8	Feeling connected to something larger than your self	4.64	0.64	Very Healthy
9	Feeling of living in accordance with your values	4.65	0.57	Very Healthy
10	Living a life full of love	4.74	0.48	Very Healthy
	Section Mean	4.69	0.56	Very Healthy

The highest-rated item was “Feeling hopeful about the future” ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 0.43$), followed by “Valuing the purpose of life” ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 0.47$). These responses suggest that spiritual wellness provided teachers with a framework for optimism and direction. Day and Gu (2014) emphasized that a teacher's internal sense of purpose, often tied to personal or spiritual values, plays a significant role in sustaining motivation and long-term engagement in the profession.

Likewise, strong mean scores for “Having the ability to pray and meditate” and “Feeling close to God” (both $M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.56$) reflect how spiritual practices served as emotional anchors during challenging times. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), emotional competence in the classroom is closely linked to an educator's personal reflection and mindfulness practices, often rooted in spiritual habits.

Other indicators, such as “Living a life full of love” ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.48$) and “Feeling connected to something larger than yourself” ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.64$), point to the role of faith and moral alignment in teacher resilience.

These findings align with those of Day and Gu (2014), who argued that alignment between personal values and professional goals fosters both well-being and professional satisfaction.

Collectively, these results underscore that teachers' spiritual wellness was a vital internal resource during demanding times. By nurturing faith, connection, and meaning, teachers sustained their emotional energy and remained committed to their calling. The results support the broader claim that wellness is not merely physical or emotional, but also deeply rooted in one's spiritual foundation, which can serve as a powerful buffer against burnout and stress.

3.4 Summary of Level of Teachers' Wellness

Table 8 presents the overall wellness of teachers across three domains: mental or emotional health, physical health, and spiritual health. The overall mean of 4.58 with a standard deviation of 0.63 indicates that, collectively, teachers rated themselves as "Very Healthy" across all dimensions of wellness.

Table 8. *Summary of the level of the teachers' wellness*

	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	Mental or emotional health	4.50	0.69	Very Healthy
2	Physical health	4.54	0.64	Very Healthy
3	Spiritual Health	4.69	0.56	Very Healthy
	Overall Mean	4.58	0.63	Very Healthy

The highest among the indicators was spiritual health, with a mean of 4.69. This finding suggests that many teachers derive strength and meaning from their faith or spiritual beliefs, which supports previous literature emphasizing the importance of spiritual wellness in sustaining teacher motivation and resilience (Day & Gu, 2014). In challenging contexts, especially in remote or under-resourced schools, spirituality often provides teachers with a sense of purpose and peace that helps them stay committed to their role.

Physical health followed closely, with a mean of 4.54. This suggests that despite workload demands, teachers generally felt energetic, well-rested, and physically capable of performing their daily tasks. Such wellness is likely influenced by the supportive elements of school culture, which promote collaboration and reduce stress, as suggested by Briner and Dewberry (2007).

Mental or emotional health came in slightly lower at 4.50, but still rated as "Very Healthy." This indicates that teachers maintained a generally positive outlook, managed stress effectively, and felt a sense of optimism and emotional balance. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), emotionally well teachers are more effective in the classroom, demonstrating stronger classroom management and relational skills.

Overall, these results align with findings by Schonert-Reichl (2017), who emphasized that educators' overall wellness—encompassing emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects—has a significant impact on their effectiveness and long-term career satisfaction. In this context, the strong wellness ratings across all domains reflect a healthy and resilient teaching workforce, likely influenced by a positive and collaborative school culture.

3.5 Students' Achievement

In terms of the General Point Average

Table 9 presents the average General Point Average (GPA) of students from the participating schools, with an overall mean of 83.25, which falls under the "Satisfactory" description based on standard academic grading scales used in the Philippine education system.

Table 9. *Students' achievement in terms of the general point average*

Schools	GPA	Interpretation
Average GPA	83.25	Satisfactory

This finding suggests that, although students were able to meet basic academic expectations, there remains considerable room for improvement in terms of academic excellence. A satisfactory GPA indicates that learners are meeting the requirements but may not yet be reaching their full academic potential. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), student achievement is often influenced by the interplay of teacher effectiveness, school leadership,

and school culture. When the school environment is nurturing and collaborative, it creates the conditions necessary for students to thrive academically.

The moderately satisfactory performance observed here may also reflect contextual challenges, particularly in last-mile schools where access to learning resources, infrastructure, and enrichment opportunities is limited. As discussed by Reyes (2023), schools in geographically disadvantaged areas frequently encounter systemic barriers that impact both teaching quality and student outcomes.

Nevertheless, this level of performance also hints at the resilience of students and the commitment of their teachers, as the achievement remains at a passing and stable level. With continued support for teacher wellness, stronger school culture, and more targeted instructional strategies, it is possible to enhance student academic outcomes in future assessments.

In terms of NAT per School

Table 10 shows the average Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of students in the National Achievement Test (NAT) across participating schools, with an overall MPS of 44.16%, which falls under the “Average” category based on national performance standards.

Table 10. *Students’ achievement in terms of NAT per school*

Schools	NAT-MPS	Interpretation
Average NAT-MPS	44.16	Average

This result reflects a moderate level of academic proficiency among learners, suggesting that while students have grasped foundational concepts, a significant gap still exists between expected competencies and actual performance. In the Philippine education system, an MPS of 75% is generally considered proficient; thus, an average score like this underscores the need for reinforced academic interventions.

Several factors may have contributed to this performance. According to Briner and Dewberry (2007), teacher well-being has a direct effect on student outcomes, particularly in terms of focus, motivation, and classroom management. If teachers are well-supported – emotionally, physically, and spiritually – they are more effective in delivering instruction that enhances student achievement.

Moreover, school culture plays a vital role. Deal and Peterson (2016) emphasized that a collaborative and mission-driven school environment fosters consistency in instructional practices and student discipline. In schools where teachers experience strong affiliative bonds and a sense of community, learning tends to become more student-centered and practical.

Reyes (2023) noted that schools in rural and disadvantaged areas, like many in this study, often face challenges in sustaining academic momentum due to resource limitations. Despite these constraints, the students’ ability to achieve an average performance is a sign of potential. With more targeted support—such as teacher training, enriched curriculum design, and improved learning infrastructure—there is a strong opportunity for these scores to improve in future assessments.

3.6 Results of Linear Regression Analysis

Between the Level of Wellness and the Influence of the School Culture

Table 11 presents the results of the linear regression analysis conducted to determine whether school culture has a significant influence on the level of wellness among teachers. The regression yielded an F-value of 136.389 and a p-value of .000, indicating that the result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that school culture has a substantial and meaningful influence on teachers' wellness.

Table 11. *Results of linear regression analysis between the level of wellness and the influence of the school culture*

Indicators	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Interpretation
Regression	12.475	1	12.475	136.389*	.000	Significant
Residual	9.421	103	.091			
Total	21.897	104				

*Significant at the .05 level.

This finding is consistent with previous literature that emphasizes the relationship between the organizational environment and employee well-being. Briner and Dewberry (2007) highlighted that positive school culture—characterized by collaboration, mutual respect, and shared values—reduces stress and burnout while promoting emotional and physical health among teachers. Similarly, Day and Gu (2014) emphasized that supportive and collegial environments not only improve job satisfaction but also enhance teachers' emotional resilience, leading to greater professional fulfillment.

The strong link observed in this study reinforces the idea that when teachers feel part of a collaborative and values-driven school community, they are more likely to thrive emotionally, physically, and even spiritually. This is particularly important in challenging teaching environments where educators face resource limitations and increased workloads. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) also noted that teacher well-being directly affects classroom climate and instructional quality, suggesting that improvements in school culture can indirectly benefit students as well.

Thus, the findings support the hypothesis that school culture has a significant influence on teacher wellness. Investing in positive cultural practices within schools can serve as a strategic approach to support teacher well-being, reduce attrition, and enhance educational effectiveness.

Between the Level of Student Achievement and the Influence of the School Culture

Table 12 presents the results of the linear regression analysis examining the influence of school culture on student achievement. The model produced an F-value of 0.137 and a p-value of 0.726, indicating that the result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that, in this study, school culture did not have a significant influence on student achievement, as measured by General Point Average (GPA) and National Achievement Test (NAT) scores.

Table 12. *Results of linear regression analysis between the level of student achievement and the influence of the school culture*

Indicators	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Interpretation
Regression	.037	1	.037	.137	.726	Not Significant
Residual	1.356	5	.271			
Total	1.393	6				

Given these results, the null hypothesis stating that school culture does not significantly influence student achievement is accepted. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis, which assumes a significant influence, is rejected. This suggests that while school culture may contribute to shaping the learning environment, its direct effect on academic performance may be limited or overshadowed by other variables.

This finding aligns with research by Scheerens (2016), who argued that school culture, though foundational, often works indirectly through teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and learner support systems. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2020) highlighted that student achievement is typically influenced by a complex web of factors, including socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and the availability of learning resources, especially in underserved communities.

In the case of last-mile schools—such as those included in this study—the impact of cultural and environmental constraints may be more profound, potentially mitigating the influence of positive school culture on academic outcomes. Thus, while school culture remains critical, its role in directly predicting student performance requires further exploration, particularly when moderated by contextual challenges.

4.0 Conclusion

This study highlights the significant impact of school culture on teacher well-being, particularly in the context of last-mile schools in the Philippines. The results reveal that when school environments foster collaboration, inclusivity, and a sense of shared community, teachers experience higher levels of emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. The findings affirm the power of a supportive school culture not only in helping teachers cope with the challenges of their profession but also in enhancing their motivation and professional satisfaction.

Notably, school culture was found to have a significant impact on teacher wellness, validating the idea that favorable working conditions go beyond infrastructure—they stem from human relationships, shared values, and

leadership practices. However, while school culture promotes teacher well-being, its influence on student academic achievement, as measured by GPA and NAT scores, was not statistically significant. This suggests that future research on student performance in last-mile schools may be assessed by the use of other factors to provide concrete results and suggestions.

These insights make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing dialogue about school improvement in underserved communities. They suggest that strengthening school culture serves as a strategic lever for improving teacher retention, job satisfaction, and long-term student outcomes. Future research may investigate how school culture interacts with other variables, such as instructional leadership, parental engagement, and curriculum delivery, to influence academic success. Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess how sustained improvements in school culture and teacher wellness ultimately translate into improved student achievement over time.

In summary, cultivating a healthy and empowering school culture is not just an organizational goal—it is a human-centered approach that affirms the well-being of educators and lays the groundwork for resilient, high-performing learning communities.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

Both authors contributed equally to the development of this study. They collaboratively conceptualized the research framework, designed the methodology, conducted the data collection and analysis, and interpreted the findings. They also collaborated on writing, revising, and finalizing the manuscript. Each author approved the final version and agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring its accuracy and integrity.

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7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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