



LEARNERS AND PARENTS ASSESSMENT ON WASH-WINS PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the awareness of the key school stakeholders who are the parents and learners of the implementation of water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH) in Schools (WinS) project of the Department of Education (DepEd). With the use of descriptive and quantitative research design, the data were gathered through the use of survey questionnaire from 496 students and their parents. The results revealed that the learners and parents both agreed that they are aware of the implementation of WASH-WinS project in their school. Moreover, there is no significant difference between the assessments of learners and parents. Hence, recommendations were given in the plan of action to add knowledge to the students thru seminars on water, sanitation and hygiene.

Keywords: *WASH-WinS Project, stakeholders' awareness, water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools, communicable diseases*

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INTRODUCTION

The challenges of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH) practices in communities of developing countries, such as the Philippines, are becoming alarming due to incessant reported cases of water related illnesses, which continue to be one of the major health challenges in many communities of these nations [UNICEF, 2008].

Accordingly, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2008) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (2010), reported that inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene issues account for a large part of the burden of illness and death in developing countries like the Philippines.

With a number of reported cases of water related diseases in the hospitals and in the primary health care centers, which is a clear indication that drinking water contamination, poor sanitation, and abysmal hygiene practices needs to be addressed is imperative to find possible ways on how the communities could be reached to provide solution towards the looming danger imposed on public health.

The teacher-student-parent-community approach on WaSH practices has been stressed to be a route for good and acceptable hygiene and sustainable practices can be tackled. This is because the schools serve as an avenue for total community sanitation campaign. It has also been established that safe WaSH in schools can improve health, boost education accomplishment, promote gender fairness and have a constructive influence on communities (UNICEF/IRC, 2012).

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Likewise, the schools are recognized as the primary place in the community where the students stay during most of their waking time. It is said that the school's sanitation and hygiene education have been given importance and the effective implementation of plans on physical infrastructure, hygiene education and monitoring at school will result to a change in schools children's behavior that seemingly, it will have an impact on the community.

In the locale of the study, which is the public elementary schools in the sub-office of Cuenca, Batangas, face problems on the inadequate and poor quality of water supply, limited toilet stalls, poor hygiene, no water for flushing, lack of handwashing stations, and poor waste management. These problems are faced by the learners and teachers in the everyday situations in the schools. Interventions are always under way such as improving water infrastructure, constructing sanitary facilities, and promoting hygiene education. But these challenges are to be faced not only by the teachers and learners but also parental involvement is greatly needed in order to address these aforementioned challenges.

Hence, this study is undertaken in order to find out the awareness of the key stakeholders in school about the WASH-WinS Project. The key stakeholders mentioned in the present study are consist of the learners and their parents. The end view of determining the awareness of the key stakeholders is to draft a plan of action on increasing the awareness of the said stakeholders of the project WASH-WinS.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The following are the related studies gathered which helped the researcher better understand the topic under investigation.

Water. DepEd Order 10, s 2016 provides the policy and guidelines for the water and sanitation in schools project. It aims to ensure the correct information and understanding among the learners of effective hygiene and sanitation projects, equitable access to safe water, adequate toilets, and hand washing facilities, hygiene and sanitation practices among the learners to enable them to develop life-long positive hygiene and sanitation behaviors; ensure that the schools are kept safe and clean through school-based solid waste management, proper drainage, elimination of breeding grounds for mosquitoes to prevent vector-borne diseases, and food sanitation, and engage public and private partners for program implementation and sustainability. This policy guides the elementary and secondary schools on the proper implementation of the project which ultimately leads to a safe and clean school environment. Similarly, those are necessary for the students to thrive in the learning community. As such, the schools whether public elementary or secondary schools adhere on the said policy.

In the study conducted by Olukanni et al. (2014) they identified the social media platforms like Tiktok and Facebook that would increase the awareness of the key stakeholders on the project WASH. They found out that since some project stakeholders may hardly have access to social media platform, planning to conduct awareness meetings, particularly within

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the district, in partnership with local units in target communities where people would be informed of the program objectives.

There is need for school and village committees to meet regularly in order to better integrate the various activities related to WaSH education, thus increasing its effectiveness. This idea would also be publicized through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media outlets. Furthermore, using weekly jingle/drama series on radio and TV, local newspapers and community bulletin, and distribution of mentoring magazines in every school term to create awareness and developments on the project goals and objectives may be employed.

Local and State government authorities and ministries (Education, Health, Water Resources and Environment) should be contacted for intervention and aid. Ministry of Education Department of Curriculum administrators should also support in the communication of the project activities. Those were the recommendations given with the low awareness of the parents and the community regarding the critical project of the school.

The study of Martinez (2021) found out that most students possessed basic knowledge about water's importance for life and its uses. They generally express positive attitudes towards water conservation and environmental protection. However, many students lacked a deeper understanding of water conservation practices and the impact of water pollution.

Sanitation. Involving families and communities in sanitation in school interventions promotes a sense of ownership, which is a necessary prerequisite for sustainability. Involvement can take the shape of school management committees, parent-teacher

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associations or committees, particularly the set up for WASH in Schools. These groups are particularly important if health and education departments or local authorities are not prepared to provide such services. Community mobilization and motivation will extend the impact of life skills development beyond schools to the whole community. If parents and the community understand the importance of appropriate hygienic behaviour, long-term effects will result (CFS WASH, 2017).

Additionally, Hernandez (2022) found out that while individuals had a basic understanding of hygiene practices, their actual behavior often fell short. Factors such as self-efficacy, social norms, and perceived benefits influenced their practices. The study highlighted the need for interventions that target these factors to improve sanitation and hygiene behaviors.

Hygiene. The study conducted by Mohamed et al. (2016), found out that there is a need for more comprehensive educational programs to create awareness regarding the importance of hand hygiene particularly among parents and children. This is significant for the prevention of communicable diseases in the community. Educating children on basic knowledge of infection and hand hygiene is crucial to minimize the risk of infection and transmission. It should be during early learning environment at home where parents set good examples, followed by formal education in preschools, primary and secondary schools. Principles of hygiene like handwashing, body cleanliness, oral, hair and nail hygiene should be made part of everyday life and the best way for parents to teach their children about good hygiene is to lead by example.

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Meanwhile, the study conducted by Dharma (2021) in Bangladesh found that despite reasonable awareness and knowledge among the university students, their practices were often suboptimal. Factors such as lack of cleanliness and maintenance, inadequate supply of sanitary products, and social and cultural norms were identified as key barriers to improved practices. The study emphasized the importance of addressing these factors through targeted interventions.

The study of Singh (2023) explored the factors influencing residents' engagement in health and hygiene practices in India. It found that awareness of sanitation and cleanliness was positively correlated with the adoption of healthy practices. However, factors such as education, income, and access to sanitation facilities also played significant roles. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive interventions that address both awareness and infrastructure issues.

Further, it could be deduced from the related studies reviewed that there is indeed a big role played by the parents and community in the implementation of the WASH project in schools. If the parents are indeed aware of these activities in school, then they will be able to continue the practice at home and in the school. In doing so, contagious diseases are prevented to spread.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to assess the awareness among grades 1-6 learners and their parents of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) –WASH is Schools (WinS) project in order to draft a plan of action for further awareness of the key stakeholders.

Specifically, the following were the questions answered.

3.1 What is the assessment of the learners and parents respondents of the WASH-WinS project as to:

3.1.1 water;

3.1.2 sanitation; and

3.1.3 hygiene?

3.2 Is there any significant difference between the assessments of the learners and parents?

3.3 Based on the results, what plan of action could be proposed in order to further the awareness of the learners and parents of WASH-WinS project in school?

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This research sought to assess the WASH-WinS project awareness of the learners and parents as to water, sanitation, and hygiene. It also aimed to find out if there is a significant difference between the assessments of learners and parents. As a result, the study proposed an action plan to further the awareness of the learners and parents regarding the WASH-WinS

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project of the school. The study was limited to the selected learners from grades 1 to 6 and their parents. As to the gender of the parent respondents, it consisted only of who was available to answer the questionnaire. The parents of the learners who answered the questionnaire were also asked to give their response to the same.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive quantitative research with the use of survey questionnaire as the main data gathering. Descriptive research design is concerned with the explanation of a phenomenon, a reality and or circumstance.

In this study, the particular phenomenon is the awareness of the learners and their parents of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in school project implemented by DepEd.

- a. Sampling.** The respondents of the study were the learners from grades 1 – 6 and their parents. There were 360 Grades 1-6 learners in the school. Using Raosoft online survey calculator with percentage of error of 5, the computed number of respondents was 187. The stratified sampling was used causing 31 learners from each grade level to be randomly identified as respondents. The parents of these randomly identified learners from each grade level were then asked to participate in the study alongside with their children. Hence, a total of 374 learners and parents participated in the study.

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Table A
Distribution of Learners and Parents Respondents

Learners	No. of Samples	Parents	No. of Samples	Total
360	187	360	187	374

b. Data Collection. A questionnaire taken from the evaluation of WASH-WinS project was used to determine the awareness of the respondents, the learners and their parents. The researcher translated the items in Filipino for easy understanding of the same by the respondents. The translation was validated by the school head, WinWash coordinator, and an English teacher grammarian. The water indicators contained five (5) items, sanitation had 5 items, and hygiene with 5 items.

c. Ethical Issues. Participants, both learners and parents, were informed about the nature of the research based on its objectives. They were also told that they can withdraw anytime from participating in the study.

d. Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher asked for the permission from proper authorities prior to the administration of the questionnaire. Then, the parents were asked for their consent to answer the questionnaire and permit their children to participate, as well in the study. Parent respondents were called for a meeting for this purpose. Grades 1-3 learners answered the questionnaire with the presence and assistance of their homeroom advisers while the Grade 4-6 learners independently answered on their own.

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DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the results based on the data gathered.

6.1 Assessment of the Respondents of the WASH-WinS Project

6.1.1 Assessment of Student Respondents

The following tables present the assessment of the student respondents as to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Table 1

Assessment of the Learner and Parent Respondents of the WASH-WinS Project in terms of Water

Indicators for Water	Weighted Mean			Verbal Interpretation			TOTAL		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
	Learners								
1. The school provide safe drinking water.	3.45	Agree	2	3.45	Agree	2	3.45	Agree	2
2. The school provides safe drinking water for free.	3.35	Agree	3	3.40	Agree	3	3.38	Agree	3
3. There are safe water in refillable containers provided in designated areas within the school.	3.26	Agree	4	3.26	Agree	4	3.26	Agree	4
4. Water for daily handwashing and cleaning of toilets is available.	3.00	Agree	5	3.00	Agree	5	3.00	Agree	5
5. The school coordinatres with the LGU or water district for testing regularly.	3.76	Strongly Agree	1	3.76	Strongly Agree	1	3.76	Strongly Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.36	Agree		3.37	Agree		3.37	Agree	

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It can be gleaned from the data gathered that the learners and parents are aware of the water use in school. This is reflected by the composite mean of 3.37 that the assessments of learners and parents obtained.

Parents and learners strongly support the school's initiative to collaborate with the Local Government Unit (LGU) or water district for regular water testing. They recognize the importance of ensuring that the water supply within the school premises is safe and potable. By partnering with these organizations, the school can leverage their expertise and resources to conduct thorough water quality assessments. This proactive approach demonstrates a commitment to the health and well-being of the school community.

Regular water testing allows the school to identify potential water quality issues early on and take appropriate measures to address them. This could involve implementing water treatment solutions, such as filtration or disinfection, or exploring alternative water sources. By prioritizing water quality, the school can significantly reduce the risk of waterborne illnesses and create a healthier learning environment for students and staff alike.

The least rated factor, *"Water for daily handwashing and cleaning of toilets is available,"* likely indicates a significant issue within the school's sanitation facilities. While water availability is essential for maintaining hygiene, it's possible that other factors are negatively impacting the overall sanitation conditions.

This finding are in accordance to the study of Martinez (2021) who found out that most students possessed basic knowledge about water's importance for life and its uses. They generally express positive attitudes towards water conservation and environmental protection.

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However, many students lacked a deeper understanding of water conservation practices and the impact of water pollution.

Table 2

Assessment of the Learner and Parent Respondents of the WASH-WinS Project in terms of Sanitation

Indicators for Sanitation	Weighted Mean			Verbal Interpretation			TOTAL		
	Learners			Parents					
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. The toilets are secure, private, have door with lock, have lighting.	3.45	Agree	5	3.49	Agree	5	3.47	Agree	5
2. The toilets are detached for girls within view of school building and people.	3.51	Strongly Agree	2	3.57	Strongly Agree	4	3.54	Strongly Agree	4
3. The toilets are cleaned regularly.	3.50	Strongly Agree	3.5	3.60	Strongly Agree	1	3.55	Strongly Agree	2.5
4. The wastes are segregated.	3.60	Strongly Agree	1	3.58	Strongly Agree	3	3.59	Strongly Agree	1
5. The school has a material recovery facility (MRF).	3.50	Strongly Agree	3.5	3.59	Strongly Agree	2	3.55	Strongly Agree	2.5
Composite Mean	3.51	Strongly Agree		3.57	Strongly Agree		3.54	Strongly Agree	

From the data presented, the learners and parents assessed that the wastes are segregated with a mean of 3.59, verbally interpreted as strongly agree. Parents and learners may have assessed that wastes are segregated in the school due to several factors. Firstly, the presence of visible waste segregation bins or containers in strategic locations around the school campus could indicate a clear commitment to waste management. Secondly, regular waste collection and disposal schedules, as well as the presence of waste management personnel, could suggest efficient waste handling practices. Lastly, educational campaigns and

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awareness programs about waste segregation could have contributed to a heightened understanding of the importance of proper waste disposal among the school community.

However, it is important to consider that the perception of waste segregation may vary from learners and parents. Factors such as the consistency of waste segregation practices, the effectiveness of waste collection and disposal systems, and the overall cleanliness of the school environment can influence how parents and learners assess the school's waste management efforts. Additionally, the involvement of students in waste segregation activities, such as waste audits or recycling programs, can positively impact their perception of the school's commitment to sustainable waste management.

On the other hand, the least rated indicator is on the toilets are secure, private, have door with lock, have lighting with a mean of 3.47 interpreted as agree. The low rating for toilet security, privacy, door locks, and lighting suggests significant shortcomings in the school's sanitation facilities. This could be due to the toilets are old, damaged, or poorly maintained, since the children are the ones cleaning the toilets, and a high number of learners are sharing a limited number of toilets, reducing privacy and increasing wait times.

This findings is supported by the study of Hernandez (2022) who found out that while individuals had a basic understanding of hygiene practices, their actual behavior often fell short. Factors such as self-efficacy, social norms, and perceived benefits influenced their practices. The study highlighted the need for interventions that target these factors to improve sanitation and hygiene behaviors.

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Table 3

Assessment of the Learner and Parent Respondents of the WASH-WinS Project in terms of Hygiene

Indicators for Hygiene	Weighted Mean			Verbal Interpretation			TOTAL		
	Learners			Parents					
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. The group handwashing with soap is supervised regularly.	3.15	Agree	4	3.15	Agree	3.15	3.15	Agree	4
2. There are student leaders assigned to lead handwashing activity.	3.20	Agree	3	3.20	Agree	3.20	3.20	Agree	3
3. There is a regular supply of soap in the handwashing facility.	3.10	Agree	5	3.10	Agree	3.10	3.10	Agree	5
4. The handwashing facility is maintained.	3.34	Agree	2	3.34	Agree	3.34	3.34	Agree	2
5. There are DepEd Approved Instructional materials on Menstrual Health.	3.55	Strongly Agree	1	3.40	Agree	3.40	3.48	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.27	Agree		3.24	Agree		3.26	Agree	

Rated the highest on sanitation is on there are DepEd approved instructional materials on menstrual health with a mean of 3.48 which means agree. The high rating for the availability of DepEd-approved instructional materials on menstrual health indicates a significant positive development in addressing menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in schools. This suggests that the school has actively implemented the Department of Education's National WinS Policy, which prioritizes MHM as an essential component of health education.

The availability of these materials ensures that students, particularly girls, have access to accurate and age-appropriate information about menstruation, hygiene practices, and

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reproductive health. This knowledge empowers them to manage their menstrual cycles with confidence and dignity, reducing stigma and absenteeism. Additionally, these materials can contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive school environment for all students.

On the other hand, the least rated indicator is on there is a regular supply of soap in the handwashing facility with a mean of 3.10 which means agree. The low rating for regular soap supply in handwashing facilities suggests a significant gap in maintaining proper hygiene practices within the school. This could be due to various reasons, such as inadequate budgeting for hygiene supplies, poor inventory management, or a lack of awareness about the importance of handwashing. Without consistent access to soap, students and staff are more susceptible to the spread of germs and infections. This can lead to increased absenteeism, compromised health, and a less conducive learning environment.

This findings are in line with Dharma (2021) in Bangladesh who found that despite reasonable awareness and knowledge among the university students, their practices were often suboptimal. Factors such as lack of cleanliness and maintenance, inadequate supply of sanitary products, and social and cultural norms were identified as key barriers to improved practices. The study emphasized the importance of addressing these factors through targeted interventions.

6.2 Difference Between the Assessments of the Students and Parents

Table 4 presents the difference between the assessments of the students and parents in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene.

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Table 4

Assessment of the Parent Respondents of the WASH-WinS Project in terms of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Indicators	t-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
1 Water	2.00	0.158	Not Significant
2 Sanitation	.801	0.371	Not Significant
3 Hygiene	.021	0.885	Not Significant

The data presented shows that there is no significant difference between the assessments of parent and student respondents. It is evident with the p-value of the assessments which is greater than the critical value set at alpha-level 0.05. This implied that the awareness of the parent and students are the same. It could also mean that the parents, who influenced the awareness of the students, have the same awareness when it comes to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

The lack of significant difference between the assessments of parents and students on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions in the school likely indicates a shared understanding of the existing situation. Both groups have firsthand experience with the school's facilities and practices, and their perceptions are aligned. This could be due to factors such as consistent exposure to the same WASH conditions, open communication between parents and students about school experiences, and a shared concern for the health and well-being of the school community.

This findings are aligned with the of study of Singh (2023) explored the factors influencing residents' engagement in health and hygiene practices in India. It found that awareness of sanitation and cleanliness was positively correlated with the adoption of healthy

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practices. However, factors such as education, income, and access to sanitation facilities also played significant roles. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive interventions that address both awareness and infrastructure issues.

6.3 Proposed Plan of Action to Further the Awareness and Parents of WASH-WinS Project in School

The proposed action plan is based on the results of the study.

Key Result Area	Recommendations	Person/s Involved	Time Frame	Resources Needed	Expected Outcome
1 Water	Monthly water testing for pollutants	School Administration Canteen in-Charge PTA	Whole year	Certain amount for the payment on water testing	Potable safe water
2 Sanitation	Quarterly Seminar on Sanitation	School Administration Canteen in-Charge PTA	First to Fourth Quarters	Laptop LCD Slide deck	Students and parents will be aware of what are to be involved in sanitation
3 Hygiene	Quarterly Seminar on Hygiene	School Administration Canteen in-Charge PTA	First to Fourth Quarters	Laptop LCD Slide deck	Students and parents will be aware of what are to be involved in hygiene

While there may be a shared understanding of WASH issues among parents and learners, an action plan is still necessary to further enhance awareness and promote positive behavior change. This action plan can help identify specific areas for improvement, such as increasing the frequency of hygiene education sessions, promoting the use of water-saving

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techniques, and advocating for better maintenance of sanitation facilities. By implementing targeted interventions and monitoring progress, the school can create a more sustainable and hygienic learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions arrived at:

1. Learners and parents are aware of the projects on water, hygiene and sanitation.
2. The knowledge of the parents on water safety, sanitation, and hygiene is the same knowledge imparted to learners.
3. The plan of action sees to it that there will be new additional information imparted to the students on the WASH-WinS project that they can imbibe with their parents at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended:

1. The learners may be given additional knowledge about the implementation of the project.
2. The learners may be involved actively in the implementation of the project.
3. The future researchers to investigate about the effectiveness of the plan of action drafted as a result of the study.

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