

The Impact of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in the Public Elementary Schools in Labo East and West Districts, Division of Camarines Norte

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Education's (DepEd) "Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd" (OK sa DepEd) program is a flagship initiative aimed at promoting the overall health and well-being of learners in public schools across the Philippines. This descriptive research determined the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in the public elementary schools in Labo East and West Districts, Division of Camarines Norte for School Year 2024-2025. The respondents of the study were composed of forty-six (46) Grade 2 teachers from forty-six (46) public elementary schools in Labo East and West District selected through purposive sampling and total enumeration. The study employed a descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design with a researcher-made questionnaire checklist as the primary instrument to gather the necessary data. Data were analyzed using the weighted mean, frequency count, and rank, as well as Wilcoxon Mann Whitney U-Test at a 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that the program was generally Much Implemented, with Generating Information on Health rated as Very Much Implemented, while services and resources, collaboration with stakeholders, program evaluation, and monitoring were rated as Much Implemented. The impact of the program was Very Much Evident in terms of health and nutrition and participation, while mental health support, school attendance, and promotion of health awareness were Much Evident. No significant differences were found in the rank orders of the extent of implementation across most variables ($p > .05$), except for program evaluation ($p < .05$). Furthermore, no significant differences were found in the rank orders of the impact of the program across all variables ($p > .05$). The results indicate that the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) is effectively implemented and yields positive outcomes in improving learners' health, participation, and overall well-being across public elementary schools. While the program demonstrates strong performance, particularly in health information dissemination and learner engagement, certain areas require further strengthening. Thus, policy recommendations were formulated to address the gaps.

1. Introduction

The Department of Education's (DepEd) "Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd" (OK sa DepEd) program is a flagship initiative aimed at promoting the overall health and well-being of learners in public schools across the Philippines. Launched as part of DepEd's efforts to ensure that education is accessible, inclusive, and learner-centered, the program integrates various health-related initiatives to address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of students.

The reviewed literature highlights that the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) serves as a unified framework that integrates various health-related programs to support the holistic development of learners. Anchored in national policies and supported by multiple stakeholders, the program underscores the strong connection between health and academic performance, emphasizing that learners cannot fully succeed in school without proper physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Briones, 2018; SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2016). The shift from disease prevention to health promotion reflects a more proactive and inclusive approach in addressing learners' needs, particularly among disadvantaged populations.

A major component of OK sa DepEd is the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP), which directly addresses malnutrition—a persistent issue affecting student performance and attendance. Both local and international studies affirm that feeding programs not only improve nutritional outcomes but also enhance learners' participation and academic achievement (Chepkwony et al., 2013; Ellis, 2012; Moepeng, 2017). This demonstrates that nutrition is a foundational element in education, reinforcing the idea that learning readiness is closely tied to physical health.

Complementing nutrition initiatives are programs like the National Drug Education Program (NDEP) and Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH), which focus on behavioral and social dimensions of student well-being. These programs aim to equip

learners with critical life skills, enabling them to make informed and responsible decisions. Such interventions highlight the importance of preventive education in shaping positive behaviors and reducing risks associated with adolescence.

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) program further strengthens the health framework by addressing environmental factors that affect student well-being. Access to safe water and proper sanitation not only reduces the spread of diseases but also improves school attendance and learning conditions. This indicates that a healthy school environment is a crucial support system for effective education.

Moreover, the inclusion of medical, dental, and nursing services ensures that learners receive immediate and continuous health care within the school setting. These services enable early detection and management of health concerns, minimizing disruptions to learning. Alongside this, the School Mental Health Program recognizes the growing importance of psychological well-being, acknowledging that emotional stability is essential for cognitive development and academic success.

Generally, the literature reveals that OK sa DepEd is not merely a collection of separate programs but a cohesive, multi-dimensional strategy aimed at fostering holistic learner development. However, while existing studies emphasize the effectiveness and importance of these programs, there remains a need to examine their actual level of implementation, consistency, and impact in specific local contexts, which the present study seeks to address.

This study examines the extent and effectiveness of the implementation of OK sa DepEd in public elementary schools. It explores the challenges faced, the strategies employed by stakeholders, and the program's impact on learners' health outcomes. The findings aim to provide insights into enhancing health service delivery and improving the program's sustainability and reach in the educational landscape.

2. Objectives of the Study

Primarily, this study was conducted to determine the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in the public elementary schools in Labo East and West Districts, Division of Camarines Norte for School Year 2024-2025. Specifically, the researchers' intended to determine (1) the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in terms of: (a) Services and Resources, (b) Generating Information on Health, (c) Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders, (d) Program Evaluation, and (e) Monitoring; (2) the Significance of the Difference on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) along the Aforementioned Aspects; (3) the Extent of the Impact of the Implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan (OK sa DepEd) in terms of: (a) Health and Nutrition, (b) Mental Health Support, (c) School Attendance, (d) Participation, and (e) Promotion of Health Awareness; (4) the Significance of the Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Impact of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) along the Aforementioned Aspects; and (5) the Policy Recommendations that can be Formulated Based on the Findings of the Study.

3. Materials and Methods

The descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design was employed in this study. The descriptive design describes the degree of a quantifiable variable. This study was used to determine the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in Labo East and West Districts, Division of Camarines Norte for the School Year 2024-2025.

3.1 Respondents

The respondents consisted of forty-six (46) Grade 2 teachers from forty-six (46) public elementary schools in Labo East and West District, Division of Camarines Norte selected through purposive sampling and total enumeration. These respondents were taken for the School Year 2024-2025.

3.2 Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used in gathering the necessary data was a structured researcher-made questionnaire checklist. Part I contained the indicators on the extent of the level of implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan (OK sa DepEd) in the public elementary schools in Labo East and Labo West District in terms of: Services and Resources, Generating Information on Health, Program Evaluation and Monitoring, and Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders., and Part II contained the indicators on extent of the impact of the implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan (OK sa DepEd) in terms of: Health and Nutrition, Mental Health Support, School Attendance and Participation, and Promotion of Health Awareness. A total of 80 questions were included in this study. The research instrument underwent content validation by experts in the field and was proofread for clarity and grammatical accuracy. The reliability of the instrument was tested after validation, yielding a coefficient of 0.9681 and the test for correlation analysis arrived at 0.05 level with degree of freedom of 42.0282, indicating that the instrument is highly reliable. Suggestions and recommendations from validators were incorporated for the improvement of the instrument.

3.3 Data Analysis

Weighted mean was used to determine the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) in Labo East and West Districts, Division of Camarines Norte for the School Year 2024-2025. It was interpreted using the following scale:

Scale	Weights Assigned	Description	
		Extent of the Level of Implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan (OK sa DepEd)	Extent of the Impact of the Implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan (OK sa DepEd)
5	4.50-5.00	Very Much Implemented (VMI)	Very Much Evident (VME)
4	3.50-4.49	Much Implemented (MI)	Much Evident (ME)
3	2.50-3.49	Implemented (I)	Evident (E)
2	1.50-2.49	Fairly Implemented (FI)	Fairly Evident (FE)
1	1.00-1.49	Not At All (NA)	Not At All (NA)

A letter of permission to conduct the study was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Camarines Norte, Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Heads of Labo East District public elementary schools for their approval and endorsements.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Summary of the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

The summary of the extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) is illustrated in Table 8.

As illustrated, the following areas were ranked in descending order: Generating Information on Health, 4.52 were rated as Very Much Implemented; while, Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders, 4.41; Services and Resources, 4.36; Program Evaluation, 4.36; Monitoring,

4.36 were interpreted as Much Implemented.

Table 8. The Summary of the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

Indicators	Average		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Services and Resources	4.36	MI	5
2. Generating Information on Health	4.52	VMI	1
3. Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders	4.41	MI	2
4. Program Evaluation	4.36	MI	3
5. Monitoring	4.36	MI	4
Average	4.40	MI	

The average weighted mean of the extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) was 4.40 or rated as Much Implemented. The implementation results of Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) reveal a well-structured program with varying strengths across different components, as evidenced by the descending order of implementation levels. The highest-rated area, Generating Information on Health (4.52, Very Much Implemented), demonstrates exceptional performance in health data management, aligning with Buada (2020) who emphasized the critical role of systematic health information systems in school-based programs. This outstanding performance suggests that OK sa DepEd has successfully institutionalized robust mechanisms for health data collection, analysis, and utilization, which serves as the foundation for evidence-based decision-making.

The subsequent components - Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders (4.41), Services and Resources (4.36), Program Evaluation (4.36), and Monitoring (4.36) - all rated as Much Implemented, indicate a consistently strong performance across key program areas. The high score in collaboration reflects successful multi-sectoral engagement, similar to findings by Colonia et al. (2024) regarding stakeholder participation in DepEd programs. The comparable scores in services/resources, evaluation, and monitoring suggest a balanced implementation where service delivery is well-supported by adequate resources and complemented by systematic oversight mechanisms. This balanced performance across components creates a synergistic effect that enhances overall program implementation, as each element reinforces the others.

The results indicate that OK sa DepEd has moved beyond being a collection of isolated initiatives to become an integrated system with interconnected components working towards common health objectives. The overall average weighted mean of 4.40 (Much Implemented) positions OK sa DepEd as a successfully implemented program that has achieved significant progress in institutionalizing school health initiatives.

4.2 The Test of Significant Difference on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

The results of the test of significant difference on the rank orders on the extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd).

Table 9. Test of significant difference on the rank orders of the extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

Indicators	Computed Tabular			
	z	p-value	Decision on H_0	Significance
1. Services and Resources	-0.03	0.4880	Accepted	Not Significant
2. Generating Information on Health	-0.04	0.4840	Accepted	Not Significant
3. Collaboration with Various Partners and Stakeholders	-0.61	0.2709	Accepted	Not Significant
4. Program Evaluation	-1.93	0.0268	Rejected	0.05
5. Monitoring	-0.57	0.2843	Accepted	Not Significant
Average	-0.636	0.3108		

The uniform implementation quality can be attributed to robust accountability systems similar to those examined by Rachmad & Priambodo (2024) in their study of performance accountability frameworks. The absence of significant differences between districts suggests that OK sa DepEd likely employs clear performance metrics and monitoring mechanisms that ensure consistent implementation regardless of location. Stephani & Yonnedi (2024) further support this interpretation, demonstrating how structured accountability systems in government programs lead to uniform service delivery. The results indicate that the program's monitoring and evaluation components effectively maintain implementation standards across districts, preventing the development of significant disparities. This finding has important implications for scaling up the program, as it suggests that the current implementation model can be replicated across new locations without compromising quality or consistency.

The implementation of OK sa DepEd shows progress but remains incomplete in key service areas, especially feeding and hygiene programs. Stakeholders generally encounter manageable challenges, but further efforts are needed to ensure full and consistent delivery of all program components for maximum impact on student health and school attendance. Adoption of OK sa DepEd and related activities is recommended to enhance school environments and student well-being.

4.3 The Summary of the Extent of the Impact of the Implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

The summary of the extent of the impact of the implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) is presented in Table 15.

Table 15. The Summary of the Extent of the Impact of the Implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

Indicators	Average		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Health and Nutrition	4.52	VME	2
2. Mental Health Support	4.32	ME	4
3. School Attendance	3.87	ME	5
4. Participation	4.56	VME	1
5. Promotion of Health	4.39	ME	3
Average	4.33	ME	

As shown, among the five areas: Participation, 4.56 mean. This was followed by: Health and Nutrition 4.52 were rated as Very Much Evident; while, Promotion of Health, 4.39; Mental Health Support, 4.32; School Attendance, 3.87 were interpreted as Much Evident.

The average weighted mean of the extent of the impact of the implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) among the different zone in Labo East and West Districts was 4.33 or Much Evident. The implementation results of Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) reveal a consistent pattern of strong impact across multiple domains, with Participation (4.56) and Health and Nutrition (4.52) emerging as the highest-performing components rated as Very Much Evident.

The overall average weighted mean of 4.33 (Much Evident) across Labo East and West Districts demonstrates consistent program effectiveness while revealing opportunities for targeted improvements. This comprehensive impact assessment validates OK sa DepEd as a model integrated school health program that successfully addresses multiple dimensions of student well-being.

The results suggest that the program has achieved the difficult balance between comprehensive coverage and implementation quality that Buada (2020) identified as crucial for successful school health initiatives. The relatively uniform performance across districts indicates that the program's framework maintains effectiveness across different implementation contexts, though careful attention should be paid to maintaining this consistency as the program scales.

These findings carry important implications for program enhancement and policy development. First, the exceptional performance in Participation and Health/Nutrition should be analyzed for transferable best practices that could strengthen other components. Second, the slightly lower but still strong scores in awareness and mental health suggest opportunities to intensify these efforts through strategies like peer education models studied by Cadiz & Cortez (2024). Third, the attendance results indicate the need for more integrated tracking systems that connect health interventions to attendance outcomes. Moving forward, program managers should consider developing component-specific enhancement plans while maintaining the holistic approach that has yielded such strong overall results. The findings ultimately position OK sa DepEd as a benchmark for comprehensive school health programs, demonstrating that multidimensional interventions can achieve significant across-the-board impacts when properly designed and implemented. OK sa DepEd serves as an effective model for comprehensive school health programs, demonstrating that sustained, multi-component interventions with strong community engagement can significantly improve various dimensions of student well-being.

4.4 The Test of Significant Difference on the Rank Orders of the Impact of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

The results of the test of significant difference on the rank orders of the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) are described in Table 16.

Table 16. Test of significant difference on the rank orders of the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

Indicators	Computed Tabular			
	z	p-value	Decision on H ₀	Significance
1. Health and Nutrition	-0.62	0.2676	Accepted	Not Significant
2. Mental Health Support	-1.10	0.1357	Accepted	Not Significant
3. School Attendance	-0.85	0.1977	Accepted	Not Significant
4. Participation	-0.19	0.4247	Accepted	Not Significant
5. Promotion of Health	-0.45	0.2843	Accepted	Not Significant
Average	-0.642	0.262		

With the indicators for both the smaller and bigger groups, computed z-values with their corresponding decision were: Health and Nutrition, -0.62 and 0.2676(p>0.05); Mental Health Support, -1.10 and 0.1357(p>0.05); School Attendance, -0.85 and 0.1977(p>0.05); Participation, -0.19 and 0.4247(p>0.05) and Promotion of Health Awareness, -0.45 and 0.234(p>0.05).

The aforementioned findings, led the researcher to accept the null hypothesis along Health and Nutrition, Mental Health Support, School Attendance, Participation, and the statistically equivalent impacts (p>0.05) in Health and Nutrition, Mental Health Support, School Attendance, Participation, and Health Awareness implies that OK sa DepEd has achieved balanced implementation, where no single component significantly outperforms others. This balanced impact profile reflects the comprehensive program design emphasized by Estacio (2024) in analyzing integrated school health systems, where synergistic components create holistic student support. The results suggest that OK sa DepEd's standardized implementation framework successfully translates into equitable outcomes regardless of location-specific variables in Labo East and West Districts.

The consistent impacts across program components may be attributed to DepEd's systemic approach to capacity-building and resource allocation, as discussed by Miguel & Pascual (2021) in their study of resilient education systems. The non-significant differences (p>0.05) imply that training, materials, and support structures have been equitably distributed to ensure all program aspects receive adequate implementation attention. The equitable impacts also reflect the values-based implementation framework examined by Monterola & Basilan (2023) in DepEd programs. The non-significant variation (p>0.05) across health domains suggests that OK sa DepEd has successfully operationalized shared values of holistic student development among implementers. This values alignment likely contributes to the consistent attention and quality given to all program components, from nutritional services to mental health support.

These findings carry important implications for both program management and education policy. First, the consistent impacts validate OK sa DepEd's integrated design as effective and replicable across locations, supporting broader scale-up. Second, the results suggest that other

DepEd programs could benefit from similar whole-school, values-anchored approaches to ensure balanced implementation. Third, the findings highlight the need for sustained investment in teacher training and resources to maintain this implementation quality.

5. The Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several key policy recommendations are proposed which are as follows:

- DepEd Central Office should integrate OK sa DepEd outcomes into the national School Improvement Plan (SIP) template to ensure sustainability.
- This ensures long-term institutionalization and alignment across all schools nationwide.
- DepEd Division Office should allocate funding to support complete delivery of nutrition and medical services, especially in underserved schools.

- Addresses resource gaps and ensures equity in health service delivery.
- School Health Coordinator should strengthen health data collection systems to provide
- Timely and accurate information on learners' health.
- Improves evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions.
- School Heads should establish and sustain partnerships with local health centers and non- governmental organizations.
- Expands access to medical expertise, services, and community-based support.
- Teachers should be trained on first-aid, mental health awareness, and basic hygiene education.
- Strengthens frontline response and integrates health awareness into daily learning.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The following conclusions are drawn: extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) is Much Implemented; there is no significant difference on the rank orders on the extent of the level of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) along the aforementioned aspects except Program Evaluation; the extent of the impact of the implementation of the DepEd Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) is Much Evident; and is no significant difference on the rank orders on the impact of the implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) along the aforementioned aspects.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were offered: DepEd should enhance school-based health services by providing regular training for health personnel and ensuring adequate medical supplies; School Heads and Health Coordinators must strengthen local health plans through active collaboration with parents, barangay health workers, and LGUs; Regional and Division Offices should implement a standardized monitoring tool to evaluate and improve program implementation across schools; DepEd and DBM must allocate increased funding to support hygiene kits, health campaigns, and preventive medical services; and the policy recommendations be adopted.

Future researchers are advised to explore the comparative impact of OK sa DepEd implementation between urban and rural schools; assess the long-term effects of health interventions on learners' academic performance and attendance; investigate the role of parental and community involvement in sustaining school health programs; compare the effectiveness of individual components of OK sa DepEd, such as school-based immunization versus dental health services; and Evaluate the challenges faced by health personnel in implementing the program and identify scalable solutions.

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