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Implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) Among Secondary Schools in the Division of Samar

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Abstract: *The Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) was established by the Department of Education (DepEd) to strengthen environmental consciousness and promote sustainable practices among students. Despite its nationwide presence, inconsistencies in implementation, participation, and sustainability across schools have been observed. This study examined the extent of YES-O implementation among public secondary schools in the Division of Samar, focusing on its objectives, programs, projects, and activities, personnel, strategies/ methodologies, budget, and monitoring and evaluation as perceived by its program implementers and school beneficiaries, together with the challenges encountered in sustaining their environmental activities. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using purposive sampling to select respondents who were directly engaged in YES-O programs, such as the YES-O advisers, school administrators, and selected student leaders. Teacher-made questionnaires served as the primary data-gathering tool, and these were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were organized and interpreted thematically to complement quantitative results. Findings revealed that respondents exhibited a high level of environmental adherence to DepEd guidelines, with most schools demonstrating strong commitment to environmental campaigns but facing constraints related to limited funding, lack of continuous training opportunities, and community partnerships. Nevertheless, schools with strong administrative support and active student involvement demonstrated positive outcomes in student engagement and environmental stewardship. The study recommends enhanced support mechanisms, capacity-building for advisers and officers, and strengthened inter-school collaboration to ensure more consistent and impactful YES-O implementation across the division. Consequently, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials were developed to reinforce implementation and environmental action among students and school stakeholders. This study will serve as a future reference for educators, policymakers, and researchers aiming to improve environmental education and youth involvement programs in Philippine schools.*

Keywords: *YES-O, Extent of Implementation, IEC Materials, School Beneficiaries, Program Implementers*

1. Introduction

Environmental degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss continue to pose serious threats to human survival and sustainable development, making the promotion of environmental awareness among learners an urgent educational concern. Schools play a critical role in shaping students' environmental consciousness and responsible behavior through formal instruction and co-curricular engagement. Globally, scholars have emphasized the importance of youth participation in environmental initiatives as a means of achieving sustainability. Upendra et al. (2023) noted that youth engagement in environmental action was increasingly supported through information and communication technologies, although lifestyle barriers still limited the adoption of sustainable practices. Likewise, Hovsepyan (2024) emphasized that environmental advocacy empowered young people to take leadership roles in addressing ecological challenges. Supporting this view, Khomenko (2024) identified teacher-student collaboration and activity-based learning as effective pedagogical approaches in fostering civic and environmental responsibility, while Meseret (2016) found that environmental clubs in Ethiopia enhanced students' awareness through activities such as waste management, soil conservation, and tree planting despite challenges related to motivation and funding.

Recent global data further underscored the need to strengthen environmental education within schools. UNESCO (2021) reported that only 53% of national curricula worldwide explicitly integrated environmental issues, revealing a persistent disconnect between environmental knowledge and consistent ecological practice. Similarly, Ojala (2019) observed that although youth participation in climate action had increased, many young individuals experienced eco-anxiety and found it difficult to sustain long-term environmental engagement without institutional support. In the broader international context, studies continued to reveal both achievements and challenges in environmental education. Boeve-de Pauw et al. (2019) demonstrated that education for sustainable development positively influenced students' environmental attitudes, although behavioral transformation often remained inconsistent. Likewise, Kollmuss and Agyeman (2018) highlighted the continuing gap between environmental knowledge and actual ecological behavior. UNESCO (2021) also noted that environmental education remained fragmented in many regions, while Leicht et al. (2018) pointed out that even successful school-based initiatives such as Eco-Schools faced difficulties in sustaining long-term environmental impact.

In the Philippines, environmental education has been institutionalized through the establishment of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) under DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2003, which designated the organization as the primary

co-curricular body responsible for leading environmental programs in schools. Despite this policy support, several studies revealed inconsistencies in implementation and sustainability. Reyes and Torres (2018) observed uneven integration of environmental education and climate change concepts in school curricula, with YES-O programs often underutilized despite their potential. Similarly, Guzman and Tan (2020) reported that many YES-O activities focused primarily on short-term events rather than fostering sustained behavioral change among students. Additional studies further illustrated this gap between awareness and practice. Rogayan and Nebrida (2019) found that students in Zambales possessed high environmental awareness but demonstrated only moderate environmental practices. Likewise, De Luna and Manlapig (2021) reported that student participation in solid waste management programs improved ecological outcomes in schools, although limited institutional support constrained wider implementation.

At the local level, studies continued to show promising yet challenging conditions in the implementation of school-based environmental programs. Saldaña and Domanog (2024) found that YES-O initiatives in Calbayog City positively influenced students' pro-environmental behavior and improved their science performance. However, the study also identified issues related to limited funding, weak parental involvement, and the absence of long-term monitoring mechanisms that affected program sustainability. These findings reflected a broader concern observed across global, national, and local contexts: while environmental awareness and advocacy among young people continued to grow, translating such awareness into sustained ecological behavior remained a persistent challenge. In the Samar context, YES-O implementation showed encouraging practices but continued to face resource limitations and structural concerns that hindered the continuity and expansion of environmental initiatives in schools and communities.

Given these conditions, there is a need to examine more closely how the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) is implemented in secondary schools within the Division of Samar. This study aimed to assess the extent of YES-O implementation, identify the challenges encountered, and evaluate the perceived effectiveness of school-based environmental activities to inform the development of a contextualized Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material. However, the study was limited to quantitative data gathered from YES-O coordinators and teacher-advisers in secondary schools within the Division of Samar. It did not include in-depth analyses of student perceptions or community-level impacts.

2. Objectives

This study aimed to determine the extent of implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) among secondary schools in the Division of Samar during the School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What was the profile of the YES-O implementers in the secondary schools of Samar Division in terms of:
   1.1 sex;
   1.2 role in the organization;
   1.3 years of experience in YES-O; and
   1.4 number of relevant trainings attended?
2. Based on the perception of implementers and beneficiaries, what is the extent of implementation of YES-O among secondary schools in Samar Division in terms of the following:
   2.1 objectives;
   2.2 programs, projects, and activities;
   2.3 personnel;
   2.4 strategies/ methodologies;
   2.5 budget; and
   2.6 monitoring and evaluation?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of implementation of YES-O among secondary schools in Samar Division as perceived by the respondent groups?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of implementation of YES-O in secondary schools of Samar Division and the profile of the implementers?
5. What are the problems encountered in the implementation of the YES-O among secondary schools of Samar Division?

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to assess the extent of implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) in secondary schools within the Samar Division. The descriptive component enabled the researcher to systematically gather, analyze, and present factual information regarding the profile of YES-O implementers, the

level of program implementation, and the perceptions of beneficiaries, including the existing practices, challenges, and issues encountered in managing the organization. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect of the design examined the possible relationships between the extent of YES-O implementation and the profile of implementers as well as the perceptions of beneficiaries, without implying causation. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis, to describe the variables and test the significance of their relationships. Through the integration of descriptive and correlational approaches, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of YES-O implementation in the Samar Division and generated findings that served as the basis for developing contextualized Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials intended to strengthen environmental awareness, knowledge, and positive behavioral change among individuals and communities.

Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was utilized as the primary data-gathering instrument in this study to obtain relevant information regarding the implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) in secondary schools within the Samar Division. The instrument was carefully developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study, related literature, and existing policies and guidelines on environmental education and YES-O implementation. It consisted of structured items designed to gather data on the profile of respondents, the extent of YES-O implementation, challenges encountered, and the perceived effectiveness of environmental activities conducted in schools. To ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity, the questionnaire underwent expert validation and necessary revisions before administration. The use of a researcher-made questionnaire enabled the systematic collection of quantitative data necessary for analyzing the variables of the study and addressing the research objectives comprehensively.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data-gathering instrument, the researcher-made questionnaire underwent a rigorous process of development, validation, and pilot testing prior to its administration. The instrument was designed based on the objectives of the study, relevant literature, existing Department of Education policies, and environmental education frameworks to measure the extent of implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) in secondary schools within the Samar Division. Separate questionnaires were prepared for YES-O implementers and student beneficiaries, covering variables such as objectives, projects, programs and activities, personnel, strategies or methodologies, budget, monitoring and evaluation, and challenges encountered, including inputs for the proposed Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. To establish content validity, the instrument was evaluated by experts in educational management and environmental education, whose comments and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and organization of the items. Subsequently, the revised questionnaire was pilot tested among respondents from non-participating secondary schools, specifically at Calbayog City National High School, to determine its reliability. Using Cronbach's Alpha, a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.72$ was obtained, indicating acceptable internal consistency and confirming the suitability of the instrument for the study. In addition, ethical standards were strictly observed during data collection by informing respondents of the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. Measures such as immediate checking of retrieved questionnaires, careful coding of responses, and triangulation of responses from implementers and beneficiaries were likewise employed to enhance the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The present study conscientiously observed ethical principles to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of all respondents. It was guided by the ethical framework of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice as outlined by Pietilä et al. (2020). Autonomy was upheld by ensuring that all respondents from the identified secondary schools in Samar Division participated voluntarily through an informed consent process. They were given clear and sufficient information about the objectives, scope, and procedures of the research, as well as their rights to ask questions, decline participation, or withdraw at any stage without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by assigning codes to responses and securing the data to prevent unauthorized access.

Beneficence was maintained by ensuring that the study's outcomes would contribute positively to educational practices, particularly in strengthening the implementation of YES-O programs in secondary schools. The research process minimized disruption to participants by conducting data collection in a manner convenient to schools and teachers. Nonmaleficence was observed by carefully designing the questionnaires to avoid intrusive, offensive, or emotionally distressing questions, thereby preventing any form of psychological or emotional harm. Moreover, the ethical management of data was strictly followed to avoid misuse or unintended disclosure of information.

The principle of justice was also applied by ensuring fairness in participant selection and treatment. All eligible respondents in the 106 secondary schools implementing YES-O were given equal opportunities to participate, and the findings of the study were intended to be equitably relevant to all participating schools. The study followed stringent ethical standards to uphold the validity and integrity of the research process. Prior to data gathering, approval from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) was secured, followed by consent from school heads.

Lastly, the study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the integrity and validity of the research process.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Profile Components		Implementers (n=306)	
		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	135	44.12
	Female	171	55.88
Role	Administrator	34	11.11
	Adviser	32	10.46
	Student Officer	240	78.43
Years of Experience	1 – 2	213	69.61
	3 – 4	47	15.36
	5 – 6	30	9.80
	7 or more	16	5.23
Number of Trainings	0 – 1	264	86.28
	2 – 3	11	3.60
	4 – 5	12	3.92
	6 or more	19	6.21

The profile of the implementers of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) in secondary schools within the Samar Division provided significant insights into the composition and preparedness of individuals facilitating the program. Findings revealed that female implementers comprised the majority at 55.88 percent, while male implementers accounted for 44.12 percent, indicating a slight predominance of females in leadership and organizational responsibilities related to YES-O activities. Most of the implementers were student officers, representing 78.43 percent of the respondents, which underscored the vital role of student leadership in carrying out environmental initiatives within schools. Meanwhile, administrators and advisers accounted for 11.11 percent and 10.46 percent, respectively, demonstrating the supportive involvement of school personnel in program implementation. In terms of experience, the majority of implementers had served for one to two years (69.61%), suggesting a relatively young and developing leadership group that may benefit from further capability enhancement. Additionally, most respondents had attended only zero to one training session (86.28%), indicating limited exposure to capacity-building opportunities that could affect the effectiveness and sustainability of YES-O implementation across schools. These findings highlighted the need for strengthened professional development and continuous training programs to improve the competency and consistency of YES-O implementers.

4.2 Extent of Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division

Table 2
Extent of Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division

Domains	Implementers			Beneficiaries			Average		
	x̄	Desc	SD	x̄	Desc	SD	x̄	Desc	SD
Objectives	4.65	HA	0.38	4.40	HA	0.40	4.49	HA	0.41
Programs, Projects, and Activities	4.58	HA	0.42	4.35	HA	0.44	4.43	HA	0.45
Personnel	4.51	HA	0.43	4.34	HA	0.44	4.41	HA	0.44
Strategies/ Methodologies	4.53	HA	0.42	4.39	HA	0.43	4.44	HA	0.43
Budget	4.35	HA	0.49	4.29	HA	0.47	4.31	HA	0.48

Monitoring and Evaluation	4.50	HA	0.40	4.42	HA	0.41	4.45	HA	0.41
Overall	4.52	HA	0.36	4.36	HA	0.37	4.42	HA	0.37

Legend:

Scale	***Interpretation***
4.20 – 5.00	*Highly Agree (HA)*
3.40 – 4.00	*Agree (A)*
2.60 – 3.25	*Slightly Agree (SA)*
1.80 – 2.50	*Disagree (D)*
1.00 – 1.75	*Does Not Agree at All (NA)*

The table presented a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) among secondary schools in the Division of Samar, as perceived by both implementers and beneficiaries. The data indicated consistently high agreement levels across multiple domains, with mean scores well within the "Highly Agree" (HA) range. The highest scores were found in objectives (mean: 4.65 for implementers, 4.40 for beneficiaries, 4.49 overall), followed closely by domains such as programs, projects, activities, personnel, strategies/methodologies, budget, and monitoring and evaluation. The overall mean for all domains stood at 4.42, signifying that YES-O was broadly regarded as effectively implemented in these schools. This positive perception covered not only the formulation of clear objectives and structured programs but also the adequacy of human resources and budget allocation, as well as robust strategies and ongoing monitoring and evaluation practices.

4.3 Test of Significance on the Mean Differences Between the Perception of the Two Groups of Respondents on the Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division

Table 3
Test of Significance on the Mean Differences Between the Perception of the Two Groups of Respondents on Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division

Domains	t-test	df	p-value
Objectives	9.071*	814	< .001
Programs, Projects, and Activities	7.15*	814	< .001
Personnel	5.375*	814	< .001
Strategies/ Methodologies	4.65*	814	< .001
Budget	1.786^{ns}	814	0.074
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.71*	814	0.007
Overall	5.935*	814	< .001

Legend: Significant at .05 level (p < .05)

The t-test yielded statistically significant differences in perceptions for several domains: objectives, programs/projects/activities, personnel, strategies/ methodologies, and monitoring and evaluation, with p-values all well below the 0.05 threshold. The domain of budget, however, did not show a significant difference (p = 0.074), implying relative consensus between implementers and beneficiaries about financial aspects. The overall implementation showed a significant mean difference between groups (p = 0.001). These results indicated meaningful gaps in perceptions of program effectiveness across key areas. Significant differences suggested that implementers and beneficiaries experience and evaluate the YES-O program in systematically distinct ways, which may reflect variances in direct involvement, access to information, and roles within organizational activities.

4.4 Test of Association on the Perception of the Implementers on Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division and their Profile

Table 4
Test of Association on the Perception of the Implementers on the Implementation of YES-O among Secondary Schools in Samar Division and their Profile

Indicators	Sex					Role				
	X^2	df	Phi	Int.	p-value	X^2	df	phi	Int.	p-value
Objectives	3.624	2	0.109	MA	0.163^{ns}	10.43	4	0.131	MA	0.034*

Programs, Projects, and Activities	1.667	2	0.074	WA	0.435^{ns}	3.426	4	0.075	WA	0.489^{ns}
Personnel	0.745	2	0.046	WA	0.388^{ns}	5.879	4	0.139	MA	0.053^{ns}
Strategies/ Methodologies	0.032	2	0.10	NA	0.984^{ns}	11.779	4	0.139	MA	0.019*
Budget	0.071	2	0.015	NA	0.965^{ns}	3.344	4	0.074	WA	0.502^{ns}
Monitoring and Evaluation	2.697	2	0.094	WA	0.260^{ns}	5.936	4	0.099	WA	0.204^{ns}
Overall	**1.284**	**2**	**0.065**	**WA**	**0.527^{ns}**	**3.074**	**4**	**0.071**	**WA**	0.545^{ns}

Legend:

*** = Highly Significant at 0.05 (p<0.01) ±0.25 – 1 = (PA) Perfect Association

* = Significant at 0.05 (p<0.05) ±0.15 - ±0.24 = (SA) Strong Association

ns = Not Significant at 0.05 (p>0.05) ±0.10 - ±0.14 = (MA) Moderate Association

±0.05 - ±0.09 = (WA) Weak Association

±0.00 - ±0.04 = (NA) No Association

The data showed the association between implementers' perceptions of YES-O implementation and their demographic profile, focusing specifically on sex and role. The results showed that there were generally weak to moderate associations between the implementers' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of YES-O implementation outcomes. Specifically, sex exhibited no significant association with most domains (programs/projects/activities, personnel, strategies/ methodologies, budget, and monitoring/evaluation), with phi coefficients indicating weak or no relationship and p-values consistently above the 0.05 significance threshold. In contrast, role showed some moderate relationships, particularly in the domains of objectives and strategies/ methodologies, where p-values for role are 0.034 and 0.019, respectively, indicating significant but only moderate associations. The implications suggested that perceptions about YES-O implementation were largely independent of the implementers' sex, while role within the organization had a small but statistically significant influence on how the objectives, personnel, and methodological strategies of the program were viewed.

4.5 Problems Encountered in the Implementation of YES-O Among Secondary Schools in Samar Division

Table 5

Frequency of the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) among Secondary Schools of Samar Division

Statements	f	Rank
1. Lack of school/ local funds or financial support.	252	3
2. Students' lack of interest, discipline, and awareness.	254	2
3. Teacher's lack of concern, support, and presence.	119	9
4. Administrator and principal's lack of attentiveness and action.	121	8
5. Community and barangay officials' lack of care and maintenance	242	4
6. Lack of time and resources for the programs, projects, and activities.	261	1
7. Lack of orientation on the program by the administrator/ teacher-adviser/ student-officers	191	5
8. Poor or unsuitable selection process of the people behind the YES-O's programs, projects, and activities	123	7
9. Unsafe and risky environmental conditions of areas identified for activities	101	10
10. Weak program monitoring and evaluation system by the implementers	125	6

These findings had significant implications for program planning and management. The prevalence of limited time and financial resources suggested a need for stronger institutional support and fundraising initiatives, such as advocating for increased budget allocations in annual implementation plans or initiating collaborations with local government units and external organizations. Addressing students' lack of interest and awareness called for more innovative, relevant, and engaging program activities, possibly through the integration of environmental topics into the core curriculum and recognition or incentive schemes for active participation. The shortfall in orientation pointed to the importance of systematic induction and regular professional development for

administrators, advisers, and student officers. Moreover, enhancing program monitoring and evaluation systems through structured tools, feedback loops, and stakeholder workshops can contribute to more robust project assessment and improvement.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

1. The implementation of the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) among secondary schools in Samar is effective and highly regarded by both implementers and beneficiaries. The organization successfully fulfills its objectives of promoting environmental awareness, fostering student participation, and implementing sustainability projects.
2. Despite the overall success, the study concludes that there are areas needing enhancement—particularly in training, documentation, long-term program maintenance, and external partnership-building.
3. The number of trainings attended significantly influences positive perceptions of implementation, proving that continuous professional development strengthens the capacity and efficiency of YES-O implementers.
4. The problems encountered highlight the need for more institutional support, better coordination among stakeholders, and innovative approaches to sustain student engagement and environmental stewardship.
5. Therefore, while YES-O has been effectively institutionalized in Samar Division schools, it requires enhanced capacity-building, resource mobilization, and monitoring systems to sustain its long-term environmental objectives.

Recommendations

1. Develop Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials for YES-O, such as posters, leaflets, and brochures that promote YES-O goals, projects, and environmental best practices.
2. Conduct regular and systematic training workshops for implementers, advisers, and student leaders focusing on environmental leadership, project management, and sustainability.
3. Strengthen collaboration with local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and community groups for technical, logistical, and financial support.
4. Establish a school-based YES-O Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Team to ensure that activities are systematically tracked, assessed, and documented.
5. This study will serve as a future reference to conduct similar studies in elementary schools or other divisions to compare implementation levels and contextual challenges.

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