

CLASSROOM SANITATION PRACTICES AMONG ELEMENTARY LEARNERS AND THEIR SOCIAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between classroom sanitation practices and the social health perspective of elementary learners in District II, Division of Malaybalay City, during the School Year 2025-2026.

Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from Grade 4, 5, and 6 learners through a researcher-made questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert Scale and a visual audit checklist. Statistical analysis was performed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Findings revealed a high level of classroom sanitation practices across five dimensions: WASH facility functionality, classroom maintenance, teacher promotion, peer influence, and personal hygiene knowledge.

Furthermore, the learners' social health perspective was rated as high, characterized by frequent positive peer and teacher interactions. Correlation analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between sanitation practices and social health perspective, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It implies that the physical cleanliness of the school environment directly impacts the social and emotional climate of the student body.

The study concludes that while physical infrastructure is vital, the primary drivers of social health are learners' attitudes and teacher-led behavioral modeling. Physical cleanliness directly influences social well-being, transforming sanitation from a mere health protocol into a foundational social-emotional tool. Recommendations include shifting teacher roles from passive supervision to active behavioral modeling and integrating hygiene into the social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. By framing cleanliness as a communal responsibility, schools can bridge the knowledge-practice gap and foster deeper collective inclusion, ensuring that a hygienic environment serves as a catalyst for enhanced teamwork, belonging, and holistic student development.

Keyword: *Classroom Sanitation, Social Health, WASH Facilities, Elementary Learners, Social-Emotional Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Evidence from various observations indicates that the level of use of classroom sanitation practices among elementary learners deeply affects their scholastic achievements and their level of involvement. Substandard hygiene habits and unhygienic school surroundings, including dusty furniture, poorly kept restrooms, and a lack of basic materials like soap, accelerate the transmission of contagious ailments. This situation results in higher rates of absenteeism

because learners who frequently experience illness face obstacles in their academic growth.

Moving forward from these observations, a significant volume of scholarly work emphasizes the link between school cleanliness and the performance of learners. For example, Mendoza and Santiago (2022) established that institutionalized hygiene protocols in rural schools significantly decrease the spread of common infections while fostering a sense of security among the children. Furthermore, recent data from Ramos (2023) indicated that consistent

access to functional handwashing stations not only improves the physical wellness of learners but also strengthens their daily presence in the classroom. This collection of evidence provides a firm basis for the current study by confirming that physical health improvements serve as a primary result of effective sanitation.

Finally, the necessity of this inquiry rests on the desire to move beyond the purely physical consequences of hygiene to support the total growth of the child. By highlighting a social health perspective, the conclusions can inform the creation of inclusive school regulations that view the level of use of classroom sanitation practices as a core component of Social-Emotional Learning rather than just a medical necessity. The outcomes will offer functional guidance for teachers and school administrators to build settings where learners feel respected and secure. Ultimately, these efforts will refine the educational journey and the collective social prosperity of the elementary school population.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The current inquiry, which examines the level of use of classroom sanitation practices among elementary learners and their social health perspective, finds its primary foundation in the Social Learning Theory established by Albert Bandura. This theoretical lens provides a holistic structure for understanding how elementary learners acquire and internalize hygiene habits while exploring how these mastered actions shape their social health perspective. By utilizing this framework, the researcher can evaluate the complex relationship between environmental conditions and the social development of the child.

Social Learning Theory maintains that the acquisition of knowledge occurs within a social context through a continuous cycle of observation and imitation. This perspective emphasizes the critical nature of monitoring and replicating the behaviors, cognitive patterns, and emotional reactions of others. Within the scope of this investigation, the school setting and the individuals within it, specifically teachers and peers, act as the primary social models that influence how learners adopt various cleanliness protocols.

The core principles of this theory align precisely with the methods through which elementary children build hygiene habits and related

interpersonal skills. Learners do not gain proficiency in sanitation solely through formal lessons; instead, they master tasks such as proper handwashing or desk organization by watching the daily routines of their teachers and fellow learners. A school room that remains consistently tidy serves as a silent yet powerful model of excellence, teaching children that maintaining a high level of use of classroom sanitation practices is the expected standard of the community. Conversely, a consistently neglected environment suggests to the learners that poor hygiene is an acceptable social norm.

Ultimately, the self-efficacy that learners gain within this social environment directly dictates their broader social health perspective. Elementary learners discover how to collaborate effectively to preserve the cleanliness of a shared school space. These socially acquired traits, which include successful teamwork, a reduction in the exclusion of ill peers, and the display of civic duty, foster a more cohesive and supportive social health perspective among the entire learner population.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For better understanding between the researcher and the readers, the following terms are defined operationally as follows.

Availability and Functionality of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities. Availability and Functionality of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities refers to the physical presence and working condition of essential facilities. This is the most direct measure of the sanitation standard of the school environment.

Classroom Cleanliness and Maintenance Status. Classroom Cleanliness and Maintenance Status refer to the observable level of cleanliness within the immediate classroom space. This directly affects the learners' daily comfort and the perceived value of space, which in turn influences their respect for the environment and for each other.

Learner's Personal Hygiene Knowledge and Attitudes. Learner's Personal Hygiene Knowledge and Attitudes refer to the learners' understanding of why sanitation is important (knowledge) and their internal feelings/beliefs about practicing hygiene (attitude). This focuses on the individual

cognitive and affective factors that mediate the environmental impact.

Learners' Social Health Perspective. Learners' Social Health Perspective refers to the students' self-perceived ability to form and maintain healthy relationships, engage in pro-social behavior (cooperation, sharing), experience social inclusion, and possess hygiene-related self-efficacy (confidence in their ability to maintain cleanliness), as influenced by their immediate classroom environment.

Peer Influence and Collective Responsibility for Cleanliness. Peer Influence and Collective Responsibility for Cleanliness refer to the students' perceived level of group cooperation, peer pressure for cleanliness, and participation in shared cleaning tasks. These variable measures the social context of sanitation, how students influence each other's behaviors and sense of communal ownership.

Teacher's Role in Promoting Hygiene Practices. The teacher's Role in Promoting Hygiene Practices refers to the frequency and consistency of the teacher's instruction, modeling, supervision, and reinforcement of hygiene behaviors. This reflects the social learning component from the educator.

4. THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter is composed of research design, research locale, respondents of the study, the sampling procedure, the research instrument, data gathering, scoring procedure, validation and try out of instrument, and statistical treatment of data.

5. RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The target population for this study comprises elementary learners currently enrolled in the intermediate levels, or Key Stage 2, which include specifically Grades 4, 5, and 6 within the public schools of District II, Malaybalay City Division, for the academic year 2025 to 2026. The researcher selects this specific demographic through purposive sampling because learners in these grade levels possess the cognitive maturity and linguistic proficiency necessary to accurately self-report on their personal hygiene habits and navigate the complexities of social perspectives. By focusing on these mature primary learners, the study ensures the collection of reliable, firsthand data regarding the intersection of physical health

practices and social awareness within the local educational context.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher selected the respondents of this study through purposive sampling to ensure sufficient variability regarding the age and maintenance status of school facilities. The study designates elementary learners in Key Stage 2, specifically those in Grades 4, 5, and 6, as the primary respondents because they possess the capacity to provide accurate self-reports on both hygiene practices and social perspectives. Furthermore, the selection process includes teachers as vital participants. Specifically, the researcher chooses only the class president from each grade level and section to serve as the respondent, thereby allowing these individuals to represent the collective views and experiences of their respective classrooms.

6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This study used an adapted survey-questionnaire titled Social Emotional Health Module (SEHM) - Elementary School Questionnaire from California School Health Survey (CalSCHLS) / WestEd 2023–2024 (Version ES27). The instrument for the dependent variable (Social Health Perspective) focused on social-emotional indicators like inclusion, cooperation, and self-efficacy. A module from a widely used school survey was highly relevant.

Instruments for the independent variables (Sanitation Practices/WASH) require both a visible audit (Checklist) and a teacher perception survey (Questionnaire) that was adapted from Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools (WinS) Monitoring Checklist/Survey authored by WHO / UNICEF (2016).

7. SCORING PROCEDURE

The data were interpreted using the rating scales below. For the level of classroom sanitation practices, the mean was interpreted using the Five-Point Likert Scale.

8. STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

To determine the level of classroom sanitation practices, weighted mean and standard deviation were used.

To identify the level of learners' social health perspective, weighted mean and standard deviation were employed.

To find the significant relationship between the level of classroom sanitation practices among elementary learners and their level of social health perspective, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, or Pearson r , was utilized.

9. FINDINGS

The following significant results emerged from the study:

There was a high level of classroom sanitation practices among elementary learners in terms of availability and functionality of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, classroom cleanliness and maintenance status, teacher's role in promoting hygiene practices, peer influence and collective responsibility for cleanliness, and learner's personal hygiene knowledge and attitudes. The level of classroom sanitation practices is observed 7-8 times out of ten situations.

There was a high level of learners' social health perspective. The learners frequently exhibit healthy social behaviors and maintain positive interactions with peers and teachers.

There was a significant relationship between the level of classroom sanitation practices among elementary learners and their level of social health perspective. These results suggest that as the quality and implementation of sanitation practices improve, the social well-being, sense of belonging, and cooperative behaviors of the learners also increase significantly.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the empirical results, this study arrives at the following conclusions:

The investigation reveals that classroom sanitation practices remain highly established, as the learners exhibit these behaviors in nearly 80 percent of situations. This evidence proves that while the necessary infrastructure exists, the true drivers of the social health perspective of the learners are their own attitudes and the rules

established by the teachers. Recognizing this, schools must shift their focus from mere physical maintenance toward sustained behavioral modeling to bridge the gap between knowing hygiene practices and consistently performing them.

Furthermore, the data indicates a high level of social health, as learners frequently exhibit positive interactions with their peers and teachers. This leads to the realization that a supportive emotional climate already exists within the schools. To sustain this, however, schools must integrate social emotional training that transforms individual kindness into active and collective inclusion, which ensures that no learner remains socially isolated despite the presence of a clean environment.

Finally, the study confirms a significant relationship between classroom sanitation practices and the social health perspective of the learners, proving that physical cleanliness directly dictates social well-being. This realization underscores that sanitation constitutes much more than just a health protocol; it serves as a foundational social emotional tool. Consequently, improving hygiene infrastructure and the knowledge of the learners' functions as a primary strategy for enhancing the sense of belonging, teamwork, and collective responsibility among the learners.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings and conclusions, this study proposes the following recommendations for practical implementation and future research:

Teachers may shift from passive supervision to active behavioral modeling by consistently demonstrating proper hygiene habits alongside their learners. By integrating these practices into daily routines and fostering positive attitudes, teachers can bridge the knowledge practice gap, ensuring that sanitation becomes a subconscious and permanent habit rather than a mere response to classroom rules or the availability of infrastructure.

Learners may actively practice inclusive behavior by inviting classmates who appear less involved to join in group games and projects. By transforming individual acts of kindness into active teamwork, learners can ensure that every individual feels a

genuine sense of belonging, which creates a supportive social environment where no peer remains isolated.

Teachers may intentionally integrate sanitation activities into the social emotional curriculum by framing classroom cleanliness as a communal responsibility rather than a rigid rule. By highlighting how a hygienic environment fosters mutual respect and safety, teachers can utilize daily cleaning routines as practical opportunities to strengthen teamwork, boost the collective self-efficacy of the learners, and enhance the overall social well-being of the class.

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