Title: **THE HEALTH AND SANITATION PROBLEMS AND PRACTICES OF PUPILS OF STO. DOMINGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BAMBANG NUEVA VTZCAYA.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to determine the health and sanitation problems and practices of selected pupils of Sto. Domingo Elementary School, Sto. Domingo, Bambang Nueva Vizcaya. Specifically, it sought to give answer to the profile of the pupils in the terms of age, gender, parent's occupation, family background and family income. The health and sanitation practices were those in the terms of practices done in the school, in their homes in the community. Health problems were those common problems like fever and chills, skin diseases, dental problems and malnutrition.

The descriptive-normative survey was used in this study with a questionnaire as its main gathering instrument. A total of 125 pupils chosen through random sampling were the pupil-respondents of the study. On the other hand, seven teacher-respondents were asked to fill up the health survey form to identify the percentage of school population found to suffer from health problems. The frequency, percentage and weighted mean were employed to treat the data.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**On the Profile of the Respondents**

The mean age is at 10.324 or 10 years. Majority of the pupils are female. Farming is the most prevalent occupation of the pupils' fathers. Majority of the mothers are without gainful occupation.

There are differences in the family background according to ethnic affiliation as accounted by the Ilocanos which make up 45 or 36 percent, the Ifugaos which make up 11 or 8.8 percent, and the Gaddangs which make up for 23 or 18 percent. The mean gross family income is at P11, 341 which is way below the national poverty threshold.

**The Health and Sanitation Practices of the Pupils in School**

The weighted mean for the health practices of the pupils in the school was described as practiced regularly. Specifically, the following were rated always: using of the hand wash facility in the school properly, using clean glasses when drinking and using the drinking facility properly. This implies the presence of the hand washing facility and drinking facility in the school and the awareness of the pupils in using clean glasses for drinking.

On the other hand, rated often practiced were: using of the health corner/personality corner in the room properly, emptying of the trash can properly, keeping the school building and classroom clean, keeping the playground clean, coming to school clean and neat, submitting clean and neat school work, having adequate toilet facilities, having well-ventilated rooms, having a sanitary disposal for garbage, and buying food only from the school canteen.

Rated never practiced were on the conduct of a physical examination regularly by a doctor and regular visit of a physician, a nurse, or a dentist in the school. The medical personnel only conduct the check up once a year.

Only one item was rated seldom: On sitting and standing erect all the time conscious of keeping themselves in the right posture all the time.

**In the home**

The overall weighted mean for the health and sanitation practices in the home was described as done regularly.

Specifically, the following items were practiced often by the respondents: Keeping house and surroundings thoroughly clean everyday; Disposing off waste and garbage and water safe from flies; Exercising and playing outdoors; Having sanitary toilets; Using only personal belongings as much as possible; Regularly eating yellow foods and vegetables; Taking a bath everyday except when sick; Keeping room clean and orderly; Keeping clothes clean and neat; and Removing clothes when wet as soon as possible.

On the other hand, the following items were practiced regularly by respondents: Keeping food and drinking water safe from flies; Reading wholesome books and seeing wholesome movies/shows; Burying empty cans, manure, dead animal and broken glasses; Burning all rubbish; Repairing broken fences; Keeping pigs, chicken, goat and ducks in pen; Killing rats, cockroaches and other vermin; Eating balance diet; and Brushing teeth after each meal

Only three items were rated seldom practiced. These were: Keeping the household waste and garbage in the covered boxes or cans; avoiding vulgar and coarse speech; and drinking at least two glasses of milk everyday.

**In the Community**

The overall weighted mean for the health and sanitation practices in the community was described regularly.

The following items were practiced "Often" by the respondents: Keeping yard and the surroundings of the home clean; and spitting on sidewalks and streets.

The following items were done regularly by the respondent: Filling the low places in surroundings; Keeping the canals near places and free from stagnant water; Destroying the breeding places of flies and mosquitoes; Making vacant places near yards dumping places for garbage; Submitting one's self to a quack doctor for a medical treatment rather than physician or doctor; and Staying at home when sick with common colds or flu.

Only two items were rated Seldom practiced by the respondents. These were: Submitting first their selves to a quack doctor for a medical treatment rather than to a physician; Reading the labels of products like medicines, canned foods, etc, when buying.

**School Population Affected with Health Diseases**

Decayed teeth and dirty teeth were the most prevalent health problems of the pupils. A few had fever and chills during the survey. This number is quite alarming considering that these are possible symptoms of the dreaded malaria disease. However, a series of laboratory work- up have to be employed to confirm this.

Dirty nails were manifested by more than one-half of the school children. Some even simple colds. Common skin diseases were scabies, tinea flava, pediculosis. However, only a few of the school population suffered from these.

**On the Nutrition Status of the School Population**

Majority of the school children had Normal state of nutritional status. The rest of the population was divided as follows: Moderate malnutrition, representing 8 or 6.4 percent; and Mild malnutrition giving 39 or 31.2 percent. However, none of the respondents had severe malnutrition. Overweight was not a health problem.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In the light of the above findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

Health is a very important subject in the curriculum. It is a subject that should not be overlooked, since the health status of a child can affect the other aspect of his development. It is said that a healthy mind is a healthy body, so teachers should not only strive to make pupils intellectually alert, but also physically fit.

Health and sanitation practices should not only be taught in school, it must be reinforced in the home and further strengthened in the community. The use of herbal medicines among pupils should be emphasized. Since health practices are values in themselves, teachers should be role models to the pupils.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the above findings and conclusions, the following are the recommendations of the study:

1. Health should be made a separate subject in the school curriculum so that proper emphasis will be made.
2. Schools should be provided with health personnel such as dentist and nurses who can attend to the health and sanitation needs of the pupils.
3. Teachers should continuously reward pupils and recognize pupils who are clean and physically healthy.
4. Home visitations should be conducted by teachers and other municipality health officers to ensure clean surroundings.
5. Dialogues between teachers, the parents and the community leaders on health and sanitation practices should be regularly conducted.
6. Reminders should always be given to the pupils in order to maintain cleanliness in the school work and in coming to school.
7. The school should have enough trash cans that are properly labeled.
8. Health education should be done during PTCA meetings.
9. Further research on a broader scope is highly recommended.