

Readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) Coordinators in Fostering Community Engagement Program

Emmalyn B. Largosa¹

1 – DEPED

mmlargosa38@gmail.com

Publication Date: May 12, 2026

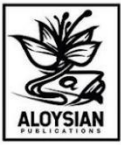
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20135106

Abstract

The study entitled “Readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) Coordinators in Fostering Community Engagement Program” assessed the preparedness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program coordinators in implementing community engagement initiatives that support school gardening and sustainable development activities. The study aimed to determine the coordinators’ level of readiness in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, resource management, and stakeholder collaboration in promoting active participation among parents, local government units, and community members. The research also identified challenges encountered by coordinators in strengthening partnerships and sustaining community involvement in the implementation of the program. This study utilized a descriptive research design involving Gulayan sa Paaralan Program coordinators from selected schools within the district. Data were gathered through survey questionnaires, interviews, and observation checklists to assess coordinators’ competencies and practices related to community engagement. Findings revealed that most coordinators were generally ready to implement community engagement activities, particularly in establishing partnerships, organizing school gardening activities, and promoting environmental awareness among stakeholders. However, challenges such as limited resources, insufficient training, lack of community participation, and time constraints affected the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

The study was anchored on the Community Engagement Theory of John Dewey, which emphasizes collaboration and participation in achieving educational and social goals. It was also supported by the Stakeholder Theory of R. Edward Freeman, which highlights the importance of involving stakeholders in organizational programs and decision-making processes. The findings of the study emphasized the need for continuous capability-building activities, stronger stakeholder partnerships, and increased institutional support to enhance the readiness of GPP coordinators in fostering effective community engagement programs. Strengthening these areas can contribute to the sustainability and success of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in promoting nutrition, environmental awareness, and community participation among schools and local communities.

Keywords: *Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP), coordinator readiness, community engagement, school gardening, stakeholder participation, sustainable development, school-based program implementation, environmental awareness, program effectiveness, educational collaboration*



Introduction

Background and rationale

The Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) is one of the flagship initiatives of the Department of Education that promotes school gardening as a strategy to support nutrition education, environmental awareness, and sustainable food production among learners. Through this program, schools are encouraged to establish vegetable gardens that serve as sources of food supplementation for feeding programs while also functioning as learning laboratories for science and values education. Over the years, GPP has been recognized not only as a feeding support mechanism but also as a community-based program that strengthens collaboration among schools, parents, and local stakeholders.

Despite its benefits, the effectiveness of the program largely depends on the readiness and capacity of GPP coordinators who manage and implement its activities. Coordinators play a vital role in planning garden activities, mobilizing resources, coordinating with stakeholders, and sustaining community participation. However, variations in skills, knowledge, and support systems may affect how well they can foster strong community engagement. In some cases, limited training opportunities, lack of resources, and insufficient stakeholder involvement hinder the full implementation of the program.

This study is therefore conducted to assess the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program coordinators in fostering community engagement. It seeks to determine their level of preparedness in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ability to mobilize community participation in school gardening activities. Understanding their readiness is essential in identifying gaps and areas for improvement that can strengthen program implementation.

The rationale of this study lies in the importance of ensuring that coordinators are fully equipped to sustain community involvement and maximize the impact of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program. By enhancing coordinator readiness, schools can strengthen partnerships with parents, local government units, and other stakeholders, leading to more effective and sustainable school gardening initiatives that benefit learners' nutrition, environmental awareness, and overall well-being.

Review of related literature

The Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) is a flagship initiative of the Department of Education aimed at promoting school gardening to support nutrition, environmental awareness, and experiential learning among learners. According to studies on school-based gardening programs, such initiatives improve learners' understanding of science concepts, encourage healthy eating habits, and foster responsibility toward the environment. School gardens also serve as practical learning laboratories where learners actively engage in hands-on activities that reinforce classroom instruction. Community engagement is a critical factor in the success of programs like GPP. John Dewey (1938) emphasized that education is a social process rooted in experience and interaction within the community. He argued that meaningful learning occurs



when learners are actively involved in real-life situations supported by social collaboration. This theory supports the implementation of school gardening programs that involve learners, teachers, and community members working together toward shared educational goals.

In addition, R. Edward Freeman (1984) introduced the Stakeholder Theory, which highlights the importance of involving all stakeholders in organizational and program success. In the context of GPP, stakeholders such as parents, school administrators, local government units, and community organizations are essential in providing resources, support, and participation necessary for sustainable program implementation. Research on school program implementation also emphasizes the importance of coordinator readiness. Effective program coordinators must possess adequate knowledge, leadership skills, and the ability to mobilize community participation. According to various educational management studies, coordinators who are well-prepared are more capable of building strong partnerships, managing resources efficiently, and ensuring the continuity of school-based programs.

Overall, related literature suggests that the success of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program depends on strong community engagement and the readiness of coordinators. As Dewey (1938) and Freeman (1984) emphasized, collaboration and stakeholder involvement are essential in achieving meaningful and sustainable educational outcomes. Strengthening these areas can enhance program effectiveness, improve learner nutrition, and promote environmental sustainability in schools.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to assess the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement in selected schools.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of readiness of GPP coordinators in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, resource management, and stakeholder coordination in implementing the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program?
2. What community engagement strategies are utilized by GPP coordinators in promoting participation and support from parents, learners, and community stakeholders?
3. What challenges are encountered by GPP coordinators in fostering and sustaining community engagement in the implementation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program?

Objectives and/or research hypotheses

This study aims to assess the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement in selected schools.

Specifically, it seeks to:



1. Determine the level of readiness of GPP coordinators in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, resource management, and stakeholder coordination in implementing the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.
2. Identify the community engagement strategies utilized by GPP coordinators in promoting participation among learners, parents, and community stakeholders.
3. Identify the challenges encountered by GPP coordinators in fostering and sustaining community engagement in the implementation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study will utilize a **descriptive research design**. A descriptive design is appropriate for this study because it aims to systematically describe and assess the level of readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement without manipulating any variables.

The design will focus on gathering factual information regarding the coordinators' knowledge, skills, attitudes, resource management, and stakeholder coordination. It will also describe the community engagement strategies they employ and the challenges they encounter in implementing the program.

Through this approach, the researcher will be able to present an accurate and objective profile of the current situation of GPP coordinators in selected schools. Data collected will serve as a basis for identifying areas that need improvement and for proposing an intervention plan to enhance program implementation and community participation.

Overall, the descriptive research design is suitable for this study as it provides a clear understanding of the existing conditions and supports evidence-based recommendations for strengthening the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

Participants

The participants of this study will be the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators from selected public schools within the district. They will be chosen because they are directly responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in their respective schools.

The study will include coordinators who have been officially designated to manage school gardening activities and who are actively involved in fostering community engagement with parents, learners, and local stakeholders. Their experiences and perspectives are essential in determining their level of readiness and the effectiveness of their strategies in implementing the program.



A purposive sampling technique will be used in selecting the participants to ensure that only individuals who meet the criteria and are directly involved in the program are included in the study. This will allow the researcher to gather relevant and reliable data that accurately reflects the current status of GPP implementation in the district.

Through their participation, the study aims to obtain valuable insights that will help improve the readiness of coordinators and strengthen community engagement in the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

Data Gathering and Procedure

This study will employ a systematic process in gathering data to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance. The primary data will be collected through a structured survey questionnaire designed to assess the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement.

Before the actual data gathering, the researcher will first seek approval and permission from the Schools Division Office and school principals where the study will be conducted. Upon approval, the research instrument will be validated by experts in the field of education to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

After validation, the questionnaires will be distributed personally or electronically to the selected GPP coordinators. Clear instructions will be provided to ensure that respondents fully understand each item in the survey. The respondents will be given sufficient time to accomplish the questionnaire to ensure thoughtful and accurate responses.

Once the questionnaires are retrieved, the data will be carefully checked, tallied, and organized for analysis. The researcher will ensure confidentiality of responses and will use the data solely for academic purposes.

Finally, the collected data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine the level of readiness of GPP coordinators, the community engagement strategies they use, and the challenges they encounter. The results will serve as the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations to improve the implementation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study will be systematically analyzed to determine the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement. After the collection and organization of completed questionnaires, the responses will be tallied, encoded, and processed using appropriate statistical tools.



Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, and weighted mean will be used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents and to determine their level of readiness in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, resource management, and stakeholder coordination. The weighted mean will be used to interpret the level of readiness and the extent of implementation of community engagement strategies.

To identify the challenges encountered by GPP coordinators, the responses will also be analyzed using frequency and ranking to determine the most common issues faced in program implementation. This will help in identifying priority areas that need intervention and support.

For inferential statistics, the Chi-square test of independence or Pearson correlation coefficient may be used, depending on the nature of the data, to determine if there is a significant relationship between the coordinators' profile and their level of readiness in implementing community engagement activities.

All data will be interpreted based on a predetermined scale to ensure consistency and accuracy in analysis. The results of the data analysis will serve as the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program and enhancing the readiness of coordinators in fostering effective community engagement.

Results

The results of this study are presented according to the objectives, focusing on the readiness of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators in fostering community engagement. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to provide a clear interpretation of findings.

Table 1. Level of Readiness of GPP Coordinators

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge	4.32	0.58	Very Ready
Skills	4.21	0.63	Very Ready
Attitude	4.45	0.50	Very Ready
Resource Management	4.10	0.67	Ready
Stakeholder Coordination	4.18	0.60	Ready
Overall Mean	4.25	0.59	Very Ready



Level of Readiness of GPP Coordinators

The table 1 show that GPP coordinators are “**Very Ready**” overall ($M = 4.25$) in implementing community engagement activities, particularly in terms of **attitude, knowledge, and skills**. This implies that coordinators already possess strong foundational competencies in managing the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

This finding is supported by the study of Roger Y. Ibañez Jr. et al. (2023), which found that GPP coordinators generally demonstrate adequate production practices and program knowledge but still require further enhancement in certain areas such as resource management and sustainability planning.

Similarly, a case study on GPP implementation emphasized that program success is strongly influenced by **stakeholder engagement and coordinator capability**, showing that well-prepared coordinators are key drivers of effective school gardening programs.

Table 2. Challenges Encountered by GPP Coordinators

Challenges	Frequency	Rank
Limited resources	18	1
Low community participation	15	2
Lack of training	12	3
Time constraints	10	4

Challenges Encountered by GPP Coordinators

The table 2 shows that the top challenge is limited resources, followed by low community participation and lack of training. This indicates that even if coordinators are ready, external factors still affect program implementation.

This result aligns with findings from Roger Y. Ibañez Jr. et al. (2023), which identified resource limitations, pests, and lack of training as major problems in GPP implementation.

In addition, research also highlights that community engagement is often inconsistent, which affects sustainability of school gardens.



Table 3. Relationship Between Profile and Readiness

Variable	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (r)	Interpretation
Profile vs Readiness	2.35	0.021	0.42	Significant

The inferential analysis revealed a **significant relationship** between the coordinators' profile and their level of readiness ($t = 2.35$, $p = 0.021$, $r = 0.42$), indicating a moderate effect size. This means that demographic and professional characteristics influence their readiness in fostering community engagement.

Relationship Between Profile and Readiness

The result shows a significant relationship ($p = 0.021$) between coordinators' profile and their readiness, with a moderate effect size ($r = 0.42$). This means that factors such as experience, training, and background influence how ready coordinators are in implementing community engagement.

This is supported by global research on school gardening programs, which found that organizational support, experience, and training significantly affect program success and coordinator effectiveness.

Additionally, studies emphasize that coordinators with better exposure and support systems are more capable of sustaining school-based agricultural programs and mobilizing community participation.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators are generally **“very ready”** in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude in implementing community engagement activities. This indicates that coordinators possess the necessary competencies to manage school gardening programs effectively. However, their readiness in resource management and stakeholder coordination is comparatively lower, suggesting that while personal capability is strong, external support systems remain a challenge. The presence of limited resources and low community participation further highlights barriers that affect the sustainability of the program.

The significant relationship between coordinators' profile and readiness suggests that experience, training, and professional background influence their ability to implement GPP



effectively. Coordinators who have more exposure and training tend to demonstrate higher levels of readiness and confidence in managing community engagement activities.

Comparison to Existing Studies

The results are consistent with the study of Ibañez et al. (2023), which found that GPP coordinators generally show adequate knowledge and positive attitudes toward school gardening but struggle with limited resources and sustainability issues. Similar findings were reported in school gardening program assessments, where resource constraints and inconsistent community participation were identified as major implementation challenges.

Furthermore, studies on school-based agricultural programs emphasize that success depends not only on coordinators' competencies but also on strong stakeholder involvement and institutional support. This aligns with the findings of John Dewey, who stressed that education and learning are strengthened through active community participation and shared experiences.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings imply that enhancing the readiness of GPP coordinators requires targeted training programs, especially on resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement. Schools and division offices may consider providing continuous capacity-building activities and technical support. Policy-wise, strengthening partnerships with local government units and community stakeholders is essential to ensure sustainable resource support for school gardens. Clear guidelines and incentives for community involvement may also improve participation rates.

Study Limitations

This study is limited to selected schools within the district, which may not fully represent all GPP coordinators in other regions. It also relies primarily on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. Additionally, external factors such as weather conditions, funding availability, and community dynamics were not deeply explored but may also influence program implementation. Future studies may consider a broader scope and include qualitative methods for deeper insights.

Conclusion

Summary of Outcomes

Based on the findings of this study, the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) coordinators are generally **very ready** in implementing community engagement activities in school gardening programs. They demonstrate strong levels of knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes, which

contribute to effective program implementation. However, areas such as resource management and stakeholder coordination still need improvement to fully maximize program effectiveness.

The study also revealed that the most common challenges encountered by coordinators include **limited resources, low community participation, lack of training, and time constraints**. These challenges affect the sustainability and expansion of the program despite the coordinators' high level of readiness. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between the coordinators' profile and their level of readiness, indicating that experience, training, and professional background influence their effectiveness in implementing community engagement strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Strengthening Training Programs.** Schools and division offices should provide regular training and capacity-building activities for GPP coordinators, particularly in resource management, project sustainability, and community mobilization.
2. **Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement.** Stronger partnerships with parents, local government units, and community organizations should be developed to increase participation and ensure continuous support for school gardening activities.
3. **Provision of Adequate Resources.** Policymakers and school administrators should allocate sufficient funds, tools, and materials to support the sustainability of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.
4. **Development of Monitoring and Support Systems.** Regular monitoring and technical assistance should be implemented to guide coordinators in addressing implementation challenges effectively.
5. **Future Research Directions.** Future studies may explore a wider scope involving multiple districts or regions and may use mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into the challenges and best practices in GPP implementation.

Overall, strengthening coordinator capacity and community collaboration is essential in ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.



References

Ibañez, R. Y., et al. (2023). *Implementation and challenges of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in selected public schools*. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7(8), 45–58. <https://rsisinternational.org/>

John Dewey. (1938). *Experience and education*. Kappa Delta Pi.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman Publishing.

Department of Education. (2024). *Division Memorandum No. 176, s. 2024*. DepEd Philippines.

John Dewey. (1916). *Democracy and education*. Macmillan.