



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Implementation and Challenges of the Special Program in Sports (SPS) in the Schools Division of Antique

JOENA MAY V. SALANATIN¹, DR. MARISSA B. NADAL²

Graduate School of Education, University of Perpetual Help System-DALTA, Las Piñas City, Philippines

ABSTRACT :

The Special Program in Sports (SPS) is a flagship initiative of the Philippine Department of Education designed to nurture students' athletic talents while ensuring academic growth. This research assessed SPS implementation and the challenges faced by SPS teachers in the Schools Division of Antique during the 2025–2026 school year. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 70 SPS teachers across five implementing schools via a validated questionnaire. Results showed a high level of program implementation, especially regarding teacher qualifications and curriculum delivery, but highlighted deficiencies in facilities and equipment. Although respondents generally disagreed that they faced major challenges, concerns regarding resources and support systems were evident. Significant differences were found in program implementation based on teachers' years of experience and training, while no significant differences in challenges were linked to personal or professional profiles. An inverse relationship existed between implementation quality and challenges encountered. Based on these findings, a development plan (Project CHAMPION) is proposed to enhance curriculum, teacher training, facilities, partnerships, and sustainability.

Keywords: Special Program in Sports, SPS implementation, teacher qualifications, sports facilities, implementation challenges, Antique

1. Introduction

Sports and education are regarded globally as crucial elements in holistic human development, fostering not only physical fitness but also discipline, resilience, teamwork, and leadership. The integration of structured sports programs within educational settings is underscored in international frameworks, such as UNESCO's Quality Physical Education Guidelines, which advocate for educational equity and student wellbeing (UNESCO, 2021). In the Philippines, the Department of Education's Special Program in Sports (SPS) offers a curriculum that develops both athletic and academic competencies (DepEd, 2015).

Despite its promise, SPS faces challenges in implementation, especially in rural and resource-constrained divisions such as Antique. Issues like limited facilities, inadequate funding, teacher qualification gaps, and accessibility concerns persist. The Schools Division of Antique, comprising mostly rural schools, presents a unique context to examine these issues. Of 56 public secondary schools in the division, only five implement SPS—highlighting the need to investigate both strengths and challenges in program delivery to inform future improvements.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. The SPS Program in the Philippines

SPS is guided by DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2015, which provides standards for admission, retention, curriculum, and teacher qualifications. SPS meets both educational and public health goals by addressing the low levels of physical activity among Filipino youth (Cagas et al., 2022). However, empirical research points to inconsistent implementation, with well-resourced schools attracting more participants and yielding better athletic outcomes (Acosta-Espiritu & Alcuizar, 2022).

2.2. Sports and Education: Global and Local Perspectives

Globally, sports are integrated into school curricula to enhance student motivation, discipline, and academic engagement. Countries like Japan and Singapore use structured sports programs to foster teamwork, perseverance, and global competitiveness (Nakata & Suzuki, 2020). In the Philippines, SPS students often display higher motivation, leadership, and academic performance (Buenaluz, 2024), but gaps remain in resource allocation and teacher training, especially between urban and rural schools (Agot, 2019).

2.3. Curriculum and Teacher Qualification

The SPS curriculum aims to balance physical, academic, and value-based education (DepEd, 2015), but its success is closely tied to teacher qualifications and ongoing professional development. Studies show that SPS teacher-coaches lacking in training or advanced degrees may struggle with effective

delivery (Bantilan, 2024), while regular training and support improve program outcomes (Magtortol & Gallano, 2024).

2.4. Facilities, Resources, and Stakeholder Engagement

Adequate facilities and instructional materials are vital for effective sports programs (Bailey et al., 2021). Yet, rural schools often face shortages in equipment and safe spaces for training (Magtortol & Gallano, 2024). Management support and stakeholder engagement—through partnerships with local government units, alumni, or private sponsors—can bridge resource gaps and contribute to program sustainability (Garcia & Santos, 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was utilized to examine the level of SPS program implementation and the challenges encountered by teachers.

3.2. Participants

The study targeted all 70 MAPEH and specialization teachers handling SPS in the five implementing schools in the Schools Division of Antique: Antique National School, Antique Vocational School, Col. Ruperto Avellon National School, Gov. Julian Fullon Pacificador National School, and Pis-anan National High School.

3.3. Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire consisting of three parts:

- Demographic profile
- Level of SPS implementation (curriculum and instruction, teacher qualification, facilities and equipment)
- Challenges encountered (same domains)

Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale.

3.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA, Pearson correlation) were used. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha=0.05$ $\alpha = 0.05$.

4. Results

4.1. Teacher Profile

- **Age:** Majority were aged 31–40 (60%), followed by 21–30 and 41–50 (both 16%).
- **Sex:** 77% male, 23% female.
- **Educational Attainment:** 81% bachelor's degree, 19% master's or doctorate.
- **Experience:** 50% had 6–10 years teaching SPS, 33% 5 years or less, 17% 11+ years.
- **Training:** 73% attended 5 or fewer SPS-related trainings.

4.2. SPS Implementation Level

- **Teacher qualification:** Highest implementation ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.52$)
- **Curriculum and instruction:** High implementation ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.54$)
- **Facilities and equipment:** High, but lowest among domains ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.51$)

Teachers reported consistently following the SPS curriculum and participating in professional development, but flagged the need for more graduate-level training and improved supervision.

4.3. Challenges Encountered

Overall, teachers disagreed that major challenges were prevalent:

- **Curriculum/instruction:** Minimal challenge ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.76$)
- **Teacher qualification:** Minimal challenge ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 0.81$)
- **Facilities/equipment:** Slightly higher, but still minimal ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.78$)

Key concerns included balancing academic and sports demands, limited training opportunities, heavy workloads, and inadequate or outdated facilities and equipment.

4.4. Differences by Teacher Profile

- **Years of SPS teaching:** Significant difference in curriculum implementation ($p = 0.04$)
- **Number of trainings attended:** Significant difference in facilities/equipment implementation ($p = 0.01$)
- **No significant differences** in challenges encountered based on age, sex, education, or years of experience.

4.5. Relationship Between Implementation and Challenges

Significant negative correlations were found between the level of program implementation and the degree of challenges encountered across all domains ($r = -0.24$ to -0.26 , $p < 0.05$), indicating that better implementation is associated with fewer challenges.

5. Discussion

The SPS in Antique is generally well-implemented, especially in curriculum delivery and teacher qualifications. However, deficiencies in facilities and equipment persist, consistent with findings from other rural and resource-limited settings in the Philippines (Magtortol & Gallano, 2024). Teacher experience and participation in training are crucial for effective SPS delivery.

Despite high implementation, teachers face recurring issues with resource limitations and the balance between academic and athletic responsibilities. Notably, the lack of significant differences in challenges by demographic profile suggests that resource-related barriers are systemic, not individual.

The negative correlation between implementation quality and challenges underscores the value of investing in teacher development and infrastructure to sustain program gains.

6. Development Plan: Project CHAMPION

Based on the findings, the following intervention is proposed:

Project CHAMPION (Comprehensive Holistic Advancement and Management Plan for the Improvement of the Special Program in Sports):

- **Curriculum Excellence:** Standardize SPS curriculum and provide regular training.
- **Teacher-Coach Development:** Expand professional development, certification, and mentoring.
- **Facilities & Equipment:** Regular audits, phased upgrades, and preventive maintenance.
- **Student-Athlete Development:** Nutrition, academic monitoring, and enhanced wellness programs.
- **Governance & Quality Assurance:** Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and digital reporting.
- **Partnerships:** Engage LGUs, alumni, and private sponsors to mobilize resources.

Annual Success Indicators:

- $\geq 80\%$ certified teacher-coaches
- 90% functional facilities
- $\geq 20\%$ increase in regional athletic performance
- $\geq 90\%$ stakeholder satisfaction

7. Conclusion

The SPS in the Schools Division of Antique is highly implemented, with teacher qualification and curriculum at the forefront, but faces ongoing challenges in facilities and professional development. Addressing these gaps through targeted capacity building, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement is essential. Project CHAMPION offers a comprehensive framework to sustain and improve SPS delivery, ensuring that students benefit from quality sports education and holistic development.

REFERENCES

(Abridged for brevity. Please see full thesis for complete list.)

- Acosta-Espiritu, J., & Alcuizar, R. M. (2022). Hitting the bull's eye through an evaluation of Special Program for Sports (SPS). *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Physical Education, Sports, and Health*.
- Bantilan, M. P. (2024). Teacher-coach competence and delivery of the Special Program in Sports. *Philippine Journal of Physical Education and Sports Studies*, 12(1), 34–49.
- Buenaluz, L. A. P. (2024). Academic performance of the students in Special Program in Sports (SPS) in Kiamba National High School. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 148(1), 48–66.
- Cagas, J. Y., Mallari, M. F. T., Torre, B. A., et al. (2022). Results from the Philippines' 2022 report card on physical activity for children and adolescents. *Journal of Exercise Science & Fitness*, 20(4), 268–273.
- Department of Education. (2015). DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2015: Implementing guidelines on the Special Program in Sports (SPS).
- Magtortol, E. H., & Gallano, M. C. (2024). Game changers: Evaluating student success in Special Program in Sports through the eyes of coaches, teachers, and parents. *Aloysian Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, Education, and Allied Fields*.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Quality physical education guidelines for policymakers*.