

Impact of the 'Barkada Kontra Droga Program' on Student Awareness of Illegal Drugs

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Abstract. This study explored the effects of the BKD program in enhancing the level of awareness of senior high school students from Cambaog National High School (CNHS) about the ill effects of prohibited drugs through symposiums, school-based contests, and culminating activities. Participants were 60 students from the senior high school department of Cambaog National High School and 10 representatives from the Department of Education (DepEd), Local Government Units (LGU), Bustos Municipal Police Station (MPS), and Bustos Local Youth Development Office (LYDO). Before the program's implementation, student participants were given a pretest to assess their baseline knowledge about illegal drugs ($M=2.72$, $SD=1.41$, $N=60$). After the program's implementation, the student-respondents were asked to take a posttest and conduct culminating activities to determine the new skill sets or knowledge that transpired after the program's implementation. Results suggested that the BKD program aided in improving the student-respondent's knowledge about the ill effects of prohibited drugs as evidenced by enhanced posttest scores ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.81$, $N=60$) and very high culminating activity ratings given by the representatives from the DepEd, LGU, Bustos PNP, and Bustos LYDO ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.68$, $N=10$).

Keywords: BKD program; Prohibited drugs; Drug education and awareness.

1.0 Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in drug education by not only imparting knowledge about the risks and consequences of substance abuse but also by integrating productive activities into the curriculum that promote healthy decision-making and personal growth. Through different wholesome activities such as sports, art-based contests, youth-to-youth visits, and the production and distribution of health education materials such as posters, brochures, slogans, videos, and jingles, teachers create an engaging environment that encourages students to reflect on their choices, develop critical thinking skills, and understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

On the other hand, the problem of illegal drug use among the youth has been a longstanding social issue affecting the country. According to the 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5) conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI), it was identified that drinking, smoking, and using illegal drugs are the common vices prominent among the youth of today. Since the early 1970s, the prevalence of youth using illegal substances, including shabu, marijuana, inhalants (rugby, paint, and gasoline), ecstasy, and cocaine, has become a significant and serious social concern in the nation. As a result, drug education has been incorporated into the Department of Education's curriculum through the Republic Act No. 6425, also known as the "Drugs Act," which mandated that all public and private schools must integrate the adverse effects of dangerous drugs, including their legal, social, and economic ramifications, into their programs. This was supported by Republic Act No. 7624 of 1992, which required integrating drug abuse prevention and control in the

intermediate and secondary curricula. Both promulgations in Republic Acts No. 6425 and 7624 became the legal bases of the implementation of drug education, prevention, and awareness activities in the educational system, including the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Furthermore, adamant in protecting learners from the adverse effects of dangerous drugs, the DepEd in coordination with Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) implemented various school-based drug prevention programs such as the National Drug Education Program (NDEP), Preventive Drug Education Program (PDEP) Curriculum Model, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program, Kids Against Drugs Program, Nationwide Caravan of Youth Against Drugs, and Barkada Kontra Droga (BKD) (DDB, 2018). The BKD was conceptualized in 2004 as a response to the call of the Philippine government to conduct nationwide drug clearing operations as an all-out war campaign against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and was institutionalized on November 13, 2007, by the Dangerous Drugs Board Regulation No. 5, s. of 2007.

This study evaluated how the BKD program affected the students' awareness level from Cambaog National High School (CNHS) about the classifications, effects, violations, punishments, and alternative activities to discourage the use and re-use of illegal substances. A pretest-posttest approach was utilized to quantify the respondents' awareness level before and after the program's implementation. Additionally, a culminating activity allowed the respondents to demonstrate what they had learned after the BKD program. Aside from the student respondents, the effects of the BKD program on the students were also evaluated by the representatives from DepEd, LGU, Bustos PNP, and Bustos LYDO. As the BKD coordinator of the Municipality of Bustos, the researcher saw the importance of evaluating the program's effects on the respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors and whether the program has successfully shifted their perceptions toward drug use. This study also identified the gaps or areas of weakness of the program that need to be refined to make it more effective at promoting proper drug education among the youth.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a mixed-methods research design to determine the BKD program's effectiveness in improving the student respondents' awareness of the ill effects of prohibited drugs. According to Jorge (2021), mixed-methods research integrates the elements and benefits of quantitative and qualitative research to answer all the research questions posed in this study.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Cambaog National High School, Bustos District, and the Schools Division of Bulacan. This study's research area is a rural community school located along the General Alejo Santos Highway, Cambaog, Bustos, Bulacan, Philippines. It is a comprehensive K to 12 public national high school that caters to over a thousand students from Grades 7 to 12 as of the school year 2022 – 2023.

2.3 Research Participants

The study included 60 senior high school students from CNHS. There were 30 respondents from Grade 11, comprised of five (5) learners from each of the six (6) strands – ABM, GAS, HUMSS, STEM, TVL-HE, and TVL-ICT. There were also 30 respondents from Grade 12, consisting of five (5) learners from each of the six (6) strands – ABM, GAS, HUMSS, STEM, TVL-HE, and TVL-ICT enrolled during the School Year 2022 - 2023. Furthermore, the study also involved two (2) representatives from the DepEd, two (2) representatives from the Sangguniang Barangay, two (2) representatives from the Sangguniang Kabataan, two (2) representatives from the Bustos Municipal Police Station (MPS), and two (2) representatives from the Bustos Local Youth Development Office (LYDO) to obtain their perceptions about the efficacy of the school's BKD program.

2.4 Research Instrument

For the quantitative part of the study, a researcher-made multiple-choice pretest and posttest was utilized. The questionnaire was composed of four (4) parts: classifications of illegal drugs, effects of illegal drugs, violations and penalties governing the commission of acts related to illegal drugs, and diversional activities to prevent the use and re-use of illegal drugs. The questionnaire was validated by representatives from the DepEd, local government units (LGU), Bustos MPS, and Bustos LYDO. It was pilot-tested to assess the consistency, validity,

and reliability of the indicators contained in the instrument. Additionally, the researcher used a posttest-only assessment as a culminating activity to demonstrate what the respondents learned from the program. The researcher made a scoring rubric for the student-respondent-designed projects, presentations, performances, or products. The representatives from the DepEd, LGU, Bustos MPS, and Bustos LYDO likewise validated it.

Qualitative data was obtained from the informants through an interview. A researcher-made questionnaire comprised of two (2) open-ended questions was used to permit the 60 student informants to assert their overall experience with the BKD program. Meanwhile, three (3) open-ended questions were utilized to obtain the perception of the representatives from DepEd, LGU, Bustos MPS, and Bustos LYDO about the benefits, suggestions, and improvements they wanted to see regarding the school's BKD program.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to collect data. A permission letter was crafted by the researcher and addressed to Bulacan's Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) through the Senior Education Program Specialist (SEPS) for Research regarding the conduct of the study. Thereafter, the purpose of the study was explained further to the School Head of Cambaog National High School, and a formal letter was also given asking for permission to conduct this study. Consent and assent letters were obtained. Likewise, an explanation was given, and consent letters were obtained from the representatives of DepEd, LGU, Bustos MPS, and Bustos LYDO, who also functioned as participants in the study. The classic paper-pencil survey method was utilized in this study. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and the necessary explanation and appropriate instructions were imparted to them, including the purpose of the study, to get their attention and encourage them to cooperate fully in answering the questionnaire. Lastly, the researcher assured the respondents that all of their responses would be kept strictly confidential and that the study's findings would only be used for academic and educational purposes.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. Since the primary respondents were students, proper communication with their parents and class advisers was observed. Consent letters were obtained from the respondents' parents or guardians, and assent letters were also secured from the student-respondents. Voluntary participation, confidentiality, and safety were likewise observed throughout this study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Tables 1 to 4 compare the level of awareness of senior high student-respondents regarding classifications, effects, violations and penalties, and diversional activities related to illegal drugs before and after implementing the BKD program.

Table 1. *Difference between diagnostic test results and post-test results in terms of illegal drugs classification*

Pretest Results			Posttest Results			t	df	P
Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N			
2.37	1.40	60	3.95	0.85	60	-11.38	59	0.000

The results ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.40$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were low before implementing the BKD program. The results ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.85$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were high after implementing the BKD program. As presented in the table, it was found that there is a significant difference between the two tests: $t(59) = -11.38$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 2. *Difference between diagnostic test results and post-test results in terms of harmful effects of illegal drugs*

Pretest Results			Posttest Results			t	df	P
Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N			
1.90	1.19	60	3.63	0.92	60	-11.85	59	0.000

The results ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 1.19$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were low before implementing the BKD program. The results ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.92$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were moderate after implementing the BKD program. As shown in the table, it was found that there is a significant difference between the two tests: $t(59) = -11.85$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. *Difference between diagnostic test results and post-test results in terms of laws and penalties governing the commission of acts related to illegal drugs*

Pretest Results			Posttest Results			t	df	P
Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N			
2.63	0.97	60	3.63	0.85	60	-6.27	59	0.000

The results ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 0.97$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were low before implementing the BKD program. The results ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.85$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were moderate after implementing the BKD program. As depicted in the table, it was found that there is a significant difference between the two tests: $t(59) = -6.27$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. *Difference between diagnostic test results and post-test results in terms of diversional activities to prevent the use or reuse of illegal drugs*

Pretest Results			Posttest Results			t	df	P
Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N			
3.97	1.35	60	4.62	0.61	60	-5.38	59	0.000

The results ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.35$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were high before implementing the BKD program. The results ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 0.61$, $N = 60$) suggest that the respondents' test scores were high after implementing the BKD program. As showcased in the table, it was found that there is a significant difference between the two tests: $t(59) = -5.38$, $p < 0.001$.

The study's findings are consistent with those of Rozubi et al. (2023), which displayed that knowledge and awareness as measures of the efficacy of drug prevention programs among school-age children have high percentages, with percentage values of 78.0% and 93.4%, respectively. This is further supported by the study of Miranda and Balsamo (2019), which showed that the BKD program was able to disseminate awareness among the students about the risks and dangers of taking cigarettes, alcohol, and other kinds of illegal drugs.

For the qualitative component of the study, the respondents were asked to expound on their overall experience with the BKD program. The key themes that emerged following data analysis were awareness of the classification of illegal drugs, understanding the harmful effects of illegal drugs, familiarity with the laws governing the commission of acts related to illegal drugs, and recognition of diversional activities to prevent the use and/or re-use of illegal drugs. All the themes are interconnected; from analyzing the data, it emerged that the BKD program improves the overall knowledge and awareness of the student respondents about illegal drugs.

Table 5. *Themes and emerging codes of the respondent's learning experience with the BKD Program*

Themes	Emerging Codes
Awareness of the Classification of Illegal Drugs	Different types of illegal drugs are commonly abused in the Philippines, such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy. Drugs can be labeled as illegal, prohibited, legal, and prescribed
Understanding the Harmful Effects of Illegal Drugs	Illegal drugs can affect the physical, emotional, social, and mental well-being of individuals Illegal drug use negatively affects not only the individuals but also the family, school, and community at large. Drug users are not limited to adults but are now becoming prominent among the youth
Familiarity with the Laws Governing the Commission of Acts Related to Illegal Drugs	Violation of Republic Act No. 6425 and 9165 leads to monetary penalty and years of imprisonment The confirmatory test is conducted for suspected illegal drug users before the penalty Several agencies such as PDEA, DDB, and the national government at extensive work collaboratively to implement programs against illegal drugs
Recognition of Diversional Activities to Prevent Use and/or Re-use of Illegal Drugs	Engaging in productive activities such as exercise, meditation, dancing, singing, and sports can prevent illegal drug use The correct information about illegal drugs is crucial to the prevention of use and abuse Peer pressure is the leading cause of illegal drug use BKD School-based activities enhanced my knowledge about illegal drugs and my skills and love for art Self-control and will is the most important factor in drug prevention

In the study of Hiblawan et al. (2019), it was determined that the conduct of symposiums on issues regarding drug use, seminars/orientation on the effects of drug use, and religious activities such as crusades and youth camps are the significant activities that significantly boosted their knowledge and brought a satisfying learning

experience from the program. Other activities considered to be significant by the respondents are workshop on actual situation regarding the prevention of drug use, outreach programs and fellowships, and boy scout/girl scout clubs.

For the culminating part of the study, the external validators were asked to rate the activity, performance, and output demonstrated by the student respondents after implementing the BKD program (see Table 6). Performance-based activities in drug education refer to engaging students in hands-on, interactive, and often creative methods such as role-playing, skits, simulations, and other physical activities that encourage active participation. A well-crafted drug education program incorporates interactive learning and participatory rather than passive teaching approaches. This provides opportunities for learners to interact with one another through group work and collaborative learning and facilitates opportunities for discussion and reflection (Mentor as cited in Darcy, 2020). However, according to the study conducted by Reyes (2020), physical activities to promote drug awareness and education only contribute to the learners' holistic development to a moderate extent. This suggests that schools and instructors still need to strengthen and enhance training and activities related to drug awareness and education for students.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation interpretation for respondents' culminating activity scores

Component	Inventory Score			
	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Focus and Content	10	3.70	0.67	Very High
Rigor and Relevance	10	3.80	0.63	Very High
Presentation	10	3.60	0.70	Very High
Originality and Artistry	10	3.50	0.71	Very High
Aesthetics	10	3.70	0.67	Very High
Impact	10	3.70	0.67	Very High

Tables 7 to 9 address the perceptions of the representatives from DepEd, LGU, Bustos PNP, and Bustos LYDO about the benefits and improvements they would like to see regarding the schools' BKD program, as well as their comments and suggestions to further strengthen the program's implementation.

Table 7. Themes and emerging codes of the representatives' perceived benefits of the BKD program

Themes	Emerging Codes
Drug Awareness	Awareness regarding illegal drugs, such as the types, side effects, and laws related to the commission of crimes related to it Students become aware of the different substance abuse and its effects on the person BKD program allowed the students to have fun while learning more about illegal drugs and their effects The BKD program enlightened our learners on the danger and disastrous effects of drug abuse Through specific school activities such as symposiums, the conduct of research, and culminating activities, learners were able to grasp preventive education and the essence of a drug-free lifestyle
Student Participation	Awareness of the ways to take part in the government's campaign against illegal drugs To develop a new generation of young leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility and commitment.
Coping Strategies	BKD program assists students in making healthy and safe choices, identifying risky situations, and developing strategies to prepare them for challenging situations BKD program focuses on prevention strategies, equipping students with life skills and serving as positive models by empowering students to say no to drugs Empower the individual to be the catalyst within his peer group in advocating a healthy and drug-free lifestyle Direct students to purposeful and meaningful activities
Support Group	CNHS learners found a new family, a peer group that provides support, promotes awareness, and leads them away from drug abuse and other related concerns

The key themes that emerged following data analysis were enhanced drug awareness, the reiteration of students' roles in drug abuse prevention, the provision of coping strategies to resist drug use, and the establishment of support groups toward a drug-free community. Participants will vastly benefit from a drug education program if it addresses the development of personal and social skills, improvement of decision-making skills, and advancement of resistance skills to aid them in navigating and managing adolescence-induced conflicts and pressures. Additionally, the participants will likely benefit from the program if it puts high value on developing positive relationships among them and relevant stakeholders such as parents, guardians, teachers, youth workers, and community representatives (Darcy, 2020).

Table 8. *Themes and emerging codes of the representatives' recommended improvement for the BKD program*

Themes	Emerging Codes
Community Engagement	It would be better if the whole community were involved where different youth organizations engage in various activities that aim to spread awareness about drugs Collaboration with parents and guardians by involving them or by engaging their families in the program BKD program would be more improved if the community, LGU officials, and other stakeholders were more involved in the conduct of school programs and activities relative to drug awareness campaigns and advocacy The presence and visibility of stakeholders would strengthen school-community partnership in achieving the program goals and objectives
Enhanced School Engagement	Schools must engage students in BKD programs to help them make healthy and safe choices Involve junior high school students. Encourage students to join the program
Need and Priority Assessment	Always plan the activities to be done. Adapt to the needs of the school and its respondents - who are the students Be open to brainstorming, comments, and suggestions Focus on the high-risk groups
Inter and/or Multidisciplinary Integration	It should have an assessment from the teacher and student
Testimony from Drug Users	Following the Data Privacy Act, integrate some real cases of substance abuse victims - how he/she became a victim, its effects on his/her life, and how he/she overcame it

The key themes that emerged following data analysis were enhancing community engagement, strengthening school engagement, conducting need and priority assessment, utilizing inter and/or multidisciplinary integration to learning areas, and utilizing true stories or testimony from drug users.

Table 9. *Themes and emerging codes of the representatives' suggestions to enhance the implementation of the BKD program*

Themes	Emerging Codes
Community Involvement	BKD program should strive to include the whole community and seek active participation from youth organizations
Added Activities	Add more activities under the program, such as drawing contests, singing contests, creative writing contests, etc. Implement other activities they have not tried implementing before, such as sports To have more programs and encourage the students to join the program
Students Behavior	Improve the discipline of the students
Program Sustainability	Create opportunities for program alumni to stay connected because alumni can serve as mentors, share their experiences, and inspire current students to make positive choices The BKD program should be implemented yearly

The key themes that emerged following data analysis were community involvement, added activities, student behavior, and program sustainability. All the themes are interconnected. From analyzing the data, it emerged that the BKD program was beneficial to the student clients. However, improvements must still be made to further enhance the implementation of the program to reach the target outcome of providing optimal drug education and awareness among the students.

4.0 Conclusion

The results indicated that the level of awareness of the senior high school students about illegal drugs before the implementation of the BKD program was Moderate, as evidenced by an overall mean of 2.72 in their pretest scores. After the implementation of the BKD program, a posttest was administered, and it was revealed that the level of awareness of the student respondents improved to 3.96, which was verbally interpreted as high. When compared, there is a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores of the student respondents, as evidenced by a p-value of <0.001. It denoted a vast improvement in the student's level of awareness after completing the BKD program. In addition, The degree of awareness of the senior high school students about illegal drugs through the demonstrated performance/activity/output was Very High, as evidenced by an overall mean of 3.67 in their culminating activity scores. Lastly, enhanced drug awareness, the reiteration of students' roles in drug abuse prevention, the provision of coping strategies to resist drug use, and the establishment of support groups toward a drug-free community were the common themes perceived by the representative from DepEd, LGU, Bustos MPPS, and Bustos LYDO to be the benefits derived by the students from the BKD program.

5.0 Contributions of Author

The author conceptualized the research idea, designed the methodology, collected data, performed the statistical analysis, Led the data analysis and interpretation of results, and made all the revisions to the manuscript.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

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