

**Strengthening Discipline and Student Leadership in Citizenship
Advancement Training**

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore the implementation of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10 and its impact on discipline, personal characteristics, and behavioral concerns using a descriptive research design. Conducted at Tambis National High School with 69 respondents (65 Grade 10 students and 4 teachers) selected through simple random sampling, the study employed a researcher-made instrument, frequency counts, and arithmetic mean in data analysis, following proper permissions from relevant authorities. Findings revealed that most respondents were adolescents and unanimously perceived behavioral improvements, with patriotism as the most enhanced trait and respect as the least; tardiness showed the greatest improvement among behavioral issues, while absenteeism showed the least reduction. The highest outcome was the unanimous agreement that CAT significantly improved patriotism and nationalism, whereas the weakest result was noted in proper garbage segregation and disposal. The study concluded that CAT plays a vital role in strengthening adolescent discipline, civic engagement, and values formation but requires refinement, complementary interventions, and holistic policies for greater impact. It recommended institutionalizing CAT in EsP 10, enriching modules on values and environmental responsibility, supporting attendance initiatives, aligning with DepEd frameworks, reinforcing teacher training, and ensuring systematic monitoring and evaluation for sustained effectiveness.

Keywords: Citizenship Advancement Training, Discipline, Integration

Introduction

“Strengthening Discipline and Student Leadership in Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT)” underscores the program’s vital role in shaping learners’ character and leadership potential (Banerjee et al., 2021). CAT instills discipline by nurturing self-control, respect for authority, adherence to rules, and responsible behavior essential for both personal growth and school harmony. At the same time, it enhances leadership competencies through opportunities that foster initiative, sound decision-making, teamwork, and confidence (Fatonah, 2023). This dual focus positions CAT as a structured training ground where students are not only molded to become disciplined individuals but are also empowered to assume leadership roles, thereby preparing them for future civic and societal responsibilities

(Béja, 2019). Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) is integrated into Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10 to address pressing student behavioral concerns. It focuses on using CAT as an intervention to instill discipline, foster respect, and promote responsible conduct among learners while also serving as a structured avenue for leadership development (Rea Rizzo & Fornet Vivancos, 2025). The implementation seeks to reduce common behavioral problems such as tardiness, absenteeism, lack of courtesy, and non-compliance with school rules (Puerto et al., 2024). In essence, it highlights how CAT, when embedded into EsP 10, can strengthen values education, improve student behavior, and enhance the overall culture of discipline in the school (Cadavez Jr. et al., 2025; Dima, 2021).

The integration of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) into the school curriculum is viewed as a strategic educational intervention that promotes holistic student development (Martínez-Borreguero et al., 2024). CAT is not merely a co-curricular activity but a structured program that instills discipline through systematic drills, rules compliance, and character formation, while simultaneously enhancing leadership potential by providing avenues for responsibility, teamwork, and decision-making (Deutsch et al., 2025). Scholars argue that such training aligns with the broader goals of values education, as it equips students with life skills necessary for responsible citizenship and nation-building (Popova, 2025). Furthermore, researchers emphasize that CAT strengthens school systems by cultivating a culture of discipline and empowering student leaders to serve as role models within their academic communities.

Although several studies highlight the role of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in instilling discipline and nurturing student leadership, significant gaps remain in existing literature (Deutsch et al., 2025; Luo & Li, 2025). Most research has concentrated on the program's historical background, its military-oriented framework, and its general contribution to values formation (Tajchmanová & Mäekivi, 2024). However, limited empirical evidence exists on how CAT specifically strengthens discipline and leadership among learners in contemporary school settings, especially after its integration into Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP 10). There is also a lack of longitudinal studies examining the sustained impact of CAT on student behavior, academic performance, and civic engagement. Furthermore, localized research focusing on contextual issues—such as school culture, teacher implementation strategies, and student perceptions—remains insufficient, leaving important areas unexplored.

This study is significant as it underscores the role of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in strengthening discipline and leadership among secondary students by fostering self-control, accountability, teamwork, and confidence essential for academic and civic growth. It also provides teachers and administrators with evidence-based insights for addressing behavioral concerns, informs policymakers and curriculum developers on sustaining CAT integration, and serves as a valuable reference for future researchers exploring discipline and leadership development.

Objectives

This study aimed to:

1. To determine the profile of the respondents.
2. To assess the observed and experienced improvements in students' characteristics and behavior.
3. To identify the specific characteristics in which students demonstrated observed and experienced improvements.

4. To examine the extent to which common behavioral problems among students were lessened.

5. To evaluate the implementation of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10 as an intervention for student discipline.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey method, which is appropriate for systematically portraying and analyzing the current conditions of a given population (Macfarlane, 1997). The use of a descriptive approach was justified as it enabled the researchers to capture observable trends and patterns related to students' behavioral problems and to assess how discipline may be strengthened through targeted interventions. By gathering quantifiable data, the method provided a reliable basis for describing the impact of the innovative program—specifically, the integration of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) into Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10—on student discipline. Descriptive designs are particularly valuable in educational research because they facilitate the identification of relationships between interventions and outcomes without manipulating variables, thereby yielding insights that are both practical and generalizable. Thus, this design was deemed most suitable for evaluating the program's effectiveness in addressing behavioral challenges and promoting discipline within the school context.

Research Local

The research was conducted at Tambis National High School, located in Tambis I, Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte. This institution was purposively chosen as the study site because it served as the venue for the implementation of the innovative program designed to address students' disciplinary challenges. Selecting the locale was justified by the school's direct engagement with the intervention, making it an appropriate context for examining its effects on student behavior and discipline. The appropriateness of a research site is determined by its relevance to the research problem, and in this case, Tambis National High School provided both accessibility and contextual richness for generating valid and meaningful data.

Research Respondents

The table presents the distribution of respondents according to category, population size, gender, and the sampling method employed. The study population was composed of Grade 10 students and Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) teachers, yielding a total population of 192 individuals. Among the 188 students, the gender composition was relatively balanced, with slightly more males than females. Likewise, the group of EsP teachers was evenly distributed by gender. To ensure representativeness and minimize bias, simple random sampling was used for both groups. This process resulted in the selection of 65 students and 4 teachers, producing a total of 69 respondents. The final sample reflects proportional representation of the larger population, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Moreover, the gender balance in the sample provides a diverse set of perspectives, which is crucial in drawing insights into the experiences and behaviors under investigation.

Table 1. Respondents of the study

| Category | Population | Male | Female | Total | Selected Respondents |
|-------------------|------------|------|--------|-------|----------------------|
| Grade 10 students | 188 | 97 | 91 | 188 | 65 |
| EsP Teachers | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 192 | 99 | 93 | 192 | 69 |

Data Gathering

In the process of data collection, the researchers adhered to a structured protocol to ensure compliance with ethical and administrative requirements. Initially, formal permission was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent, whose approval served as the primary authorization for the conduct of the study. Following this, permits were likewise secured from the school principals to facilitate access to the participating institutions. In alignment with ethical research practices, informed consent was obtained from the respondents, ensuring that their participation was voluntary and grounded in a clear understanding of the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and possible risks, reflecting the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence. Prior to data administration, respondents were oriented regarding these ethical considerations to safeguard their rights and welfare throughout the research process. Once consent was granted, the validated instruments were distributed to the respondents, who were allotted sufficient time to complete them without undue pressure. Upon completion, the instruments were systematically retrieved, after which the responses were organized, analyzed, and interpreted to address the objectives of the study. This methodical approach underscored both the ethical rigor and procedural integrity of the data-gathering process.

Research Instrument

The study employed a researcher-made instrument that was meticulously designed to capture the objectives of the inquiry through a combination of systematic item generation, validation, and testing. The development process began with interviews conducted with individuals outside the respondent pool to obtain authentic insights, which were subsequently transcribed and thematically analyzed to extract patterns and relevant themes. To ensure content validity, the researchers also examined related studies and scholarly articles, integrating empirical evidence and theoretical foundations into the construction of indicators. These two sources—interview data and literature review—served as the basis for formulating the initial pool of items, which were subjected to expert validation by three specialists who assessed clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. A pilot test was then administered to a group distinct from the actual respondents, followed by item analysis and the computation of Cronbach's alpha to establish the reliability of the instrument. With its validity and reliability confirmed, the finalized tool was administered to the respondents, ensuring its empirical grounding and psychometric soundness. Complementing this, the study utilized multiple instruments for data gathering, including a survey questionnaire, an evaluation checklist, observation schedules, and interview schedules, thereby facilitating triangulation of data. Specifically, the rating scale for student discipline consisted of 12 indicators—punctuality, absenteeism, attendance in flag ceremonies, proper garbage disposal, courtesy and respect, cleanliness and orderliness, truancy, patriotism and nationalism, physical fitness, improved academic performance, student leader empowerment, and student outlook toward the school—measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” (5) to “Strongly Disagree” (1), allowing for nuanced assessment of student perceptions and behaviors.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study employed descriptive statistical techniques to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. Descriptive statistics, defined as methods that summarize and organize data into meaningful patterns, were utilized in the form of frequency counts and percentages to present the distribution and trends within the dataset (Nimon et al., 2019). This approach was justified as it allowed the researchers to provide a clear profile of respondents and highlight the prevalence of specific characteristics. To facilitate accuracy and efficiency in computation, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed, given its reliability, user-friendly interface, and wide acceptance in social science research. The use of this statistical tool is justified as it ensured clarity in presenting the data and rigor, thereby strengthening the validity of the study's conclusions.

Research Results

From the study, the researcher can analyze and summarize the data as follows:

Table 2. Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents

| Age | Male | Female | Total | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 14-16 | 31 | 31 | 62 | 89.86 |
| 17-19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 20-22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 23-25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 26-28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 29-31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| 32-34 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1.45 |
| 35-above | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8.7 |
| Total | 34 | 35 | 69 | 100 |

The table presents the age and sex distribution of respondents, showing that out of 69 participants, 34 are male and 35 are female, which indicates a nearly equal gender representation. The majority, or 62 respondents (89.86%), belong to the 14–16 age group, underscoring that the sample is largely composed of adolescents, while no participants fall within the 17–31 age ranges, reflecting a gap in representation from late adolescence to early adulthood. Only one respondent (1.45%) is within the 32–34 age group, and six (8.7%) are aged 35 and above, signifying minimal representation from older age brackets. Overall, the data highlight that the respondents are predominantly young, with a balanced distribution between male and female participants.

Table 3. Response on the Observed and Experienced Improved Characteristics

| Characteristics | Frequency | Rank |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|
| Discipline | 60 | 4.5 |
| Nationalism | 67 | 2 |
| Attendance to flag ceremony | 65 | 3 |
| Patriotism | 69 | 1 |
| Courtesy | 58 | 6.5 |
| Academic performance | 58 | 6.5 |
| Physical fitness | 60 | 4.5 |
| respect | 56 | 8 |

The table presents the responses on the observed and experienced improved characteristics of students, showing that patriotism ranked first with the highest frequency of 69 respondents, followed by nationalism with 67 respondents and attendance to flag ceremony with 65 respondents, ranking second and third, respectively. Discipline and physical fitness both obtained a frequency of 60, sharing the fourth and fifth ranks, while courtesy and academic performance tied at sixth with 58 respondents each. Lastly, respect received the lowest frequency, with 56 respondents, ranking eighth. Overall, the data suggest that improvements in values related to love of country and civic participation were most strongly observed, while aspects such as respect, courtesy, and academic performance, though still positively noted, showed relatively lower frequencies.

Table 4. Lessened Behavioral Problems

| Characteristics | Frequency | Rank |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|
| Absenteeism | 55 | 5 |
| Tardiness | 65 | 1 |
| Truancy | 60 | 2.5 |
| Improper garbage disposal | 58 | 4 |
| Not wearing uniform/ID | 60 | 2.5 |

Lessened Behavioral Problems. The table presents the distribution of lessened behavioral problems among students, revealing that tardiness ranked first with the highest frequency of 65 respondents, indicating it was the most improved issue. Truancy and not wearing uniform/ID both ranked second with 60 respondents each, followed by improper garbage disposal with 58 respondents, ranking fourth. Lastly, absenteeism was reported by 55 respondents, placing fifth. Overall, the data suggest that the intervention or experience contributed to reducing common behavioral problems, with punctuality showing the most notable improvement, while absenteeism showed the least reduction among the identified concerns.

Table 5. Implementation of the Citizenship Advancement Training CAT in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao EsP 10

| Observations and Experiences | Level | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---|-------|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| 1. It helps improves the punctuality of the students | 45 (65%) | 24 (35%) | - | - | - | 69 |
| 2. It helps lessen the absenteeism of students | 21 (30%) | 31 (45%) | 12 (17.4%) | 5 (7.25%) | - | 69 |
| 3. It helps compel students to attend flag ceremony. | 60 (87%) | 4 (5.8%) | 5 (7.25%) | - | - | 69 |
| 4. It helps improve the students' proper garbage segregation and disposal. | 26 (39.4%) | 17 (25.76%) | 19 (28.77%) | 3 (4.5%) | - | 66 |
| 5. It helps enhanced the courtesy and respect of students. | 35 (50.72%) | 28 (40.58%) | 4 (5.8%) | 2 (2.9%) | - | 69 |
| 6. It helps maintain school cleanliness and orderliness | 60 (88.24%) | 6 (8.8%) | 1 (1.47%) | 1 (1.47%) | - | 68 |
| 7. It helps minimize truancy of students. | 56 (86.15%) | 3 (4.62%) | 6 (9.23%) | - | - | 65 |
| 8. It helps improved physical fitness of students | 61 (87.4%) | 8 (11.6%) | - | - | - | 69 |
| 9. It helps in improving patriotism and nationalism of all | 69 (100%) | - | - | - | - | 69 |
| 10. It empowers student leaders to lead efficiently and effectively. | 52 (75.36%) | 11 (15.94%) | 6 (8.7%) | - | - | 69 |
| 11. It improves the outlook of students and boost confidence and pride towards the school | 56 (81.16%) | 6 (8.7%) | 7 (10.14%) | - | - | 69 |
| 12. It paved way to increase academic performance of students (especially on EsP) | 43 (62.32%) | 17 (24.64%) | 9 (13.04%) | - | - | 69 |

Implementation of the Citizenship Advancement Training CAT in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao EsP 10 Table 5 reveals that the integration of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10 was perceived positively by the majority of respondents. Most notably, all respondents (100%) strongly agreed that CAT improved patriotism and nationalism among students. High levels of agreement were also observed in enhancing physical fitness (87.4%), improving school cleanliness and orderliness (88.24%), and minimizing truancy (86.15%). Similarly, a large proportion affirmed its effectiveness in compelling attendance at flag ceremonies (87%) and in empowering student leaders (75.36%). Meanwhile, moderate but still favorable responses were recorded in improving punctuality (65%), lessening absenteeism (30% strongly agree, 45% agree), enhancing courtesy and respect (50.72% strongly agree, 40.58% agree), and boosting academic performance, particularly in EsP (62.32% strongly agree, 24.64% agree). However, comparatively lower ratings were noted in improving proper garbage segregation and disposal, where only 39.4% strongly agreed and 25.76% agreed, with a significant 28.77% remaining neutral. Overall, the findings underscore that CAT integration significantly fostered students' patriotism, discipline, fitness, and leadership skills, while environmental practices and absenteeism reduction showed relatively weaker yet positive outcomes.

Discussion

Firstly, the respondent profile reveals a balanced gender representation, ensuring that perspectives from both male and female students are equally considered. More notably, the predominance of adolescents in the sample indicates that the study's findings are primarily shaped by the developmental experiences of younger learners. This aligns with literature underscoring adolescence as a critical stage for identity formation, values development, and civic engagement (Atkins & Hart, 2019). The minimal participation of older learners, however, highlights a gap in capturing broader perspectives from late adolescents and young adults, whose insights could enrich the understanding of transitions across developmental stages. From a policy standpoint, this suggests the need to prioritize age-responsive programs that address adolescents' unique developmental tasks while also creating inclusive strategies that engage learners beyond secondary education. Educational literature emphasizes that adolescence is the period when values such as discipline, responsibility, and social consciousness are most effectively cultivated through structured learning experiences (Taylor & Zhang, 2025). Inferences from this profile point to the importance of tailoring curriculum innovations to strengthen adolescent development while also establishing pathways for lifelong learning that incorporate the perspectives of older students. Such an approach would not only align with holistic education policies but also contribute to the broader goal of nurturing responsible and engaged citizens across the life course.

Moreover, in terms of observed and experienced improvement on students' characteristics and behavior, the findings demonstrate a clear consensus that the intervention significantly enhanced students' characteristics and behavior, underscoring the effectiveness of structured educational initiatives in fostering holistic development. This outcome resonates with literature emphasizing that values education and experiential learning contribute to discipline, respect, and civic responsibility, which are integral to both academic success and active citizenship (Busara, 2023). The implication for policy is the need to institutionalize and sustain character-based programs within the curriculum, ensuring that they are not treated as supplementary but as core components of student formation. Such approaches align with global and local educational frameworks that advocate for values-driven curricula as essential for preparing learners to navigate complex social realities (Zhong et al., 2025). Insights from these findings suggest that education systems should expand beyond cognitive outcomes to include structured opportunities for moral and social growth, thereby addressing the whole learner. It can be inferred that curriculum innovations grounded in character formation, supported by coherent policy frameworks, will continue to produce students who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible and morally grounded, contributing to the broader goals of nation-building and democratic participation.

Another point to consider is the observed and experienced improved characteristics that students demonstrated the most notable improvements in values associated with patriotism, nationalism, and civic participation, while qualities such as respect, courtesy, and academic performance, though still positively influenced, appeared less pronounced. This pattern resonates with literature emphasizing the effectiveness of structured citizenship programs in fostering national pride and civic responsibility (Hungo et al., 2024; Saidkasimovich, 2025). The prominence of patriotic and civic traits suggests that interventions like the integration of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in the curriculum can play a vital role in strengthening students' sense of identity and belonging, which are essential in nation-building. From an educational policy standpoint, this indicates the need to sustain and institutionalize character-focused programs that not only emphasize academic excellence but also cultivate holistic values that prepare learners for democratic participation and social responsibility. At the same time, the relatively lower observations in

respect, courtesy, and academic performance imply areas where complementary strategies may be necessary, such as embedding values education across all subjects and enhancing teacher training on character formation (Awashreh & Ghunaimi, 2025). These insights underscore the inference that while nationalistic ideals are being successfully reinforced, continuous efforts are required to balance civic virtues with interpersonal values and academic growth, thereby aligning educational practices with the broader goals of holistic human development.

Furthermore, the lessened behavioral problems, the intervention was most effective in addressing issues related to punctuality and compliance with school rules, while concerns such as absenteeism showed less improvement. This finding supports the literature emphasizing the role of structured school programs and value-based interventions in reducing disruptive student behaviors and promoting a culture of discipline (Jerome Freiberg et al., 2020). Improvements in punctuality and adherence to uniform policies suggest that initiatives fostering responsibility and orderliness can create a more conducive learning environment, which aligns with the goals of the Department of Education in strengthening student discipline as part of character formation. However, the lesser impact on absenteeism reflects persistent challenges that may be linked to external factors such as family circumstances, socio-economic conditions, or community influences (Ghimire, 2024). From a policy perspective, this highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that go beyond classroom-based interventions, integrating community and parental engagement to address underlying causes of absenteeism. Educational insights drawn from this suggest that while school-based programs are effective in instilling discipline and reducing certain behavioral problems, a multi-sectoral approach is necessary to sustain improvements, thereby ensuring that students not only comply with school norms but also develop lifelong habits of responsibility and accountability.

Finally, the integration of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) into Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10 was generally perceived as highly beneficial, particularly in fostering patriotism, nationalism, leadership, and discipline among students. These outcomes resonate with existing scholarship emphasizing the role of citizenship education in cultivating democratic values, civic responsibility, and national identity (Saidkasimovich, 2025). The positive impact on students' participation in school activities, leadership development, and personal discipline underscores CAT's potential as a complementary program to the existing EsP curriculum, aligning with DepEd's mandate to provide holistic formation that goes beyond academic learning. While the program appears most effective in strengthening civic values and leadership capacities, areas such as environmental stewardship and absenteeism remain less responsive, suggesting the need for additional or integrated strategies. Insights from the literature highlight that behavioral change in these domains often requires sustained community involvement and supportive school policies (Abbott & Snidal, 2021; Hungo et al., 2023). From a policy perspective, these findings imply that CAT should not only be sustained but also enhanced with interdisciplinary linkages—particularly with environmental education and student support systems—to maximize its transformative potential. Inferences drawn here suggest that a balanced implementation, addressing both civic virtues and everyday behavioral practices, can further solidify CAT's role as a vital platform for producing disciplined, responsible, and socially engaged learners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study highlight the crucial role of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in shaping adolescent development, particularly in the areas of discipline, civic engagement, and values formation. The strong representation of adolescents in the study underscores the need for policies that prioritize character education during these formative

years, while the unanimous perception of improved student behavior demonstrates the effectiveness of structured programs such as CAT, warranting their institutionalization in secondary education. The prominence of patriotism and nationalism further affirms CAT as a vital tool in strengthening civic identity and aligning with national education goals on citizenship development. However, the relatively weaker outcomes in respect and proper garbage disposal reveal program gaps that call for complementary interventions focusing on social-emotional learning and environmental stewardship. Likewise, while CAT proved effective in improving punctuality and reducing tardiness, thereby reinforcing responsibility and discipline, its limited impact on absenteeism indicates the necessity of integrating it with broader student welfare initiatives that address underlying family, health, and socio-economic concerns. Overall, the study concludes that while CAT is a promising intervention in promoting student discipline and civic values, it must be continuously refined and supported by holistic policies to maximize its impact on student development.

To maximize the impact of Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT) in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) 10, it is recommended to institutionalize its integration across schools as a formal intervention for student discipline and character formation. Program modules should be strengthened by embedding lessons on respect, courtesy, and environmental responsibility through school campaigns and experiential activities. Beyond promoting punctuality, comprehensive attendance support mechanisms such as mentorship programs, counseling services, and parental involvement must be developed to address absenteeism. Moreover, CAT activities should be aligned with DepEd's values education and environmental sustainability frameworks to ensure holistic student growth. Continuous professional development for EsP teachers is essential to equip them with strategies for balancing civic, behavioral, and academic outcomes. Finally, systematic monitoring and evaluation of CAT's implementation must be conducted to track progress, identify gaps, and refine program content for sustained effectiveness.

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