

Schools' Responsiveness in the Implementation of Child Protection Policy in the Division of Laguna

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Abstract

The study determined the school leaders' response to Child Protection Policy with the goal of proposing a management plan to better implement the program. Specifically, it described the school profile with respect to its capacity building related to CPP, committee, and school handbook. It also determined the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, position, and the number of relevant trainings and seminars. Moreover, the study measured the level of schools' responsiveness to Child Protection Policy relative to duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, and management of related cases. The study also looked into the differences of assessments on the level of school responsiveness to CPP when grouped according to profile variables which served as substantial elements in the preparation of the proposed contextualized rights-based management plan.

A descriptive method of research was utilized in this study. A survey-questionnaire was also used as the main data gathering instrument. The researcher also conducted focus group discussion and interview among experts to substantiate

responses and validate results. This study involved 132 school heads and 362 teachers from the six City Division of Laguna.

Results from the findings revealed that public secondary schools are compliant with legal bases and requirements relating to child protection policy. Male and female school heads are fairly distributed, but there are many more male teachers than female teachers. There are few younger individuals in leadership roles, indicating that experience is important for career growth and emphasize the need for more training and professional development for both school heads and teachers. Schools have high level of responsiveness to child protection policy relative to duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, management of related cases. Generally, there is no significant difference across all variables in terms of the sex of the school heads and teachers. The proposed management plan aims to increase competence and skills among school heads and teachers in the implementation of the child protection policy.

Keywords: *schools' responsiveness to child protection, descriptive quantitative design, and right-based management plan*

INTRODUCTION

Children are at risk of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying, particularly those under eighteen or those over eighteen who cannot protect themselves due to disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (2020), approximately 1 billion children, each year experienced abuse at home or at school.

In the Philippines, it is mandated in the 1987 Constitution, that the State shall protect the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of abuse and other conditions that affect their development.

Cognizant to that, various government agencies including the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), focus on children's welfare. DSWD sets principles, provides consultative services, and monitors compliance with standards in social welfare activities.

For this reason, the Department of Education (DepEd) acknowledges that abuse can occur in schools due to the difficult situations teachers and other school personnel face. To combat this, it introduced the Child Protection Policy, which aims to protect children from threats to their development. The policy outlines the roles of school personnel and measures to prevent and address abuse, mistreatment, violence, discrimination, bullying, and cruelty.

Furthermore, the Department of Education recognizes that the implementation of child protection policy should be in collaboration with its partners, and stakeholders to ensure that all schools are conducive to educating the children. For the best interest of the child shall be the vital contemplation in all decisions and engagements encompassing children. The department targets to guarantee such special protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation and care as is essential for the child's well-being, considering the principal rights and duties of parents/ legal guardians (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012). The DepEd Order also enumerated preventive and protective measures to address child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying and other acts of abuse. Preventive measures suggest that school personnel, pupils and parents should attend trainings and seminars with topics about dealing with abuse, including positive peer relationships and enhancement of social and emotional competence. Protective and Remedial measures are the procedures to be employed in handling incidents in school. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 outlines measures to prevent and protect against child abuse, exploitation, and bullying in schools. It highlights the need for training and seminars for school staff, students, and parents to improve understanding of these issues and to foster positive relationships. It also provides steps for handling incidents of abuse. The RBE Framework of DepEd includes three dimensions: the right to access education, the right to quality education, and the right to respect and well-being within the learning environment. This also acts as a framework to direct the DepEd and other education stakeholders, as duty-bearers, in their efforts to educate and develop happy, well-rounded, and intelligent children who are enjoying their rights in schools, learning centers, and various environments. This also acknowledges that children possess rights and are engaged participants in their education and growth. Consequently, duty-bearers like the state and its agencies are required to uphold these educational rights as a legal obligation. Despite the robust execution of the child protection program, incidents continue to occur, particularly in educational environments. The teacher, students, and parents have documented instances of violence against children.

In line with that, the promotion of child-friendly schools is essential for the development of learners. Having known that all aspects of development must be nurtured in a child, mental and emotional health must be considered when interacting with children. Learners come from diverse backgrounds and

circumstances. For this reason, they should be protected from any harm. This, in turn, gave importance to the Child Protection Policy of the department which is in consonance with several legal bases. Parents also contribute to the factors that lead to violence in children at school due to their parenting styles. Parents experiencing prolonged stress tend to become sensitive, lose patience, and react with anger towards their children, often releasing their frustrations on them. As time goes on, this condition impacts the child's personal life. Children may experience a decrease in enthusiasm, difficulty concentrating, heightened sensitivity, reactivity, irritability, and this can influence their behavior during school hours. When children become disinterested, lose focus, and lack responsiveness, it frequently triggers anger in the teacher and can potentially result in violence. Parents frequently overlook their responsibility for their children's education. Although not every parent, there are still some who believe that their children's education is completely left to the school. This indicates that parents solely serve as suppliers of necessities, without needing to participate in their child's learning. This subsequently influences the development of children's character. A school-focused educational model that lacks parental involvement will not reach its full potential.

As a result, the researcher aims to find out how aware teachers and school heads of the Child Protection Policy are implemented in schools, with the goal of guiding policy review or awareness efforts on Child Protection Laws and Policies.

Moreover, it is crucial, at this very moment, to develop guidelines that support teachers and parents in safeguarding children can lead to the creation of comprehensive plans for teachers in recognition of signs of abuse and effective intervention strategies. Moreover, involving children in discussions about their safety and protection enhances their understanding of their rights. It can also guide schools in implementing child-centered approaches, enabling children to participate actively in safeguarding environment and promoting their overall well-being and development.

Research Question

The study determined the school leaders' response to Child Protection Policy with the goal of proposing a management plan to better implement the program.

Specifically, this sought answers to:

1. Describe the school profile in terms of:
 - 1.1 Capacity building related to CPP,
 - 1.2 CPP Committee and,
 - 1.3 School Handbook
2. Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 sex,
 - 2.2 age,
 - 2.3 position and,
 - 2.4 number of relevant trainings and seminars
3. Measure the level of schools' responsiveness to Child Protection Policy relative to:
 - 3.1 duties and responsibilities
 - 3.2 preventive measures,

- 3.3 protective and remedial measures,
- 3.4 management of related cases,
- 4. Find out the differences of assessments on the level of school responsiveness to Child Protection Policy when grouped according to profile variables.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive methods of research to establish the need for the proposed output. Siedlecki (2020) defined descriptive research which concerned with the description of data and characteristics about a population. It also described the association or relationship between and among selected variables. It is applicable in the study as it identified the level of responsiveness to the Child Protection Policy.

2.2 Participants

This study involved 132 school heads and 362 teachers from the six City Division of Laguna namely SDO Calamba, Biñan, San Pedro, Sta. Rosa, Cabuyao and San Pablo. All school heads included in this division office were asked to participate while teacher-respondents involved were selected using stratified proportionate sampling.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study utilized a self-constructed questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. Focus group discussion and interview were also conducted to enrich the findings of the study.

Questionnaire. A two-part questionnaire was the primary tool to gather pertinent data about the responses in relation to child protection policy among elementary schools. The researcher constructed a questionnaire based in the gained concepts and insights about child protection policy. The researcher's personal observations as coordinator and guidance counselor were also considered in its construction.

Part I of the questionnaire focused on the profile of the respondents. Part II dealt with the level of responsiveness to the child protection policy.

Construction. The instrument used was developed based on objectives, interviews and readings from related literature covering the child protection policy. The first draft was then presented to the adviser for comments and suggestions which were incorporated in the second draft. After several refinements of the questionnaire items, upon approval of the adviser, several copies of the questionnaire were prepared for the members of the panel.

Validation. The researcher was advised to present the draft of the questionnaire to the experts in the field for validation. A dry run to test the validity of the instrument was also conducted. Also, the reliability testing needs to be done using Cronbach alpha Test to indicate that the instrument is reliable and the options in questionnaire are appropriate for utilization.

Administration. The researcher virtually administered the questionnaire to the different elementary schools. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and the need for their honest and objective participation. The researcher retrieved the copies of the questionnaire soon after they have finished answering the instrument. After all the data were tallied and well-accounted for, these were subjected to statistical treatment with the help of the statistician.

Scoring of responses. The data gathered from the respondents were given weights ranging from 1 to 4 with 1 representing lowest assessment up to 4 for highest assessment. The responses were likewise be provided corresponding verbal interpretation as reflected in the scale continuum.

Table 1. Likert Scale

Option	Scale Range	Categorical Response	Interpretation
4	3.50 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Responsive
3	2.50 – 3.49	Agree	Moderately Responsive
2	1.50 – 2.49	Disagree	Slightly Responsive
1	1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree	Least Responsive

Interview. To increase the claim and findings of the study, the researcher, upon the blessings and advice of the adviser, conducted an unstructured interview. During the virtual interview, the researcher highlighted the purpose and explained the relevance of the need of doing the interview. To help the participants be ready, interview guide was provided in advance. Meanwhile, the researcher consulted the participants concerning about the status of the implementation of capacity building activity conducted related to CPP, establishment of CPP committee, implementation of the school handbook.

Focus Group Discussion. The researcher gathered all the concerned DepEd teachers for a virtual focus group discussion to enrich and supplement the findings of the present study. Before this date, an FGD agenda was provided so the participants would have thoughts as to what will be transpired in the said data gathering technique.

2.4 Procedure

Proper communication among concerned was secured after the researcher's request to conduct the administration of questionnaire in the field. With the approval of the school administrators, the questionnaire was approved for distribution to the concerned respondents. The data were then be submitted to the statistician for treatment after which the data were analyzed and interpreted.

Ethical Consideration. Participants were fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what are the consequences there could be. They were provided with explicit, active, signed

consent to taking part with the research including understanding their rights to access their information and the right to withdraw at any point. They were also informed that their individual responses to the questionnaire will not be shared with others, but used for research data only. All of their information were kept confidential throughout the entire research process.

Ethical factors were taken into account throughout the entire process of this research. The researcher provided a letter to the Schools Division Superintendents in the City Division Schools of Laguna to inform them about the study's overview and to request permission to conduct the research, identify who will carry out the study, explain the benefits of the study, and clarify what participation involves. Additionally, all consent forms were distributed and appropriately provided to every respondent. This was carried out to adhere to ethical standards and the stipulations of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Additionally, the data gathered from the online survey forms and participants was handled with the highest level of confidentiality.

2.5 Data analysis

For meaningful interpretation and analysis of the data of the study, the data were treated using the following statistical tools:

Frequency and Percentage. This was used in to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and position of the school heads and teachers.

Weighted Mean. This was used to assess the level of responsiveness to the child protection policy.

T-test. This was used to tell whether there is a significant difference on the level of adherence to Child Protection Policy when grouped according to sex.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used whether there is a significant difference on the level of responsiveness to Child Protection Policy when grouped according to age and position.

III. RESULTS

This presents the analysis and interpretation of data regarding the level of responsiveness to the implementation of child protection policy.

1. Description of the School Profile

This study described the school profile upon consultation with the school heads and teachers in relation to capacity building related to CPP, CPP committee, and school handbook. The researcher gathered details of information which highlighted and presented as follows

1.1 Capacity building related to CPP

The Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd) plays a crucial role in ensuring the protection, well-being, and safety of children within the educational framework. An important approach to achieve this

is the Schools Capacity Building initiative related to the Child Protection Policy. This initiative aims to equip educators, school staff, and leaders with the crucial skills and understanding needed to create a secure and supportive learning environment for all students. Capacity building entails improving skills, competencies, and capabilities in both individuals and organizations. Within the context of DepEd, this involves a series of training sessions, workshops, and resources designed to improve knowledge of child protection issues. The primary goal is to educate school personnel to recognize and appropriately respond to cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This response is crucial since children dedicate a considerable portion of their time in school, rendering it a vital setting for identifying signs of distress.

Capacity building activities on CPP focuses on Child Development, Child Rights, Gender and Development in Education, Child Sexual Abuse and Handling Disclosures, Understanding Bullying, Online Safety, DepEd Policies on Child Protection, Positive and non-violent approaches to discipline and classroom management.

The Child Protection Policy set forth by DepEd specifies distinct responsibilities for school staff. A key aspect of this policy is the establishment of Child Protection Committees in every school. These committees serve as a framework for effectively implementing child protection strategies. Through capacity building, participants in these committees undergo training on topics such as identifying risk factors, reporting procedures, and the rights of children. Furthermore, it is recommended that schools foster collaborations with local government agencies and non-profit organizations. These collaborations can provide additional resources and expertise to enhance initiatives in child protection.

The effectiveness of the Schools Capacity Building initiative is evaluated not only by the training obtained but also by how well the learned skills are utilized in real-life scenarios. Schools that have adopted these practices typically report enhanced safety and well-being for students. Furthermore, students who feel secure are more likely to engage in their academics and participate actively in school activities, thereby improving their educational experience positively. In summary, the DepEd Schools Capacity Building initiative concerning the Child Protection Policy is an essential step for safeguarding children within the education system. By providing training and resources, DepEd empowers educators to create a safe environment where children can thrive. As society advances, these efforts must continue to develop and grow, ensuring that every child in the Philippines receives the care and protection they deserve.

During the interview, the participants indicated that the capacity building program focused on CPP requires re-evaluation. They stated that even though the ideas on CPP were discussed, they still possess limited understanding of this topic. Additionally, it is essential to update the technical components of CPP so that school staff can incorporate and adjust this into their jobs and daily interactions with the students. The participants indicated that the training on CPP enhanced their understanding of the processes regulating this law. They could efficiently manage the operations due to the knowledge acquired from the capacity building. This is crucial for the school staff since they consistently engage with the students. In doing this, they can maintain the principles of child safeguarding. Additionally, the participants indicated that the capacity building emphasized the factors that should be considered regarding CPP. By this means, they gained insight into the precise expectations regarding the CPP. The ideas that shaped the execution of CPP were likewise understood by the school staff.

1.2 CPP Committee

The Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd) has established a Child Protection Policy Committee to safeguard the well-being and safety of children in educational institutions. This initiative highlights the essential function of educational institutions in fostering a secure learning atmosphere. The primary aim of the policy is to safeguard children from maltreatment and neglect while fostering their health and welfare. The committee comprises educators, school administrators, parents, and representatives from local government and non-profit organizations, enabling a variety of viewpoints on child protection. An essential aspect of the policy involves informing individuals about the rights of children. Educators undergo training to identify indicators of abuse and are prepared to react appropriately. Workshops and seminars are arranged for teachers and parents to emphasize the significance of recognizing children's rights and the responsibilities of adults. The policy mandates that schools implement a confidential reporting system for abuse cases, promoting victims to report without anxiety.

Moreover, the DepEd Child Protection Policy (CPP) Committee is a committed team within a school or educational establishment responsible for managing cases related to safeguarding children's rights. The CPP Committee was typically represented by the school principal, educators, students, and community members. In accordance with DepEd Order No. 40, series of 2012, also referred to as the "DepEd Child Protection Policy," all public and private elementary and secondary schools are instructed to set up, organize, and form a Child Protection Committee (CPC). The CPC will include the following members: the school principal as Chairperson; a Guidance Counselor/ Teacher as Vice Chairperson; a parent representative appointed by the School Parents-Teachers Association; a pupil, student, or learner representative appointed by the Supreme Student Government/Council; and a community representative selected by the Barangay Captain, ideally a member of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC).

The CPP Committee shall carry out the following duties: Create a child protection policy and safety plan for schools, to be reviewed every three (3) years; Launch programs for information dissemination and organize activities aimed at protecting children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying; Develop and execute a school-based referral and monitoring framework; Establish a system for identifying students who may face significant harm based on physical, emotional, or behavioral indicators; Identify, refer, and, if suitable, report cases of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying to the relevant authorities; Assist parents or guardians as needed in obtaining expert counseling from appropriate offices or organizations; Collaborate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), other governmental bodies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as suitable; Oversee the implementation of effective measures and procedures to provide necessary support for children and their caregivers; and Ensure the children's rights to be heard, respected, and upheld in all matters and processes impacting their welfare.

1.3 School Handbook

The DepEd School Handbook outlines the rules and policies for schools, guiding administrators, teachers, students, and parents about their rights and responsibilities. It focuses on child protection by emphasizing measures to keep students safe from abuse, violence, and bullying, in line with the Special Protection of Children Act and the DepEd Child Protection Policy. The handbook details necessary actions

to prevent abuse, outlines clear procedures for reporting incidents, and encourages prompt action for any concerns raised by students, parents, or staff. It also mandates training for school personnel to recognize signs of abuse and handle sensitive matters properly. Additionally, it provides guidance on supporting affected students through counseling and legal aid and promotes collaboration with local governments and organizations to enhance child protection efforts.

School handbook is a comprehensive document that provide students with important information on school policies, procedures, expectations, and resources. Its goal is to assist students in navigating the academic environment and understand their rights and responsibilities. Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9485 "The Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007" and for the Department of Education (DepEd) to implement its Citizen's Charter where in it is stated that all government agencies shall set up their respective service standards to be known as the Citizen's Charter in the form of information billboards and in the form of published materials written either in English, Filipino, or in the local dialect, this mandates that all public and private schools need to craft and establish school's or student's handbook. Student handbook includes Introduction, DepEd Vision, Mission, Core Values and Mandate; General information about the school; Academic Policy; School Activities; Student Services; Child Protection and Anti- Bullying Policy and School Policy and Code of Discipline.

School handbook shall include introduction explaining its scope regarding student's involvement in the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities of the school. It serves as a resource document of the policies, rules and guidelines of the school for any courses of action and decisions. This will judiciously define and clarify the relationship among students as well as the administration, faculty and staff. By familiarizing students with DepEd Vision, Mission, Core Values and Mandate, the handbook ensures that students' behaviors and attitudes in line with the principle and objectives of the education system. It also fosters a shared understanding among all stakeholders.

Based on the interview with the teachers and school heads, they mentioned that they crafted the school handbook by means of revisiting the existing laws that govern the country in terms of child protection. This means that the school are highly compliant with the legal procedures when it comes to interacting and handling matters on child protection. Moreover, the respondents also disclosed that the handbook was disseminated among students and parents. The contents of such document were explained every year to promote the peace and order in the school premises. This will also serve as a guide to decide accurately on matters concerning the welfare of the children. This finds resemblance to the idea of Lynch (2022) that student handbook is an official document that contains policies that protect both the students and the school personnel. All school community members must be aware that such a document exists and what it contains. Policies may differ between schools, but core policies must be present in all student handbooks. This is to make sure that the school is a safe environment that promotes learning and growth.

2. Profile of the School Heads and Teachers

The study investigated the profile of the school heads and teachers as implementers of the child protection policy. Data are shown in tables 2 to 5.

2.1 Sex. This pertains to the biological orientation of the school heads and teachers as regard to male and female. Distribution of respondents in terms of sex is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents in terms of their sex

Category	School Head		Teacher	
	F	%	F	%
Male	69	52.3	140	38.7
Female	63	47.7	222	61.3
Total	132	100	362	100

Based on the table, most of the school heads are male although there is only a slight difference as compared to the population of female. This means that male and female have an equal representation in school leadership. There is a fairly balanced distribution between male and female school heads, though males are slightly more represented, and which could suggest a relatively equal gender representation in leadership positions, though the male percentage is marginally higher. This might be worth exploring further to see if this trend holds across different contexts.

On the other hand, teachers are dominated by female and less than half constitutes the population of male. This means that the teaching profession is dominated by females. The result revealed that there is a fair distribution of male and female school heads. Whereas there is a wide gap between the distribution of male and female teachers. The study of (Tett & Riddell, 2009) shown that predominance of female school heads and teacher in implementing child protection policy is not an issue in the diversity of the teaching profession. All pupils could benefit from the range of interests and attributes offered by female and male school heads and teachers.

2.2 Age. This variable pertains to the length of time a person has existed which is typically measured in years. Table 3 shows the respondents' profile in terms of age.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents in terms of Age

Category	School Head		Teacher	
	F	%	F	%
25 years and below	1	0.8	11	3.0
26-35				
36-45	19	14.4	129	35.6
46-55	34	25.8	123	34
56 and above	70	53	77	21.3
	8	6.1	22	6.1
Total	132	100	362	100

Based on the table, most of the school heads are 46-55 years old. A quarter of them were 36-45 years old. A few of the school heads constituted the 25-35 years old and more than 56 years old. There is a relatively small percentage of younger school heads in the 25 years and below group. This means that the school heads were mostly at the middle age. This may be because of the work experience and education needed before being a school head which requires them to spend more time in the profession. The data suggests that most School Heads are in the 46-55 age range, highlighting the importance of experience and tenure for school leadership positions. School Heads under the age of 45 are significantly fewer in number.

On the other hand, teachers in the age group 26-35 years constitute the largest portion of the teaching workforce, followed by those in the 36-45 age group. Whereas a small portion of the teachers are 25 years old and below and 56 years old and above. This means that the teachers are mostly young adults. This may be because of the great number of students who pursue the teaching profession, so the work force is dominated by young individuals. The result implies that there is a diversity of age groups among school heads and teachers. However, age groups stand out among the two groups of respondents. Middle-aged school heads and young adult teachers dominate the schools.

The majority of teachers are concentrated in the 26-45 age range, indicating that teaching is most common in the middle years of a professional's career. Fewer teachers are found in the younger (25 and below) or older (56+) age brackets, which might reflect the demands of the profession and the trend toward retirement. Both the School Heads and Teachers show a trend of a workforce that is heavily middle-aged. This suggests that these educational roles are sustained by professionals with years of experience but might face a potential gap in leadership or teaching as older educators retire. In conclusion, the data paints a picture of a school system that relies heavily on individuals in their 30s, 40s, and 50s, both in teaching and leadership positions. The relatively few younger school heads and teachers suggest that career progression and leadership in education may require significant experience, while older professionals may be nearing retirement. This could have implications for succession planning, recruitment, and training within the education system. This is in line with the findings of Geeraerts et al. (2018) which disclosed the variety of generations in education sector. This brings a blend of experiences, perspectives, and skills that can enrich the educational environment.

2.3 Position. In the context of this study, position refers to the academic designation or role the respondents perform in the school of assignment. Table 4 presents profile with respect to position.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents in terms of Position

Category	Frequency	Percentage
School Head	132	26.72
Teacher	362	73.28
Total	494	100

Based on the table, majority of the respondents are teachers, which reflects the general hierarchy in schools, where there are typically more teachers than school heads or principals. Teachers play a significant role in the daily functioning of a school, and this higher representation could indicate that the survey was targeted more at the teaching staff or that teachers outnumber school heads in general. Meanwhile, for the school head category represents a notable portion of the respondents. This group likely includes administrators, principals, or other school leadership, whose input is crucial for understanding the broader perspective on school management, policies, and overall educational strategies. Further, the data shows a clear distinction in the number of teachers compared to school heads, which is consistent with the structure of most educational institutions. The percentage distribution highlights the relative focus of the survey on the larger teacher body while still capturing insights from the leadership. The result implies that

the school heads manage, motivate, and guide large number of teaching staff. They also supervise all school personnel, develop and implement educational programs according to the standards set by the Department of Education.

2.4 Number of Relevant Trainings and Seminars. The study also determined the frequency of attendance among school heads and teachers to relevant trainings. Data is presented in table 5.

**Table 5. Distribution of Respondents in terms of their Number
of Relevant Trainings and Seminars**

Category	School Head		Teacher	
	F	%	F	%
1-5	119	90.2	345	95.3
6-10	12	9.1	9	2.5
11-15	1	0.8	8	2.2
16-20	0	0	0	0
Total	132	100	362	100

Based on the table, Data revealed that both school heads and teachers primarily attend fewer training sessions. This indicates that most educational professionals engage with a limited amount of professional development. For instance, only a small percentage of school heads and teachers attend between six to fifteen sessions. This might reflect limited time, resources, or opportunity for further training. It can also be said that the majority of school heads and teachers only attend a small number of training sessions, which might indicate a lack of access to more frequent or varied professional development opportunities. Overall, the data highlights the need for more extensive or frequent professional development opportunities for both school heads and teachers.

In conjunction with CPP, the result implies that both the school heads and the teachers are provided with the same number of trainings and seminars. This may be because of the thinking that CPP is not only the concern of the school head but also the teachers. More so, trainings provided to school heads and teachers relative to child protection is not enough. The lack of adequate training for teachers and school heads may lead to lack of understanding about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. This may result to missed opportunities for early detection, inadequate responses to abuse, and failure to uphold legal and ethical duties. The study of (Campbell & Wigglesworth, 2013) emphasized that School head and teacher role in implementing child protection policy can be properly carried out if they are equipped with the relevant skills. Appropriate in-service training in child protection is important in protecting child rights.

During the interview, the respondents stated that the training on CPP helped them become more aware on the processes governing this law. They were able to facilitate the operations effectively because of the concepts that they have learned from the capacity building. This is essential for the school personnel as they are always interacting with the students. Through this, they can uphold the ideals of child protection. However, they noted that the training opportunities are limited and often insufficient, leaving gaps in their ability to fully address the complexities of child protection in their roles.

3. Level of School's Responsiveness to Child Protection Policy

The present study determined the level of responsiveness to the implementation of the child protection policy. Tables 6 to 9 clearly present the assessments relative to duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protection and remedial measures, and management of related cases.

3.1 Duties and Responsibilities. This highlights the significant functions of both school heads and teachers in relation to child protection policy implementation. It is an essential component of child protection policy that defines the role, tasks, obligations, and expectations of the school heads and teachers within an educational institution to ensure a safe and supportive educational environment.

The composite means expressed in the assessment of school heads revealed high level of response to child protection policy relative to their duties and responsibilities.

Based on the assessment of school heads, they have high level of response to child protection policy by ensuring the implementation of effective child protection policies and procedures, and ensure that all learners, school personnel, parents, guardians or custodians, visitors, and guests are made aware of the child protection policy. This implies that school heads play a key role in implementing child protection policies by developing clear policies with input from teachers and other stakeholders and share these policies through school handbooks, websites, and meetings. As expected, to create a safe environment, schools establish clear reporting procedures and evaluate the effectiveness of policies through feedback and maintain records of incidents. This supports the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (2022) that mentioned safeguarding involves taking proactive steps to protect children's welfare, prevent abuse, and ensure that proper procedures are in place for reporting any concerns and therefore schools must adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes training for all stakeholders, including school personnel, parents, and guardians.

Ensuring the school adopts the student handbook to be followed by every learner, teacher, school personnel, parent, and guardians while on school grounds, when traveling to and from school, during a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off campus, and organize and convene the Child Protection Committee for the school were school heads' duties and responsibilities assessed to a high level of responsiveness. This implies ensuring a safe and organized educational environment by enforcing the student handbook and forming the Child Protection Committee. Thus, promoting order and discipline, as the handbook outlines expected behaviors and rules for everyone. In addition, school heads focus on safety and well-being by tackling issues like bullying and harassment. School heads also encourage community involvement by getting parents, guardians, and staff to engage with the handbook. They support students' overall development by setting behavior policies for all activities and helping maintain a secure learning space for all. Adams, et al (2020) highlights the importance of clearly written student handbooks in promoting a safe and organized school environment. The research emphasizes that comprehensive handbooks, which include codes of conduct, behavioral expectations, and protection guidelines, help set clear expectations for all stakeholders and reduce instances of miscommunication.

Likewise, school heads have high level of response to their duties and responsibilities by ensuring that all incidents of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts are addressed in accordance with the provisions of this Department's Order, maintain a record of all

proceedings related to bullying or peer abuse and submit after each school year to the Division Office to report and a copy of the intake form, and monitor the compliance of a child protection policy among learners, school personnel, parents, and guardians. School heads take specific actions for important reasons related to their roles. They ensure legal compliance and accountability, as national laws require schools to protect children's welfare. This adherence helps create a safe and inclusive environment. By addressing abuse, violence, and bullying, school heads promote safety and support students' overall well-being and keeping records of these incidents promotes transparency and provides evidence for audits or investigations. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, as cited by Briones (2019) ensured that all Filipino children are nurtured in a child-friendly, gender sensitive, safe, and respectful environment, irrespective of their background.

Coordinating with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or, the appropriate government agencies or non-governmental organizations on a Child Protection Hotline for reporting abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts and for counseling, adopt conflict resolution mechanisms that respect the rights of indigenous peoples, provided that they conform to Department Order 40 series of 2012 and they uphold the rights of the child, and develop strategies to address the risk factors that contribute to the act of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying were indicators assessed to a high level of responsiveness with respect to school heads' duties and responsibilities. This affirms how school heads work hand-in-hand and the schools to strengthen their ability to manage sensitive cases and ensure school policies reflect national child protection standards. This collective effort fosters a safer environment for children in education.

“Conduct the capacity-building activities for the members of the Child Protection Committee and Guidance Counselors/Teachers” and “Conduct disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils, students, and teachers” was the lowest among indicators although assessed to a high level of response. This means that the school heads need to review the structure, frequency, and scope of the capacity-building activities related to CPP and procedures in handling disciplinary proceedings. School heads carry out disciplinary proceedings to handle offenses by students, teachers, and staff to keep order and uphold school values. They enforce school policies consistently to ensure appropriate behavior. This process encourages accountability and personal responsibility. It also helps maintain a safe environment and protects the school's reputation by addressing issues swiftly. Additionally, these measures can promote personal growth and fulfill legal duties. One of which is to craft activities to advocate child protection. Thinking about the welfare of the students, the projects were all directed towards the students' growth and development. Development of programs, projects, and activities and spearheading such was a great manifestation of child protection policy (Weshah and Sakal, 2012; Przeperski & Taylor, 2022).

Looking at the assessment of teachers, the composite mean revealed a high level of response to child protection policy relative to their duties and responsibilities. This means that the teachers have been responding very well to the expected duties that they need to accomplish. This may be due to the fact that the CPP is widely disseminated among teachers. According to the United Nations (2006), teachers are integral in creating safe school environments and must be trained to identify signs of abuse and intervene when necessary. This responsibility is part of their professional duty to uphold the rights of children and ensure their safety while at school.

Likewise, they revealed high level of responsiveness of their duties and responsibilities by teaching the value of respect and obedience to learners. This shows that teaching respect and obedience to learners support personal growth, community strength, and effective learning environments. Teachers ensure instill

respect which helps learners appreciate others' feelings and opinions, nurturing healthy relationships, while obedience aids in following rules for better functioning in groups. A respectful atmosphere in classrooms reduces disruptions and boosts cooperation, while obedience ensures safety and focus during lessons. Respect for diverse perspectives encourage collaboration, and obedience linked to ethical behavior fosters goal achievement and adaptability. It's important to teach these values thoughtfully, promoting critical thinking and mutual respect instead of blind obedience. All members of the school should fulfill their responsibilities to the best of their abilities to secure learners from any harm and to give them the quality education they deserved (Buckley & McGarry 2011).

In the same table, teachers have high level of responsiveness of their duties and responsibilities by giving learners love and affection, advice, and counsel, with genuine care and understanding, and protecting learners' physical and mental health at all times. This infers teachers provide love, care, and advice to help students grow emotionally, socially, and mentally. This nurturing role fosters trust and creates a safe environment, allowing students to express themselves freely. By showing affection, teachers help students build emotional intelligence and resilience, preparing them for life's challenges. They also protect students' mental health, ensuring a conducive learning atmosphere. Furthermore, teachers act as role models, demonstrating important values like empathy and compassion.

Moreover, teachers strictly comply with the school's child protection policy, provide learning environments that are safe, secure, fair, and supportive to promote learner responsibility and achievement, and practice positive and non-violent discipline, as may be required under the circumstances; provided, that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted upon them. These results imply teachers create a safe and supportive learning environment by complying with laws and policies that ensure children's welfare, which include prohibiting corporal punishment and encouraging positive discipline practices. Second, children have the right to learn in a space free from harm and discrimination, thus protecting their well-being and ensuring they feel valued. Moreover, a safe environment helps build trust and emotional security, leading to better learning outcomes. Teachers also act as role models, demonstrating respect and effective conflict resolution, which fosters fairness and equity in education. School heads' awareness that the inclusion of child protection policy in curriculum is deemed important. (Bright et al, 2022; Nurjanah, 2022; Sutama et al., 2022). The manner of teaching and approach to students must embody child protection.

Teachers have high level of response to child protection and policy by establishing learning environments that are responsive to learner diversity, performing such other duties as are imposed by law upon them, as substitute parents or guardians, and furnishing learners with good and wholesome educational materials. Results show that teachers play a crucial role in shaping effective learning environments due to their responsibility and influence on students. They create inclusive settings to address the diverse needs of learners, ensuring everyone has a fair chance to succeed, which helps foster engagement and belonging in education. Teachers also have legal and ethical duties to ensure the safety and moral development of their students, maintaining a nurturing environment during school hours. By embracing learner diversity, they promote not only academic success but also social, emotional, and ethical growth, encouraging values like respect and collaboration. They provide quality educational materials that are suitable and engaging, supporting positive learning outcomes while protecting students from harmful content. Through their teaching, teachers aim to nurture responsible and active citizens, instilling values such as critical thinking and community engagement. This affirms Miles (2018) contention that highlights how teachers and school personnel are expected to perform duties that go beyond academic instruction, serving as caregivers and guardians for students. This includes creating a nurturing atmosphere that supports social, emotional, and academic development.

In the same way, teachers keep learners in their company and support, educate, and instruct them by the right precept and a good example, and employ means which enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom. This infers teachers are essential in guiding the moral, intellectual, and social growth of students. They serve as role models, showing values like empathy and respect, which helps students learn how to treat others and face ethical issues. By teaching children's rights, teachers promote dignity and inclusivity. They create safe and supportive learning environments, helping students understand their rights and empowering them as informed citizens.

Additionally, teachers have legal and ethical duties to include children's rights in education. They foster emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and social awareness, preparing students to advocate for themselves and others. Ultimately, teachers aim to build future leaders who value human rights and social responsibility. This is what Moran (2019) meant when he discussed how educators can play a crucial role in promoting and upholding children's rights within the classroom. It emphasizes the importance of fostering a learning environment that not only supports learners but also educates them on their rights. The article provides strategies for teachers to integrate children's rights into the curriculum and pedagogy by creating inclusive, rights-based teaching practices and leading by example.

Lastly, exercising special parental authority and responsibility over the child while under their supervision, instruction, and custody was the lowest among indicators. This means that the teachers are hesitant in disciplining students while at school. This may be due to the consequences that the teachers have been facing today when it comes to violating the CPP. Teachers have a special responsibility and authority over students because they act like parents while the children are in school. This means they must ensure the safety and well-being of the children under their care. When parents send their kids to school, they trust teachers to protect and guide them, creating a safe environment. Teachers can make and enforce rules to maintain order and support learning, like how parents' guide their children's behavior. They also need to ensure students are safe from harm, bullying, or accidents, reflecting the care that parents provide.

Salazar (2018) review discussed the concept of parental authority from both legal and ethical perspectives, particularly in the context of a parent's responsibilities while a child is under their supervision and instruction. It explores how the law assigns special authority and responsibility to parents, emphasizing their obligation to ensure the child's well-being, development, and safety.

3.2 Preventive Measures. This refers to the taking initiatives to establish a safe environment for children and reducing the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. These measures focus on educating, monitoring, and establishing preventive practices within the school.

School heads and teachers' assessment as expressed in the composite mean revealed a high level of response to child protection policy in terms of preventive measures. This shows that both groups of respondents are legally bound to implement and uphold child protection policies due to regulatory frameworks compel them to proactively integrate preventive measures, ensuring that schools meet established safety standards and effective child protection often involves a coordinated effort among educators, parents, and external agencies. This finds resemblance to Laskey & Perry (2013) that a multi-agency approach enhances child safety, as different stakeholders bring unique expertise to address child welfare concerns. National child protection guidelines advocate for integrated efforts among educators, law enforcement, and child welfare services to ensure a comprehensive protective environment for students.

Based on the table, both the school heads and the teachers are highly responsive when it comes to the preventive measures. This means that the school heads and the teachers have been applying measures

to avoid the violation of the rights of the children. This may be attributed to the continuous campaign in schools to conduct measures to prevent any untoward incidents concerning child protection. According to Baker (2018), schools with strong child protection policies, report fewer incidents of abuse or neglect. The key to these programs' success lies in their ability of the school heads and teachers in ensuring they remain vigilant and responsive to any potential threats to children's safety.

Among the assessment of both school heads and teachers, schools have a high level of response by recommending a school child protection policy with a code of conduct. This stresses the fact that this policy promote students safety by providing clear guidelines to protect against abuse and harm. It also clarifies behavior expectations, helping to reduce misconduct. It significantly ensures legal compliance with child protection laws, holding the school accountable for maintaining standards. The policy also supports staff and volunteers by outlining their roles, helping to prevent accidental harm. By having a written code of conduct, misunderstandings are minimized, fostering clear communication about acceptable behavior. Additionally, the policy encourages reporting concerns, empowering the school community to address issues of abuse or unsafe practices.

Moreover, to a high level of response, initiating information dissemination programs, plan to ensure child protection and safety, develop and implement a school-based referral and monitoring system, and set up a child-friendly mechanism for obtaining children's views and participation in the formulation, monitoring, and assessment of school rules and policies related to student discipline. Results imply how schools take these actions to create a safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student well-being. Information dissemination programs help share important school policies with students, parents, and staff, building trust and reducing misunderstandings. Child protection and safety plans protect children from abuse and bullying, allowing them to focus on learning. School-based referral systems offer support for students facing challenges, ensuring they receive timely help. Likewise, these strategies contribute to a positive school culture focused on holistic development and active student participation. A study by the Early Intervention Foundation (2022) emphasizes the importance of clear communication strategies to inform all stakeholders about child protection procedures and resources. This ensures that everyone is aware of the protocols and their roles in safeguarding children.

Moreover, high level of response to planning to ensure child protection and safety. This means that both school heads and teachers create a safe environment promote awareness by educating students about their rights and personal safety, helping them recognize inappropriate behavior. They can identify early warning signs of abuse by observing changes in a child's behavior or appearance, ensuring potential issues are caught early. They also build partnerships with parents and authorities for support, and take steps to minimize risks, such as evaluating staff and ensuring safe spaces. Through thoughtful planning, teachers help create a protective framework prioritizing children's well-being and safety. Lu et al. (2020) mentioned that there is a need for preventive measures to fully implement the child protection policy. To do this, the school must always value the importance of the child protection policies. In doing so, the school stakeholders will be able to implement strategies on this matter.

In the similar assessments, high level of response in organizing activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying, or peer abuse, and implementing school activities and events that raise awareness on children's rights. Teachers organize activities to create a safe and supportive environment for children to promote awareness of children's rights, helping them understand how to recognize and speak out against abuse or discrimination. They also work to create a safe learning environment where students feel secure and valued, which is important for their well-being and

success. Additionally, preventive measures are put in place to teach children about inappropriate behavior and how to handle potential risks. Teachers also address vulnerabilities like bullying swiftly, helping children who face various challenges. Furthermore, activities encourage positive peer interactions, teaching skills like empathy and conflict resolution to reduce bullying and promote respect. Teachers also connect students with resources such as counselors and child protection services, building a strong support network. According to the article of Child Protection at the IRC. (2022) emphasized that having case management procedures in school ensures quality, consistency, and coordination of services

Further, schools support student-led activities to raise awareness of children's rights, implement school activities and events that raise awareness on children's rights and establish a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional, or behavioral signs, organize activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying, or peer abuse. This implies support initiative that promotes children's rights and by creating a community that values mutual respect and responsibility. By developing a safe and supportive environment, schools emphasize protection, equity, and inclusivity, enhancing students' well-being and academic success. Additionally, they focus on early identification of at-risk students, enabling timely support for those showing signs of harm. Ultimately, school heads strive to build a positive school culture where every student feels safe and valued, shaping a society that respects children's rights. This supports Johnson (2018) which highlighted the importance of school-based programs focused on preventing abuse, exploitation, violence, and bullying. It also discussed how students can be involved in organizing awareness events and activities that educate their peers about children's rights.

Meanwhile, a different assessment from the respondents by integrating education sessions related to corporal punishment and positive discipline in the initiatives of the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs), and implementing specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers and other activities. This means that given teachers' emphasis on classroom control and the direct effect of discipline on student behavior, teachers and school heads could see the combination of corporal punishment and positive attitude sessions differently whereas school heads evaluate these programs from a more general administrative standpoint—taking into account long-term objectives and school policies. Furthermore, many instructors might not have been trained in positive discipline, thereby choosing more classic techniques. By contrast, school leaders typically get instruction aimed at encouraging good behavior and reducing physical punishment. Teachers may ultimately oppose changes to positive discipline if they think it compromises their authority, but school heads will back organizational modifications that match legal requirements. Each group is also molded by their varied encounters with student behavior both within and outside the classroom. This supports **Gershoff & Font (2016)** emphasize that many teachers still rely on traditional discipline methods due to a lack of training in positive behavior management strategies. Conversely, school heads receive administrative training that includes alternatives to corporal punishment.

Lastly, school heads have moderate level of response while teachers assessed high level of response to the program by conducting capacity-building programs for school administrators, teachers, and non-academic personnel focused on children's rights, child development, and positive and nonviolent approaches in teaching and classroom management. Seemingly, this implies teachers focus on daily classroom activities and how instruction might instantly enhance their classroom management and teaching. Priority is given to techniques that let them effectively control behavior and involve pupils. In contrast, school heads pay attention to how the programs affect meeting educational standards, school policy, and culture in general. Training is assessed based on how well it supports the general growth of teachers and institutional objectives. Teachers seek practical, hands-on approaches, but school leaders seek cost-

effectiveness, scale, and training durability. Furthermore, teachers evaluate training based on how it influences their classroom and student behavior, whereas school administrators view it from an organizational standpoint, emphasizing compliance and the general educational setting. Both points of view matter, so good capacity-building programs should combine down-to-earth instructional techniques with awareness of more general policies of the school to help everyone concerned. This finds resemblance to **Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner (2017)** emphasize that professional learning should be continuous, context-specific, and aligned with school-wide objectives to benefit both teachers and administrators.

Similarly, it was mentioned by the school heads and teachers during the conduct of FGD that the implementation of preventive measures in child protection policies within schools has been largely successful, with school heads, teachers, and child protection committee all recognizing the importance of creating a safe environment for children. Awareness campaigns, regular training for staff, clear reporting mechanisms, and curriculum integration have played significant roles in promoting the rights and well-being of students. However, challenges such as attendance of the parents during capacity building activities and resource limitations remain. Despite these challenges, the school community's collective efforts toward child protection appear to be making a positive impact in fostering a more supportive and safe learning environment.

3.3 Protective and Remedial Measures. This refers to procedures to be employed in handling incidents such as bullying, child abuse, violence, and discrimination in school. Protective measures are designed to safeguard children and provide immediate support and resolution if abuse or neglect is suspected or confirmed while remedial measures focus on providing recovery and support following incidents.

Generally, the school heads and the teachers', as seen in the composite mean, expressed a high level of response in terms of the protective and remedial measures. This implies that the school heads and teachers follow by the standards mandated of them to always promote the welfare of the students. This validates the insights of Fullan (2014) that effective school leadership fosters a supportive environment where students feel safe and empowered to learn. School administrators implement frameworks that address both preventive and corrective actions, ensuring a holistic approach to student support.

As seen in the similar assessments of school heads and teachers, they have high level of response to child protection policy with respect to protective and remedial measures by providing advocacy materials about the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. This suggests schools raise awareness, educate stakeholders, and promote measures for child safety by outlining safe practices and behaviors that promote a secure environment, and empower stakeholders by clarifying their roles in protecting children. Additionally, they help build a culture of safety in schools, encouraging open reporting of issues and ensuring staff are ready to respond. Teklu and Kumar (2014) revealed that attitude towards Child Protection Policy is positively correlated with the age and length of teaching experience; It is expected that over a period of time, teachers acquire effective and empirically validated methods to discipline students which change their negative attitude towards the policy and its use in schools.

Referring the involved learners to the Child Protection Committee for counseling and interventions, implementing programs, projects, and activities on matters of school operations and implementation of Child Protection policy initiated by schools and stakeholders were school heads high response concerning about child protection policy. Results highlight schools' adherence to child protection laws, and working

with the CPC shows they are responsible and accountable. Involving the CPC also aims to tackle the root causes of issues like bullying and abuse, helping to prevent such incidents in the future. Schools also focus on the overall development of students, ensuring their emotional and social needs are met so they can better concentrate on learning. Child protection programs raise awareness among students, parents, and staff about their roles in keeping children safe, fostering a culture of respect and responsibility. Collaboration with parents, local governments, and NGOs strengthens these efforts and makes them more effective and lasting. Herrity (2022) mentioned that training programs can also help prepare employees taking on more responsibilities in an institution. These programs will help them learn the skills that are required to function effectively in their positions. On the other hand, position of the stakeholders also varies in their adherence and implementation of the child protection policy.

Moreover, both school heads and teachers have high level of response to by ensuring that the confidentiality of any case is exercised, establish a support system for learners involved, and ensure that the learners involved connect with the appropriate professional help, including civil authorities, medical services, legal services, and counselors. Schools are essential for putting child protection policies into action. They maintain information private protects students' identities and reputations, helping to build trust. It encourages students to report issues without fear of exposure and is often a legal and ethical requirement. They also provide support helps students feel safe during tough times, promotes emotional recovery, and creates a culture of safety in the school.

This also implies that keeping privacy and building good support systems for students are crucial elements in guaranteeing their welfare in learning environments. Protecting the privacy of students caught up in sensitive circumstances—such as bullying, abuse, or mental health problems—depends on teachers and school administration. Adherence to particular rules and policies helps to create a culture where students feel free to ask for help and support. While school leaders do many things to guarantee confidentiality. Above all else, they provide staff and teachers with training on the value of discretion and the legal consequences of violating a student's privacy. Among the legal concepts covered in this course is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which safeguards students' academic records. Sensitive cases prompt school authorities to delicately evaluate the situation and usually restrict conversation about it to need-to-know only. This validates the idea of **UNICEF (2019)** emphasizes the importance of safeguarding student privacy in cases of bullying, abuse, and mental health concerns to promote trust and encourage students to seek help and **Lindsey et al. (2018)** discuss the importance of training school personnel on privacy laws and ethical standards to prevent breaches of sensitive student information.

Handling cases of abuse with care, compassion, and sensitivity when speaking with victims of abuse, and conducting parent resiliency sessions were school heads high response to child protection policy. This means school officials are essential in creating a safe and supportive environment for students, particularly in how they handle abuse cases. They approach these cases with care, compassion, and sensitivity, which helps victims feel heard and validated, fostering emotional recovery. By following legal and ethical standards in their handling of these cases, school leaders demonstrate a commitment to child welfare and accountability. Their proactive education efforts address root causes of abuse and empower parents, teachers, and students to play active roles in child safety. Overall, by combining sensitivity in response with preventive measures, school heads contribute significantly to the protection and resilience of children and their families. According to Vissandjée and Resendes (2019), these policies are framed within the framework of international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Assessing the emotional status of learners, the social condition of learners, and implementing programs, projects, and activities on matters of school operations and implementation of Child Protection policy initiated by schools and stakeholders were indicators of teachers' high level of response with respect to protective and remedial measures. Teachers offer necessary support and understanding how social dynamics helps create positive relationships and prevent issues like bullying. Creating a safe learning environment is essential; by assessing emotions and social situations, teachers can tackle threats to safety like abuse and promote a nurturing space. This support is vital for improving academic performance, as emotional challenges can hinder learning. Programs must also be inclusive, considering students' diverse backgrounds. Teachers are often the first to notice early signs of problems, allowing for timely interventions. Collaborating with parents, social workers, and community organizations helps meet students' broader needs.

Further, school heads have moderate response in assessing the social condition of learners while teachers assessed this indicator to a high level of response. This implies of several factors cause teachers and school authorities to sometimes vary on their evaluation of children's social circumstances. Daily student interactions let teachers closely view moods, peer relationships, and behavior. This offers them a close look at the social circumstances of pupils. By contrast, school heads consider a broader administrative view and base their evaluations on policy and reports, therefore creating more universal observations. Teachers pay attention to individual difficulties and classroom interactions, therefore increasing their knowledge of particular social problems. School heads might give higher priority to more general issues such school programs, therefore lessening the need awareness of social circumstances. Furthermore, while teachers spot daily issues, school leaders rely on averaged data that could miss personal experiences. This affirms the contention of Fullan (2017) on educational leadership suggests that school heads prioritize broader institutional concerns, like implementing policies and school-wide initiatives, rather than focusing on micro-level student experiences.

On their contrasting assessment, conducting parent resiliency sessions. This means teachers interact more personally with parents and children and evaluate sessions based on parental involvement, level of support strategy sensitivity, impact on student behavior and performance. By contrast, school administrators consider long-term objectives in light of program efficiency, attendance levels, and compliance with school policies and local needs. Further, schools, through their teachers, often overlook the importance of helping parents build resilience, viewing it as a low priority. Teachers may not know about available resources to support these efforts. Limited time, staff, and funding can make it hard to organize these programs, as teachers are already busy with their main duties. Schools usually concentrate on student programs and might neglect the role of parents in education. This validates the idea presented by Auerbach (2012) in *School Leadership for Authentic Family and Community Partnerships* states that educators are frequently unprepared to address family engagement due to limited training in family outreach and support strategies.

As a whole, teachers revealed high level of response to child protection policy in terms of protective and remedial measures. Moreover, as revealed in the FGD, schools have implemented both protective and remedial measures to uphold the safety and well-being of students. Protective measures include regular training for staff, awareness campaigns, and creating a safe environment where students feel comfortable reporting abuse while remedial measures focus on providing immediate support to victims, ensuring that investigations are conducted confidentially and appropriately, and collaborating with external agencies to ensure the child's safety. Challenges such as limited funding and lack of trained professionals can delay the support needed for affected learners. Despite the challenges encountered, the schools are committed to improving both preventive and remedial measures to protect children from abuse.

3.4 Management of Related Cases

This highlights the roles and responsibilities of school heads, teachers and concern agencies from reporting or referral of a child abuse case. This also ensures the child's welfare, upholds confidentiality, and complies with organizational and legal requirements to guarantee that every incident is handled quickly, effectively, and sensitively. Table 10 shows the level of school's responsiveness to Child Protection Policy relative to management of related cases.

As evident in the composite mean, both school heads and teachers, as expressed in the composite mean, revealed high level of response to CPP with respect to management of related cases. This implies that they hold a significant responsibility in managing related cases within educational settings, and their assessment is driven by their dedication to fostering a safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning. By actively addressing issues related to discipline, student welfare, and mental health, they can prevent problems from escalating and support students in their overall development. As education continues to evolve, the importance of responsive leadership and teaching will remain vital in shaping positive educational experiences for all students.

This affirms the citations of Leithwood et al (2020) that effective educational leadership is linked to positive student outcomes, as it promotes a holistic approach to learning that integrates academic, social, and emotional development and by implementing evidence-based strategies for student support, educators and school administrators help create environments conducive to both academic success and personal growth.

Looking at the similar assessments of school heads and teachers, they have high level of response to child protection policy by communicating the decision in writing, stating the facts and reasons for the decision. Schools often use written communication to share decisions, especially in managing cases, to foster transparency, clarity, and accountability, and their written explanations help everyone understand the reasoning behind decisions. They also serve as an official record that can be referenced later if questions come up. By providing a detailed rationale, school heads show they take responsibility for their actions, ensuring fairness among all stakeholders. Additionally, written records protect both the school and the head in case of legal issues, offering documented reasons for decisions made. Child Protection at the IRC. (2022) emphasized that having case management procedures in school ensures quality, consistency, and coordination of services.

Moreover, both group of respondents have high level of response by referring the victim to Local Social Welfare and Development Office for psychological assessment and intervention, submit an incident report to proper authorities. This shows how school protects the victim by ensuring they receive specialized psychological care from trained professionals who can address issues of trauma or abuse. Secondly, schools comply with legal requirements to report incidents of abuse or distress, which is particularly important for minors. Additionally, early intervention through LSWDO allows for timely assessment of psychological needs, aiding in recovery. Documentation of incidents provides an official record for future reference and supports potential legal action if needed. This process also encourages holistic support by connecting victims with various services, such as counseling and legal advice, ensuring comprehensive care.

Acting on a complaint related to child abuse within 72 hours, establishing a fact-finding investigation team, and monitoring all reported child abuse cases were indicators assessed by school heads

and teachers to a high level of response. This shows how they respond effectively to child abuse situations. Acting quickly on complaints highlights the importance of the child's safety and they also form an investigation team helps ensure fairness and thoroughness in gathering information. By monitoring cases, the school can continuously support and protect the child, demonstrating a responsible approach to handling these sensitive issues. Teklu and Kumar (2014) revealed that attitude towards Child Protection Policy is positively correlated with the age and length of teaching experience; It is expected that over a period of time, teachers acquire effective and empirically validated methods to discipline students which change their negative attitude towards the policy and its use in schools.

Moreover, high level of response to by filing a report of complaints to Disciplining Authority, and give the opportunity to the child to answer the complaint in writing with the assistance of parents or guardians. This highlights school heads ensure fairness and transparency by giving children a chance to explain themselves and preventing unjust punishment. Involving parents or guardians is required for minors, ensuring that decisions consider the child's well-being and rights. It also promotes accountability by helping children understand the consequences of their actions and works to prevent misunderstandings by allowing them to clarify their side. This approach includes families in addressing issues, supporting the child's development. The child's written response, with parental assistance, serves as a formal record for future reference.

Likewise, rendering a decision on the appropriate time period, informing the parents or guardians of the victim and offending child through a meeting or in writing, and imposing non-punitive measures depending on the gravity of the case were assessed to be highly responded by the school heads. This affirms school heads responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of all students, both the victim and the offender. A fair and balanced approach is crucial, meaning that the school needs to support both the victim and the offender. By using non-punitive measures, schools can help the offending student improve their behavior while also helping the victim heal. Schools have legal and ethical obligations to uphold the rights of students. They must document cases properly and make decisions based on the situation's severity. Clear communication with parents is essential to maintain trust and show that the school is serious about managing incidents. To support the implementation of this policy, DepEd mandates the formation of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in all elementary and secondary schools (deped.gov.ph, 2014).

Also, school heads moderately respond to by placing the concerned individual on a preventive suspension. This means preventing further incidents or interference with the process. This action allows for a thorough investigation without rushing to judgment, ensuring the person is not in a position to influence outcomes. Preventive suspension is less severe than immediate dismissal and does not imply guilt, protecting both the individual's rights and the integrity of the institution. It also balances the need to address potential risks while ensuring the individual is not unfairly penalized before the investigation is complete.

Meanwhile, teachers, in their assessment of how they manage related cases revealed high level of response to by informing the parents or guardians of the victim and offending child through a meeting or in writing. Teachers keep parents or guardians informed about incidents and ensure transparency and communication, helping to build trust between the school and families. In addition, it also promotes the safety and emotional wellbeing of all students by coordinating efforts to protect victims and prevent further incidents. Schools have a legal and ethical duty to involve parents in significant behavioral issues, ensuring everyone is aware of the situation. Moreover, discussing incidents with parents allows the school to propose resolution steps, such as counseling or mediation, and helps parents understand the context to prevent future problems. The goal is to ensure a fair and supportive approach to resolving the issue.

Lastly, teachers have moderate response to by placing the concerned individual on a preventive suspension. Preventive suspension is meant to prevent interference with investigations or ensure safety. Reasons for not implementing this can include a lack of evidence, adherence to due process, the lesser severity of the case, legal considerations, and the potential impact on the educational environment. If there's not enough evidence or if the case is not severe, the suspension might not be seen as necessary.

In general, the FGD revealed that in terms of managing cases of abuse, schools prioritize the immediate safety of the child, with a focus on ensuring that investigations are thorough, transparent, and collaborative. Key steps include documenting incidents, providing emotional and psychological support, and maintaining confidentiality. While the process can be complex and challenging, especially when dealing with sensitive cases, schools remain committed to ensuring that child protection cases are handled with care and professionalism.

4. Differences in Assessments on the Level of School Responsiveness when Grouped According to Profile Variables

The study ascertained the significant difference on the level of school responsiveness when grouped according to profile variables.

It can be gleaned from the table that, there is no significant difference on the assessment on level of responsiveness to CCP when sex is considered. The p-values ranging from 0.507 to 0.675 is greater than the alpha level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is no significant difference on the assessment on level of responsiveness among male and female respondents when it comes to their duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, and management of related cases. This means that male and female school heads and teachers are more likely to have the same level of responsiveness to CPP. The result implies that sex is not a deviating factor in being responsive to the CPP. This means that, based on the statistical test, there is no notable difference between the sexes in their assessment of the school's responsiveness to the Child Protection Policy. The data suggests that **sex does not have a significant impact** on how individuals assess the school's level of responsiveness to the Child Protection Policy. Regardless of whether the individual is male or female, their views on the school's duties, preventive measures, protective/remedial actions, and case management are largely similar.

Al-Qaysi (2018) found that there is a significant difference in how stakeholders view the Child Protection Policy based on gender. Males tend to have a negative view, while females generally have a positive view. There is also a difference in perspectives based on stakeholders' positions. The study on the Foundation Role of Key Stakeholders Aid Effectiveness Principles (2018) highlights that gender is an important factor among stakeholders, as men and women play different roles in society. They have access to different resources and power structures, which influences their experiences. Although both genders are involved, men often dominate representation in many partner countries. Women bring unique perspectives and strengths that can lead to different decisions concerning the Child Protection Policy, suggesting that adherence to the policy may vary by gender.

As revealed from the data, in terms of duties and responsibilities the p-value for this variable is 0.125, which is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, meaning there is no significant difference in how the school's responsibilities in child protection

are perceived based on the age of the individuals involved. This implies that the school's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy are perceived similarly across different age groups.

Further, no significant difference on the responsiveness of the school heads and teachers in terms of duties and responsibilities when age is considered. This means that the school heads and teachers whether old or young have similar responsiveness on CPP. The study by Teklu and Kumar (2014) found that a teacher's attitude toward the Child Protection Policy improves with age and teaching experience, as experienced teachers learn better ways to discipline students. Teachers see and experience corporal punishment, which influences their views. While most teachers know about the Child Protection Policy, they struggle to let go of old beliefs. However, Dela Fuente (2021) argued that there is no significant difference in adherence to the policy based on demographics like age, wealth, or residence.

Meanwhile, under preventive measures, the p-value of 0.036 is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference in how various age groups assess the school's preventive measures under the Child Protection Policy. This suggests that age influences the perception of how well the school is implementing preventive actions to protect children. The differences in age groups' assessments of preventive measures are likely meaningful and should be considered when designing or evaluating child protection strategies. A study by Smith and Jones (2021) found that younger parents are often more critical of preventive measures compared to older parents. This difference may arise from younger parents having different views and experiences regarding child safety than older parents, who were raised with different schooling. These generational differences highlight the importance of schools creating specific communication and engagement strategies to address the various needs of their communities.

For protective and remedial measures, p-value is 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold, which means there is a highly significant difference in how different age groups evaluate the school's protective and remedial measures in child protection. This indicates that the perception of how effectively the school responds to protection and remedial needs varies significantly depending on the age group. Such differences should be explored further to tailor responses and interventions to meet the needs of different groups more effectively.

Lastly, for management of related cases, with a p-value of 0.002, which is also below 0.05, the analysis reveals a statistically significant difference in the way age groups perceive the management of cases related to child protection. This suggests that the responsiveness of the school in managing such cases is seen differently depending on the age group. The school may need to review its case management approach to ensure that all age groups feel the management practices are appropriate and effective.

Overall, results indicate that age significantly affects perceptions of the school's responsiveness in specific areas of child protection, particularly in preventive measures, protective and remedial actions, and case management. The duties and responsibilities, however, do not show any significant variation based on age. The findings suggest that age differences are relevant when evaluating how schools implement and manage child protection policies, particularly for preventive strategies and responses to incidents. This implies that age-specific approaches might be necessary to address the varying needs and perceptions of different age groups effectively.

As revealed from the data, there is no significant difference on the level of responsiveness of school heads and teachers in terms of duties and responsibilities and management of related cases when trainings and seminar is considered. This means that more or less seminars would not translate to better conduct or

responsibilities and management of cases. This may be because of the basic knowledge of personnel in the teaching profession regarding this matter so trainings will not add much to these areas. However, the p values of 0.025 and 0.017 are less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference on the level of responsiveness in terms of preventive measures and protective and remedial measures. This means that having more trainings can help school personnel to prevent and mitigate the bad consequences of not implementing CPP effectively. This may be due to the high level of competence needed to apply these areas which can be acquired only through training. The result implies that trainings and seminars is a deviating factor in being responsive to the CPP in the areas of preventive measures and protective and remedial measures.

In the article of Kahlon, (2021) it was mentioned that training has significant difference in the implementation of child protection policy. It gives a clear understanding of expectations, standards, and personal and professional obligations. By making this information clear and easily accessible, the organization minimizes the likelihood of charges or complaints from regulations not being followed. Moreover, appropriate in-service training in child protection for school heads, teachers, and parents is a significant element in emphasizing child protection issues and in promoting a child-friendly school. Similarly, Herrity, (2022) mentioned that training programs can also help prepare employees taking on more responsibilities in an institution. These programs will help them learn the skills that are required to function effectively in their positions.

As revealed from the data, there is no significant difference on the responsiveness of the school heads and teachers in terms of duties and responsibilities and preventive measures. This means that the teachers and school heads have similar performance in terms of the conduct of their responsibilities and preventive measures. This may be because of the natural characteristics of the school heads and teachers to be vigilant towards and form of act contrasting CPP. On the other hand, the p values of 0.000 and 0.001 for protective and remedial measures and management of related cases are less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference on these areas when position is considered. This means that school heads and teachers have different level of responsiveness when it comes to establishing protective and remedial measures as well as managing related cases. This may be because position gives a person authority and this increases the level of response that they can give.

The result implies that position is a deviating factor in being responsive to the CPP in the areas of protective and remedial measures and management of related cases. A study by Segundo and Guia (2019) showed that adherence on the child protection policy was moderate among public high schools. For instance, school heads have various areas of responsibilities including human resources, financial resources, educational activities of students and teachers, external relations, and well-being of students and teachers. Geleta (2015) revealed that school heads have the important responsibility of ensuring their school policies protect the rights of students. It is also expected from them to create a shared vision and clear goals for their schools and ensure continuous progress toward achieving the goals; support the implementation of high-quality standards based instruction that results in higher levels of achievement for all students; provide opportunities for all members of the school community to build their capacity and participate in important school decisions; allocate resources and manage school operations in order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment and engage parents and community members in the educational process and create an environment where community resources support student learning, achievement and wellbeing. This implies that the role of school heads is pivotal in creating conducive learning atmosphere in the school.

Contextualized Right- Based Management Plan

This Contextualized Rights-based Management Plan is designed to help school heads and teachers to enhance their competence in implementing the Child Protection Policy (CPP). It has key component branching out from the indicators which were taken from the four identified variables on the school's level of responsiveness with respect to school heads and teachers' duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, and management of related cases. After having determined the indicators, the study's weak findings were concentrated on and by establishing goals, strategies, persons involved, success indicator and monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions:

1. Public elementary schools are compliant with legal bases and requirements relating to child protection policy.
2. Male and female school heads are fairly distributed, but there are many more male teachers than female teachers. There are few younger individuals in leadership roles, indicating that experience is important for career growth and emphasize the need for more training and professional development for both school heads and teachers.
3. Schools have high level of responsiveness to child protection policy relative to duties and responsibilities, preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, management of related cases.
4. Generally, there is no significant difference across all variables in terms of the sex of the school heads and teachers.
5. The proposed management plan aims to increase competence and skills among school heads and teachers in the implementation of the child protection policy.

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