

Assessment of Interagency Procedures and Performance in Handling Violence Against Women and Children: A Comparative Study of PNP, DSWD, and Barangay

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Abstract

This research examines the comparative application of procedures and service performance of three frontline agencies—the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and barangay officials—in the context of responding to incidents of violence against women and children (VAWC). The study employed a quantitative, descriptive-comparative research design to evaluate the operational effectiveness and compliance with procedural protocols of each agency, taking into account the complexity and urgency of VAWC incidents. A validated, structured survey questionnaire was administered to a combined total of 268 respondents, all of whom were directly involved in managing VAWC cases. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were implemented to investigate variations in agency perceptions. The results indicated that all three agencies reported high procedural compliance, with Barangay officials scoring slightly higher than the other agencies as a result of their successful inter-

agency coordination and prompt response at the community level. The DSWD was valued for psychosocial support, while the PNP was valued for protective service delivery. Moreover, service performance was rated highly across categories. Results of the ANOVA show that there are no statistically significant differences in the manner respondents rate their agency's procedures ($p = 0.360$) and performance ($p = 0.111$), signifying a shared understanding and commitment to institutional responsibilities. Operational challenges were noted through qualitative feedback despite positive ratings, such as inconsistent training, poor hotline response, and fragmented follow-through. The interagency response can be improved by applying standardized SOPs, joint capacity-building programs, and a community-based monitoring system, as suggested by these findings. Overall, the study underscores the need for embracing a systems-based approach that ensures trauma-informed, synchronized, and victim-centered interventions at all service delivery levels.

Keywords: *Violence Against Women and Children, Interagency Response, Service Performance, Procedural Implementation, Frontline Institutions*

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, violence against women and children (VAWC) is a public health and human rights issue. Abuse, in any form such as physical, psychological, sexual, and economic, remains rampant, notwithstanding the passage into law of Republic Act No. 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (Piol-Salazar, 2022). VAWC cases usually cut deep across institutional barriers, power relations, and socio-cultural perceptions that limit access to protection and justice (Gondal et al., 2024). Aside from recourse to law, it is also important to ensure the active and combined involvement of frontline service providers, particularly at the community level, so that such cases can be responded to properly (Seferis et al., 2024).

The Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and local Barangay authorities are the three primary agencies responsible for responding to VAWC cases. The provision of legal intervention, psychosocial support, temporary shelter, and referral services is a unique yet interconnected function of each institution (Rivano & Rivano, 2022). Nevertheless, the coordination of VAWC among different agencies is still inconsistent. The implementation of protocols is fragmented, responsibilities are overlapping, and there are no clear accountability mechanisms, according to reports from both government and civil society organizations. Ultimately, the overall protective system is weakened by delayed responses, re-traumatization of victims, and underreporting of cases (Perez-Vincent et al., 2024).

Despite attempts at institutionalizing collaborative mechanisms, including the creation of Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs) and Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs), there are discrepancies in the application of governance procedures and performance monitoring among the participating agencies (Gunawan et al., 2024; Thorpe et al., 2007). Furthermore, there are no empirical research studies that have specifically compared the evaluation and implementation of procedures and frontline institution service performance under an integrated framework, given that previous studies have examined the mandates of target agencies or victim experience (Andrews 2019).

This study seeks to fill this gap by making a comparative evaluation of procedures and performance of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Barangay officials in responding to Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) cases. Specifically, it seeks to assess the service performance of each agency, outline the implementation of procedures broaching VAWC, and establish the presence of major differences in perceptions among the three sectors. The study will guide policy development, standardization, and capacity-building plans to facilitate more effective and victim-centered interagency responses. This purpose will be fulfilled through the implementation of the study. This study is a valuable addition to the increasing number of studies on a systems response to case management for violence against women and children (VAWC). This research points to the importance of institutionalized cooperation, effective role definition, and coordinated practice in order to guarantee that women and children who have been subjected to violence are provided with timely, competent, and empathetic care, irrespective of the type of initial responder they encounter. This is achieved by the use of evidence-informed wisdom.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The current study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to investigate and contrast the performance and procedure implementation of three frontline agencies—the Philippine

National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Barangay officials—in the context of violence against women and children (VAWC). In order to assess the perceptions of key agency actors regarding their agency's compliance with standard procedures and their actual performance in the deliverance of services, the research design was implemented. The comparative design of the study facilitated the examination of the differences between the three institutions, ascertaining which agency possesses strengths or deficits and whether statistically significant differences exist between them.

Respondents

The study respondents were purposively selected frontline workers from the PNP, DSWD, and Barangay sectors directly handling VAWC cases. Only those having firsthand experience and knowledge of handling VAWC cases were selected. There were 268 respondents in the study. The inclusion criterion was that the respondents were at least one year with their respective agency and had handled at least one VAWC-related case. Their professional functions were from case handlers and social workers up to barangay officials and WCPD (Women and Children Protection Desk) officers.

Instrument

The primary data collection instrument employed was a structured questionnaire that was administered by a researcher and subsequently pre-tested by an expert council of public service delivery and gender-based violence experts. The instrument collected respondents' demographic profiles, procedural implementation rating, and agency performance rating, which encompassed factors such as responsiveness of services, timeliness, coordination, and follow-through mechanisms. Response categories ranged from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4), and responses were evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.98 was obtained during the reliability testing, which suggests that the internal consistency is high.

Statistical Tools

Quantitative data that were gathered were coded and then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to provide an overview of respondent profiles and their procedural compliance and performance ratings. To determine if there were statistically significant differences in ratings among the three groups (Philippine National Police, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Barangay), a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used as the cut-off point to determine significant differences among the agency groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparative Assessment of the Procedures and Performance of the PNP, DSWD, and Barangay Officials in Responding to VAWC Cases

In this section, comparative examination of the process and service delivery of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Barangay officials in handling cases of violence against women and children (VAWC) is shown. This sets the template through which each agency executes the mandated VAWC procedures, evaluates the perceived effectiveness of their services, and determines statistically significant differences between the three sectors. The information is used as the foundation for recommendations regarding policy standardization and interagency capacity building.

Implementation of VAWC-Related Procedures

Table 1. Comparative assessment of VAWC-related procedures

Agency	Overall Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
DSWD	3.48	0.40	Strongly Agree
PNP	3.43	0.44	Strongly Agree
Barangay Officials	3.51	0.34	Strongly Agree

As can be observed from Table 1, all three agencies had a high rate of compliance with Republic Acts 9262 and 9710 procedural requirements, with the Barangay officials having the overall highest mean ($M = 3.51$) (Figure 1). This was due to their highest practice of inter-agency referrals and coordination, especially in acting on initial VAWC reports. DSWD prioritized hotline responsiveness and intake procedures, and the PNP focused on investigative procedures and protection services.

While procedural consistency was as marked as it was, specific activities such as changing emergency contact numbers regularly and assisting with legal documents were marked lower in all respects, indicating areas of improvement in administrative and logistical activities (Montemayor 2024; Balahadia et al, 2024).

Evaluation of Service Performance

Table 2. Comparative assessment of VAWC service performance

Agency	Overall Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
DSWD	3.32	0.31	Strongly Agree
PNP	3.26	0.51	Strongly Agree
Barangay Officials	3.48	0.41	Strongly Agree

Performance of services across the different agencies was generally seen to be very satisfactory, as seen in Table 2 and Figure 1. Again, barangay officials achieved the highest rating, mainly based on their direct proximity to communities and their prompt initial response. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was praised for its psychosocial support and reintegration services, while the Philippine National Police (PNP) was praised for its rescue operations and protection services, though some variation in responsiveness and coordination with health services was observed.

Certain respondents also complained about the absence of standardized gender sensitivity training, as well as the periodical absence of female officers in PNP stations, which would otherwise undermine victim cooperation and trust (Valdez et al., 2022).

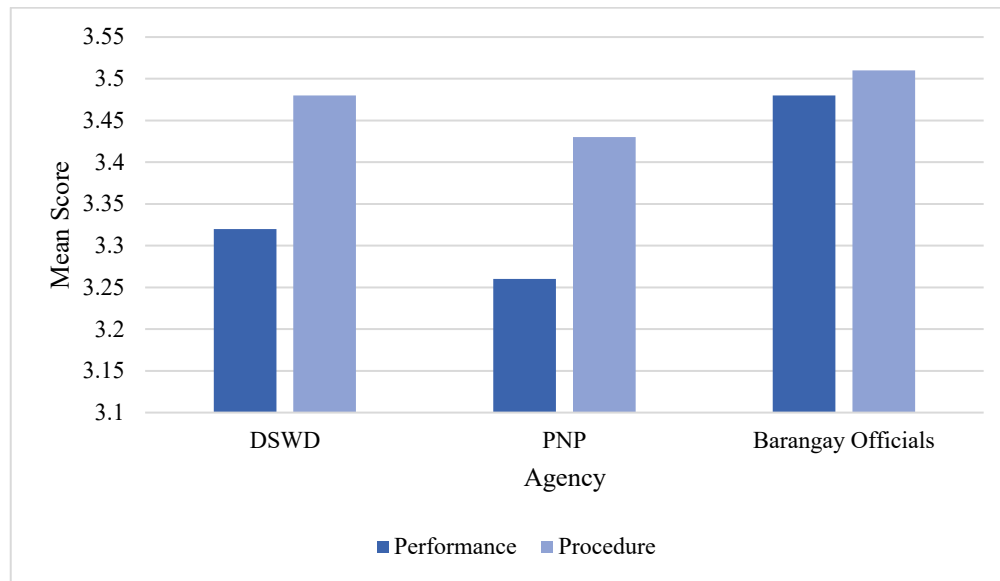


Figure 1. Comparative assessment of procedures and performance in VAWC response.

Statistical Comparison of Agency Perceptions

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results for procedural implementation

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	0.186	2	0.093	1.027	0.360
Within Groups	24.024	265	0.091		
Total	24.210	267			

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results for service performance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	1.038	2	0.519	2.223	0.111
Within Groups	61.835	265	0.233		
Total	62.873	267			

The ANOVA results in Table 3 and 4 show no statistically significant differences in the perception of procedural implementation ($p = 0.360$) and service quality ($p = 0.111$) across the three institutions. The implication is a convergence in frontline workers' perception of the role and responsibilities in dealing with

VAWC cases. While there are minor variations in means, it is not large enough to infer significant differences in operational practice.

The evidence indicates the large-scale harmonized application of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) procedures by the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and barangay officials, thus offering promising terrain for the institutionalization of standard inter-agency mechanisms. Due to the sensitivity and complexity of VAWC cases, agency cooperation must go beyond parallel action to include synchronized and united intervention models (Collaboration Between Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence: A Case File Review 2022; Ranjan & Dmello, 2022). The evidence demands a policymaking direction that involves the creation of single Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across agencies, periodic joint capacity-building exercises in a view towards strengthening gender sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and systems for referral, and community-based monitoring systems with the intent of monitoring victim experience along the response continuum (Lang et al., 2016; Covington, 2022). Finally, while the fact of common procedures as well as similar performance ratings is reassuring, these are not enough in themselves; the guarantee of truly victim-centered and trauma-responsive care demands institutionalized, policy-based, and continuously assessed inter-agency cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The research findings suggest that, while the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Barangay officials all have high procedural compliance and performance levels in handling Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) cases, there is a need for structural alignment and integrated system integration. While there are no statistically significant differences in each agency's perception of procedural implementation and service delivery, qualitative data disclose operational inconsistencies, most significantly in the matters of real-time coordination, hotline operations, and victim follow-through. This context underscores the need to transition from parallel agency action to a harmonized, victim-centered interagency system. The mutual recognition of duties among the three institutions is an opportunity to institutionalize standard procedures, set capacity-building measures, and create monitoring tools to solidify the collective response mechanism to VAWC more efficiently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on evidence, it is therefore recommended that a shared Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) be developed and adopted across the PNP, DSWD, and Barangay units in order to reduce procedural fragmentation and overlap. Regular, joint capacity-building exercises in gender sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and referral systems should be mandated to enhance competency and coherence in interagency practice. To boot, each agency should establish community-based monitoring and evaluation systems to allow real-time monitoring of cases, improve feedback loops, and ensure service accountability. Policymakers are implored to invest resources to ensure institutional sustainability of the recommendations and enable victim-centered, timely, and interagency responses to VAWC.

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