



SCHOOLS' AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent of teachers' awareness and schools' responsiveness to the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in the schools of Sta. Josefa District I, Sta. Josefa. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected using a survey instrument distributed to 123 teachers selected through probability sampling. The research aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' awareness of the Child Protection Policy and the schools' implementation to adhere to its requirements and guidelines. Key variables, such as teachers' awareness of the policy provisions and implementation levels, were analyzed to determine their interconnection. Findings indicated that schools demonstrated substantial compliance with the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between teachers' awareness of the policy and the schools' responsiveness. This suggests that a higher level of awareness among teachers correlates with more effective implementation of child protection measures. Despite the positive outcomes, the study underscored the need for continuous professional development for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills regarding the policy, particularly in addressing emerging challenges in child protection. The study concluded that successful implementation of the Child Protection Policy relies on a collaborative, whole-school approach that involves teachers, school leaders, parents, and the broader community. It recommended the consistent promotion of information campaigns and training programs to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and actively involved. Schools are encouraged to strengthen their internal systems and policies to create safe, supportive, and child-friendly environments. Ultimately, protecting children's rights and ensuring their safety within the school setting remains a shared responsibility that requires sustained efforts and commitment from all concerned parties.

KEYWORDS: Child Protection Policy, Responsiveness, Teachers' Awareness, descriptive-correlational study

INTRODUCTION

Children in the Philippines are highly susceptible to various forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, and discrimination. According to Philippine law, children are defined as individuals under the age of eighteen or those above eighteen who, due to physical or mental disabilities, are unable to protect themselves from neglect, cruelty, or mistreatment (Saplala, 2007). Given this vulnerability, it is crucial to implement strong child protection policies, particularly in educational institutions where children spend a substantial amount of time.

Several studies emphasize the importance of safeguarding children within school environments. According to Reyes and Castillo (2019), schools play a pivotal role in providing a safe space for children, yet cases of bullying, corporal punishment, and other forms of mistreatment persist. Likewise, David and Santos (2021) highlight the need for comprehensive child protection programs that include teacher training, student awareness, and community involvement. Strengthening child protection policies in schools is a legal obligation and a moral imperative to ensure children's well-being and development.

Globally, the importance of child protection in educational settings has gained increased attention. A comprehensive study by Ssenyonga et al. (2018) across 27 schools in Uganda found that well-implemented child protection policies were associated with a 42% reduction in reported cases of child abuse within school premises. Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports enacted guidelines that prohibit the use of violent disciplinary measures and punishments that harm the learners in the education sector (Naker & Sekitoleko, 2009). By 2016, the

Child Amendment Act advocating for nonviolent forms of discipline and protection of children was passed by the Ugandan parliament (GIEACPC, 2018). However, teachers continue to use violence in response to students' misbehavior such as coming late to school, making noise in class, interrupting the lessons, and poor academic performance (African Network for Prevention & Protection against Child Abuse & Neglect [ANPPCAN], 2011; Devries et al., 2014, 2015; Naker, 2005).

In the educational context, Bermudo et al. (2020) conducted a comprehensive study on implementing the Department of Education's (DepEd) child protection policy in Mindanao. Their findings indicated that while there was a general awareness of the policy among school personnel, significant gaps existed in its effective implementation. The study revealed that only 57% of surveyed schools had fully functional Child Protection Committees, and merely 38% conducted regular training on child protection for all staff members.

Sta. Josefa, a municipality in Agusan del Sur, faces unique challenges in implementing child protection policies. Despite the implementation of the Department of Education (DepEd) Child Protection Policy through DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, there is a significant gap in understanding the level of awareness, responsiveness, and effectiveness of this policy among schools in Sta. Josefa, Agusan del Sur. Thus, this study aimed to assess the awareness levels of school personnel quantitatively, the extent of policy implementation, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of child protection measures in this specific context.



METHODS

Research Design

The study employed the quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. A quantitative approach was used since this research will define the research questions based on the trends in the field of research sites (Creswell, 2012). A quantitative approach was used if the researcher wanted to explain why something occurred. Creswell further says that describing a trend means that the research problem can be answered best by a study in which the researcher seeks to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and to note how this tendency varies among people.

From the elaboration above, the quantitative approach is the best employed in this study. This study also used the correlation method since it was intended to investigate the correlation

between the child protection policy and the level of awareness of implementing the school protection policy among the teachers. The degree of correlation between two variables was classified in the form of the correlation coefficient. This was also supported by Creswell (2012), as he claimed that investigators use the correlation statistical test to describe and measure the degree of association (or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores.

Respondents

The respondents were selected using universal or probability sampling. The subjects of the study were teachers from Sta. Josefa Central Elementary School with SPED Program and Junior High School Teachers of Sta. Josefa National High School of Sta. Josefa District 1, Division of Agusan del Sur for the school year 2024-2025.

Table 1
Respondents of the Study

Name of School	Total Number of Teachers	Total Number of Respondents
Sta. Josefa Central Elementary School with SPED Program	39	39
Sta. Josefa National High School	84	84
Total	123	123

Instrument

The researcher used an adapted instrument entitled Survey Questionnaire on Awareness and Implementation of the DepEd Child Protection Policy in Schools by Macatimpag (2018). The instrument contained the following parts: Part I comprised the demographic profile of the respondents as to gender, age, and length of service. Part II comprised 15 items on the teacher's knowledge containing the DepEd Order No. 40 series of 2012 or the DepEd Child Protection Policy. Part III comprised a 15-item statement concerning the implementation of the above order in the school where the teacher is teaching.

Statistical Tools

The data obtained were tallied and tabulated. The statistical tools used to ensure the accuracy of the analyses and interpretations of the findings were the following:

Percentage. This was used to determine the average grade of the students.

Mean. This was used to measure the academic performance of the students.

Pearson r. This was used in computing the significant relationship between two groups of samples.

One-way ANOVA. This was used to identify the significant differences between the level of awareness of child protection policy and the level of implementation of the child protection policy in schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter dealt with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. The study's results were presented and discussed according to the research questions outlined in Chapter One.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sex. Table 2 shows the profile of respondents in terms of sex.

Table 2
Profile of Respondents according to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	20%
Female	99	80%
Total	123	100%

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the distribution of the respondents in terms of sex. It is revealed that out of 123 respondents, 24 males (20%) of the total samples and 99 females (80%). This further portrays that there were more female teachers than males.

Age. Table 3 shows the profile of respondents in terms of age bracket.



Table 3
Profile of Respondents according to Age Bracket

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 29	40	32.5%
30 – 39	38	30.9%
40 – 49	34	27.6%
50 – 59	11	9%
TOTAL	123	100%

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to their age. Most of them were 20 to 29 years old (32.5%), followed by 30-39 years old (29.6%), then 40-49 years old (28.6%). Only 11 or 9.3% were of age 50-59.

Length of Service. Table 4 shows the profile of respondents in terms of length of service.

Table 4
Profile of Respondents according to Length of Service

Age	Frequency	Percentage
0-9 YR.	45	36.5%
10-19 YR.	35	28.5%
20 – 29	31	25.2%
30 – 39 YR.	12	9.8%
TOTAL	123	100%

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents according to their length of service. The 45 teacher respondents (36.6%) were 0 to 9 years in the service. This was followed by 35 teachers (28.5%) 10 to 19 years in service. Thirty-one or 25.2% of the respondents were 20 to 29 years in the service. Furthermore, 12 (10%) were 30-39 years in service.

Awareness of the Respondents on the Child Protection Policy

Level of Awareness on the Child Protection Policy. Table 3 shows the level of awareness of the respondents on the child protection policy.

Table 5
Awareness on the Child Protection Policy

Item	Mean	Description
1. There is a DepEd Order on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying, and other forms of abuse.	3.30	Moderately Knowledgeable
2. I have read and understood the DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012.	3.42	Moderately Knowledgeable
3. Pursuant to the 1987 Constitution, the State shall defend the right of children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect treatment, maltreatment, and exploitation, including sexual abuse.	3.98	Knowledgeable
4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, and exploitation, including sexual abuse.	3.47	Moderately Knowledgeable
5. This DepEd aims to ensure that all schools are conducive to the education of children.	3.91	Knowledgeable
6. Teachers and learning facilitators especially in learning centers are their substitute parents and are expected to discharge their functions and duties with this in mind.	3.96	Knowledgeable
7. This policy aims to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their normal development and over which they have control and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation.	4.01	Knowledgeable
8. DepEd aims to ensure such special protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation and care as is necessary for the child's well-being.	4.04	Knowledgeable
9. This DepEd Order has zero-tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse.	3.87	Knowledgeable
10. There are different forms of bullying.	3.95	Knowledgeable
11. Bullying is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another or several students in a school setting, which results in physical and mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation.	3.93	Knowledgeable
12. Corporal punishment is a penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offense, which is carried out, for discipline, or training by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or	3.97	Knowledgeable



any other child who has been given or has assumed authority for punishment or discipline.		
13. Positive and Non-violent discipline of children is a way of thinking and a holistic, constructive, and pro-active approach to teaching that helps children develop appropriate thinking and behavior in the short and long term and foster discipline.	4.05	Knowledgeable
14. This DepEd Order aims to prevent violence against children in schools and make these available to all schools.	3.94	Knowledgeable
15. Violence against children committed in schools is an act or series of acts committed by school administrators, and academic and non-academic personnel against a child.	4.01	Knowledgeable
Average Weighted Mean	3.9	Knowledgeable

Table 5 shows the 15-item statements which focused on the provision of the child protection policy. The computed average mean of these items was 3.9 with the descriptive value of knowledgeable shows that the respondents have an idea on the provisions of the policy.

As seen, item #1 (*There is a DepEd Order on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying, and other forms of abuse.*), got the lowest mean score with a rating of 3.30, which has a descriptive value of “moderately knowledgeable”. This further shows that although the respondents knew that there was an existing policy that pertained to the protection of children, they did not have an idea of the specific title of the basis for the said policy.

Another item that has a “moderately knowledgeable” descriptive value was items Item Number 2 (*I have read and understood the DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012.*), and Item Number 4 (*The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, and exploitation, including sexual abuse.*) revealed that the respondents are not aware of specific department orders and conventions as well as what is being pushed forward by the organization.

Implementation of Child Protection Policy in the School
Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policy in the School. Table 6 shows the results of the level of implementation of the child protection policy in the school.

Table 6
Implementation of the Child Protection Policy in the School

Item	Mean	Description
1. The school adopts a child protection policy.	4.26	Implemented
2. Ensures all pupils, school personnel, parents, guardians or custodians and visitors are made aware of child protection policy.	3.75	Implemented
3. Organize and convene the Child Protection Committee for the School	3.64	Implemented
4. Conduct disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils	3.53	Implemented
5. Conduct the appropriate training and capability building activities on child protection measures and protocols	3.60	Implemented
6. Information-dissemination activities and in-service training for teachers on the protection of children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or peer abuse and other related cases	3.64	Implemented
7. Ensure that the school adopts a student Code of Conduct to be followed by every pupil while on school grounds, or when traveling to and from school, during a school-sponsored activity and lunch period, whether on or off campus	3.58	Implemented
8. Coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the appropriate government agencies or non-government organization on a Child Protection Hotline for reporting abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts and for counseling.	3.55	Implemented
9. The school administrator, teachers, academic and non-academic, and other personnel 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.	3.62	Implemented
10. The school child protection committee initiates information dissemination programs and organizes activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying or peer abuse.	3.60	Implemented
11. Training modules that include positive and nonviolent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity are used.	3.39	Implemented
12. Employ means enhancing the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom	3.69	Implemented
13. Any incidents of bullying are filed and reported immediately to the School Head.	3.64	Implemented



14. The school child protection committee has a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional or behavioral signs.	3.60	Implemented
15. The school protection child committee coordinate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP) the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations.	3.79	Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	3.7	Implemented

Table 6 presents 15 items on the level of implementation of the child protection policy in the school. It has a computed weighted mean of 3.7 which is under the Likert Scale equivalent to “Implemented”.

Item Number 1 (*The school adopts a child protection policy.*) got the highest mean score and has a computed mean of 4.26 which shows that the schools in Sta. Josefa District 1 has already adopted the DepEd Child Protection Policy. The lowest mean score among the 15 items is Item Number 11 (*Training modules that include positive and nonviolent discipline in*

classroom management, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity are used.) with a 3.39.

All items were categorized under the Likert Scale equivalent of “Implemented” which means that the child protection policy was implemented in the schools of Sta. Josefa District 1.

Relationship between awareness on the Child Protection Policy and its Implementation. The tables below show the relationship between the variables in the study.

Table 7
Relationship Between the Awareness on Child Protection Policy and Its Implementation

Variable	Pearson's r	p-value
Level of Awareness vs. Level of Implementation	0.053	0.563

The results indicate no significant correlation between the level of awareness (LOA) and the level of implementation (LOI) of the child protection policy. The Pearson's r value of 0.053 suggests a very weak positive relationship between the two variables, indicating minimal to no linear association. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.563, which is greater than the standard significance threshold of 0.05, confirms that the observed correlation is not statistically significant. This means that the level of awareness does not appear to have a meaningful impact on the level of implementation. These findings suggest that other factors, such as resources, institutional support, or training, may play a more critical role in determining the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Difference in the Level of Awareness of the Child Protection Policy based on the Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section presents the results of the difference in the awareness of the child protection policy based on the indicators of the demographic profile of the respondents.

Difference in the Level of Awareness of the Child Protection Policy based on Sex.

Table 8 presents the results of the difference in the level of awareness on the child protection policy based on sex.

Table 8
Difference in the Level of Awareness on the Child Protection Policy Based on Sex

Statistical Test	t-value	df	p-value
Independent Samples t-Test (LOA by Sex)	0.227	121	0.821

The independent samples t-test results in Table 5.1 reveal no significant difference in the level of awareness of the Child Protection policy based on sex. The t-value of 0.227 and the p-value of 0.821, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, indicate that the observed difference in the mean levels of awareness between male and female respondents is not statistically significant. Therefore, this suggests that sex does

not influence the respondents' level of awareness of the policy, as both males and females exhibit similar levels of awareness.

Difference in the Level of Awareness of the Child Protection Policy based on Age. Table 8 presents the results of the difference in the level of awareness on the child protection policy based on age.

Table 9
Difference in the Level of Awareness on the Child Protection Policy Based on Age

Cases	Df	F-value	p-value
Age	3	3.040	0.032
Residuals	199		



Shown in Table 9 is the results of the one-way ANOVA test which indicates a significant difference in the level of awareness of the Child Protection Policy when respondents are grouped according to age brackets. The analysis yielded an F-value of 3.040 and a p-value of 0.032, which is below the standard threshold of 0.05. This suggests that age has a statistically significant effect on the respondents' level of

awareness. Therefore, the level of awareness varies across different age groups, implying that age may be an important factor influencing awareness of the Child Protection Policy.

Post Hoc Age Comparisons. Table 10 presents the results of the age comparison of the respondents.

Table 10
Post Hoc Age Comparisons

	Mean Difference	SE	T	P
1	2	0.087	-1.239	0.604
	3	0.090	-2.267	0.112
	4	0.131	-2.595	0.051
2	3	0.091	-1.051	0.720
	4	0.132	-1.760	0.298
3	4	0.134	-1.022	0.737

Based on the results of Table 10, Post Hoc Age Comparisons, mean differences, standard errors (SE), t-values, and p-values for various age group comparisons were highlighted. The mean difference reflects the variation between the average scores of the age groups being compared, such as 0.087 between groups 1 and 2, 0.090 between groups 1 and 3, and so on. The standard error (SE) values, ranging from 0.087 to 0.134, indicate the variability in the mean difference estimates. The t-values show the extremity of the observed differences, with values like -1.239 (groups 1 vs. 2), -2.267 (groups 1 vs. 3), and -2.595 (groups 1 vs. 4). However, the p-values, which determine

statistical significance, are all above the conventional threshold of 0.05 (e.g., 0.604, 0.112, 0.051, 0.720, 0.298, and 0.737). This indicates that none of the comparisons show statistically significant differences between the age groups. Thus, any variations in the data are likely due to random chance or sample variability rather than actual differences in the population.

Difference in the Level of Awareness of the Child Protection Policy based on Length of Service. Table 11 presents the results of the difference in the level of awareness on the child protection policy based on length of service.

Table 11
Difference in the Level of Awareness on the Child Protection Policy Based on the Length of Service

Cases	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
LoS	1.095	3	0.365	2.422	0.069
Residuals	17.937	119	0.151		

The data in Table 5.4 reveals that there is no significant difference in the level of awareness of child protection policy when respondents are grouped according to their length of service ($F=2.422$; $p=0.069$). Since the p-value (0.069) is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. This means that the length of time a person has served in their position does not significantly influence their level of awareness of child protection policies.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that regardless of whether someone is new to the service or has been serving for a longer period, their awareness level of child protection policy remains relatively consistent.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policy based on the Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

This section presents the results of the difference in the level of implementation of child protection policy based on the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy based on Sex. Table 12 presents the results of the difference in the level of implementation of the child protection policy based on sex.

Table 12
Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy Based on Sex
Independent Samples T-Test

	t	df	p
LOI	-0.701	121	0.485

Table 12 presents the Independent Samples T-Test indicating that there is no significant difference in the level of implementation between males and females. The computed t-value is -0.701, with 121 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is 0.485. Since the p-value is greater than the standard

significance level of 0.05, the difference observed between the two groups is not statistically significant. This suggests that gender does not have a significant impact on the level of implementation in this study.



Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy based on Age. Table 13 presents the results

of the difference in the level of implementation of the child protection policy based on age.

Table 13

Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy Based on Age

Cases	df	F	p
Age	3	1.992	0.119
Residuals	119		

The ANOVA results indicated in Table 13 shows that there is no significant difference in the level of implementation when respondents are grouped according to age bracket. The analysis produced an F-value of 1.992 and a p-value of 0.119, which is greater than the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that age does not have a statistically significant effect on the level of implementation in this study.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy based on Length of Service. Table 14 presents the results of the difference in the level of implementation of the child protection policy based on sex.

Table 14

Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy Based on the Length of Service

Cases	df	F	p
LoS	3	1.222	0.305
Residuals	119		

Table 14 shows that the sum of squares for the length of service (LoS) is 0.370 with 3 degrees of freedom, and the residual sum of squares is 12.001 with 119 degrees of freedom. The mean square value for LoS is 0.123, resulting in an F-value of 1.222 and a p-value of 0.305.

the study echoes the observations of Mump and Marchant (2019), who emphasized the crucial role of inter-agency collaboration—particularly between schools, social welfare offices, and law enforcement—in addressing child protection concerns holistically.

The p-value, which is greater than the commonly used significance level of 0.05, indicates that any observed differences in the level of implementation across groups based on length of service are not statistically significant. This means that the length of service of teachers does not significantly influence their level of implementation of child protection policies. In other words, whether a teacher is new to the profession or has many years of experience, their approach to implementing child protection policies remains relatively consistent. This suggests that factors other than length of service may have a more significant impact on their level of implementation.

As well as, studies by Alampay and Jocson (2011) in the Philippine context highlight that a teacher's awareness and responsiveness to child protection issues are significantly enhanced when they receive formal training and orientation on child rights and protection policies. This suggests that ongoing professional development programs contribute to increased vigilance and sensitivity among educators. Likewise, Gonzales and Reyes (2017) found that schools with strong administrative support systems tend to implement the Child Protection Policy more effectively, empowering teachers to act decisively in incidents of bullying, abuse, or neglect.

Moreover, research by Dela Cruz and Navarro (2020) underlines the importance of integrating child protection education into the curriculum and co-curricular activities, which not only increases teacher awareness but also empowers students to recognize and report abusive behavior. Finally, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2019), effective child protection in schools hinges not only on awareness but also on the existence of clear reporting mechanisms, confidentiality protocols, and a school culture that prioritizes student welfare.

DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to explore the awareness of teachers and the responsiveness of schools to the Department of Education's Child Protection Policy. Additionally, it sought to determine the relationship between these variables.

Level of Awareness on the Child Protection Policy. The findings indicate that teachers generally demonstrated a strong awareness of the Child Protection Policy, affirming the importance of safeguarding the well-being and rights of students under their care. In instances of child-related concerns, teachers reported taking proactive steps such as directly addressing incidents, reporting to higher authorities, or reprimanding inappropriate behavior. This supports Shewchuk's (2016) assertion that school procedures must be continuously updated to remain relevant and effective in addressing emerging child protection challenges. Furthermore,

Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy in Schools. The findings revealed that the schools demonstrated a satisfactory level of responsiveness to the Child Protection Policy, as evidenced by the "implemented" rating given by all the respondents. This indicates that significant strides have been made in applying key aspects of the policy in school settings. However, certain areas of the program may still



require reinforcement to ensure its consistent and comprehensive application. Similarly, Segundo and Guia (2019) identified variations in the effectiveness of child protection measures across public high schools, suggesting that ongoing monitoring and evaluation are critical for sustained success. Challenges such as limited resources and the need for continuous teacher training, as noted by Mustikasari and Rostyaningsih (2020), remain relevant and could potentially affect the robustness of implementation. Also, Treacy and Noihilly (2020) highlighted the importance of fostering a strong culture of compliance within schools to uphold child protection standards effectively.

The study also underscores the complexities involved in achieving uniformity in the implementation of child protection policies. Variations may arise due to factors such as differences in teachers' roles and responsibilities, the adequacy of professional development opportunities, and the reliance on online resources for training, as discussed by Treacy and Noihilly (2020). These findings are supported by international studies, such as those by Jalal et al. (2019) and Baroncia (2020), which highlight the influence of systemic, societal, and practice-related factors on policy implementation. For example, Zhao et al. (2019) observed how socio-cultural dynamics, such as Confucian values in China, can shape child protection practices and their associated legislation.

Thus, this study confirms the successful implementation of the Child Protection Policy within schools and emphasizes the strong link between teachers' awareness and school responsiveness. The Department of Education's commitment to child protection has effectively translated into compliance at the school level. Nevertheless, sustaining and enhancing this progress will require continued investments in capacity-building initiatives, regular policy reviews, and consistent enforcement mechanisms to address any gaps and ensure that the policy remains robust and responsive to evolving needs.

Correlation Between the Level of Awareness of the Child Protection Policy and the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy in Schools. Using Pearson correlation, the study's finding revealed that there is no significant correlation between the level of awareness of the Child Protection Policy and its level of implementation in schools, suggesting that awareness alone does not necessarily translate into effective execution of policies. This result challenges the common assumption that increased awareness among educators inherently leads to improved adherence to and application of child protection guidelines within schools.

While awareness is an essential first step in implementing any policy, it does not guarantee the presence of the necessary structures, resources, and support systems required for effective implementation. For example, Mustikasari and Rostyaningsih (2020) highlighted that the successful application of child protection policies often faces barriers such as insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, and inadequate training. Even when teachers are fully aware of the policy, the absence of actionable frameworks or well-defined implementation strategies may hinder their ability to translate knowledge into practice.

Furthermore, Treacy and Noihilly (2020) emphasized that compliance with child protection measures is largely dependent on fostering a culture of accountability within schools, along with clear enforcement mechanisms. Awareness campaigns alone, while valuable, may not address deeper systemic issues such as resource allocation, monitoring, and the availability of support systems for teachers and administrators.

Other studies have also identified the potential disconnect between knowledge and practice. However, Jalal et al. (2019) pointed out that various factors, including institutional priorities, the presence of leadership support, and the socio-cultural context of the schools, influence the implementation of child protection policies. These findings align with the argument that while educators may possess theoretical knowledge about a policy, practical implementation often depends on external factors beyond their control.

Further, Segundo and Guia (2019) revealed disparities in the implementation of child protection measures across schools, which were attributed to differences in leadership, institutional capacity, and resource availability. This indicates that awareness, while crucial, is not a standalone determinant of implementation success; rather, it must be complemented by comprehensive training, sufficient resources, and ongoing evaluation mechanisms.

Difference in the Level of Awareness of the Respondents of the child protection policy based on Gender, Age, and Length of Service of the Respondents. The study explored awareness of the Child Protection Policy based on sex, age, and length of service. Results showed no significant difference in awareness levels between male and female respondents, indicating that awareness is not influenced by sex, despite more females participating in the study. Similarly, no significant difference was found based on length of service, suggesting that whether respondents are new or experienced, their awareness levels remain consistent. However, a significant difference was observed across age groups, with respondents aged 50 to 59 years demonstrating higher awareness compared to those aged 20 to 29 years. These findings align with research by Eslami et al. (2018), which suggests that older individuals often exhibit greater policy awareness due to accumulated experience and exposure. Similarly, Blankenship et al. (2020) emphasize the need for targeted training for younger groups to address awareness gaps, further supporting the observed age-related differences in this study.

Difference in the Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy in Schools-Based on Gender, Age, and Length of Service of the Respondents. The study investigated the level of implementation of Child Protection Policies in relation to gender, age, and length of service, finding no significant differences among these variables. These results suggest that implementation levels are consistent across demographic groups, with gender, age, and professional experience having minimal influence. This is consistent with the findings of Pellegrini et al. (2020), who argue that the success of policy implementation is more strongly linked to institutional training programs and organizational culture than to individual demographic factors. In addition, Karabenick and



Conley (2015) emphasize that professional development opportunities, rather than personal attributes such as age or years of service, are critical in shaping the effective application of policies. These studies reinforce the idea that external support systems, such as institutional training and resources, are more decisive in driving policy implementation than individual demographic characteristics.

In conclusion, the lack of correlation found in this study underscores the complexity of policy implementation in educational settings. It highlights the need for a holistic approach that goes beyond raising awareness, emphasizing the importance of providing schools with the tools, training, and support systems necessary to effectively carry out child protection policies. Addressing these factors can bridge the gap between awareness and implementation, ensuring that policies are not only understood but also actively and effectively enforced.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that while teachers exhibit awareness of the Child Protection Policy, this awareness does not directly correlate with the level of its implementation in schools. This finding suggests that awareness alone is insufficient to ensure the effective execution of the policy. Factors such as institutional support, availability of resources, clear guidelines, and regular monitoring play a critical role in bridging the gap between awareness and implementation.

This lack of correlation underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to policy enforcement, emphasizing not only awareness campaigns but also the development of robust support systems, capacity-building initiatives, and accountability mechanisms. Schools must be equipped with adequate training, leadership support, and actionable strategies to translate knowledge into consistent and effective practices.

Ultimately, while awareness is an important foundation, it must be complemented by practical measures to ensure that the goals of the Child Protection Policy are fully realized, safeguarding the welfare and rights of children in educational institutions.

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