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Abstract

The study assessed the implementation of child protection policy in Narra Del Sur District, focusing on the level of implementation, awareness, preventive measures, and challenges encountered. It utilized a survey questionnaire, descriptive statistical tools, and inferential statistics to analyze and interpret the data. The study reveals that secondary schools in Narra Del Sur District are implementing the Child Protection Policy. The Child Protection Committee, teachers, and students are aware of how issues like child abuse, discrimination, exploitation, violence, corporal punishment, and bullying are being handled. They are also aware of preventive measures, such as providing immediate response, reporting incidents, fact-finding, documentation, intervention, referral, and disciplinary measures. Implementing the Child Protection Policy in secondary schools of Narra Del Sur District faces challenges due to lack of support, coordination, understanding of CPP, proper training, lack of qualified professionals, and having too many cases handled. The level of awareness among CPC, teachers, and student respondents regarding handling prohibited acts against children significantly influences the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, suggesting that understanding how to handle child protection incidents influences the policy's success. Moreover, the study found no significant difference in implementing the Child Protection Policy and preventive measures to handle prohibited acts against children among respondents from the CPC, PNP, DSWD, and teacher respondents. However, a significant difference was observed among student respondents.

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INTRODUCTION

Child protection rights are universally recognized. Its primary goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for children and to protect their health from any violence or abuse. Recognizing the right to life, the government supports and realizes all children's rights. However, despite policies on the protection of children, Zamora and Madrigal (2018) claimed that these laws needed to be fully implemented and adhered to across Asia-Pacific. Thus, they suggested that child protection should be incorporated into the school's quality management system to build quality assurance processes for handling child welfare-related challenges. The child's right to explore, enlighten, and exercise at school (Prestoza, 2022) must not be hampered by discrimination, violence, and bullying.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution protects the rights of children under the law. Likewise, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 40, series 2012, known as the "DepEd Child Protection Policy," on May 3, 2012. This policy aims to adopt zero tolerance to any acts of abuse or violence against children in schools. The order also emphasized the duties of schools in forming their School Child Protection Committees that would implement the policy. The School Child Protection Committee comprises School Administrators, School Child Protection Committee comprises School Administrators, a school guidance counselor or designated guidance teacher, a selected faculty member, parents, students, and a community representative. They are instructed to ensure that the rights of the students are protected.

According to Roche et al. (2021), the existing child protection system in the Philippines is regarded as "top-down," having specific regulations and government policies so poorly executed that its system features are questioned. In addition, there is a scarcity of research on child protection efforts or outcomes, the effectiveness of programs, and the effects on children and young people in the Philippines who undertake child protection initiatives (Roche & Flynn, 2020). Furthermore, cases related to child protection are also being encountered in Palawan, which threatens the safety of children. For instance, Ballarta (2022) published a report that a female student from one of the public secondary schools in Puerto Princesa City has been a victim of child abuse committed by an Indie film director with two other perpetrators. In 2019, three people were also charged with sexual assault on a 15-year-old high school student in the Municipality of Narra (Taboada, 2019). Magdayao (2018) also published a report that Palawan is recognized as one of the most vulnerable provinces to human trafficking, commercial sex exploitation, and forced labor.

By recognizing these gaps, the study proposes that continuous assessment of the impact of implementing the child-protection policy is necessary to ensure the safety and protection of children. Additionally, schools play a crucial responsibility in implementing the Child Protection Policy. They are expected to cater to the needs of the learners in preventing and addressing any acts of violence or abuse. Specifically, the Child Protection Committee Members are the leading implementers of this policy to promote the protection of children in schools. Thus, this study was conducted to determine the implementation of the child protection policy in public secondary schools of Narra Del Sur District in the Division of Palawan. This study hoped to provide additional data to the limited literature regarding implementing the Child Protection Policy in Public Secondary Schools and to have an in-depth understanding of the school-based procedures associated with child protection.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational-comparative research design, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. Descriptive research aims to understand existing situations, while correlational studies seek to establish relationships between variables based on present data. The correlational design aimed to uncover connections related to respondents' awareness levels, preventive measures, and perceived implementation of the Child Protection Policy. The comparative phase focused on differentiating the perceived level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children.

Respondents were Grade 10 students, teachers, and School Child Protection Committee members from four public secondary schools in the Narra Del Sur District of Palawan. The selection of this locale was strategic, considering the researcher's current assignment in the district, ensuring ease of data collection due to proximity. The respondents included various stakeholders as stipulated in DepEd Order Number 40, series 2012, alongside representatives from the PNP and DSWD, ensuring a comprehensive sample.

The sampling procedure involved identifying the number of teacher and student respondents through stratified random sampling, while the School Child Protection Committee members were utterly enumerated. Data collection followed ethical guidelines, including obtaining permissions and ensuring confidentiality. The survey questionnaire was pilot-tested and validated by experts as Pentang (2023) recommended. It comprised sections to gather respondents' perceptions regarding policy implementation, awareness levels, preventive measures, and encountered challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as Perceived by the Respondents

The data analysis reveals that the Child Protection Policy (CPP) is actively being implemented in secondary schools within the Narra Del Sur District, as perceived by various stakeholders, including the Child Protection Committee, teachers, and students. Across different indicators, a notable consensus exists on implementing CPP, as evidenced by high mean scores. Among the key findings, it is evident that schools in the district have adopted and are actively promoting awareness of the CPP among all stakeholders. This indicates a commitment to safeguarding the rights of learners and creating a safe environment for them. Additionally, partnerships with relevant government agencies and non-governmental organizations underscore a collaborative approach to child protection efforts, further enhancing the effectiveness of CPP implementation.

However, the data also highlight areas for improvement, particularly regarding utilizing training modules related to positive discipline, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity. While the overall implementation of CPP is perceived positively, there is room for enhancing the capacity of schools, particularly in providing comprehensive training for teachers and staff members. Moreover, the findings suggest that students know the CPP and perceive their schools actively implementing it. This awareness is attributed to the delivery of seminars and lectures aimed at educating students about child protection issues, indicating the effectiveness of educational initiatives in promoting awareness and understanding among the student body.

Likewise, these findings were also in line with the findings of several studies, including those by Bayuca (2020), Matulac and Zamora (2020), and Galvizo (2022). This suggests DepEd No. 40 s. 2012, which advocates zero-tolerance for any act of child abuse, exploitation, aggression, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse against children in schools, is widely implemented and adhered to in Narra Del Sur District. Galvizo (2022) asserts that the steps that facilitate the application of child protection, starting with prevention and protection measures, raise everyone's understanding of their roles and duties in this policy. Because a safe and sound environment is the guiding concept, it is imperative to adopt child protection.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the respondents' perceived level of implementation of child protection policy.

Indicators	CP Committee		Teachers		Students	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Our school has adopted a child protection policy.	4.58	HI	3.91	I	4.52	HI
2. Our school ensures that all pupils, school personnel, parents, guardians, custodians, and visitors know the child protection policy.	4.53	HI	4.04	I	4.64	HI
3. A Child Protection Committee was organized and convened in our school.	4.42	I	4.24	I	4.39	I
4. Our school conducts disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils.	4.47	I	4.30	I	4.38	I
5. Our school conducts the appropriate training and capability-building activities on child protection measures and protocols.	4.36	I	3.96	I	4.23	I
6. Our school provides 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	4.44	I	4.11	I	4.38	I
7. Our school adopts a Student Code of Conduct that every pupil must follow while on school grounds, traveling to and from school, participating in a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off-campus.	4.44	I	4.13	I	4.28	I
8. Our school coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the appropriate government agencies or non-government organizations on a Child Protection Hotline for reporting abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts and counseling.	4.47	I	4.22	I	4.33	I
9. Our 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	4.33	I	4.00	I	4.06	I
10. Our 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.	4.11	I	4.09	I	4.35	I
11. Our school uses training modules that include positive and nonviolent discipline in classroom management, anger management, stress management, and gender sensitivity.	3.11	SI	3.65	I	3.74	I
12. Our school employs means that enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom.	4.42	I	4.03	I	4.35	I
13. Any bullying incidents are filed and reported immediately to our School Head.	4.25	I	3.97	I	4.25	I
14. Our school child protection committee has a system for identifying students suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional, or behavioral signs.	4.19	I	3.92	I	4.12	I
15. Our school child protection committee coordinates 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.	4.50	HI	3.98	I	4.22	I
Overall Mean	4.31	I	4.04	I	4.28	I

Note: 4.50-5.00 = Highly Implemented (HI)
 3.50-4.49 = Implemented (I)
 2.50-3.49 = Somewhat Implemented (SI)
 1.50-2.49 = Not Implemented (NI)
 1.00-1.49 = Highly Not Implemented (HNI)

Qualitative Description (QD)
 CPC Committee includes DSWD and PNP

Level of Awareness of the Respondents in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children

The analysis reveals a high level of awareness among respondents regarding the handling of prohibited acts against children, particularly in cases of child abuse, discrimination,

exploitation, violence, corporal punishment, and bullying. Across different stakeholder groups, including the CPC, teachers, and students, there is a consistent understanding of the procedures and interventions necessary to address these issues.

Among the CPC members, there is a strong awareness of protocols for handling child abuse cases, including seeking assistance from relevant authorities, ensuring protection for victims and witnesses, and following established procedures for reporting and investigation. Similarly, teachers demonstrate awareness of these protocols, although slightly less, indicating a collective understanding among school staff members.

Students also exhibit a significant level of awareness regarding how prohibited acts against children are handled in their schools. While there are slight variations in awareness levels across different aspects, such as coordination with proper agencies and procedures for complaint handling, overall, students demonstrate a commendable understanding of the CPP and its implementation.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights specific areas where further training or education campaigns may be beneficial, such as child exploitation and violence against children in school. Addressing these areas of lower awareness could contribute to strengthening the implementation of the CPP in the Narra Del Sur District. Notably, the CPC members exhibit the highest level of awareness among the three respondents, suggesting their frontline experience and familiarity with child protection procedures. This underscores the importance of adequately equipping CPC members with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle child protection issues effectively.

As for the students, Ruelo et al. (2020) claimed that if learners lacked knowledge and understanding of the Child Protection Policy, they became more susceptible to probable maltreatment and violence. As for the teachers, according to Casipe and Bete (2023), an approach to increasing teacher awareness is through effective teacher training and vigorous dissemination of information in implementing the Child Protection Policy. When teachers are uninformed of the policy and lack explicit knowledge, it results in misunderstanding and doubt about implementing it. Furthermore, the results show that the Grade 10 student respondents in this study know the Child Protection Policy in place at their schools.

Table 2. Summary of the respondents' perceived level of awareness in handling prohibited acts against children.

Prohibited Acts Against Children	CP Committee		Teachers		Students	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
Child Abuse	4.48	A	4.18	A	4.07	A
Discrimination	4.47	A	4.26	A	4.12	A
Child Exploitation	4.42	A	4.19	A	4.03	A
Violence Against Children in School	4.51	VA	4.25	A	3.84	A
Corporal Punishment	4.47	A	4.23	A	3.95	A
Bullying	4.51	VA	4.00	A	4.15	A
Overall Mean	4.48	A	4.19	A	4.02	A

Preventive Measures Employed by the Respondents in Handling Prohibited Acts Against Children

The analysis of preventive measures indicates a commendable level of protocol implementation within secondary schools in the Narra Del Sur District, as perceived by the CPC, teachers, and students. Among the various preventive measures, immediate

response emerges as a particularly strong aspect across all respondent groups, indicating a prompt and proactive approach to addressing child protection incidents.

Both teachers and students also acknowledge the importance of immediate response, reporting incidents or retaliation, and intervention, demonstrating a collective understanding of the necessity of swift action in safeguarding children from harm. These findings suggest a consistent commitment among stakeholders to prioritize the well-being and safety of students within the school environment.

However, the analysis also identifies areas for improvement, as evidenced by the lower mean scores associated with disciplinary measures, reporting incidents and retaliation (as perceived by teachers), and referral (as perceived by students). While these measures are still rated positively, there is room for enhancement to ensure that all preventive measures are fully implemented and adhered to by the Child Protection Policy.

The results suggest that protocols outlined in the Child Protection Policy are being followed in the Narra Del Sur District secondary schools. However, continued efforts to strengthen implementation, particularly in areas that need improvement, will be essential for ensuring comprehensive protection for all students. This implies that the findings indicate a positive foundation for child protection efforts within the district, with a strong emphasis on preventive measures. By addressing areas of improvement and building upon existing strengths, schools can further enhance their capacity to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Table 3. Summary of the preventive measures employed by the respondents in handling prohibited acts against children.

Preventive Measures Employed	CP Committee		Teachers		Students	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
Immediate Response	4.49	A	4.37	A	4.06	A
Reporting the Incident or Retaliation	4.44	A	4.00	A	4.08	A
Fact-Finding and Documentation	4.41	A	4.33	A	3.89	A
Intervention	4.45	A	4.01	A	4.08	A
Referral	4.44	A	4.35	A	3.81	A
Disciplinary Measures	4.34	A	4.27	A	3.93	A
Overall Mean	4.42	A	4.19	A	3.96	A

Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy

The perspectives of the CPC, teachers, and students illuminate the challenges encountered in implementing the CPP within secondary schools in the Narra Del Sur District. The analysis reveals several common challenges perceived by all respondent groups, highlighting areas where improvements are needed to strengthen the efficacy of child protection initiatives.

Among the challenges identified by the CPC, lack of support and coordination with other agencies and the shortage of qualified school-based professionals emerge as prominent issues. This underscores the importance of enhancing collaboration and ensuring access to expertise for effective intervention in child protection cases. Additionally, the need for more understanding of the CPP among CPC members indicates a need for continuous training and awareness-building efforts to ensure comprehensive policy implementation. Similarly, teachers express concerns about coordination with other agencies, the need for more understanding of the CPP, and the shortage of qualified professionals. These

challenges mirror those identified by the CPC, highlighting the need for concerted efforts to address these issues at the institutional level.

This is similar to the CPC's perception. Thus, there is a need to address these challenges by strengthening coordination with other agencies, a need for further training about the CPP for teachers, and a need to hire experts that could provide accurate intervention; this was confirmed by Chi (2023), who stated that there are not enough guidance counselors available to DepEd schools. As an alternative, in schools with no registered guidance counselor, teachers are assigned to become "guidance teachers" to provide psychosocial help to learners while not having the necessary license. Further, to address the challenge of handling too many cases, the students also need to be educated about the CPP through seminars or education campaigns which could help lessen the cases. The implementation of the CPP could also be integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Student respondents also perceive challenges in implementing the CPP, particularly regarding the need for more monitoring and evaluation practices. This finding underscores the importance of establishing robust mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of child protection initiatives within schools. Casipe and Bete (2023) conducted a study in which they noted the challenges faced by their participants in implementing the Child Protection Policy and how they coped by keeping proper monitoring, which assisted them in strengthening their ability to deliver the policy efficiently. Furthermore, the discrepancies between students' awareness of the CPP's implementation and their understanding of schools' challenges suggest a need for more comprehensive education campaigns. By providing students with a deeper understanding of the challenges encountered in implementing the CPP, schools can empower them to support and contribute to child protection efforts actively.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of the challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing the child protection policy.

Challenges Encountered	CPC Committee		Teachers		Students	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
1. Lack of support and coordination with other agencies or organizations that handle Child Protection related issues.	2.75	SWA	2.82	SWA	3.93	A
2. Lack of understanding of the Child Protection Policy.	2.56	SWA	2.67	SWA	3.81	A
3. The need for more awareness about the procedures of Child Protection.	2.31	D	2.44	D	3.93	A
4. Lack of proper training related to Child Protection.	2.36	D	2.52	SWA	4.15	A
5. The procedures stipulated in DO 40 s. 2012 is not being implemented.	2.28	D	2.29	D	3.92	A
6. There is a lack of qualified school-based professionals/specialists (e.g., psychologists) who could provide the proper intervention.	2.72	SWA	2.77	SWA	4.14	A
7. There are too many cases to handle related to Child Protection.	3.08	SWA	3.09	SWA	3.88	A
8. The lack of time to juggle the cases and other responsibilities.	2.44	D	2.31	D	4.03	A
9. Lack of information dissemination campaigns about Child Protection for teachers, students, and stakeholders.	2.44	D	2.43	D	4.05	A
10. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy should be practiced.	2.44	D	2.38	D	4.56	SA
Overall Mean	2.54	SWA	2.57	SWA	4.04	A

Note: 4.50-5.00 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3.50-4.49 = Agree (A)

2.50-3.49 = Somewhat Agree (SWA)

1.50-2.49 = Disagree (D)

Qualitative Description (QD)

CPC Committee includes DSWD and PNP

Relationship between the Respondents' Level of Awareness in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children and their Perceived Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy

CPC Members

The analysis conducted among the respondents comprising the CPC reveals a significant relationship between their level of awareness in handling prohibited acts against children and their perceived level of implementation of the CPP. The computed p-value of .001 indicates a highly significant relationship, leading to rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that the level of awareness among CPC members, PNP, and DSWD personnel regarding handling prohibited acts against children directly influences the implementation of the CPP within the Narra Del Sur District. The results imply that when the CPC is highly aware of the protocols and procedures for addressing prohibited acts against children, there is also a correspondingly high level of implementation of the CPP. This underscores the importance of ensuring that key stakeholders involved in child protection efforts are well-informed and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the CPP effectively.

Furthermore, the correlational analysis provides valuable insights into the relationship between the level of awareness and the perceived level of implementation of the CPP among CPC members. By identifying this relationship, stakeholders can better understand the factors influencing the successful implementation of child protection initiatives and work towards strengthening awareness and capacity-building efforts accordingly. The findings highlight the integral role of awareness among key stakeholders in driving the effective implementation of the CPP. Continued efforts to enhance awareness and provide comprehensive training and support to CPC will be crucial for ensuring the sustained success of child protection efforts within the Narra Del Sur District.

Table 4a. Correlational analysis between the CPC Members' level of awareness in handling prohibited acts against children and their perceived level of implementation of the child protection policy.

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value
Level of Awareness in Handling Prohibited Acts Against Children	.945	.001
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]

Teachers

The analysis conducted among teachers reveals a highly significant relationship between their level of awareness in handling prohibited acts against children and their perceived level of implementation of the CPP. The computed p-value of .001 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, leading to rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that teachers' awareness of the protocols and procedures for addressing prohibited acts against children directly influences the implementation of the CPP within the Narra Del Sur District. When teachers possess a high level of awareness, it correlates with a higher perceived level of implementation of the CPP.

The results imply that well-informed teachers knowledgeable about handling prohibited acts against children are better equipped to contribute to the effective implementation of child protection initiatives within their schools. Their awareness enables them to recognize and respond to child protection issues promptly and appropriately, creating a safer and more supportive environment for students. Furthermore, the significant relationship identified underscores the importance of investing in training and awareness-building

initiatives for teachers to enhance their understanding of child protection protocols and procedures. By providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills, schools can strengthen their capacity to safeguard the well-being of students and uphold the principles of the CPP.

Table 4b. Correlational analysis between the teachers' level of awareness in handling prohibited acts against children and their perceived level of implementation of the child protection policy.

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value
Level of Awareness in Handling Prohibited Acts Against Children	.926	.001
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]

Students

The analysis among student respondents reveals a highly significant correlation between their awareness of how prohibited acts against children are being handled and their perceived implementation of the CPP. The computed p-value of .001 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant, leading to rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that the level of awareness among students regarding the protocols and procedures for addressing prohibited acts against children directly influences the perceived implementation of the CPP within the Narra Del Sur District. When students possess a high level of awareness, it correlates with a higher perceived level of implementation of the CPP.

The results imply that well-informed students who know how to recognize and report prohibited acts against children are better equipped to contribute to the effectiveness of child protection initiatives within their schools. Their awareness enables them to identify potential abuse or misconduct and seek appropriate support or intervention. Furthermore, the significant correlation identified underscores the importance of promoting student awareness and education regarding child protection issues. By providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills, schools can empower them to play an active role in creating a safe and supportive environment for themselves and their peers.

The findings highlight the importance of involving students actively in child protection efforts within the Narra Del Sur District. Continued efforts to promote awareness and education among students will be essential for ensuring the sustained effectiveness of the CPP and fostering a culture of safety and respect within schools.

Table 4c. Correlational analysis between the students' awareness of prohibited acts against children and their perceived level of implementation of the child protection policy.

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value
Level of Awareness in Handling Prohibited Acts Against Children	.937	.001
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]

Difference between the Perceived Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and the Preventive Measures being Employed in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children

CPC Members

The results show no significant difference (computed p-value .253) between the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children as perceived by the CPC Members. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the level of implementation of the Child

Protection Policy is different from the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children.

There are several potential reasons for this need for significant difference. While the CPP outlines general principles and procedures for child protection, the specific preventive measures employed by CPC members may be influenced by other factors such as organizational protocols, available resources, and individual expertise. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that effective implementation of the CPP and employing preventive measures are crucial aspects of promoting child protection. While they may not be directly correlated in this analysis, they are complementary components of a comprehensive approach to safeguarding children from harm.

Table 5a. Comparative analysis of the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children as perceived by the CPC Members, PNP, and DSWD Personnel.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	Statistic	p-value
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy	36	4.43	.42	1.15	.253
Preventive Measures Being Employed in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children	36	4.31	.45		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]
 Welch t-test was conducted; Cohen's $d = 0.272$ [Effect Size]; n = sample size

Teachers

Similarly, based on the computed p-value (.091), no significant difference was found between the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children as perceived by the teacher respondents, as presented in Table 10b. Thus, accepting the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the teacher's perception of the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children. This finding suggests that while teachers may perceive the CPP to be effectively implemented within the Narra Del Sur District, this perception only correlates with the specific preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children. In other words, implementing the CPP may not directly influence the choice or effectiveness of preventive measures adopted by teachers.

Several factors may contribute to this need for more significant differences. Teachers' decisions regarding preventive measures may be influenced by various factors such as school policies, available resources, and individual teaching styles. Additionally, while the CPP provides overarching guidelines for child protection, the specific context and circumstances within each school may necessitate tailored approaches to prevention. Although no significant difference was found in this analysis, it is crucial to recognize that effective CPP implementation and preventive measures are essential to ensuring child protection within schools. While they may not be directly correlated in this study, they are complementary elements of a comprehensive strategy to safeguard children from harm.

Further exploration and evaluation of specific preventive measures employed by teachers and ongoing monitoring of CPP implementation may be necessary to identify areas for improvement and ensure the holistic protection of children within the Narra Del Sur District. Continued collaboration and support among educators, school administrators, and relevant stakeholders will be crucial for strengthening child protection efforts in the region.

Table 5b. Comparative analysis between the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children as perceived by the teachers.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	Statistic	p-value
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy	99	4.04	.85	-1.70	.091
Preventive Measures Being Employed in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children	99	4.22	.68		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]

Welch t-test was conducted; Cohen's $d = -0.241$ [Effect Size]; n = sample size

Students

The test results revealed a significant difference in the level of implementation of the Child Protection Policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts in school as perceived by the student respondents, which was represented by the computed p-value (.001), therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. This result indicates a significant difference between the student respondents' perceived level of implementation of the Child Protection Policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children. This finding suggests that student respondents perceive a notable disparity between the implementation of the CPP and the effectiveness of preventive measures employed in addressing prohibited acts in school. While the CPP may be perceived as being in place within the Narra Del Sur District, students may perceive gaps or deficiencies in the preventive measures implemented to address prohibited acts against children.

Several factors may contribute to this significant difference perceived by students. Students may have firsthand experiences or observations of incidents highlighting shortcomings in the preventive measures employed within their school environment. Additionally, students may have unique perspectives and insights into the effectiveness of preventive measures based on their interactions and experiences within the school community. This finding underscores the importance of considering student perspectives and involving them in school discussions and decisions related to child protection. Students are valuable stakeholders whose perceptions can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of child protection measures and areas for improvement.

Addressing the identified differences between the perceived implementation of the CPP and the effectiveness of preventive measures will be essential for ensuring the comprehensive protection of children within the Narra Del Sur District. This may involve conducting further assessments, seeking student feedback, and implementing targeted interventions to enhance the effectiveness of preventive measures and strengthen child protection efforts within schools. Collaboration and communication among students, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders will be crucial for addressing these disparities and fostering a safe and supportive school environment for all students.

Table 5c. Comparative analysis between the level of implementation of the child protection policy and the preventive measures employed in handling prohibited acts against children as perceived by the students.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	Statistic	P-value
Level of Implementation of the Child Protection Policy	344	4.28	.66	5.99	.001
Preventive Measures Being Employed in Handling Prohibited Acts against Children	344	3.97	.69		

Note: $p < .01$ [highly significant, reject H_0]; $p \leq .05$ [significant, reject H_0]; $p > .05$ [not significant, accept H_0]

Welch t-test was conducted; Cohen's $d = 0.456$ [Effect Size]; n = sample size

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study indicates that the CPP is being implemented in secondary schools within the Narra Del Sur District. Various stakeholders, including the Child Protection Committee, teachers, and students, are aware of the existence of the CPP and its provisions aimed at safeguarding children from various forms of abuse and exploitation. This suggests a positive step towards promoting the rights and well-being of learners within the district. The level of awareness among stakeholders, including the Child Protection Committee, teachers, and students, significantly influences the implementation of the CPP. Stakeholders who are well-informed about the procedures for handling prohibited acts against children are better equipped to contribute to successfully implementing child protection initiatives within their respective schools.

While preventive measures, such as immediate response, reporting incidents, and intervention, are being employed in handling prohibited acts against children, there is a need for continuous enhancement and refinement. The study reveals that the effectiveness of preventive measures may not directly correlate with the perceived level of CPP implementation among certain stakeholder groups, highlighting potential areas for improvement in child protection strategies. Despite efforts to implement the CPP, several challenges persist, including a lack of support and coordination with other agencies, insufficient understanding of the CPP among stakeholders, shortage of qualified professionals, and high caseloads. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for strengthening child protection efforts and ensuring the comprehensive protection of children within the district.

The significant difference students perceive between implementing the CPP and the effectiveness of preventive measures underscores the importance of considering student perspectives in child protection initiatives. Students' insights can provide valuable feedback for improving the implementation of the CPP and enhancing preventive measures to create a safer and more supportive school environment. Generally, while progress has been made in implementing the CPP and employing preventive measures, there is still room for improvement. Addressing the challenges and disparities identified in this study, along with continued collaboration and communication among stakeholders, will be essential for advancing child protection efforts and promoting the well-being of children within the Narra Del Sur District.

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