



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND LEARNERS' WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Innumerable accounts of children being bullied, abused, or mistreated in every institution across the nation. It happens in homes, schools, and public spaces; at places of employment and recreation; and in facilities for care and detention. Parents, relatives, teachers, caregivers, members of the security services, government officials, and other kids can all be perpetrators. Also, it is an important worldwide pattern that every nation in the globe deals with and attempts to eradicate. These violent acts can take many different forms, but they typically involve cruelty and discrimination, as well as neglect and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Violence can affect both boys and girls, especially younger kids. Hence, this study is conducted to explore on the implementation of Child Protection Policy and the Level of Learners' Well-being in the District of Bagumbayan II.

The aforementioned study employed a descriptive- correlational design to determine how one variable affects another in order to comprehend the presence of the phenomena under investigation.

Consequently, the focus of this study was to determine the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy and the level of Learners' Well-being and the relationship of these variables.

Based on the result of the study, the District of Bagumbayan II strictly implements the Child Protection Policy, and the level of Learners' Well-being is strictly adhered to. The well-being of the students was strongly correlated with the application of the aforementioned policy.

Keywords: *Child Protection Policy, Learners' Well-being, South Sepaka Elementary School*

1.INTRODUCTION

Child violence transcends geographical, racial, class, religious, and cultural boundaries. It is ubiquitous, manifesting in residential, educational, and public settings, as well as in occupational, recreational, and custodial facilities. Perpetrators may consist of various individuals, such as parents, family members, teachers, caretakers, law enforcement, authorities, and other children. This is a significant global phenomenon that all nations worldwide confront and endeavor to eliminate.

The UN World Report on VAC (2006) states that approximately one billion children have been subjected to various forms of violence, including sexual and emotional abuse, bullying, and exposure to violence. The majority of these incidents, nearly 75%, occurred in Asia.

UNICEF reports that over 50% of Filipino children undergo violence in their childhood, with boys being twice as susceptible to abuse. Child abuse victims commonly exhibit symptoms such as low self-esteem, sadness, fear, social withdrawal, and anxiety. Violence can significantly harm children's physical and psychological wellbeing in the long term.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was established to address this worldwide issue. The United Nations General Assembly adopted it on November 20, 1989. The CRC is

the inaugural globally applicable legal framework for the rights of children. It serves as a global framework for safeguarding the rights and welfare of children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets universal benchmarks for safeguarding, sustaining, empowering, and engaging all children, without prejudice. States are obligated to shield children from all forms of abuse and to promote their entitlements, particularly in education, healthcare, specialized assistance, safety, confidentiality, and adequate livelihood.

In Tanzania, over 80% of adolescents aged 13-24 have reported experiencing sexual abuse as children who also experienced physical violence. 11-26% of adolescent females in Sub-Saharan African nations reported experiencing sexual abuse within the previous year, according to the Violence Against Children and Youth Survey. Between 7% and 17% of individuals who have engaged in sexual activity have experienced coerced or forced sexual initiation, which elevates their susceptibility to HIV infection.

In the Philippines, violence deprives numerous children of their childhood and causes enduring developmental difficulties. The impacts comprise of mental and physical health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular disease, along with health risk behaviors like smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and participation in high-risk sexual activity. The Department of Education has implemented the DepEd Child Protection Policy, as per Article XV, Section 3 (2) of the Philippine Constitution, to safeguard children from neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other harmful conditions that may hinder their development. This policy aims to ensure the protection of children.

The Department has instructed its program, partners, and stakeholders to guarantee that all schools are suitable for quality learning and are child-friendly.

The department has endeavored to eliminate all forms of abuse and enhance its adherence to the Order. Despite efforts to prevent it, school abuses persist.

The National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children in the Philippines in 2016 found that 80% of the 3,866 respondents aged 13-24 experienced physical violence. Insufficient dis-aggregated data hinders a comprehensive understanding of the matter in the aforementioned study. This data corroborates the research's argument that despite legal measures, instances of violence against children persist. This study aims to assess the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and the well-being of learners in Bagumbayan District.

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of the Child Protection Policy by teachers and its impact on the well-being of learners. Despite the DepEd's mandate to achieve zero tolerance, children continue to experience similar issues. Thus, it is not possible to determine the effectiveness of efforts to combat all types of child abuse. The data indicates a research gap that this study aims to address.

The study is anchored on the concept of the implementation Child Protection Policy which has been adopted to provide special protection to seriously susceptible children or threatened by situations that distress their normal growth. This policy like-wise ensures children's' holistic well-being and safeguards them from all forms of abuse and exploitation including violence, discrimination, and bullying.

In Figure 1, the dependent variable, which is the extent of implementation in terms of the imposition of Child Protection Policy against child discrimination, bullying and corporal punishment will be examined if it is related to the level of learners' well-being translated into security, safety, and protection.

In addition, the categories of the dependent variable will be used in assessing the extent of the implementation of child protection policy. These are defined specifically in the Department of Education Order 40, Series of 2012 Section 3, Definition of Terms. These are categories that Department of Education needs to address in order to protect the learners inside the schools.

School is the second home for the children that most of their time are spent learning, and where schooling gives them different experiences either positive or negative. If the school condition is not conducive and safe for the learners, this can affect their learning

process and development of their potentials (Unicef Manual for Child Friendly Schools, 2009).

On the other hand, the intervening variable will comprise the demographic profile of the teachers in terms of gender, age, grade level taught, religion and number of service.

Generally, this framework tries to analyze the significant relationship of the above variables that will answer the questions stipulated in the statement of the problem.

This study looked into the relationship of the extent of implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Policy and the level of learners' well-being.

This study about the relationship of the extent of Child Protection Policy implementation and the level of Learners' Well-being at Bagumbayan District II, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat in the SY 2022-2023.

This study covered the selected teachers of the nine (9) elementary schools of Bagumbayan District II namely; Biwang Central School, Datu Nakan Memorial Elementary School, S. Nilong Elementary School, Busok Elementary School, Kinayao Elementary School, B. Venus Elementary School, Bai Saripinang Elementary School, Dawing Elementary School, and South Sepaka Elementary School. The respondents of this study will be limited to both male and female teachers of Bagumbayan District II Teachers SY 2022-2023.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design. Quantitative research employs deductive reasoning to formulate and test predictions in the real world (Cristobal & Cristobal, 2013). The generalizability of research refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to a broader population.

Descriptive-correlational research design will be used to determine the relationship between variables, as indicated in the problem statement. This study aims to determine the relationship between two variables and investigate the phenomenon under investigation (Almeida et al., 2016).

The respondents of the study were the selected public elementary school teachers in Bagumbayan District II in the SY 2022-2023.

This study employed a Simple Random Sampling Technique through drawing of lots wherein 50% were selected respondents from the total number of employed public school elementary teachers in Bagumbayan II District during the SY 2022-2023. This sampling is appropriate due to the large number of public school teachers in Bagumbayan II District.

According to Thomas (2020), a simple random sample is a randomly selected subset of a population. In this sampling method, each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected. This method is the most straightforward of all the probability sampling methods, since it only involves a single random selection and requires little advance knowledge about the population. Because it uses randomization, any research performed on this sample should have high internal and external validity.

Slovin's formula was used to calculate the sample size (n) given the population size (N) and a margin of error (e). It's a random sampling technique formula to estimate sampling size.

It is computed using the below formula:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2).$$

This research was conducted in the Municipality of Bagumbayan and covered the public elementary schools in Bagumbayan District II with a significant numbers of basic public school elementary teachers. These are: Biwang Central School, Nakan Elementary School, S. Nilong Elementary School, Busok Elementary School, Kinayao Elementary School, B. Venus Elementary School, Bai Saripinang Elementary School, Dawing Elementary School, and South Sepaka Elementary School.

This study employed an adapted instrument from Macatimpag (2018), A Survey Questionnaire on the Awareness and Implementation of DepEd Child Protection Policy Checklist to determine the extent of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

Furthermore, to determine the level of the Learner's Well-being, a researched-made survey questionnaire were employed which undergoes validation from experts.

The gathered data were analyzed and interpreted using various adopted instruments from different researchers and authors. Analysis and Interpretation help the research draw reliable results and conclusions.

The researcher used frequency and percentage to describe the demographic profile of the respondents.

For the extent of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, a five point Likert Scaling were used.

For the extent of the level of the learners' welfare, a rating scale which adopted from the study of Fabia (2021) were used.

To have a reliable and valid results and discussions, the researcher followed a process which were beneficial in her study.

First, the researcher secured a permit to conduct the study from Division Superintendent. Another letter of permission was sent to the Public Schools District Supervisor and the Schools Principals for the conduct of the study in all public elementary schools of Bagumbayan II.

Second, the adoption and preparation of the instruments, such as survey questionnaire and rating scales from different researchers and authors.

The third process was the selection of the respondents using a relevant Sampling Technique based on the needs and demands of the aforementioned study.

The researcher will provide then copy of questionnaires on Implementation of Child Protection Policy and learner's welfare during their vacant time or any time that best suits for them.

Then, the collection of the survey questionnaire took place for the results and discussions to answer all of the questions stipulated in Chapter I.

Finally, tabulation and interpretation of data followed. Refer to flowchart below:

This study followed strict health protocols set by the Division Office, LGU and IATF for the health security of its target respondents.

Along with the completion of the study, data were organized, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using some reliable and relevant statistical methods:

First, frequency and percentage were used to determine the demographic profile of respondents.

Second, Mean and standard deviation were employed to compute the extent of extent of implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Learners Well-being.

On the other hand, Pearson r Correlation was administered for the computation of the significant relationship between extent of extent of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Learners Welfare.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents

These tables provide the frequency and percentage results based on the respondents' demographic profiles. The responders' age, gender, grade level, religion, and length of departmental service are all listed. That will address the first problem statement.

Each age group has responded to the questionnaire, as shown in Table 1. The majority of them (31.25%) are between the ages of 41 and 50, followed by 22.5% (18) between the ages of 36 and 40, 17.5% (14) from the age of 51 and up, 15% (12) between the ages of 31 and 35, and the least (13.75%) are between the ages of 26 and 30. (11). As a result, respondents are primarily between the ages of 41 and 50.

According to table 2, out of 80 respondents there are 12 males which consists of 12% of the total sample and 68 females (85%). This further portrays that female teachers dominate the teaching profession in the District of Bagumbayan II.

During distribution, the questionnaires were distributed at random to the respondents. As seen in Table 3, the majority of respondents come from the Grade 5 level, which had 25% or 20 respondents, 21% or 17 respondents from the Grade 3 level, 18% (14) from the Grade 6, 13% (10) from Kindergarten teachers, 9% (7) from grade 4 teachers, Grade 2 teachers, and the lowest of them all, 6% or 5 respondents from Grade 1.

Table 4 gives a breakdown of religious affiliation of the respondents. It is depicted that majority of the respondents which consisted 75% of the respondents or 60 out of the total sample. In addition, the same percentage of 12.5% or 10 respondents for Islam and other religious affiliations.

The respondents' length of service is shown in Table 5. It is established that there is a slight variation in the services provided by our respondents, as evidenced by the results, which showed that 23 respondents, or 28% of the total population of respondents, have been in the service for between six and ten years, 17 respondents, or 21.5% of the total population, have been in the service for between eleven and fifteen years, and 12%, or 10 respondents, have been in the service for between one and twenty years. age 21 and older 5 represents the length of service of the respondents. It is shown that there is a little difference in the service rendered by our respondents as results shows that 23 respondents which consists of 28% are 6-10 years in the service, 17(21.25%) respondents have been in the service for 11-15 which is 21%, both 1-5yrs and 16-20 years have 15 respondents consisting 18% of the total population of respondents and 12% or 10 respondents have been in the service for 21 years and above.

Extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy

This table illustrates the mean evaluation on the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy. It addresses the statement of the problem 2.

The degree to which the school's child protection policy has been implemented is shown in Table 6.

That can be seen based on the overall average for each domain, which is 3.9029 and corresponds to the Likert scale response of "Highly Implemented."

(The school has written child protection and/or anti-bullying policies), according to item #1 in the bullying section, which had the highest weighted mean with a score of 4.213. This simply demonstrates that the school has already implemented the DepeD Child Protection Policy.

The lowest weighted mean of 3.813 was obtained for item #2 of corporal punishment (Has mapped out accessible resources in their neighborhood for potential links or networking for cases seeking referrals, etc.).

All items were categorized under Likert scale equivalent of "Highly Implemented" which means that the Child Protection Policy in the school is existing and visible and are fully implemented. The result further confirms that teachers are highly implementing the Child Protection Policy to promote positive discipline among learners and safeguard the children from any form of abuse, violence and exploitation.

It supported the statement of former Education Secretary Br. Armin Luistro FSC that RA 10627 enhanced DepEds' existing Child Protection Policy (DepEd order No. 40 s2012), which puts primary importance on well-being of the children.

Level of Learners' Well-being

This table presents the mean evaluation on the level of learners' welfare regarding the implementation of Child Protection Policy. It addresses the statement of the problem 3.

Table 7 shows the level of learners' welfare on the implementation of Child Protection Policy. It can be seen based on the general mean of each domain with its corresponding mean of 4.434 which is under Likert scale equivalent of "Always Observed".

Item # 5 of learners' security (The students are secured against discrimination inside the classroom and school premises.) got the highest weighted mean at 4.763 with Likert Scale equivalent of "Always Observed".

Although from the indicator of students' safety item #1 (The students are secured against physical harm, threats and exploitation inside the classroom.) for learners' well-being got the lowest weighted mean of 4.350, it still shows under Likert scale "Always Observed".

All items were categorized under Likert scale equivalent of "Always Observed" which means that the level of learners' well-being in the school is truly observed.

Relationship between the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy and level of Learners' Welfare

This table shows the relationship between the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy and level of Learners' Welfare. It answers the statement problem.

Table 8 highlights the important connection between the implementation and of the Learners' Welfare and Child Protection Policy. As demonstrated in the table, bullying has a significant p-value of .035 and a computed mean r-value of .236 that is "highly implemented." Furthermore, discrimination has a .263 r-value that is "highly implemented" and a .018 significant p-value. Hence, corporal punishment as calculated has a "highly implemented" r-value of .274. This table makes it quite evident that when the positive r-values rise, the other rises as well. Hence.

The results of the tabulated overall Child Protection Policy implementation reject the null hypothesis with an r-value of .391 indicating "highly implemented" and a p-value of .000 indicating "significant," lower than 0.05 significant point.

Thus, it was determined that there is a significant relationship between the implementation of Child Protection Policy and Level of Learners' Well-being.

The study by Matulac, et al. (2020) shows that the school with a very high level of implementation of the child protection policy has a general degree of consciousness and conformity, and there are no gaps with regard to the implementation of the child protection procedures. His research came to the conclusion that instructors and senior management are the school's vanguards. Their expertise in raising the kids and shielding them from abuse rests in their capable hands.

Thus, the Child Protection Policy must be rigorously enforced to ensure children's growth, development and well being.

4.MAJOR FINDINGS

Generally, this study was conducted to evaluate the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy and the level of learners' Welfare in the District of Bagumbayan II, Division of Sultan Kudarat.

This study specifically looked and evaluated the respondents' age, gender, grade level of instruction, religion, and length of employment in the Department of Education. In order to determine whether there was a substantial correlation between the degree of learner welfare in terms of safety, security, and protection, the extent of implementation of the Child Protection Policy was also assessed in terms of bullying, discrimination, and corporal punishment.

The descriptive-correlational approach was also used in this study to determine how one variable affects another in order to comprehend the presence of the phenomena under investigation.

The teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire to evaluate the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy and the level of Learners' Welfare in their respective school. The result was strictly made confidential.

According to the findings, respondents between the ages of 41 and 50 made up the majority of those who responded to the poll. The responders are primarily between the ages of 26 and 30.

More female instructors than male teachers work in this field. In terms of affinity with a particular religion, this district employs a higher proportion of catholic teachers. To be exact. Nonetheless, the highest rank is awarded after 6–10 years in teaching profession.

Additionally, the level of Learners' Welfare had a grand rating of 4.434, highly observed revealing severe observation of Learners' Welfare. The grand rating on the extent of implementation of Child Protection Policy is 3.9029, highly implemented which signifies the firm implementation of the mentioned policy pursuant to DepEd Order no. 40 series 2012.

The conclusion of these studies is that there is a substantial association between the level of Learners' Wellbeing and the degree of Child Protection Policy implementation, rejecting the null hypothesis and adopting the alternative hypothesis.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, the District of Bagumbayan II strictly implemented the Child Protection Policy, and the level of Learners' Welfare was strictly adhered to. The welfare of the students was strongly correlated with the application of the aforementioned policy.

Based from the findings, recommendations are formulated and given:

1. Conduct monitoring to ensure and maintain strict implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
2. There must be an action plan to ensure schools' full implementation of the policy.
3. School heads/principal may monitor closely the implementation through class observation and random interviews of the school children.
4. DepEd should include data on the implementation of Child Protection Policy.
5. Improve participation of stakeholders in accordance of implementation of policy.
6. Capacitate teachers on giving special protection to school children.
7. Every school must have a written school-based Child Protection Policy vividly posted with-in school premises.
7. Further studies may be conducted to ensure strict implementation and improve further implementation in Philippine context.

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