

# Public Secondary School Teachers' Extent of Implementation of The Child Protection Policy

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*Abstract* — This study aimed to determine the teachers' extent of implementation of the child protection policy (CPP) in the areas of a) Child Exploitation, b) Violence against Children, c) Bullying, d) Corporal Punishment, and e) Positive Nonviolent Discipline during the school year 2024-2025. The study made use of descriptive-correlational research design, and a validated researcher-made tool was utilized. The findings revealed that CPP implementation in all areas is extensively implemented, which garnered 4.442 as Overall Weighted Mean, with the highest ratings in preventing child exploitation and bullying. However, the lowest implementation was observed in Positive and Nonviolent discipline, which may require more targeted training and support. ANOVA and t-tests showed significant differences in implementation based on age, position, years in service, educational attainment, and training attendance, while civil status did not show significant variation. Pearson correlation further supported the strong influence of relevant in-service training on effective CPP implementation. This emphasizes the vital role of continuous learning and professional development in ensuring effective and comprehensive implementation of the CPP. Thus, teachers are encouraged to attend In-Service Trainings related to child protection policy (CPP) especially in areas with lower mean scores.

*Keywords* — **Child Protection, Implementation, Abuse, Child Exploitation, Positive Nonviolent Discipline, Corporal Punishment**

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## I. Introduction

Schools play a crucial role in the holistic development of students, encompassing their cognitive, social, and emotional growth, which prepares them for future success and active citizenship. Beyond academic instruction, schools are responsible for ensuring the well-being and safety of students, thereby creating a conducive and secure learning environment.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has taken significant steps to implement child safety measures in schools through various directives. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, or the "DepEd Child Protection Policy," is a critical directive that outlines comprehensive guidelines for ensuring child safety in schools. This policy aims to establish a framework for preventing and addressing child abuse, exploitation, violence, and discrimination within the educational system. This research

aimed to explore the extent of implementation of the child protection policies of secondary teachers.

Maintaining student safety is a significant responsibility for school staff, particularly teachers and administrators. Collaboration among staff members is essential to foster a positive learning environment where every student is protected from potential harm. Prioritizing child safety not only enhances students' educational experience but also cultivates a climate of trust, respect, and mutual support.

School staff should maintain open lines of communication with parents and community members to ensure a unified approach to child protection. Regular assessments of the school environment should be conducted to identify and mitigate potential risks, ensuring that physical and emotional safety standards are consistently met.

Adinda et al. (2023) discussed in their study the role of the teacher as a guide, counselor, information, facilitator, mediator, collaborator, organizer, motivator, director, initiator, transmitter, evaluator, subject teacher, class teacher, and evaluator in achieving educational success in schools. That only means that teachers are not only focused on teaching but also emphasize that teachers play a crucial role in guidance and counseling, going beyond traditional instruction to support students' academic, personal, and social development.

Zamora's (2021) study sheds light on the challenges faced by school leaders in implementing Child Protection Policies (CPP), notably the lack of adequate financial and human resources, as well as negative attitudes encountered from students. However, the research also suggests that effective CPP implementation hinges on: Child-centered and policy-driven decision-making, cultivating positive relationships with stakeholders, and strengthening school communication systems.

A study by Matulac and Zamora (2020) found a high degree of Child Protection Policy implementation within the school studied, characterized by widespread awareness, adherence, and a lack of significant shortcomings in execution. Furthermore, the study highlighted significant differences in the level of implementation across various aspects of the DepEd's Child Protection Policy, including school staff roles, student responsibilities, Child Protection Committee formation, and capacity building for school officials.

Sletten and Bjørkquist's (2020) research explored how child welfare professionals integrate standardized tools into their practice. The study focused on the utilization and adaptation of two common tools in Norway. The findings revealed that the application of these tools led to the development of new practice guidelines and knowledge, which professionals then tailored to align with their ethical considerations and manage their workload. Thus, the adoption of standardized tools can foster new practice guidelines and knowledge which professionals adapt based on workload and ethical standards

In addition, Asio et al. (2020) results showed that teachers were aware of the Child Protection Policy program of the Department of Education. However, the responsiveness of the schools is not very high. There were significant differences in the results observed in the awareness of teachers and the responsiveness of the schools.

In connection, the study of Bayuca (2020) showed that most teachers are aware of the Child Protection Policy, although its implementation in schools is not as strict. As a result, it is recommended that the implementation of the Child Protection Policy be monitored and that teachers be provided with more complete information. This study determined how teachers gave their parts and expertise in implementing child-protection policies.

Being viewed as a student's second home, the school plays a vital role in preventing abuse among students. Therefore, this study contributed valuable insights by identifying teachers' extent in the implementation of DepEd Child Protection Policy and offer recommendations for improving child protection efforts in schools and in the community.

### **Literature Review** (Times New Roman, Font Size 12)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), school violence and bullying infringe upon children's and adolescents' fundamental rights, including their rights to education and health. Empirical evidence indicates that violence and bullying in schools can negatively affect academic achievement, physical and mental health, and emotional well-being. Therefore, school administrators should prioritize the development and implementation of policies aimed at preventing violence and bullying among students.

Child protection policies are of paramount importance in safeguarding children from various forms of maltreatment, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. These policies are firmly grounded in both national and international legal frameworks, reflecting a global commitment in protecting the rights and well-being of children.

The cornerstone of international child protection is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This treaty articulates the fundamental rights of children and delineates the responsibilities of states in ensuring these rights are upheld.

The Philippines has established a comprehensive legal framework for child protection grounded in both of international conventions and national laws. This framework is designed to uphold children's rights, prevent abuse and exploitation, and foster their welfare. The primary legal foundations for child protection policy in the Philippines include:

The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines lays the groundwork for child protection through Article XV, Section 3. This provision explicitly directs the State to defend children's right of assistance, encompassing proper care, education, and safeguarding against all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. This

constitutional mandate underscores the government's fundamental responsibility to prioritize and protect the well-being of Filipino children.

Republic Act No. 7610, also known as the Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992, reinforces these constitutional principles by providing a comprehensive legal framework to protect children from various forms of abuse and exploitation.

Specifically, Section 3 defines various forms of child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, including but not limited to: Child prostitution and other sexual abuse, child trafficking, obscene publications and indecent shows, and other acts of abuse. Under Section 10 mandates the State to implement programs and services that prevent and address child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination. This includes providing support for victims and their families and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable.

Sociological theories, particularly functionalism, offer valuable insights into the role of schools in child protection. Drawing from the works of Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons this perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of social institutions, including the family, education system, and the state. Durkheim believed that education transmits societal norms and values, creating social solidarity and cohesion. Parsons expanded upon this, suggesting that schools serve as crucial agents of socialization, preparing children for their roles in society. Child protection, therefore, is not solely the responsibility of parents but a shared societal imperative. Schools, as integral social institutions, play a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students. A breakdown in any one institution (e.g., failure to report suspected abuse) can negatively impact on the entire social system.

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development provides a framework for understanding the psychological needs of children and adolescents. During adolescence (ages 12-18), individuals grapple with the central conflict of identity versus role confusion. This stage is critical for developing a stable sense of self, values, and future direction. Schools provide a key environment for adolescents to explore their identities through social interactions, academic pursuits, and extracurricular activities. Active participation of teachers and school leaders in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment significantly impacts students' psychological well-being. When educators create a safe space where students feel valued, respected, and understood, they facilitate healthy identity formation and reduce the risk of negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Conversely, a school environment characterized by bullying, discrimination, or lack of support can hinder identity development and contribute to psychological distress.

In summary, the study is based on these theories to explain how schools, as part of broader social systems, play a vital role in child protection and human development. And the basis of school personnel to perform their major role in safeguarding the safety of the learners.

## II. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically descriptive correlational research. Descriptive correlational research is a non-experimental design aimed at examining the relationship between two or more variables as they naturally occur, without manipulation or control. On the other hand, the ex post facto one-shot case study design was used since the gathering of data happens within a single period. The main feature of this research design is that the data, which is the measurement of the phenomenon, is gathered in one period (Miemban, 2021).

The respondents of the study were the Public Secondary School Teachers in Schools Division of Urdaneta City, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan during the school year 2024-2025. A stratified random sampling using Yamane Formula with allowable error of 0.05 was considered in the study.

The researcher used a validated self-constructed questionnaire which composed of three parts. (1) the demographic profile of the respondents, and (2) questionnaire for Secondary School Teachers as to their extent of implementation of the Child Protection Policy, and (3) open-ended questions.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, position, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, and number of relevant training/seminars attended.

For the teachers' extent of implementation of the Child Protection Policy, overall weighted mean was used and descriptive measures using a 5-point Likert scale with the corresponding numerical values and interpretation as shown below.

Literal Rating	Mean Scale Range	Descriptive Equivalent	Transmuted Rating
A	4.50 – 5.00	Always (A)	Very Extensively Implemented (VEI)
B	3.50 – 4.49	Often (O)	Extensively Implemented (EI)
C	2.50 – 3.49	Sometimes (S)	Moderately Implemented (MI)
D	1.50 – 2.49	Rarely (R)	Slightly Implemented (SI)
E	1.00 – 1.49	Never (N)	Least Implemented (LI)

## III. Results and Discussion

The table below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to their profile variables.

**Table 1**  
**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents across Profile Variables**  
**n=260**

Variable	Variable Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	20-35 years old	147	56.5
	36-50 years old	85	32.7
	51 years or more	28	10.8
<b>Sex</b>	Male	100	38.5
	Female	160	61.5
<b>Civil Status</b>	Single	78	30.0
	Married	182	70.0
<b>Position</b>	Teacher I	40	15.4
	Teacher II	49	18.8
	Teacher III	153	58.8
	Master Teacher I	14	5.4
	Master Teacher II	4	1.5
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>	BS degree	16	6.2
	BS w/ MA units	143	55.0
	MA/MS Acad. Req.	2	0.8
	MA/MS	77	29.6
	MA/MS w/doc. units	17	6.5
	EdD/ PhD	4	1.5
	MBA units	1	0.4
<b>No. of Years in Service</b>	Below 5 years	36	13.8
	5- 10 years	134	51.5
	11-20 years	58	22.3
	21- 30 years	21	8.1
	31 years or more	11	4.2
<b>Relevant In-Service Training</b>	1-3 Trainings	184	70.8
	4-6 Trainings	40	15.4
	7 Trainings or more	36	13.8

The respondents' profile reveals that the majority (56.5%) are aged between 20 and 35 years, with a larger proportion being female (61.5%). Although the venue of the study is in the secondary level, it is still well known that this level of the DepEd is still female dominated. Most respondents are married (70%) and hold the position of Teacher III (58.8%). A significant number (55%) have attained Bachelor's degrees with additional Master's degree units. Most respondents (51.5%) have between 5 to 10 years of teaching experience, and most (70.8%) have attended 1 to 3 relevant in-service training.

Table 2 on the next page presents a summary of the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents in all areas of implementation. The OWM indicates the score of each area of implementation and the GOWM indicates the general average of the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents.

**Table 2**
**Summary of the Extents of Implementation of the CPP by the respondents in All Areas**

Areas of Implementation	Total	OWM	DE	TR
Child Exploitation (10)	44.842	4.484	O	EI
Violence Against Children (10)	44.523	4.452	O	EI
Bullying (10)	44.796	4.480	O	EI
Corporal Punishment (10)	44.185	4.418	O	EI
Positive Nonviolent Discipline (10)	43.781	4.378	O	EI
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>222.127</b>			
Grand Overall Weighted Mean (GOWM)		4.442	O	EI

The grand overall weighted mean (GOWM) of 4.442 equivalent to “O” (often) in descriptive equivalent, and “EI” (extensively implemented) in transmuted rating, indicates that the respondents are extensively implementing the CPP in all areas, namely: a) Child Exploitation, b) Violence against Children, c) Bullying, d) Corporal Punishment, and e) Positive and Nonviolent Discipline. All the areas of implementation of the CPP obtained OWMs that are equivalent to “EI” (extensively implemented). Although these OWMs are high enough, the extent of implementation still has plenty of room for improvement. The respondents need to exert more effort to level up their implementation of the CPP.

The extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents are significantly different from each other when grouped according to the variable categories of “age.” Further, the respondents would have the extent of implementation of CPP similar to each other regardless of the age bracket to which they belong. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents across the variable “age” is rejected.

The t-test results on the mean differences in the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents across the variable “sex” have significance level greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, except in the area of “positive nonviolent discipline,” where the  $t = -2.178$  sig. at 0.030 with equal variance assumed, and  $t = -2.128$  sig. at 0.035 with equal variance not assumed. Thus, the null hypothesis, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents with respect to the variable “sex” is accepted in all areas, except in “positive nonviolent discipline.” This means that the extent of implementation of the CPP would vary from each other.

The t-test results on the mean differences in the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents across the variable “civil status” have a significance level greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents with respect to the variable “civil status,” is accepted in all areas. This means that the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents would not differ from each other whether they are married or single.

The null hypothesis, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents across the variable “position” is rejected. This means that the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents differ from each other when grouped according to the variable categories of “position”. Further, this shows that the variable, “position” was able to differentiate the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents from each other.

The null hypothesis, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents across the variable “highest educational attainment” is rejected. The extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents differ from each other when grouped according to the variable categories of “highest educational attainment.” Further, this shows that the variable, “highest educational attainment” was able to differentiate the extents of implementation of the CPP by the respondents from each other.

The null hypotheses, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents across the variable “years in service” is rejected. This means that the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents differ from each other when grouped according to the variable “years in service.” Further, this shows that the variable, “years in service” was able to differentiate the extents of implementation of the CPP by the PSSTs from each other.

The null hypothesis, stating, “there are no significant mean differences in the extent of implementation of CPP by the respondents across the variable “relevant in-service training” is rejected. This means that the extent of implementation of the CPP by the respondents differ from each other when grouped according to the variable categories of “relevant in-service training.” Further, this shows that the variable, “relevant in-service training” was able to differentiate the extents of implementation of the CPP by the respondents from each other.

The r- values in the areas: “child exploitation,” “violence against children,” “bullying,” “corporal

punishment,” and “grand total,” for the variable “age” are significant at 0.05 alpha level. For the variable “sex,” however, only the r- values in the areas of “bullying,” “corporal punishment,” “positive nonviolent discipline,” and the “grand total” are significant. Further, for the variable “position,” the r- values in the areas of “child exploitation,” “violence against children,” and “bullying” are significant. While, for the variable, “relevant in-service trainings,” the r- values in all areas are significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that “there are no significant relationships of the extents of implementation of the CPP (in the specified areas) by the respondents and the specified variables” is rejected. The means that in those specified areas of implementation of CPP by the respondents, the extents are significantly associated with the specified variables.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that public secondary school teachers have an extensive level of implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) across all domains, indicating a positive adherence to DepEd mandates. The high scores in Child Exploitation and Bullying suggest strong vigilance and commitment in these sensitive areas. Despite generally high scores, the lowest implementation was observed in Positive and Nonviolent Discipline, which may require more targeted training and support. The implementation of the CPP significantly varies by demographic and professional variables like age, position, educational attainment, years in service, and training—indicating the need for differentiated professional development. The in-service training variable has the most consistent and strong correlation with CPP implementation, emphasizing the vital role of continuous learning.

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