

Synergy of Community and School Leaders in Ensuring Child Protection Policy

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Abstract

The study assessed the synergy of communities and school leaders in ensuring child protection policy. The study utilized quantitative methods employing descriptive-correlational design. There was a total of 80 respondents coming from 16 schools in Daet North District composed of school personnel specifically school head, guidance counselor/designate, and faculty president, and community leaders such as School Parent-Teacher Association president and School Governance Council or the Child Protection Committee SGC or CPC representative from barangay like Barangay Captain or Barangay Councilor. The data analysis revealed that the overall synergy between the school and the community is at a medium level. The implementing strategies practiced by schools coincide with that of community schemes which mainly revolve in the establishment of Child Protection Committees, foster more linkages and connections with other agencies, and actively engaging members to seminars and capacity building for a more versatile ability to respond and implement child protection policy. Furthermore, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) revealed high significant positive moderate relationships among the parameters of level of synergy and that of strategies such as coordination, capacities and resources and service delivery suggesting that strong collaboration and alignment in these key areas contribute to the successful implementation of child protection efforts. In addition, both school and community leaders face significant challenges in the implementation of the child protection policy including resistance to change, complacency, insufficient financial resources, and lack of awareness among stakeholders. Thus, a need to development of an intervention plan is suggested to further strengthen child protection implementation.

Keywords: Synergy, Child Protection, Communities, School leaders, Organization, Coordination, Capacities and Resources, Service Delivery

1. Introduction

The United Nations, through its United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), highly support the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which particularly contains the provisions reaffirming the fundamental rights of children to be protected against any form of discrimination and cruelty. This convention on the rights of the child is an agreement of every country to promote and protect the safety and welfare of children. Philippines, as a member of UN, also supports these international provisions as reflected in Republic Act 7610, 1992 also known as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act. This is anchored on the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (1987, Article XV, Section 3) which states that the state shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development. The RA 7610, 1992 extends its regulations

on the program formulation of government agencies directly responsible for children protection and welfare. This, however, is not only limited to government agencies, but it also promotes collaborations and active participation of private sectors to ensure full implementation of this act. The Department of Education, a government agency, which directly harbors and actively communicates with students who are considered part of the RA 7610, crafted its own policies anchored on the provisions of the enacted law. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, known as DepEd Child Protection Policy, carefully laid down provisions and guidelines on protecting children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse.

Despite the implementation of different provisions and policies, cases of violence against children are continuously perpetuating. According to Child Protection Network, Women and Children Protection Units - Statistics (n.d.), there are 7,778 cases of violence recorded across the country from January - September 2024. Majority of these cases are sexual abuse, which accounts for 66.63%, followed by physical abuse with 12.03%, teenage pregnancy with 6.76%, and the remaining percentages account for various cases such as neglect and psychological abuse.

Locally, Daet, Camarines Norte is not an exception on the emergence of cases of violence against children. As per the record of Camarines Norte Police Provincial Office - Women and Children Protection Desk Office (CNPPO-WCPDO), in the year 2016, there are about 179 cases of abused on children. In 2016 and 2018, crimes against children decreased to 146 and 81 cases, respectively (Jeminez and Lamug, 2020). Most of the cases recorded were of sexual abuse which overlaps with the records of WCPU in previous years.

The prevalence of violence on children in the province, which include cases in schools where students are involved in such recorded abuses, it is pertinent to further strengthen implementation of programs and campaigns on ensuring students safety and protection. The collaboration between these entities plays a significant role in creating safe environments for children, ensuring their well-being, and addressing any potential risks they may face. Hence, this study is proposed focusing on the synergy of community and school leaders in ensuring child protection policy.

2. Methodology

The study utilized quantitative method employing descriptive-correlational design to assess the synergy of communities and school leaders in ensuring child protection. There were a totally enumerated 80 respondents from 16 schools in Daet North District. This includes school head, guidance counselor/designate, and faculty president, and community leaders such as SPTA president and School Governance Council or the Child Protection Committee SGC or CPC representative. A letter of request was sought from the Department of Education Division Superintended and the Public Schools District Supervisor of Daet North District. In addition, ethical considerations were ensured during the conduct of the data, specifically considering the consent and data privacy of the respondents. Data was gathered using two (2) sets of adapted survey questionnaires containing different indicators pertaining to parameters that were measured in the study. One of the questionnaires was intended for school leaders which contained 24 items for level of synergy (SOP 1), 28 items for implementing strategies (SOP 2) and 26 items for challenges encountered (SOP 4). While the other set of questionnaires was intended for the community leaders and contained 24 items for level of synergy, 27 items for implementing strategies and 26 items for challenges encountered. All the indicators were measured using 5-point Likert scale. On the other hand, Pearson Moment of Correlation was utilized to determine the relationships between parameters. Based on the findings, an intervention plan was crafted (SOP 4). Furthermore, weighted means were computed in determining the level of synergy, implementing strategies

and challenges encountered. Additionally, data gathered were further subjected to data analysis using SPSS Statistical Soft Ware Version 28.0 ensuring accuracy and efficiency in data interpretation.

1. Results and Discussion

1.1 Level of Synergy among School and Community Leaders

The level of synergy is the core to realize communities and schools' collaboration in implementing child protection policy to ensure welfare of learners. It begins with the community and school leaders who are the builders in implementing child protection.

1.1.1 Organization. The level of synergy of schools and community in terms of organization was measured by computing the weighted mean of the responses as reflected in table 1.

Table 1 revealed that indicator 1, Established Child Protection Committee (CPC) with schools and community representatives exhibited the highest level of synergy in both school and community with the weighted mean of 3.81 and 3.66, respectively both interpreted as high level of synergy. On the other hand, the lowest rated for the school is indicator 6, Conduct situational analysis with CPC members with a weighted mean of 3.04 interpreted as medium level of synergy (ML). In addition, for the community, the lowest rated indicator is Craft workplan and identify targets with the CPC members with a weighted mean of 2.94 or medium level. The overall weighted mean is 3.34 for school with high level and 3.22 community, interpreted as medium level.

This signifies that both schools and community have a well-established practice which is essential aspects of child protection policies. Both school and community leaders have established CPC in its respective offices and organization. Establishing CPC is an important aspect of ensuring child welfare. CPC also composed of representative from various sectors that work together by doing a regular monitoring and evaluation of CPC implementation. This is to ensure that child protection efforts are being strengthened. School principals and community/barangay chairmen are the head of these CPC's that enlist the support of the representative from other sectors to ensure that child welfare will be prioritized.

Table 1. Level of Synergy of School and Community along Organization

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Established Child protection committee (CPC) with schools and community representatives	3.81	HL	3.66	HL
2 Conduct orientation with CPC members	3.65	HL	3.41	HL
3 Organize quarterly meeting with CPC members	3.15	ML	3.28	HL
4 Conduct strategic planning with members	3.33	HL	3.03	ML

5	Craft workplan and identify targets with the CPC members	3.08	ML	2.94	ML
6	Conduct situational analysis with CPC members	3.04	ML	3.00	ML
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.34	HL	3.22	ML

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	High Level of Synergy (HL)
2.50-3.24	Medium Level of Synergy (ML)
1.75-2.49	Low Level of Synergy (LL)
1.00-1.74	Lack of Synergy (L)

3.1.2 Coordination. This requires the combined efforts of various individuals, agencies, and organizations dedicated to ensuring children's safety. Table 2 shows the level of synergy along coordination.

Indicator number 6, Active involvement of school on programs and activities about child protection and indicator number 5, Provided information to the schools and community about programs and activities concerning child protection with weighted mean values of 3.56 and 3.52 showed high level of synergy from school respondents. Furthermore, the data showed that community leaders exhibited highest mean in indicator 1, Establish active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD and other agencies. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean for school is indicator 4, Establish formal collaboration (MOA and MOU) with LHO, WCPD, LSWD, private and practice counselling (psychiatrist, psychologist) for referral services with 2.92. While that of community displayed the lowest mean in indicator 2, Mapped out available resources and linkages referral and networking with weighted mean of 2.91. The overall weighted mean of school and community were both 3.29 and interpreted as high level of synergy.

Table 2. Level of Synergy of School and Community along Coordination

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Establish active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD and other agencies	3.27	HL	3.75	HL
2 Mapped out available resources and linkages referral and networking	3.15	ML	2.91	ML
3 Active coordination with different government and non-government agencies for referral system arrangements	3.25	HL	3.41	HL
4 Establish formal collaboration (MOA and MOU) with LHO, WCPD, LSWD, private and practice counselling (psychiatrist, psychologist) for referral services	2.92	ML	2.94	ML

5	Provided information to the schools and community about programs and activities concerning child protection	3.52	HL	3.34	HL
6	Active involvement of school and community on programs and activities about child protection	3.56	HL	3.47	HL
7	Conduct annual assessments of programs and activities with the members of CPC	3.35	HL	3.19	ML
Overall Weighted Mean		3.29	HL	3.29	HL

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	High Level of Synergy (HL)
2.50-3.24	Medium Level of Synergy (ML)
1.75-2.49	Low Level of Synergy (LL)
1.00-1.74	Lack of Synergy (L)

The result implies that school prominently involved community to its programs and activities that concern child protection and that ensured its participation and full contribution. This active engagement fosters a strong partnership between the school and the community in promoting a safe and supportive environment for children. Through collaborative efforts, stakeholders, including parents and local authorities, work together to implement child protection policies effectively.

3.1.3 Capacities and Resources. Capacities involve the knowledge and skills that individuals, organizations, and communities require to safeguard children effectively. The data were consolidated and were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of Synergy of School and Community along Capacities and Resources

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Conduct capability building needs assessment with CPC members	3.33	HL	3.13	ML
2 Conduct appropriate capability building training, workshops, symposium and seminars about CP for CPC members	3.29	HL	3.19	ML
3 Organized capacity building trainings in coordination with other government and non-	3.08	ML	3.06	ML

government agencies

4	CPC members attend appropriate capacity building trainings, workshops, symposium and seminars about CP	3.15	ML	3.13	ML
5	Allocate budgets for capacity building of CPC members	3.13	ML	3.19	ML
6	Allocate budgets for programs and activities targeted by CPC members	3.15	ML	3.16	ML
7	Generate external funds or sources	2.94	ML	2.94	ML
Overall Weighted Mean		3.15	ML	3.11	ML

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	High Level of Synergy (HL)
2.50-3.24	Medium Level of Synergy (ML)
1.75-2.49	Low Level of Synergy (LL)
1.00-1.74	Lack of Synergy (L)

Based on the computed data, the highest weighted mean for school was exhibited by indicator 1, Conduct capability building needs assessment with CPC members with 3.33 interpreted as high level. In community respondents, indicator 2, Conduct appropriate capability building training, workshops, symposium and about CP for CPC members and indicator 5, allocate budgets for capacity building of CPC members both with weighted mean of 3.19 were the highest mean. However, indicator 7, Generate external funds or resources with 2.94 got the lowest mean in school respondents and even with community respondents. The computed overall weighted mean for school and community in terms of capacities and resources were 3.15 and 3.11, respectively which signify medium level of synergy.

The result indicates that school leaders actively conduct capability building activities that reflect the needs of its CPC members just as it coincides with the responses from the community. This is an important aspect of assessing issues and concerns encountered and the needed appropriate solution to be administered. The continuous implementation of these capability-building activities ensures that CPC members are well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to address emerging challenges effectively. By aligning these activities with the needs of the community, school leaders foster a more responsive and collaborative approach to problem-solving.

3.1.4 Service Delivery. Table 4 shows the level of synergy of school and community in terms of service delivery.

It was revealed that highest weighted mean for school and community leaders was both exhibited in indicator 1, Tie-up with other agencies in disseminating information with weighted mean 3.21 for school, interpreted as medium level, and 3.25 for community interpreted as high level. The synergy and collaborations of school and community with other agencies are therefore evident. This was made possible through conduct of a regular child protection awareness campaign done during General Assembly and SPTA meetings usually discussed by the school Guidance Counsellor or Guidance Counselor - designate.

The topics were based on the relevant and up-to-date child protection issues reported by school or community. One of which OSAEC (Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children) and CSAEM (Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Materials) which are highly relevant youth issues that must be discussed in schools. By teaching students about their rights, safe internet usage, and various reporting channels, it also helps the school's duty in child protection. Schools can help prevent abuse and provide a safer, more informed learning environment. Orientation about localized Child Protection Handbook anchored on DepEd Order 40 s.2012 can also be discussed. It is a manual wherein the members of the Child Protection Committee designed, localized and agreed upon. The handbook encourages a secure and encouraging learning atmosphere where kids experience safety, respect, and worth. By having a well-executed Child Protection Manual, schools actively support each child's fundamental rights to safety and dignity in addition to adhering to Department of Education standards and federal legislation. Likewise, the Barangay also conduct the same activity along with the school for their constituents. There were also cases wherein speakers are from other agencies like DSWD, PNP and Rural Health Unit personnel.

Table 4. Level of Synergy of School and Community along Service Delivery

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Tie up with other agencies in disseminating information	3.21	ML	3.25	HL
2 Conduct meetings with other agencies to disseminate Child protection awareness, programs and activities	3.06	ML	2.94	ML
3 Conduct meetings with other agencies to discuss referral systems and case management	3.06	ML	3.00	ML
4 Establish monitoring system to address child abuse and violence	3.17	ML	3.16	ML
Overall Weighted Mean	3.13	ML	3.09	ML

Rating Scale: 3.25-4.00
Descriptive Rating: High Level of Synergy (HL)

2.50-3.24	Medium Level of Synergy (ML)
1.75-2.49	Low Level of Synergy (LL)
1.00-1.74	Lack of Synergy (L)

3.2 Implementation Strategies Used by School and Community Leaders to Ensure Child Protection

This study also determined the implementing strategies primarily utilized by school and community leaders in ensuring that child protection policy is implemented. These are described using various parameters such as organization, coordination, capacities and resources as well as service delivery.

3.2.1 Organization. Table 5 shows the implementation strategies of School and Community along Organization.

It shows that school and community leaders exhibited the highest weighted mean in indicator 1, Establish CPC in school, and indicator 2. Conducted annual orientation for CPC members and other concern stakeholders with weighted mean 3.81 and 3.65, correspondingly both verbally interpreted as “always”. In contrast, the lowest weighted mean value for school was shown in indicator 4, Organize quarterly meetings with CPC members, with 3.10 while that of community leaders exhibited 2.84 in indicator 5, conducted annual strategic planning with CPC members to discuss tasking, intervention, situation analysis and fund allocation both interpreted as often encountered. The data reflect that the overall weighted mean for both school and community was 3.33 interpreted as always encountered and 3.13 respectively and verbally interpreted as often encountered.

Table 5. Implementation Strategies of School and Community along Organization

Indicators		School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Established CPC in School	3.81	AL	3.75	AL
2	Conducted annual orientation for CPC members and other concern stakeholder	3.65	AL	3.47	OF
3	Designed orientation materials and guidebook for CPC members	3.33	AL	3.13	OF
4	Organized quarterly meetings with CPC members	3.10	OF	2.97	OF
5	Conducted annual strategic planning with CPC members to discuss tasking, intervention, situation analysis and fund allocation	3.21	OF	2.84	OF
6	Conducted Child protection situation analysis	3.23	OF	3.00	OF

7	Crafted workplan with specific targets/ objectives concerning Child Protection	3.17	OF	2.94	OF
8	Established clear mechanism for ensuring protection of Children with disabilities	3.15	OF	2.97	OF
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.33	AL	3.13	OF

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	Always Implemented (AI)
2.50-3.24	Often Implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	Seldom Implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	Never Implemented (NI)

These findings imply that all the schools are adherent to DepEd Order 40 s., 2012 which requires that all public private elementary and secondary schools shall establish a CPC who will ensure that schools provide a safe environment for learners by addressing issues related to child abuse, exploitation, violence discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm. On the other hand, the lowest figures can be attributed to the irregular attendance or absenteeism of some CPC members, especially from the barangay representative, some parents due to engagement in other activities, forgetting the schedule despite notice given, and for some teachers who are attending some activities that coincide with the CPC meeting. Due to these, attending CPC members failed to come up with strategic plans on child protection reports and other forthcoming activities.

3.2.2 Coordination. This parameter was also evaluated by respondents and the responses were computed to get the weighted mean of each indicator. The results were shown in table 6.

Table 6. Implementation Strategies of School and Community along Coordination

	Indicators	School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Established active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD, and other government agencies	3.31	AI	3.69	AI
2	Mapped out available or existing resources for referral linkages and networking	2.98	OI	3.00	OI
3	Coordinated with different government and non-government agencies for referral system arrangements	3.19	OI	3.25	AI
4	Built formal collaboration (MOA and MOU) with LHO, WCPD, LSWD, private practice counselling (Psychiatrist, Psychologist) for	2.92	OI	3.00	OI

referral services

5	Provided information to the community about the programs and activities about Child Protection	3.33	AI	3.31	AI
6	Involved the community on Programs and activities concerning CP	3.38	AI	3.25	AI
7	Conducted annual assessments of programs and activities	3.02	OI	3.06	OI
Overall Weighted Mean		3.16	OI	3.22	OI

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	Always implemented (AI)
2.50-3.24	Often implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	Seldom implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	Never implemented (NI)

The overall weighted mean for school leaders is 3.16 and 3.22 for community, which were both interpreted as often encountered. The highest mean for school leaders was reflected in indicator 6, Involved the community on programs and activities concerning CP with weighted mean 3.38 while for the community was exhibited in indicator 1, Established active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD, and other government agencies with weighted mean 3.69 interpreted as always encountered.

The schools spearhead the implementation of positive discipline to its learners to promote non-violent, respectful behavior management techniques. This is embodied in the students' manual and disseminated to parents and other stakeholders during general student and SGPT orientation to assist them on its implementation. Other activities include the Barangay forum on child protection sponsored by Barangay Council. On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean for both school and community was found in indicators 4 and 2, Built formal collaboration (MOA and MOU) with LHO, WCPD, LSWD and Private practice counselling with weighted mean of 2.92 and 3.00 interpreted as often implemented. The overall weighted mean for the school is 3.16 while for the community is 3.22 both verbally interpreted as often encountered. These findings can be attributed to the unavailability of formal Memorandum of Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOA and MOU) between the school, LGU and other agencies. Usually, a request or invitation letter is sent by the school to the concerned agency if they need their assistance/presence for smooth processing or referral systems.

3.2.3 Capacities and Resources. Table 7 presents the implementation strategies implemented by schools and community leaders along capacities and resources.

The highest weighted mean for school is 3.25 exhibited by indicator 5, Conducted re-echo seminars for other stakeholders (e.g. teachers, administrators, non-teaching personnel, etc.). Meanwhile, the highest weighted mean for community is shown in indicator 4, Attended appropriate capacity building trainings, workshops, symposium and seminars about CP for community and school representatives with weighted mean 3.28. The overall weighted mean for school and community were 3.23 and 3.14, respectively.

The Department of Education continuously conduct training and seminars on Child Protection policy (DepEd Order 40. s., 2012) for school heads, guidance counselors and community representatives to

reflect DepEd on-going commitment to creating safe and supportive environment for all learners. They comprised the trainers group who disseminate information cascaded to the regional, division and school level as part of its capacity building component. On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean for school and community was both 2.94 displayed in indicator 1, Identified capacity building needs of community and school representatives. But even with these efforts, there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome, especially when it comes to the referral system and dealing with disclosure concerns. The Child Protection Committee (CPC) frequently faces difficulties in effectively coordinating and promptly referring child protection cases to the right outside organizations, such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), or mental health specialists. This frequently causes delays in giving the impacted and prompt intervention and support. These gaps highlight the need for strengthened partnerships, continuous capacity building, and clearer guidelines within the school's child protection framework.

Table 7. Implementation Strategies of School and Community Along Capacities and Resources

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Identified capacity building needs of community and school representatives	2.94	OI	2.94	OI
2 Conducted appropriate capacity building trainings, workshops, symposium and seminars about CP for community and school representatives	3.13	OI	3.00	OI
3 Organized capacity building trainings in coordination with other government and non-government agencies.	3.06	OI	3.16	OI
4 Attended appropriate capacity building trainings, workshops, symposium and seminars about CP for community and school representatives	3.17	OI	3.28	AI
5 Conducted re-echo seminars for other stakeholders (e.g. teachers, administrators, non-teaching personnel, etc.)	3.25	AI		N/A
6 Allocated budget for capacity building of community and school representatives	3.31	AI	3.22	OI
7 Allocated budget for programs and activities targeted by the school and community on CP	3.17	OI	3.25	AI
8 Generated funds from external sources	2.98	OI	3.13	OI
Overall Weighted Mean	3.13	OI	3.14	OI
Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating			
3.25-4.00	Always implemented (AI)			
2.50-3.24	Often implemented (OI)			

1.75-2.49	Seldom implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	Never implemented (NI)

3.2.4 Service Delivery. In terms of service delivery, as reflected in table 8, the highest weighted mean for school was exhibited by indicator 2, Conducted meetings to disseminate information about CP awareness programs and activities with weighted mean of 3.29. Meanwhile, for community, the highest was in indicator 1, Assisted by different agencies in disseminating information on CP with 3.28 and indicator 2, had the same mean as that of school.

As part of implementation of Child Protection policy, the CP Committee hold their regular meeting chaired by the school head to discuss current DepEd and government issuance's relative to its implementation. Likewise, CPC is encouraged to access Child Protection e-learning Course for Educators aimed at enhancing the capabilities of school-based Child Protection Committees comprised of video lessons covering various child protection policies (DM NO. 674, s. 2023).

Table 8 also shows that the lowest weighted mean for school and community is indicator 4, Conducted meetings with other agencies or service providers to discuss referral system and case management with 2.90 and 3.09, respectively. The overall weighted mean of school was 3.10 while that of community was 3.21, both interpreted as often implemented. Official meetings conducted regularly help in assessing, updating and realigning the targeted activities. This will enable the execution of CP policy to be more effective and efficient. These meetings provide a platform for open discussions, allowing stakeholders to identify challenges and develop appropriate solutions collaboratively. Regular assessments ensure that activities remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the school and community. However, due to overlapping schedules of personnel, concerned LGU officials and lack of trained CP members, referral system is usually hampered.

Table 8. Implementation of School and Community Along Service Delivery

Indicators		School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Assisted by different agencies in disseminating information on CP	3.15	OI	3.28	AI
2	Conducted meetings to disseminate information about CP awareness programs and activities	3.29	AI	3.28	AI
3	Conducted case conference	3.17	OI	3.25	AI
4	Conducted meetings with other agencies or service providers to discuss referral system and case management	2.90	OI	3.09	OI
5	Established a monitoring system to address child abuse and violence	2.98	OI	3.13	OI
Overall Weighted Mean		3.10	OI	3.21	OI

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Rating**
 3.25-4.00 Always implemented (AI)

2.50-3.24	Often implemented (OI)
1.75-2.49	Seldom implemented (SI)
1.00-1.74	Never implemented (NI)

3.3 Relationship between Level of Synergy and the Implementation Strategies

In determining the relationships of variables being studied such as the level of synergy and implementing strategies of school and community, the consolidated data from the respondents were used to compute for the correlation.

To test whether a significant relationship exists between the level of synergy and the implementation strategies of school and community in the implementation of child protection policy, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used. Table 9 shows that the implementation strategies along coordination and level of synergy obtained significant relationships along coordination ($r=.554$, $p\text{-value}<.01$), and service delivery ($r=.440$, $p\text{-value}<.01$). This indicates that as the coordination in the implementation strategies increases, the level of synergy along coordination and service delivery also increases. This implies that the high level of implementation on established active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD, and other government agencies resulted in high level of synergy along active involvement of school and community on programs and activities about child protection and tie up with other agencies in disseminating information.

Further, significant relationship also exists between the implementation strategies along capacities and resources and the level of synergy in terms of organization ($r=.223$, $p\text{-value}<.05$) and capacities and resources ($r=.450$, $p\text{-value}<.01$). The positive relationship suggests that an increase in the capacities and resources in the implementation strategy, there is also an increase in the level of synergy along organization and capacities and resources. These results can be interpreted that the allocated budget for capacity building of community and school representatives may consider establishing CPC with schools and community representatives and eventually conduct appropriate capability building trainings, workshops, symposium and seminars about child protection for CPC members.

Table 9. Test for Significant Relationship between the Level of Synergy and Implementation Strategies

Level of Synergy	Implementation Strategies							
	Organization		Coordination		Capacities and Resources		Service Delivery	
	r	$p\text{-value}$	r	$p\text{-value}$	r	$p\text{-value}$	R	$p\text{-value}$
Organization	.181	.108	-.143	.207	.223*	.047	-.070	.535
Coordination	.122	.280	.554**	.000	.072	.528	.383**	.000
Capacities and Resources	.111	.328	-.141	.213	.450**	.000	.012	.914
Service Delivery	-.022	.846	.440**	.000	.125	.269	.429**	.000

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01

Finally, significant relationships also exist in the implementation strategy along service delivery and the level of synergy in terms of coordination ($r=.383$, $p\text{-value}<.01$) and service delivery ($r=.429$, $p\text{-value}<.01$). The positive relationship can be interpreted that, as the implementation strategies on service

delivery increases, the level of synergy in coordination and service delivery also increases. This implies that conducting meetings to disseminate information about CP awareness programs and activities may result a high level of synergy in establishing active communication with PNP, DSWD, WCPD and other agencies as well as collaboration with other agencies in disseminating information.

3.4 Challenges Encountered by the School and Community Leaders in Ensuring Child Protection

The succeeding tables provide data about the challenges encountered by school and community leaders concerning child protection.

3.4.1 Organization. Table 10 reflects the challenges encountered by school and community in terms of organization.

Table 10. Challenges Encountered by School and Community Leaders in Ensuring Protection along Organization

	Indicators	School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Lack of strong leadership or clear governance structures in organizations responsible for child protection	1.77	SE	1.63	NE
2	Weak implementation of existing policies due to unclear guidelines or lack of enforcement mechanism.	1.88	SE	2.00	SE
3	Inefficient distribution of financial, human and physical resources needed for child protection	1.96	SE	2.13	SE
4	Inadequate professional development to keep staff updated on emerging child protection issues.	2.02	SE	2.09	SE
5	Complacency or resistance to change within organizations	2.19	SE	2.06	SE
6	Limited collaboration between different organizations	2.17	SE	2.13	SE
7	Inadequate data management systems making difficult to track cases and monitor progress	2.06	SE	2.09	SE
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.01	SE	2.02	SE

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Rating**

3.25-4.00 Always Encountered (AE)

2.50-3.24 Often Encountered (OE)

1.75-2.49 Seldom Encountered (SE)

1.00-1.74 Never Encountered (NE)

3.4.2 Coordination. Challenges in terms of coordination were also assessed by the respondents and the results were consolidated in Table 11.

Table 11. Challenges Encountered by School and Community Leaders in Ensuring Protection along Coordination

	Indicators	School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Lack of clear or timely communication between child protection agencies.	2.17	SE	1.91	SE
2	Unclear delineation of roles among agencies	2.17	SE	1.94	SE
3	Inadequate staff or training in key institutions such as schools.	2.29	SE	2.03	SE
4	Conflicting guidelines or policies between different organizations involved in child protection	2.04	SE	1.88	SE
5	Poor coordination in tracking case leading to gaps in service provision.	2.21	SE	2.09	SE
6	Differences in approaches or priorities between various agencies.	2.15	SE	1.97	SE
7	Families may be reluctant to cooperate due to fear of stigma, or lack of trust in institution.	2.35	SE	2.06	SE
Overall Weighted Mean		2.20	SE	1.98	SE

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	Often Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	Never Encountered (NE)

It was revealed that indicator 3, Families may be reluctant to cooperate due to fear of stigma, or lack of trust in institution exhibited the highest mean of 2.35 for school with seldom descriptive rating. Consequently, for community, indicator 5, Poor coordination in tracking case leading to gaps in service provision showed the highest mean of 2.09 with “seldom” rating. The lowest weighted mean for the school

and community respondents both pertain to indicator 4, Conflicting guidelines or policies between different organizations involved in child protection with 2.04 and 1.88 weighted mean values respectively interpreted as seldom encountered. The overall weighted mean for school as to coordination was 2.20 while that of community was 1.98, both of which were verbally interpreted as seldom.

Relatively, school respondents communicated that there are times child protection cases are not pursued or coordinated by other suited agencies because even the families are reluctant to cooperate, due to fear of stigma and trust. This is pertaining mainly to incest case or if a family member is the perpetrator. These can be connected to a lack of awareness that certain acts, such as emotional manipulation or neglect, are an example of abuse. Others might not be aware of the legal reporting processes, or they might think that authorities will not give their complaints any importance. But to some, it is a way of creating discord, embarrassment, or disunity in the family.

3.4.3 Capacities and Resources. Table 12 presents the challenges encountered along capacities and resources.

Table 12. Challenges Encountered by School and Community Leaders in Ensuring Protection along Capacities and Resources

	Indicators	School		Community	
		Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Insufficient training on child protection policies	2.04	SE	2.34	SE
2	Absence of clear procedures for reporting and addressing cases of abuse.	1.94	SE	2.38	SE
3	Insufficient or overburdened staff that is assigned in child protection cases.	2.08	SE	2.22	SE
4	Lack of partnerships between the school and stakeholders like poor communication to parents on child safety.	1.94	SE	2.28	SE
5	Insufficient supervision in critical areas e.g. broken fences non-functional security cameras	1.96	SE	2.22	SE
6	Limited funding to support child protection	2.08	SE	2.31	SE
7	Lack of awareness campaigns or training sessions on issues like bullying and online safety	2.10	SE	2.25	SE
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.02	SE	2.29	SE

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	Often Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	Never Encountered (NE)

The highest computed mean in school in terms of this parameter was revealed in indicator 7, Lack of awareness campaigns or training sessions on issues like bullying and online safety with 2.10, interpreted as seldom. On the other hand, for the community, indicator 2, Absence of clear procedures for reporting and addressing cases of abuse, displayed the highest mean with 2.38 and interpreted as seldom. The overall weighted mean for these two were 2.02 and 2.29, which were both seldom encountered.

Lack of awareness campaigns or training sessions on issues like bullying and online safety in terms of capacities and resources got the highest weighted mean, interpreted as seldom encountered. Data showed that while awareness programs and training sessions are important preventative measures, some schools struggle to implement them successfully due to capacity and budgetary limitations. One of the challenges is lack of funding. Furthermore, teachers and staff may lack the necessary knowledge and time to address such complicated concerns in addition to their regular job. Even if they see indicators of bullying or cyberthreats, they may not know how to intervene successfully.

These challenges may be seldom encountered, but there were still cases that were encountered at a lesser frequency. In the study of Matulac and Zamora (2020), procedural issues and reporting may emanate from the lack of proper trainings of members that were directly responsible for addressing the case. This coincided with the result of challenges encountered in coordination where strengthening of linkages with other agencies is highly recommended. These figures reflect the need to reinforce school and community leaders to foster collaboration with other private and government organizations and agencies.

3.4.4 Service Delivery. Table 13 presents the consolidated responses of the respondents.

The highest mean for both school and community were consequently displayed by indicator 5, Insufficient funding to implement child protection programs, hire staff or create safe spaces with values of 2.04 and 2.34, respectively. On the other hand, the lowest mean value for school is reflected in indicator 1, Geographic barriers/transportation issues hence there is limited access to child protection services with weighted mean of 1.52. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean, reading in community, was 1.88 displayed by indicator 2, Understaff/overworked child protection personnel include teacher, BHW etc. The overall weighted mean exhibited in school was 1.87 while that of community was 2.11, which were both verbally interpreted as seldom.

For school, geographic barriers/transportation issues was seldom encountered as challenge. This indicator mainly focused on physical safety, the locale of the study or the schools in Daet North were mostly accessible for transportation and no geographic barriers. As to community, the data showed that they seldom encountered challenges in indicator 2, Understaff/overworked child protection personnel. Although understaffing and overwork among child protection personnel are serious issues, they may not be recognized as such in some communities due to a lack of awareness, shifting priorities others.

Table 14. Challenges Encountered by School and Community Leaders in Ensuring Protection along Service Delivery

Indicators	School		Community	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1 Geographic barriers/transportation issues hence there is limited	1.52	No	1.91	SE

	access to child protection services.				
2	Understaff/ overworked child protection personnel include teacher, BHW etc.	1.85	SE	1.88	SE
3	Ineffective referral system or delay in service delivery due to lack of communication, bureaucracy etc.	1.98	SE	2.13	SE
4	Inadequate training and capacity building	1.96	SE	2.31	SE
5	Insufficient funding to implement child protection programs, hire staff or create safe spaces	2.04	SE	2.34	SE
	Overall Weighted Mean	1.87	SE	2.11	SE

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Rating
3.25-4.00	Always Encountered (AE)
2.50-3.24	Often Encountered (OE)
1.75-2.49	Seldom Encountered (SE)
1.00-1.74	Never Encountered (NE)

3.4 Proposed intervention to Ensure Child Protection Policy Implementation

Considering the result of the consolidated data presented in this chapter, various challenges were highlighted that may become potential dilemma that may affect the proper and accurate implementation of the child protection policy.

Based on the challenges that were given emphasis from the responses, an Intervention Plan is suggested to further strengthen child protection implementation. The intervention plan is composed of the following intervention activities in response to the challenges (1) Establishment of MOA, MOU and other additional linkages; (2) Strategic planning workshops; (3) Conduct of symposia and seminar for stakeholders; and (4) Capacity building and training workshops for school and community leaders. An activity proposal was also proposed to strategically describe the exact actions, goals, resources, and partnerships required to protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, particularly within schools and communities.

2. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study highlighted the synergy between community and school leaders in ensuring successful implementation of child protection policy. This also gave emphasis on the implementing strategies and encountered challenges that affects implementation process. The community and school leaders exhibited medium level of synergy. This also reflects a good implementing strategies of child protection policy across different forged linkages on organizations and other agencies. The significant positive moderate relationships among the parameters of level of synergy and that of strategies such as coordination, capacities and resources and service delivery suggested that resistance to changes and complacency, inadequate

financial aspect, lack of awareness and limited connections were still prominent among leaders of school and community rooted from the significant challenges in the implementation of the child protection policy. Thus, development of a targeted intervention plan aimed at strengthening the implementation of child protection policies is recommended explicitly containing proposed interventions that directly address the identified challenges through the establishment of formal partnerships and linkages, strategic planning sessions, stakeholder education via symposia and seminars, and continuous capacity building for both school and community leaders.

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