


Status in the Implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Policy

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Index Terms:

child safety, protection policy, capacity building, collaborative efforts

Abstract. Schools play a vital role in safeguarding learners through the implementation of child protection policies and programs. This study assessed the status and challenges in the implementation of the Department of Education (DepEd) Child Protection during the School Year 2022–2023. Specifically, it examined the extent of implementation in terms of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign, Capacity Building, Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, and Evaluation, as well as the significant differences in implementation when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design. A total of 300 elementary school teachers from six selected school districts were chosen through random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using mean, independent-samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA. Findings revealed that the overall implementation of the DepEd Child Protection Program was generally “implemented” to “moderately implemented.” Among the five indicators, IEC Campaign obtained the highest overall mean, indicating that awareness campaigns and dissemination of child protection policies were actively conducted in schools. However, Capacity Building, Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, and Evaluation were only moderately implemented, with Implementation and Monitoring receiving the lowest mean score. Statistical analysis further revealed significant differences in the status of implementation when respondents were grouped according to district, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and number of child protection trainings attended. In contrast, no significant differences were found when respondents were grouped according to gender and ethnicity.

Introduction

Child maltreatment remains a significant global public health and human rights concern that threatens the safety, development, and well-being of millions of children worldwide. The World Health Organization (2024) defines child maltreatment as all forms of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence that result in actual or potential harm to a child's health, dignity, survival, and development. Children are particularly vulnerable because of their dependence on adults for care, protection, and emotional support, making them susceptible to abuse both at home and in school environments.

Child abuse may occur in different forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, and bullying. Physical abuse involves intentional acts that cause physical harm, while emotional abuse includes behaviors that damage a child's emotional and psychological well-being. Sexual abuse refers to involving a child in sexual activities that they cannot fully understand or consent to. Bullying, which commonly occurs in schools, includes repeated aggressive behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, or harm vulnerable learners. These experiences have serious consequences on children's physical, emotional, social, and academic development and may lead to long-term mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and low self-esteem (Durrant & Ensom, 2012). Recent studies have shown that exposure to violence during childhood increases the risk of poor educational outcomes, behavioral problems, and psychological distress later in life.

Globally, violence against children remains alarmingly widespread. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, nearly one billion children aged 2–17 years, experience some form of violence, abuse, or neglect every year. In the Philippines, violence against children continues to be a major concern. Reports from the Philippine government and UNICEF (2023) revealed that many Filipino children experience physical punishment, psychological abuse, bullying, and other forms of violence both at home and in school settings. These realities emphasize the urgent need for stronger child protection mechanisms and effective implementation of school-based child protection programs.

Schools play a crucial role in safeguarding children because they serve as primary environments for learning, development, and socialization (Zamora 2018). Teachers and school administrators are considered frontline protectors of children as they are often the first to identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, bullying, and exploitation. Recognizing this responsibility, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, also known as the "Policy and Guidelines on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying and Other Forms of Abuse." This policy promotes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and aims to establish safe, supportive, and child-friendly learning environments in all schools.

Despite the implementation of child protection policies, cases of bullying, abuse, and violence among learners continue to be reported in many schools. Challenges such as inadequate awareness, insufficient training, limited resources, and inconsistent policy enforcement may hinder the effective implementation of child protection programs. Teachers and school administrators may also encounter barriers in identifying, reporting, and managing child protection cases (Walsh et al, 2021). Consequently, there is a continuing need to assess how child protection policies are being implemented and determine the challenges faced by schools in ensuring children's safety and welfare.

Incidents involving bullying and other forms of child abuse among elementary learners remain a concern. Young learners are particularly vulnerable due to their age, dependence, and limited capacity to protect themselves. Hence, this study seeks to assess the status and implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program. Specifically, it aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing child protection practices and identify areas for improvement in creating safer and more protective school environments for learners.

Research Questions

This study was aimed to determine the status and challenges in the Implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in selected school districts in Zamboanga City. It specifically seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What is the status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Information Education and Communication Campaign, Capacity Building, Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, and Evaluation? (2) Is there a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their profile?

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their profile.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a Quantitative descriptive research design which was appropriate to assess and evaluate the status in the implementation of the child protection program of the Department of Education. Descriptive method of research as one involving collection of data in order to test hypothesis to answer the questions concerning the correct status of the subject of the study. Descriptive design is the most commonly used method of investigation in educational research.

Study Population

The target population of the study are elementary school teachers of six selected school districts in Zamboanga City for school year 2022-2023. Random sampling design was utilized to get the sample size of 300 respondents. It is a probability sampling technique where every member of a population has an equal, known chance of being selected, reducing selection bias and enhancing generalizability. The 300 respondents were profiled according to their district schools, sex, ethnicity, educational status, length of service, number of child protection seminars attended in the last 3 years.

Missing data in the demographic profile were carefully examined prior to analysis to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the dataset. Cases with incomplete responses were managed using appropriate statistical procedures depending on the extent and pattern of missingness. In this study, listwise deletion was employed for variables with minimal missing data, wherein respondents with incomplete demographic information were purposely excluded from specific analyses.

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	114	38
Female	186	62
<i>District School</i>		
District school A	49	16
District school B	45	15
District school C	48	16
District school D	49	16
District school E	46	15
District school F	43	14
Missing data*	20	7
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Chavacano	96	32
Visayan	87	29
Tausug	82	27
Others	21	7
Missing data*	14	5
<i>Educational status</i>		
Baccalaureate	48	15.9
Masters unit	135	44.9
Masters degree	89	29.6
Doctorate unit	23	8.0
Doctorate Degree	4	1.3
Missing data*	1	0.3
<i>Length of service</i>		
1-3 years	61	20.3
4-6 years	127	42.2
7-9 years	80	26.6
10 years and above	30	10.0
Missing data*	14	5.0
<i>Number of child protection seminar attended in the last 3 years</i>		
none	34	11.3
1-2	135	44.9
3-4	109	36.2
5-6	16	5.6
7 and above	5	1.7
Missing data*	1	0.3

*Note: Missing data were not supplied by some respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=300)

Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire consists of two (2) parts. Part 1 solicited the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, educational qualification, length of service in teaching, and number of child protection training/ seminar attended within three (3) years. Part 2 consisted of five (5) components, namely: Information Education and Communication Campaign; Capacity Building; Linkages and Coordination; Implementation and Monitoring; and Evaluation. Each component has 4 constructs each related to extent of implementation of child protection program of the Department of Education. A five point Likert scoring technique was utilized, with its descriptive value as follows: 1 - Not implemented (program activities have not been carried out at all), 2 -slightly implemented (program activities are minimally carried out with major gaps or inconsistencies), 3 - Moderately implemented (program activities are implemented to an average extent with some inconsistencies), and 4 - *Implemented* (program activities are generally well carried out with only minor

inconsistencies) and 5- Highly implemented (program activities are fully, consistently, and effectively carried out as intended). The questionnaire was presented to three (3) research experts for validation to suit to the context of the study.

Ethical Consideration

In compliance to Research Ethics Protocol, the researchers obtained an informed consent from the survey respondents specifying their awareness to the purpose of the study. Their agreement to participate as survey respondents, their freedom to disclose or not to disclose information, their freedom to stop their participation anytime if they do not feel comfortable, their right to be informed of the results of the study, the benefits they will get if there will be any as a result of the study, and their right to confidentiality of information and anonymity of their identity will be respected. In the course of the survey, no pictures showing their faces will be taken nor does identifying feature of their address and location unless allowed by the respondents. The researcher declares that there was no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study. The research was carried out independently, and no financial, personal, professional, or institutional relationships influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, or publication of results. Additionally, to ensure that the study was within ethical standards, this study was subjected for evaluation to the Western Mindanao State University Research Ethics Oversight Committee.

Statistical Tool

To facilitate the analysis of data, the following statistical measures were used: Percentage was used to determine the percentage of the respondents with the same demographic characteristics. Weighted Average Mean was utilized to determine the status in the implementation of the Child Protection Program of the Department of Education in 6 school districts in terms of the 5 domains. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to determine the significant difference in the status of the implementation of the Child Protection Program of the Department of Education when respondents are grouped according to district school, ethnicity, educational status and socio-economic status while independent-samples t-test was used to find the significant difference in the status of the implementation of the Child Protection Program of the Department of Education when respondents are grouped according to sex.

Results and Discussion

The quantitative results and discussion below addressed the status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Information Education and Communication Campaign, Capacity Building, Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, and Evaluation and the significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their profile.

Status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Information Education and Communication Campaign, Capacity Building, Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, and Evaluation

Information Education and Communication Campaign	Mean	Remarks
The school initiates information Education and communication campaign program for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying or peer abuse.	3.73	Implemented
The school organizes educational activities to inform and educate pupils about their basic rights.	3.84	Implemented
The school ensures all pupils, school personnel, parents, guardians or custodians, and visitors and guests are made aware of child protection policy.	3.69	Implemented
The school ensures that pupils are informed of the code of conduct to be followed by every pupil while on school grounds, or when traveling to and from school, or during a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off campus.	3.57	Implemented
Grand Mean	3.71	Implemented

Table 2. Status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of information education and communication campaign

Table 2 presents the status of the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns. Findings revealed that schools generally implemented activities promoting children’s rights awareness, child protection education, anti-bullying campaigns, and dissemination of school policies related to child safety and conduct. Among the indicators, organizing educational activities to inform pupils about their rights obtained the highest mean score (3.84), followed by the conduct of IEC campaigns against abuse, violence,

exploitation, discrimination, and bullying (3.73). Schools also ensured that pupils, parents, school personnel, and visitors were informed about child protection policies and expected standards of conduct. The overall mean score of 3.71, verbally interpreted as “implemented,” indicates that the selected schools actively carried out IEC-related child protection initiatives.

The findings emphasize the significant role of information dissemination and awareness campaigns in strengthening child protection efforts within schools. Effective IEC programs help educate learners, parents, and school personnel regarding children’s rights, reporting mechanisms, and preventive measures against abuse and violence. Studies have shown that school-based awareness campaigns improve knowledge, encourage reporting of abuse, and promote safer learning environments (Daro, 2019). Furthermore, active participation of parents, teachers, and community stakeholders enhances the effectiveness of child protection programs by fostering collective responsibility for children’s welfare.

These findings support the view that schools serve as vital platforms for promoting child safety and rights awareness (Briones, 2019). Through continuous education and advocacy campaigns, schools can empower children to recognize and report abuse while encouraging communities to become more vigilant and responsive to child protection concerns.

Capacity Building	Mean	Remarks
The school conducts the appropriate training and capability building activities on child protection measures and protocols.	3.39	Moderately Implemented
The school provides training modules which include positive and non-violent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management and gender sensitivity are use.	3.39	Moderately Implemented
The school employs means to enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children’s rights in the classroom.	3.49	Moderately Implemented
The schools provide training to empower teachers with skills in early detection of pupils who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical emotional or behavioral signs.	3.28	Moderately Implemented
Grand Mean	3.39	Moderately Implemented

Table 3. Status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Capacity Building

Table 3 presents the status of the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of capacity building. Findings revealed that schools moderately implemented activities aimed at strengthening teachers’ competencies in child protection. Among the indicators, enhancing teachers’ skills and pedagogy in integrating children’s rights into classroom instruction obtained the highest mean score (3.49). This was followed by the conduct of training and capability-building activities on child protection protocols (3.39), provision of training modules on positive discipline, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity (3.39), and training teachers to identify learners showing signs of abuse or emotional distress (3.28). The overall mean score of 3.39, interpreted as “moderately implemented,” indicates that while capacity-building initiatives are present, further enhancement and continuous professional development are still needed.

The findings highlight the importance of teacher training in strengthening school-based child protection programs. Capacity-building initiatives equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, respond to, and prevent cases of abuse, bullying, neglect, and other forms of violence among learners (Nadeen 2016). Research suggests that trained school personnel are more confident and effective in recognizing at-risk students, making referrals, and implementing child protection measures. Moreover, professional development programs that promote positive discipline, mental health awareness, and gender sensitivity contribute to safer and more supportive learning environments (Allen, 2023). These results imply that continuous training and institutional support are essential to improve the effectiveness of child protection implementation in schools. Strengthening teachers’ competencies can enhance early detection of child welfare concerns and promote a more proactive and responsive child protection system within the educational setting (UNICEF, 2023).

Linkages and Coordination	Mean	Remarks
Coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or appropriate government agencies or non-governmental organization working on Child protection for incidence of child abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts and for counseling.	3.45	Moderately Implemented

The school coordinate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP) for incidence of child abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts.	3.50	Moderately Implemented
The school has a system for coordinating with teachers to identify students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical emotional or behavioral signs.	3.50	Moderately Implemented
4. The school coordinates with DepEd Division Office any incidence of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts reported and filed to the school.	3.41	Moderately Implemented
Grand Mean	3.46	Moderately Implemented

Table 4. Status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of Linkages and Coordination

Table 4 presents the status of the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of linkages and coordination. The findings revealed that schools moderately implemented collaborative efforts with various agencies and stakeholders involved in child protection. Among the indicators, coordination with the Women and Children Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police and coordination among teachers to identify learners showing signs of abuse or distress both obtained the highest mean score (3.50). Coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and non-government organizations for counseling and intervention services was also moderately implemented (3.45), while reporting and coordination with the DepEd Division Office regarding cases of abuse, violence, bullying, and exploitation obtained a mean score of 3.41. The overall mean score of 3.46, interpreted as “moderately implemented,” indicates that inter-agency collaboration exists but still requires strengthening for more effective child protection implementation.

The findings underscore the importance of strong partnerships and coordinated efforts among schools, law enforcement agencies, social welfare institutions, mental health professionals, and community organizations in ensuring children’s safety and well-being. Research suggests that collaborative child protection systems improve early identification, reporting, intervention, and support services for vulnerable learners. Effective school-community partnerships also enhance schools’ capacity to address bullying, abuse, mental health concerns, and other child welfare issues through a multidisciplinary approach. School safety requires a broad-based effort by the entire community, including educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and faith-based organizations, among others. By adopting a comprehensive approach to addressing school safety focusing on prevention, intervention, and response, schools can increase the safety and security of students (Fisher, B. W., et.al. 2023).

Effective strategies recognized as best practices include multidisciplinary approaches, community engagement, and strong leadership from Local Government Units. However, several persistent challenges remain, including resource constraints, capacity gaps, coordination issues, and socio-cultural barriers (Andaya, E. J. & Patricio, R. S., 2025). Furthermore, coordination with external agencies provides schools with specialized resources and expertise that may not be readily available within the educational setting. Continuous collaboration among stakeholders is therefore essential in strengthening school-based child protection mechanisms and creating safer, more responsive, and child-friendly learning environments (Ballard, 2018).

Implementation and Monitoring	Mean	Remarks
The school Implements of positive measures and effective procedures in providing necessary support for the children and for those who care for children	3.27	Moderately Implemented
Teachers conduct home visitation to monitor pupils who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical emotional or behavioral signs.	3.12	Moderately Implemented
The school implements referral system to appropriate agencies for any incident of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts.	3.41	Moderately Implemented
The school elevates any complain of maltreatment done by teaching and non-teaching personnel to the Division Office.	3.42	Moderately Implemented
Grand Mean	3.30	Moderately Implemented

Table 5. Status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of program implementation and monitoring

Table 5 presents the status of the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of implementation and monitoring. Findings revealed that schools moderately implemented key child protection measures and monitoring practices. Among the indicators, elevating complaints of maltreatment involving teaching and non-teaching

personnel to the Division Office obtained the highest mean score (3.42), followed by the implementation of referral systems to appropriate agencies for cases of abuse, violence, bullying, exploitation, and discrimination (3.41). Schools also moderately implemented supportive interventions for affected children and caregivers (3.27), as well as home visitation activities for learners showing signs of physical, emotional, or behavioral harm (3.12). The overall mean score of 3.30, interpreted as “moderately implemented,” suggests that monitoring and intervention mechanisms are present but still require strengthening for more effective child protection implementation.

The findings highlight the importance of effective monitoring systems, timely reporting procedures, and coordinated intervention strategies in safeguarding learners from abuse and violence. Studies indicate that strong implementation of school-based child protection policies contributes to early detection of maltreatment, improved referral systems, and better support services for vulnerable children (Mungen and Markstrom, 2019). School leadership and teacher involvement are also critical in ensuring that child protection protocols are consistently implemented and monitored.

However, challenges such as limited training, unclear reporting procedures, fear of misreporting, and insufficient resources may affect teachers’ ability to effectively identify and report suspected abuse cases (Topping & Baron, 2020). Strengthening educators’ competencies and establishing clear monitoring mechanisms are therefore essential in improving the implementation of child protection programs and ensuring safer school environments for learners.

The conduct of home visitation by teachers to monitor pupils who may be experiencing significant physical, emotional, or behavioral harm may have obtained the lowest mean in the implementation of the Department of Education’s Child Protection Policy due to several institutional, logistical, and psychosocial factors. This result is with studies of Buot (2024), Alda, A. M, et.al. (2024) and Unger, K., & Gothe, B. D. (2026).

One major reason is the issue of teacher workload and time constraints. Teachers already manage extensive teaching, administrative, and co-curricular responsibilities, making home visitation difficult to prioritize. Studies on child protection implementation in Philippine schools noted that overlapping school activities and excessive workload limit teachers’ ability to conduct community-based interventions such as home visits (Buot, 2024). Another contributing factor concerns teachers’ safety and security during home visits. Teachers may need to travel to geographically isolated or high-risk communities, exposing them to possible threats, especially when dealing with sensitive child protection cases. Research on teachers’ experiences in home visitation found that educators perceived significant risks to their personal safety when visiting learners’ homes outside school premises. Additionally, Insufficient training and lack of confidence in handling child protection cases may also explain the low implementation level. Many teachers may not feel adequately prepared to identify abuse indicators, conduct sensitive family interactions, or manage legal and ethical concerns associated with child welfare investigations (Unger, K., & Gothe, B. D, 2026).

Evaluation	Mean	Remarks
The school evaluates a school-based referral and monitoring system for any incident of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts.	3.41	Moderately Implemented
The school evaluates positive measures and effective procedures in providing necessary support for the children and for those who care for children	3.36	Moderately Implemented
The school reviews the school-based child protection program and codes of conduct.	3.32	Moderately Implemented
The school evaluates the progress of cases referred to appropriate agencies.	3.38	Moderately Implemented
Grand Mean	3.37	Moderately Implemented

Table 6. Status in the Implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of program evaluation

Table 6 presents the status of the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in terms of evaluation. Findings revealed that schools moderately implemented evaluation activities related to child protection practices and interventions. Among the indicators, evaluating the school-based referral and monitoring system for incidents of abuse, violence, bullying, exploitation, and discrimination obtained the highest mean score (3.41). This was followed by evaluating the progress of cases referred to appropriate agencies (3.38), assessing support measures provided to affected children and caregivers (3.36), and reviewing school-based child protection programs and codes of conduct (3.32). The overall mean score of 3.37, interpreted as “moderately implemented,” indicates that evaluation mechanisms are present but require further strengthening to ensure effective program implementation and continuous improvement. The findings emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring the effectiveness of school-based child protection programs. Regular evaluation enables schools to assess the adequacy of referral systems, intervention strategies, and support services for learners affected by abuse and violence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2020). It

also provides evidence-based information that guides program improvement, policy development, resource allocation, and decision-making processes.

The result is supported by the 2023 comprehensive evaluation done by the United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on the effectiveness of its projects for protecting children from violence. Evidence showed that the effectiveness of child protection program is very variable and seems to be only average. It was found that 13 percent of its projects for protecting children from violence were deemed not effective, 67 percent partly effective, and 19 percent effective.

Furthermore, effective evaluation practices help schools identify gaps in implementation, strengthen accountability, and improve collaboration among stakeholders involved in child protection. Continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms are therefore essential in sustaining safe, responsive, and child-friendly school environments.

Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their profile.

District	N	Mean	F-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
District school A	49	3.42	3.022	0.011	significant	Reject Ho
District school B	45	3.44				
District school C	48	3.26				
District school D	49	3.61				
District school E	46	3.19				
District school F	43	3.75				

Table 7. Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents were grouped according to district.

Table 7 shows the result of One-way ANOVA. Since the p -value (0.011) $< \alpha=0.05$, therefore, the Null Hypothesis is rejected. The evidence is enough to conclude that there is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to District at 95% Confidence Interval.

The findings above revealed that the significant difference among the group is district school F, which yield the highest mean score of 3.75, and district school E, with the lowest mean score of 3.19. This can be interpreted that school F implemented Department of Education Child Protection Program the most, over the rest of respondent districts, while school E came in last implementing of the Department of Education Child Protection Program among the 5 respondent districts.

The findings is supported by Gibbons (2019) in his study on English child protection register statistics. The results of his study revealed a wide and persistent variation in the implementation of child protection policy between and among school authorities. However, his study also showed that over time their rank order remain moderately stable. According to the findings of his study, socio demographic characteristics of area combined with differing practices of schools have been found to explain much of the variability.

In the Philippines, the varying degree in the implementation of the child protection programs between the public and private institutions can be attributed to lack of commitment and motivation among the primary personnel involved in the implementation of the programs (Zamora 2018).

Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents were grouped according

Sex	N	Mean	T-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
Male	114	3.46	0.222	0.824	Not significant	Failed to reject Ho
Female	187	3.44				

Table 8: Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents were grouped according to sex

Table 8 shows the result of Independent-samples T test. Since p -value (0.824) is $> \alpha=0.05$, therefore, failed to reject Null hypothesis. The evidence is enough to conclude that there is no significant difference in the status of implementation of

Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to Gender at 95% Confidence Interval.

The findings revealed that gender affiliation of the teachers does not have a significant bearing in the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program. It showed that the implementation of the program does not vary on the gender of the program implementors.

The finding is supported by the study of Dima (2023), on gender capacity development of teaching and non-teaching personnel. The study revealed that active gender sensitivity trainings introduced gender in institutional policies for both teaching and non-teaching personnel. It contributed to development of conceptual understanding about gender and the principles of equality in education. It further revealed that majority of teaching and non-teaching personnel have gain, regardless of their gender affiliation have gained new insights, and enriched knowledge and practical skills for equal treatment of learners.

Earlier studies conducted by Sumsion (2005), however, showed the high incidence of sexual abuse cases involving male teachers reduced public support for male educators in primary learning. Parents and school administrators expressed their hesitance towards males teaching young children due to their concerns for child safety against pedophile. While male teachers are employed at early childhood level in government schools, majority of men working at private schools are either employed in teaching post-primary classes or for school administrative purposes.

Ethnicity	N	Mean	F-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
Chavacano	96	3.33	1.383	0.248	Not significant	Failed to reject Ho
Visayan	87	3.58				
Tausug	82	3.43				
Others	21	3.42				

Table 9. Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to ethnicity.

Table 9 shows the result of One-way ANOVA. Since the $p\text{-value} (0.248) > \alpha=0.05$, therefore, failed to reject the Null Hypothesis. The evidence is not enough to conclude that there is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to Ethnicity at 95% Confidence Interval.

The above findings can be interpreted that the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program is not affected by the ethnicity of school personnel and staff implementing the program. The result showed that there is no variation in the implementation of the Department of Education Child Protection Program in respondent school districts notwithstanding differences in the ethnicity and cultural orientation of the program implementors,

The UNICEF (2023) explained that the approach to child protection is universal to all nations. The utmost quality of child protection is a shared responsibility of human races. Along this line, the UNICEF is committed to continuous improvement of child protection policy in collaboration with all the international and even its local stakeholders.

The views of the UNICEF, however, is not congruent with the findings in other research studies.) found that in Minnesota, white American teachers showed high rate of intolerance to African American and Native Americans students. It was revealed in their studies that African American and Native Americans students were six times more likely to be maltreated than white American and Caucasian students.

Educational Attainment	N	Mean	F-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
Baccalaureate	48	3.48	3.434	0.000	Significant	Reject Ho
With Master's units	135	3.58				
Master's Degree	89	3.44				
With Doctorate Units	24	3.28				
Doctorate Degree	4	3.24				

Table 10: Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents were grouped according to educational attainment

Table 10 shows the result of One-way ANOVA. Since the $p\text{-value} (0.000) < \alpha=0.05$, therefore, the Null Hypothesis is rejected. The evidence is enough to conclude that there is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of

Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to Educational Attainment at 95% Confidence Interval.

The findings above revealed that there is a significant difference between the group of respondents with masters units, which yield the highest mean score of 3.58, and the group of respondents with doctorate degree, with the lowest mean score of 3.24. The former had drawn a higher mean of 0.34 compared to latter. This can be interfered that respondents with masters units exerts more effort in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program that respondents with doctorate degree. Many school districts and states have long encouraged teachers to pursue graduate education. Teachers are frequently permitted to use graduate credits for recertification (Hill, 2007), In Newfoundland and Labrador, as in many other areas, teachers who receive Doctorate of Education degree advance on the certification scale, receive a salary increase and occupies administrative positions. However, educational institutions are reluctant to give leadership positions, especially that of principal and assistant principal to teachers with less qualification or did not finish their master's degree qualification of teachers, hence, they remain as regular classroom teachers. The finding of the study is congruent with the concept of Hilda Taba Grass-root Approach in Curriculum Development. It is believed that regular classroom teachers, who are more aware of the students' needs, can play a crucial part in preventing child maltreatment since they work directly with the students and are regarded as grass-root implementer of the school programs.

Years of Teaching Experience	N	Mean	F-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
0 – 3	61	3.30	4.345	0.010	Significant	Reject Ho
4 – 6	127	3.35				
7 – 9	80	3.69				
10 and above	30	3.57				

Table 11. Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to Years of Teaching experience.

Table 11 shows the result of One-way ANOVA. Since the $p\text{-value} (0.010) < \alpha=0.05$, therefore, the Null Hypothesis is rejected. The evidence is enough to conclude that there is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to Years of Teaching Experience at 95% Confidence Interval. The above findings revealed that the significant difference among the group is only in between 7-9 years of teaching experience and 0-3 years of teaching experience. 7-9 drawn a higher mean of 0.39 compared to 0-3. This can be interpreted that the group of respondents with 7-9 years of teaching experience had showed had significantly implemented the Department of Education Child Protection Program, as evidence of a higher mean score compared to the grouped of respondents with 0-3 years of teaching experience. The result is also evident on the accounts of participants in the interview conducted parallel to the study. It was revealed that majority of the newly hired teachers expressed that they have difficult time dealing with problematic students. According to Laats (2020), new graduates of formal teacher preparation programs frequently encounter difficulties when they experience the practical realities of schools. Teacher education programs tend to predominantly orient pre-service teachers theoretically and practically. However, teacher education pre-service programs are unable to supply all of the work-related information that novice teachers need to perform their work roles because much of this information is context specific within the school setting. The daily work within schools is embedded in contexts, and novice teachers experience unexpected events and situations that occur daily in school life and the satisfaction that teachers experience in performing their daily routines is linked to factors which can lead to either job attrition or sense of self-worth and self-confidence to carry on with the daunting task of a teacher (Lowery, 2002).

Number of trainings attended for the last 3 years	N	Mean	F-value	P-value	Significant	Decision
0	34	3.42	3.720	0.000	Significant	Reject Ho
1 – 2	135	3.47				
3 – 4	109	3.49				
5 – 6	17	2.81				
7 and above	5	4.15				

Table 12. Significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to number of trainings attended

Table 12 shows the result of One-way ANOVA. Since the $p\text{-value} (0.000) < \alpha=0.05$, therefore, the Null Hypothesis is rejected. The evidence is enough to conclude that there is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of

Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to number of related trainings on child protection attended in the last three years at *95% Confidence Interval*.

It the findings revealed that that the significant difference among the group is also in between 7 and above number of related trainings on child protection attended and 5-6 number of seminars attended in the last three years. 7 and above drawn a higher mean difference of 1.34 compared to 5-6. However, the 7 and above number of trainings on child protection only benefited a very small portion of the population.

According to Kenny (2001), training and staff development programs for those who work with children are an excellent starting point. These programs should stress identifying, reporting, treating, and preventing child maltreatment; furnish information on professional roles and responsibilities; and offer opportunities for free and frank discussion of mutual interests and problems among professionals in various disciplines. Some States even require educators to receive training on being a mandated reporter.

Further, as front-liners of the school in child protection, school personnel must be properly selected and trained to effectively implement the relevant policies to this effect. The success of the implementation of the child protection policy necessitates consciousness and commitment of the members of the academic community. Glouchkow (2022) states that all school personnel must be trained in recognizing and reporting alleged ill-treatment of children by parents, guardians, and even by school personnel themselves.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results revealed in this study, the following conclusions were made. Among the five (5) indicators on the status in the implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program, information education and communication campaign ranked the highest. The other indicators such as the Linkages and Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring, Capacity Building and Evaluation are all moderately implemented. However, Implementation and Monitoring ranked the least among indicators which were moderately implemented. There is a significant difference in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their district, educational attainment and number of years in service, number of trainings attended. However, no significant difference was noted in the status of implementation of Department of Education Child Protection Program when respondents are grouped according to their age and ethnicity.

This study has a strong implication for the Department of Education to intensify its program implementation and monitoring in the different school districts under its jurisdiction in order to ensure that the welfare of its primary stakeholders – the learners is protected as mandated by our fundamental law of the land and increase the confidence level of the parents repost on the leading frontrunners in education. School administrators should strengthen their mentoring and supervision of subordinates in the performance of their functions to ensure the establishment and maintenance of a good relationship with children and parents as stakeholders of the school. Some of the actions that may be taken by the administrators are consistent ocular inspection, dialogue, and small group discussion between the immediate heads and underlings. Teachers must be enjoined to undergo training through the capacity building program that will educate on child protection for them to efficiently and effectively handle classroom issues and complaints concerning child protection in their level of authority as second parents of children in school. Parents and students must also be educated and encouraged to actively participate as partners in all advocacies and programs of the school related to child protection. Their dynamic involvement serves as their commitment to the institution to work together for the protection and welfare of their children and will help the school to become a safe place for their sons and daughters, next to their home.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.