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Engagement of LGU and Implementation of Child Protection Policy (CPP): A Social Science Perspective

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ABSTRACT: This research evaluates the engagement of Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) and school personnel in implementing the Child Protection Policy (CPP) within the Loreto District of Agusan del Sur. Recognizing the barangay as the frontline institution for safeguarding children, the study identifies a critical gap between policy awareness and systematic execution. Using an explanatory-sequential mixed methods design, data were collected from 105 respondents—including 53 teachers, 27 BLGU officials, 7 social workers, and other key stakeholders—followed by qualitative key informant interviews and focus group discussions across three research sites (Poblacion, Binucayan, and Kauswagan). Findings indicate that while school personnel (M=4.47, Very Clear Understanding) and barangay personnel (M=4.18, Clear Understanding) demonstrate high awareness of CPP mandates, implementation is frequently "personality-driven," relying on individual social capital and informal adaptations to bypass bureaucratic and resource constraints. Statistical analysis revealed significant positive correlations (Spearman ρ ranging from 0.563 to 0.834, $p < .001$) between role conceptualization and the extent of implementation, indicating that clearer role understanding linearly improves the effectiveness of protection mechanisms. Qualitative themes highlighted institutional bottlenecks, financial scarcity addressed through adaptive budgeting (e.g., utilizing the 1% BNAP allocation), and socio-cultural pressures arising from social proximity. To address these challenges, the study introduces the Localized Child Protection Collaboration and Governance Enhancement Framework (LCPC-GEF). This framework provides a system-driven approach across five domains: Governance, Coordination, Resource Support, Human Capacity, and Ethical Accountability. The study concludes that transitioning from personality-reliant to system-driven governance is essential for sustainable child protection.

KEYWORDS: Child Protection Policy, Local Government Units, School-Community Collaboration, Explanatory-Sequential Mixed Methods, LCPC-GEF

I. INTRODUCTION

In the decentralized Philippine governance landscape, the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) is positioned as the "first line of defense" for child welfare. Legally mandated to mitigate risks at the grassroots level, the BLGU must operate in synergy with educational institutions to translate national mandates into localized safety. However, the efficacy of this "frontline" role is often compromised by the tension between formal legal requirements and the socio-political realities of rural districts.

Child protection is a fundamental pillar of social development requiring multisectoral engagement that transcends mere compliance. In Loreto District, Agusan del Sur, the urgency of this mandate is reflected in the 2024–2025 school year incident data: Binucayan National High School recorded nine cases of bullying and cyberbullying, while Loreto and Kauswagan National High Schools documented thirteen and six cases, respectively. Beyond peer-related harm, a critical failure in systemic governance was exemplified by the unauthorized arrest of a student at Binucayan National High School by PNP personnel from Panabo, conducted without localized coordination. Such incidents highlight the "smoking gun" of current implementation: a dangerous reliance on individual discretion rather than robust, inter-agency protocols.

This study integrates three analytical lenses: **Good Governance Theory** (macro), **Social Capital Theory** (meso), and **Symbolic Interactionism** (micro). Good Governance focuses on the institutionalization of accountability within the BLGU. Social Capital Theory, as advanced by Putnam (2020), explains how trust-based networks between schools and communities facilitate service delivery. Finally, Symbolic Interactionism analyzes how frontline actors—such as a Kagawad or teacher—assign meaning to their roles. This synthesis is vital: while macro-structures demand reporting, micro-level "social proximity" often leads

implementers to use the "discretion" identified by Lipsky (2020) to settle cases informally, potentially overriding formal mandates in favor of community harmony.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized an "Explanatory-Sequential Mixed Methods" design to bridge the gap between statistical trends and the lived experiences of policy implementers. The research was executed in two phases: a quantitative survey to establish baseline engagement levels, followed by qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to explore institutional factors. The locale comprised three purposively selected sites in Loreto District: Loreto National High School, Binucayan National High School, and Kauswagan National High School, representing varied socio-economic barangay contexts (Poblacion, Binucayan, and Kauswagan).

A total of 105 respondents participated in the quantitative phase, categorized into five stakeholder groups: Teachers (53), School Heads (3), SPTA representatives (9), BLGU Officials (27), and Social Workers (7). For the qualitative phase, 16 key informants per school were selected based on their direct involvement in CPP coordination. A significant demographic nuance emerged: while school personnel hold advanced graduate degrees, 43% of barangay personnel are high school graduates, creating a potential technical barrier to interpreting complex legal mandates.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation (). Qualitative data underwent Reflexive Thematic Analysis to identify drivers of "street-level bureaucracy." Ethical adherence followed the Belmont Report principles—Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice—ensuring informed consent and data privacy under the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a functional, yet institutionally fragile child protection ecosystem characterized by high awareness but inconsistent formalization.

Profile of the Respondents on the Engagement and Implementation of CPP in terms of School Personnel and Barangay Personnel

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

School Personnel			**Barangay Personnel**		
Profile	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**	**Profile**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Age			**Age**		
20-27 years old	10	17	20-27 years old	4	10
28-35 years old	26	43	28-35 years old	8	20
36-43 years old	16	27	36-43 years old	10	25
44-51 years old	4	7	44-51 years old	4	10
52-59 years old	3	5	52-59 years old	10	25
60 and above years old	1	2	60 and above years old	4	10
Total	**60**	**100**	**Total**	**40**	**100**
Gender			**Gender**		
Male	15	25	Male	13	33
Female	43	72	Female	27	68
Prefer to Self-Describe	1	2	Prefer to Self-Describe	0	0
Prefer not to say	1	2	Prefer not to say	0	0
Total	**60**	**100**	**Total**	**40**	**100**
Educational Attainment			**Educational Attainment**		
Bachelor's Degree	26	43	Elementary Graduate	4	10
With Master's Unit	26	43	High School Graduate	17	43
Master's Degree	3	5	Senior High School Graduate	0	0
With Doctoral Units	1	2	Vocational/Technical	4	10
Doctorate Degree	0	0	College Undergraduate	6	15
Others	4	7	College Graduate	9	23
Total	60	100	Post Graduate	0	0

Religion			**Total**	40	100
Christianity	0	0	**Religion**		
Roman Catholic	38	63	Christianity	0	0
Protestant	11	18	Roman Catholic	26	65
Iglesia Ni Cristo	1	2	Protestant	4	10
Others under Christianity	10	17	Iglesia Ni Cristo	0	0
Islam	0	0	Others under Christianity	10	25
Others	0	0	Islam	0	0
Total	60	100	Others	0	0
Position/Designation			**Total**	40	100
School Principal	3	5	**Position/Designation**		
Guidance Counselor/Designate	3	5	Barangay Captain	3	8
Academic Coordinator	4	7	Kagawad	24	60
Class Adviser	39	65	Health Worker	2	5
SPTA BOD/ SGC Representative	8	13	Social Worker	11	28
Child Protection Coordinator	1	2	CPP Coordinator	0	0
Others	2	3	Others	0	0
Total	**60**	**100**	**Total**	**40**	**100**

The data illustrates a female-dominated workforce across both sectors (72% in schools; 68% in barangays), suggesting that women serve as the primary "frontline gatekeepers" of child welfare in Loreto. A stark disparity exists in educational attainment; 86% of school personnel possess graduate units or degrees, whereas high school graduation (43%) is the modal educational level for barangay personnel. This disparity underscores the need for localized technical support to bridge the gap between complex legal mandates and grassroots execution. From a Social Capital perspective (Putnam, 1993), the reliance on Class Advisers and Kagawads indicates that policy success is anchored in the relational energy of frontline actors rather than a rigid administrative hierarchy.

Level of Perception of the Respondents on their Respective Mandates and Responsibilities under CPP

Table 2. Level of Perception of the Respondents on Their Mandates and Responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy

School Personnel			**Barangay Personnel**	
Dimension	**Mean**	**Verbal Description**	**Mean**	**Verbal Description**
Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	4.57	Very Clear Understanding	4.32	Very Clear Understanding
Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	4.53	Very Clear Understanding	4.18	Clear Understanding
Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	4.32	Very Clear Understanding	4.26	Very Clear Understanding
Institutional Support and Enablement	4.41	Very Clear Understanding	4.08	Clear Understanding
Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	4.5	Very Clear Understanding	4.07	Clear Understanding
Overall	**4.47**	**Very Clear Understanding**	**4.18**	**Clear Understanding**

Perception levels dictate the transition of policy from a legal document to a lived social practice. School personnel maintain a "Very Clear Understanding" (4.47), likely due to professional development exposure, as noted by Dela Fuente (2021). Barangay personnel demonstrate a "Clear Understanding" (4.18). A critical "Awareness vs. Confidence" gap is observed: while awareness of policy existence is the highest indicator for both, school personnel report their lowest mean in self-perceived confidence (4.32). This mirrors findings by Alda et al. (2024) regarding operational hesitancy in rural settings. The BCPC's role is recognized as "Very Clear" by the barangay (4.32), yet institutional support (4.08) remains a point of relative weakness.

Significant Difference on the Perception of the Respondents on their Respective Mandates and Responsibilities when Grouped according to Profile

Table 3. Significant Differences in the Level of Perception of the Respondents on CPP Mandates and Responsibilities When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Demographic Profile	Level of Perception of School Personnel on Mandates and Responsibilities under the CPP	School Personnel			Barangay Personnel		
		Test Statistic	p-value	Interpretation	Test Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	18.956	0.002	Significant	11.548	0.0415	Significant
	Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	12.498	0.0286	Significant	13.156	0.022	Significant
	Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	5.0662	0.4079	Not Significant	17.074	0.0044	Significant
	Institutional Support and Enablement	6.0216	0.3041	Not Significant	19.424	0.0016	Significant
	Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	4.9772	0.4187	Not Significant	11.938	0.0357	Significant
	Overall	9.3853	0.0947	Not Significant	15.787	0.0075	Significant
Gender	Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	6.2378	0.1006	Not Significant	202	0.4327	Not Significant
	Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	4.2505	0.2357	Not Significant	166	0.7815	Not Significant
	Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	1.5046	0.6812	Not Significant	184.5	0.7928	Not Significant
	Institutional Support and Enablement	2.9158	0.4048	Not Significant	195	0.5684	Not Significant
	Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	3.1143	0.3743	Not Significant	195.5	0.5603	Not Significant
	Overall	4.4032	0.2211	Not Significant	200	0.4788	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	11.638	0.0203	Significant	8.3536	0.0795	Not Significant
	Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	11.191	0.0245	Significant	14.015	0.0072	Significant
	Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	4.5929	0.3317	Not Significant	13.859	0.0078	Significant
	Institutional Support and Enablement	11.064	0.0259	Significant	9.9385	0.0415	Significant
	Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	6.2016	0.1846	Not Significant	8.0505	0.0898	Not Significant
	Overall	9.2748	0.0546	Not Significant	11.829	0.0187	Significant
Religion	Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	1.9144	0.5904	Not Significant	1.2741	0.5289	Not Significant

	Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	6.759	0.0799	Not Significant	1.2843	0.5262	Not Significant
	Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	7.4879	0.0579	Not Significant	2.1014	0.3497	Not Significant
	Institutional Support and Enablement	4.5281	0.2098	Not Significant	1.1505	0.5626	Not Significant
	Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	2.9806	0.3946	Not Significant	0.5489	0.76	Not Significant
	Overall	5.867	0.1183	Not Significant	1.6204	0.4448	Not Significant
Position/ Designation	Awareness of Policy Existence and Core Mandate	24.168	0.0004	Significant	4.0187	0.2595	Not Significant
	Clarity on Specific Prohibited Acts and Required Action	21.267	0.0016	Significant	1.5933	0.6609	Not Significant
	Self-Perceived Confidence in Fulfilling Duties	11.334	0.0786	Not Significant	0.9888	0.804	Not Significant
	Institutional Support and Enablement	18.522	0.0051	Significant	1.0115	0.7985	Not Significant
	Personal Alignment with Policy Principles	11.938	0.0634	Not Significant	0.2734	0.9651	Not Significant
	Overall	19.567	0.0033	Significant	0.9631	0.8102	Not Significant

For school personnel, significant differences were observed in terms of age, educational attainment, and position/designation, particularly in indicators such as awareness of policy existence, clarity on prohibited acts, and institutional support. Among the indicators, the highest level of perception was consistently observed in awareness of policy existence and core mandate, indicating that respondents generally have a strong foundational understanding of the CPP. In contrast, the lowest perception levels were noted in self-perceived confidence in fulfilling duties and personal alignment with policy principles, suggesting that while knowledge is present, confidence in application and internalization of the policy remains limited. This aligns with Spillane (2006), who emphasized that knowledge of policy does not automatically translate into practice, as well as Winter (2012), who highlighted the gap between policy awareness and implementation competence.

For barangay personnel, significant differences were found in age and educational attainment, particularly in awareness, clarity of responsibilities, confidence in fulfilling duties, and institutional support. Similar to school personnel, the highest perception level was also observed in awareness of policy existence and core mandate, indicating general familiarity with CPP provisions. However, the lowest perception levels were found in self-perceived confidence in fulfilling duties and personal alignment with policy principles, reflecting challenges in translating knowledge into effective role execution at the community level. This is supported by Matland (1995), who explained that implementation varies depending on clarity and contextual capacity, and O'Toole (2000), who noted that differences in actor capability and experience influence policy enactment.

Overall, the findings suggest that while respondents demonstrate high awareness of CPP mandates, gaps remain in confidence and internalization, highlighting the need for targeted training and capacity-building interventions to strengthen effective policy implementation.

Level of Conceptualization of their Respective Roles

Table 4. Level of Conceptualization of Roles of the Respondents under the Child Protection Policy (CPP)

Dimension	**School Personnel**		**Barangay Personnel**	
	Mean	**Verbal Description**	**Mean**	**Verbal Description**
Conceptualizing as Partners	4.5	Strongly Agree	4.16	Agree
Conceptualizing as Separate Entity	4.52	Strongly Agree	4.1	Agree
Conceptualizing as Hierarchical Relationships	4.44	Strongly Agree	4.09	Agree
Engagement in Proactive Advocacies	4.37	Strongly Agree	4.14	Agree

Understanding Case Management and Response Protocols	4.41	Strongly Agree	4.11	Agree
Overall	**4.45**	**Strongly Agree**	**4.12**	**Agree**

Table 4 presents that school personnel demonstrate a consistently strong conceptualization of their roles, particularly in recognizing clear distinctions in responsibilities within CPP implementation. This indicates a high level of role clarity developed through sustained engagement in school-based child protection mechanisms and regular exposure to policy implementation processes. However, the relatively lowest perception is observed in engagement in proactive advocacies, suggesting that while role understanding is well-established, participation in preventive and community-oriented initiatives remains comparatively less emphasized. This may be attributed to workload demands and prioritization of compliance and response functions over advocacy-related activities within school settings. For barangay personnel, the highest conceptualization is observed in viewing themselves as partners in CPP implementation, reflecting strong recognition of shared responsibility with schools in child protection efforts. In contrast, the lowest perception is noted in hierarchical relationship understanding, indicating limited clarity on formal coordination structures and role delineation within the CPP framework. This may be associated with varying levels of exposure to formal CPP orientations and capacity-building opportunities at the community level.

These findings imply that while both groups demonstrate generally positive conceptualization of roles, school personnel exhibit more structured and consistent understanding, whereas barangay personnel show stronger relational but less defined structural clarity. This suggests that institutional immersion, training exposure, and frequency of policy engagement significantly influence role conceptualization in CPP implementation.

In-depth analysis aligns with recent literature emphasizing that role clarity and inter-agency coordination are critical in effective policy implementation. Grissom (2020) emphasized that clearer role understanding among implementers improves policy fidelity and coordination outcomes in education systems. Similarly, Honig (2021) argued that policy implementation in complex systems depends on how actors interpret and enact their roles within organizational networks. In addition, O'Toole (2022) highlighted that inter-organizational alignment and role clarity are essential determinants of successful decentralized policy execution, particularly in collaborative governance settings.

The respondents demonstrate a strong conceptualization of their CPP roles, with school personnel showing more structured understanding and barangay personnel reflecting more relational engagement. This underscores the need for sustained capacity-building and strengthened inter-agency coordination to enhance role clarity and improve CPP implementation effectiveness.

Extent of Implementation of Formal and Informal Mechanisms between the BLGU and School of the CPP

Table 5. Extent of Implementation of Formal and Informal CPP Mechanisms by School Personnel

Dimension	**School Personnel**		**Barangay Personnel**	
	Mean	**Verbal Description**	**Mean**	**Verbal Description**
Referral Systems	4.43	Always	4.04	Often
Joint Meetings	4.41	Always	4.03	Often
Shared Databases (Information Sharing and Confidentiality)	4.46	Always	4.1	Often
Combined Awareness Campaigns	4.34	Always	4.05	Often
Capacity-building and Training Initiatives	4.31	Always	3.99	Often
Overall	**4.39**	**Always**	**4.04**	**Often**

Table 5 presents that school personnel consistently report a very high level of implementation across all CPP mechanisms, indicating that formal and informal coordination activities are regularly and systematically practiced within the school setting. The strongest area is shared databases and information sharing systems, suggesting strong compliance with confidentiality protocols and structured documentation processes in handling child protection concerns. Meanwhile, the lowest, although still highly implemented, is capacity-building and training initiatives, implying that while training activities are consistently conducted, they may occur less frequently compared to operational coordination mechanisms such as referrals and meetings. This pattern suggests that school-based implementation is more process-driven, focusing on immediate response and coordination activities.

For barangay personnel, the implementation level is generally high but comparatively lower across all indicators. The strongest area is shared databases and information sharing, reflecting active participation in coordinated child protection data exchange with schools. In contrast, the weakest area is capacity-building and training initiatives, indicating limited participation or

access to formal training opportunities related to CPP implementation. This may be attributed to resource constraints, scheduling limitations, or less frequent engagement in structured capacity-building programs compared to school personnel.

The findings imply that while both groups actively implement CPP mechanisms, school personnel demonstrate more consistent and systematic execution, whereas barangay personnel show moderate but active participation, particularly in collaborative and information-sharing activities. This highlights the need to strengthen inclusive training programs and institutionalize regular joint capacity-building activities to ensure more balanced implementation across both institutions.

From an analytical perspective, these findings align with the implementation perspective of Honig (2021), which emphasizes that sustained inter-organizational coordination depends on shared routines, capacity, and resource access. Likewise, O'Toole (2022) underscores that the effectiveness of policy implementation in decentralized systems is influenced by the strength of inter-agency collaboration and communication structures.The results indicate a high extent of CPP mechanism implementation, with stronger execution among school personnel and moderately high engagement among barangay personnel, underscoring the need for enhanced joint capacity-building and sustained inter-agency collaboration.

Significant Difference on the Level of Conceptualization of their Respective Role when Grouped according to Barangay Category

Table 6. Significant Differences in the Level of Role Conceptualization When Grouped According to Barangay Category

Variable	Test Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Conceptualizing as Partners	1.4933	0.6838	Not Significant
Conceptualizing as Separate Entity	1.2558	0.7397	Not Significant
Conceptualizing as Hierarchical Relationships	1.3107	0.7266	Not Significant
Engagement in Proactive Advocacies	0.4833	0.9225	Not Significant
Understanding Case Management and Response Protocols	1.1262	0.7708	Not Significant
Overall	**0.0617**	**0.7863**	**Not Significant**

Table 6 indicates that all indicators show no significant differences across barangay categories, suggesting that respondents have relatively similar levels of role conceptualization regardless of barangay classification. This implies that the perception of CPP roles is generally uniform and is not influenced by the specific barangay category where respondents belong. The absence of significant variation may also suggest that CPP orientations, training, and implementation practices are consistently disseminated across barangays, resulting in a shared understanding of roles among stakeholders.

These findings further imply that barangay classification does not serve as a determining factor in shaping how respondents conceptualize their responsibilities under the CPP. Instead, role understanding appears to be more influenced by standardized policy exposure and common implementation frameworks rather than local categorization. This consistency may reflect effective policy dissemination and uniform implementation practices across different barangay types.

This aligns with the perspective of O'Toole (2022), which emphasizes that uniformity in policy implementation often results from standardized administrative structures and coordinated inter-agency systems. Similarly, Honig (2021) highlights that when implementation systems are tightly coupled and consistently structured, variation across local units tends to diminish. In addition, it suggests that barangay category does not significantly influence the level of conceptualization of CPP roles, indicating a generally consistent understanding of responsibilities across different barangay classifications and reinforcing the effectiveness of standardized policy dissemination.

Significant Relationship between Level of Conceptualization and the Extent of Implementation of Formal and Informal Mechanism

Table 7. Relationship Between Level of Role Conceptualization and Extent of Implementation of CPP Mechanisms Among School Personnel

Level of Role Conceptualization	Extent of Implementation of Formal and Informal Mechansims	School Personnel			Barangay Personnel		
		Correlation	p-value	Interpretation	Correlation	p-value	Interpretation
Conceptualizing as Partners	Referral Systems	0.6877	<0.001	Significant	0.7792	<0.001	Significant
	Joint Meetings	0.5797	<0.001	Significant	0.833	<0.001	Significant
	Shared Databases (Information Sharing	0.729	<0.001	Significant	0.8342	<0.001	Significant

	and Confidentiality)						
	Combined Awareness Campaigns	0.6207	<0.001	Significant	0.6912	<0.001	Significant
	Capacity-building and training initiatives	0.7458	<0.001	Significant	0.7237	<0.001	Significant
Conceptualizing as Separate Entity	Referral Systems	0.7971	<0.001	Significant	0.7981	<0.001	Significant
	Joint Meetings	0.6413	<0.001	Significant	0.8334	<0.001	Significant
	Shared Databases (Information Sharing and Confidentiality)	0.7136	<0.001	Significant	0.7763	<0.001	Significant
	Combined Awareness Campaigns	0.5965	<0.001	Significant	0.7053	<0.001	Significant
	Capacity-building and training initiatives	0.7983	<0.001	Significant	0.7572	<0.001	Significant
Conceptualizing as Hierarchical Relationships	Referral Systems	0.789	<0.001	Significant	0.7954	<0.001	Significant
	Joint Meetings	0.563	<0.001	Significant	0.7914	<0.001	Significant
	Shared Databases (Information Sharing and Confidentiality)	0.7531	<0.001	Significant	0.7598	<0.001	Significant
	Combined Awareness Campaigns	0.6516	<0.001	Significant	0.6348	<0.001	Significant
	Capacity-building and training initiatives	0.7208	<0.001	Significant	0.7538	<0.001	Significant
Engagement in Proactive Advocacies	Referral Systems	0.7799	<0.001	Significant	0.8146	<0.001	Significant
	Joint Meetings	0.5826	<0.001	Significant	0.77912	<0.001	Significant
	Shared Databases (Information Sharing and Confidentiality)	0.7312	<0.001	Significant	0.7953	<0.001	Significant
	Combined Awareness Campaigns	0.7066	<0.001	Significant	0.6668	<0.001	Significant
	Capacity-building and training initiatives	0.7743	<0.001	Significant	0.7131	<0.001	Significant
Understanding Case Management and Response Protocols	Referral Systems	0.7564	<0.001	Significant	0.8146	<0.001	Significant
	Joint Meetings	0.5848	<0.001	Significant	0.7714	<0.001	Significant
	Shared Databases (Information Sharing and Confidentiality)	0.7365	<0.001	Significant	0.7555	<0.001	Significant
	Combined Awareness Campaigns	0.5995	<0.001	Significant	0.6481	<0.001	Significant
	Capacity-building and training initiatives	0.7629	<0.001	Significant	0.7365	<0.001	Significant

Table 7 presents the relationship between respondents' level of role conceptualization under the Child Protection Policy (CPP) and the extent of implementation of formal and informal coordination mechanisms among school and barangay personnel. For school personnel, Table 7 presents a consistently significant relationship between role conceptualization and the implementation of CPP mechanisms, indicating that clearer understanding of roles is strongly associated with more effective execution of coordination activities. The strongest relationships are observed in structured mechanisms such as referral systems and capacity-building initiatives, suggesting that when school personnel have a well-defined understanding of their

responsibilities, they are more efficient in handling cases and engaging in professional development activities. This implies that role clarity within schools directly strengthens operational efficiency in child protection processes. Meanwhile, relatively weaker but still significant relationships are observed in joint meetings and awareness campaigns, suggesting that while conceptual understanding supports participation, these activities may also be influenced by workload demands and institutional scheduling constraints. In addition, it shows that stronger role conceptualization is significantly associated with higher implementation of CPP mechanisms among both school and barangay personnel, with school personnel showing more consistent institutional application and barangay personnel reflecting stronger dependence on coordination capacity and resource availability.

These findings align with Honig (2021), who emphasized that policy implementation in educational settings depends on how school actors interpret and operationalize their roles within complex organizational systems. Likewise, Spillane (2006) highlights that distributed role understanding enhances coordination and strengthens collective implementation practices in schools.

For barangay personnel, a significant relationship across all indicators, indicating that stronger role conceptualization is associated with higher implementation of CPP mechanisms at the community level. The strongest relationships are observed in shared databases and referral systems, suggesting that when barangay officials clearly understand their roles, coordination with schools in handling child protection cases becomes more systematic and responsive. This implies that role clarity enhances their participation in formal reporting and case management processes. However, relatively weaker yet still significant relationships are observed in awareness campaigns and joint meetings, indicating that while role understanding supports engagement, participation in these collaborative and outreach activities may be influenced by limited resources, competing responsibilities, or less frequent exposure to structured CPP trainings.

This supports O'Toole (2022), who noted that inter-organizational effectiveness in decentralized governance depends on both role clarity and institutional capacity. It also aligns with Hill and Hupe (2020), who emphasized that variations in local implementation capacity affect how policy roles are enacted in practice, particularly in community-based governance systems.

Primary Institutional, Resource-based and Socio-cultural Factors that Enable or Hinder Effective Collaboration of CPP Mandate.

Table 8. Institutional, Resource-based and Socio-cultural Factors that Enable or Hinder Effective Collaboration of CPP Mandate

Category	Major Themes	Subthemes
Institutional Factors	Jurisdictional Protocols and Role Delineation	• Incident-Based Lead Determination (School vs. Barangay) • Reference to CPP Manual for Jurisdiction Clarification • Private Settlement of Role Disagreements • MSWDO Mediation in Case of Conflict
	Communication and Coordination Systems	• Use of Formal Referral Letters • Delays Due to Paperwork and Signatories • Slow Official Feedback Mechanisms • Limited Case Status Updates • Informal Communication (Chat, Direct Visit to Officials)
	Confidentiality and Information Governance	• Limiting Disclosure to Authorized Personnel • Sharing Only Essential Case Information • Securing CPC and BCPC Records • Confidentiality as Priority During Investigation
Resource-Based Factors	Financial Constraints and Adaptive Budgeting	• Absence of Dedicated CPP Emergency Funds • Use of BNAP (1% IRA Allocation) for Medical Needs • "Pass-the-Hat" Contributions from Teachers • Personal Financial Advances by Officials • Dependence on MSWDO/Municipal Support
	Human Resource Limitations	• Shortage of Trained Personnel (Guidance Counselors, CPP Coordinators) • Reliance on Experienced Teachers • Limited CPP-Specific Training Exposure
	Facility and Infrastructure Gaps	• Absence of Child-Friendly Interview Rooms • Improvised Private Office Spaces for Interviews • Use of General Barangay Office for Sensitive Cases
Socio-Cultural	Relational Dynamics and	• Faster Coordination through Good Relationships

Factors	Personal Relationships	• Mutual Understanding Between School and Barangay • Separation of Personal Feelings from Official Duties
	Political and Familial Influence Risks	• Risk of Political Interference • Difficulty When Offender is Personally Known • Ensuring Professional Neutrality in Case Handling
	Cultural Norms in Conflict Handling	• Preference for Informal Settlement Mechanisms • Trust-Based Coordination Practices • Emphasis on the "Best Interest of the Child" Principle

The study identifies institutional, resource-based, and socio-cultural factors that both enable and hinder effective collaboration in implementing the Child Protection Policy (CPP). Using Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis, the findings show that CPP implementation is shaped by a dynamic interaction between formal structures and informal practices.

Institutionally, collaboration is guided by existing protocols, but role delineation and jurisdiction are often negotiated in practice rather than strictly defined. Schools typically initiate cases, while barangays provide family-level interventions, with mediation support from MSWDO when conflicts arise. Although formal communication systems such as referral letters exist, bureaucratic delays and slow feedback mechanisms limit efficiency, prompting stakeholders to rely on informal communication channels (e.g., personal networks and direct coordination). Meanwhile, confidentiality is strongly upheld, with controlled information sharing to protect the child and maintain case integrity.

Resource-based factors reveal significant constraints. The absence of dedicated CPP funds leads to adaptive budgeting strategies, including the use of limited barangay funds, inter-agency support, and even personal financial contributions from implementers. In addition, shortages of trained personnel and lack of child-friendly facilities hinder service delivery. These gaps are

addressed through improvisation, such as on-the-job learning, role-sharing, and converting available spaces into temporary interview areas, reflecting both system limitations and frontline resilience.

Socio-cultural factors play a dual role. Strong interpersonal relationships between school and barangay actors enhance coordination and speed up processes, demonstrating the value of social capital. However, these same relationships can introduce risks of bias, especially when cases involve acquaintances or influential families. Stakeholders mitigate this by emphasizing professionalism, ethical boundaries, and adherence to the "best interest of the child" principle. Additionally, local culture favors informal conflict resolution and consensus-building, which facilitates cooperation but operates alongside formal legal frameworks.

Overall, the findings suggest that CPP implementation is not purely system-driven but relies heavily on adaptive, relationship-based, and context-sensitive practices. While institutional gaps and resource limitations persist, the commitment of stakeholders, supported by informal mechanisms and ethical awareness, enables the system to function despite constraints.

Discretion and Adaptive Practices in Managing Shared CPP Responsibilities

Table 9. Discretion and Adaptive Practices in Managing Shared CPP Responsibilities

Category	Major Themes	Subthemes
Discretion in Institutional Procedures	Context-Based Decision-Making in Jurisdiction	• Determining Lead Agency Based on Incident Location • Assessing Who Has Greater Access to the Child • Flexible Role Adjustment in Overlapping Cases • Seeking MSWDO Mediation When Necessary
	Policy-Guided but Negotiated Conflict Resolution	• Returning to CPP Manual for Clarification • Private Dialogue to Resolve Role Disputes • Informal Settlements Before Formal Escalation
	Adaptive Communication Strategies	• Supplementing Referral Letters with Informal Messaging • Direct Personal Visits for Urgent Coordination • Informal Updates When Official Feedback is Delayed
Discretion in Information Management	Selective and Purpose-Driven Information Sharing	• Limiting Disclosure to Authorized Individuals • Sharing Only Essential Facts • Balancing Confidentiality with Child Safety Needs
	Protective File Handling Practices	• Securing CPC and BCPC Records • Controlled Release of Case Details Based on Official Involvement

Discretion in Resource Utilization	Improvised Financial Management	• Utilizing BNAP (1% IRA) for Medical Concerns • Soliciting Community and Business Support • "Pass-the-Hat" Contributions from Teachers • Personal Financial Advances by Officials • Referring to MSWDO or Municipal Support When Funds Are Insufficient
	Flexible Human Resource Deployment	• Assigning Experienced Teachers in Absence of Specialists • Role-Sharing Among Available Personnel • Learning Through Seminars and On-the-Job Experience
	Facility Adaptation and Improvisation	• Using Private Corners for Sensitive Interviews • Conducting Sessions in General Barangay Offices • Creating Informal Child-Safe Spaces Within Limited Infrastructure
Discretion in Socio-Cultural Contexts	Relational-Based Coordination	• Leveraging Good Personal Relationships for Faster Action • Maintaining Mutual Understanding Between School and Barangay • Using Trust-Based Communication Channels
	Professional Neutrality Amid Social Proximity	• Separating Personal Feelings from Official Duties • Avoiding Political or Familial Influence • Upholding the "Best Interest of the Child" Principle in Decision-Making

The findings reveal that discretion and adaptive practices are central to the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) at the local level. While formal guidelines exist, school personnel and barangay officials consistently interpret and apply these policies flexibly based on situational demands, resource limitations, and community dynamics. Institutional procedures such as jurisdiction are not rigidly followed but are context-dependent, with roles negotiated based on incident location, access to the child, and mediated when necessary by MSWDO. Conflict resolution reflects a dual governance system, where formal policies guide decisions, but informal dialogue and negotiation ensure practical and timely outcomes.

In terms of operations, stakeholders adopt adaptive communication strategies, using informal channels like direct messaging and personal visits to overcome bureaucratic delays in formal systems. Similarly, information management is handled with discretion, emphasizing confidentiality through selective and purpose-driven sharing to protect the child while enabling coordination. Resource limitations further necessitate improvisation, as implementers rely on alternative funding sources, personal contributions, and inter-agency support to sustain services. Human resource shortages are addressed through flexible role-sharing and reliance on experienced personnel, while infrastructure gaps lead to facility improvisation, such as converting available spaces into temporary child-safe environments.

Socio-culturally, relational dynamics significantly influence implementation. Strong interpersonal relationships enhance coordination efficiency, but also pose risks of bias, especially in close-knit communities. These risks are mitigated through professional neutrality, ethical awareness, and strict adherence to the "best interest of the child" principle. Overall, the system demonstrates high functionality driven by frontline adaptability, social capital, and discretionary decision-making. However, this reliance on informal and personality-driven practices also exposes institutional fragility, highlighting the need for a more structured and system-driven approach, such as the proposed LCPC-GEF, to ensure sustainable and consistent child protection governance.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings imply that the generally strong awareness and understanding of Child Protection Policy (CPP) mandates among both school and barangay personnel reflect effective policy dissemination within the locality. This suggests that stakeholders possess a shared foundational knowledge of their responsibilities. However, the observed gaps in deeper policy understanding among some barangay personnel indicate that awareness does not always translate into full policy internalization, highlighting the need for continuous and targeted capacity-building efforts to strengthen comprehension and application.

Results further indicate that role conceptualization is largely collaborative, showing that CPP implementation is grounded on shared responsibility between schools and Barangay Local Government Units. This implies that child protection governance in the area depends heavily on partnership and coordination rather than isolated institutional efforts. Nonetheless, variations in the depth

of role understanding suggest that collaboration remains more relational than fully institutionalized, pointing to the need for clearer definition and formalization of roles and coordination processes.

The relationship between role conceptualization and implementation of CPP mechanisms suggests that clearer understanding of roles is associated with more effective coordination practices. This implies that strengthening how stakeholders perceive and internalize their responsibilities can enhance the consistency and effectiveness of referral systems, meetings, and information-sharing mechanisms. Conversely, weaker role clarity may limit the stability of implementation, reinforcing the importance of cognitive and organizational alignment in policy execution.

Implementation practices also reflect a dual system composed of both formal mechanisms and informal coordination strategies. This implies that while structured systems are in place, day-to-day child protection work is also sustained through interpersonal relationships and community-based networks. However, reliance on informal practices also indicates gaps in institutional responsiveness, suggesting the need to strengthen formal systems to ensure more consistent and standardized implementation.

The presence of institutional, resource-based, and socio-cultural constraints implies that CPP implementation is not solely dependent on awareness or willingness of stakeholders, but also on the enabling environment in which they operate. This means that even with strong commitment, limited resources, procedural delays, and social dynamics may affect implementation efficiency. As such, improving structural support systems is essential to enhance policy effectiveness at the local level.

Finally, the adaptive strategies employed by stakeholders demonstrate that CPP implementation is flexible and responsive to local realities. This implies that implementers actively negotiate and adjust policy execution to address contextual challenges, ensuring that child protection concerns are still addressed despite system limitations. However, this flexibility also suggests potential inconsistencies in implementation practices, highlighting the need for balanced guidelines that allow adaptability while maintaining standardization.

Overall, the findings suggest that CPP implementation in the locality is functional and collaborative, but its effectiveness depends on strengthening role clarity, institutional coordination, resource availability, and formal implementation systems to ensure that strong policy understanding is consistently translated into sustained child protection outcomes.

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