

Child Protection Policy Implementation and its Relationship to Learners' Discipline and Manners in Denigpi-An Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of Child Protection Policy (CPP) implementation and its relationship to learners' discipline and manners in Denigpi-an Elementary School, Dolores, Eastern Samar. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed. The respondents consisted of 50 participants, including 43 learners from Grades 4, 5, and 6 and seven teachers. Teachers were selected through total enumeration, while learners were selected through stratified random sampling with proportionate allocation. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire based on DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and related literature. The instrument measured CPP implementation, learners' discipline, and learners' manners using a five-point Likert scale. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used for data analysis. Results showed that teachers assessed

CPP implementation as Very High ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.49$), while learners assessed it as High ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.12$). Learners' discipline was High ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.04$), and learners' manners were also High ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.04$). A significant moderate positive relationship was found between CPP implementation and learners' discipline ($r = 0.578$, $p < .001$). A significant strong positive relationship was likewise found between CPP implementation and learners' manners ($r = 0.789$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that stronger CPP implementation is associated with more favorable learner behavioral outcomes. The study recommends sustaining policy implementation while strengthening policy evaluation, compassionate discipline, learner participation, values formation, and stakeholder involvement.

Keywords: *Child Protection Policy, learner discipline, learner manners, descriptive-correlational research, elementary education*

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes the fundamental right of every child to learn in an environment that is safe, supportive, and conducive to holistic development. To protect learners from violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm, DepEd institutionalized the Child Protection Policy through DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012. The policy provides guidelines and mechanisms for promoting children's welfare and safeguarding their rights within the school setting.

The implementation of the Child Protection Policy plays a vital role in establishing a positive school climate where learners feel safe, respected, and valued. Beyond protection from harm, the policy encourages positive discipline, respect for human dignity, and healthy interpersonal relationships. These conditions are

essential in developing discipline and good manners, which are important indicators of learners' social, emotional, and moral growth.

Discipline enables learners to regulate their behavior, follow established rules, demonstrate responsibility, and practice self-control. Manners reflect learners' ability to interact respectfully and courteously with peers, teachers, and other members of the community. These behavioral attributes support academic success, social harmony, and character development. Consequently, schools are expected to provide an environment that nurtures these qualities through consistent child protection measures and positive behavioral interventions.

Denigpi-an Elementary School in Dolores, Eastern Samar continuously implements Child Protection Policy programs and activities aimed at promoting learner welfare and maintaining a child-friendly learning environment. Understanding how Child Protection Policy implementation is associated with learners' discipline and manners may provide useful evidence for strengthening school-based interventions and learner development.

The study was guided by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and a Rights-Based Approach to Education. Social Learning Theory explains that learners acquire behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the influence of interconnected school, family, and community environments. The Rights-Based Approach situates child protection within learners' rights to safety, dignity, and holistic development.

Research Questions

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, and civil status?
2. What is the level of Child Protection Policy implementation as assessed by teacher and learner respondents?
3. What is the level of learners' discipline?
4. What is the level of learners' manners?
5. Is there a significant relationship between Child Protection Policy implementation and learners' discipline?
6. Is there a significant relationship between Child Protection Policy implementation and learners' manners?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Child Protection Policy implementation and learners' discipline and manners.

Scope and Delimitation

The study focused on the level of Child Protection Policy implementation and its relationship to learners' discipline and manners at Denigpi-an Elementary School, Dolores, Eastern Samar. The respondents consisted of seven teachers and 43 learners enrolled in Grades 4, 5, and 6. The study assessed CPP implementation in terms of awareness, orientation, enforcement, disciplinary practices, monitoring, documentation and reporting, parental involvement, community participation, policy evaluation, and learner safety. Discipline and manners were measured using the indicators contained in the research instrument. Other factors such as family background, socio-economic status, parenting practices, peer influence, media exposure, and other external factors were not included.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design using the descriptive-correlational method. The descriptive component determined the level of Child Protection Policy implementation as perceived by teachers and learners and the levels of learners' discipline and manners. The correlational component determined whether significant relationships existed between CPP implementation and learners' discipline and manners without manipulating the variables.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Denigpi-an Elementary School, Barangay Denigpi-an, Dolores I District, Schools Division of Eastern Samar. The school offers complete elementary education from kindergarten to Grade 6 and continuously implements child protection programs and school-based measures designed to promote learner safety, positive behavior, and holistic development.

Respondents and Sampling

The respondents consisted of 50 participants: 43 learners and seven teachers. All seven teachers were included through total enumeration. Learners from Grades 4, 5, and 6 were selected through stratified random sampling with proportionate allocation.

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 4	18	41.86%
Grade 5	11	25.58%
Grade 6	14	32.56%
Total	43	100.00%

The learner respondents included 24 males (55.81%) and 19 females (44.19%), with ages ranging from 8 to 11 years. The teacher respondents included six females and one male; all seven were married, and their ages ranged from 37 to 44 years.

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed structured questionnaire was used. Part I gathered demographic information. Part II contained 10 statements measuring Child Protection Policy implementation and were answered by both teachers and learners. Part III contained 10 statements measuring learners' discipline. Part IV contained 10 statements measuring learners' manners. Parts II–IV used a five-point Likert scale.

Scale	Range	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41–4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61–3.40	Moderately Agree	Moderate
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in educational management, research methodology, and basic education. A pilot test was conducted among respondents with characteristics similar to the actual participants, but who were not included in the final sample. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency, with 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities and the school administration. After validation and pilot testing, informed consent was obtained from teachers, while written

parental consent and learner assent were secured for learner participants. The questionnaires were administered personally, checked for completeness, coded, and encoded in SPSS for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment

Frequency counts and percentages were used for demographic data. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of CPP implementation, learners' discipline, and learners' manners. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the relationships between CPP implementation and learners' discipline and manners. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 level.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed informed consent, parental consent, learner assent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data privacy. Respondent names were not recorded and numerical codes were used. Data were safeguarded in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Academic integrity was observed throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Learners by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
8	3	6.98%
9	14	32.56%
10	10	23.26%
11	16	37.20%
Total	43	100.00%

The largest group of learner respondents was 11 years old (37.20%), followed by 9-year-olds (32.56%), 10-year-olds (23.26%), and 8-year-olds (6.98%).

Learners by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	55.81%
Female	19	44.19%
Total	43	100.00%

Male learners comprised 55.81% of the learner respondents, while female learners comprised 44.19%.

Teachers by Age, Sex, and Civil Status

Teacher Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Female	6	85.71%
Male	1	14.29%
Married	7	100.00%

Teacher respondents were predominantly female (85.71%), all were married (100%), and their ages ranged from 37 to 44 years, with 38-year-old teachers comprising the largest age group (28.57%).

Child Protection Policy Implementation as Assessed by Teachers

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Well informed about CPP	4.57	0.53	Very High
Regular CPP orientations	4.71	0.49	Very High
Consistent enforcement	4.71	0.49	Very High
Fair and compassionate discipline	4.57	0.53	Very High
Regular monitoring	4.71	0.49	Very High
Bullying/violence reports documented and addressed	4.86	0.38	Very High
Parental participation	4.71	0.49	Very High
Community collaboration	4.43	0.53	Very High
Annual evaluation	4.00	0.00	High
Learners feel safe and protected	4.00	0.00	High
Overall	4.53	0.49	Very High

Teachers assessed the overall implementation of the Child Protection Policy as Very High ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.49$). The highest-rated indicator was the proper documentation and addressing of bullying or violence reports ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 0.38$).

Child Protection Policy Implementation as Perceived by Learners

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Well informed about CPP	4.26	0.85	Very High
Regular CPP orientations	4.23	0.78	Very High

Consistent enforcement	4.12	0.98	High
Fair and compassionate discipline	3.28	1.16	Moderate
Regular monitoring	3.49	1.35	High
Bullying/violence reports documented and addressed	3.47	1.20	High
Parental participation	3.67	1.25	High
Community collaboration	4.07	1.12	High
Annual evaluation	3.37	1.22	Moderate
Learners feel safe and protected	3.65	1.27	High
Overall	3.76	1.12	High

Learners perceived CPP implementation as High ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.12$). Awareness of the policy received the highest rating ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.85$), while fair and compassionate disciplinary measures received the lowest rating ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.16$).

Level of Learners' Discipline

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Follow school rules without supervision	4.26	0.76	Very High
Respect teachers and authorities	4.26	0.79	Very High
Responsibility for assigned tasks	4.07	0.99	High
Consistent behavior	4.00	1.05	High
Accept consequences	3.44	1.20	High
Listen attentively to instructions	4.00	0.93	High
Self-control in challenging situations	3.86	0.99	High
Respect school property	3.72	1.40	High
Fulfill student duties responsibly	3.65	1.02	High

Maintain discipline in group activities/events	3.79	1.30	High
Overall	3.90	1.04	High

Learners' discipline was High ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.04$). The highest ratings were for following school rules even without supervision and showing respect to teachers and school authorities (both $M = 4.26$).

Level of Learners' Manners

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Greet teachers/classmates politely	4.12	0.82	High
Cooperate with peers during group activities	4.30	0.77	Very High
Kindness and empathy	4.00	1.00	High
Observe cultural and moral values	3.67	0.99	High
Respect classmates' opinions	4.00	1.20	High
Help classmates needing assistance	3.77	1.21	High
Honesty	4.00	1.05	High
Avoid offensive language	4.07	1.06	High
Cooperation/teamwork in projects	3.53	1.22	High
Courtesy/respect in school/community events	3.72	1.08	High
Overall	3.92	1.04	High

Learners' manners were High ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.04$). Cooperation with peers during group activities received the highest rating ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.77$).

Relationship Between CPP Implementation and Learners' Discipline

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
CPP Implementation and Learners' Discipline	0.578	< .001	Reject H_0	Significant Moderate Positive Relationship

A significant moderate positive relationship existed between CPP implementation and learners' discipline ($r = 0.578$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that higher levels of CPP implementation were associated with higher levels of learner discipline.

Relationship Between CPP Implementation and Learners' Manners

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
CPP Implementation and Learners' Manners	0.789	< .001	Reject Ho	Significant Strong Positive Relationship

A significant strong positive relationship existed between CPP implementation and learners' manners ($r = 0.789$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that stronger CPP implementation was associated with more positive manners among learners.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Child Protection Policy implementation was positively associated with learners' behavioral outcomes in Denigpi-an Elementary School. Teachers gave a Very High assessment of implementation, while learners gave a high assessment. The difference in ratings suggests that teachers viewed policy processes more favorably, whereas learners provided a more varied assessment of how implementation was experienced in daily school life.

Teachers' strongest rating concerned the documentation and addressing of bullying or violence reports. This indicates a strong perceived institutional response to child protection concerns. Regular orientations, consistent enforcement, monitoring, and parental participation also received very high ratings. However, annual evaluation and learners' sense of safety received comparatively lower teacher ratings, suggesting areas for continued strengthening.

Learners' responses showed strong awareness and exposure to orientations but lower ratings for fair and compassionate disciplinary practices and annual policy evaluation. This pattern suggests that policy information may be more visible to learners than the processes used to monitor and evaluate implementation. Strengthening learner feedback mechanisms and making evaluation processes more visible may therefore improve learner confidence in child protection systems.

The high level of learner discipline indicates favorable adherence to school rules and respect for authority. However, comparatively lower ratings for accepting consequences, fulfilling responsibilities, and respecting school property suggest that accountability and stewardship remain areas for development. Positive discipline, reflective activities, and values formation may reinforce these behaviors.

Learners also demonstrated high levels of manners, particularly cooperation with peers. The findings indicate that learners generally practice politeness, honesty, respect, and positive social interaction. Lower ratings in cooperation and teamwork in school projects and observance of cultural and moral values suggest the need for continued opportunities to practice these values in authentic settings.

The significant moderate positive relationship between CPP implementation and discipline supports the view that a safe, structured, and supportive school environment is associated with responsible learner behavior. The relationship is not perfect, indicating that other factors may also influence discipline.

The significant strong positive relationship between CPP implementation and manners was stronger than the relationship with discipline. This suggests that child protection practices may be particularly associated with interpersonal behaviors such as respect, cooperation, courtesy, and empathy. The result is consistent with the theoretical foundation that learners observe and internalize behaviors modeled and reinforced in their environment.

Overall, the findings support the importance of sustaining comprehensive child protection practices while strengthening learner-centered monitoring, compassionate discipline, policy evaluation, values formation, and stakeholder collaboration.

CONCLUSION

1. Denigpi-an Elementary School demonstrates a high level of commitment to implementing the Child Protection Policy, particularly in awareness, enforcement, monitoring, reporting, and stakeholder participation.
2. Learners generally exhibit high levels of discipline, particularly in adherence to school rules and respect for teachers and authorities.
3. Learners demonstrate high levels of manners characterized by cooperation, politeness, honesty, respect, and positive social interaction.
4. Child Protection Policy implementation has a significant moderate positive relationship with learners' discipline.
5. Child Protection Policy implementation has a significantly strong positive relationship with learners' manners.
6. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between Child Protection Policy implementation and learners' discipline and manners is rejected.

Recommendations

1. School administrators should sustain and strengthen CPP implementation through regular monitoring, evaluation, and capacity-building activities.
2. Teachers should continue to model positive behaviors and apply fair, compassionate, and positive disciplinary practices.
3. The Child Protection Committee should strengthen periodic assessment of policy implementation and establish regular learner feedback mechanisms.
4. Parents and community stakeholders should increase participation in child protection programs and school activities.
5. The school should implement activities that strengthen learners' accountability, responsibility, cultural values, and respectful behavior.
6. Values formation, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and collaborative learning activities should be integrated into school programs.
7. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using larger populations, multiple schools, additional variables, or qualitative and mixed-method approaches.

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