

Challenges in Child Protection: A Mediation of Interactive Learning Environment Towards New Normal

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Abstract — This study evaluates the challenges in the child protection that would mediate in the interactive learning environment of learners in this new normal of education. It also investigates the lives of learners of Tabina District both public elementary and secondary schools. It further investigates the experiences of teachers in public elementary and secondary of Tabina District, Parents and administrators in the District of Tabina, Division of Zamboanga del Sur for School Year 2020-2021. This study utilized the qualitative exploratory design with the aid of the interview guide questions which was administered to the selected learners in public elementary and secondary schools, teachers and parents. The result revealed the importance of intensive child protection to the learners that protect them in this new normal situation of education. The government must provide adequate care to learners and even to children with special disabilities who were also learners of said vicinity. Allocate substantial funds for equipment for children in this new normal situation. Provide adequate school supplies, medical supplies, and nutritious food for children. The school does not have difficulty in providing adequate action for the welfare of the children. Child protection is one of the guidelines so that our children and their right to be protected from various abuses by other people, especially now with the new normal in our education. Child protection policy is the basis and adequate guide for maintaining the education of children in this new normal. Principals and teachers have a standard for providing good care and education to children based on the child protection policy.

Keywords — Abuse, Child Protection, Moral Support, Economic Status

I. Introduction

Republic Act 7610, states to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty exploitation and discrimination and other conditions, prejudicial to their development; provide sanctions for their commission and carry out a program for prevention and deterrence of and crisis intervention in situations of child abuse, exploitation and discrimination. The State shall intervene on behalf of the child when the parent, guardian, teacher or person having care or custody of the child fails or is unable to protect the child against abuse, exploitation and discrimination or when such acts against the child are committed by the said parent, guardian,

teacher or person having care and custody of the same. It shall be the policy of the State to protect and rehabilitate children gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect or will affect their survival and normal development and over which they have no control.

Pursuant to the 1987 Constitution, the State shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development (Article XV, Section 3 [2]).

The Constitution further provides that all educational institutions shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency. (Article XIV, Section 3 [2]).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse. The same Convention establishes the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively, and on the basis of equal opportunity, it obliges the government to take measures to encourage regular attendance in school and reduce drop-out rates.

Child protection policy was created to avoid physical violence and even verbal violence for children. However, this policy gives the children a freedom to become aggressive and violent. They do what they want even fighting with their teacher because they know that the power of the teacher is limited when it comes to discipline.

In this case, mediation is an important part of the "procedural safeguards" of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended in 1997. (Turnbull III, H. R., & Turnbull, A. P. (1998).

The law's new requirement that mediation be made available to parents is a tribute to the legislature's good sense. It would, of course, have been difficult to ignore this process, which is designed for preserving and improving the relationships of the parties in conflict - in this case the parents and the school personnel. The legislators must have seen that the humane and sustainable way to process a conflict between parents and school personnel is for them to collaborate in finding the best ways to educate the children who are their joint responsibility. While it is occasionally appropriate to use the adversarial methods of the courts, in most cases mediation will serve the child's best interest (Bille, 2004).

DepEd has adopted the policy to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect their normal development and over

which they have no control, and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation. (DO 40, s.2012)

In this case, a positive and welcoming learning environment is especially important when children are considered to be able to do better in their school works. The school environment that students attend often influences what they do. Students' success in their learning progress is determined by a nurturing school environment. (Sithole, 2017).

Tabina Central Elementary School-SPED Class focuses on the rights of children as a whole giving great importance to each other for the benefit of all. Every child's opinion is listened to. Even their preferences are given weight. Their preferences are listened to but guided by teachers and parents. Although children have their right but they do not neglect their desires without care and guidance so that they do not fall into evil.

The school provides a strict implementation of the Child Protection Policy by crafting School-based Child Protection Policy in line with national policy. The school has taken steps to support parents and stakeholders to help implement the policy.

In compliance with the Child Protection Policy, the school has taken steps to enforce a policy that is unequivocal and fair to all children based on their capacity, understanding, knowledge, disability and health. There is no chance that every student can do harm to their fellow students, as well as parents. Everyone's rights are taken seriously.

This research employs innovation, intervention and strategy to enhance the essence of the Child Protection Policy in the Philippines particularly in the Department of Education. The researcher aims to do the innovation, intervention and strategy to strengthen the laws embedded in the Child Protection Policy for the welfare of children in school.

There was a conduct of face-to-face interview to the selected teachers to get their views regarding the laws in protecting the children and collecting their knowledge about the Child Protection Policy. Then, researcher also interviewed the selected parents, children and other stakeholders about how far they know about the Child Protection Policy, how child is being nurtured in accordance with the laws and policies in the Child Protection Policy (CPP). Questioners are also distributed to selected respondents in order to gather additional data and responses that can be used in strengthening this research. The data gathered was analyzed and grouped.

Upon analyzing and grouping the responses from the respondents, the researcher employs interventions in order to come up with gaps. Symposia and advocacy were being conducted in selected schools and to the Purok Centers in the selected barangay of Tabina by observing a standard of minimum COVID-19 Health Protocols. A distribution of flyers about the Child Protection Policy in English, Tagalog and Cebuano version to cater all levels of recipient readers.

This study shall look into the challenges of child protection with its mediation of interactive learning environment towards new normal to the selected parents, administrators, teachers and learners of both elementary and secondary schools in Tabina District.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following queries:

1. How far do you know about Child Protection Policy (CPP)?
2. How do you raise your child/learner in accordance with the Child Protection Policy in this new normal of education? (For parents and teachers only)
3. In your own opinion, is Child Protection Policy useful in nurturing your children/learner? (For Parents and Teachers only)
4. Is child Protection Policy fully implemented in school and in your own community/family in the midst of pandemic?

In your own observation, does the government fully implement the Child Protection Policy in this time of COVID-19 pandemic? How?

II. Methodology

Design - This study employed a qualitative research design with the survey and interview as the main processes in generating the necessary data on the challenges in child protection as mediation of interactive learning environment towards new normal. Descriptive research study includes surveys and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds, which help the researcher to describe the present situation that makes the analysis about the responses of research participants.

Sampling - In the case of this study, the survey and interview were done in a natural setting, in which the researcher conducts the data gathering stage of the study in schools and in community.

- A) the five (5) teachers in elementary public schools of Tabina District, Division of Zamboanga del Sur who has been in the service for three years and above;
- B) five (5) parents with three (3) or more siblings studying in elementary or secondary public schools of Tabina District
- C) five (5) grade six pupils in elementary public schools
- D) and five (5) secondary students in secondary public schools in Tabina District

The participants gave their response through an interview. It will be assumed in this study on how the respondents give their views regarding the implementation of Child Protection Policy (CPP) in every school, in the family and in the community as a whole in the new normal situation. It will be assumed also in this study on how the respondents give their own views on the

effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) in the midst of pandemic. It is also postulated in this study the significance of Child Protection Policy in the life of each child.

The study w also considered the actual responses of the respondents who actually experienced uncertainties in schools and in the community in which their responses will be treated seriously in order to come up with the realistic results which will answer the statement of the problem of the research.

Interview questions were formulated by the researcher and for content validity, the researcher asked suggestions from the expert and comments of the respondents as well as the panelists of the study.

Research Procedure - In collecting the data of this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted individually. The participants of the study were interviewed in March and April 2021. Each interview was conducted face to face with the participants' permission but maximum health protocols were observed. The researcher also took notes during each interview, which enabled him to track key points to return to later in the interview process, the researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study, research procedures, expected benefits, and protection of confidentiality.

Participants were also provided information about himself to establish rapport and gain their trust. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews to encourage respondents to respond freely and openly to queries. Probing and follow-up questions were used, when necessary, to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response. The transcription process followed after each interview. To ensure transcript accuracy, the researcher reviewed each transcript while listening to the audio tapes. Interview responses were then transcribed in verbatim form and meanings were formulated.

Ethical Issues – The right to conduct this action research was strictly adhered through the approval of the Division Research Committee spearheaded by the Schools Division Superintendent, District Research Committee headed by the District Supervisor and the School Principal. Orientation of the participants was done through face-to-face modality following with a minimum Covid-19 Health Protocols and assuring the secrecy of their responses through the Privacy Act.

III. Results and Discussion

In analyzing the data which were generated through audio recording and notes during interviews, a line-by-line coding was used in their individual responses. Statements made by the research participants may be vernacular, Filipino or English were carefully transcribed into texts without changing the point of the statements and identified commonalities among these aspects between the accounts from different research participants and used these observations to identify its theme.

During the interview, research participants gave their experiences and perceptions of child protection. They also shared their expectations of all the experiences they have undergone being a teacher, a parent and child respectively. The data on the experiences of the research participants in the implementation of Child Protection Policy are presented. It is recommended that each school will fully implement the Child Protection Policy by creating a Child Protection Committee which will eye the welfare of each pupil in the school. In consonants, the Barangay Local Government Unit and Municipal Local Government Unit will strengthen the implementation of Child Protection Policy (CPP) in the time of new normal setting in the midst of pandemic. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will do their task and function fully anchored in the mandate of Convention of Rights of the Children (CRC) so that no children will be left behind and abused.

Table 1. Summary of the occurrence of the theme based on the responses

No.	Implications	Number of Participants Mentioning the Specific Responses
1.	Abuse	20
2	Family Time	13
3	Moral Support	15
4	Economic Status	19

Abuse

It is to hurt or cause another person’s emotional well -being. Abuse can affect anyone. This can be seen to happen in every type of relationship, such as a love, romantic relationship, or with family members. Abuse can happen in many ways. Hate crimes that are studied by people because of their race, religion, ability, gender, or sexual orientation are present. (<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/family-abuse.html>)

“It is a policy that protects the children from all form of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse.” T1

“I am well informed about the child protection Policy (CPP). This policy aims to protect the children from the abuse of the different individuals.”T2

“Child Protection Policy is policy that intended to prevent and protect the child from all forms of violence that may be inflicted by a person.”P1

“Child Protection Policy is law for the protection of the rights of Filipino children. This law is implemented so that Filipino children can enjoy all the rights. They can be nurtured and be grown fully into a mature individual being with moral values.”T3

“Child Protection Policy is a Law to respond any form of abuses and violence experienced by children. This Policy aims to protect each child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuses.”T4

“Child Protection Policy is protecting the children against all form abuses from individuals.”T5

“Child Protection Policy will provide protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect their normal development.”P2

“Child Protection Policy is law to protect each child from any form of abuses, discrimination and violence.”G61

“ It ensure the protection of children from discrimination and violence, and all form of abuses.”P3

“Child Protection Policy caters the problem experienced by children from individual who inflicted them in any forms of abuse and violence.”GS1

“Child Protection Policy is a law that sees the protection of children from abuses, violence and discrimination.”GS2

“As fa as I know child protection policy is a policy that protect each children against from any form of abuses.”P4

“It is a law of which the rights of the are fully catered and given importance. It protects children from abuses and violence.”P5

“ Its protect children from harm and abuses.”G62

“Child Protection Policy is protecting children from abuses and violence.”GS3

Family Time

The importance of family time: Children, from birth to adulthood, need time and attention from their parents. The impact of personal interaction cannot be underestimated. The importance of family time is related to the maturity and emotional maturity of children and builds deep understanding with family members. The role of the family can have a significant impact on children’s emotional and behavioral issues. Many studies have recommended spending quality time with children as the first step in raising happy children who will make a positive contribution to society. The ultimate goal of family time is to create opportunities for all family members to love and get along with each other, in the process of growing happy, well -rounded children.

[\(https://www.eacs.wa.edu.au/2019/03/importance-family-time/\)](https://www.eacs.wa.edu.au/2019/03/importance-family-time/)

“I raised my child in accordance with the child protection policy through encouraging children’s participation in matters that affect their lives. Give them time to accompany during their learning”P1

“In the new normal, parents become the first responders responsible for their children’s education. Enough time for the family is necessary”T1

“In raising my child, I devote enough time in helping their distance learning and I always the child protection policy.”T2

“Every child should be protected by every parent. With this new normal of education, a lot of things have changed in their lives. As parent, I should have to render moral and financial support, enough time in terms of their distance learning in accordance with the child protection policy.”T3

“My responsibility as parent, I will devote enough time to answer all their needs especially in this new normal of education. I anchored my discipline with the Child Protection Policy.”P2

“ Yes, it is, because aside from parents’ foster love and care for their children. This policy is a great help in the development, rights and upbringing of the young but parents cannot devote enough time for their family because they were busy working, so economic status of the family can greatly affect the growing of the children”T4

Moral Support

Moral support in a way in your support of a person or cause, or on a part of you in a conflict, without giving any contribution beyond the emotional or psychological amount of encouragement. Basically, moral support on one side, with nothing really included in the conflict. The line leans on moral support and other forms of help that are always hard to come by. Initially, a number of children reported that they were left at home and found their friends for comfort. There is moral support to be given to someone who has experienced a difficult state. An individual can do any concrete help out of empathy. (<https://www.definitions.net/definition/moral+support>)

“Every child should be protected by every parent. With this new normal of education, a lot of things have changed in their lives. As parent, I should have to render moral and financial support, enough time in terms of their distance learning in accordance with the child protection policy.”T3

“Our government ensures the protection of children by not allowing them roaming around for the sake of their protection. Moral support and discipline from the parents is very essential but we cannot deny that economic status of the family is the reason why children will go out ”P1

“I have noticed that Child Protection Policy is implemented in school because children were given importance especially their education in the midst of pandemic regardless of their economic status. Parents and teachers joined hand in hand in giving their moral support to the children. ”P2

Economic Status

Economic status is passed on from parents to children. The continuation of generations in a social class in the family, or their position in income distribution, in the many expectations seen in combined effects of the transmission of genetic and cultural characteristics, such as cognitive transfer, that contributed to the economic success, as well as the legacy of the members to inform the income of the group and property. Higher education is enjoyed in children on the lips you high the status of the families seen here economic heritage process. During recent research dispelled the causal aspects in this account, the causes that contribute to the bread of intergenerational passing condition and the genetic means and transfer of culture and property heritage and affiliations contribute to the retention process not visible. (<https://www.umass.edu/preferen/gintis/feldman.pdf>)

“Our government ensures the protection of children by not allowing them roaming around for the sake of their protection. Moral support and discipline from the parents is very essential but we cannot deny that economic status of the family is the reason why children will go out ”P1

“ Yes, it is, because aside from parents’ foster love and care for their children. This policy is a great help in the development, rights and upbringing of the young but parents cannot devote enough time for their family because they were busy working, so economic status of the family can greatly affect the growing of the children ”T4

Reflection

This study aimed to identify the motives in the implementation of Child Protection Policy in the midst of pandemic in public elementary and secondary schools of Department of Education of Tabina District, Division of Zamboanga del Sur and in the families in the Municipality of Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur as seen by the selected research participants.

More precisely, this study expected to answer the following queries:

1. What is the current situation of the public elementary and secondary schools and community particularly in the Municipality of Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur in terms of:
 - 1.1 protection of children in all abuses;
 - 1.2 implementation of child protection policy in the midst of pandemic; and
 - 1.3 challenges in child protection in the new normal?

Based on the results of this study there are lists of experiences that manifested by the participants in which they found it difficult to cope with all the challenges and abuses as seen by them. The parents- participants always complain that they don't have enough time to nurture their children and to cope up with their work.

2. How do teachers cope with the challenges in their teaching in line with the Child Protection Policy in the midst of new normal?

Based on the summary of concurrence on the themes stated, the research participants assured that these were just challenges and spices on their teaching career in following the Child Protection Policy. They added that without these kinds of challenges their work would have no color because they considered these as guides to pursue their career. These hardships can be overcome when they come out from their multiple works and when they can unwind the stresses of their life through chit chats with their fellow teachers.

IV. Conclusion

Given the presented summary of findings, it could be concluded that the common concurrence that could be seen on the experiences by the respondents involved the full implementation of Child Protection Policy. These struggles of Family time, moral support, abuse and economic status were noticeable even there is policy to protect the rights of children. Firstly because, abuse, family time, economic status, and moral support would have been addressed if the teachers, parents and authorities managed wisely the full implementation of Child Protection. Secondly, wouldn't adopt "mañana habit" to avoid delay of specific action. However, the full implementation of the policy could be realized if it was a sincerity in following what were mandated in the policy. To conclude, family time and abuse were the top two occurrences of the theme.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendation were crafted by the researcher:

1. Full implementation of Child Protection Policy in schools and in the community.
Authorities may do their tasks seriously.
2. Authorities would make interventions through symposia and advocacy.
3. Teachers would seriously follow the mandate of the Child Protection Policy in the midst of pandemic.
4. That the school heads or administrators may strictly follow the directives of the Department of Education and may also consider the burdens experienced by the teachers.
5. That they may find ways and means to monitor the implementation of CPP.
6. They may draft a plan and intervention that will help the teachers to balance their time from doing their work in school and performing their duties for their family as well.

7. That the school administrators may impose on time policy. They will tell the teachers to do their part.

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The author was born on September 8, 1975 at Malimpuno, Mabuhay, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. She finished her Elementary Education at Tabina Central Elementary School, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur last March, 1990 as Valedictorian. She continued her Secondary Level at Saint Ambrose High School, Poblacion, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines and graduated in the year 1993 as Valedictorian. She pursued her tertiary level at Saint Columban College, Pagadian City in a course of Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED) with an area of concentration in English and graduated on March, 1997. She took the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) and luckily she passed on the same year.

Work experiences:

1997	Substitute Teacher (4 months)
1998 – 2001	Grade I Teacher at San Roque Elementary School, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX
2002-2006	Grade I Teacher at Malim Elementary School, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX
2007-2015	Grade I Teacher at San Roque Elementary School, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX
2016-2020	SPED LSEN Teacher at Tabina Central Elementary School, Tabina, Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX
2021- Present	Grade I Teacher as Master Teacher-1 of Tabina Central Elementary School w/ SPED Class

Graduate Studies :

Southern Mindanao Colleges (SMC)
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Master of Art in Education major in
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