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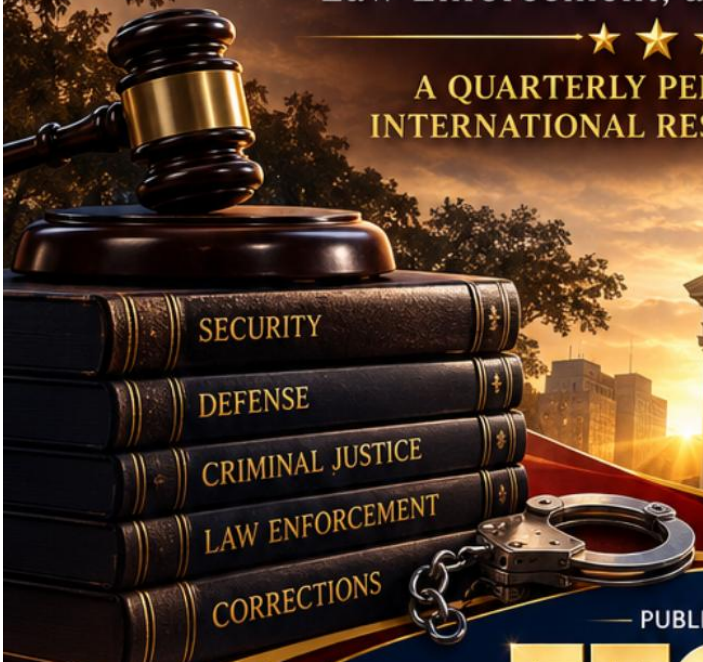
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Knowledge, practices, and challenges in implementing Republic Act 11930 in Naga City: Basis for a proposed intervention program

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Abstract

Aim: This study assessed the knowledge, practices, and challenges of Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930, or the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act of 2022, in Naga City. The findings served as the basis for developing an intervention program to strengthen local implementation of the law.

Methodology: The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase involved 54 respondents, comprising 30 PNP personnel and 24 DSWD staff, whose knowledge and practices were assessed using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and Mann–Whitney U test were used to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 10 purposively selected key informants, and the responses were analyzed thematically to explain the implementation challenges encountered by frontline personnel.

Findings: PNP personnel and DSWD staff obtained high self-reported knowledge ratings and reported frequent performance of activities associated with the legal provisions, assigned roles, and operational procedures of RA 11930. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups in knowledge or practice. However, the qualitative findings revealed persistent challenges involving digital investigation, legal procedures, resource limitations, inter-agency coordination, victim and family cooperation, and community awareness of online child exploitation.

Conclusion: Effective implementation of RA 11930 requires not only knowledgeable and competent frontline personnel but also adequate institutional resources, technical capabilities, coordinated agency responses, and victim- and family-centered interventions. Based on the integrated findings, the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program was formulated as an intervention framework intended to address identified needs in institutional capacity, inter-agency collaboration, operational support, and community-based child protection efforts against OSAEC and CSAEM. Its effectiveness has not yet been evaluated.

Keywords: *RA 11930; online sexual abuse or exploitation of children; child sexual abuse or exploitation materials; child protection; law enforcement*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of digital technologies and online platforms has created new opportunities for communication, education, and social interaction, but it has also exposed children to emerging forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and the production and distribution of Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) have become serious child protection and criminal justice concerns. The rapid development of digital platforms, encrypted communication, anonymous online accounts, and emerging technologies has complicated the detection, investigation, and prosecution of these offenses. International assessments, including the Global Threat Assessment 2023 of the WeProtect Global Alliance, have highlighted

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emerging forms of technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and the importance of coordinated institutional responses (WeProtect Global Alliance, 2023).

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11930 (RA 11930), otherwise known as the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act of 2022, strengthened the country's legal framework against OSAEC and CSAEM. Its implementation involves law enforcement agencies, social welfare institutions, local government units, and other child protection stakeholders. Frontline personnel are expected to understand their institutional responsibilities and observe applicable procedures involving investigation, reporting, referrals, evidence handling, confidentiality, and victim protection.

However, the existence of legal safeguards does not automatically eliminate operational and social barriers to child protection. The WeProtect Global Alliance (2023) emphasized the importance of prevention strategies and coordinated responses to evolving online exploitation. In the Philippines, action research undertaken through SaferKidsPH identified community norms involving stigma, victim-blaming, and non-interference in family matters that may discourage reporting and cooperation (SaferKidsPH–UNICEF & Plan International, 2024). Research involving child victims and survivors also highlighted the importance of rehabilitation, reintegration, and child-sensitive services alongside criminal justice responses (Child Frontiers et al., 2023).

These concerns are relevant to the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which perform complementary responsibilities in child protection. Police personnel undertake investigative and law enforcement functions, while social welfare personnel provide protective services, case management, referrals, and interventions for affected children. Consequently, the implementation of RA 11930 involves not only knowledge of legal provisions but also operational practices, institutional resources, and coordination among responsible agencies.

Although existing literature has examined online child sexual exploitation, victim protection, and community vulnerabilities, the studies reviewed do not directly establish how frontline PNP and DSWD personnel in Naga City understand and report implementing RA 11930. In particular, the reviewed literature provides limited localized comparative evidence concerning the two groups' knowledge and self-reported practices alongside their implementation challenges. This gap warrants examination because national policies and broader studies may not fully capture the operational experiences and institutional constraints encountered by personnel responsible for implementing the law in a specific locality.

Accordingly, the study assessed the knowledge, self-reported practices, and challenges of PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing RA 11930 in Naga City. It examined differences between the two groups in knowledge and reported practices and explored the challenges encountered by frontline implementers. Through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, quantitative findings were integrated with qualitative insights to inform the development of the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program (Welfare Enhancement through Partnerships, Resource Optimization, Technical Capability, Effective Coordination, and Community Transformation). The program was formulated to address identified needs involving digital investigation, legal and operational support, inter-agency coordination, victim- and family-centered interventions, and community awareness.

This study contributes to criminal justice and public safety governance by providing localized evidence concerning the implementation of child protection legislation. Its empirical contribution lies in comparing the knowledge and self-reported practices of two frontline groups while examining the operational challenges they encounter. Its practical contribution lies in developing a proposed intervention framework informed by the integrated findings. The results may assist relevant institutions in identifying priorities for capacity building, resource planning, inter-agency coordination, and community-based child protection. Although the findings are specific to the participating personnel in Naga City, they may offer contextual insights for other jurisdictions facing similar challenges in coordinating law enforcement, social welfare, and community-based responses to technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation. The proposed intervention has not been implemented or evaluated for effectiveness in the present study.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Global Literature on OSAEC Implementation

Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) has become an increasingly complex concern for law enforcement and child protection institutions as digital technologies continue to evolve. The WeProtect Global Alliance (2023), through its Global Threat Assessment 2023, identified emerging threats involving artificial intelligence-generated abusive imagery, financial sexual extortion, and encrypted communication. These

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developments demonstrate the changing technological environment within which child protection institutions operate and underscore the importance of technical knowledge, digital investigation procedures, and institutional preparedness.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC, n.d.) documents reports of suspected online child sexual exploitation through its CyberTipline reporting system. These reports provide information about reporting volumes and the demands placed on investigative and referral mechanisms. However, reports of suspected exploitation should not be interpreted as equivalent to confirmed offenses or unique victims. CyberTipline data therefore provide an indication of reporting and investigative demands rather than a direct measure of the effectiveness of frontline personnel.

Beyond international threat assessments, the Disrupting Harm research project (UNICEF Innocenti et al., 2022) examined online child sexual exploitation and abuse across countries in Southeast Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa. The research incorporated quantitative and qualitative approaches involving children and relevant child protection stakeholders. Unlike threat assessments that primarily describe emerging risks and reporting patterns, this research examined experiences of online exploitation, reporting mechanisms, institutional responses, and access to protection services.

These international sources provide complementary but different forms of evidence. Threat assessments identify emerging technological risks, reporting data illustrate demands on investigative systems, and empirical studies examine experiences and institutional responses. Taken together, they highlight the relevance of technical capability, operational preparedness, and coordination to child protection. However, they do not directly measure the knowledge and self-reported implementation practices of PNP personnel and DSWD staff under RA 11930. This distinction is important because evidence concerning the prevalence or nature of online exploitation cannot automatically establish the preparedness or effectiveness of the institutions responding to it.

Philippine Literature and Studies

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11930 (2022), otherwise known as the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act, strengthened the country's legal framework against OSAEC and CSAEM. Nevertheless, implementation involves legal, institutional, operational, and community-related considerations. The National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines (De La Salle University–Social Development Research Center et al., 2021) examined the nature of OSAEC and concerns involving law enforcement and child protection responses. The study provides relevant background on institutional and operational challenges. However, because it preceded the enactment of RA 11930, it did not specifically assess personnel's knowledge or implementation practices under the newer legislation.

The Philippine component of Disrupting Harm (UNICEF Innocenti et al., 2022) examined children's experiences of online sexual exploitation and abuse and barriers to disclosure and reporting. Its findings emphasize the importance of accessible reporting mechanisms, appropriate institutional responses, and protection services. These concerns are relevant to PNP and DSWD personnel because investigation, referral, case management, and victim assistance involve complementary institutional responsibilities. Nevertheless, evidence about children's experiences and reporting barriers is distinct from direct evidence about frontline personnel's knowledge and practices.

The importance of victim assistance was further examined in Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in the Philippines: Study on Intervention Strategies for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims/Survivors by Child Frontiers, the Psychosocial Support and Children's Rights Resource Center, and UNICEF Philippines (2023). The study considered rehabilitation, reintegration, and services for children affected by online sexual exploitation. Its focus on victim recovery and child-sensitive interventions complements the law enforcement perspective by demonstrating that responses to OSAEC extend beyond investigation and prosecution. This is particularly relevant to coordination between police personnel and social welfare practitioners in providing protection, referrals, and continuing assistance.

Community-related barriers were examined in the SaferKidsPH Action Research on Changing Social Norms for Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (SaferKidsPH–UNICEF & Plan International, 2024). The research identified social norms involving stigma, victim-blaming, non-interference in family matters, and gender expectations that may discourage disclosure and reporting. These findings suggest that community attitudes and family circumstances may complicate child protection responses even when legal and institutional mechanisms are available. However, the study focused on community norms rather than directly measuring the implementation practices of law enforcement and social welfare personnel.

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At the policy level, the Fourth National Plan of Action for Children (2023–2028), developed by the Council for the Welfare of Children (2024), provides a national framework for strengthening child protection systems, institutional coordination, professional capacity, and local government participation. The plan emphasizes effective child protection mechanisms, inter-agency collaboration, and coordinated responses to online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. As a policy document, it identifies institutional priorities rather than empirically establishing the effectiveness of RA 11930 implementation. Its relevance to the present study lies in providing a policy context for examining the preparedness and coordination of agencies responsible for child protection.

The Philippine literature therefore offers different perspectives on OSAEC implementation. Earlier empirical research documents the nature of exploitation and institutional challenges; victim-centered studies examine protection, recovery, and rehabilitation; community research identifies social barriers to reporting; and national policy documents establish institutional priorities. Although these sources are relevant to the implementation environment, they do not directly provide a comparative assessment of the knowledge and self-reported practices of PNP and DSWD personnel in Naga City under RA 11930.

Synthesis

The reviewed literature and studies identify three interconnected concerns relevant to implementing RA 11930. First, emerging forms of online exploitation create demands for updated legal knowledge, technical capabilities, and operational preparedness. Second, institutional responses involve coordination among law enforcement agencies, social welfare institutions, and other child protection stakeholders, particularly in investigation, reporting, referral, case management, and victim assistance. Third, community-related factors, including stigma, limited awareness, and family circumstances, may create difficulties in identifying and responding to cases.

The sources differ in their purposes, methods, and evidentiary contributions. International threat assessments describe emerging digital risks, while reporting statistics illustrate demands placed on investigative systems. Empirical studies examine experiences of online exploitation, barriers to disclosure, and institutional responses. Philippine research and policy documents provide additional evidence concerning victim assistance, community attitudes, and institutional responsibilities. These sources collectively establish the importance of technical capability, resources, coordination, and child-sensitive services, but they cannot be treated as interchangeable measures of frontline implementation.

A limitation of the reviewed literature is the lack of directly comparable evidence concerning the knowledge and self-reported practices of PNP personnel and DSWD staff implementing RA 11930 in Naga City. Studies examining victim experiences or community reporting barriers do not necessarily establish how personnel understand the law or perform their assigned responsibilities. Similarly, policy documents defining institutional roles do not independently demonstrate how consistently those responsibilities are carried out.

The present study addressed this specific gap by assessing and comparing the knowledge and self-reported practices of PNP personnel and DSWD staff concerning legal provisions, specific roles, and operational procedures under RA 11930. It further explored implementation challenges through qualitative interviews. Integrating these findings provided the basis for developing the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program, which was intended to address identified needs involving technical capability, institutional resources, inter-agency coordination, victim-centered interventions, and community awareness. The program's effectiveness was not evaluated in the present study.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Social Learning Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Systems Theory, which provided complementary perspectives for understanding the knowledge, self-reported practices, and challenges of frontline personnel in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 (RA 11930). These theories were selected because implementing child protection legislation involves individual competencies, institutional responsibilities, and coordination among agencies. Each theory informed a distinct aspect of the study rather than serving as a direct explanation of causal relationships.

Social Learning Theory, as explained by Akers (1998), emphasizes how behavior may be learned and reinforced through social interaction, observation, modeling, and reinforcement. In the context of this study, the theory provided a perspective for interpreting how PNP personnel and DSWD staff may develop their understanding of RA 11930 and their professional practices through training, institutional orientations, supervision, established procedures, and case-related experiences. It was relevant to the quantitative assessment of knowledge concerning legal provisions, specific roles, and operational procedures, as well as respondents' self-reported practices. However,

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the study did not directly measure learning mechanisms or determine whether training and experience caused differences in knowledge or practices.

Routine Activity Theory, developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), explains that crime may occur when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship converge. Applied to OSAEC, the theory provides a crime-prevention perspective on protective mechanisms in digital environments. Parents, communities, technology providers, law enforcement agencies, and child protection institutions may contribute to capable guardianship through prevention, reporting, detection, investigation, and protective interventions. In the present study, the theory informed the interpretation of the institutional responsibilities and reported operational practices of PNP and DSWD personnel. Nevertheless, the study did not directly examine offending patterns, children's exposure to online risks, or the actual effectiveness of guardianship measures.

Systems Theory, developed by von Bertalanffy (1968), views organizations and institutions as interconnected components of a larger system. Implementing RA 11930 involves the participation of the PNP, DSWD, prosecutors, local government units, healthcare institutions, schools, communities, and other child protection stakeholders. These institutions perform complementary responsibilities, making communication, referrals, information-sharing arrangements, resources, and coordinated case management important considerations. In this study, Systems Theory provided a perspective for interpreting challenges involving resource limitations, legal and operational procedures, inter-agency coordination, and victim and family assistance. Difficulties encountered by one institution may affect the continuity of services involving other agencies, although the study did not establish causal relationships among these institutional conditions.

The three theories therefore complemented one another by addressing different aspects of frontline implementation. Social Learning Theory informed the interpretation of personnel knowledge and professional practices; Routine Activity Theory emphasized prevention and institutional guardianship; and Systems Theory supported the examination of institutional relationships and coordination. Together, these perspectives guided the interpretation of the quantitative assessment and qualitative exploration of implementation challenges.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. The three theoretical foundations informed the examination of frontline implementation of RA 11930. The quantitative phase assessed and compared the knowledge and practices of PNP personnel and DSWD staff, while the subsequent qualitative phase explored implementation challenges among selected respondents. The findings from both phases were integrated to identify reported strengths and operational concerns that informed the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program. The framework illustrates the sequence of inquiry and development of the proposed intervention; it does not represent established causal relationships or evidence of program effectiveness.

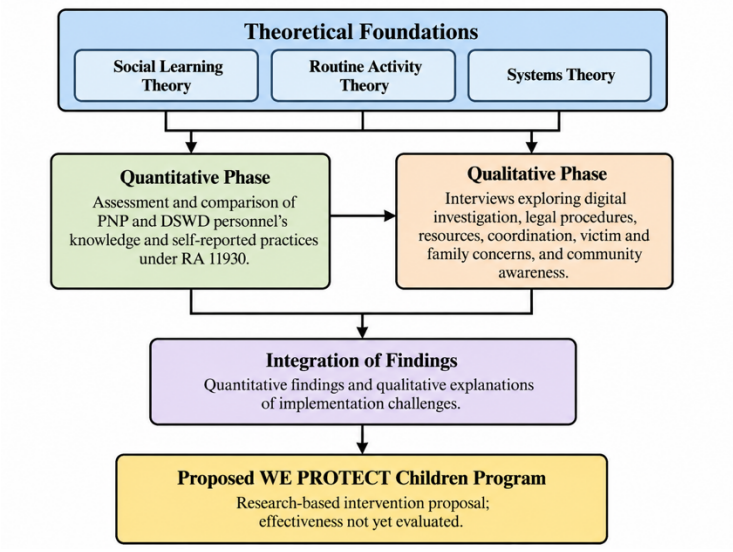


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

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Statement of the Problem

The effective implementation of Republic Act No. 11930, or the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act of 2022, is an important concern in criminology, law enforcement, and child protection. Addressing online sexual abuse or exploitation of children (OSAEC) and child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM) requires not only a sound legal framework but also adequate personnel competencies, appropriate operational procedures, sufficient institutional resources, and effective coordination among agencies responsible for investigation, case management, victim assistance, and protection. Challenges in these areas may affect the timely and coordinated delivery of child protection and justice services.

In Naga City, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) perform complementary functions in responding to cases involving OSAEC and CSAEM. The PNP undertakes law enforcement and investigative functions, while the DSWD provides social welfare services, case management, victim assistance, and related protective interventions. Effective implementation of Republic Act No. 11930 therefore requires both institutions to understand their respective legal responsibilities, consistently apply appropriate procedures, and coordinate their actions. However, localized evidence comparing the knowledge and implementation practices of personnel from these two institutions, together with the challenges they encounter, remains limited within the scope of the present study.

A systematic assessment of these areas is necessary to identify existing strengths and determine the operational and institutional concerns that may require further support. Examining both the knowledge and practices of frontline personnel and their reported implementation challenges can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the law is implemented at the local level. Such evidence may inform capability-building activities, resource allocation, inter-agency coordination, victim- and family-centered services, and community-based child protection initiatives.

Accordingly, this study assessed the knowledge, practices, and challenges of PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in Naga City. It compared the two groups in terms of their knowledge and practices, explored the challenges encountered by frontline personnel, and integrated the quantitative and qualitative findings as the basis for developing the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program. The study sought to provide evidence that could support institutional capacity-building, coordinated law enforcement and social welfare responses, and improved local child protection efforts against OSAEC and CSAEM.

General Objective:

To assess the knowledge, practices, and challenges of Philippine National Police personnel and Department of Social Welfare and Development staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in Naga City and use the integrated findings as the basis for a proposed intervention program.

Specific Objectives:

Specifically, the study aimed:

1. To determine the level of knowledge of PNP personnel and DSWD staff regarding Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of legal provisions, specific roles, and operational procedures.
2. To determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of knowledge regarding the implementation of Republic Act No. 11930.
3. To determine the level of practice of PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of the application of legal provisions, performance of specific roles, and execution of operational procedures.
4. To determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of practice in implementing Republic Act No. 11930.
5. To identify and describe the challenges encountered by PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930.
6. To develop a proposed intervention program based on the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings to strengthen the local implementation of Republic Act No. 11930.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

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1. What is the level of knowledge of PNP personnel and DSWD staff regarding Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of:
    a. legal provisions;
    b. specific roles; and
    c. operational procedures?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of knowledge regarding the implementation of Republic Act No. 11930?
3. What is the level of practice of PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of:
    a. application of legal provisions;
    b. performance of specific roles; and
    c. execution of operational procedures?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of practice in implementing Republic Act No. 11930?
5. What challenges are encountered by PNP personnel and DSWD staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930?
6. What intervention program may be developed based on the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings to strengthen the local implementation of Republic Act No. 11930?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

H_{o1}: There is no statistically significant difference between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of knowledge regarding the implementation of Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of legal provisions, specific roles, and operational procedures.

H_{o2}: There is no statistically significant difference between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in their levels of practice in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in terms of the application of legal provisions, performance of specific roles, and execution of operational procedures.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design to assess the knowledge, practices, and challenges of Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff in implementing Republic Act No. 11930 in Naga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines.

The quantitative phase was conducted first to determine the respondents' levels of knowledge and practice regarding the legal provisions, institutional roles, and operational procedures associated with the implementation of the law. It also examined whether statistically significant differences existed between PNP personnel and DSWD staff in these areas. The qualitative phase followed and involved semi-structured interviews with selected key informants to explore the operational, institutional, and inter-agency challenges encountered in implementing the law.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during interpretation. The quantitative results provided an assessment of existing knowledge and practices, while the qualitative findings offered contextual explanations of the challenges experienced by frontline personnel. The integrated findings served as the basis for developing the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program.

Population and Sampling

The quantitative phase involved 54 respondents, comprising 30 Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and 24 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff assigned in Naga City, Camarines Sur, who were directly involved in functions related to the implementation of Republic Act No. 11930. The PNP respondents included personnel engaged in law enforcement, investigation, and child protection operations, while the DSWD respondents were involved in case management, child welfare, victim assistance, and related social welfare services.

Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents with relevant professional responsibilities, knowledge, and experience in implementing the law. The inclusion criteria required participants to be assigned in

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Naga City, have at least six months of service, be directly involved in functions related to the implementation of RA 11930, and voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

The final quantitative sample consisted of 54 eligible personnel who participated in the survey. Given the non-probability sampling approach, the findings were interpreted within the context of the participating PNP and DSWD personnel and were not assumed to represent all personnel from these agencies in Naga City or other localities.

The qualitative phase involved 10 key informants purposively selected from the same 54 respondents who participated in the quantitative survey. These consisted of six PNP Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) personnel, two PNP Anti-Cybercrime Unit personnel, and two DSWD staff. The six WCPD personnel and two Anti-Cybercrime Unit personnel were distinct participants representing different police functions.

The key informants were selected based on their direct professional involvement and relevant experience in handling matters associated with online sexual abuse or exploitation of children (OSAEC) and child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM). Their responsibilities in investigation, child protection, case management, inter-agency coordination, and victim assistance made them suitable for providing detailed accounts of the operational and institutional challenges encountered in implementing RA 11930.

Instruments

Two research instruments were used: a researcher-developed structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide.

The structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on Republic Act No. 11930, its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), and relevant Philippine National Police (PNP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) child protection guidelines. It consisted of three sections. The first section gathered respondents' demographic and professional information. The second section assessed respondents' knowledge of Republic Act No. 11930 across three dimensions: legal provisions (10 items), specific roles and responsibilities (7 items), and operational procedures (7 items), comprising a total of 24 items. The third section assessed respondents' practices across three dimensions: application of legal provisions (7 items), performance of assigned roles and responsibilities (6 items), and execution of operational procedures (6 items), comprising a total of 19 items.

A four-point Likert-type scale was employed to measure respondents' knowledge and self-reported practices. For knowledge, responses ranged from 1 (Not Knowledgeable) to 4 (Very Knowledgeable), while for practices, responses ranged from 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). The corresponding numerical ranges and verbal interpretations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Interpretation of Knowledge and Practice Scores

Numerical Range	Knowledge Interpretation	Practice Interpretation
3.26–4.00	Very Knowledgeable	Always
2.51–3.25	Moderately Knowledgeable	Often
1.76–2.50	Slightly Knowledgeable	Seldom
1.00–1.75	Not Knowledgeable	Never

The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts: a criminologist specializing in child protection, a licensed social worker experienced in OSAEC case handling, and a research methodology expert. Content validity was assessed using Aiken's V. For the knowledge dimensions, the coefficients were 0.9556 for legal provisions, 0.9683 for specific roles and responsibilities, and 0.9048 for operational procedures. For the practice dimensions, the coefficients were 1.000 for application of legal provisions, 0.9444 for performance of assigned roles and responsibilities, and 1.000 for execution of operational procedures. These results provided evidence of high content validity based on expert evaluations.

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing among participants outside the final study sample to examine item clarity, relevance, and appropriateness and to obtain data for assessing internal consistency. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The knowledge dimensions obtained coefficients of 0.884 for legal provisions, 0.865 for specific roles and responsibilities, and 0.700 for operational procedures. The corresponding coefficients for self-reported practices were 0.772 for application of legal provisions, 0.860 for performance of assigned roles and responsibilities, and 0.813 for execution of operational procedures. These results

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indicated acceptable to good internal consistency across the six dimensions. Content validity and internal consistency were considered separate forms of evidence regarding the quality of the instrument.

The semi-structured interview guide consisted of five open-ended questions designed to explore challenges encountered in implementing Republic Act No. 11930. The guide was reviewed by the same three experts and evaluated using the Content Validity Index (CVI). The item-level CVI (I-CVI) was calculated as the proportion of experts who rated each question as relevant, while the scale-level CVI using the averaging method (S-CVI/Ave) was determined by averaging the item-level indices across the five questions. All five questions obtained an I-CVI of 1.00, resulting in an S-CVI/Ave of 1.00, indicating unanimous agreement among the validators regarding the relevance of the interview questions.

Data Collection

Formal permission was obtained from the concerned Philippine National Police (PNP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) offices in Naga City, Camarines Sur, before data collection. The researcher coordinated with designated agency representatives to identify personnel who met the inclusion criteria and were directly involved in implementing Republic Act No. 11930.

Data collection was conducted from April to June 2026, during Academic Year 2025–2026, in participating PNP offices, police stations, and DSWD offices in Naga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines.

During the quantitative phase, the researcher distributed printed, paper-based structured questionnaires to the respective participating offices and police stations. The survey involved 54 respondents, comprising 30 PNP personnel and 24 DSWD staff, who met the inclusion criteria and voluntarily agreed to participate. The accomplished questionnaires were subsequently retrieved, organized, and prepared for encoding and statistical analysis. The survey assessed respondents' knowledge and practices concerning the implementation of RA 11930.

Following the quantitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 purposively selected key informants drawn from the same 54 respondents who participated in the survey. These consisted of six PNP Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) personnel, two PNP Anti-Cybercrime Unit personnel, and two DSWD staff. The interviews explored challenges involving digital investigations, legal procedures, resource and operational limitations, inter-agency coordination, victim and family concerns, and community awareness of online child exploitation.

With the participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve the accuracy of their responses. Identification codes P1 to P10 were assigned to the key informants to protect their identities during data analysis and reporting.

Treatment of Data

Quantitative data were encoded, organized, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize respondent characteristics and relevant response distributions. The questionnaire responses were grouped according to the respondents' agency affiliation and the six dimensions of the research instrument.

Descriptive scores were reported for three knowledge dimensions, the legal provisions, specific roles and responsibilities, and operational procedures, and three practice dimensions, the application of legal provisions, performance of assigned roles and responsibilities, and execution of operational procedures. The reported scores were interpreted using the established four-point scale ranges: 3.26–4.00, 2.51–3.25, 1.76–2.50, and 1.00–1.75, with the corresponding knowledge and practice descriptions specified in the Research Instruments subsection.

The Shapiro–Wilk test was applied to the 43 individual questionnaire items, comprising 24 knowledge items and 19 practice items. The reported item-level results indicated statistically significant departures from normality ($p < .001$). These findings described the distributions of individual item responses and were not treated as direct normality assessments of the six dimension-level scores.

The Mann–Whitney U test was employed to compare the knowledge and practice scores of two independent groups: 30 Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and 24 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff. The use of this nonparametric test was justified by the ordinal nature of the questionnaire responses and the independent-group comparison, rather than by the normality results alone. The three knowledge dimensions and three practice dimensions were examined separately.

The level of statistical significance was set at .05. Results with p-values greater than .05 were interpreted as indicating insufficient statistical evidence to reject the corresponding null hypotheses. Such findings were not interpreted as establishing equivalence between the two respondent groups.

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P - ISSN: 3116-3904; E - ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
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The qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the six-stage thematic analysis framework described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and examined to identify recurring experiences, concerns, and challenges encountered by personnel involved in implementing Republic Act No. 11930. The analytical process involved familiarization with the interview transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification of recurring patterns and potential themes, review of themes, definition and naming of final themes, and preparation of the interpretative report.

The analysis identified six major themes: Digital Investigation, Legal Procedures, Resource Constraints, Inter-Agency Coordination, Victim and Family Cooperation, and Community Awareness and Online Vulnerability.

Relevant participant quotations were used to illustrate the identified themes and provide supporting evidence from the interview accounts. Participant identification codes P1 to P10 were used to maintain confidentiality and avoid disclosure of sensitive information involving victims or ongoing investigations.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during interpretation, consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. The quantitative results described the respondents' reported knowledge and practices and examined differences between PNP personnel and DSWD staff.

The qualitative findings provided contextual explanations of the operational and institutional challenges encountered by frontline personnel. The integration of findings helped explain how favorable knowledge and practice ratings could coexist with difficulties involving digital investigations, legal procedures, resource limitations, inter-agency coordination, victim and family cooperation, and community awareness.

The integrated quantitative and qualitative findings served as the basis for developing the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program. The program was not implemented or evaluated as part of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical safeguards intended to protect the rights, privacy, and confidentiality of research participants. Before data collection, institutional permission was obtained from the concerned Philippine National Police (PNP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) offices in Naga City, Camarines Sur. Participants were limited to PNP personnel and DSWD staff directly involved in functions related to implementing RA 11930. No minors, victims of abuse, or members of the public were directly recruited. Written informed consent was obtained before administering the survey questionnaires and conducting the semi-structured interviews. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty. Participation was voluntary, and no coercion or undue influence was applied.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. Participants' identities were protected through the use of identification codes, with qualitative informants designated as P1 to P10. Research information was used exclusively for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Considering the sensitive nature of online sexual abuse or exploitation of children (OSAEC) and child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM), the researcher exercised caution to avoid unnecessary disclosure of personally identifiable information and details that could compromise victims, families, or ongoing investigations.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are organized according to the six research questions concerning the implementation of Republic Act No. 11930 (RA 11930) among Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff in Naga City, Camarines Sur. The quantitative phase examined respondents' knowledge and practices and determined whether statistically significant differences existed between the two groups. The qualitative phase explored the challenges experienced by selected frontline implementers and provided contextual insights into the quantitative findings. The integration of both sets of findings informed the development of the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program.

1. Level of Knowledge Regarding Republic Act No. 11930

Table 2

Level of Knowledge of PNP Personnel and DSWD Staff Regarding Republic Act No. 11930

Area	PNP Median	DSWD Median	Overall Median	Interpretation
Legal Provisions	3.74	4.00	3.86	Very Knowledgeable
Specific Roles	3.72	4.00	3.77	Very Knowledgeable
Operational Procedures	3.68	4.00	3.75	Very Knowledgeable

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P - ISSN: 3116-3904; E - ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
National Book Development Board Registration as Book Publisher (Print & Digital): 6312

Table 2 presents the respondents' knowledge ratings across three dimensions of RA 11930 implementation. Legal provisions obtained the highest overall score (3.86), followed by specific roles (3.77) and operational procedures (3.75). All three dimensions were classified as Very Knowledgeable based on the interpretation ranges presented in Table 1.

These findings indicate that the participating PNP personnel and DSWD staff reported favorable knowledge of the legal provisions, institutional responsibilities, and operational procedures associated with RA 11930. However, the findings reflect responses to the research questionnaire and do not independently establish respondents' ability to apply such knowledge accurately in actual investigations or case management.

Operational procedures obtained the lowest overall score among the three dimensions. Although this score remained within the highest interpretation category, the relative difference identifies procedural knowledge as an area that may be considered in subsequent competency assessments. The present study does not establish that respondents lacked procedural competence or that additional training would necessarily improve their performance.

The findings may be considered alongside international literature emphasizing the importance of technical preparedness and institutional capability in addressing technology-facilitated child exploitation (WeProtect Global Alliance, 2023). Whereas these institutional discussions emphasize operational requirements, the present study contributes local evidence concerning personnel's reported knowledge of the legal and procedural framework governing OSAEC and CSAEM cases.

Social Learning Theory offers an interpretive perspective on how professional knowledge may develop through instruction, observation, and institutional experience. Nevertheless, the study did not examine the effects of these learning processes. Therefore, the relatively high knowledge ratings cannot be attributed directly to training, supervision, or case exposure without further investigation.

2. Significant Difference in the Level of Knowledge

Table 3
Comparative Analysis of the Level of Knowledge Between PNP Personnel and DSWD Staff

Area	PNP Median	DSWD Median	Z-value	p-value	Decision
Legal Provisions	3.74	4.00	-0.444	0.657	Not Significant
Specific Roles	3.72	4.00	-0.818	0.413	Not Significant
Operational Procedures	3.68	4.00	-1.216	0.224	Not Significant

Note. The level of statistical significance was set at α = .05.

Table 3 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test comparing the knowledge scores of PNP personnel and DSWD staff. No statistically significant differences were found in knowledge of legal provisions ($p = .657$), specific roles ($p = .413$), or operational procedures ($p = .224$). Since all p-values exceeded the .05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected for any of the three dimensions.

Although the DSWD respondents obtained higher reported descriptive scores, the statistical analysis did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the knowledge-score distributions differed between the two participating groups. Importantly, the absence of statistically significant differences does not establish that the groups possessed identical knowledge or were statistically equivalent.

The findings indicate that both participating groups reported favorable knowledge of RA 11930 within their respective professional contexts. However, the comparison was limited to the dimensions measured by the questionnaire and did not evaluate the quality of inter-agency coordination, referral efficiency, or case outcomes.

Systems Theory provides a useful framework for interpreting the complementary responsibilities of law enforcement and social welfare institutions. PNP personnel undertake investigative and law enforcement functions, while DSWD staff provide social welfare and protective services. Although knowledge of relevant legal and institutional responsibilities may be useful for inter-agency collaboration, the present findings do not establish whether similarities in knowledge improve coordination or the delivery of child-protection services. These relationships warrant further investigation.

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P - ISSN: 3116-3904; E - ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
National Book Development Board Registration as Book Publisher (Print & Digital): 6312

3. Level of Practice in Implementing Republic Act No. 11930

Table 4

Level of Practice of PNP Personnel and DSWD Staff in Implementing Republic Act No. 11930

Area	PNP Median	DSWD Median	Overall Median	Interpretation
Application of Legal Provisions	3.76	4.00	3.81	Always
Performance of Specific Roles	3.83	4.00	3.88	Always
Execution of Operational Procedures	3.83	4.00	3.83	Always

Table 4 presents the respondents' practices concerning the implementation of RA 11930. The performance of specific roles obtained the highest overall reported score (3.88), followed by the execution of operational procedures (3.83) and the application of legal provisions (3.81). All three dimensions were classified as "Always" based on the interpretation ranges presented in Table 1.

The findings indicate that respondents reported frequently carrying out the institutional responsibilities and procedures assessed by the questionnaire. These include activities associated with applying legal provisions, performing assigned roles, and executing operational procedures related to OSAEC and CSAEM case handling.

However, the findings must be interpreted within the limitations of self-reported data. The questionnaire measured respondents' reported frequency of practice rather than independently observed performance. Consequently, the results do not establish that all required procedures were followed in every case, that the respondents consistently met legal compliance standards, or that the reported activities produced favorable investigative or protective outcomes.

This distinction is important in the context of child protection, where the performance of institutional responsibilities involves not only the frequency of activities but also their accuracy, timeliness, procedural appropriateness, and responsiveness to victims' needs. The relatively high practice scores provide information about how respondents described their professional activities, but they do not substitute for case-file reviews, direct observations, or independent assessments of service quality.

Social Learning Theory may offer an interpretive perspective because professional practices can develop within institutional environments through observation, repetition, and reinforcement. Nevertheless, the study did not test whether these mechanisms influenced respondents' reported practices. The findings are therefore descriptive rather than evidence of a causal relationship between professional learning and implementation performance.

4. Significant Difference in the Level of Practice

Table 5

Comparative Analysis of the Level of Practice Between PNP Personnel and DSWD Staff

Area	PNP Median	DSWD Median	Z-value	p-value	Decision
Application of Legal Provisions	3.76	4.00	-1.046	0.296	Not Significant
Performance of Specific Roles	3.83	4.00	-0.621	0.534	Not Significant
Execution of Operational Procedures	3.83	4.00	-0.054	0.957	Not Significant

Note. The level of statistical significance was set at α = .05.

Table 5 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test comparing the self-reported practice scores of PNP personnel and DSWD staff. No statistically significant differences were detected in the application of legal provisions ($p = .296$), performance of specific roles ($p = .534$), or execution of operational procedures ($p = .957$). Since all p-values exceeded the .05 significance level, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected for any of the three dimensions.

These results indicate that the study did not detect statistically significant differences in the distributions of reported practice scores between the two groups. However, the findings do not demonstrate that PNP personnel and DSWD staff performed identical activities, achieved equivalent operational outcomes, or complied with RA 11930 to the same extent.

The two agencies perform distinct but complementary functions in child protection. PNP personnel are primarily responsible for law enforcement and investigative activities, whereas DSWD staff provide social welfare

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P – ISSN: 3116-3904; E – ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
National Book Development Board Registration as Book Publisher (Print & Digital): 6312

services, case management, and assistance to victims and families. The respondents' favorable practice ratings indicate that both groups reported frequent performance of their respective responsibilities.

From a Systems Theory perspective, these institutional functions form part of a wider child-protection response requiring communication and coordination among participating agencies. Nevertheless, the quantitative comparison did not directly assess the effectiveness of their collaboration.

The qualitative findings provide an important qualification to the quantitative results. Although respondents reported frequent performance of their institutional responsibilities, selected informants described operational difficulties involving communication, resources, and coordination. Thus, favorable practice scores may coexist with implementation challenges that are not fully captured by a structured questionnaire.

5. Challenges Encountered in Implementing Republic Act No. 11930

The qualitative phase explored the experiences of 10 key informants selected from the quantitative respondents. The interview transcripts were examined through thematic analysis, involving familiarization with the data, identification of meaningful statements, generation of initial codes, grouping of related codes, review and refinement of emerging themes, and interpretation of the findings.

Six major themes were identified: Digital Investigation, Legal Procedures, Resource Constraints, Inter-Agency Coordination, Victim and Family Cooperation, and Community Awareness and Online Vulnerability. These themes and their corresponding implementation challenges are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6
Major Challenges Encountered in Implementing Republic Act No. 11930

Theme	Challenges Reported by Key Informants
Digital Investigation	Limited forensic equipment, dependence on specialized cyber units, identification of anonymous offenders, and delays in acquiring digital evidence
Legal Procedures	Delays in warrants, medico-legal examinations, documentary requirements, and case processing
Resource Constraints	Limited funding, transportation, manpower, and heavy workloads
Inter-Agency Coordination	Scheduling conflicts, personnel availability, communication delays, and differing interpretations of agency responsibilities
Victim and Family Cooperation	Fear, shame, trauma, family pressure, financial dependence, and reluctance to pursue cases
Community Awareness and Online Vulnerability	Limited understanding of OSAEC, insufficient digital safety awareness, and inadequate supervision of children's online activities

Digital Investigation

Digital investigation emerged as a major challenge because OSAEC and CSAEM cases frequently involve electronic devices, online accounts, digital communications, and electronic records requiring specialized investigative procedures and technical resources. One participant described the limitations encountered at local police stations:

> "Sa mga lokal na istasyon, wala kaming sapat na kagamitan para sa pagkuha at pagsusuri ng mga digital na ebidensya kaya umaasa kami sa Anti-Cybercrime Unit..."
> (Local stations do not have sufficient equipment for collecting and examining digital evidence, so we rely on the Anti-Cybercrime Unit.)

The statement illustrates the distinction between personnel knowledge and institutional technical capability. Although the quantitative findings indicated favorable reported knowledge of operational procedures, the interview account identified limited access to equipment and specialized technical support as practical concerns.

This finding may be considered alongside international discussions of digital forensic capability and technical specialization in investigations involving online child sexual exploitation (Europol, 2023). The international literature provides a broader context for understanding the technical demands of investigating online exploitation, while the present findings describe how these demands were experienced by selected frontline implementers in Naga City.

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P – ISSN: 3116-3904; E – ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
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The study did not independently measure the availability of digital forensic equipment, the frequency of technical assistance requests, or the duration of investigative delays. Nevertheless, the reported difficulties provide a basis for considering technical capability assessments, specialized investigative support, and improvements in digital evidence-handling procedures.

Legal Procedures

Participants identified procedural difficulties involving the acquisition of warrants, completion of documentary requirements, medico-legal examinations, and other activities necessary for case processing.
Participant P6 reported:

> "Nagkakaroon din ng pagkaantala sa ilang kaso dahil kinakailangan pang hintayin ang resulta ng medico-legal examination..."
> (Some cases experience delays because medico-legal examination results must first be obtained.)

The statement illustrates how the progress of case handling may depend on procedures and services involving different institutions. The concern does not establish that the legal requirements are unnecessary or inappropriate. Rather, it identifies the time required to complete certain procedural requirements as a difficulty encountered by frontline personnel.

The finding is relevant to criminal justice administration because case investigation and processing involve interconnected legal, investigative, medical, and administrative functions. Delays experienced in one stage may create practical difficulties for personnel responsible for subsequent activities.

Systems Theory provides an interpretive perspective by emphasizing the interdependence of institutions involved in responding to child exploitation. In this context, procedural coordination and timely communication may be considered areas for institutional review.

However, the study did not quantify processing times or independently establish the causes of procedural delays. Further examination of case-processing records would be necessary to determine the frequency, duration, and contributing factors associated with these concerns.

Resource Constraints

Resource limitations emerged as another challenge affecting the implementation of RA 11930. Participants described concerns involving operational funding, transportation, personnel availability, and competing responsibilities.
Participant P4 stated:

> "Kulang talaga ang pondo..."
> (Funding is insufficient.)

Participant P10 also described difficulties associated with handling multiple cases and responsibilities simultaneously.

These accounts indicate that selected respondents experienced resource-related pressures in carrying out their assigned functions. Such concerns are relevant when interpreting the quantitative findings, as favorable self-reported practice scores do not necessarily indicate that adequate operational resources were available.

Resource constraints may also intersect with other challenges identified in the interviews. For example, limited technical equipment may increase dependence on specialized units, while transportation and staffing limitations may complicate the scheduling of investigative or victim-assistance activities.

The findings provide a basis for considering institutional assessments of operational requirements, including equipment, personnel, transportation, and logistical support. However, the study did not conduct a financial assessment, workload analysis, or resource-needs computation. Therefore, it cannot establish the specific level of additional funding or staffing required.

Inter-Agency Coordination

The interviews identified difficulties involving scheduling conflicts, personnel availability, communication delays, and differing interpretations of institutional responsibilities.

These findings indicate that the implementation of RA 11930 involves coordination challenges extending beyond the responsibilities of individual personnel. Investigation, victim assistance, referral, medico-legal services,

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
P - ISSN: 3116-3904; E - ISSN: 3116-3912
PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
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and case management may require participation from several institutions operating under different procedures and administrative arrangements.

The qualitative findings provide additional context for the quantitative results. Although respondents reported frequently performing their institutional roles, the interviews indicated that coordination difficulties may still arise when those responsibilities require joint action.

These results are not necessarily contradictory. Personnel may regularly perform their assigned functions while encountering difficulties in communicating with other agencies or coordinating activities that depend on external services.

Systems Theory provides a relevant interpretive framework because child protection involves interconnected institutions whose activities may affect one another. The findings support consideration of clearer referral arrangements, communication procedures, role clarification, and inter-agency case coordination.

Nevertheless, the study did not directly measure referral timeliness, communication efficiency, or the effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms. The identified concerns therefore provide a basis for further assessment rather than evidence that a particular coordination model would improve case outcomes.

Victim and Family Cooperation

Participants identified fear, shame, trauma, family pressure, financial dependence, and reluctance to pursue cases as challenges encountered in responding to OSAEC and CSAEM incidents.

The interview findings indicated that some victims were hesitant to disclose experiences or participate in case processes, while some families experienced circumstances that complicated their cooperation with authorities. Participants also described situations in which the relationship between the alleged offender and the child created additional difficulties.

These accounts highlight the importance of considering the circumstances of victims and families when examining the implementation of child-protection laws. The challenges described by respondents extend beyond the legal knowledge and professional responsibilities of frontline personnel.

The findings may be considered in relation to child-sensitive and trauma-informed approaches to investigation and victim assistance. Such approaches recognize the importance of safety, confidentiality, appropriate communication, psychosocial support, and sensitivity to the circumstances of children and their families.

However, the study obtained these accounts from PNP and DSWD personnel rather than directly from victims or families. Accordingly, the findings represent the experiences and perceptions of professional implementers and should not be interpreted as direct evidence of victims' personal experiences.

The results provide a basis for considering appropriate psychosocial assistance, confidential reporting mechanisms, and victim- and family-centered services. The study did not evaluate whether these interventions improve cooperation, case processing, or child-protection outcomes.

Community Awareness and Online Vulnerability

The final theme concerned limited community understanding of OSAEC and CSAEM, insufficient awareness of digital risks, and difficulties associated with supervising children's online activities.

Participants identified community awareness and online safety as relevant concerns in the prevention, identification, and reporting of technology-facilitated child exploitation.

Routine Activity Theory offers a possible interpretive perspective by emphasizing the relationship between opportunities for offending and the presence or absence of capable guardianship. Within online environments, parental guidance, digital literacy, and awareness of reporting mechanisms may be relevant considerations for prevention-oriented discussions.

Nevertheless, the study did not directly examine children's online behavior, measure parental supervision, or establish the relationship between community awareness and OSAEC or CSAEM incidence in Naga City.

The findings therefore support considering parent education, school-based digital safety initiatives, barangay information activities, and community awareness programs as potential responses to the concerns reported by participants. The effectiveness of these measures in reducing exploitation or improving reporting would require separate evaluation.

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PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
National Book Development Board Registration as Book Publisher (Print & Digital): 6312

6. Proposed WE PROTECT Children Program

The integrated findings served as the basis for developing the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program, which stands for Welfare Enhancement through Partnerships, Resource Optimization, Technical Capability, Effective Coordination, and Community Transformation.

The program was formulated in response to the six implementation challenges identified during the qualitative phase, while considering the favorable knowledge and practice ratings obtained during the quantitative phase.

Table 7

Alignment of Research Findings with the Proposed WE PROTECT Children Program

Identified Challenge	Proposed Program Component	Intended Focus
Digital investigation	Digital Investigation Capability Enhancement	Technical training, digital evidence procedures, and access to specialized support
Legal procedures	Legal Case Management Enhancement	Procedural coordination, documentation, and case-processing support
Resource constraints	Resource and Operational Support	Assessment of equipment, transportation, personnel, and logistical needs
Inter-agency coordination	Inter-Agency Coordination	Referral protocols, communication arrangements, and coordinated case management
Victim and family cooperation	Victim- and Family-Centered Intervention	Trauma-informed assistance, psychosocial support, and appropriate family engagement
Community awareness and online vulnerability	Community Awareness and Online Child Protection	Digital safety education, parent awareness, and community information activities

Note. The WE PROTECT Children Program is a proposed intervention developed from the integrated research findings. Its implementation and effectiveness were not evaluated in this study.

Table 7 presents the alignment between the six implementation challenges identified in the qualitative findings and the corresponding components of the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program.

The Digital Investigation Capability Enhancement component responds to the reported limitations involving technical equipment and specialized investigative support. Legal Case Management Enhancement addresses concerns involving documentation, procedural requirements, and case-processing coordination. Resource and Operational Support focuses on assessing institutional requirements involving equipment, transportation, personnel, and logistics.

The Inter-Agency Coordination component addresses reported difficulties involving communication, scheduling, referrals, and institutional responsibilities. Victim- and Family-Centered Intervention responds to concerns involving trauma, family circumstances, and cooperation during case handling. Community Awareness and Online Child Protection focuses on digital safety information, parent education, and community-level awareness of OSAEC and CSAEM.

The program reflects a systems-oriented approach by recognizing the complementary roles of law enforcement, social welfare institutions, and other child-protection stakeholders. It also considers the relevance of preventive education and family support alongside investigative and case-management concerns.

However, the WE PROTECT Children Program remains a proposed intervention derived from the study findings. It was not implemented, pilot-tested, or evaluated for effectiveness as part of the research. Its feasibility, acceptability, resource requirements, and potential outcomes therefore remain subjects for future assessment.

Accordingly, the study provides an evidence-informed rationale for proposing the program but does not establish that its implementation will improve institutional performance, accelerate case processing, strengthen victim assistance, or reduce the incidence of OSAEC and CSAEM in Naga City.

Conclusions

The findings indicated that the participating Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) staff in Naga City obtained high knowledge ratings regarding Republic Act No. 11930 and reported frequent practice of the assessed legal provisions, institutional roles, and operational procedures. The statistical analyses found no significant differences between the two groups across the measured knowledge and practice areas. These results indicate comparable measured scores among the participants; they do

International Journal of Security, Defense, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections (IJSDCJLEC)
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PRC-CPD Accredited Provider: PTR-2025-749
National Book Development Board Registration as Book Publisher (Print & Digital): 6312

not establish that the two groups are equivalent in all aspects of implementation or that compliance was independently verified.

Despite these reported strengths, the qualitative findings identified continuing challenges involving digital investigation, legal procedures, resource availability, inter-agency coordination, victim and family cooperation, and community awareness of online sexual abuse or exploitation of children and child sexual abuse or exploitation materials. These findings indicate that favorable knowledge and practice ratings may coexist with operational constraints that require institutional attention.

The study contributes to local crime-prevention and policing discussions by presenting quantitative assessments of knowledge and reported practice alongside qualitative accounts of implementation challenges. Its findings also highlight the relevance of coordination among law enforcement, social welfare services, and other child-protection stakeholders. However, the study did not directly measure case outcomes, changes in crime incidence, or the effectiveness of specific preventive interventions.

Based on the integrated findings, the WE PROTECT Children Program was proposed to address the identified challenges through digital investigation capability enhancement, legal case management, resource and operational support, inter-agency coordination, victim- and family-centered intervention, and community awareness. The program represents a proposed response grounded in the study's findings. Its feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness would require further assessment before conclusions about its impact could be drawn.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) may continue capability-building activities for frontline personnel, particularly in digital evidence handling, cyber investigation, legal documentation, case management, and updates concerning Republic Act No. 11930. Existing knowledge and reported practices may be sustained through periodic training and procedural reviews, with particular attention to the operational and technical challenges identified by the participants.

Concerned agencies and the local government may assess the adequacy of equipment, transportation, personnel, funding, and other operational resources needed for case investigation and victim assistance. Partnerships with schools, healthcare institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and other child-protection stakeholders may also be explored to support referrals and service coordination.

The PNP, DSWD, prosecutors, healthcare providers, local government units, and other relevant stakeholders may review existing coordination and referral arrangements. Regular case conferences, protocol reviews, clear referral procedures, and appropriate information-sharing mechanisms may be considered to address the scheduling, communication, and role-clarification difficulties reported by participants, subject to applicable confidentiality and legal requirements.

The PNP and DSWD, in coordination with qualified child-protection and psychosocial service providers, may consider strengthening trauma-informed and child-sensitive interventions. Counseling, appropriate family engagement, psychosocial support, confidentiality safeguards, and follow-up services may be explored in response to the fear, shame, trauma, family pressure, and financial dependence identified in the interviews. Such measures may be implemented with due regard for the child's safety, best interests, and individual circumstances.

Local government units, schools, parents, and relevant child-protection partners may consider expanding community-based information and digital-safety initiatives through barangay orientations, school-based education, parent information activities, and awareness campaigns on OSAEC, CSAEM, responsible internet use, and reporting mechanisms. The proposed WE PROTECT Children Program may be considered as a framework for coordinating these initiatives in Naga City.

Finally, future researchers may evaluate the feasibility, stakeholder acceptability, implementation requirements, and outcomes of the proposed WE PROTECT Children Program. Further studies may include additional localities or relevant stakeholder groups and may examine objective indicators of case processing, referral timeliness, service delivery, and child-protection outcomes. Such investigations may help determine whether the proposed measures produce measurable improvements beyond the knowledge ratings, reported practices, and challenges documented in the present study.

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