

## **Child Friendly Schools in Sorsogon Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to determine the child friendly schools in the province of Sorsogon. This study employed mix method research as it used survey for the school profile and unstructured interview to gather data from the respondents. 375 learners are purposively determined from 8 central schools in 2<sup>nd</sup> district of Sorsogon. The statistical tools used in this study are frequency count, percentage and likert scale. The findings are: 1. The most location of the teachers belongs to urban area. Teachers have unit earned only in Master's Degree. All programs created by the school intended to learners were all conducted. 2. The learning effectiveness was less friendly. The health and protection was interpreted moderately friendly. The gender sensitivity of the respondents was interpreted as moderately friendly. The recommendations are: Conduct evaluation of child friendly school in every school and monitor the development to sustain the good rapport made by the CFSS programs, conduct orientation to inform parents and stakeholders about the CFSS program for them to be aware about the child friendly school.

**Keywords:** Child Friendly School, Location of the school, Facilities in the school, Educational Qualification, Health and Protection, Child participation

## 1. Introduction

Child friendly school environment is one where the staff is friendly, the safety and the needs of the children are adequately met. It is an environment which is community based, takes cognizance of the rights of the children irrespective of their gender, religious and ethnic affiliation, physical and mental abilities and any other inferences (Katz, 2010).

A global survey of the child friendly schools' concept and its application within UNICEF programs reveals a weakness in approach where there has been tendency to under emphasize the determinants of a child friendly school in education. Despite the gap in approach the approach has progressed steadily in the world from an estimated 33 countries in 2004 to 56 countries in 2007 (UNICEF, 2010).

The UNICEF grounded the CFS framework in the principles of child rights set forth in the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments and international declarations such as the Declaration of Education for All (1990). These principles emphasize the right of all children to receive free and compulsory education in settings that encourage enrollment and attendance; institute discipline humanely and fairly; develop the personality, talents, and abilities of students to their fullest potential; respect children's human rights and fundamental freedoms; respect and encourage the child's own cultural identity, language, and values, as well as the national culture and values of the country where the child is living; and prepare the child to live as a free, responsible individual who is respectful of other persons and the natural environment (UNICEF, 2009).

In addition, in Macedonia, Child Friendly School approach is important. The country adopted National Program for the development of Education that provide framework for the CFS approach as it seeks to improve the quality of its educational program for all children and moves toward participation in the European Union (Miske, Witt & Associates 2007).

Likewise, the CFS initiative in the Philippines is rooted in the provisions of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) adopted in 1989 by the U.N. member countries, which include the Philippines. The initiative was first put into action in the Philippines in 1999 following the Fifth Country Programme for Children (CPC5) of the Philippine government, with support from UNICEF Philippines. In an effort to promote healthier classroom environments and increase retention rates, the Department of Education initiated the Child Friendly School System (CFSS) initiative:

One which recognizes and respects children's rights and responsibilities, provides the enabling environment to realize children's right in school and helps ensure such an environment in the community and household, is child-friendly. The CFSS promotes a new appreciation of and approach to basic education in that the school, to become truly child-friendly, needs to be where students, teacher, parents and the community work together in support of children's education and development. It also puts forward the notion the school must take responsibility for the education of children who are not enrolled.

The Philippines has made significant strides in all aspects of its CFSS. Most teachers supported the use of interactive teaching methods. Over 90 percent of students said that students were encouraged to participate in class and work together during class. Nearly all students found

that what they were learning was interesting and was what they needed to know in life. Classroom observations also suggested that teachers were using child-centred teaching techniques, were organized, and were interacting with students respectfully and positively (UNICEF, 2009).

The Department of Education first piloted CFSS in 2001 in 131 elementary schools in 24 school divisions through Deped Order no. 73 s. 2006. Since then, the number of CFSS in elementary schools has steadily increased, bringing the total number of CFSS schools to over 5,000 (out of 40,763 total) elementary schools by 2008.7 UNICEF Philippines has supported this initiative by providing basic supplies and training for teachers and school heads on child-friendly practices ([deped.gov.ph/depedhistory](http://deped.gov.ph/depedhistory)).

While Alina (2010) reiterates that a child friendly school environment should provide a comprehensive quality framework for school policies, teaching facilities and community environment in support of children's right to health, protection and development to their fullest potential. According to her, a child friendly school environment encompasses child- seeking, child centered, gender sensitive, inclusive and healthy approaches to schooling and out-of-school education worldwide.

Child-friendly school, or CFS, is UNICEF's approach to promoting quality education in schools for all children – especially among the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations – both in everyday circumstances and in emergencies. Child-friendly educators focus on the needs of the child (which include his or her health, nutrition and overall well-being) and care about what happens to children in their families and communities before they enter school and after they leave. CFSs imply designing world class schools that inspire a love of learning and create a sense of harmony between the school, the surrounding community and the environment. CFSs also promote healthy, safe and protective environment for children's emotional, psychological and physical well-being, both in primary and secondary schools – especially for girls (Orkudashvill, 2013).

Sorsogon is one of the smallest provinces in the Philippines. It has 2 Congressional district – the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> district (Wikipedia.org). The province is located at the tip of Bicol region and characterized by mountain ranges that is home for far flung school. Not all schools in the province has an easy access in transportation and communication. That is why school structures, programs and performance are affected. Facilities and other school services in these areas are not in good condition which supposedly it must have a good one to cater the needs of the learners. But then, the schools are trying its best to provide the basic necessities of the learners and to comply with the child friendly school program which was mandated by the Department of Education.

With this, the researcher has strong believed to pursue the study on the child friendly school in 2<sup>nd</sup> District in Sorsogon Province as perceived by school heads and pupils to determine how child friendly the school is, so that necessary plan and programs might be done in order to provide the needs of the learners and of the school as well.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the profile of the school in terms of the following variables?

- a. Location of the school
  - b. Adequate and functional facilities in the school
  - c. Educational Qualification of School head
  - d. Activities conducted for the children
  - e. Availability of non-teaching personnel
2. How child-friendly is the school in terms of:
    - a. Learning effectiveness
    - b. Health and protection
    - c. Child participation
  3. How child friendly is the school when grouped according to their profile?
  4. What could be proposed based from the study?

## 2. Related Literature

This review of literatures was presented to give support to the present study. The findings, statements, and explanation by various authors may give reference to the presents study.

UNICEF Philippines (2009) stated that most students were favorable about their involvement in their learning. Most students reported that they thought the subjects they studied at school were interesting and were preparing them for life after school. Students who attended a school with more attentive teachers were significantly more likely to report that they looked forward to coming to school and that they wished to complete secondary school when compared with students who had teachers who did not notice when they had difficulty (less attentive). Students in rural schools disagreed significantly more than those who attended urban ones that they were provided with more challenging work when they mastered their work. Most classrooms in the Philippines were appropriate in terms of cleanliness, student work space, and blackboards, but some were inadequate in terms of protection from the elements, ventilation, noise, and poorly sized furniture, which occurred more often in rural schools.

The literature presented above give significant statement as support to the present study. The literature provided information that is useful to the development of the study.

Rodriguez (2017) stated that a child-friendly school can only be achieved with voluntary participation and involvement of parents in their schooling as well as to develop and improve learning levels. As a child-friendly school, as a concept, fosters democratization of education. It seeks to provide a healthy, hygienic, safe and happy environment for children. It promotes classroom activities and behavior that are gender-sensitive and results is effective learning.

The literature above gives supports to the present study as it suggests on how to achieve a child friendly school. Furthermore, RodrigueZ also explained child-friendly school system promotes effective learning.

Dr. ShafiaWani (2017) explained that a child-friendly school ensures every child an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. Teachers are the single most important factor in creating an effective and inclusive classroom. Children are natural learners, but this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed. A child-

friendly school recognizes, encourages and supports children's growing capacities as learners by providing a school culture, teaching behaviours and curriculum content that are focused on learning and the learner.

The literature presented is parallel to the present study. It explained that a school should ensure and promote a safe learning environment. It also defined that learners are sometimes undermined once the school is not a child friendly one.

In Nepal, after the earthquake that shook the country last 2015, temporary learning centers in schools of Dhading were upgraded as per the requirement. And to make earthquake resilient school building as well as to create a child-friendly learning environment ([www.umn.org.np/news/655](http://www.umn.org.np/news/655)).

The literature presented stated that upgrading the school facilities especially learning centers are necessary to promote a child-friendly school. The present study is focusing on the implementation of child-friendly school.

In Dominica, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development planned to adopt the child-friendly schools (CFS) model, which focuses on behavior management, in all Dominican schools by 2015. The CFS model promotes a child-centered approach to learning and is aimed at high quality education for all. It focuses on behavior management practices in classroom. The creation of classrooms that are learning ready, healthy lifestyle and systems that encourage the participation of all children ([dominicanewsline.com/news](http://dominicanewsline.com/news)).

The literature presented is similar to the presents study as it talks about the implementation of child-friendly school model wherein necessary action and plans were done in order to promote a school that is favorable to the learners.

The National Commission for Human Development of Pakistan stated that a child-friendly school is an important concept because it shifts the focus from education as a mechanical. pedagogical intervention should one that is centered on wellbeing and development of the child ([dawn.com/news](http://dawn.com/news)).

The literature above is aligned to the present study in the sense that NCHD of Pakistan recognizes the importance of Child-friendly school in shifting the school to one that is centered on the development of the students. The present study has same intention of looking for a school that is child friendly.

In Dominica, teachers trained to compliment child friendly schools' initiative. Steve Hyacinth, a Chief Education Officer stated that they are firmly believe that all the schools in Dominica should be child-friendly schools because the focus as a Ministry is on children and secondly to their vision to ensure that each child succeeds. The Child Friendly School (CFS) initiative emphasizes that schools not only must help students realize their dreams and aspirations but that each child has a right to a basic education of good quality ([news.gov.dm](http://news.gov.dm))

The literature emphasized the role of teachers in promoting a child-friendly school in which the present study is about to tackle. Furthermore, the he stated that child-friendly school will help the pupils in realizing their dreams and aspirations to become a tangible one.

In Turkey in 2002, UNICEF and the ministry of education began to work together to design a child friendly school model project with a well-defined monitoring and evaluation program. Twenty-five schools volunteered to participate in the project. In the project the number of schools later expanded to 326 where the children, parents and community at large appended the initiative (Shirley, 2010).

The literature presented is parallel to the present study as it explained the effort of government in designing a child friendly school model. Furthermore, the project reaches out the parents, pupils and the community.

Okpala (2016) explained that unfriendly school physical facilities compel teachers and learners to use makeshift classrooms and improvise sitting facilities like stones instead of desks or chairs and such unattractive and unsafe nature of learning greatly contributed to low school attendance and poor performance. These lead to school dropout mostly among the children from diverse backgrounds.

The statement of Okpala reflected how important it is to make a school a friendly one. The statement above expressed the need to improve the school to make it a friendly one to cater the needs of the learners.

Mendez discussed the challenges CCF faces including how to: reach excluded children; make the schools more accessible and safe; improve the quality of learning experiences and engage and support children in their participation to institutionalize and sustain these efforts. He believes that CCF's education programs are on the right path to meeting these challenges. "CCF focuses on improving the quality of educational services, the learning achievements of children, as well as building the capacity of families, communities and institutions,".

The statement of Mendez supports the conduct of the present study in the sense that it tackled the challenges that child friendly schools are facing. The statement suggested that to be able to have a right of CFS, the quality of educational services must be improved.

## **Related Studies**

Findings from various authors will strengthen the present study. It will serve as a guide on how the concept and the process of the conduct of the study will be formed.

Koskey (2017) concluded in the study "Influence of Community Participation on School Learning Environment in Public Primary Schools in Nandi North Sub County" that community participated in the following ways in strive to promote CFS in their schools: attended school events, made direct contact with families whose children dropped out of school, had PTA's which comprised of diverse communities. However, the community failed in making decisions which affect their children's learning, assisting the school teachers or the school in making the teaching and learning materials and finally it also failed in rendering of voluntary services to school.

The study presented is similar to the present study as it concludes that certain activities may be conducted to promote child-friendly schools. However, the previous study talks about the

influence of community in the participation of promoting a child friendly school while the present study will be dealing with the three cores of child -friendly school model.

Orkudashvili (2013) concluded in her study “Quality Education through Child-friendly school: Resource allocation for the protection of children’s right” that experience is now showing that a framework of rights-based, child-friendly schools can be a powerful tool for both helping to fulfill the rights of children and providing them an education of good quality. At the national level, for ministries, development agencies, and civil society organizations, the framework can be used as a normative goal for policies and programmes leading to child-friendly systems and environments, as a focus for collaborative programming leading to greater resource allocations for education, and as a component of staff training. At the community level, for school staff, parents, and other community members, the framework can serve as both a goal and a tool of quality improvement through localized self-assessment, planning, and management and as a means for mobilizing the community around education and child rights.

The study presented above give significant to the present study. It concluded that certain action must be done both on national and local level. However, the present study is tackling the whole model of child friendly school while the previous was about the protection of human rights.

Njojue (2016) concluded in the study “Influence of child-friendly school model on pupils’ performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Njoro Sub-county’s schools, Kenya” that the learning resources, safety and health measures, teachers training and the child-centered teaching/learning methods bring effective teaching and can improve the pupils’ performance in KCPE. That there are inadequate learning resources and majority of teachers do not attend seminars and workshops that can enhance their skills and knowledge.

The study presented bears resemblance to the present study in the sense that it elaborated the effect of training, work environment, learning resources in developing a child friendly school which the present study will about to conduct. However, the previous study looked on the effectivity of the said factors in the development of a child-friendly school while the present study will be tackling the implementation of the program.

Shakya (2017) concluded in the study “The UNICEF policy program of Child-Friendly School in practice in Sunrise Boarding School” that bullying is practiced but it is minor not intense such as seniors teasing juniors, asking money from weaker students, pretending to be superior and eating others lunch, the infrastructure of the school is quite good and the buildings are also earthquake-resistant. However, few problems have been highlighted by the respondents such as the roof of the building not appropriate, wall partition in the classroom is thin and not sound proof, the boundary wall of the school compound is not secure, dusty floors and the playground is not child-friendly.

The study presented give support to the present study as it assesses the school whether the facilities, learning environment, teaching-learning process and other are child friendly or not which the present study will be dealing with. However, the previous study was conducted in secondary school while the present will be conducted in elementary level.

Manduku et al (2016) concluded in the study “Assessment of effects of child friendly schools on learners’ performance in selected Public Primary schools in Londiani, Sub-county, Kericho County, Kenya” that environment in most primary schools selected was partially conducive to teaching and learning activities. On inclusive learning, some facilities were not friendly to learners with impairment. It was concluded that the infrastructural facilities such as toilet facilities and library were adequately available in the schools although not disability friendly. The classroom environment was however, found to be friendly to children with disabilities. The classroom is a critical focus in the total school environment and has a powerful influence on how well a child develops and learns. The classroom environment should be attractive to the children. In view of the fact that school environment is significantly related to children learning, everything possible must be done to make the schools child friendly. Equality in relation to access to education was observed, in fact all schools had attained gender parity in as far as enrollment and retention was concerned. However, children from marginalized areas had to walk for long distances to access education facilities.

The previous study presented above is parallel to the present study as it presented whether the learning environment, facilities and other factors are child friendly or not. However, the previous study was concentrated on the effects of child friendly schools on learners’ performance in selected Public Primary schools while the present study will look on the level of implementation of child friendly school in elementary schools.

Miriam College (2009) concluded in the study “Gender-Socialization in Philippines Child-Friendly Schools” that most teachers equated gender sensitivity to rights, emphasizing that women and men must be treated equally and given equal opportunities. Revaluing and respecting the tasks and responsibilities performed by women in the same manner as those performed by men, as well as being equally sensitive to the needs of the sexes, were principal notions the teachers related to gender sensitivity. The undertaking of social activities and roles by either sex, which the school heads focused on when they spoke of gender sensitivity, was just one notion teachers attached to the same concept. Teachers had a more developed notion of gender sensitivity and gender fairness than school heads.

The study presented is closely related to the present study as both focused on the perception of the teachers on how child friendly the school is. It differs in the scope as the previous focused on the teachers’ perception alone while the present covers teachers, pupils and parents.

Kanamba (2004) concluded that the factors influencing the provision of child friendly school are teachers’ attitude on was low as indicated by majority of head teachers, the schools used textbooks as the instructional resources in their school as indicated by majority of head teachers, the Ministry officers rarely visited the school, head teachers were trained on inspection. The head teachers never visited teachers in class while teaching is in progress and they also thought that their teachers were well prepared to provide CFS environment. The study lastly concluded that head teacher has talked to teachers about child friendly school which implied that teachers were most important factor in creating an effective and inclusive environment.

The study presented showed similarity to the present study as it cited the factors influencing the provision of child friendly school which the present study dealt with. However,



the previous and present study differs in scope as previous focused on the perception of the teachers while present focused on the teachers' perception including of the pupils and parents.

Krueger et al (2015) concluded on their research after the destruction of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines that Child-friendly spaces can contribute to positive changes for children and families when kept simple and focused on serving specific needs related to the relief emergency phase. Basic CFS can be implemented in large numbers because they require few resources, staff capacity and supplies. Extending the duration of CFS in subsequent emergency phases loses relevance unless this is based upon a strong rationale, strategy and solid theory of change grounded in the local context.

The findings of Krueger et al bears significance to the present study as it concluded how important to align the school in the provision of child friendly school especially in emergency situation. However, the previous and present differs in terms of scope and respondents.

Wehella (2014) concluded that both initiatives have influenced to increase parents' contribution in the school physical infrastructure development and in the educational projects. School-based planning has been promoted by both initiatives, and in some cases has resulted in the production of two separate plans. Some schools have combined these plans in accordance with the thematic structure of national Education Sector Development Framework. These initiatives have involved principals and teacher in decision-making, planning and implementation of programmes in collaboration with the community. The emphasis given to school-based teacher development is, however inadequate. Nonetheless, the increases in attendance and retention was influenced by CFSI rather than PSI, while both initiatives have had a positive influence by improving student learning and performance through various interventions at school and learning at home.

The study presented somehow bears resemblance to the present study as it focused on the impact of child friendly school in improving parents' participation in the school which the present study dealt with. However, the studies differ in scope and respondents as the previous focused on the impact of child friendly school program while the present focused on the perception of teachers, pupils and parents on child friendly school.

Musila (2012) concluded that schools had inadequate classroom, desks, water and electricity. It was also concluded that the classrooms in the school were not adequate. It was also concluded that psycho-social and service delivery was practiced to a very great extent in the schools. The study concluded that performance was determined by the wellbeing of a child at home and in the community and that psychosocial support ensures socially and emotionally support for pupils. It was also concluded that teachers helped pupils to understand hard topics.

The study of Musila is related to the present study as it determined the factors influencing the child friendly school which the present study dealt with. However, the previous and present studies differ in scope as the previous focused on the factors influencing the implementation of child friendly school while the present focused on the perception of teachers, parents and pupils on child friendly school.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mix method type of research to determine the perception of learners about child-friendly school. A survey was structured to cover the school profile and of the school head. An unstructured interview conducted to determine the activities related to child friendly school. This was done in order to cover all necessary data both quantitative and qualitative.

The respondents were 375 pupils of 8 central school in 7 municipalities. The number of respondents were gathered using purposive sampling. To obtain the data of the school profile and of the school heads, the survey was utilized and for the perception of pupils about child friendly schools' activities, the researcher analyze the pupils' responds through unstructured interview.

The gathered data were collected, tallied and organized for statistical treatment. The statistical methods used were frequency count and ranking. The data gathered from an unstructured interview were presented qualitatively.

#### The Sample

The primary source of data are the central schools from 8 municipalities of 2<sup>nd</sup> district of Sorsogon. Respondents of this study are the 375 selected pupils identified using purposive sampling as they are the center of the study and they residence are near the vicinity of the school.

**TABLE 1 The Respondents**

School/District	Frequency	Percentage
1. Bulan North CS-A	45	12%
2. Bulan South CS	43	11%
3. Bulusan CS	46	12%
4. Gubat North CS	42	12%
5. Gubat South CS	47	12%
6. Irosin CS	53	14%
7. Juban CS	44	12%
8. Matnog CS	55	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### The instrument

The instrument that was employed by the researcher in conducting this study is the survey. The content of the survey was mainly variables comprising the school profile along: 1. a) Location of the school, b) Adequate and functional facilities in the school, c) Educational Qualification of School head, d) Activities conducted for the children, and e) Availability of non-teaching personnel. 2. How child-friendly is the school in terms of: a) Learning effectiveness, b) Health and protection, and c) Child participation. The researcher is also part of the instrument since he conducted an unstructured interview to the respondents which undergone data analysis.

To determine the validity of the checklist, the researcher conducted a dry run to the non-respondent. A letter request was forwarded to the PSDS to permit the conduct of the dry run. The result of the dry run was conferred by the researcher to the adviser, and asked suggestions and feedback for the improvement of the tool. Then the final copies of the questionnaire were presented for the distribution to the respondents.

#### **4. Data Gathering Procedures**

To assure full cooperation of the respondents, the researcher asked permission to administer the survey questionnaire from the Public Schools District Supervisor. This permit shown to all respondent before the administration of the questionnaire.

The researcher gave the questionnaire to the respondents and after the retrieval of the tool, the researcher interviewed the respondents some questions regarding the implementation of CFS.

#### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using statistical measures and tools. The frequency count and mean were used to determine the profile of the school and of the school head. To gather data for the activities conducted for a child friendly school, the researcher adopted the Likert scale. The researcher used the following scale:

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Level of Child friendly</b>
1.0 – 1.49	Not friendly
1.50 – 2.49	Less friendly
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately friendly
3.50 – 4.0	Child friendly

#### **5. Results**

Most of the schools are located in an urban area because. Ranged from 1-20 classrooms with good conditions and minor repairs got the highest frequency. The educational attainment of the teachers who serve CFSS categorize from unit earned only in Master's Degree. All programs created by the school intended to learners were all conducted according to the teachers and heads of the school. that among 8 schools they have 1 designated personnel or staff. The ratio of 1 staff is to 1 school is presently practice in all districts of Sorsogon.

The learning effectiveness of the learners based from the result was less friendly with the weighted mean of 2.04. The health and protection was interpreted moderately friendly according to the result of weighted mean. It means that they comply moderately the programs of the school in terms of health and protection. The gender sensitivity of the respondents was interpreted as moderately friendly. The child participation in CFSS was less friendly with the total weighted mean of 1.8. The learners are not aware about the CFSS. Maybe the stakeholders are also not aware about the programs most especially the parent who are part from the development of the learners.

## 6. Recommendations

In analysis of the given conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Conduct evaluation of child friendly school in every school and monitor the development to sustain the good rapport made by the CFSS programs.
2. Teachers maybe inform about the duties and responsibilities of School in maintaining CFSS programs so that the learners may perform based from the CFSS program.
3. Conduct orientation to inform parents and stakeholders about the CFSS program for them to be aware about the child friendly school.
4. Future researches on the status of child friendly school be conducted to determine the legality, validity and reliability of this study.

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