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Research Article

Assesing the Level of Awareness on Violence Against Women and their Children in Two Selected Cities in South Cotabato

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women and their children (VAWC) remains a significant protection concern in the Philippines. This study examined women's awareness of Republic Act No. 9262, their perceptions of its impact, and challenges in its implementation in Koronadal City and General Santos City. A quantitative descriptive-comparative design was used. Structured questionnaires were administered to 747 women from selected barangays, comprising 367 respondents from Koronadal City and 380 from General Santos City. Descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests were used to examine assessments across four domains: procedures for handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders (BPOs), and violations of BPOs. Overall awareness was rated Very Aware (M = 4.13), perceived impact was rated Very High (M = 4.38), and implementation challenges were rated Very Highly Challenging (M = 4.23). Awareness of case-handling procedures received the highest domain rating (M = 4.41), whereas awareness of BPO issuance was lowest (M = 3.90). BPO violations were rated the most challenging domain (M = 4.51).

The reported locality comparisons identified differences in selected awareness and challenge domains, but none in perceived impact. These findings suggest that familiarity with legal protections coexists with perceived difficulties in implementation, particularly in enforcing protection orders. They provide a basis for locally responsive public information initiatives, procedural training, and interagency coordination. The findings reflect respondents' assessments rather than verified enforcement outcomes.

Keywords: *Barangay Protection Orders, Comparative Study, Implementation Challenges, Legal Awareness, Republic Act No. 9262, Violence Against Women and their Children*

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Introduction

Violence against women and their children (VAWC) is both a human rights concern and a public health issue. Its consequences extend beyond individual incidents of abuse, affecting family relationships, personal safety, and access to justice. Guedes et al. (2016) identified important intersections between violence against women and violence against children, drawing attention to the need for coordinated protection rather than responses that treat these experiences as entirely separate concerns. Effective legal protection therefore depends not only on the existence of legislation but also on whether people understand their rights and can obtain timely assistance.

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, establishes legal protections against specified forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. The law provides several remedies, including Barangay Protection Orders (BPOs), Temporary Protection Orders, and Permanent Protection Orders. BPOs are issued at the barangay level for acts covered under the relevant provisions of the law, making local officials an important point of contact for women seeking immediate protection (Republic Act No. 9262, 2004; Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], n.d.). Knowledge of these mechanisms matters because understanding where to report, which office can act, and what a protection order can provide may influence how women navigate available services.

Yet awareness of a law does not necessarily mean that its procedures are understood or that protection is consistently experienced in practice. Women may recognize RA 9262 while remaining uncertain about filing complaints, documenting incidents, requesting a BPO, or responding when a protection order is violated. Perceptions of the law's impact also differ conceptually from verified enforcement outcomes: favorable assessments may reflect confidence in the protective framework without establishing whether reported incidents were resolved or repeat violence was prevented. Separating awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges is therefore necessary for a more informative assessment of local responses to VAWC.

This study focused on Koronadal City, a component city in South Cotabato, and General Santos City, a highly urbanized city in the same SOCCSKSARGEN region. The two locations offer contrasting administrative and urban settings in which women encounter barangay services, law enforcement offices, and other support institutions. Their inclusion allows comparisons of respondents' assessments across localities without assuming in advance that differences in resources, access, or institutional performance account for any observed statistical variation. The investigation covered women from selected barangays in both cities and addressed operational procedures, elimination efforts, issuance of BPOs, and violations of BPOs.

The central research problem concerns the gap between the legal protections established under RA 9262 and how women understand and assess those protections in their own communities. Although legislation defines rights and institutional responsibilities, the written law alone cannot establish the extent of public awareness or the difficulties perceived during local implementation. The present study responds to this contextual and comparative need by examining the same four implementation domains in two city settings and identifying where assessments converge or differ. The contribution is a locally grounded comparison of women's reported knowledge and perceptions, not a direct evaluation of case outcomes or a causal explanation of differences between localities.

Feminist Legal Theory provides an interpretive foundation for this inquiry. MacKinnon (1989) argued that legal institutions and their apparent neutrality must be examined in relation to unequal social power. Applied to VAWC protection, this perspective draws attention to the distinction between formal rights and the practical conditions under which women can recognize, pursue, and obtain those protections. It also supports examining whether the information and institutional processes made

available to women are understandable and accessible. The study did not directly measure structural inequality; rather, the theory informs the interpretation of awareness gaps and reported implementation challenges.

Accordingly, the study assessed women's awareness of RA 9262, perceived impact of its implementation, and challenges encountered in Koronadal City and General Santos City. It also examined whether assessments differed significantly between the two localities and used the findings to inform a proposed action plan. By identifying areas of reported strength alongside procedural concerns, the investigation sought to inform public education, barangay-level capacity building, coordination among service providers, and more accessible protection pathways for women and their children.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is anchored in Feminist Legal Theory (FLT), which examines how legal systems and institutional practices influence gender inequality, women's rights, and access to justice. MacKinnon (1979, 1989) emphasized that laws and legal institutions must recognize and address structural inequalities that contribute to women's discrimination and vulnerability to violence. From this theoretical perspective, legal protection extends beyond the enactment of legislation to include the accessibility, implementation, and enforcement of measures intended to safeguard women's rights.

In the Philippine context, Republic Act No. 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, provides legal remedies and protective mechanisms for women and their children experiencing abuse. The legislation recognizes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence and establishes procedures for seeking legal assistance and protection orders. Consistent with Feminist Legal Theory, the law represents an institutional response to gender-based violence by recognizing the rights of victims and establishing legal mechanisms intended to promote their safety and protection.

Feminist Legal Theory provides the foundation for examining three principal domains of the study: awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges. Awareness refers to respondents' knowledge and understanding of RA 9262, including its legal provisions, available remedies, and protective procedures. Perceived impact concerns respondents' assessments of the law's effectiveness in protecting victims and addressing violence. Implementation challenges refer to the perceived barriers that may affect access to legal protection, institutional assistance, and enforcement procedures. These domains are particularly relevant because the existence of legal safeguards does not necessarily ensure that individuals understand or can effectively access them.

The three domains were examined across four operational dimensions of RA 9262: operational procedures in handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence against women and their children, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and violation of Barangay Protection Orders. These dimensions provided the basis for assessing how respondents understood the law, evaluated its implementation, and perceived the challenges associated with its enforcement.

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical organization of the study, showing how Feminist Legal Theory informs the assessment of awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges across the four operational dimensions. The framework guided the comparative examination of respondents' assessments in Koronadal City and General Santos City. It also provided a basis for interpreting the findings in relation to women's access to legal information, institutional protection, and available remedies.

Overall, Feminist Legal Theory establishes the theoretical relevance of examining legal awareness and institutional implementation in addressing violence against women and their children. The framework recognizes that mean-

ingful legal protection requires not only appropriate legislation but also accessible information, responsive institutions, and effective implementation mechanisms. Accordingly, the findings provide an empirical basis for recommending context-specific measures to strengthen public awareness, institutional responsiveness, and the implementation of RA 9262.

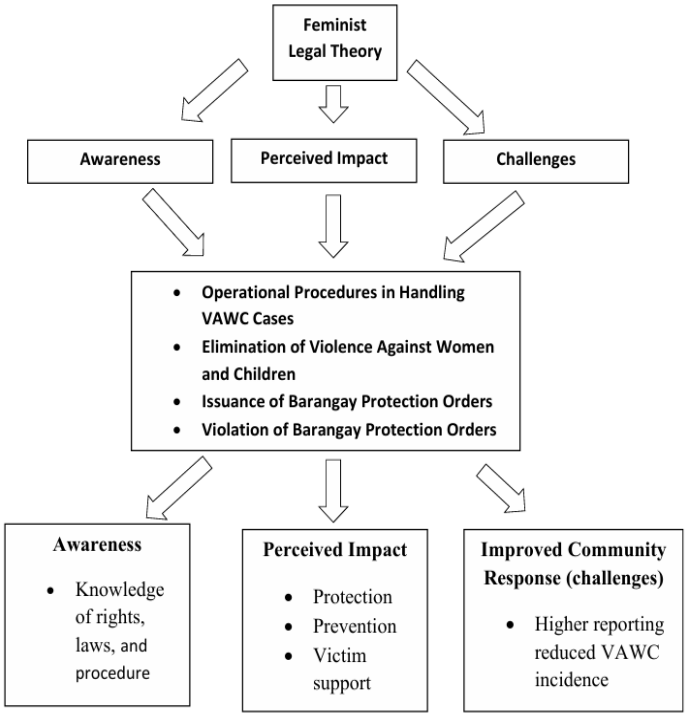


Figure 1. Research Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the level of awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, among selected women in Koronadal City and General Santos City. It also examined differences in respondents' assessments between the two localities as a basis for developing a proposed action plan to strengthen the implementation of the law.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
   1.1 Age;
   1.2 Occupation;
   1.3 Educational attainment;
   1.4 Civil status;
   1.5 Religion; and
   1.6 Ethnic group or tribal affiliation?
2. What is the respondents' level of awareness regarding the implementation of RA 9262 in terms of:
   2.1 Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases;
   2.2 Elimination of violence against women and their children;
   2.3 Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders; and
   2.4 Violation of Barangay Protection Orders?
3. How do respondents assess the perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation in terms of:
   3.1 Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases;
   3.2 Elimination of violence against women and their children;
   3.3 Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders; and

3.4 Violation of Barangay Protection Orders?

4. What challenges do respondents perceive in the implementation of RA 9262 in terms of:
   4.1 Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases;
   4.2 Elimination of violence against women and their children;
   4.3 Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders; and
   4.4 Violation of Barangay Protection Orders?
5. Is there a statistically significant difference in respondents' levels of awareness regarding RA 9262 when grouped according to locality?
6. Is there a statistically significant difference in respondents' assessments of the perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation when grouped according to locality?
7. Is there a statistically significant difference in respondents' assessments of implementation challenges associated with RA 9262 when grouped according to locality?
8. What action plan may be proposed based on the findings to strengthen awareness, institutional responsiveness, and the implementation of RA 9262 in the selected localities?

Hypothesis of the Study

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents' levels of awareness regarding RA 9262 between Koronadal City and General Santos City.

H_{02}: There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents' assessments of the perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation between Koronadal City and General Santos City.

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents' assessments of implementation challenges associated with RA 9262 between Koronadal City and General Santos City.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examined women's awareness of Republic Act No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, and their assessments of its perceived impact and implementation challenges in Koronadal City and General Santos City. Specifically, the investigation focused on four dimensions: operational procedures in handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence against women and their children, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and violation of Barangay Protection Orders. The study also described respondents' demographic characteristics and determined whether significant differences existed in their assessments of awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges between the two localities. The findings served as the basis for developing a proposed action plan to strengthen the implementation of RA 9262.

The investigation employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design and was limited to selected women residing in the two cities. Data collection was conducted during the first and second quarters of 2025. The study excluded the perspectives of male respondents, law enforcement personnel, social workers, and other stakeholders involved in VAWC prevention and response. Furthermore, the investigation was confined to the variables identified in the research questions and did not directly examine personal experiences of abuse, accessibility of legal assistance, or broader sociocultural and institutional factors that may influence awareness and perceptions of the law.

The findings were also subject to geographical, methodological, and temporal limitations. As the study focused on selected respondents from two localities, the results may not fully represent the experiences and perspectives of women in other communities with different socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional conditions. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported assessments may have introduced response biases, while the descriptive-comparative design did not establish causal relationships or independently measure the effectiveness of RA 9262 implementation. Nevertheless, the findings provided localized empirical evidence that may inform community awareness initiatives,

institutional improvements, and context-specific interventions intended to strengthen the protection of women and their children.

Methodology

This section presents the methodological procedures employed in examining respondents' awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262. It describes the research design, research locale, population and sampling technique, research instrument, data-gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to assess women's awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, in Koronadal City and General Santos City. The design was appropriate because the investigation sought to describe respondents' assessments of the law's implementation and determine whether statistically significant differences existed between the two localities.

The descriptive component examined respondents' assessments across four dimensions: operational procedures in handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence against women and their children, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and violation of Barangay Protection Orders. The comparative component focused on determining differences in awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges between respondents from Koronadal City and General Santos City. This approach provided a basis for examining variations in perceptions across the two geographical settings without establishing causal relationships.

Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire containing closed-ended items designed to obtain measurable responses concerning the identified dimensions of RA 9262 implementation. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were employed to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and assessments. Independent-samples t-tests were used to examine differences between the two localities at the 0.05 level of significance.

The descriptive-comparative approach enabled the researcher to examine localized patterns in awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges. The findings provided an empirical basis for proposing context-specific recommendations to strengthen public awareness, institutional responsiveness, and the implementation of protective mechanisms under RA 9262.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Koronadal City and General Santos City, both situated in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region (Region XII) in southern Mindanao, Philippines. Koronadal City, the provincial capital of South Cotabato, serves as an administrative center characterized by a combination of urban and rural communities. In contrast, General Santos City is a highly urbanized city and a major commercial center in the region, with a diverse population and distinct local governance structure. These characteristics provided relevant geographical and institutional contexts for examining women's awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262.

The selection of these localities was based on their differing administrative, socioeconomic, and community settings, which provided a basis for comparing respondents' assessments of the implementation of RA 9262. Both cities have local government structures responsible for implementing programs and protective mechanisms addressing violence against women and their children. Their differing urban characteristics and community environments offered an opportunity to examine variations in respondents' awareness of legal provisions, protection procedures, and perceived implementation challenges.

The inclusion of Koronadal City and General Santos City allowed the study to generate localized evidence concerning women's understanding and assessment of RA 9262 across two distinct urban settings. The comparative findings provided a basis for identifying areas requiring greater public awareness, institutional responsiveness, and context-specific interventions to strengthen the implementation of the law.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study involved 747 women respondents from six selected barangays in Koronadal City and General Santos City, Philippines. Of these, 367 respondents were from Koronadal City, comprising Barangay General Paulino Santos (n = 270), Caloocan (n = 68), and Cacub (n = 29). Meanwhile, 380 respondents were from General Santos City, including Barangay San Isidro (n = 187), Apopong (n = 170), and Tinagacan (n = 23). The distribution of respondents across these barangays provided the basis for comparing women's awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262.

Respondents were selected according to their residence in the identified barangays, accessibility during data collection, and voluntary participation. The study included women with varying demographic characteristics, including age, occupation, educational attainment, civil status, religion, and ethnic affiliation. These characteristics provided demographic context for examining respondents' assessments of the implementation of RA 9262.

The inclusion of respondents from different barangays enabled the investigation to obtain perspectives from women residing in the two selected localities. However, the representativeness of the sample depends on the sampling procedures and the eligible population from which participants were drawn. Accordingly, the findings were interpreted within the geographical coverage and respondent characteristics established in the study.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured survey questionnaire developed to assess respondents' awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262. The instrument consisted of four sections corresponding to the objectives of the investigation.

The first section gathered respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, occupation, educational attainment, civil status, religion, and ethnic affiliation. The second section assessed their level of awareness regarding the implementation of RA 9262, while the third examined their perceptions of the law's impact. The fourth section evaluated perceived challenges associated with its implementation. The three assessment sections covered four common dimensions: operational procedures in handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence against women and their children, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and violation of Barangay Protection Orders.

A five-point rating scale was employed for the assessment sections, with corresponding verbal interpretations for awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges. The questionnaire items were developed through a review of RA 9262, relevant literature, and consultation with individuals knowledgeable about gender-based violence and community protection. The structured format facilitated consistent data collection and quantitative comparisons between respondents from Koronadal City and General Santos City.

Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire underwent content validation and pilot testing before its administration to the study respondents. Three experts participated in the validation process: a faculty member from Mindanao State University, a Special Investigator III from the Commission on Human Rights, and a Social Welfare Officer II from the City Social Welfare and Development Office. They evaluated the instrument's clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and alignment

with the research objectives. Their recommendations informed revisions to the wording and organization of the questionnaire items.

Following the expert review, the revised instrument was pilot-tested among 30 women with demographic characteristics comparable to those of the target respondents. These participants were excluded from the main study. The pilot-test responses were subjected to internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reported reliability coefficient of 0.93. This result indicated high internal consistency among the items included in the reported reliability analysis. The instrument was subsequently finalized for administration to the selected women in Koronadal City and General Santos City.

Data-Gathering Procedure

Data collection was undertaken following the acquisition of the necessary permissions from the local government units of Koronadal City and General Santos City and the concerned barangay officials. Coordination with barangay representatives facilitated the scheduling of survey administration and the identification of eligible women residents. Before participation, prospective respondents were informed of the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the confidentiality measures adopted to protect their responses.

The structured questionnaire was administered face-to-face by the researcher and trained research assistants over a two-month period. Survey administration was conducted during scheduled barangay assemblies and household visits. Respondents were provided with appropriate assistance when clarification of the questionnaire instructions was necessary. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before the questionnaires were administered.

Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness before the responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Throughout data collection, respondents' privacy and confidentiality were maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw without penalty. These procedures supported the ethical collection of quantitative data concerning awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques consistent with the study's quantitative descriptive-comparative design. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, occupation, educational attainment, civil status, religion, and ethnic affiliation.

Mean scores and standard deviations were employed to describe respondents' assessments of awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges across the four operational dimensions of RA 9262. The mean scores were interpreted using the five-point rating scales presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Rating Scales for Awareness, Perceived Impact, and Implementation Challenges Associated with RA 9262

Scale	Mean Interval	Awareness	Perceived Impact	Implementation Challenges
5	4.20-5.00	Highly Aware	Very High Impact	Very Highly Challenging
4	3.40-4.19	Very Aware	High Impact	Highly Challenging
3	2.60-3.39	Aware	Moderate Impact	Moderately Challenging
2	1.80-2.59	Slightly Aware	Low Impact	Slightly Challenging
1	1.00-1.79	Not Aware	No Impact	Not Challenging at All

Independent-samples t-tests were employed to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between respondents from Koronadal City and General Santos City in terms of awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges. The analyses corresponded to the three null hypotheses formulated in the study, with statistical significance evaluated at the 0.05 level.

Cronbach's Alpha was used during the pilot testing of the research instrument to assess internal consistency. The reported reliability coefficient of 0.93 indicated high internal consistency for the items included in the reliability analysis. The quantitative findings subsequently provided the basis for developing a proposed action plan to strengthen awareness and institutional responses associated with RA 9262.

Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings concerning women's awareness, perceived impact, and implementation challenges associated with Republic Act No. 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, in Koronadal City and General Santos City. The analysis covers respondents' demographic characteristics and their assessments across four operational dimensions: procedures in handling VAWC cases, elimination of violence against women and their children, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and violation of Barangay Protection Orders. It also examines statistically significant differences between the two localities. The findings are interpreted in relation to the study's objectives and Feminist Legal Theory, providing an empirical basis for the proposed action plan.

Sub-problem No. 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of age, occupation, educational attainment, civil status, religion, barangay, and ethnic group.

Table 2. Consolidated Demographic Profile of the Survey Respondents (N = 747)

Demographic Charateristic	Largest Reported Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	26-30 years old	206	27.6%
Occupation	Government employees/ VWAC implementers	216	28.9%
Educational attainment	Bechelor’s degree	301	40.3%
Civil status	Single	355	47.5%
Religion	Roman Catholic	357	47.8%
Ethnic group	Cebuano	280	37.5%
Barangay	General Paulino Santos	270	36.1%

The study involved 747 women respondents from Koronadal City (n = 367) and General Santos City (n = 380). The largest age group consisted of respondents aged 26–30 years (27.6%), followed by those aged 31–35 years (19.8%). Together, these age groups represented 47.4% of the total sample. In terms of civil status, single respondents accounted for 47.5%, closely followed by married respondents at 46.3%, while widowed participants comprised 6.2%. These findings indicate that the survey included women across different age groups and civil statuses.

The reported occupational distribution identified government employees involved in VAWC implementation as the largest group (28.9%), followed by unemployed respondents (20.5%) and teachers (15.1%). Regarding educational attainment, bachelor's degree holders accounted for 40.3%, followed by high school graduates at 37.9%. However, discrepancies between the city-level frequencies and the reported totals in the original occupational and educational tables require verification before these distributions can be considered final.

Religious affiliation reflected the diversity of the respondents, with Roman Catholics comprising 47.8%, followed by Muslims (26.5%) and respondents belonging to other Christian denominations (25.7%). Cebuano respondents constituted the largest reported ethnic group (37.5%), followed by Blaan/Tboli (25.4%), Hiligaynon (24.8%), and Tagalog (12.3%). The geographical distribution also varied across the selected barangays, with General Pauline Santos contributing the largest proportion of respondents (36.1%).

The demographic composition provides relevant context for examining women's awareness and perceptions of RA 9262 across the two localities. Consistent with Feminist Legal Theory, the inclusion of women from different social, educational, and cultural backgrounds highlights the importance of accessible legal information and responsive protection mechanisms. However, these demographic characteristics should not be interpreted as determinants of awareness or perceived impact, as the study's inferential comparisons focused on locality rather than differences across demographic categories.

Sub-problem No. 2. Respondents' Level of Awareness Regarding the Implementation of RA 9262

The findings revealed that respondents from Koronadal City and General Santos City were generally Very Aware of the implementation of Republic Act No. 9262, as reflected in the overall composite mean of 4.13 (SD = 0.43). Koronadal City registered a mean of 4.16, while General Santos City obtained 4.10, indicating that respondents in both localities reported relatively high levels of familiarity with the provisions and protective mechanisms of the law. These findings reflect respondents' self-reported awareness rather than independently verified knowledge of legal procedures.

Table 3. Level of Awareness Regarding the Implementation of RA 9262 (N = 747)

Dimensions	Koronadal City M (SD)	General Santos City M (SD)	Overall M (SD)	Interpretation
Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases	4.39 (0.48)	4.44 (0.48)	4.41 (0.48)	Highly Aware
Elimination of violence against women and their children	4.13 (0.52)	4.01 (0.54)	4.07 (0.53)	Very Aware
Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders	3.88 (0.64)	3.92 (0.53)	3.90 (0.59)	Very Aware
Violation of Barangay Protection Orders*	4.23 (0.50)	4.02 (0.57)	4.12 (0.55)	Very Aware
Composite Mean	**4.16 (0.44)**	**4.10 (0.43)**	**4.13 (0.43)**	**Very Aware**

Awareness of RA 9262

Awareness was generally rated Very Aware (overall M = 4.13, SD = 0.43). The strongest awareness concerned operational procedures in handling VAWC cases (M = 4.41), whereas the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders (BPOs) received the lowest mean (M = 3.90). Respondents thus expressed relatively greater familiarity with case-handling procedures than with the processes for obtaining barangay-level protective measures. Although the general level of awareness was favorable, the comparatively lower BPO-issuance rating identifies a concrete topic for more accessible public information.

Koronadal respondents reported an awareness composite mean of 4.16, compared with 4.10 in General Santos. The difference in these descriptive means should not be assumed statistically significant without a test of the composite score. From the standpoint of Feminist Legal Theory, the findings draw attention to how knowledge of procedures and remedies may condition women's ability to understand the legal protections available to them. The data do not, however, demonstrate that greater

reported awareness led to actual reporting, protection-order issuance, or reductions in violence.

Perceived Impact of RA 9262

Respondents evaluated the perceived impact of RA 9262 as Very High (overall M = 4.38, SD = 0.51). The issuance of BPOs obtained the highest domain mean (M = 4.41), followed by operational procedures (M = 4.39) and violations of BPOs (M = 4.37). Elimination of violence against women and their children received the lowest, though still very high, rating (M = 4.34). The close grouping of these scores suggests similarly favorable assessments of the law's perceived protective and procedural contributions across the four dimensions.

The city-level composite ratings were likewise close: 4.37 in Koronadal City and 4.39 in General Santos City. These ratings are measures of respondents' perceptions rather than independently established changes in incidence, case resolution, accessibility of services, or protection outcomes. The distinction is important because favorable perceptions of legal mechanisms do not by themselves verify their reach or effectiveness in specific cases.

Perceived Implementation Challenges

The composite challenge rating was Very Highly Challenging (overall M = 4.23, SD = 0.48), with respondents in both cities identifying substantial difficulties in the implementation of RA 9262. Violations of BPOs had the highest challenge rating (M = 4.51), substantially exceeding the issuance-of-BPOs rating (M = 3.98). Concerns associated with the elimination of VAWC (M = 4.22) and operational procedures (M = 4.19) were also prominent. The contrast between high perceived impact and high perceived challenges is not necessarily contradictory: respondents may value the protections established under the law while simultaneously perceiving substantial difficulties in applying and enforcing them.

General Santos respondents reported a slightly higher overall challenge rating (M = 4.25) than those in Koronadal (M = 4.20). The data support attention to coordinated response to BPO violations, documentation, referral pathways, and accessible information about reporting and enforcement. However, the survey did not directly audit agency performance or confirm the prevalence of specific institutional shortcomings, so these areas should be understood as priorities suggested by respondent assessments rather than proven failures.

Among the four dimensions, operational procedures in handling VAWC cases obtained the highest overall mean of 4.41 (SD = 0.48), interpreted as Highly Aware. This finding suggests that respondents were particularly familiar with procedures associated with reporting incidents, securing legal assistance, and accessing protection mechanisms. Awareness concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children also received a favorable assessment (M = 4.07, SD = 0.53). Nevertheless, this result indicates that further clarification of particular legal provisions may be beneficial, especially those concerning the different forms of abuse covered under RA 9262.

In contrast, the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders recorded the lowest overall mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.59), although it remained within the Very Aware category. This comparatively lower rating indicates a potential gap in respondents' familiarity with the procedures and authority governing the issuance of protection orders. Similarly, awareness concerning violations of Barangay Protection Orders received an overall mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.55), suggesting that additional information concerning enforcement procedures, legal consequences, and available remedies may support a clearer understanding of victims' rights.

Viewed through Feminist Legal Theory, these findings emphasize the significance of legal awareness in facilitating women's access to institutional protection. Although RA 9262 establishes protective measures intended to address gender-based violence, their accessibility also depends on individuals' understanding of available procedures and remedies. The findings therefore support the development of targeted community education programs, particularly concerning the issuance and enforcement of Barangay Protection Orders. Such initiatives may help strengthen women's understanding of their legal rights and the mechanisms available for seeking protection.

Sub-problem No. 3. Respondents' Assessment of the Perceived Impact of RA 9262 Implementation

All four dimensions received Very High Impact ratings. The issuance of Barangay Protection Orders obtained the highest overall mean (4.41), while the elimination of violence against women and their children received the lowest (4.34).

These findings describe perceived impact and do not establish actual reductions in violence, verified enforcement outcomes, or causal effects of RA 9262.

Table 4. Respondents' Assessment of the Perceived Impact of Republic Act No. 9262 Implementation in Koronadal City and General Santos City (N = 747)

Dimensions	Koronadal City M (SD)	General Santos City M (SD)	Overall M (SD)	Interpretation
Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases	4.40 (0.45)	4.39 (0.47)	4.39 (0.46)	Very High Impact
Elimination of violence against women and their children	4.32 (0.64)	4.37 (0.62)	4.34 (0.63)	Very High Impact
Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders	4.40 (0.54)	4.43 (0.56)	**4.41 (0.55)**	Very High Impact
Violation of Barangay Protection Orders	4.35 (0.50)	4.38 (0.50)	4.37 (0.50)	Very High Impact
Composite Mean	**4.37 (0.50)**	**4.39 (0.52)**	**4.38 (0.51)**	**Very High Impact**

The respondents assessed the perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation as Very High overall (M = 4.38, SD = 0.51). Koronadal City recorded a composite mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.50), while General Santos City recorded 4.39 (SD = 0.52). Both means fall within the same interpretation category, indicating broadly favorable evaluations of the protective measures and administrative procedures examined. These results reflect the respondents' assessments and should not be treated as direct evidence that the law reduced VAWC incidence or improved verified case outcomes.

The issuance of Barangay Protection Orders received the highest domain rating (M = 4.41, SD = 0.55). Respondents gave particularly favorable ratings to statements concerning immediate ex parte relief, clearly defined prohibited acts, and the prioritization of VAWC matters at the barangay level (each M = 4.54). By comparison, the statement addressing the transition from a 15-day BPO to a court-issued Temporary Protection Order obtained a lower mean of 4.03. Considered alongside SOP 2, where BPO issuance had the lowest awareness rating (M = 3.90), these findings suggest that favorable perceptions of protective value may coexist with less complete familiarity with procedural details.

Operational procedures for handling VAWC cases were also rated Very High (M = 4.39, SD = 0.46). Among the underlying items, victim protection protocols involving medical assistance and safe referral received a mean of 4.56, whereas documentation through separate barangay VAWC logbooks received 3.90. The perceived impact of measures concerning BPO violations was similarly favorable (M = 4.37, SD = 0.50). Respondents rated statements concerning jurisdictional clarity highly (M = 4.68), although the item on appeal processes was comparatively lower (M = 4.14). These patterns identify procedural communication and case documentation as useful subjects for further assessment and training.

The elimination of violence against women and their children obtained the lowest domain rating, although it remained Very High (M = 4.34, SD = 0.63). Respondents rated the statement concerning the incorporation of VAWC programs into government priorities and budgets highly (M = 4.55), while the item identifying

gaps in offender rehabilitation and victim resolution received a mean of 3.91. From the perspective of Feminist Legal Theory, the results draw attention to the distinction between formal legal protection and the practical ability to access comprehensive support. The findings support consideration of clearer BPO guidance, stronger case-documentation procedures, and more accessible information on referral and support services. Comparisons of statistical significance between the two cities are addressed separately under SOP 6.

Sub-problem No. 5. Significant Differences in Respondents' Level of Awareness Regarding RA 9262 According to Locality.

Table 5. Differences in Respondents' Level of Awareness Regarding RA 9262 Implementation According to Locality (N = 747)

Awareness Dimension	Koronadal M	General Santos M	t-value	p-value	Decision
Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases	4.39	4.44	1.24	.22	Not Significant
Elimination of violence against women and their children	4.13	4.01	3.06	<.01	Significant
Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders	3.88	3.92	0.828	.41	Not Significant
Violation of Barangay Protection Orders	**For verification**	**For verification**	5.25*	.001*	Provisional

The comparative analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between Koronadal City and General Santos City in respondents' awareness of operational procedures in handling VAWC cases ($t = 1.24$, $p = .22$) and the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders ($t = 0.828$, $p = .41$). The corresponding mean scores were 4.39 and 4.44 for operational procedures and 3.88 and 3.92 for BPO issuance. These results indicate insufficient statistical evidence of differences between the two localities in these dimensions. However, the absence of significant differences does not necessarily establish identical levels of awareness.

A statistically significant difference was reported in awareness concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children ($t = 3.06$, $p < .01$). Respondents from Koronadal City obtained a higher mean score ($M = 4.13$) than those from General Santos City ($M = 4.01$). Although the difference was statistically significant, the relatively small difference of 0.12 points suggests that its practical importance should be interpreted cautiously. The finding identifies variation in self-reported awareness but does not establish the institutional or community factors responsible for this difference.

The original analysis also reported a statistically significant difference concerning violations of Barangay Protection Orders ($t = 5.25$, reported $p = .001$). However, inconsistencies among the corresponding mean scores in the original manuscript prevent a definitive interpretation of this result. Verification of the original statistical output is necessary to establish the accurate means, test statistics, and direction of the reported difference before the finding is incorporated into the final conclusions.

Viewed through Feminist Legal Theory, the findings emphasize the importance of ensuring that women in different communities have access to clear and understandable information regarding their legal rights and available protective mechanisms. The observed difference in awareness concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children provides a basis for further examining local information-dissemination practices. Nevertheless, the findings do not establish whether differences in institutional programs, community initiatives, or service accessibility account for the variation in respondents' assessments.

Sub-problem No. 6. Differences in Perceived Impact According to Locality.

The independent-samples t-tests found no statistically significant differences between Koronadal City and General Santos City in respondents' assessments of the perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation across the four operational dimensions. The corresponding p values were .73 for operational procedures in handling VAWC cases, .33 for the elimination of violence against women and their children, .51 for the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and .44 for violations of Barangay Protection Orders. Since all values exceeded the .05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected for any dimension. These findings provide insufficient evidence of locality-based differences in the perceived impact measured in this study.

Table 6. Differences in Respondents' Assessments of the Perceived Impact of RA 9262 Implementation Between Koronadal City and General Santos City (N = 747)

Original Manuscript	Revision
Repeated "Operational Procedures in Handling VAWC Cases" for all four variables	Corrected the labels to match the four operational dimensions
Lengthy, repetitive discussion	Consolidated into three analytical paragraphs
Claimed that similar perceptions demonstrate equally effective implementation	Clarified that the study measured perceived impact, not actual effectiveness
Descriptive and inferential findings discussed interchangeably	Distinguished locality comparisons from descriptive assessments

The city-level mean scores were close across all domains. Respondents from Koronadal City and General Santos City reported means of 4.40 and 4.39, respectively, for operational procedures; 4.32 and 4.37 for the elimination of VAWC; 4.40 and 4.43 for BPO issuance; and 4.35 and 4.38 for BPO violations. This pattern corresponds with the Very High Impact ratings reported in the descriptive analysis under SOP 3. Nevertheless, the lack of significant differences should not be interpreted as proof that the two localities have identical experiences, equal institutional capacities, or equally effective enforcement practices. The survey assessed perceptions rather than verified administrative or victim-protection outcomes.

From the perspective of Feminist Legal Theory, the findings reinforce the relevance of examining whether legal protections are understandable and accessible in different communities. The broadly favorable evaluations in both cities support considering shared priorities for strengthening public information on protection orders, victim referrals, and case-handling procedures. Any explanation involving comparable local programs, training practices, or resource allocation would require additional evidence beyond the present survey. The results therefore support context-sensitive implementation planning without attributing the observed ratings to unmeasured institutional conditions.

Sub-problem No. 7. Significant Differences in Respondents' Assessment of Implementation Challenges Associated with RA 9262 According to Locality.

Table 7. Differences in Respondents' Assessments of Implementation Challenges Associated with Republic Act No. 9262 between Koronadal City and General Santos City (N = 747)

Assesment Dimension	Koronadal City M	General Santos City M	t-value	p-value	Decision
Operational procedures in handling VAWC cases	4.17	4.21	1.23	.22	Not Significant
Elimination of violence against women and their children	4.18	4.26	2.33	.02	**Significant**

Assesment Dimension	Koronadal City M	General Santos City M	t-value	p-value	Decision
Issuance of Barangay Protection Orders	3.94	4.02	1.07	.29	Not Significant
Violation of Barangay Protection Orders	4.49	4.53	1.33	.18	Not Significant

The comparative analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between Koronadal City and General Santos City in respondents' assessments of implementation challenges concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children ($t = 2.33$, $p = .02$). Respondents from General Santos City reported a higher mean score ($M = 4.26$) than those from Koronadal City ($M = 4.18$). Although the difference was statistically significant at the .05 level, the relatively small mean difference of 0.08 points suggests that its practical importance should be interpreted cautiously. The finding indicates variation in perceived implementation challenges between the two localities but does not establish the institutional or socioeconomic factors responsible for this difference.

No, statistically significant differences were observed in the remaining operational dimensions. Respondents' assessments of challenges concerning operational procedures in handling VAWC cases yielded $t = 1.23$ ($p = .22$), while the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders produced $t = 1.07$ ($p = .29$). Similarly, challenges associated with violations of Barangay Protection Orders showed no statistically significant locality-based difference ($t = 1.33$, $p = .18$). These results indicate insufficient evidence of differences between the two cities in these dimensions. However, the absence of statistical significance does not necessarily establish that respondents experienced identical implementation conditions.

Notably, violations of Barangay Protection Orders received the highest challenge ratings in both Koronadal City ($M = 4.49$) and General Santos City ($M = 4.53$). This finding is consistent with the descriptive results, which identified BPO violations as the most highly rated implementation challenge overall. Although the difference between the two cities was not statistically significant, the elevated assessments suggest that procedures associated with monitoring compliance, responding to reported violations, and coordinating enforcement efforts warrant closer institutional examination.

Viewed through Feminist Legal Theory, these findings highlight the importance of ensuring that legal protections are supported by accessible procedures and responsive institutions. The statistically significant difference concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children provides a basis for examining the particular needs of the two localities. Meanwhile, the consistently high ratings of challenges associated with BPO violations support the consideration of coordinated measures involving barangay officials, law enforcement agencies, and social welfare service providers. These recommendations should be treated as proposed improvements rather than interventions whose effectiveness has been established in the present study.

Sub-problem No. 8. Proposed Action Plan to Strengthen the Implementation of RA 9262.

The proposed action plan translates the descriptive and comparative findings into four implementation priorities: operational case handling, victim-centered support, issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, and response to BPO violations. Its strongest survey-based priority concerns perceived weaknesses in the enforcement and coordination of BPO-violation responses ($M = 4.81$), consistent with the highest challenge dimension reported under SOP 4 ($M = 4.51$). These ratings identify matters warranting institutional review; they do not independently establish that such failures occurred or that the proposed interventions will reduce violations.

Table 8. Proposed Action Plan for Strengthening RA 9262 Implementation in Koronadal City and General Santos City

Priority Area and Study Evidence	Proposed Activities	Responsible Offices and Resources	Proposed Time Frame	Monitoring Indicators
Operational procedures Record-keeping challenges (M=4.69); training needs (M=4.31).	Standardize confidential VAWC case logs, referral checklist, and secure file-handling procedures. Conduct role-specific training and scenario exercises on case classification, documentation, confidentiality, and timely referrals.	Barangay officials; LGU social welfare offices; PNP Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD). Forms, secure storage, trainers, modest training allocation.	0-6 moths; annual refresher training.	Percentage of designated personnel trained; completeness of records reviewed; proportion of referrals documented within locally approved targets.
Elimination of VAWC Perceived gaps in recovery and rehabilitation support (M=4.65); reporting-related barriers (M=4.63).	Map existing counseling, legal aid, shelter, livelihood, and psychosocial services. Establish confidential, survivor-centered referral pathways and voluntary follow-up; coordinate with qualified service providers rather than presume a need for new facilities.	LGU social welfare offices; PNP WCPD; accredited health, legal-aid, and NGO partners. Referral directory, qualified providers, service agreements.	Service mapping: 0-3 months; referral coordination: 3-12 months.	Updated referral directory; number of personnel oriented; documented referrals; service access and follow-up completion where consent permits.
Issuance of BPOs Records and facilities concerns (M=4.40); comparatively lower awareness of issuance (M=3.90).	Provide clear BPO application guides and standardized intake/issuance checklists. Review secure filing capacity, restricted-access records, and escalation guidance for court-issued protection orders; assess digital-record options before procurement.	Punong Barangay and authorized barangay personnel; LGU legal and social welfare offices. Quick guides, secure cabinets or approved digital tools, privacy training.	Guides and orientation: 0-3 moths; filing improvements: 3-9 months.	Availability of BPO guidance: documented applications and actions; completeness of records; periodic confidentiality and access-control checks.
Violation of BPOs Perceived enforcement and coordination challenges (M=4.81).	Agree on barangay-PNP WCPD reporting, urgent referral, and follow-up protocols. Publicize existing confidential reporting channels; conduct case-coordination exercises and regular de-identified case reviews, with survivor safety and privacy prioritized.	Barangay officials; PNP WCPD; LGU social welfare and legal services. Communication channels, referral forms, trained responders.	Protocol review: 0-3 months; orientation and monitoring: 3-6 months, then ongoing.	Documented response/referral timeliness; completeness of violation reports; number of coordination reviews and corrective actions undertaken.

The plan also addresses the high ratings assigned to record-keeping limitations (M = 4.69), gaps in rehabilitation and recovery support (M = 4.65), and barangay documentation facilities (M = 4.40). Practical responses include secure records management, targeted capacity-building, accessible BPO guidance, and confidential referrals to existing services. Given the comparatively lower awareness rating for BPO issuance under SOP 2 (M = 3.90), public-facing procedural information is incorporated into the proposed measures. Emphasis is placed on feasible improvements and cooperation among authorized barangay, police, social welfare, and legal-service personnel rather than assuming that new facilities or reporting applications are immediately necessary.

The proposed timelines and monitoring indicators provide a preliminary basis for implementation planning and subsequent evaluation, subject to local capacity, existing policies, funding, and institutional approval. From the

perspective of Feminist Legal Theory, the plan prioritizes accessible remedies and responsive institutions while protecting survivors' confidentiality and autonomy. Its effectiveness would require evaluation using implementation records, service-quality measures, and appropriate follow-up data; it cannot be inferred from the present cross-sectional perception survey.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents demonstrated a generally high level of self-reported awareness regarding the implementation of Republic Act No. 9262, with an overall mean of 4.13. Awareness was highest concerning operational procedures in handling VAWC cases (M = 4.41), while the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders received the lowest assessment (M = 3.90). These findings indicate that although respondents were relatively familiar with the law's protective provisions, further clarification of procedures governing the issuance and enforcement of protection orders remains necessary.
2. The perceived impact of RA 9262 implementation was consistently rated Very High across the four operational dimensions, with an overall mean of 4.38. The issuance of Barangay Protection Orders obtained the highest assessment (M = 4.41), reflecting favorable perceptions of the protective mechanisms established under the law. However, these assessments represent respondents' perceptions and do not independently establish the actual effectiveness of RA 9262 in preventing violence or improving institutional outcomes.
3. Respondents identified substantial perceived challenges associated with the implementation of RA 9262, as reflected in the overall mean of 4.23. Challenges concerning violations of Barangay Protection Orders received the highest assessment (M = 4.51), particularly in relation to enforcement and coordination mechanisms. Other prominent concerns involved case documentation, access to rehabilitation and recovery services, and institutional resources. These findings emphasize the need to examine existing implementation procedures and strengthen coordination among barangay officials, law enforcement agencies, and social welfare service providers.
4. The comparative analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between Koronadal City and General Santos City in respondents' assessments of the perceived impact of RA 9262 across the four operational dimensions. However, statistically significant differences were reported in awareness concerning the elimination of violence against women and their children ($p < .01$) and in the perceived implementation challenges associated with the same dimension ($p = .02$). These findings indicate that certain assessments varied according to locality, although the study did not establish the specific institutional or contextual factors responsible for these differences.
5. Consistent with Feminist Legal Theory, the findings emphasize the importance of accessible legal information, responsive protection mechanisms, and institutional support in safeguarding women's rights. The coexistence of relatively high awareness and perceived impact with substantial implementation challenges provides a basis for proposing improvements in community education, case documentation, victim-centered referral services, and Barangay Protection Order enforcement. These measures constitute recommendations for institutional consideration and require further evaluation to determine their effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen professional training and procedural compliance. Local government units, in coordination with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and relevant social welfare agencies, should conduct continuing training for barangay officials and frontline personnel on the implementation

of Republic Act No. 9262. Particular attention should be given to the issuance and enforcement of Barangay Protection Orders (BPOs), documentation requirements, legal procedures, confidentiality, and appropriate referral mechanisms. Regular refresher courses and practical exercises are recommended to reinforce procedural knowledge and institutional responsiveness.

2. Enhance community awareness and legal information dissemination. Local government units and community organizations should implement culturally appropriate and accessible information campaigns concerning women's legal rights, available protection mechanisms, and procedures for reporting VAWC incidents. Educational materials should be available in relevant local languages and should particularly clarify BPO application procedures, issuing authorities, validity periods, and remedies for violations. These initiatives may address the comparatively lower awareness ratings associated with BPO issuance and promote informed access to legal protection.
3. Improve institutional coordination, documentation, and accountability. Barangay officials, law enforcement agencies, social welfare offices, and legal service providers should strengthen coordination through standardized case documentation, referral procedures, and communication protocols. Existing mechanisms for reporting BPO violations should be reviewed to identify opportunities for improving response procedures, confidentiality safeguards, and case monitoring. Periodic institutional assessments are recommended to determine whether additional personnel, equipment, or operational resources are necessary to support these functions.
4. Strengthen survivor-centered assistance and support services. Local government units, in partnership with qualified social workers, healthcare professionals, legal assistance providers, and accredited community organizations, should improve access to confidential counseling, psychosocial assistance, legal services, temporary shelter, and livelihood support. Referral arrangements should prioritize survivors' safety, informed consent, confidentiality, and individual needs. Appropriate intervention programs for offenders may also be considered through legally authorized agencies and qualified professionals, without compromising survivor protection or accountability.
5. Promote responsive and accessible community protection mechanisms. Barangays and partner agencies should assess the availability and accessibility of existing VAWC help desks, reporting channels, and emergency assistance services, particularly in communities with limited access to institutional support. Where documented service gaps exist, improvements may include designated referral personnel, accessible reporting procedures, appropriate communication equipment, and coordinated assistance arrangements. Such measures should be guided by local needs assessments and available institutional resources.
6. Consider the implementation and evaluation of the proposed action plan. The local government units of Koronadal City and General Santos City, together with barangay officials and relevant partner agencies, should consider the proposed action plan as a basis for strengthening RA 9262 implementation. Its adoption should be subject to institutional review, resource availability, and applicable policies. Regular monitoring of training participation, documentation practices, referral procedures, and institutional coordination is recommended to assess implementation progress. Future studies may employ additional stakeholder perspectives and objective administrative indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.

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