

# A Governance Perspective on Administrative Capabilities and Competencies of Social Workers in Managing Legal Adoption and Alternative Child Care Cases in Zamboanga Peninsula

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*social workers, alternative child care, governance, administrative capabilities, policy reform*

## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the administrative capabilities and competencies of social workers in managing alternative child care cases in the Zamboanga Peninsula, emphasizing the role of governance structures in enhancing service delivery. From governance perspective views, it evaluates the current skills, challenges, and resource limitations faced by social workers while identifying areas for policy and procedural improvements. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data from social workers, government agencies, and community stakeholders involved in alternative child care services. Findings indicate that while social workers demonstrate strong professional ethics, confidentiality, and case management skills, they encounter significant obstacles, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate resources, and a lack of standardized governance frameworks. These challenges hinder their ability to provide timely and comprehensive support to children and families. Additionally, the study highlights the critical role of Local Government Units (LGUs) and inter-agency collaboration in addressing systemic gaps. To enhance the effectiveness of alternative child care services, the study recommends institutionalizing competency development programs, strengthening governance mechanisms, and ensuring adequate resource allocation. Standardizing policies, improving inter-agency coordination, and establishing a robust post-placement monitoring system are essential for promoting accountability and ensuring long-term child welfare. This research offers actionable insights for policy reforms aimed at creating a more responsive, efficient, and child-centered alternative child care system in the Zamboanga Peninsula.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the professional responsibilities and critical administrative competences of a social worker from a governance perspective. It stresses the ways in which institutions, policies, and processes affect responsibility, moral conduct, and general service quality. To ensure openness, legitimacy, and responsible decision-making in professional service, ethics in practice, especially in particular circumstances, organized accountability, and reporting processes are necessary.

By emphasizing how institutional systems influence professional roles, responsibilities, and client interactions, the governance perspective places social work within the larger context of organizational

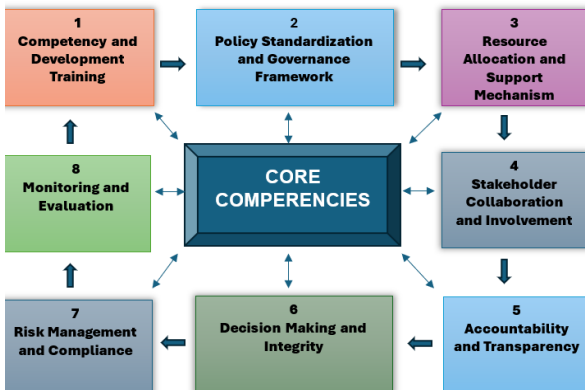
management and public administration. Several governance models influence how social workers execute their jobs and adhere to regulations, which frequently leads to extra compassionate and ethical aspects of care.

The experiences of 38 social workers and 67 adoptive and foster parents in the Zamboanga Peninsula, is vital in examining the governance structures in steering capacity the professional competencies, ethical decision-making, and the overall efficiency of services. This increases institutional resilience of adoption and child welfare programs in the Philippines in terms of accountability, responsiveness, and fairness.

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## 1.1 Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1**  
**Governance Framework and Policy Guidelines for Administrative Capabilities and Competencies of Social Workers (Marcos and Dela Cruz- Sahipa Model, 2025)**



The framework presents an integrated structure aimed at reinforcing governance systems and enhancing administrative efficiency in managing legal adoption and alternative child care cases. Pivotal to the framework is the empowerment of professional social workers, enabling practitioners with the necessary competencies, training, and institutional support to deliver effective and ethical services. By mainstreaming the recommendations within an organized system, the governance structure aspires to create a more responsive, accountable, and transparent child care environment.

This comprehensive model is composed of interconnected components, including Competency Development and Training, Policy Standardization and Governance, Resource Allocation, Stakeholder Collaboration, Accountability, Decision Making, Risk Management, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Each domain synergistically ensure that policies and practices are aligned with the organizational goals and ethical standards. Ultimately, this model not only provides structure but also establishes a culture of integrity, cooperation, and continuous improvement, enabling more consistent and just outcomes in child care and adoption processes.

### 1. Competency Development and Training:

Emphasizes building a skilled, knowledgeable, and emotionally resilient social work workforce capable of managing complex adoption and child care cases. Through rigorous competency evaluations, targeted training modules, and emotional resilience programs, social workers can address gaps in legal knowledge, case management, and ethical practice. An approach that promotes accessible and continuous learning through online platforms, workshops, mentoring, and partnerships with academic institutions offering certification

programs. By incorporating competency assessment tools and identified development plans, this component ensures focused capacity building and sustained professional growth in child welfare practice.

### 2. Policy Standardization and Governance Framework:

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social workers managing adoption and foster care cases by establishing transparent guidelines and robust governance structures. Central to this approach is the development of an integrated governance framework that delineates roles, responsibilities, and accountability, alongside to reduce bureaucratic delays. Standardized reporting templates aim to promote consistency in case documentation, while maintaining flexibility for professional judgment in complex situations. By aligning all procedures with national and international child welfare standards, the framework strives to strengthen governance, streamline processes, and provide social workers with a structured yet adaptable system to improve child welfare outcomes.

### 3. Resource Allocation and Support Mechanisms:

Empower social workers handling adoption and child care cases by ensuring access to adequate financial, technological, and human resources. Key strategies include the development of knowledge-sharing platforms, user-friendly case management tools, and regional operation agency to provide equitable resource distribution, particularly to remote areas. Mentorship programs and continuous supervision by experienced professionals are emphasized to foster skill development, professional growth, and service quality. Concomitantly, these measures are designed to establish a well-supported, resource-equipped workforce capable of delivering effective and high-quality services.

### 4. Stakeholder Collaboration and Involvement:

Strengthen child welfare outcomes by fostering coordinated partnerships among government agencies, local government units, NGOs, and community organizations. Key approaches includes formal inter-agency coordination platforms, empowering LGUs with resources to manage child related programs, and conducting public education efforts that encourage and promote positive societal attitudes toward adoption and foster care. Regular multi-stakeholder meetings, active participation from community and religious leaders, and the use of shared digital technological platforms are emphasized to ensure effective collaboration,

alignment efforts, and integration of cultural and legal considerations. By weaving, these measures aim to create a holistic, inclusive, and efficiently coordinated child welfare system.

5. **Accountability and Transparency:** Strengthen ethical conduct, legal adherence, and informed decision-making throughout the adoption process requires a clear and well-supported system for practitioners. Providing social workers with detailed guidelines, standardized documentation tools, and well-defined ethical principles helps promote professionalism and integrity in service delivery. Complemented by comprehensive rules, regular audits, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms, these measures help equipped to improved procedures, enhance practices, reduce legal risks, and maintain public trust. Ensuring the availability of accurate and timely information further empowers clients to make informed decisions while safeguarding their rights in adoption and alternative care processes.
6. **Decision Making and Integrity:** The framework emphasize the importance of fairness, transparency, and ethical standard in adoption and alternative care. By providing social workers, particularly in the Zamboanga Peninsula, with clear guidelines and decision-making support, it ensures that actions focus and prioritize the best interests of the child while upholding professional and legal integrity. Robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms promote consistent, morally and principled decisions and nurture a culture of responsibility among all involved stakeholders. Collectively, these initiatives build public confidence and trust in the adoption process, strengthen ethical governance, and safeguard the welfare of children and families.
7. **Risk Management and Compliance:** The framework is designed to ensure that adoption and alternative care processes are carried out safely, ethically, and in full compliance with the law. By providing social workers with practical tools and guidance to identify, assess, and address potential risks, it enables them to manage complex cases confidently while keeping the child's safety and well-being as the top priority. Established procedures and oversight systems help guarantee that all actions follow legal and ethical standards, reinforcing accountability and protecting the rights of clients. Together, these measures build greater trust in the adoption and child welfare system by promoting proactive risk management, adherence to

regulations, and consistent protection for children and families.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This approach focuses on keeping adoption and child welfare governance strong, relevant, and capable of adapting as needs change. It relies on clear monitoring systems that track progress through practical goals and meaningful indicators, helping to evaluate how well training programs work, how resources are used, and how effectively stakeholders work together. Laws, policies, and operational guidelines are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and responsive. Ongoing input from social workers, families, and partner organizations plays a key role in identifying what is working and where improvements are needed. Annual reports bring these insights together, highlighting successes, addressing challenges, and supporting transparent decision-making that strengthens the overall quality and sustainability of child welfare services.

## 1.2 Review of Relevant Literature (RRL)

This examines governance roles, professional ethics, and the practical challenges social workers face in managing cases. It draws on a range of established models, academic literature, and examples from different contexts to provide a broad perspective. The discussion shows how organizational arrangements, policy frameworks, and case profiling shape social workers' ability to handle complex legal situations. By bringing these elements together, the review helps identify both ongoing challenges and areas where improvements are possible. These insights form the basis of the study's conceptual framework and objectives, supporting the development of realistic strategies aimed at improving social work practice and reinforcing governance within child welfare services.

The growing influence of managerial approaches in social work has reshaped everyday practice, particularly in adoption and child care services. Short-term employment contracts, funding tied to performance targets, and the outsourcing of services have contributed to job insecurity and reduced professional independence. As a result, social workers may feel less able to question unjust practices or rely on their professional judgment when dealing with ethically sensitive cases. Researchers have observed that the heavy focus on paperwork, targets, and standardized procedures often clashes with core professional values, limiting flexibility and the ability to respond to individual circumstances (Westerberg, 2013). At the same time, governance arrangements play a significant role in shaping practice. Organizational forms of control tend to prioritize hierarchy, rules, and managerial supervision, whereas professional or occupational control is grounded in shared ethics, peer support, and

collective decision-making (Evetts, 2010; Svensson, 2010). Taken together, these factors show how managerial pressures and governance models can either constrain or support social workers' ethical decision-making, professional capacity, and effectiveness in complex legal and child welfare settings.

In social work, organizational governance often blends traditional administrative structures with newer reforms inspired by New Public Management, sometimes referred to as Progressive Public Administration or hierarchical governance (Hood, 1991; Newman, 2005). These approaches focus on formal rules, centralized decision-making, and efficiency, aiming to safeguard citizens' rights and promote fair service delivery.

Subsequently, research consistently shows that highly bureaucratic systems can have significant negative effects on social workers themselves. Professionals in these environments report higher levels of stress, burnout, ethical tension, and anxiety, and some even choose early retirement due to the pressures of the system (Abramovitz & Zelnick, 2015; Disney et al., 2019; Yuill & Mueller-Hirth, 2019; Bertotti, 2010; Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015). The heavy emphasis on paperwork, procedural compliance, and administrative tasks often leaves less room for meaningful client interaction. This can lead to rushed or inaccurate assessments, overreliance on stereotypes, and interventions that may not fully meet clients' needs (Carey, 2009; Fenton & Kelly, 2017; Horwath, 2011; Groves et al., 2016).

According to Scholars like Hupe and Hill (2007) note that bureaucratic control helps ensure that social work practice follows established policies. However, these systems can clash with social workers' professional values and their desire to provide client-focused care. Overall, this research underscores a central tension in social work: the need to balance efficiency and accountability with ethical, relational, and professional responsibilities.

Strong, trusting relationships are widely recognized as the foundation of effective social work practice, as they create the conditions for meaningful support and lasting change (Ingram & Smith, 2018; Ruch, 2005, 2013; Trevithick, 2003). Despite this, contemporary social work increasingly operates within systems that emphasize efficiency, measurable outputs, and cost reduction rather than the quality of outcomes for clients. Organizational performance targets and managerial reforms often restrict practitioners' ability to tailor interventions to individual needs, ultimately weakening relational practice (Abramovitz & Zelnick, 2015; Carey, 2009; Dixon, 2013; Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015; Groves et al., 2016; Horwath, 2011; Marti-Garcia et al., 2019).

Within this context, social ethics play a crucial role in guiding practice. Professional values, shared norms, and accumulated practice knowledge support social workers in exercising ethical judgment and making informed, case-specific decisions (Svensson, 2010; Johnson & Yanca, 2001; Lenz, 2008). Ethical

frameworks help practitioners navigate complex organizational demands while remaining accountable to both clients and institutions. By anchoring governance in ethical responsibility, these standards promote transparency, trust, and integrity, ensuring that administrative requirements do not override moral and professional commitments (Robert, 2022).

Despite increasing oversight and administrative control, many social workers do not fully adopt managerial or bureaucratic ways of working. Instead, they continue to push for greater professional independence, deeper engagement with service users, and recognition of their knowledge and expertise (Abramovitz & Zelnick, 2015; Bertotti, 2010; Carey, 2009; Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015; Groves et al., 2016; Yuill & Mueller-Hirth, 2019). Resistance often takes subtle and practical forms, such as finding flexible ways to work within rigid procedures, placing client's needs ahead of organizational rules, or limiting reliance on standardized information systems when these fail to capture important contextual details (Carey et al., 2009).

Moreover, social workers respond to restrictive working environments in different ways. Some adopt coping strategies that allow them to manage pressures pragmatically, including working remotely, postponing formal processes, or scaling back advocacy efforts in order to remain operational within system constraints (Disney et al., 2019; Horwath, 2011; Weinberg, 2016). Others, however, find it difficult to adapt, particularly when they feel underprepared for the increasingly regulatory and risk-focused nature of contemporary social work practice (Parker, 2017). Across the literature, there is strong agreement on the importance of education, supervision, and ongoing professional development. Supportive supervision is seen as especially valuable in strengthening practice skills and enabling reflective, ethical decision-making, particularly in complex areas such as adoption and alternative child care within legal frameworks (Weld, 2016).

Conversely, these studies highlight the persistent tension between bureaucratic requirements and professional values, while pointing to capacity-building and supportive structures as essential for sustaining effective and ethical social work practice.

Within social service organizations, management is often associated with administrative control, regulatory compliance, and efficiency-driven processes. Leadership, by contrast, is usually described as more forward-looking and motivational, although in practice the boundary between the two is far from clear (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2014). Many managers working in personal social services tend to identify more strongly with leadership than with management, reflecting the ongoing tension between holding formal authority and exercising influence in everyday practice.

Traditionally, areas such as child welfare, substance misuse services for adults, and social assistance were organized within broader, integrated systems. Over time, however, these services have become increasingly divided into specialized units, each with a narrower

focus (Lundgren et al., 2009). This shift aligns closely with New Public Management (NPM) reforms, which emphasize market-oriented principles, the separation of purchaser and provider roles, and the autonomous management of smaller organizational entities (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2011; Hood, 1995). Although there is limited empirical evidence on the direct consequences of this growing specialization, existing research suggests that it has contributed to the expansion of managerial roles in the public sector. These changes appear to have altered not only the conditions under which managers work, but also the nature of professional practice within social services (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2013).

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the administrative capabilities and competencies of social workers managing legal adoption and alternative child care in the Zamboanga Peninsula. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative strategies, the research aimed to capture an in-depth understanding of the sociocultural and governance factors influencing service delivery. The qualitative component focused on exploring the experiences of social workers and service recipients, fostering trust and credibility while allowing for rich, interpretive insights. The quantitative component measured competency levels through structured scales, providing objective evidence to complement the qualitative findings.

The study covered the provinces of Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur, as well as the independent cities of Zamboanga City and Isabela City. These locations were selected to capture a broad range of areas where legal adoption and alternative child care cases are actively managed. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling to ensure they had direct and relevant experience with these processes. The sample included 38 social workers from Local Social Welfare and Development Offices and the Regional Alternative Child Care Office (RACCO), together with 67 adoptive and foster parents. Their firsthand involvement provided valuable perspectives on meaningful insight on administrative procedures, professional skills, and how governance arrangements shape the delivery of child care and adoption services.

Data were collected using modified open-ended interviews and structured scales, tailored separately for social workers and program recipients. Interviews for social workers included assessment of administrative capabilities, competency levels, governance impacts, and professional experiences, supplemented with focus group discussions to deepen understanding. For adoptive and foster parents, instruments explored their experiences with service delivery, perceptions of social worker competency, and suggestions for improving governance and administrative practices. This

methodological framework was designed to produce grounded practical- oriented recommendations for enhancing public service delivery while addressing the unique challenges of managing legal adoption and alternative child care cases in the region.

### **2.1 Data Collection Procedure and Validity and Reliability**

The systematic and ethically guided data collection processes played significant key role in strengthening the credibility and validity of the findings while capturing the real experiences of both social workers and service recipients. The integration of quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of administrative competencies, governance impacts, and capacity-building needs in legal adoption and alternative child care. This blended approach underscores the importance of methodological rigor in producing actionable insights that can inform policy, enhance professional practice, and ultimately improve the quality of child welfare services in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

### **2.2 Data Analysis Procedures**

The combined use of quantitative and qualitative data analysis in this study is vital as it enabled a holistic understanding of social workers' administrative capabilities and competencies in managing legal adoption and alternative child care. Statistical analysis provided objective measures of competency levels and governance impacts, while thematic analysis captured the nuanced experiences, strategies, and challenges of both social workers and service recipients. Together this approach ensured a robust, evidence-based interpretation of findings, supporting actionable recommendations for enhancing professional practice, policy development, and the overall effectiveness of child welfare services.

### **2.3 Ethical Consideration**

This study is pivotal in safeguarding the rights, well-being, and dignity of participants, particularly those in vulnerable situations related to adoption and child care. By ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, data security, and reduced any potential harm, the research maintained high ethical standards, fostering trust and openness among respondents. Ethical approval from the Research Ethics Oversight Committee further affirmed the study's integrity, ensuring that the collection and handling of sensitive information were conducted responsibly, which ultimately enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings.

### **3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

The study examined the governance, administrative capabilities, and competencies of social workers managing legal adoption and alternative child care in the Zamboanga Peninsula, revealing key factors that shape their effectiveness in this specialized field. Results highlighted the critical role of social workers' professional competencies, administrative skills, and adherence to governance structures in ensuring efficient case management and quality service delivery. The study identified persistent challenges including bureaucratic procedures, resource limitations, and policy-related constraints that hinder optimal performance. The results suggest that improving administrative workflows, investing in continuous skills development, and strengthening governance arrangements are key to enhancing social workers' effectiveness.

The study offers practical, evidence-based recommendations aimed on actionable strategies to build capacities, streamline procedures, and foster supportive policies, providing practical guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and future research to advancing child welfare services in the region.

#### **3.1 Types of Existing Availed Services**

The study highlights that legal adoption and alternative child care in the Zamboanga Peninsula are guided by a clear legal and administrative framework. Regular and independent adoptions are the most common forms of legal adoption, while foster care emerges as the primary alternative child care service. Social workers play a key role in overseeing relative and non-relative adoptions, emphasizing that placements adhere with legal standards and prioritize the best interest of the child. In alternative child care arrangement, foster care is the most frequently managed service, followed by kinship and residential care, reflecting strong preference family-care interventions. These findings underscore the governance framework's emphasis on family-based placements, regulatory compliance, and the effective coordination of social welfare interventions, highlighting the interplay of legal structures, policy support, and professional practice in shaping child welfare services in the region.

#### **3.2 Capabilities of Social Workers**

The study highlighted that adoption and alternative child care services in the Zamboanga Peninsula are largely managed by a registered social worker with diverse experience and educational backgrounds, whose competencies are highly viewed by both themselves and parents they served. Despite strong ethical standards and dedication, they face challenges including bureaucratic processes, complex legal requirements, emotionally demand cases, and limited supervisory guidance, particularly in emergency and special-needs cases. The

findings also point to child placement difficulties, resource constraints, inconsistency application of policies, and inter-agency coordination gaps were identified, alongside the need for culturally competent practices and adherence to children's legal rights. Strengthening administrative system through streamlined procedures, clear monitoring mechanisms, evidence-based assessments, and improved collaboration is essential to support social worker and improve service delivery and ensuring the well-being of children.

#### **3.3 Competencies of Social Workers**

The study revealed that adoptive and foster parents view social workers in the Zamboanga Peninsula as competent and reliable in managing adoption and alternative child care cases, particularly in documentation, case preparation, and child advocacy. Despite strong performance, the study also identifies operational challenges such as delays in reporting, limited autonomy in task execution, and bureaucratic constraints that affect efficiency. Emphasis was placed on professional responsibilities, ethical decision-making, and adherence to child welfare principles, with recommendations including capacity-building programs, strengthened inter-agency coordination, digital case management systems, and governance reforms to optimize service delivery and ensure the protection and well-being of children.

#### **3.4 Influence of Governance Structure and Policies**

The study underscores the critical role of governance and policy framework that shape the effectiveness of social workers involved in legal adoption and alternative child care. Clear policies, supported with well-defined roles and adequate supervision contribute to improved service delivery, while challenges such as bureaucratic delays, high turnover, and complex legal frameworks highlight the need for simpler procedures, digital case management, and continuous professional training. Focus group discussion stress the importance of strong inter-agency coordination, cultural sensitivity, and practical legal knowledge in reducing adoption disruptions. Governance-driven reforms structured professional development, and institutional support have collectively improved administrative efficiency, intensified accountability, and promoted ethical child-centered care in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

#### **3.5 Challenges and Opportunities**

The study reveals that social workers managing adoption and alternative child care in the Zamboanga Peninsula operate within bureaucratic, resource, and governance challenges that hinder service efficiency and quality. Heavy caseloads limited inter-agency coordination, unclear institutional responsibilities,

funding constraints, and slow legal and administrative processes remain main barriers to effective practice. Despite these difficulties, decentralization efforts including support from RACCO IX and NACC, have improved in service delivery. Social workers employ coping strategies like collegial support, work-life balance, and stress management to maintain performance. Generally, the findings point to the need of stronger governance and policy reforms, alongside digital case management procedures, and continues capacity-building to promote ethical practice, and child-centered outcomes in adoption and child welfare services.

### **3.6 Support Mechanism**

The study finds that improving social workers competencies in adoption and alternative child care requires continuous specialized training, adequate resources, and structured support. Key areas include trauma-informed care, case management, legal procedures, documentation, stakeholder engagement, and gender-sensitive practices. Training gaps and knowledge disparities hinder service delivery, while mentorship, inter-agency collaboration, and clear policies enhance efficiency, ethical practice, and responsiveness. This further highlight the critical role of capacity-building and institutional support in child welfare governance.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The study reveals that the management of legal adoption and alternative child care in the Zamboanga Peninsula are shaped by the influence of social workers competencies, governance structure, and administrative systems. Adoption and foster care dominate the child welfare landscape, reflecting a structured but resource-dependent framework. While social workers are generally regarded as competent, challenges such as bureaucratic procedures, policy gaps, staff turnover, and limited access to training opportunities hinder timely and effective service delivery. Analysis suggests that strengthening continuous professional development, digital case management, inter-agency collaboration, and mentorship programs can enhance administrative capacity, ethical practice, and child-centered outcomes. Furthermore, governance mechanisms including policy refinement, resource allocation, and coordinated oversight are essential in sustaining improvements. The need for evidence-based reforms and capacity-building initiatives are key to ensure a responsive, efficient, and sustainable adoption and child welfare system.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations seek to strengthen adoption and alternative child care systems in the Zamboanga Peninsula by increasing public awareness,

improving governance, enhancing social workers' competencies, and addressing bureaucratic challenges. By implementing these measures, policymakers, social workers, and other stakeholders can help create a child welfare system that is more accessible and responsive to the needs of every child and family.

1. Strengthening public awareness, improving access and support for adoption and foster and implementing data-driven monitoring are essential to enhance the legal adoption and alternative child care system in the Zamboanga Peninsula.
2. Enhancing social workers skills through continuous training, better workload management, inter-agency collaboration, and the adoption of digital tools is essential to improve efficiency, accountability, and service quality in adoption and alternative child care case services.
3. Establishing structured mentoring, focused training, resilience-building initiatives, and regular feedback is essential to enhance social workers competencies, address skill gaps, and better adoption and alternative child care services.
4. Implementing governance reforms, providing career development and legal training for social workers, and setting oversight monitoring are essential to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in adoption and alternative child care systems.
5. Streamlining legal and administrative procedures, integrating digital solutions, increase policy advocacy, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and institutionalizing grievance mechanisms make adoption and child welfare services more efficient, accountable and responsive.
6. Allocating adequate training resources, establishing a competency framework, psychosocial support, and opportunities for inter-agency learning are essential to strengthen social workers skills, well-being, and effectiveness in adoption and child welfare services.
7. Conducting a comprehensive review of adoption laws, involving stakeholder engagement, promoting community-based models, and strengthening public-private partnerships are essential to enhance governance, inclusivity, and resource mobilization in adoption and alternative child care services.
8. Institutionalizing a structured governance framework with skills development, policy standardization, resource planning, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring is vital to enhance the efficiency and impact of adoption and child care services in the Zamboanga Peninsula.
9. Future research should examine local governance in social work, integrate findings into education and training, encourage collaborative studies, and address emerging issues to strengthen governance knowledge and improve social service delivery.



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