

Exploring the lived experiences of science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education in General Santos City

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study employed phenomenology to explore and understand the lived experiences of science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education in General Santos City Division, General Santos City, Philippines. A validated interview guide was utilized to gather data in this study. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants for the in-depth interview and for the focus group discussion. The data were analyzed using the phenomenological method of Colaizzi. Results revealed four essential themes under the lived experiences of the science teachers as regards classroom management such as structured flexibility, effectiveness of inclusive classroom management strategies, disruptive behavior management challenges and structural and environmental constraints in the classroom. The themes generated regarding the coping mechanisms of the teachers were instructional and behavioral strategies, emotional regulation, and well-being of teachers, and institutional support. As regards insights shared to the academe and the community, the themes extracted were instructional innovation and deepened sense of fulfillment.

Keywords: Classroom management, education, inclusive education, lived experiences, phenomenology, science teachers, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is a term employed by educators to describe the process of ensuring that classroom activities run smoothly despite of the disruptive student behaviors (Camingao et al., 2024). Further, classroom management refers as a vital ingredients in developing an environment that diminish disruptions, enhance instruction time, and motivate students to engross in learning (Reinke et al., 2021). Inclusive education is as a continuous process of increasing participation and reducing exclusion of all learners within mainstream schools, emphasizing the removal of barriers to learning and the accommodation of diverse needs (Poly & Harishma, 2023). Similarly, inclusive education as an approach that promotes equity, collaboration, and respect for diversity by ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, background, or disability, learn together in supportive environments (Yeo et al., 2016).

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Despite its strong philosophical foundation, a persistent problem in inclusive education is the lack of adequate institutional support, including insufficient teacher training, limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and minimal access to specialized services, which can hinder effective classroom management and reduce the quality of instruction provided to learners with diverse needs (Reinke et al., 2021).

However, in an Inclusive education, classroom management are among teachers most pressing problem and challenges due to disruptive behavior of students with special educational needs (Santiago, 2025). Further, teachers faced an increasing challenges in providing an effective classroom management due the inclusive education that requires to cater huge diversity of student including under special education (Khasanah, 2018).

In California, USA identifies that teachers who are assigned in a classroom with learners under special needs features difficulties in classroom management in handling the diverse behavior of the students (Reinke et al., 2021). Meanwhile, India, teachers experience difficulties in handling inclusive education, they face many challenging situations in classroom management due lack of knowledge and resources (Kumar & Kaushik, 2023). Additionally, in Malaysia reveals that inclusive education teachers encountered problems regarding classroom management, it showed that inclusive education teachers are lacking of understanding and skills regarding with students with learning disabilities acquired poor classroom management (Ngang & Abdullah, 2015). In Pakistan, working as a teacher with children with Special Needs Education (SNED) under or Inclusive Education, faces many challenging situations like managing a classroom with a variety of special needs (Khasanah, 2018).

In Philippines teachers in an inclusive classroom experienced difficulties in teaching and learning process specifically classroom management due to the high demand of students under special educational needs (Sampaga, 2022). The data further showed that educators work in a variety of demands and needs depending on the exceptionality of the learner. Additionally, teachers are challenged with classroom management in inclusive classrooms, considering the varied learning styles and abilities of learners, dealing with difficulties in communication, and assessing their performance (Santiago, 2025). Likewise, a study locally conducted in Davao City that teachers experience a composite range of difficulties, classroom management, approaches, methods of dealing with stress, and valuable understandings in dealing inclusive education specifically learners under SNED (Cordova & Villarente, 2025).

This study is aligned in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SGD), specifically UN-SGD SDG 4: Quality Education, by which it provides social values of equality, inclusion and respect human dignity through securing that every learner regardless of socioeconomic status, background and ability will have an access into a quality and equitable education. In the idea of inclusive education under in emphasizes a significance in providing a conducive learning environment by which every learner must feel safe, valued, supported and give the opportunity to be successful in life. These objectives protect the principle of fairness, justice and active community participation to remove the hindrances and accept learning diversity and apply varied teaching practices to address diversity and varied learning needs.

From the literature I accessed, there are limited studies regarding inclusive education that focus on the perspectives of science teachers on classroom management. In studies that I found inclusive that involved educators, the teachers involved were elementary education teachers (Beltran et al., 2025); (Taghap and Pabalan, 2025) and non-science education teachers (Chowdhury, 2025). Moreover, these studies utilized design-based research methodology (Floranza, 2025), document analysis (Martino, 2022), and systematic reviews (Agustin, 2025). Particularly, I failed to access literature that discussed the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms specifically of science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education. Therefore, this study aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of

science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education in General Santos City Division, General Santos City, Philippines using phenomenological design.

The results of the study could be used to formulate or improve policies relevant to inclusive education, especially in science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education. In addition, the results could also help to inspire pre-service teachers, address issues and challenges met by in-service teachers, and consequently allow the learners to receive quality and inclusive education.

The findings of this study will be presented during meetings in the school, district, or division and even regional level. Moreover, this will be shared during Learning Action Cell (LAC), Collaborative Expertise sessions and Peer Teacher Session. The study will also be presented at various national, and international research conferences. In addition, I have plans to publish my study in a reputable peer reviewed research journal.

Statement of the problem

This research sought to explore and understand the lived experiences of public junior high school science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education in General Santos City, Philippines. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of public junior high school science teachers as regards classroom management in an inclusive education?
2. How do the participants cope with the challenges encountered as regards classroom management in an inclusive education?
3. What insights can be shared to the academe and the community?

METHODOLOGY

Discussed in this chapter are the research design, research participants, data sources, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, role of the researcher, and ethical considerations.

This study employed a qualitative study specifically phenomenological approach. Qualitative research is a research design focusing on exploring social phenomena and subjective experiences through the gathering and analyzation of non-numerical information such as text, images, and videos (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2020). Qualitative research is often used when the objective of the investigation is to achieve extensive understanding of a particular phenomenon or to explore complex aspects of a research question. This design allows researchers to generate rich data that can offer insights regarding the perspectives and experiences of research participants.

Qualitative research is used when a researcher wants to understand the beliefs, experiences, and behaviors of people. In addition, qualitative research has gained recognition among researchers due to its capacity to add new dimensions to studies that could not be obtained by relying on variables and numerical data (Pathak et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, phenomenological design is a sub-approach under the qualitative design that aims to explore the core of human experiences, understandings, and perceptions related to a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Beck, 2021). The focus of this design was on understanding how individuals experience and make meaning of their experiences. The research design is rooted in the philosophy of phenomenology which underscores the prominence of comprehending the subjective individual experiences of a certain group and their perception of the world around them.

There are many different approaches under phenomenology, but the general steps are the same. A phenomenological study involves developing a research question about the phenomenon under study, identifying appropriate and volunteering participants, gathering data through interviews of written descriptions of the phenomenon, and analyzing the data using codes and categories (Gumarang Jr. et al., 2021).

The design was appropriate for my study because this investigation focuses to explore and understand the lived experiences of science teachers on classroom management in an inclusive education. Moreover, the data needed could not be quantified. This required qualitative research data to get a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Phenomenology was likewise appropriate as this investigation sought to elucidate on the subjective experiences of the teachers and how they make meaning of those experiences.

The participants in this study were the 17 science teachers in inclusive classrooms in three public in General Santos City. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling to ensure rich and relevant data. Of the 17 participants, there were 10 for IDI, while seven joined FGD. Purposive sampling is highly appropriate and effective in qualitative research because it intentionally selects participants who possess rich, relevant, and firsthand experiences of the phenomenon under investigation, thereby enabling the researcher to gather in-depth, meaningful, and context of specific data that contribute to a deeper understanding of the study. (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

The inclusion criteria in the selection of participants were the public junior high school science teachers, three years of professional experience as an inclusive education teacher, and male or female. Non-junior high school teachers handling non-science subjects, below three years, and non-teaching were excluded as participants.

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured that participants are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. The researcher was able to maintain transparency by clearly informing participants of all relevant details, including the study's purpose, procedures, and estimated time commitment. It was also clarified that there are no conflicts of interest, and that data collected was used exclusively for this research. All communications were open and truthful to preserve the integrity and credibility of the study. As a gesture of appreciation, a token was provided for their time and effort.

Furthermore, participants are not vulnerable but may experience discomfort during the interviews. However, they may experience discomfort of emotional unease during the interview when giving their personal experiences. To reduce possible discomfort the participants will be informed of their right to stop the interview, refuse to answer some queries, pause the meeting and withdraw from the study without any consequences of penalty. I conducted my interview in a very respectful and non-judgmental manner, and the well-being of the participants was my top priority.

The responses of the participants both in the IDI and FGD were the sources of my data in this study. In both setups, the answers of the participating teachers were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated. The transcribed responses were sent to the participants online as a pre-analysis member checking step where they validated the accuracy and consistency of the documents. These served as the official and final sources of data which underwent analysis and interpretation.

An endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School for ethics review was submitted to the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC). As soon as the ethical clearance was released, I sought approval from the Graduate School Dean to conduct the study and an endorsement to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd General Santos City. After permission was granted, I sent another letter requesting the division office to furnish me with the list of teachers handling Science in Junior high school. Included in the letter was a clause to ascertain the confidentiality of the data according to the

Data Privacy Act of 2012 by which I assigned codes to participants ensuring that the personal information of the participants was identifiable. The access of the data was limited solely to the researcher. Further, the collected data was kept in password guarded files and in lock storage. After the accomplishment of the study the data was indelibly disposed of through guarded deletion and burning the physical documents.

Furthermore, I sent a letter to the school heads of the participants allowing them to participate voluntarily. IDI and FGD were conducted face-to-face and via online respectively. I sent the Informed Consent Form (ICF) to the FGD participants via email. The IDI participants were informed about the study, and they were requested to sign the ICF form.

The gathered data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) thematic analysis, a systematic and rigorous method designed to uncover shared meanings and patterns across lived experiences of the participants. The process began with carefully reviewing and extracting significant statements, from which formulated meanings were derived. Similar meanings were then grouped into clusters to form coherent themes based on conceptual similarities. Each thematic cluster was assigned an overarching description that accurately reflected its core idea, followed by the development of an exhaustive narrative that captured the essential qualities and characteristics of each theme. From these detailed descriptions, a fundamental structure was constructed to synthesize and represent the essence of the participants' experiences. To ensure credibility, accuracy, and validity, the findings were validated through constant comparison with the original data, consultation with an expert, post-analysis member checking with participants, and ongoing reflexivity to acknowledge and minimize potential researcher biases.

Trustworthiness in research is an essential aspect that underpins the reliability of the findings of the study. In essence, trustworthiness answers the question of whether not the study was reliably duplicated or referenced. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is accomplished through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2018).

Credibility. This study underwent member checking through confirming the accuracy, validity, and consistency of data by sending out a copy of translated transcripts and research findings to the participants. They will be given the time and opportunity to provide feedback. I cross-checked the feedback of the respondents, analyzed them, and consulted my adviser and other experts. Further, I employed peer debriefing by asking other researchers or experts, including my adviser, and peer researchers from my school to look at the findings vis-a-vis the data to gain valuable input from them. Meanwhile, the triangulation aspect will be achieved by having multiple data sources, IDI and FGD, with mutually exclusive participants.

Credibility is a measure of how congruent the findings of a study are with reality. This can be achieved through triangulation, member checking, and peer cross-examination. Triangulation is the use of various data sources. Member checking is involving participants in verifying the interpretation of data made by the researcher, while peer debriefing involves colleagues and coresearchers who are not involved in the study (Stahl & King, 2020).

Transferability This study clearly defined as specific contexts of the investigation. It explored only the lived experiences of teachers in teaching Science in inclusive, non-segregated classrooms in a specific division in the Philippines. The inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, as well as the profiles of the participants were clearly presented. Likewise, the limitation of the transferability of this study was also established in the declaration that the findings are not fit for generalization to the universal population of teachers due to the limited quantity of participants in comparison to the total population of teachers in inclusive classrooms, and due to the limited setting of the study which is only one schools division.

The transferability of the findings of a study will be limited for qualitative research because by design, qualitative studies do not aim for replicability (Stahl & King, 2020). Since

it is up to readers to judge whether the findings of a study are transferable to their context, qualitative researchers have the responsibility to provide detailed descriptions of their methods, organization of the study, participants, and time frame among other details (Kakar et al., 2023).

Dependability The dependability of this study was established using audit trails, multiple data sources, peer debriefing, and personal reflection of the researcher. Raw data are available to appropriate regulatory bodies for validation. I also conducted peer debriefing by allowing my colleagues in school to review my data analysis and interpretation. Moreover, my personal biases were set aside, and my role was explicitly identified throughout the entire data gathering, analysis, and interpretation.

Dependability establishes trust in the research process. Qualitative researchers can establish dependability by peer debriefing which gives researchers a sense of self-credibility as feedback comes from professional colleagues. Moreover, researchers uphold dependability by acknowledging and monitoring the role of their values, passions, and biases in the study (Stahl & King, 2020).

Confirmability. While personal biases inevitably play a role in qualitative research, I will ensure that it has negligible influence on the outcome of the study, if any. Throughout the data analysis, I will be exerting all effort to ensure that all personal biases were out of the picture. Subjectivities may still have surfaced; thus, the findings and results of this study were subjected to review by experts and peer researchers in the school.

Confirmability seeks to uphold the highest degree of objectivity (Stahl & King, 2020). The confirmability of a study relies on the constructs of precision and accuracy as well as the involvement of other researchers.

The researcher had several roles in this study: interviewer/moderator, transcriber, translator, and analyzer. I acted as the interviewer in the IDI and as moderator in the FGD. In both methods, I only facilitated free flow of information and did early member checking through summarization of ideas for the validation of the participants. I did not, in any way, act as the source of information. I also transcribed the recorded files and analyzed the data gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study grounded on data gathered from seventeen (17) public junior high school science teachers in the Division of General Santos City, consisting of ten (10) participants from in depth interviews and seven (7) participants from focus group discussions. The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using purposive sampling, with data collected through interview guides administered in both in depth interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis of the data was conducted through thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of patterns, meanings, and shared experiences among participants. The findings presented in this section are derived directly from the participants' narratives and are interpreted in relation to the objectives of the study, ensuring that all discussions are anchored on the empirical data gathered.

The profile of the participants reflects a diverse group of educators with varying demographic and professional characteristics. Among the seventeen (17) participants, ten (10) were female and seven (7) were male. Their ages ranged from 27 to 54, indicating representation across early to late stages of professional development. In terms of teaching experience, the least number of years in service was seven (7) years, reported by IDI2, FGD1, and FGD5, while the longest tenure was twenty one (21) years, reported by IDI4 and FGD3. Participants were distributed across three schools, with six (6) participants each from School A and School B, and five (5) participants from School C. Specifically, School A had four (4) participants from in depth interviews and two (2) from focus group discussions, School B had

three (3) participants from in depth interviews and three (3) from focus group discussions, while School C had three (3) participants from in depth interviews and two (2) from focus group discussions. This distribution indicates a balanced representation of experiences across institutional contexts, thereby strengthening the credibility and richness of the data. The use of coded identifiers such as IDI and FGD ensured confidentiality while allowing systematic analysis of participant responses.

The lived experiences of science teachers in managing inclusive classrooms revealed four essential themes, namely classroom management as structured flexibility, effectiveness of inclusive classroom management strategies, disruption and behavioral management challenges, and structural and environmental constraints in the classroom. These themes collectively illustrate that classroom management in inclusive education is characterized by both positive and challenging experiences, reflecting the complex realities faced by teachers in accommodating diverse learners, including those under special needs education.

Classroom management as structured flexibility emerged as a central theme, highlighting that teachers consistently integrate structured routines with adaptive instructional practices. Participants described the use of differentiated instruction through varied tasks and activities to address diverse learning needs, combined with clearly established routines such as step by step lesson flow, consistent classroom rules, and predictable procedures. These practices enabled teachers to maintain order while responding to differences in behavior, attention span, and learning abilities. For instance, participants emphasized that learners with attention difficulties, particularly those with ADHD, responded positively to structured lessons, visual schedules, and predictable routines, which minimized disruptions and improved focus. At the same time, teachers acknowledged the necessity of flexibility in modifying instructional approaches, pacing, and strategies to ensure inclusivity. This balance between structure and flexibility aligns with Operant Conditioning Theory, which posits that consistent routines reinforce desirable behavior, while adaptive responses allow for individualized support. The findings are consistent with Woodcock and Anderson (2025), who emphasized that structured routines combined with differentiated instruction and visual supports enhance both behavioral and academic outcomes in inclusive settings. Similarly, Camingao et al. (2024) and Wijaya et al. (2020) underscored the importance of differentiated and multimodal instructional strategies in addressing diverse learner needs, while Barco (2024) and Priyanka (2022) highlighted that responsive routines and flexible instructional decisions are essential in sustaining engagement and managing classroom behavior. These findings demonstrate that structured flexibility is not merely a strategy but a foundational approach in inclusive classroom management.

The effectiveness of inclusive classroom management strategies was also evident in the participants' experiences, as teachers reported positive outcomes associated with the consistent application of simple yet intentional practices. Teachers utilized reinforcement of classroom rules, structured routines, reward systems, peer tutoring, and differentiated instructional strategies to support learners with behavioral and attention challenges. These approaches resulted in improved student participation, increased confidence, enhanced self esteem, and a more positive classroom atmosphere. Participants observed that when students felt supported and recognized, they were more motivated to engage in learning activities, leading to improved academic participation and cooperative behavior. The use of peer tutoring further promoted collaboration, acceptance, and mutual understanding among students with varying abilities. These findings align with Contact Theory, which suggests that meaningful interaction among diverse individuals fosters cooperation and reduces prejudice. The results are consistent with Bibiana et al. (2020), Santiago (2025), and Tantengco (2015), who reported that structured classroom management strategies and consistent support significantly reduce disruptive behavior and enhance student participation. Additionally, Junker et al. (2021) and Khasanah

(2018) emphasized that inclusive management strategies grounded in positive behavior support and clear expectations contribute to improved classroom dynamics. These findings indicate that effective inclusive classroom management not only addresses behavioral concerns but also fosters an environment conducive to meaningful learning.

Despite these positive experiences, disruption and behavioral management challenges emerged as a significant theme, reflecting the persistent difficulties faced by teachers in inclusive classrooms. Participants reported frequent disruptions caused by tantrums, aggressive behaviors, and emotional outbursts, which reduced teaching time and interrupted lesson flow. Managing multiple behavioral and emotional needs simultaneously was identified as particularly challenging, as teachers were required to address individual student needs while maintaining overall classroom order. Instances of aggressive behavior, such as physical altercations among learners under special needs education, further intensified classroom disruptions and required immediate intervention. Moreover, participants highlighted the lack of immediate institutional support during behavioral crises, noting that assistance from guidance counselors, special education teachers, or administrators was not always readily available. As a result, teachers were often compelled to rely on personal judgment and experience, increasing both emotional and professional strain. These findings are consistent with Cancio et al. (2018), Abellana et al. (2023), and Lutz et al. (2024), who reported that disruptive behaviors significantly reduce instructional time and increase teacher stress. Similarly, Wijaya et al. (2020), Hermanto and Pamungkas (2023), and Nagro et al. (2019) emphasized the complexity of managing multiple behavioral and emotional needs in inclusive classrooms, particularly in the absence of adequate support systems. These results highlight the need for strengthened institutional mechanisms to support teachers in addressing behavioral challenges effectively.

Structural and environmental constraints in the classroom further compounded the challenges of inclusive classroom management. Participants identified large class sizes, limited resources, time constraints, and heavy workloads as significant barriers to effective teaching and management. The imbalance in teacher student ratio made it difficult to provide individualized attention and monitor student progress, particularly for learners with special educational needs. Time constraints limited teachers' ability to plan differentiated instruction and develop appropriate learning materials, while additional administrative tasks increased workload and contributed to stress and fatigue. These factors negatively affected instructional effectiveness and classroom management practices. The findings support Adedigba and Sulaiman (2020) and Kebbi (2018), who noted that large class sizes hinder individualized instruction and increase management difficulties. Reyes and Francia (2025) and Bozkuş (2021) similarly emphasized that limited time and excessive workload reduce teachers' capacity to implement inclusive strategies effectively, while Lutz et al. (2024) highlighted the impact of burnout on instructional quality. These results underscore the need for systemic improvements in resource allocation, workload management, and policy implementation to support inclusive education.

In response to these challenges, teachers employed various coping mechanisms categorized into instructional and behavioral strategies, emotional regulation and teacher well-being, and the impact of institutional support. Instructional and behavioral strategies involved the use of differentiated instruction, flexible teaching methods, structured routines, reward systems, and calming strategies to manage classroom behavior and support diverse learners. These approaches helped minimize disruptions, maintain order, and enhance student engagement. The findings align with Woodcock and Anderson (2025), Gomez Lange (2024), and Gordon (2026), who emphasized the effectiveness of differentiated instruction and positive reinforcement in inclusive classrooms. Barni et al. (2019), Lap et al. (2022), and Chen (2023)

further highlighted that structured routines and reward systems contribute to improved classroom management and student motivation.

Emotional regulation and teacher well-being emerged as critical coping mechanisms, as teachers emphasized the importance of maintaining calmness, patience, and emotional stability in managing classroom challenges. Participants reported that emotional regulation helped them respond appropriately to behavioral issues, reduce stress, and sustain positive teacher student relationships. This finding is consistent with the concept of emotional labor proposed by Hochschild, as well as studies by Adedigba and Sulaiman (2020), Culita and Puertos (2025), and Shah (2023), which highlight the role of emotional intelligence and resilience in effective teaching. Additional studies by Makhambetova et al. (2021), Yehya (2023), and Duan et al. (2024) further support the importance of emotional stability in reducing occupational stress and enhancing classroom management.

Institutional support also played a significant role in helping teachers cope with the demands of inclusive education. Participants reported receiving support through professional development training, seminars, workshops, and Learning Action Cell sessions, which enhanced their knowledge, skills, and confidence in managing inclusive classrooms. These findings are consistent with Almulla et al. (2025) and Formanes and Caliba (2024), who emphasized the importance of sustained professional development in improving teaching practices. The implementation of Learning Action Cell sessions, as outlined in Department of Education Order 35, series of 2016, further supports collaborative learning and continuous professional growth among teachers.

Finally, the insights shared by the participants revealed two essential themes, namely instructional innovation and deepened sense of fulfillment. Instructional innovation reflects teachers' commitment to continuously improving their teaching strategies to address diverse learner needs, emphasizing creativity, adaptability, and responsiveness in delivering science instruction. This finding aligns with Legaspi and Brobo (2023), Aljecera and Francisco (2023), and Arias et al. (2023), who highlighted the importance of reflective and adaptive teaching practices in inclusive education. At the same time, teachers expressed a deepened sense of fulfillment derived from supporting diverse learners, recognizing the importance of patience, empathy, and compassion in teaching. This fulfillment was reinforced by observing students' progress and development, which strengthened teachers' sense of purpose and professional identity. These findings are consistent with Yeo et al. (2018), Peñeda et al. (2019), Sinclair (2024), Zimmerman et al. (2020), and Ma et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of inclusive teaching in fostering meaningful teacher student relationships and enhancing professional satisfaction.

In synthesis, the findings of the study demonstrate that the lived experiences of science teachers in inclusive classroom management are characterized by a dynamic interplay of structured flexibility, effective strategies, persistent challenges, and adaptive coping mechanisms. The results directly address the objectives of the study by providing a comprehensive understanding of how teachers manage inclusive classrooms, the strategies they employ, the challenges they encounter, and the coping mechanisms they utilize. These findings contribute to the field by highlighting the importance of balancing structure and flexibility, strengthening institutional support, and promoting teacher well-being in achieving effective inclusive education. Moreover, the insights generated from the study provide valuable implications for policy, practice, and future research, thereby laying a strong foundation for the subsequent chapter of the manuscript.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of public junior high school science teachers in managing inclusive classrooms within the Division of General Santos City. Drawing from the narratives of seventeen participants, the study revealed that classroom management in inclusive education is a dynamic and multifaceted process shaped by both positive and challenging experiences. Central to these experiences is the concept of structured flexibility, wherein teachers consistently integrate clear routines, explicit expectations, and predictable classroom procedures with adaptive instructional practices such as differentiated instruction, varied learning activities, and flexible teaching strategies. This balance enables teachers to address the diverse academic, behavioral, and emotional needs of learners, including those under special needs education, while maintaining classroom order and engagement. The findings affirm that structured routines promote stability and reduce disruptions, while flexibility allows teachers to respond effectively to individual learner differences, thereby creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Moreover, the study established that inclusive classroom management strategies are effective in enhancing student participation, improving behavior, and fostering a positive classroom climate. The consistent application of simple and intentional strategies such as reinforcement of classroom rules, use of structured routines, reward systems, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction contributed to increased student confidence, improved academic engagement, and stronger collaboration among learners. These practices not only reduced behavioral problems over time but also cultivated a classroom atmosphere that is motivating, supportive, and conducive to meaningful learning. However, despite these positive outcomes, the study also highlighted significant challenges encountered by teachers, particularly in managing disruptions and behavioral issues. Frequent occurrences of tantrums, aggressive behaviors, and emotional outbursts were reported to interrupt lesson flow and reduce instructional time. Teachers experienced difficulty in addressing multiple behavioral and emotional needs simultaneously, especially in the absence of immediate institutional support during critical situations. These challenges underscore the complexity of inclusive classroom management and the need for more responsive and accessible support systems within the school environment.

In addition to behavioral challenges, structural and environmental constraints were identified as major factors influencing classroom management practices. Large class sizes, limited resources, time constraints, and heavy workloads significantly hindered teachers' ability to provide individualized attention and implement differentiated instruction effectively. The imbalance in teacher and student ratio made it difficult to monitor student progress and manage diverse behaviors, while limited time for lesson planning and material preparation restricted the development of responsive instructional strategies. Furthermore, the presence of additional administrative tasks contributed to increased stress and fatigue, ultimately affecting instructional effectiveness and classroom management. These findings highlight the necessity of addressing systemic issues such as resource allocation, workload distribution, and policy implementation to support teachers in delivering quality inclusive education.

Despite these challenges, the study revealed that teachers employ a range of coping mechanisms to sustain effective classroom management. Instructional and behavioral strategies such as differentiated instruction, flexible teaching approaches, structured routines, reward systems, and calming techniques were utilized to manage classroom behavior and support diverse learners. At the same time, emotional regulation and teacher well-being emerged as essential coping mechanisms, enabling teachers to maintain patience, composure, and resilience in the face of daily classroom demands. By managing stress and maintaining

emotional stability, teachers were able to foster positive relationships with students and create a supportive learning environment. Additionally, institutional support in the form of professional development training, seminars, workshops, and Learning Action Cell sessions played a crucial role in enhancing teachers' competence, confidence, and motivation in managing inclusive classrooms. These forms of support were recognized not only as avenues for professional growth but also as vital mechanisms that empower teachers to navigate the complexities of inclusive education.

The insights shared by the participants further emphasized the importance of instructional innovation and a deepened sense of fulfillment in inclusive teaching. Teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to continuously improving their instructional practices through creativity, adaptability, and responsiveness to learners' needs. Instructional innovation was viewed as both a professional responsibility and a source of motivation, particularly as teachers observed the progress and development of their students despite challenges. At the same time, the experience of managing inclusive classrooms fostered a deepened sense of fulfillment among teachers, rooted in the values of patience, empathy, and compassion. Supporting learners with diverse abilities and witnessing their growth contributed to a stronger sense of purpose and professional identity, reinforcing the meaningful and transformative nature of teaching in inclusive settings.

In light of these findings, the study suggests that strengthening inclusive classroom management requires a holistic approach that integrates effective instructional strategies, emotional support for teachers, and enhanced institutional backing. There is a need to provide continuous and sustained professional development opportunities focused on inclusive education, to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to address diverse learner needs. Improving resource allocation, reducing class sizes, and managing teacher workload are also essential to enable more effective implementation of inclusive practices. Furthermore, strengthening support systems such as guidance services, special education personnel, and collaborative learning communities can help teachers respond more effectively to behavioral challenges and classroom disruptions. Future research may expand the scope of this study by including teachers from other subject areas and different divisions, as well as employing quantitative approaches to validate and generalize the findings to a larger population.

Overall, this study underscores that inclusive classroom management is both a challenge and an opportunity for professional growth among science teachers. The integration of structured and flexible practices, the use of effective strategies, and the development of adaptive coping mechanisms demonstrate the resilience and dedication of teachers in promoting inclusive education. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the realities of inclusive teaching and provide valuable insights for improving educational practices, policies, and support systems. Ultimately, the study highlights that while inclusive education presents significant demands, it also offers meaningful rewards, as teachers continue to shape learning experiences that are equitable, responsive, and transformative for all learners.

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