

# Navigating Inclusion in Junior High School Classroom: Teachers Point of View

Retchel T. Salazar

**Abstract.** This study uncovered the experiences, coping mechanisms used, and educational insights the Junior High School teachers learned in navigating inclusion in the classroom. A qualitative approach to research phenomenological from the Eight (8) Junior High School, Teachers from the different schools in Governor Generoso South District. Experiences in navigating inclusion in the classroom were observed: addressing individual needs, building relationships with students and families, dealing with challenges and barriers, and adapting varied teaching strategies. The coping mechanisms used in addressing the challenges were as follows: collaborating with other teachers, attending professional development, engaging parents and community, and culturally responsive teaching. Finally, the educational insights learned from teachers' experiences: The need for ongoing professional development, the importance of building positive relationships with students and families, the need for collaboration, and the benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction. All these themes investigated the effectiveness of different training and professional development programs for Junior high school teachers in enhancing their understanding of inclusive classroom pedagogy, strategies for accommodating diverse learning needs, and creating supportive classroom environments. This study may also be published in any respectable research journal.

## KEY WORDS

1. Inclusive Classroom 2. Junior High School Teachers 3. Davao City

Date Received: May 25, 2024 — Date Reviewed: June 01, 2024 — Date Published: July 1, 2024

## 1. Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world, the concepts of equity and diversity have gained significant recognition and importance, particularly in education. Equity refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and support to ensure that every individual has an equal chance to succeed and thrive regardless of background. In the education system, the lack of teachers to facilitate the huge number of learners with different learning is a great challenge to address this perennial problem. In the same context, Navigating inclusion in Junior high school classrooms can be challenging and complex for educators and students. Inclusion refers to creating an environment where all students, regardless of their differences, can fully participate in classroom activities and feel valued and supported. However, implementing inclusive practices in the classroom can be difficult, especially in Junior high school, where students are going through a critical period of development and socialization. Inclusive classrooms require teachers to understand and respond to the diverse learning needs and backgrounds of

their students while also promoting a sense of community and belonging. In Japan, inclusion in junior high school classrooms is a relatively new concept that is gaining attention from educators, policymakers, and parents. While the Japanese education system has traditionally emphasized homogeneity and conformity, there is a growing recognition that diversity should be valued and accommodated in the classroom. Inclusive practices in Japanese Junior high schools typically involve a focus on individualized instruction, differentiated learning activities, and the use of assistive technology and other supports for students with disabilities or special needs (Yokota and Okamoto, 2020). Additionally, some schools have implemented programs and activities that promote intercultural understanding and dialogue, such as international exchange programs or language learning activities (Okabe and Inaba, 2020). Despite these efforts, navigating inclusion in Junior high school classrooms in Japan is not without its challenges. Some educators and parents may still hold traditional views of education that prioritize academic achievement over social-emotional development, which can limit opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Hagiwara Oikawa, 2019). Moreover, there is a need for ongoing teacher training and professional development to support the implementation of inclusive practices and to foster a culture of inclusion in Japanese Junior high schools. In Thailand, there is a growing emphasis on inclusive education in Junior high schools, which seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to education and can fully participate in classroom activities. The Thai government has implemented several policies and programs to support inclusion, such as the Education for All policy, which aims to provide education for all children, regardless of their background or abilities (Office of Basic Education Commission, 2019). Inclusive practices in Thai Junior high schools typically focus on differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and the use of assistive technology and other supports for students with disabilities or special needs (Punthumasen Petnjiyom, 2019). Additionally, some schools have implemented community-based learning and service activities, which promote social responsibility and community engagement among students (Pholprasert, 2019). With these efforts, navigating inclusion in Junior high school classrooms in Thailand is challenging. Some educators and parents may still hold traditional views of education that prioritize academic achievement over social-emotional development, which can limit opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Ketmanee, 2019). Moreover, there is a need for ongoing teacher training and professional development to support the implementation of inclusive practices and to foster a culture of inclusion in Thai Junior high schools. In Australia, inclusion in Junior high school classrooms is an important aspect of education policy and practice. The Australian education system is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, and ensuring they can participate fully in the classroom (Department of Education and Training, 2018). Inclusive practices in Australian Junior high schools typically focus on differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and the use of assistive technology and other supports for students with disabilities or special needs (Armstrong Barton, 2018; Florian, 2019). Additionally, some schools have implemented programs and activities that promote social-emotional learning, such as mindfulness and positive psychology interventions, to support the well-being of all students (Greenberg et al., 2017). In the Philippines, inclusion in Junior high school classrooms is becoming an increasingly important issue in education policy and practice. The government has implemented several initiatives to support inclusive education, such as the Special Education Fund, which pro-

vides funding for schools to support the needs of students with disabilities or special needs (Department of Education, 2018). Inclusive practices in Filipino Junior high schools typically focus on differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and assistive technology and other supports for students with disabilities or special needs (Fajardo, 2019). Additionally, some schools have implemented co-curricular activities and community-based learning programs that promote social-emotional development and community engagement among students (Valero Layson, 2019). Considering these efforts, navigating inclusion in Junior high school classrooms in the Philippines is challenging. Some educators may still lack the necessary training and resources to effectively support students with disabilities or special needs (Custodio et al., 2018). Moreover, ongoing teacher training and professional development are needed to support the implementation of inclusive practices and foster a culture of inclusion in Filipino Junior high schools. In the local scenario, particularly in Governor Generoso South District, junior high teachers encounter varied experiences as they navigate inclusion in their respective classrooms. In this context, this study was conceptualized to discover the experiences, mechanisms, and insights gained by the informants in navigating inclusion in the classroom.

*1.1. Purpose of the Study*—The study’s goal was to explore the experiences of junior high school teachers in navigating inclusion in their respective classrooms. This study was beneficial for administrators, as the data gathered would serve as research-based information used to motivate and give technical assistance to teachers who encounter difficulty navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms.

*1.2. Research Questions*—The primary research questions of this study were the following:

- (1) What are the experiences of junior high school teachers in navigating inclusion in their classrooms?
- (2) How do junior high school teachers cope with the challenges in navigating inclusion in their classroom?
- (3) What educational management insights were gained from the experiences of the informants?

*1.3. Definition of Terms*—The following terms were operationally defined to make this study more comprehensive. Inclusion in junior high school classrooms refers to creating a supportive and accessible learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, to participate and succeed fully in their education. Junior High School Teacher—A junior high school teacher is an educator who teaches students in grades 7-10, typically between the ages of 12 and 15.

*1.4. Significant of the Study*—This study would be significant to the following people in the educational field: Policy Makers. The findings of this study would help them find an effective method for helping junior high school teachers navigate inclusion in the classroom. Administrators. The findings of this study would help them provide technical assistance to teachers struggling to navigate inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Teachers. The findings of this study would equip the teachers with the necessary skills to continue attending professional development activities and acquire a new set of skills in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms.

1.5. *Theoretical Lens*—This study was anchored on Lev Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism Theory (1978). This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and shared experiences in the construction of knowledge. It posits that learning occurs through collaboration and discussion with others rather than through individual effort alone. Social constructivism theory, as proposed by Vygotsky, emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cultural context in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). According to this theory, individuals acquire knowledge and skills through interactions with others who are more knowledgeable, and these interactions shape the individual’s cognitive development. Vygotsky also introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a learner could accomplish independently and what they can achieve with the guidance and support of a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers could use this concept to scaffold learning by providing support and guidance to students as they work toward more challenging tasks. Research has supported the effectiveness of social constructivism theory in promoting learning and academic achievement. For example, a study by Liao and colleagues (2017) found that incorporating social constructivist principles into a middle school science curriculum led to significant gains in both academic achievement and critical thinking skills among students. Similarly, a study by Tatar and colleagues (2019) found that using social constructivist strategies in teaching mathematics to middle school students resulted in higher student engagement and better understanding of mathematical concepts. These findings highlight the value of social interaction and cultural context in the learning process and emphasize the importance of incorporating these principles into classroom instruction. The second theory used in this study is Critical Race Theory by Derrick Bell (1995). Critical race theory is a the-

oretical framework that highlights the ways in which race intersects with other forms of oppression and privilege in society. This theory emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and challenging systemic injustices, particularly those related to race, in order to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that emerged in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily through the works of legal scholars such as Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. CRT originated as a response to the limitations of traditional civil rights approaches to addressing racial inequality and discrimination, and it emphasizes the role of power and systemic oppression in perpetuating racial hierarchies. The central tenet of CRT is that racism is not just an individual or isolated act, but rather a deeply ingrained feature of society and the legal system. According to CRT, racial inequality is not the result of individual prejudices or biases, but rather the product of larger social and historical forces that are deeply entrenched in institutions and systems. Derrick Bell, one of the founding scholars of CRT, argued that racism is a permanent feature of American society and that the struggle for racial justice requires a fundamental reordering of society’s institutions and power structures. In his book “Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism,” Bell explores the idea of “interest convergence,” which suggests that white people will only support racial equality when it serves their own interests. Bell argues that this has been the case throughout American history, and that any progress made in the struggle for racial justice has only occurred when it coincides with the interests of the dominant white society. Bell also developed the concept of “racial realism,” which asserts that the law and legal institutions were not neutral, but rather reflect and perpetuate existing power structures and social hierarchies. Promoting inclusion in a classroom requires providing a range of ma-

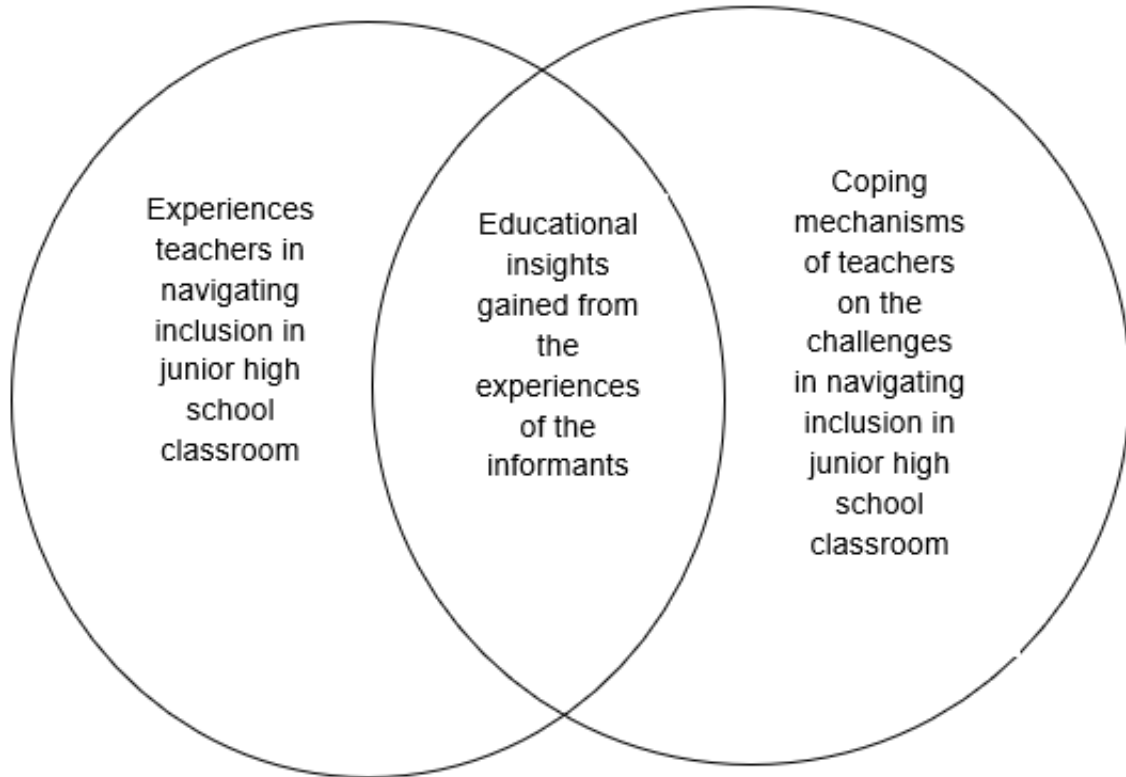


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

materials and activities that support all students’ learning styles, incorporate a variety of cultural backgrounds and perspectives, and foster courageous thinking. Addressing biases and stereotypes in the classroom was crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Teachers and administrators can do this by examining their own biases and stereotypes, engaging in professional development to increase their cultural competence, and modeling inclusive behavior. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Based on the figure, there are two interconnected variables. These variables are the following: teachers’ experiences of navigating inclusion in the junior high school classroom, teachers’ coping mechanisms regarding the challenges encountered in navigating inclusion in the junior high school classroom, and educational insights gained from the experiences of the informants.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter presents the method, research participants, data collection, role of the researcher, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, and ethical considerations. Exploring facts and knowledge in this study necessitates the consequent design and implementation, as elaborated in this chapter. The three most common qualitative methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method was particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data. Participant observation was appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth Interviews (IDI) was optimal for collecting data on individuals’ personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in

generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. Patton (2002) defined phenomenology as inquiry that asks the question, "What is the structure and essence of the experience of his phenomenon for these people?" "the goal of this research worked well with this definition in trying to understand the experiences of the BE Coordinators as they try to compare its implementation then and now. Giorgi (2007) cautioned researchers to be prepared for an investigation that was greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg.

*2.1. Philosophical Assumptions*—The philosophical assumption was a framework used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It establishes the background used for the coming conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types and are elaborated below. Good research – undertaking the selection of the topic, problem, or area of interest, as well as the paradigm. Stanage (1987) traces 'paradigm' back to its Greek (paradigm) and Latin origins (paradigm), meaning pattern, model, or example among examples, an exemplar or model to follow according to which design actions are taken. Differently stated, a paradigm was an action of submitting to a view. This view was supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), who defend a research paradigm as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action", dealing with first principles, "ultimates" or the researcher's worldview or philosophy. Ontology. This part of the research pertains on how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2012), reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. The reality was constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study. In this study, the experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms were discussed by the participants, and tried to look into their mechanisms in addressing the challenges and educational insights gained. In this study, the researcher relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct the commonality and discreteness of responses. It was made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal bias as the study progressed. Epistemology. This refers to the awareness of how knowledge claims are justified by staying as close to the participants as possible during the study to obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln, as cited by Creswell (2012), state that on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance between himself or herself from the participants. He suggests that being a researcher he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an 'insider'. Based on Davidson (2000) and Jones (2011). Researcher identified phenomenology with the use of thematic analysis as the best means for this type of study. In this regard, individual researchers "hold explicit belief". The intention of this study was to gather information from the participants or teachers in Governor Generoso South District as to how they navigate inclusion in junior high school classroom based on the guidelines set by DepEd. It is assured that close interaction with the participants was established to gain direct information

that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry, particularly on the experiences and mechanisms used in navigating inclusion in the junior high school classroom. Axiology. It refers to the role of values in research. Creswell (2012) avers that the role of values in a study was significant. Axiology suggests that the researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes their interpretation in conjunction with the interpretation of participants. The researcher ensured the dignity and value of every detail of information obtained from the participants. The researcher understands the personal and value-laden nature of

information gathered from the study. Therefore, the researcher preserved the merit of the participants' answers and carefully interpreted the answers in the light of the participants' interpretation. Rhetoric means reporting reality through the eyes of the research participants. This was important because it meant that the research would report objectively on what was observed and heard from the participants. The research used personal voice, qualitative terms, and limited definitions. In the context of the study, the researcher used the first person to elucidate the experiences of teachers as they navigate inclusion in junior high school classrooms.

*2.2. Qualitative Assumptions*—The methodology was different from the method. The methodology is a creative and responsive approach to understanding questions and subject matter, while the method refers to the exact knowledge and procedure (Gerodias, 2013). In this study, the experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in the junior high school classroom in Governor Generoso South District were gathered through an In-Depth Interview (IDI), and their coping mechanisms were extracted from the participants. The researcher's drive to know the deeper meaning of the experiences teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means which Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited from Gerodias, (2013) considered helpful in looking for "meanings and motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences, and phenomena." By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms in a manner that, as David (2005)

wrote, the themes, symbols, and meaning of the experiences presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience was a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (1992), as cited in Morrissey Higgs (2006), that experience is a source of knowledge and shapes one's behavior. From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research lies in the view that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge and that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our daily lives (Morrissey Higgs, 2006). By doing phenomenology, which concerns the "what" and the "how" (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher projected that the experiences and mechanisms used by junior high school teachers were explored and insights drawn, which would form the basis for possible future research and policy analysis about this research.

*2.3. Design and Procedure*—This study employed a qualitative approach to research

specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phe-

phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data, such as documents, observations, and art, were also used. The data were read and reread and were culled for phrases and themes that were grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher constructed the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, Maxwell (2013) also added that with its roots in philosophy, psychology, and education, phenomenology attempts to extract the purest, untainted data, and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing was used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing was taking of notes. According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design was a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell, (2012) also claimed that interviews were primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audio tapes were utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as to further investigate their responses. In qualitative research, interviews were used to pursue the meanings of central themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in doing interviews was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 1999).

Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2016), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, in order to analyze it after interviewing. Interviews particularly be useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic. The researcher collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation, extracting significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written so that readers could better understand the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience. Conversely, several challenges have been pointed out. The researcher required a solid grounding in the philosophical guidelines of phenomenology. The subjects selected for the study were individuals who had actually experienced the phenomenon. The researcher needed to bracket his or her own experiences and observations, which was difficult to do. The researcher also needed to decide how and when his or her personal observations should be incorporated into the study. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches were based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasized the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such, they were powerful tools for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom Since this study



focuses on exploring and assessing the teacher experience and the mechanisms and insights gained, the researcher intends to employ the

*2.4. Research Participants*—Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when more participants are added to the study, which does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25, and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample

*2.5. Ethical Considerations*—Ethical considerations were significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues regarding the research participant in this fieldwork. Ethical considerations could be specified as one of the most important parts of the research. The researcher needs to adhere to the aims of the research, impart authentic knowledge and truth, and prevent errors. Social Value. The research was essential to society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experience of teachers. This study was conducted explicitly among junior high school teachers. This study also served as a basis for the higher authorities to create more programs and resolutions from which classroom teachers could benefit. Thus, the social problem that pushes the researcher's interest is teachers' experiences in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Informed Consent. In

phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990). The participants of this study were Eight (8) Junior high school teachers from Governor Generoso South District, Division of Davao Oriental. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) Junior high school teacher; and (3) experienced in navigating inclusion. The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

the conduct and practice of this study, the Treaty Principle of Participation, as cited by McLeod (2009), was adhered to. The invitation to the participants ensured that their participation in the research was completely voluntary in nature and was based on the understanding of adequate information. The recruitment and selection of participants are lodged in the appendices of this study. Gaining the trust and support of research participants was critical to informed and ethical academic inquiry and phenomenological research (Walker, 2007, as cited by Pillerin, 2012). All participants were given an informed consent form before scheduling the interviews and participating in the phenomenological research process. Each participant was required to provide a signed personal acknowledgment, consent, and an indication of a willingness to participate in the study release. The purpose of the informed consent letter is to introduce

the research effort, provide contact information, articulate the study's intent, request voluntary participation by the recipients, and anticipate the information the informants were expected to provide. All participants were required to sign and return the consent letter to the researcher before participating. Vulnerability of Research Participants. The participants of this study were capable of answering the research instrument, for they are all professional teachers in public elementary schools. Thus, the researcher assured them that as the researcher, he or she can easily be reached through the contact number and address in case there are some clarifications or questions about the study. Risks, Benefits, and Safety. The recruitment of the respondents was free of coercion, undue influence, or inducement. Moreover, respondents were provided with the contact numbers of the panel chair or panel members if they had queries related to the study. Furthermore, if respondents experienced potential discomfort and inconvenience while answering the questions, they were not compelling to participate in any manner. Further, the researcher ensured that the respondents were safe during the survey and interview. Thus, the questionnaire was distributed in a safe venue and administered at their convenience. The dominant concern of this study was the Treaty Principle of Protection, as reflected in the respect for the rights of privacy and confidentiality and minimization of risk. This was done by assigning pseudonyms for each informant so as not to disclose their identity. The possibility of a degree of risk inherent to this was minimized by taking all reasonable steps to guarantee participant confidentiality. Privacy and Confidentiality of Information. This study observed the Data Privacy Act of 2002 to ensure that the data cannot be traced back to their real sources to protect participants' identities. Thus, utmost care was taken to ensure the anonymity of the data sources. Hence, any printed output that was carried out from this study was kept in anonymity.

Furthermore, all the issues were considered to avoid conflict of interest among the researcher and the respondents. Any misleading information and representation of primary data findings in a biased way must be avoided. Justice. The respondents were informed of the researcher's role and their corresponding role during data gathering. They were briefed that they had to be fully honest in answering the survey questions and that any communication related to the research should be done with honesty. Similarly, they were informed that they would benefit first from the study's results. Transparency. The results of the study were accessed by the respondents and heads of the participating schools because the information is available and will be placed on CDs or other storage devices, which could be requested from the researcher. In addition, by learning about the study's results, classroom teachers were aware of the significance of the study and its contribution to their well-being. Further, each participant was advised that they have the right to withdraw their information at any time up to the completion of the data collection process and that they could request and verify their transcript after the interview is carried out. This allowed the participants to amend or remove any information they felt might identify them. The researcher reserved the right to use pseudonyms and change names and/or non-significant dates in the interest of protecting the participant's identity in all subsequent data analysis and reporting. Qualification of the Researcher. The researcher ensured that he or she was qualified to conduct the study. The researcher should have completed the academic requirements and passed the comprehensive examination before thesis writing, the last requirement to obtain the master's degree. The researcher should also be qualified to conduct the study physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially. In addition, the advisee-adviser tandem ensured that the study would reach its completion. Adequacy of Facilities.

The researcher strived to ensure that the study could be completed successfully in the specified time and that he or she was equipped with the necessary resources. Likewise, the technical committee helped enhance the paper by giving suggestions and recommendations for improving the study. Also, the researcher ensured that he or she had enough funds to continue and finish the research. Thus, this study was hoped to be completed within the target time. Community Involvement. The researcher showed respect for the local traditions, culture, and views of the respondents in this study. Moreover, this study did not involve any use of deceit in any stage of its implementation, specifically in the recruitment of the participants or methods of

data collection. Furthermore, the researcher necessarily expressed great pleasure in the wholehearted participation of the interviewees in the conduct of the study. Plagiarism and Fabrication as the researcher. The researcher respected other works by properly citing the author and rewriting what someone else has said his or her way. The researcher also used quotes to indicate that the text has been taken from another paper. Similarly, the researcher assured that honesty was present when working on the manuscript and no intentional misrepresentation and making up of data or results was included, or that conclusions were purposefully put forward that were not accurate.

*2.6. Role of the Researcher*—The researcher has a responsibility to uncover, transfer and exploit knowledge for the benefit of educational institutions. To do so, the researcher takes up the following roles in the course of the study: Facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research. The researcher conducts interview to the participants and guide them in the process. The researcher interprets ideas and responses base on existing literatures and related studies and not on researcher's own knowledge, thoughts and feelings to avoid the intrusion of bias. Expert in qualitative methods. The researcher implements the qualitative method correctly. To do so, the researcher assesses himself and seeks help to the research adviser and other research professionals. These help him exhibit competence in explaining the study without biasing the participants, conducting interview properly according to the design, making appropriate field observations, selecting appropriate artifacts, images, and journal portions, employing Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis precisely. Collector and Keeper of data. The researcher ensures different ways of making a record of what was said and done during the

interview and Focus Group Discussion, such as taking handwritten notes or audio and/or video recording. The recordings were transcribed verbatim before data analysis could begin. Records done by the researcher are properly secured as they contain sensitive information and are relevant to the research. However, the data are being collected, and the primary responsibility of the researcher is to safeguard participants and their data. Mechanisms for such safeguarding must be clearly articulated to participants and must be approved by a relevant research ethics review board before the research begins. Analyst of data. The researcher sees the phenomenon or problem from the participants' perspective by interpreting data, transcribing and checking, reading between the lines, coding and theming. The researcher makes sure that the findings are true to the participants and that their voices are heard. Organizer and presenter of data. The researcher presents the problem and the related literature and studies that support it. Findings of the study are presented through research questions – stating the results for each one by using themes to show how the research questions were answered in the study. Moreover, future direc-

tions and implications of the study are given by the researcher for the improvement of educa-

tional policy and practices.

*2.7. Data Collection*—The following are the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School. The researcher asked an endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges as one of the documents needed for submission to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent in asking permission to conduct study. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. The researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the identified school. The researcher sent a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with Chapters 1 and 2 attached, together with the research instrument, which explains the objectives of the study and the identification of the participants. The researcher will wait for the SDS's response before conducting the study. Asking permission from the school heads. After securing the approval of the SDS, the researcher sent letters to the principals of the schools explaining the study to be conducted in their schools. Obtaining consent from the participants. The researcher asked permission from the participants and their parents/guardians. They were formally oriented

about the study and the process they would undergo as participants. Conducting the interview. The researcher conducted the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. The profile of the participants was taken, jotted down notes, and conversations were recorded using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher carefully listens and responded actively during the interviews. Transcribing the responses of the interviewees. The researcher transcribed the responses of the interviewees precisely by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it to English language. Data Coding and Thematic Content Analysis. After the transcription, the data would then be categorized and coded. Then, themes were extracted, and individual data within the participants was compared and contrasted. The researcher then conducted a second round of interviews (FGD) to corroborate any data that needed further explanation and input from the participants; additional information gathered was examined thoroughly and integrated into the existing body of data. After this, data were compared and contrasted between the participants in order to come up with patterns and trends.

*2.8. Data Analysis*—In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews using Creswell's Model, specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012), themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database. Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative

analysis; the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data, reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations. Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involving generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so

codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ended this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts. Searching for themes was a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme. Reviewing themes. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each individual theme and the relationship between the themes. For these, Thematic Content Analysis was employed by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis was a descriptive presentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme was made by identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2013). In addition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, Environmental Triangulation was also employed by the researcher. It was a technique to analyze the results of the same study using differ-

ent methods of data collection. The key was identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that is received during the study. These environmental factors are changed to see if the findings are the same across the settings (David, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations, and other factors such as time, day, and season in which the study took place. The idea was to determine which of these factors influenced the information received, and these factors were then changed to see if the findings were the same. If the findings remain unaltered under varying environmental factors, then validity can be established (Naeem, Saira, 2019). In this study, such triangulation was used considering that the requirement, as mentioned, was the use of environmental triangulation best suited to the environment of the research being conducted. Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

*2.9. Framework of Analysis*—The framework analysis of this research was flexible to allow the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage, the gathered data was sifted, charted, and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involves a five-step process: In-depth interview, data organizing, statement groupings, describing experiences, and descriptions of phenomenon (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected during interview or focus group transcripts, observation or field notes and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). In other words,

the researcher becomes immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process, the researcher was aware of key ideas and recurrent themes and made a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that could be collected in qualitative research, the researcher may not be able to review all of the material. Thus, a selection of the data set would be utilized. The selection would depend on several aspects of the data collection process. For example, the mix of methods used of interviews, documents, observations. Identifying a thematic framework, the second stage, occurs after familiarization when the researcher recognizes emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues may have arisen from

a priori themes issues; however, it is at this stage that the researcher must allow the data to dictate the themes and issues. To achieve this end the researcher uses the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts, and themes that have been expressed by the participants now form the basis of a thematic framework that can be used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Indexing means that one identifies portions or sections of the data that correspond to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data that was gathered during transcriptions of interviews. For the sake of convenience Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools are ideal for such a task.

*2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study*—Trustworthiness was all about establishing credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. In qualitative study, trustworthiness was very important because the result and finding of the research study would depend on the process of how it was being conducted by the researcher. The trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluate its worth. Due to the nature of the qualitative study, honesty in all the data and details is required. Trustworthiness makes the researcher's study worthy to read, share, and be proud of. Credibility was how confident the qualitative researcher was in the truth of the research study's findings. The researcher in this study believed that honesty in everything you do was essential to attain worthwhile success. The researcher has no derogatory records or administrative issues that ruin her integrity. Lincoln and Guba (2000) state that credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the main issue is "how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so." Transferability refers to how

The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involves the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis should be able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon thus guiding the researcher in their interpretation of the data set. It was at this point that the researcher was cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis, which are: "defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies" (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p. 186). Once again, these concepts, technologies, and associations are reflective of the participant. Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echo the true attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants.

the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research study's findings are applicable to other contexts. In this case, "other contexts" can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena. The researcher has already studied the effects of using graphic organizer as strategy in teaching reading comprehension. The used of graphic organizer as a strategy in teaching reading comprehension is effective in the domains analysis and creating. With this, the researcher is interested to know the students' perspective of using this strategy. Gasson (2004) emphasizes transferability as the extent to which the reader was able to provide generalization of the study based on his own context and could address the core issue of "how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of the theory." Confirmability was the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on participants' responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. This involves making sure that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation

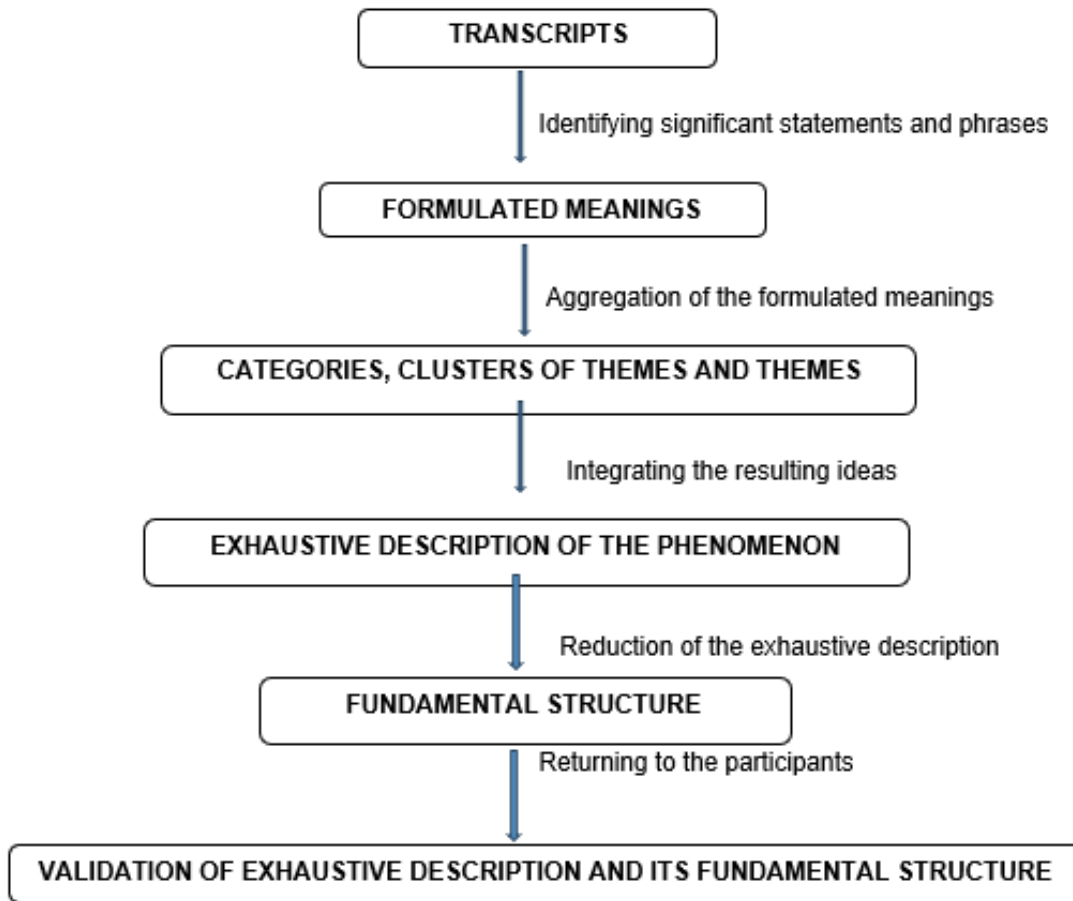


Fig. 2. illustrates the descriptive phenomenological data analysis process created by Colaizzi (1978)

of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative. The information using the audit trail in this situation was thoughtfully recorded by the researcher which highlights every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. This helps establish that the research study's findings accurately portray participants' responses. Gasson (2004) states that confirmability was based on the acknowledgement that research was never objective. Dependability was the extent that the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so

and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher used inquiry audit in order to establish dependability which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. In this component, the use of a database was very important in backing up information collected and noting changes for all types of research studies. All the data collected was properly kept for future use as references. Gasson (2004) stated that dependability deals with the core issue that "the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques."

### 3. Results and Discussion

This part of the research dealt with the research questions required. The participants disclosed their experiences in navigating inclusion in Junior High school, coping mechanisms, and insights. All these themes were presented here.

*3.1. Experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classroom—* Junior high school teachers faced a range of experiences that shaped their practice and attitudes toward inclusion. For some teachers, navigating inclusion can be a rewarding experience that enables them to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting diverse learners. For example, a study by Elhoweris (2020) found that teachers who had positive attitudes toward inclusion were more likely to engage in inclusive practices and view inclusion as an opportunity to enhance their teaching and promote positive social-emotional outcomes among all students.

However, navigating inclusion is also challenging for teachers, particularly when they lack the necessary support and resources to support diverse learners effectively. For example, a study by Hyun and Kim (2021) found that teachers in South Korea experienced challenges in adapting their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. They also reported feeling unsupported by their colleagues and administration in implementing inclusive practices. This highlights the need for schools and education systems to provide teachers with ongoing professional development and support to navigate inclusion effectively.

*3.1.1. Address individual needs—*Teachers need to address the individual needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, cultural or linguistic differences, and varying learning styles. This can involve providing accommodations and modifications to curricu-

lum, instructional materials, and assessments (Avramidis Norwich, 2002; Gay, 2018). Addressing individual needs is an essential experience for teachers in creating inclusive classroom environments in junior high schools. This involves understanding the unique needs of each



student and providing differentiated instruction to meet their needs. Teachers can use a range of strategies, such as adapting curriculum materials, providing extra support, and using assistive technologies to address the individual needs of their students. Research has shown that teachers who use differentiated instruction and individualized approaches to teaching positively impact student learning outcomes (Benedict et al., 2018). Teachers must collaborate with other professionals, such as special education teachers, counselors, and therapists, to address individual needs effectively. Collaboration can help teachers better understand their student's diverse needs and identify effective strategies and interventions to support their learning. Collaboration can also help teachers create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students (Benedict et al., 2018). Finally, addressing individual needs requires a willingness to be flexible and adapt teaching practices as needed. Teachers may need to modify instruc-

*3.1.2. Build relationships with students and families*—Teachers need to build strong relationships with students and families to foster a sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom. This can involve creating a welcoming and supportive learning environment, communicating effectively with families, and engaging in home-school partnerships (McCarthy et al., 2018; Chavez LaBelle, 2020). Building relationships with students and families is crucial to creating an inclusive classroom environment in junior high schools. Teachers who establish positive relationships with their students and their families are more likely to create a sense of belonging and engagement, leading to better academic outcomes for all students. One study found that teachers who built strong relationships with their students and their families were better able to create a positive classroom environment that facilitated learning (McCarthy et al., 2018). Teachers can employ a

variety of strategies to build strong relationships with students and their families. For example, they can communicate regularly with parents and guardians through emails, phone calls, and parent-teacher conferences. They can also make an effort to learn about the cultures and backgrounds of their students and their families and incorporate this knowledge into their teaching practice. Additionally, teachers can create a welcoming and supportive classroom environment that promotes student engagement and participation and fosters positive relationships among all students (Chavez LaBelle, 2020). Research has shown that when teachers build strong relationships with their students and their families, students are more likely to feel connected to their school and their community. This can lead to increased motivation and engagement, better academic performance, and improved social and emotional outcomes (Bryant Cramer, 2020). Moreover, when teachers collaborate with fam-

ilies and engage in home-school partnerships, they can work together to create a more inclusive school culture that supports the success of all students (McCarthy et al., 2018). Teachers inevitably encounter challenges and barriers in their profession, such as resource limitations, lack of support, and negative perceptions of inclusion. However, by maintaining resilience and determination, educators can overcome these obstacles. By empowering students to advocate

*3.1.3. Deal with challenges and barriers—* Teachers face various challenges and barriers in implementing inclusive practices, including lack of support, inadequate resources, and negative attitudes towards inclusion. This can involve seeking support and guidance from colleagues and professionals, advocating for policy change and resource allocation, and addressing personal biases and assumptions (Vuijk Hartmann, 2017; Schildkamp et al., 2020). Teachers who work to create inclusive classroom environments in junior high schools face various challenges and barriers. These challenges include limited resources, a lack of training or professional development opportunities, and the need to adapt instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. One study found that teachers who experienced challenges in implementing inclusive practices often cited a lack of support and resources as significant barriers to success (Lindsay et al., 2018). To address these chal-

*3.1.4. Adapt teaching strategies—* Teachers need to modify their teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of all students, including those with disabilities or special needs. This can involve using a range of instructional approaches, such as differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, and technology-assisted learning (Ruijs et al., 2018; Hyun Kim, 2021). Adapting teaching strate-

gies for themselves, fostering open discussions on inclusion, and advocating for systemic change, teachers can create an inclusive environment where diversity is embraced and every student's voice is valued. Addressing immediate classroom challenges while also promoting awareness and understanding of inclusive practices through dialogue with colleagues, parents, and administrators is a key strategy in navigating barriers to education.

lenges and barriers, teachers can engage in ongoing professional development and collaborate with colleagues to share strategies and resources. They can also seek out opportunities to learn about evidence-based practices for inclusive instruction and consider the unique needs of their students when planning lessons and activities. Additionally, teachers can advocate for policy changes and increased funding to support inclusive education initiatives in their schools and communities (Lindsay et al., 2018). Despite these challenges, research suggests that teachers who work to create inclusive classroom environments can have a significant positive impact on the academic and social outcomes of their students. For example, one study found that students who received instruction from teachers who used inclusive practices showed greater academic gains and improved social and emotional outcomes compared to students who received instruction from teachers who did not use such practices (Kurth Gross, 2019).

gies is an important experience for teachers in creating inclusive classroom environments in junior high schools. This involves using a variety of teaching strategies that meet the diverse needs of students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Teachers can use a range of instructional approaches, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, group work, and technology-based in-

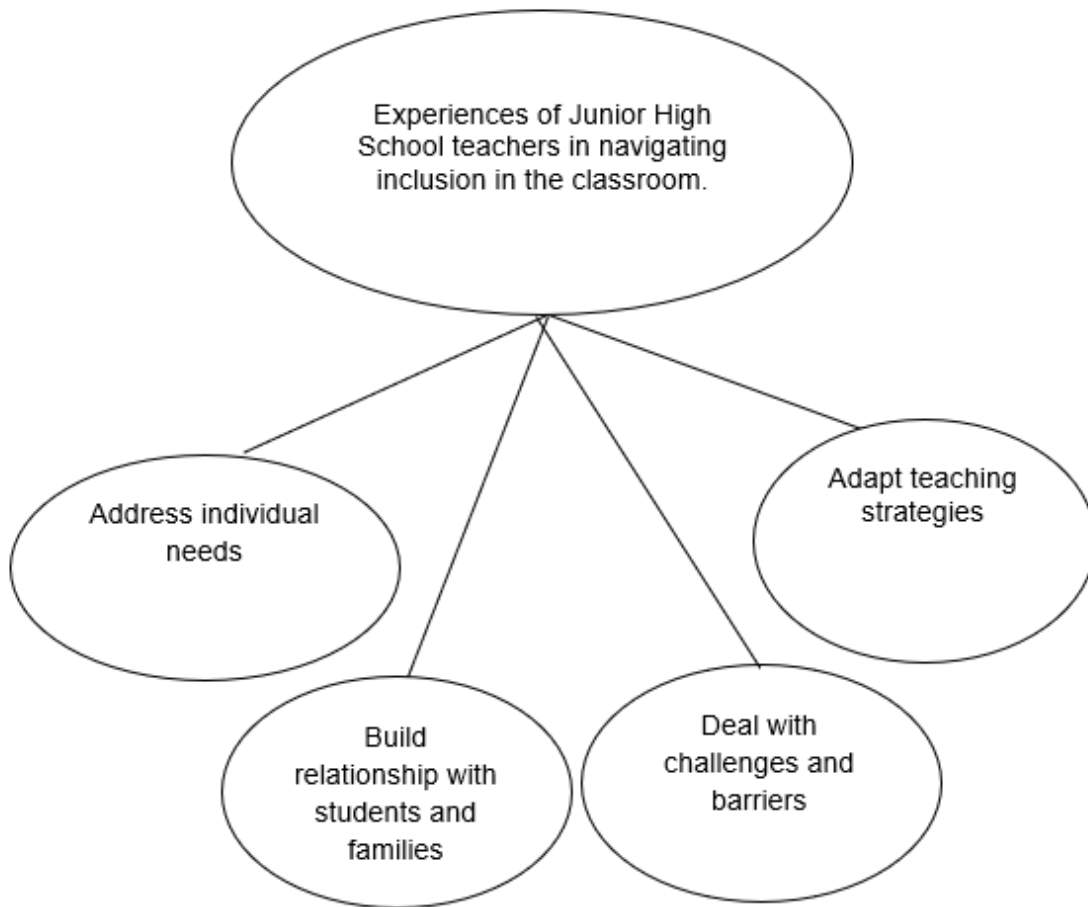


Fig. 3. The emerging themes are the experiences of junior high school teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom

struction, to engage and support all students in their learning (Scruggs Mastropieri, 2020). Effective teaching strategies also involve providing opportunities for active and authentic learning. Teachers can encourage students to participate in real-World learning experiences, such as field trips, projects, and service learning, to help them apply their learning to real-world situations. These strategies can help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, which are essential for success in the 21st century (Scruggs Mastropieri, 2020). Finally, adapting teaching strategies requires a commitment to ongoing professional development. Teachers must stay up-to-date

with the latest research and best practices in education to effectively adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students. This can involve attending workshops and conferences, participating in professional learning communities, and engaging in self-reflection and evaluating their teaching practices (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 2020). Figure 3 shows the experiences of junior high school teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom. Four themes emerge: addressing individual needs, building relationships with students and families, dealing with challenges and barriers, and adapting teaching strategies.

*3.2. Mechanisms of Teachers on the Challenges In Navigating Inclusion In Junior High School Classroom—*

According to research, teachers who develop effective mechanisms for navigating inclusion are likelier to create positive classroom environments that promote academic and social success for all students (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2018). However, navigating inclusion can be challenging, and teachers need ongoing support to develop the knowledge

and skills necessary to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. This paper will explore the mechanisms of teachers on the challenges in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms, focusing on building relationships with students and families, addressing individual needs, adapting teaching strategies, and dealing with challenges and barriers.

*3.2.1. Collaborating with other teachers—*Teachers in inclusive classrooms may also collaborate with their peers to develop and implement strategies for addressing the needs of all students. This can involve team teaching, co-planning, and sharing resources and expertise (Liu et al., 2019). Collaboration can help to ensure that teachers have the support and resources they need to effectively meet the needs of all learners. Collaborating with other teachers is a key mechanism that can help teachers navigate inclusion in junior high school classrooms. This involves working together with other teachers to share strategies, resources, and ideas for supporting students with diverse learning needs. Collaborating with other teachers can help to ensure that all students receive the support and accommodations they need to succeed academically and socially (Friend Cook, 2013). Additionally, collaboration can help teachers to address the challenges of inclusive classrooms by providing them with opportunities to learn from one another and share their experiences (Kozleski et al., 2012). One effective way for teachers to collaborate in inclusive classrooms is through co-teaching. Co-teaching involves two or more teachers working together in the same classroom to provide instruction and support to all students. Co-teaching allows teachers to combine their knowledge, skills, and resources to provide high-quality instruction to

all students, regardless of their learning needs (Friend Cook, 2013). Research has shown that co-teaching can effectively support students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Murawski Dieker, 2013). In addition to co-teaching, collaboration can occur through professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are groups of teachers who meet regularly to discuss and reflect on their teaching practices. They can allow teachers to share their successes and challenges and learn from one another (Kozleski et al., 2012). Through PLCs, teachers can develop a shared understanding of inclusive teaching practices and work together to address the challenges of inclusive classrooms. Engaging in professional development sessions focused on inclusion has been a transformative experience for educators, enhancing their understanding of inclusive practices and empowering them to drive meaningful change within their classrooms and school communities. By recognizing and adapting teaching methods to meet each student's unique needs and abilities, teachers are better equipped to create inclusive learning environments. These sessions validate educators' efforts and inspire a commitment to ongoing improvement and learning. Experienced educators emphasize the importance of experimentation, learning from challenges, and maintaining a deep commitment to continuous growth in overcoming obstacles and promoting inclusive education.

*3.2.2. Attending professional development —*

Attending professional development is also crucial for teachers navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Teachers may require training on differentiating instruction, using assistive technologies, and implementing inclusive practices. Professional development can also help teachers build their confidence and improve their attitudes toward inclusion (Mackenzie Brady, 2008). Attending professional development programs is one mechanism that teachers use to navigate the challenges of inclusion in junior high school classrooms. These programs allow teachers to learn new skills, strategies, and techniques for working with diverse student populations. For instance, in a study by Carpenter and Meadan (2010), teachers who participated in a professional development program on assistive technology reported feeling more confident in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms. Professional development programs also allow teachers to collaborate with other educators, share their experiences, and learn from one another. In a study by Karger et al. (2019), teachers who participated in a professional development program on inclusive education reported that they valued collaborating with other teachers and sharing their experiences. They reported that these opportunities helped them to develop new ideas and strategies for working with diverse student populations. Finally, professional development programs can help teachers stay current with

the latest research and trends in inclusive education. This knowledge can help them identify and address the challenges they face in their classrooms. In a study by Goh et al. (2016), teachers who participated in a professional development program on inclusive education reported that they gained a deeper understanding of the needs of their diverse student populations and were better equipped to provide individualized support. Engaging parents and the community is a vital and dynamic process in creating an inclusive educational environment where the unique needs of each student are addressed. By valuing input from parents and actively involving them, educators can establish a collaborative support system that enhances student learning. Collaborations with local organizations provide students with diverse perspectives, cultures, and experiences, fostering an appreciation for diversity and reinforcing the message that inclusion transcends the classroom into every aspect of life. Parents play a crucial role in this journey by offering valuable insights into their child's needs and strengths, contributing to the development of effective support systems. Through regular communication channels like parent-teacher conferences and online platforms, teachers, parents, and the community can collaborate to set goals, share information, and track progress, ultimately creating a nurturing environment where all students feel supported and valued.

*3.2.3. They are engaging parents and the community*—Engaging with parents and the wider community is another important mechanism for teachers navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Building positive relationships with parents helps to create a more supportive learning environment for students with diverse needs. Teachers involve parents in developing individualized education plans (IEPs) and provide regular updates on student

progress (Ministry of Education, 2015). Engaging parents and the community was crucial for teachers navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Teachers who work collaboratively with parents and community members create a more inclusive learning environment. Effective communication with parents and community members about inclusive education can build trust and confidence in the education system, leading to more significant support for

inclusive practices. Teachers can engage parents and community members through regular communication, open dialogue, and partnership-building activities. Research has shown that parent and community engagement positively impacts student outcomes, particularly for students with disabilities (Cheney et al., 2015). Parents and community members can provide valuable insights into students' individual needs and strengths and help teachers develop more effective teaching strategies. In addition, parent and community involvement can help create a more positive school culture, where diversity is celebrated and inclusivity is valued (Graham,

2017). Teachers can utilize a range of strategies to effectively engage parents and community members, such as creating welcoming and accessible spaces for them, providing opportunities for feedback and input, and involving them in decision-making processes (Graham, 2017). Building partnerships with parents and community members requires time and effort, but the benefits of collaboration are well worth it. By working together, teachers, parents, and community members can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

*3.2.4. Culturally responsive teaching—* Teachers in inclusive classrooms may also employ culturally responsive teaching strategies to create a more inclusive learning environment for all students. Culturally responsive teaching involves recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences and using this knowledge to inform teaching practices (Gay, 2010). This can include modifying teaching materials to be more inclusive, creating opportunities for students to share their cultural experiences, and using a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. Culturally responsive teaching (CTR) is a framework that encourages teachers to incorporate their students' cultures, languages, and experiences into their teaching practices. CRT has been shown to be effective in promoting inclusive practices in the classroom, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds. Teachers who employ CRT approach education from a cultural and social justice perspective, acknowledging and addressing the unique needs of their students. In a study by Gist and Lubinski (2019), CRT enhanced teacher efficacy and promoted positive student outcomes in inclusive classrooms. Another aspect of CRT is the development of cultural competence, which

involves understanding the cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom. Culturally competent teachers are better equipped to support students from diverse backgrounds and create an inclusive learning environment. In a study by Orosco and O'Connor (2014), it was found that culturally responsive teachers were able to better meet the needs of English language learners (ELLs) in inclusive classrooms by using a variety of instructional strategies that recognized the linguistic and cultural diversity of the students. In addition to promoting inclusive practices, CRT can also help reduce classroom bias and stereotypes. By acknowledging and valuing their students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, teachers can create a more positive and inclusive classroom culture. According to a study by Sleeter and Milner (2011), CRT can also help to challenge the dominant cultural norms that often marginalize students from diverse backgrounds. Through CRT, teachers can create a classroom environment that celebrates diversity and promotes equity and social justice. Figure 4 shows the Coping mechanism of Junior High School Teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom. Four themes emerge: collaborating with other teachers, attending professional development, engaging parents and community, and culturally responsive teaching.

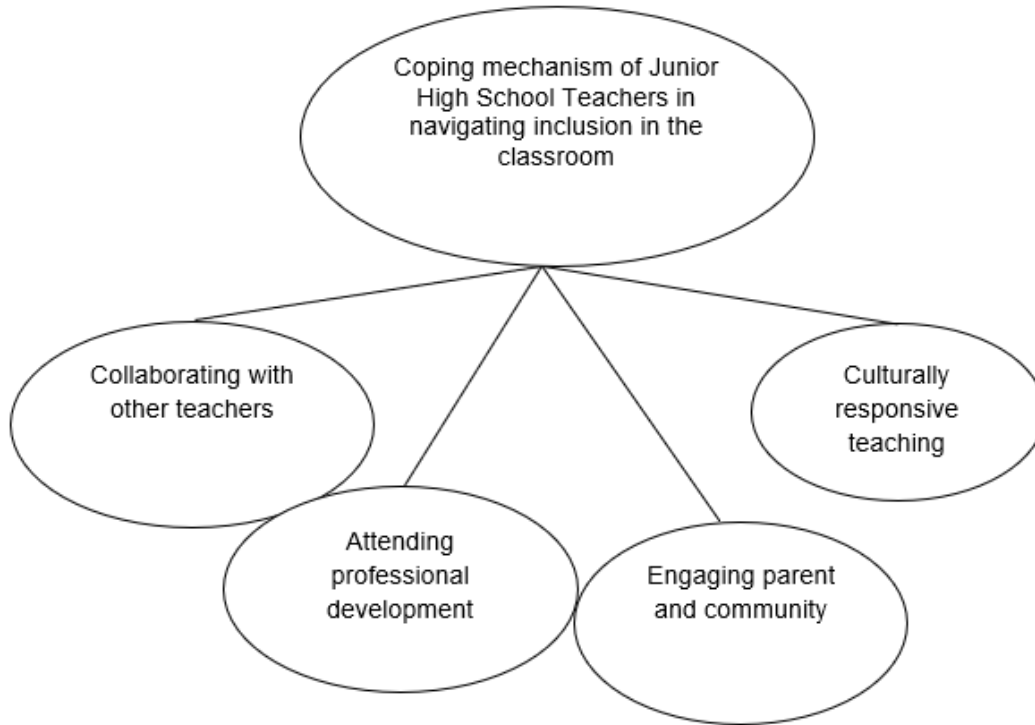


Fig. 4. The emerging themes on the coping mechanisms of Junior High School teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom

3.3. *Insights Gained from The Experiences of the Teachers’ In Navigating Inclusion in Junior High School Classroom*—The insights gained from the experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms provide valuable information for developing effective strategies and policies for inclusive education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2021; Dowdy et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019). Teachers’ experiences can offer unique perspectives on the challenges, mechanisms, and outcomes of inclusive education. By reflecting on their experiences, teachers can identify what worked well, what did not work, and what could be improved in their practices (Dowdy et al., 2020; Fleischner et al., 2017). This can help inform policy and practice changes that support more

inclusive classrooms and improve outcomes for all students. For example, research has shown that teachers who engage in reflection and dialogue with their peers and school leaders about their experiences are better able to identify and address the challenges they face in inclusive classrooms (Cochran-Smith et al., 2021; Fleischner et al., 2017). Additionally, teachers who receive ongoing professional development on inclusive practices and cultural responsiveness are more likely to feel confident and prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students (Dowdy et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019). These insights highlight the importance of providing ongoing support and opportunities for professional learning and collaboration to promote more effective and inclusive practices in junior high school classrooms.

3.3.1. *The need for ongoing professional development—*



Teachers recognized the importance of ongoing professional development to stay up-to-date on evidence-based practices for inclusive education (Reupert et al., 2018). This includes training on instructional strategies, behavior management techniques, and approaches for supporting students with diverse learning needs. Professional development opportunities also provide a forum for teachers to share their experiences and learn from each other, building a collective understanding of inclusive practices. One of the significant insights gained by teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms is the need for ongoing professional development. The dynamic nature of the educational system and the changing needs of diverse learners require teachers to continually update their knowledge and skills to effectively meet the needs of all students. Studies have shown that professional development programs enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in diverse teaching strategies, classroom management, and collaboration with other professionals, leading to improved inclusive classroom practices (Armstrong Squires, 2019; Lohman Leko, 2019). Another insight teachers gain is the importance of ongoing collaboration with colleagues to address the challenges of inclusion. Teachers in inclusive classrooms often encounter complex issues that require the expertise and input of other professionals, including special education teachers, counselors, and therapists. Collaborative efforts can enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in

managing diverse classrooms, leading to improved outcomes for students (Collins, 2020; Shriner, 2018). Lastly, teachers' insights revealed the need to adopt culturally responsive practices to engage students from diverse cultural backgrounds effectively. Teachers who understand and acknowledge their students' cultural backgrounds can create a classroom environment that supports their learning and enhances their social and emotional well-being (Anderson Lawton, 2019; O'Neal Ringler, 2018). By incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices, teachers can provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Creating a positive relationship with students and their families is fundamental to effective teaching. By ensuring that students feel safe, secure, and valued in the classroom, educators can establish a supportive environment where students feel comfortable and heard. Collaborating with students and their families through activities like class meetings fosters a sense of community and encourages teamwork and mutual support among students. Understanding each student individually, showing genuine interest in their lives, interests, and aspirations, and being approachable and supportive are key strategies in building positive relationships. By valuing students' voices, opinions, and ideas, educators can cultivate a positive classroom climate based on strong relationships between teachers, students, and parents, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience for all involved.

*3.3.2. The importance of building positive relationships with students and families*—Teachers identified that building strong and positive relationships with students and their families is crucial to fostering an inclusive learning environment (Olsen Fuller, 2010). This includes taking the time to understand and acknowledge students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds,

learning needs, and personal interests. When students feel valued and respected, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and achieve academic success. Another key insight gained by teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms is the importance of building positive relationships with students and their families. Research has

shown that building positive relationships with students and their families can lead to better student outcomes and a more supportive classroom environment (Wang Khoo, 2017). In the context of inclusion, this becomes even more important as students with diverse needs may require additional support and understanding. Teachers who prioritize building positive relationships with their students and families may be better equipped to provide the necessary support for their students to succeed. Another important insight is the need for teachers to have a deep understanding of their students' individual needs. Inclusion requires teachers to provide differentiated instruction and support to meet the unique needs of each student. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to develop a strong understanding of their students' strengths, challenges, and learning styles (Basham et al., 2019). This insight highlights the importance of individualized instruction and support to promote student success in inclusive classrooms. Finally, teachers also understand the importance of collaborative and inclusive practices. Collaboration with other teachers, support staff, and families can help to create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment. Inclusive practices

*3.3.3. The need for collaboration*—Teachers identified collaboration with other teachers, support staff, and families as essential to promoting inclusion in the classroom (Kalyanpur Harry, 2012). Collaboration enables teachers to share knowledge and resources, develop effective strategies, and consistently support students across different learning environments. It also allows for a more holistic understanding of student's needs, which is critical for the effective planning and implementation of inclusive practices. Another key insight gained by teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms is the importance of collaboration with colleagues. Research has highlighted that

that prioritize the involvement of all students, regardless of their abilities, can promote a sense of community and belonging (Martínez et al., 2020). The insights gained by teachers on the importance of collaboration and inclusive practices can inform their teaching practices and contribute to a more inclusive classroom environment. Collaboration among educators plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning experience for all students by facilitating the sharing of strategies, challenges and the co-creation of solutions that benefit everyone involved. In the context of inclusion, collaboration extends beyond individual classrooms to build a supportive network of educators dedicated to positively impacting every student's lives. Educators can create a more inclusive and well-rounded learning environment by pooling expertise and adjusting teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning preferences. Leveraging each teacher's strengths, whether in visual aids, kinesthetic activities, or other areas, through collaboration ensures that students receive a comprehensive learning experience that caters to their individual needs and maximizes their potential for success.

collaboration amongst teachers leads to the development of shared understandings of inclusive practices and provides a platform for effective problem-solving and decision-making. By working together, teachers can share resources, strategies, and expertise, which can lead to better outcomes for all students. This is particularly important in the context of junior high school classrooms, where teachers may have to cater to a diverse range of needs and abilities. By collaborating with their peers, teachers can develop a more nuanced understanding of the needs of their students and ensure that their practices are inclusive and effective. Furthermore, collaboration can also facilitate a sense of commu-

nity amongst teachers, providing a supportive environment to navigate the challenges of inclusion. Teachers may feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and seeking advice from their colleagues, which can help to reduce feelings of isolation and burnout. Research has shown that collaboration among teachers can improve job satisfaction, increase teacher retention, and better student outcomes (Hargreaves, 2010). Therefore, teachers need to have opportunities to collaborate with their peers regularly to develop their practice and support their well-being. In conclusion, the importance of

collaboration among teachers is a key insight gained by teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Collaboration allows teachers to develop shared understandings, share resources and strategies, and provide a supportive environment to navigate the challenges of inclusion. Furthermore, collaboration can improve job satisfaction, increase teacher retention, and better student outcomes. Therefore, schools need to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with their peers regularly to support the development of inclusive practices.

*3.3.4. The benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction*—Teachers found that student-centered and differentiated instruction effectively promoted inclusion in the classroom (Marzano et al., 2017). This approach involves tailoring instruction to meet each student’s unique learning needs and strengths, which can improve engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. By using various instructional strategies, teachers can accommodate diverse learning styles and promote a sense of belonging for all students. The final insight gained by teachers in navigating inclusion in the junior high school classroom is the benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction. Student-centered instruction recognizes the uniqueness of each learner and promotes active participation, which results in better academic performance and increased engagement. Differentiated instruction, on the other hand, acknowledges that students have different learning needs and adjusts the content, process, and product of instruction to accommodate these needs. Teachers who use student-centered and differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms report that it promotes a positive learning environment and enables them to effectively meet the needs of diverse learners (Tomlinson Moon, 2013). Another benefit

of using student-centered and differentiated instruction is that it promotes equity in the classroom. By tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of learners, teachers can ensure that each student has equal access to learning opportunities, regardless of their background, abilities, or disabilities. Additionally, student-centered and differentiated instruction promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, essential skills for success in the 21st-century workforce (Basham et al., 2019). Finally, using student-centered and differentiated instruction can improve teacher satisfaction and reduce burnout. Teachers who use these instructional approaches in the inclusive classroom report feeling more fulfilled and effective in their roles. Moreover, they report being better able to manage the complex needs of diverse learners and develop positive relationships with students and families (King-Sears, 2018). Overall, student-centered and differentiated instruction in the inclusive classroom has numerous benefits. These instructional approaches not only promote better academic performance and engagement but also equity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Finally, using these approaches can improve teacher satisfaction and reduce burnout, which is critical for retaining quality educators in education. Figure

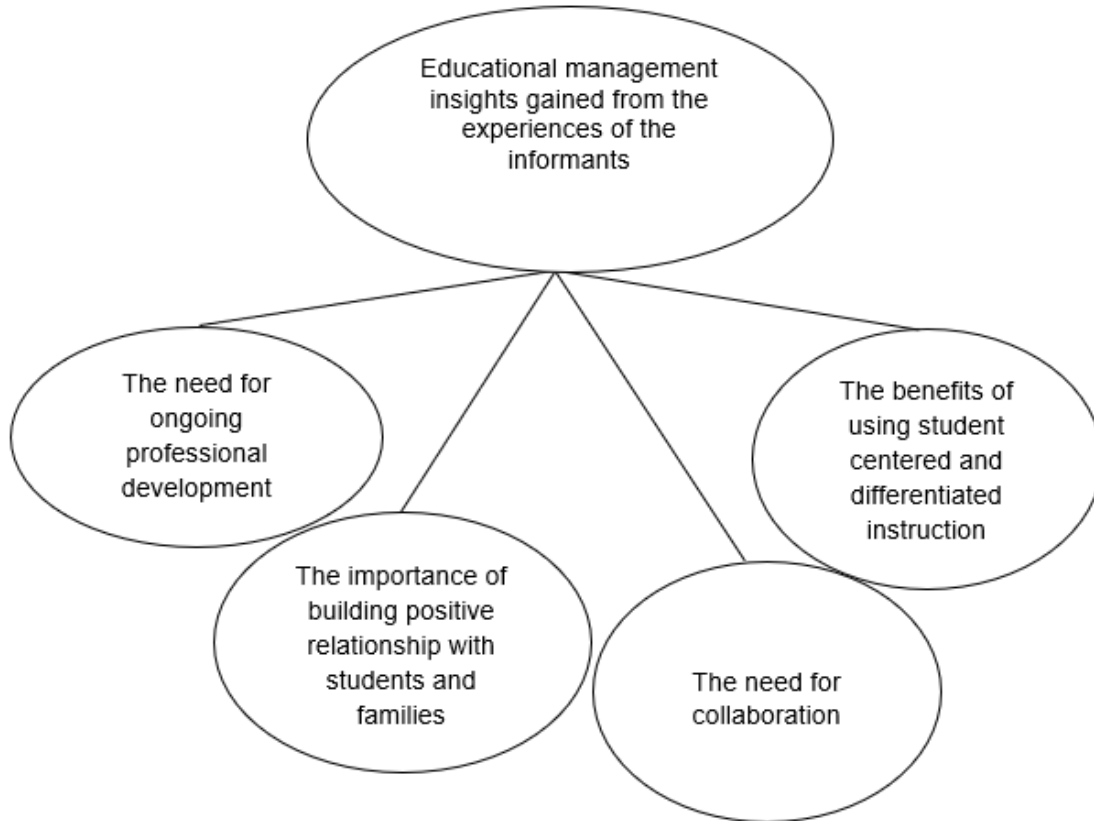


Fig. 5. The emerging themes on the insights Junior High School teachers gained in navigating inclusion in the classroom

4 shows the educational management insights gained from the informants’ experiences. Four themes emerge: the need for ongoing professional development, the importance of building positive relationships with students and families, collaboration, and the benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction.

#### 4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the summary of the study was presented, and from the summary of the findings, the implications and future directions. The purpose of my study was to solicit the experiences of Junior High School teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom at Governor Generoso, South District. To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative phenomenological method was utilized with thematic analysis. In adherence to Creswell’s (2006) guidelines, open-ended interview questions were applied to gain an authentic understanding of people’s experiences. Furthermore, this interview approach encouraged participants to present their own definition or meaning of the phenomenon being explored. Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when more participants are added to the study, which does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological

studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25, and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There were no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990). The participants of this study were Eight (8) Junior high school teachers from Governor Generoso South District, Division of Davao Oriental. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: must be in the service for at least 5 years; Junior high school teacher; and experienced in navigating inclusion.

*4.1. Findings*—The findings of the study on the experiences of Junior High School teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom were revealed as follows: address individual needs, build relationships with students and families, deal with challenges and barriers, and adapt teaching strategies. In terms of the coping mechanisms of the teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom, it was revealed that they cope through collaborating with other teachers, attending professional development, engaging parents and community, and culturally responsive teaching. As to the educational management insights gained from the participants, the teachers emphasized the need for ongoing professional development, the importance of building positive relationships with students and families, collaboration, and the benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction.

*4.2. Implications*—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. Based on teachers' experiences navigating inclusion in the classroom, the interview results revealed the following themes: First, address individual needs. Teachers need to address the individual needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, cultural or linguistic differences, and varying learning styles. Second, build relationships with students and families. The teachers must build strong relationships with students and families to foster a sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom. Teachers can communicate regularly with parents and guardians through emails, phone calls, and parent-teacher conferences. Third, deal with challenges and barriers. Challenges include limited resources, a lack of training or professional development opportunities, and the need to adapt instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. To address these challenges and barriers, teachers can engage in ongoing professional development and collaborate with colleagues to share strategies and resources. Fourth, they can adapt varied teaching strategies. The teachers should modify their teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of all students, including those with disabilities or special needs. This can involve using a range of instructional approaches, such as differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, and technology-assisted learning. On the coping mechanisms of teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom, one of the themes that was shown was; collaborating with other teachers. Collaborating with other teachers is a key mechanism that can help teachers navigate inclusion in junior high school classrooms. This involves working together with other teachers to share strategies, resources, and ideas for supporting students with diverse learning needs. The second theme identified was; attending professional development. Professional development programs provide teachers with the opportunity to learn new skills, strategies, and techniques for working with diverse students. It provides teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with other educators, share their expe-

riences, and learn from one another. The third theme identified was engaging parents and the community. Engaging parents and the community is crucial for teachers in navigating inclusion in junior high school classrooms. Teachers who work collaboratively with parents and community members create a more inclusive learning environment. The fourth theme identified was culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching involves recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences and using this knowledge to inform teaching practices. On the educational management insights gained by the teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom, the first theme identified was; the need for ongoing professional development. Training on instructional strategies, behavior management techniques, and approaches for supporting students with diverse learning needs. Professional development opportunities also provide a forum for teachers to share their experiences and learn from

each other, building a collective understanding of inclusive practices. The second theme identified as was the importance of building positive relationship with students and families. Building positive relationships with students and their families can lead to better student outcomes and a more supportive classroom. The third theme was collaboration with other teachers. Collaboration with support staff, and families as important to promoting inclusion in the classroom. Collaboration enables teachers to share knowledge and resources, develop effective strategies, and consistently support students across different learning environments. Finally, the benefits of using student-centered and differentiated instruction are discussed. Student-centered and differentiated instruction were effective in promoting inclusion in the classroom. This approach involved tailoring instruction to meet each student's unique learning needs and strengths, which can improve engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

**4.3. Future Directions**—This study may contribute valuable insights that can shape the way Junior high school educators approach inclusive teaching practices. Its findings can be used to develop a design for teacher training programs that address the unique needs of junior high school educators. Develop a comprehensive inventory of inclusion strategies and evaluate the impact of inclusion practices on student engagement, academic performance, and social interactions, providing insights into the effectiveness of various strategies, categorized by subject area and student needs. Likewise, this study may also identify common challenges faced by teachers, such as adapting curriculum materials, managing diverse learning abilities,

and fostering a positive classroom climate, explore how their personal beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about diversity and inclusion influence their teaching practices and interactions with students. Examine factors that shape these beliefs and how they impact classroom dynamics. Moreover, this study may gain insights from students about their experiences in inclusive classrooms. Understand how they perceive the efforts of teachers to promote inclusion, their comfort level in the classroom, and the impact of inclusive practices on their learning and social interactions. For the future researchers, they may consider other aspects such as technology integration on the experiences of teachers in navigating inclusion in the classroom.

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