

Integrating Social-Emotional Learning In Classroom Management: Benefits And Challenges Among Elementary Teachers

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Abstract. This study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management. Specifically, it aimed to examine their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of SEL integration, as well as the strategies they employ to navigate these experiences. Adopting a phenomenological approach, the study sought to deeply understand the lived experiences of the 12 teacher participants who engaged in in-depth interviews (7 participants) and focus group discussions (5 participants). Using a semi-structured online interview protocol and a coding technique for data analysis, several essential themes occurred. Investigating the lived experiences of teachers integrating SEL in learning uncovered core themes Building Emotional Awareness Through Daily Routines, Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships, and Empowering Students' Voices and Emotional Expression. Exploring the benefits and challenges of SEL integration included three themes Enhancing Student Engagement and Reducing Behavioral Issues, Lack of Time and Institutional Support, and the Impact of Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes on SEL Integration. On the insights drawn from the study two interconnected themes emerged SEL as a Foundation for Holistic Education and the Need for Continuous Professional Development. From an educational management perspective, the study revealed key implications such as the importance of Institutional Support, Strategic Implementation of SEL Policies, and Empowering Teachers Through Collaboration and Autonomy. These findings highlight the critical role of school leaders and policymakers in cultivating school environments that support meaningful SEL integration.

KEY WORDS

1. Social-Emotional Learning 2. Classroom Management 3. Elementary Teachers

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1. Introduction

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has emerged as a crucial component in fostering a well-rounded educational experience. Exploring teachers' perceptions of integrating SEL into classroom management is essential for developing supportive educational practices. By understanding educators' experiences and viewpoints, schools and policymakers can provide better guidance and professional development, ultimately creating more inclusive and emotionally supportive learning environments. This research aims to investigate how teachers perceive the value and practicality of SEL in classroom management, highlighting both the

benefits and challenges they encounter in fostering students' social-emotional development. Globally, one of the most prominent global challenges in integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management is the inconsistency in teacher training. Despite growing awareness of the importance of SEL in fostering students' emotional and social growth, many educators worldwide report feeling inadequately prepared to implement SEL strategies effectively in their classrooms. Research shows that while teachers may understand the theoretical importance of SEL, they often lack the practical training needed to integrate these concepts into everyday classroom practices (Bridgeland et al., 2023). This inconsistency in training leads to wide variability in how SEL is applied, affecting the quality and effectiveness of classroom management across schools and regions. In Laos, another significant challenge in integrating SEL into classroom management is the disconnect between SEL policies and the practical realities that teachers face in their classrooms. Although many educational systems have adopted policies promoting SEL, the support needed to implement these initiatives effectively is often lacking. In many cases, policymakers advocate for SEL as a way to improve student outcomes without providing the necessary resources, time, or training those teachers require to integrate these principles into their daily classroom routines (OECD, 2021). This gap between policy and practice can leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. In Myanmar, A critical global gap in integrating SEL into classroom management is the challenge of ensuring the cultural relevance and adaptability of SEL practices. SEL frameworks are often developed based on Western psychological models, which may not align with the values, beliefs, and practices of students and educators in diverse cultural contexts. This issue is particularly relevant in multicultural classrooms and non-Western educational settings,

where standardized SEL programs may fail to address the unique social dynamics and emotional needs of the students. Research indicates that while SEL has proven benefits, its success is highly dependent on its cultural relevance and adaptability (Durlak et al., 2021). In the Philippines, one of the primary challenges in integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management in the Philippines is the limited access to teacher training and professional development programs focused on SEL. Despite the growing emphasis on SEL in global education, Filipino teachers often lack sufficient preparation and support to implement SEL strategies effectively in their classrooms. This gap in teacher training is particularly significant in public schools, where many educators are already overburdened with large class sizes, administrative tasks, and tight schedules (Dizon, 2021). Without targeted professional development, teachers may struggle to integrate SEL alongside academic instruction, leading to inconsistent implementation across schools. A significant contributor to this issue is the focus of teacher education programs in the Philippines, which are traditionally centered on academic content rather than holistic student development. As a result, SEL is often viewed as an "add-on" rather than an essential component of classroom management. While some schools offer workshops or seminars on SEL, these are often short-term and fail to provide the in-depth knowledge and skills teachers need to sustain SEL practices over time (Quijano, 2022). This lack of comprehensive training leaves many teachers feeling ill-equipped to manage the emotional and social needs of their students, particularly in diverse and high-need classrooms. Another pressing issue in integrating SEL into classroom management in the Philippines is the lack of adequate resources and institutional support, particularly in public schools. Public schools in the country, especially those in rural and underprivileged

areas, often face significant resource constraints, including overcrowded classrooms, outdated materials, and limited access to technology.

These conditions create an environment where teachers are primarily focused on managing large groups of students, making it challenging to allocate time and attention to SEL activities (Dawey et al., 2019). As a result, SEL is often deprioritized in favor of academic instruction, leading to an inconsistent application of social-emotional learning principles across the education system. Moreover, the lack of administrative support for SEL in public schools further complicates its integration into classroom management. While SEL has been recognized as important by the Department of Education, its implementation often depends on the initiative of individual schools and teachers. Many school administrators prioritize academic performance and standardized test results over the development of students' social-emotional skills, limiting the time and resources available for SEL programs (Bernardo, 2020). A significant issue in integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management in the Philippines is the challenge of ensuring that SEL programs are culturally sensitive and contextually relevant to the Filipino experience. Many SEL frameworks and programs adopted in the Philippines are based on Western models, which may not fully align with the values, traditions, and social norms of Filipino students and teachers. As a result, some SEL strategies may feel disconnected from the local context, limit-

ing their effectiveness in promoting emotional and social growth (Reyes Castillo, 2021). In the Davao Region, one of the significant challenges in integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management is the limited access to SEL resources and professional development, particularly in rural and remote areas. While Davao City has more access to educational innovations and resources, many rural schools in the region struggle with insufficient funding and limited access to professional development opportunities focused on SEL. Teachers in these areas often face challenges in implementing SEL strategies due to a lack of structured training and materials, leading to uneven application of SEL principles across schools (Alegado, 2021). Rural schools in the Davao Region typically face larger class sizes and fewer resources, making it difficult for teachers to prioritize SEL alongside academic content. Teachers in these settings often focus on maintaining discipline and meeting basic academic requirements, which leaves little room for SEL activities that promote emotional regulation and social skills (Berja, 2020). Moreover, due to the geographical challenges of the region, teachers in rural areas have limited opportunities to participate in workshops or training sessions on SEL, as many of these professional development opportunities are concentrated in urban areas like Davao City. This gap in access to training further complicates teachers' ability to incorporate SEL into their classroom management practices.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—This study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management and identify the challenges and opportunities they face in implementing SEL strategies in their daily teaching practices. By examining how educators understand and apply SEL within the context of managing student behavior and fostering a supportive learning environment, this research aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of current SEL initiatives and highlight areas for improvement in teacher training, resources, and institutional support. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the development of more comprehensive approaches for integrating SEL into classroom management, particularly in diverse educational settings.

1.2. Research Questions—The main purpose of this study was to discover the teachers’ perceptions on integrating social-emotional learning in classroom management: teachers’ perception because it offers important insights into the opportunities and challenges of creating a classroom that is an inclusive learning environment.

- (1) What are the experiences of elementary teachers in integrating social-emotional learning in classroom management?
- (2) What are the benefits and challenges of teachers in integrating social-emotional learning in classroom management?
- (3) What educational insights can be drawn among the experiences of elementary teachers in integrating social-emotional learning in classroom management?

1.3. Definition of Terms—The following definitions shall be used throughout the study.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

In this study, social-emotional learning refers to the strategies and practices employed by elementary teachers to help students develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills as part of daily classroom activities and routines.

Classroom Management

In this study, classroom management refers to the methods and approaches used by elemen-

tary teachers to establish and maintain a structured, supportive, and engaging learning environment that promotes both academic success and social-emotional growth.

Integration

In this study, integration refers to the process by which elementary teachers incorporate social-emotional learning principles and practices into their classroom management strategies to create a unified approach that addresses students’ academic, social, and emotional needs.

1.4. Significant of the Study—The study is significant to the following.

Students

This study supports the argument that SEL integration can lead to better student engagement, reduced behavioral issues, and improved overall well-being. Teachers

This study offers valuable insights into teachers’ perceptions of SEL and its application in classroom management. It identifies common challenges teachers face, such as limited resources and inadequate training, while also showcasing the potential benefits of SEL for fostering positive classroom environments.

School Heads

Emphasize the importance of administrative support in addressing the challenges teachers

face in balancing academic instruction and SEL, particularly in managing student behavior and emotional well-being.

Department of Education Officials

This study highlights the need for comprehensive policy frameworks that prioritize Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integration in classroom management. It underscores the importance of developing standardized SEL guidelines and curricula that can be implemented across diverse educational settings.

Future Researchers

This study can still contribute to the work of future researchers to understand more information about this field. This study can influence other readers to know more about the situation of the school

1.5. Theoretical Lens—

The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 1994) provides a structured approach to fostering students' emotional and social growth within the classroom. SEL is centered on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, all of which contribute to students' ability to navigate both academic and social challenges. When integrated into classroom management, SEL supports teachers in creating a positive, inclusive, and emotionally supportive learning environment. Research has shown that classrooms emphasizing SEL experience fewer behavioral issues, improved student engagement, and stronger teacher-student relationships (Durlak et al., 2020). By helping students develop emotional regulation and interpersonal skills, teachers can manage their classrooms more effectively, reducing disruptions while fostering a culture of respect and cooperation. However, successful SEL implementation requires teacher training, administrative support, and collaboration with parents and the broader school community (Schonert-Reichl, 2021). This framework underscores the essential role of social-emotional competencies in promoting both academic success and holistic student development. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) explains how individuals' motivation and engagement are influenced by their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of classroom management, this theory suggests that when students feel a sense of control over their learning (autonomy), believe in their abilities (competence), and experience positive connections with teachers and peers (relatedness), they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and well-behaved. Research by Niemiec and Ryan (2019) highlights that classroom fostering intrinsic moti-

vation through SEL-based strategies result in higher academic performance, better emotional regulation, and fewer behavioral issues. Teachers who incorporate SEL within classroom management strategies can create an environment where students feel valued and empowered, leading to a more harmonious and productive learning space. However, challenges such as rigid curricula, time constraints, and lack of professional development can hinder the full realization of SDT principles in SEL implementation (Reeve Cheon, 2021). By integrating SDT into SEL practices, teachers can promote student motivation and self-discipline while fostering a supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere. The Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasizes that a child's development is shaped by multiple environmental systems, including family, school, and community. This theory is particularly relevant to SEL in classroom management, as it recognizes that students' behaviors and emotional well-being are influenced by factors beyond the classroom, such as family dynamics, peer relationships, school policies, and societal norms. A study by Oberle et al. (2020) found that effective SEL implementation requires a whole-school approach, where teachers, administrators, and families work collaboratively to create a consistent and supportive environment. Teachers who acknowledge and address these external influences can better manage classroom behavior by adapting strategies to meet students' diverse emotional and social needs. However, challenges such as lack of parental involvement, cultural differences, and systemic inequalities can impact the effectiveness of SEL-based classroom management (Domitrovich et al., 2019). By applying Bronfenbrenner's framework, educators can develop more inclusive and responsive SEL programs that acknowledge the interconnected nature of student development. Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (1995) posits that the ability to rec-

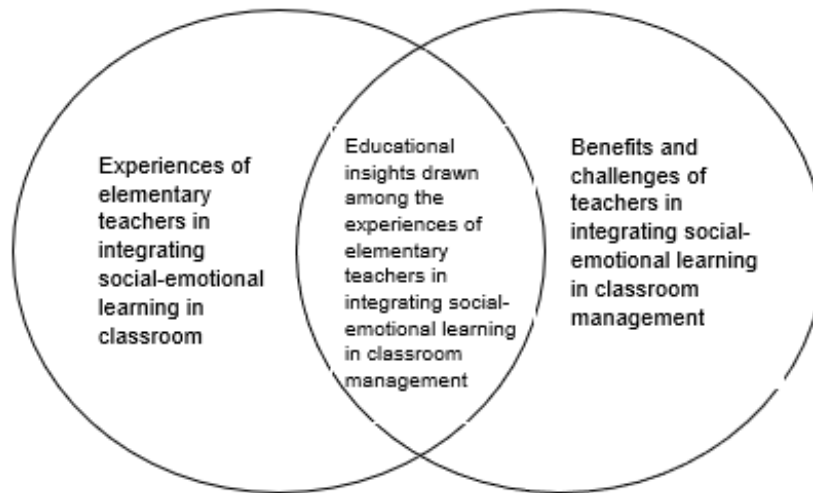


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

ognize, understand, and regulate emotions plays a crucial role in personal and social success. In the classroom, teachers with high emotional intelligence can manage student behavior more effectively by responding to challenges with empathy, patience, and adaptability. Research by Brackett et al. (2020) highlights that emotionally intelligent teachers create a more positive

classroom climate, leading to lower stress levels, improved student-teacher relationships, and better student self-regulation. SEL programs grounded in EI principles help students develop emotional awareness and interpersonal skills, reducing conflicts and promoting a culture of respect and collaboration.

2. Methodology

This chapter of the study 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.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—The philosophical assumption is a framework used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It established the background used for the following conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types which are elaborated below.

Ontology

This part of the research pertains to how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2019), 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 researcher relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes, and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different per-

spectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct the commonality and discreteness of responses. It is ensured 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 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 2019, as cited by Creswell (2019) state that on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance between themselves and the participants. He suggests that, being a researcher, he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an ‘insider’. It is assumed that there is an establishment of close interaction with the participants to gain direct information that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry.

Axiology

It refers to the role of values in research. Creswell (2019) avers that the role of values in a study is significant. Axiology suggests that the researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes their interpretation in conjunction with the interpretation of participants. Upholding the dignity and value of

every detail of information obtained from the participants was ensured by the researcher. The researcher understands the personal and value-laden nature of the 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

It means reporting what reality was 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 and qualitative terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability instead of internal and external validity and objectivity. Patton (2020) defined phenomenology as an 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 study worked well with this definition in trying to understand the experiences of teachers on their attitudes in teaching elementary learners such as positive, and strong-willed. Guba (2019) pointed out that the researcher needs to prepare for an investigation that is greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg.

2.2. Qualitative Assumptions—The methodology is 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, 2019). In this study, the experiences of the teaching personnel will be explored, particularly amongst the twelve (12) elementary teachers in Sto. Tomas East, Division of Davao del Norte. The

researcher’s drive to know the deeper meaning of their experiences became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means which Kalof and Dietz (2019), as cited from Gerodias, (2019) 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 stories of the floating teachers in a manner that, as David (2019)

wrote, the themes, symbols, and meaning of the experiences will be presented. Phenomenological research is based on two premises. The first is that experience is a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (2019), as cited in Moustakas (2019), that experience is a source of knowledge and shapes one's behavior. From the definition, human experience is 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, 2019). By doing phenomenology which is concerned with the "what" and the "how" Reicher the researcher projected that the subjective experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of the physical education teachers were explored and insights were drawn as the basis for the possible future researches and policy analysis concerning this research.

2.3. Design and Procedure—This study employed a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2019), phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is 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 was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, Maxwell (2019) also added that with its roots in philosophy, psychology, and education, phenomenology attempt 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 is taking notes. According to Corbetta

(2023), the phenomenological research design is a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide an in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell, (2019) also claimed that interviews are 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 are 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 is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 2019). Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2019), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, to analyze it after interviewing. Interviews particularly be useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information about 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

that extracted 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 meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better 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 that were selected for the study were individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. The researcher

needed to bracket his or her own experiences and observations, which would be difficult to do. The researcher also needed to decide how and when his or her observations be incorporated into the study. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasize 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 the focus of this study is to explore the non-teaching personnel's perception and feelings towards the school environment and the perspectives on the new normal innovations, the researcher intended to employ the phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

2.4. Research Participants—This study will employ purposive sampling to select the research participants. A total of twelve (12) elementary teachers from Kinamayan Integrated School, Sto. Tomas East District will be chosen based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) teachers must have at least two years of teaching experience, and (2) they must be currently teaching in a school under the Division of Davao del Norte. The participants will be divided into two groups: five (5) teachers will take part in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to explore shared experiences and perspectives on integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into classroom management, while seven (7) teachers will participate in In-Depth Interviews (IDI) to provide a more detailed and personal account of their challenges and best practices. The researcher adopted purposive sampling as it allows the selection of participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives (Creswell, 2019). This method, also known as

judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, ensures that the findings are authentic, contextually rich, and reflective of the lived experiences of teachers managing classrooms with SEL strategies (Marshall, 2019). 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 interviews the participants and guides them in the process. The researcher interprets ideas and responses based on existing literature and related studies and not on the researcher's 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 interviews properly according to the design, making appropriate field observations, selecting appropriate artifacts, images, and journal portions, and employing Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis precisely.

Collector and Keeper of Data

The researcher ensures different ways of making a record of what is said and done during the interview and Focus Group Discussion, such as taking handwritten notes or audio and/or video recording. The recordings are transcribed verbatim before data analysis can 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, 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 too by research questions – stating the results for each one by using themes to show how the research questions were answered in the study. Moreover, future directions and implications of the study are given by the researcher for the improvement of educational policy and practices.

2.5. Ethical Considerations—The ethical considerations are significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues about the research participants in this fieldwork. Ethical considerations can be specified as one of the most important parts of the research. The researcher needs to adhere to promote the aims of the research imparting authentic knowledge, truth, and prevention of error.

Social Value Research is very essential to the society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experience of teachers. This study was specifically conducted among the elementary teachers. This study also served as a basis for the higher authorities to create more programs and resolutions in which classroom teachers could benefit. Thus, the social problem that pushes the interest of the researcher is the challenges faced by the teachers in the use of interactive media instruction in the classroom

as a way to ameliorate teaching competence.

Informed Consent In the conduct and practice of this study, the Treaty Principle of Participation as cited by McLeod (2019) adhered to. The invitation to the participants was ensured that their participation in the research is completely voluntary in nature, and is based on the understanding of adequate information. The participant recruitment and selection are lodged in the appendices of this study. Gaining the trust and support of research participants is critical to informed and ethical academic inquiry and phenomenological research page. 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 intent of the study, request voluntary participation by the recipients, and anticipate the information that the informants were expected to provide. All participants were required to sign and return the letter of consent to the researcher before participating in the research.

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 with regard to 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 chair of the panel or panel members in case 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 has ensured that the respondents were safe during the conduct of the survey and interview. Thus, the distribution of the questionnaire was conducted in a safe venue and administered at their convenient time. The dominant concern of this study is 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 so that there would be no conflict of interest among the researcher and the respondents. Any type of misleading information, as well as 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 have to give their full honesty in answering the survey questions and additionally, any type of communication about the research should be done with honesty. Similarly, they were informed that they were the ones to benefit first from the results of the study. 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 CD or other storage devices which can be requested from the researcher to provide. In addition, by learning about the results of the study, classroom teachers will be aware of the significance of the study and its contribution to their well-being. Further, each of the participants 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 can be requested and allowed to verify their transcript after the interview is carried out. This provided the participants with the opportunity to amend or remove any information which they felt might identify them. The researcher reserved the right to employ the use of pseudonyms, and changing names and or non-significant dates in the interest of the protection of the identity of the participant in all subsequent data analysis and reporting.

Qualification of the Researcher The researcher ensured that he or she possesses the needed qualifications to conduct the study. The

researcher should have completed the academic requirements, and passed the comprehensive examination before thesis writing which was the last requirement to obtain the master's degree, and the researcher should 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 that the study can be completed successfully in the specified time and that he or she is equipped with the necessary resources. Likewise, the technical committee helped in the enhancement of the paper by giving the needed suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of 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 in the target time.

Community Involvement The researcher

showed respect to 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 for 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 had said his or her way. The researcher also used quotes to indicate that the text had been taken from another paper. Similarly, the researcher assured that honesty was present in working on the manuscript and no intentional misrepresentation and making up of data or results was included, or purposefully put forward conclusions that are not accurate.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—In this study, I played various roles to attain the success of the study. First, I asked for permission to conduct the study which started from the Schools Division Superintendent and then to the participants of my study. As a researcher, if consented, I have recorded the actual interview to achieve the needs of this type of research. The interview's goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the learners in the new normal way of teaching and learning. The interview would also include how the Department of Education should improve its programs. After the needed data has been gathered, everything has been transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. However, human instruments are more important to be studied in case the quality of this research has to deal with biases and assumptions in dealing with the persons involved in the research (Greenbank, 2019) To address the validity issues of this design specifically on the

method, I will ask for help from the experts. My interview guide question tool shall be checked and validated by the experts. The sampling used for the selection of my participants will be under the suggestions of the expert panels. In this study, I played various roles to attain the success of the study. First, asked for permission to conduct the study which will start with the Schools Division Superintendent and then with the participants of my study. As a researcher, if consented, I recorded the actual interview to achieve the needs of this type of research. The interview's goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers in the new normal way of teaching and learning. The interview would also include how the Department of Education should improve its programs. After the needed data had been gathered, everything had been transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. However, human instruments are more important to be studied in case the quality

of this research has to deal with biases and assumptions in dealing with the persons involved in the research (Greenbank, 2019).

2.7. Data Collection—Data collection for qualitative study involves direct interaction from the participants in a one-to-one basis or group setting. Since data gathering for qualitative study is quite time-consuming, it only requires a small number of participants. However, the qualitative study gives richer and deeper insights and findings of the phenomenon that is being studied. The following is the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed.

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 will send a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with the attached Chapters 1 and 2 together with the research instrument which explains the objectives of the study and the identification of the participants. The researcher will wait for the response of the SDS before the conduct of it.

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 of

the process, they shall go through as participants.

Conducting the interview

The researcher conducted the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. The profile of the participants will be taken, notes will be jotted down, and conversations will be recorded using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher carefully listened 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 were categorized and coded. Then, themes will be extracted and individual data within the participants will be 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 it into the existing body of data. After this, data were compared and contrasted between the participants 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 with the use of Creswell's Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2019), themes in qualita-

tive research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database. Familiarization with the data is common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in and became intimately familiar with, the data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations.

Coding

Is also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis and involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding is not simply a method of data reduction; it is also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher will code every data item and end this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

Searching for Themes

Is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher will end 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 theme and the relationship between the themes. For these, Thematic Content Analysis will be employed by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme will be made by identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy, and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2019). In ad-

dition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, Environmental Triangulation will also be employed by the researcher. It is a technique to analyze the results of the same study using different methods of data collection. The key is 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, 2019). 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 is to determine which of these factors influence the information received, these factors are then changed to see if the findings are 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 is the use of environmental triangulation best suits 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 concerning existing literature.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—This study adopted a flexible approach by allowing data collection and analysis to occur simultaneously. Data gathered from contractual teachers will be examined and categorized based on familiar topics and themes related to their experiences, challenges, and insights. Following the six-step process outlined by Fuchs (2023), the analysis involves: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing these themes, defining and naming them, and ultimately producing a comprehensive re-

port. This structured methodology ensures that the analysis accurately reflects the teachers’ experiences and struggles within contractual employment arrangements. Familiarization entails immersing oneself in the data by thoroughly reading and re-reading it, while noting preliminary analytical observations. During coding, I employed qualitative analysis techniques by creating concise labels for significant data segments relevant to my research questions. Coding facilitates data reduction and analysis, with each code representing my semantic and con-

ceptual interpretation of the data. I conclude this stage by organizing all codes along with their corresponding data extracts.

In the searching phase, I identify coherent patterns and meaningful connections within the data, categorizing the coded data according to emergent themes. Reviewing themes involves multiple readings of the data to deepen understanding and uncover initial insights. This process helps ensure that the themes effectively convey a compelling narrative. During this review, I assess how well the themes represent the data and explore their interconnections to develop a broader understanding. The defining and naming stage involves analyzing each theme in detail, identifying its core components and nuances. The goal here is to craft concise, impactful titles that accurately encapsulate each theme's essence, promoting clarity and effective communication. Finally, in the producing stage, I integrate the analytical narrative with

relevant data extracts, creating a coherent and engaging presentation of the findings. This process involves weaving together evidence and analysis to produce a narrative that is both informative and compelling, guiding the reader through the insights derived from the data. The analytical framework used in this study guides the examination of the data, aligning it with the study's objectives and research questions. It draws upon key theoretical concepts from teaching and learning theories, educational psychology, and insights from previous research on effective health education strategies. This framework structures the data analysis and aids in interpreting the findings from In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). As illustrated in Figure 2, the framework provides a systematic approach that ensures data collection is organized and that the interpretation of results is thorough and insightful.

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—Trustworthiness is all about establishing credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. In qualitative study, trustworthiness is very important because the result and finding of the research study would depend on the process of how it is being conducted by the researcher. The trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluating 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. The concepts of validity and reliability are relatively foreign to the field of qualitative research. Instead of focusing on reliability and validity, qualitative researchers substitute data trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of the following components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Harts, 2019). Credibility Contributes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data by observing the at-

tributes of prolonged engagement. To address the issue of credibility, interviewed as many research participants as possible or up to the point of saturation. Transferability Is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. In positivist work, the concern often lies in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population since the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals. It is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions apply to other situations and populations. Therefore, to ensure transferability, I acknowledged that it is my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual transformation about the fieldwork sites is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. Confirmability Associates' objectivity in science with the use of instruments that are not dependent on human skill and perception.

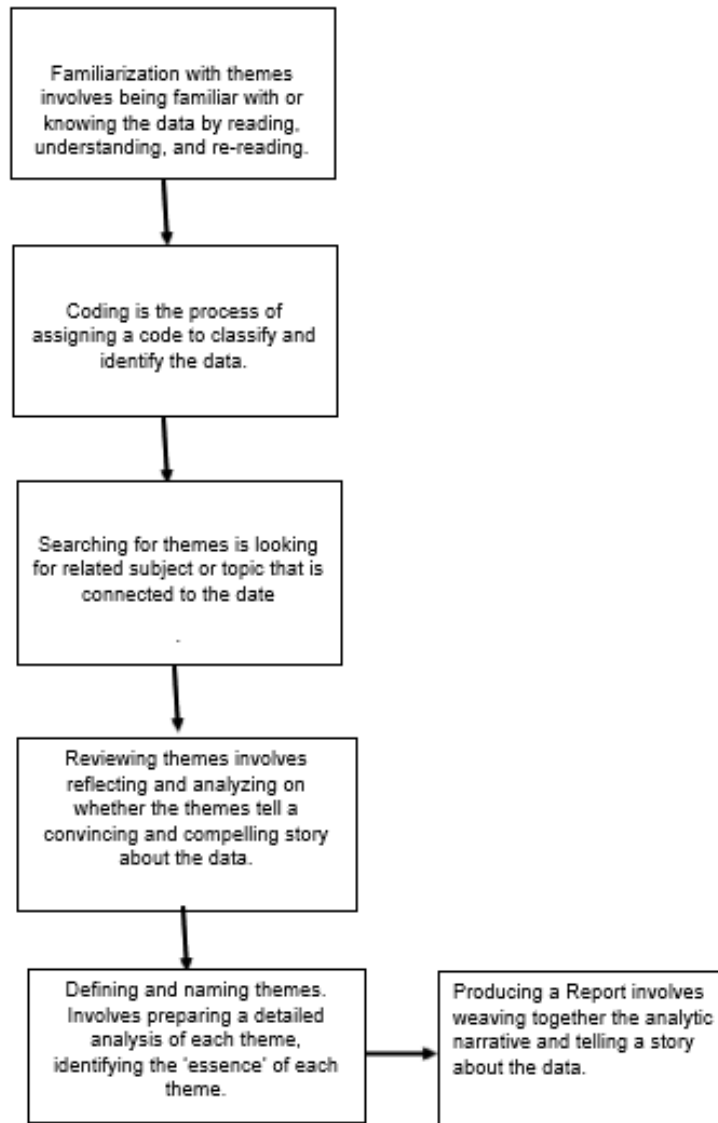


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

It is, however, difficult to ensure real objectivity since, as even tests and questionnaires are designed by humans, the intrusion of the researcher's biases is inevitable. Here, steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

Dependability

Involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study. Confirmability The degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers.

3. Results and Discussion

This study section addresses the research questions and their related answers based on the participants' feedback. The investigation explored teachers' experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights as they navigate the blended learning of scientific concepts.

3.1. Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Integrating Social-Emotional Learning in Classroom Management—In today's classrooms, elementary teachers are increasingly integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) as a vital component of effective classroom management. SEL emphasizes the development of skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making. As children face a range of emotional and behavioral challenges, especially in early learning stages, SEL provides teachers with tools to manage their classrooms more compassionately and productively. According to Brackett, Rivers, and Reyes (2022), implementing SEL enhances not only the emotional climate of classrooms but also academic performance by creating a more responsive and respectful learning environment. Managing a classroom goes beyond discipline and instruction; it requires understanding students' emotional needs and fostering a supportive atmosphere. Elementary teachers who apply social-emotional learn-

ing principles in classroom management report more meaningful student engagement and fewer behavioral disruptions. These experiences suggest that SEL supports holistic development and strengthens teacher-student relationships. As highlighted by Schonert-Reichl (2019), integrating SEL in daily teaching practice nurtures a positive school climate and promotes both social competence and academic achievement among students. The experiences of elementary teachers reveal that integrating social-emotional learning into classroom management offers both rewarding and challenging aspects. Teachers become facilitators of emotional growth, conflict resolution, and social awareness while navigating systemic limitations such as limited training or lack of administrative support. Despite these barriers, many educators find that SEL significantly enhances student cooperation and classroom harmony. Curtin et al. (2019) emphasize that evidence-based SEL programs contribute positively to classroom management by reducing aggression and increasing students' prosocial behavior.

3.1.1. Building Emotional Awareness Through Daily Routines—Elementary teachers commonly report that integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into daily routines

such as morning meetings, mindfulness breaks, and reflection periods helps foster a calm and empathetic classroom culture. These moments allow students to start their day with intention

and emotional regulation, creating a more focused learning environment. Through these experiences, teachers have observed increased student self-awareness, with learners better able to articulate their feelings and manage their emotional responses. Teachers also note that SEL routines help build classroom cohesion by encouraging empathy and understanding among peers. However, integrating SEL consistently requires planning and time, and teachers often need to adjust their academic schedules to accommodate these practices. Despite this, many believe the benefits outweigh the challenges because SEL integration contributes positively to both student behavior and learning engagement (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Based from the narratives Integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the daily routines of elementary classrooms has emerged as a crucial strategy in creating a nurturing and emotionally responsive learning environment. Teachers report that activities such as morning meetings, feelings check-ins, and mindfulness breaks allow students to start their day with emotional clarity and calm. These routines serve not just as transitional moments but as deliberate practices that foster emotional regulation, empathy, and collective classroom harmony. By embedding SEL into the fabric of the school day, teachers help students recognize and express their emotions in healthy ways, laying the foundation

for both academic and social success. Teachers who consistently implement SEL routines often observe positive changes in student behavior and classroom climate. Students become more adept at identifying their feelings, using appropriate language to express them, and responding constructively to emotional challenges. This self-awareness translates into reduced behavioral incidents and improved peer relationships. Moreover, SEL routines promote a sense of belonging and community, where students support one another and recognize the emotional states of their classmates. The ripple effect of these practices often results in a more focused, respectful, and cooperative classroom dynamic. Despite the benefits, integrating SEL into daily routines is not without challenges. Teachers must balance time constraints, curriculum demands, and the need for consistent implementation. Some educators also express a lack of formal training or resources to guide SEL integration. Nevertheless, many are committed to these practices, recognizing their long-term value in fostering both emotional well-being and academic engagement. As Schonert-Reichl (2019) emphasized, incorporating SEL into the school day equips students with the emotional tools necessary for lifelong success, emphasizing the pivotal role teachers play in shaping not only minds but hearts as well.

3.1.2. Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships—Teachers shared that one of the most impactful experiences with SEL integration is the strengthened relationship they develop with students. By emphasizing emotional check-ins and active listening, they create a safe and trusting classroom environment. This enhanced rapport leads to better communication and fewer behavioral issues. When students feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to engage with learning and respond positively to classroom expectations. Teachers find that

when SEL is embedded in their classroom management, students become more cooperative and resilient. Still, maintaining these relationships requires emotional labor from the teachers. Some report feeling overwhelmed, especially when students have complex emotional needs. Nevertheless, the deepened connection with students is consistently regarded as a highlight of SEL-centered teaching (Brackett et al., 2019). Participant's insights underscore the transformative power of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in fostering a safe and supportive classroom en-

vironment. By implementing strategies such as daily emotional check-ins and active listening, the teacher observed a significant shift in student behavior and openness. These practices have created an atmosphere where students feel heard, valued, and emotionally secure. When learners perceive their classroom as a safe space, they are more likely to engage meaningfully and express their concerns without fear of judgment. This environment not only supports academic growth but also nurtures students' holistic development. However, the interviewee also highlighted the emotional toll that comes with sustaining such deep relationships. Teachers often serve as emotional anchors for students who carry various forms of psychological stress or trauma. The effort to remain emotionally present for every student can be taxing, especially when educators are dealing with their own personal challenges. This emotional labor,

though demanding, is seen as worthwhile by the teacher due to the positive relational outcomes it yields. This sentiment reflects the dual nature of SEL in classroom management—it brings both significant rewards and substantial demands. Finally, the interviewee emphasized how strong teacher-student relationships built through SEL lead to more respectful and cooperative classroom behavior. Students who feel respected and understood respond more positively to guidance and discipline. The need for authoritative tones or punitive actions diminishes when mutual respect is the foundation of the classroom. As Brackett et al. (2019) point out, SEL enhances the emotional intelligence of both teachers and students, resulting in more empathetic interactions and reduced behavioral issues. In this way, SEL not only improves the emotional climate of the classroom but also elevates the overall teaching and learning experience.

3.1.3. Empowering Student Voice and Emotional Expression—Elementary teachers often discover that integrating SEL empowers students to express themselves more confidently and respectfully. Many teachers observe that students who previously struggled with articulating their emotions begin to verbalize feelings, ask for help, and even mediate minor conflicts independently. This shift not only creates a healthier emotional climate in the classroom but also promotes mutual respect between peers and between students and teachers. Teachers describe using "feelings check-ins," journals, or class meetings as tools that help normalize emotional expression. These practices foster a culture of openness where students understand that emotions are valid and manageable. Such strategies also allow teachers to better assess the emotional well-being of their students, offering early interventions when needed. As students gain more control over their emotions, their behavior tends to stabilize, making the classroom environment more manageable for

both teaching and learning. Research supports these findings. According to Schonert-Reichl (2019), SEL practices that enhance emotional literacy contribute significantly to students' self-awareness and communication skills, which are essential to both academic success and emotional development. When students feel heard and supported, they are more engaged, motivated, and cooperative—key elements for a well-managed classroom. The narratives of the participants revealed that the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) practices, such as the use of a "feelings board," has proven to be an effective strategy in empowering student voice and encouraging emotional expression in the classroom. By providing students with a simple, visual tool to express their current emotional state, the teacher creates an opportunity for self-reflection and emotional check-ins. This early SEL intervention sets a tone of emotional awareness and validation from the start of the day. During morning circles, students are given a safe space to verbalize their emotions, rein-

forcing a classroom culture where feelings are acknowledged and respected. Over time, this approach has had a visible impact on student behavior and interpersonal communication. Initially, students were hesitant to share their feelings, but consistent exposure to SEL routines helped them gradually open up. The teacher noted a significant transformation in students who previously struggled with emotional regulation. These students began using “I feel” statements during conflicts, allowing them to address disagreements with greater composure and empathy. Such behavioral changes have led to fewer emotional outbursts and clearer communication among classmates, improving the overall classroom climate. However, the process is not without its challenges. Not all students come from environments where emotional expression is modeled or encouraged, which means some are resistant or unfamiliar with articulating their feelings. To overcome this, the teacher emphasizes the importance of modeling emotional honesty, even sharing her own emotions when appropriate. This modeling helps normalize emotional expression and shows students that vulnerability is acceptable. As a result, the classroom evolves into a cooperative space where both teacher and students participate in mutual emotional growth. According to Schonert-Reichl (2019), such SEL integration fosters self-awareness, improves relationships, and cultivates a sense of belonging—outcomes clearly reflected in the teacher’s experience.

3.1.4. Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships—Another recurring experience among elementary teachers integrating SEL is the deepening of teacher-student relationships. SEL encourages a shift from traditional discipline to a more empathetic and relational approach. Teachers often describe how regular use of SEL practices has allowed them to connect with their students on a personal level, building trust and mutual understanding. This connection, in turn, has improved class-

room dynamics and reduced behavioral issues. Teachers report that when students perceive their teacher as someone who genuinely cares for their well-being—not just their academic performance—they are more likely to follow classroom norms and exhibit prosocial behavior. These strong relationships become a cornerstone of effective classroom management, as students feel more secure, respected, and motivated to cooperate. SEL thus becomes not just a strategy, but a foundation for a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This experience is echoed in the work of Brackett et al. (2019), who assert that positive teacher-student relationships built through SEL are linked to improved student engagement, fewer disciplinary referrals, and stronger academic outcomes. The presence of empathy and trust within the classroom not only benefits students but also reduces teacher stress, making the teaching experience more fulfilling and sustainable. They make teaching more rewarding. When students feel secure and supported, classroom dynamics improve, and teaching becomes more effective. I feel more connected to my students, and that connection motivates me to keep integrating SEL despite the challenges. The narratives of the participants highlight that integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) has significantly deepened the teacher-student relationship by fostering a classroom environment where students feel safe and valued. This emotional safety encourages students to open up about their concerns, enhancing their sense of belonging and trust. Such an environment moves beyond academic interactions, recognizing students as whole individuals with emotional needs, which aligns with research indicating that positive teacher-student relationships improve student engagement and well-being (Brackett et al., 2019). Furthermore, the interviewee observes that stronger emotional connections translate into better classroom management. When students feel understood and supported, they are

more likely to respect classroom rules and cooperate, reducing the need for disciplinary actions like raising one's voice. This shift reflects the relational nature of SEL, where mutual respect and empathy replace traditional authoritative approaches, resulting in a more harmonious and productive classroom dynamic. This transformation supports findings that SEL fosters prosocial behavior and self-regulation, essential components of effective classroom management (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). However, the interviewee also candidly discusses the emotional challenges teachers face when implementing SEL. Being emotionally available to students, especially those carrying significant emotional burdens, can be draining and requires careful balancing of the teacher's own well-being. Despite this, the benefits of building trust and deeper connections outweigh the difficulties. This acknowledgment reflects the emotional labor involved in teaching and highlights the need for adequate support systems for educators as they adopt SEL practices, ensuring sustainability and teacher resilience (Jennings Greenberg, 2019). In Figure 3, the diagram visually represents the core themes derived from the experiences of elementary teachers integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) in classroom management. Central to the diagram is the overarching concept of teachers' experiences with SEL integration, from which four main thematic areas branch out. These themes collectively encapsulate the multifaceted nature of SEL's impact on classroom management, emphasizing emotional awareness, relational dynamics, and student empowerment. The first theme, Building Emotional Awareness Through

Daily Routines, highlights how teachers embed SEL practices into everyday classroom activities. This approach helps students develop a better understanding of their emotions through consistent, intentional moments like morning check-ins or mindfulness exercises. Such routines create a supportive classroom environment where emotional regulation becomes part of the daily rhythm, leading to improved focus and reduced behavioral issues. Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships, presented as two separate but related ovals in the diagram, underscores the relational benefits of SEL. Teachers report that practices such as emotional check-ins and active listening foster deeper trust and connection with their students. This strengthened bond not only makes students feel valued and safe but also enhances classroom cooperation and discipline. The repetition of this theme in two ovals suggests its fundamental importance in the SEL experience, emphasizing how strong relationships form the foundation of effective classroom management. Lastly, Empowering Student Voice and Emotional Expression reflects how SEL encourages students to communicate their feelings openly and respectfully. By providing tools and opportunities for emotional expression, teachers help students develop self-awareness and conflict-resolution skills. This empowerment contributes to a more positive classroom climate where students feel heard and respected, fostering mutual respect and responsibility. Together, these themes illustrate a holistic framework of SEL integration that supports emotional growth, relational health, and cooperative learning environments.

3.2. Benefits And Challenges Of Teachers In Integrating Social-Emotional Learning In Classroom Management —In recent years, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a vital component of holistic education, em-

phasizing the development of students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness alongside academic achievement. Integrating SEL into classroom management enables teachers to create a supportive and nur-

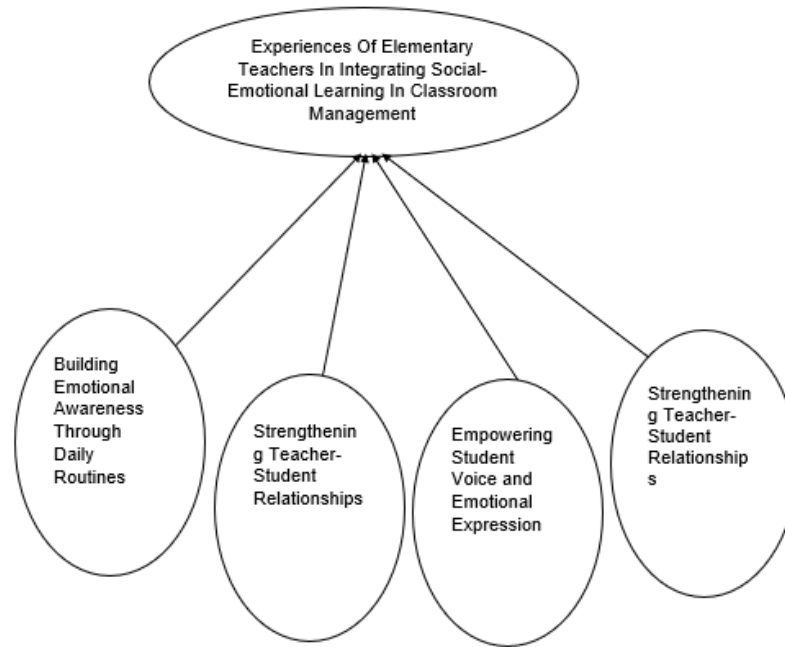


Fig. 3. Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Integrating Social- Emotional Learning in Classroom Management

turing environment where students feel safe, respected, and motivated to learn. By fostering social-emotional competencies such as empathy, self-regulation, and effective communication, teachers can improve student behavior, enhance classroom climate, and promote positive relationships among learners. The benefits of incorporating SEL in classroom management extend beyond improved student interactions. Research has shown that students who engage in SEL programs tend to have better academic outcomes, reduced behavioral problems, and increased resilience to stress. For teachers, integrating SEL strategies can lead to a more harmonious classroom atmosphere and reduce disciplinary disruptions, allowing for more focused and effective instruction. Additionally, SEL equips students with essential life skills

that contribute to their overall well-being and long-term success, making its integration a key priority for educators seeking to address the holistic needs of their learners. Despite its clear advantages, the integration of SEL in classroom management also presents several challenges for teachers. Many educators face constraints such as limited time, insufficient training, and inadequate resources, which hinder their ability to fully implement SEL practices. Furthermore, addressing the diverse social-emotional needs of students in classrooms with varying backgrounds and experiences can be complex and demanding. Teachers must also balance SEL initiatives with rigorous academic standards, which can sometimes lead to conflicts in prioritizing instructional time.

3.2.1. Enhancing Student Engagement and Reducing Behavioral Issues (Benefit) — One key benefit teachers report is improved student engagement and a significant reduction in

behavioral problems. SEL allows students to recognize and regulate their emotions, which translates into fewer classroom disruptions and more productive academic time. When students

are taught skills like empathy, conflict resolution, and self-control, they become more responsible and cooperative. Teachers see this improvement not only in academic participation but also in peer interactions, where students are more likely to resolve issues without adult intervention. This improved behavior makes classroom management more proactive than reactive, allowing teachers to focus on instruction. According to Davidoff et. al (2021), SEL programs help students succeed by fostering emotional intelligence, which is closely tied to academic performance and social behavior. The narratives highlight the vital role of empowering student voice and emotional expression in classroom management. By fostering a safe and non-judgmental environment, the teacher encourages students to articulate their feelings, which in turn provides insight into the root causes of their behavior. This practice not only supports emotional well-being but also allows the teacher to tailor interventions more effectively. Moreover, involving students in rule-setting empowers them, making them active participants in maintaining classroom order rather than passive recipients of discipline. This empowerment cultivates responsibility and self-regulation, contributing to a more positive

and cooperative classroom atmosphere. Encouraging student voice and emotional expression plays a transformative role in creating a supportive classroom culture. When students feel heard and understood, they are more likely to engage positively in learning and exhibit respectful behavior. Providing opportunities for emotional expression helps uncover underlying issues that may be influencing their actions, allowing the teacher to respond with empathy rather than punishment. This approach strengthens trust between students and teachers, which is essential in fostering mutual respect and cooperation within the classroom setting. In addition, giving students a role in establishing classroom norms promotes ownership and accountability. When learners are involved in creating rules and consequences, they are more invested in upholding them. This participatory approach helps students internalize expectations and encourages them to reflect on their actions. It also promotes a sense of fairness and equity, reducing power struggles and resistance. Ultimately, empowering students in this way supports not just classroom management but also their social-emotional development, helping them become more responsible and emotionally aware individuals.

3.2.2. Lack of Time and Institutional Support (Challenge)—Despite the benefits, many elementary teachers face challenges integrating SEL due to time constraints and a lack of institutional support. Teachers often feel pressured to prioritize academic instruction to meet curriculum targets, leaving little room for social-emotional activities. Moreover, some schools lack formal SEL programs or training, leading to inconsistent practices across classrooms. Teachers express frustration that while SEL is encouraged in theory, it is rarely supported with dedicated time, resources, or professional development. Without systemic support, the burden

of integrating SEL falls solely on teachers, making it difficult to sustain. As highlighted by Schonert-Reichl (2019), systemic approaches are essential to successfully embed SEL within schools, as individual efforts alone are not sufficient to create lasting change. The teacher's response emphasizes that integrating SEL significantly strengthens teacher-student relationships. By actively listening and validating students' emotions, the teacher builds trust and rapport, transforming the classroom dynamic into a collaborative partnership. This relational closeness fosters a sense of safety and belonging, which are essential for effective learning and behavior

management. When students feel valued beyond their academic performance, they become more cooperative and motivated, reducing conflicts and improving overall classroom climate. Thus, SEL integration is not only about skills development but also about nurturing meaningful connections that support both social and academic growth. The integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) transforms the traditional teacher-student dynamic into a relationship rooted in empathy, trust, and mutual respect. When teachers take time to acknowledge students' feelings, they create a safe environment where learners feel heard and understood. This emotional validation strengthens bonds, making students more receptive to guidance and more engaged in their learning journey. As

trust deepens, students become less defensive and more open to constructive feedback, which contributes to smoother classroom interactions and stronger behavioral outcomes. Moreover, the collaborative atmosphere fostered by SEL empowers students to take ownership of their actions and decisions. They are more likely to internalize class expectations and exhibit self-discipline when they feel emotionally supported by their teacher. This shift from compliance to cooperation not only reduces classroom disruptions but also enhances students' motivation and participation. In essence, SEL doesn't just promote emotional intelligence—it cultivates a nurturing classroom culture where academic and social success go hand in hand.

3.2.3. Impact of Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes on the Integration of Social-Emotional Learning in Classroom Management—This theme explores how teachers' personal beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions toward SEL influence their willingness and effectiveness in integrating social-emotional learning into their classroom management practices. Teachers who value SEL and understand its importance tend to be more motivated and creative in applying SEL strategies, which can lead to better student engagement and a more positive classroom environment. Conversely, teachers who are skeptical or less confident about their ability to implement SEL may face resistance or inconsistent application, limiting the potential benefits for students. This theme highlights the critical role of mindset and professional identity in shaping how SEL is embraced and practiced within educational settings. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes serve as a foundation for how effectively Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is integrated into classroom management. When educators genuinely believe in the value of SEL, they are more likely to invest the time and ef-

fort needed to embed it meaningfully into their daily routines. These teachers view SEL not as an extra task, but as an essential part of helping students grow holistically. Their positive outlook fosters creativity and consistency in using SEL strategies, which enhances classroom climate, promotes respectful behavior, and supports emotional development among students. In contrast, teachers who are unsure about SEL or feel unprepared to apply it may struggle to maintain consistent implementation. Doubts about its relevance or a lack of confidence in facilitating emotional conversations can lead to missed opportunities for connection and growth. This hesitation can affect the classroom atmosphere, making it less responsive to students' emotional needs. Therefore, teacher mindset plays a pivotal role—not just in whether SEL is used, but in how deeply and effectively it is integrated. Ongoing training and reflective practice are key to nurturing more supportive beliefs and strengthening teachers' confidence in using SEL tools. The participants' reflections reveal how teacher beliefs and attitudes critically influence the integration of SEL in classroom manage-

ment. Initially focusing on traditional discipline, the teacher's evolving mindset to value social-emotional aspects marks a significant shift toward a more holistic approach. This change fosters greater patience, empathy, and flexibility, which enhance the teacher's capacity to manage behavior constructively. The acknowledgment that SEL is a continuous learning process also highlights the importance of professional growth and openness to new strategies. Teachers' attitudes thus play a foundational role in either facilitating or hindering the successful incorporation of SEL practices in educational settings. The teacher's experiences highlight the powerful role of mindset in shaping how social-emotional learning (SEL) is implemented in classroom management. Transitioning from a rule-centered perspective to one that prioritizes emotional understanding shows a meaningful shift in values. This evolution allows the teacher to respond to students with increased compassion and insight, leading to more effective behavior support and deeper connections. It also reflects a recognition that classroom discipline is more sustainable when grounded in empathy and emotional awareness rather than authority alone. Moreover, the teacher's acknowledgment of SEL as a continuous journey underscores the

importance of ongoing reflection and growth in professional practice. Embracing SEL requires not just skill but also a willingness to evolve personally and professionally. Teachers who adopt this mindset become more adaptable and resilient, better equipped to meet the diverse emotional needs of their students. Ultimately, this openness lays the foundation for a positive classroom culture where students feel seen, supported, and motivated to engage both socially and academically. Figure 4 illustrates three key themes drawn from the experiences of teachers in integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into classroom management: enhancing student engagement and reducing behavioral issues, the challenge of lacking time and institutional support, and the impact of teacher beliefs and attitudes. The first theme underscores a major benefit—when SEL is integrated into the classroom, students tend to become more engaged and display fewer behavioral problems. Teachers find that fostering emotional expression, empathy, and relationship-building encourages a more positive learning environment, making students feel safe, respected, and motivated to participate constructively. This benefit directly links SEL to improved classroom climate and academic readiness.

3.3. Educational Management Insights are Drawn from the Findings of the Study — The experiences of elementary teachers in integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into classroom management offer valuable educational insights that highlight the evolving nature of effective teaching practices. As these teachers navigate the balance between academic instruction and students' emotional development,

their experiences shed light on the importance of empathy, relationship-building, and student-centered approaches in creating a positive learning environment. These insights emphasize that classroom management is no longer just about enforcing rules but also about fostering emotional awareness, resilience, and mutual respect—key elements that contribute to both student well-being and academic success.

3.3.1. SEL as a Foundation for Holistic Education—A major insight emerging from teacher experiences is that SEL forms the founda-

tion of holistic education. Teachers recognize that emotional well-being is deeply connected to academic success and that teaching

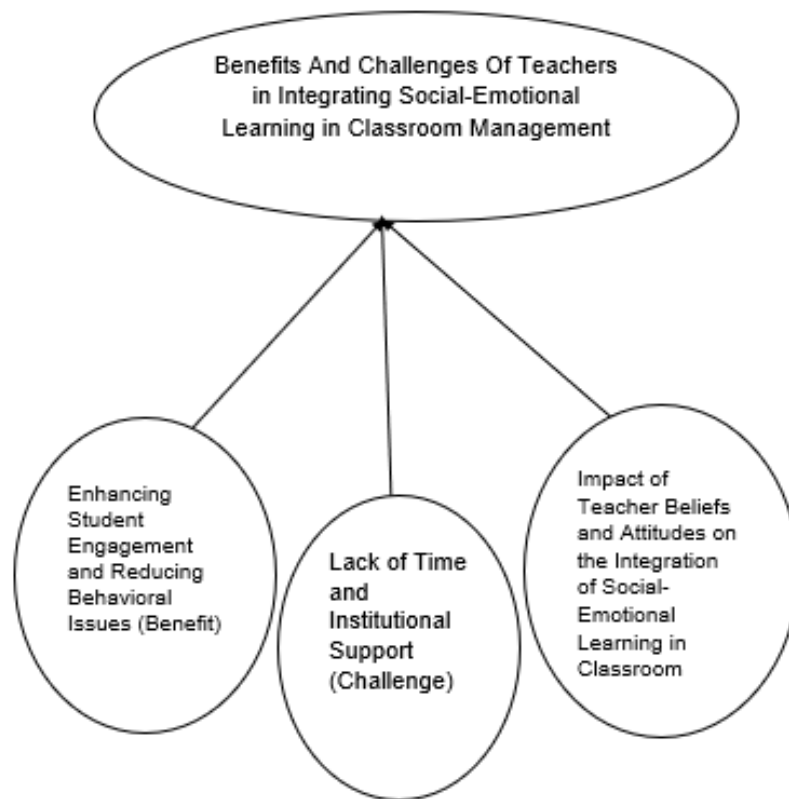


Fig. 4. Benefits and Challenges of Teachers in Integrating Social-Emotional Learning in Classroom Management

cannot be effective without addressing students' social and emotional needs. This understanding has shifted how some educators perceive their role—not just as content deliverers, but as emotional guides. They now see classroom management not just as discipline, but as nurturing behavior through empathy, communication, and trust. SEL encourages teachers to develop classroom practices that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and student-centered. As Zins and Elias (2020) argue, emotional and social competencies are essential for students' long-term success, and their development should be as prioritized as academics. The integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has led to a significant shift in how teachers perceive their roles in the classroom. According to the interviewee, SEL allows teachers to go beyond simply delivering content to also becoming emotional mentors who nurture students' well-being. This transition reflects an understanding that education is most effective when it considers the whole child, not just their academic needs. By supporting students emotionally, teachers help build a foundation for academic success and

lifelong learning. Through the practice of SEL, classroom management transforms from being reactive to proactive. The interviewee noted that rather than correcting behaviors in the moment, SEL helps address their root causes by fostering empathy, communication, and trust. This new perspective helps establish a classroom culture that values respect, inclusivity, and emotional safety. Students are more likely to behave positively when they feel emotionally secure and understood, making learning environments more harmonious and productive. Ultimately, the interview underscores that SEL is a cornerstone of holistic education. It enables teachers to address the interconnectedness of emotional and cognitive development. This approach encourages inclusive, student-centered practices that allow learners to thrive both socially and academically. As supported by Jagggers (2019) promoting emotional and social competencies should be as important as academic instruction. By treating students as whole individuals, educators can foster a deeper, more meaningful learning experience.

3.3.2. The Need for Continuous Professional Development—Another insight is the pressing need for ongoing professional development on SEL. Many teachers feel underprepared and rely on self-study or informal resources. Structured training would empower them with evidence-based strategies and confidence to implement SEL effectively. Teachers believe that continuous learning in SEL could help bridge gaps in practice and promote consistency across classrooms. They also emphasize the importance of including SEL in teacher preparation programs and school-based learning sessions. Supportive leadership and collaboration with peers are also essential to successful SEL implementation. According to Jagggers (2019) SEL programs are more effective when teachers

receive proper training and administrative backing, underscoring the need for an institutional commitment to SEL integration. The teacher's response to the second theme highlights a crucial challenge in effectively implementing SEL: the lack of formal and continuous professional development. The interviewee mentioned relying heavily on self-study and informal learning opportunities, such as webinars and online articles, which although helpful, do not provide the structured support needed for consistent implementation. This lack of access to comprehensive training creates uncertainty and inconsistency in how SEL is practiced in classrooms, potentially limiting its impact. Teachers recognize that ongoing, structured training would empower them with the necessary tools, strate-

gies, and confidence to integrate SEL more effectively. They advocate for sessions that go beyond theory and focus on real classroom scenarios, allowing educators to share experiences and collaborate on best practices. The absence of such professional development creates a gap between recognizing the importance of SEL and actually applying it with fidelity. Furthermore, the interviewee emphasized the role of school leadership in supporting SEL through institutional commitment. When administrators value SEL and integrate it into school-wide goals, it signals to teachers that this work is essential and supported. According to Renshaw et al. (2019), teacher training and administrative backing significantly enhance the effectiveness of SEL programs. Therefore, promoting continuous professional development and institutional support is essential for making SEL an integral and sustainable part of classroom management and educational practice. Figure 5 presents key educational management insights derived from the study, highlighting two interconnected domains: SEL as a Foundation for Holistic Education and The Need for Continuous Professional Development. These elements emphasize

the importance of a holistic and responsive educational leadership model. Institutional support ensures that leadership addresses the immediate and long-term needs of both learners and staff. Meanwhile, the strategic implementation of integrating social-emotional learning in classroom management: benefits and challenges among elementary teachers empowering teachers through professional autonomy and collaboration recognizes the vital role educators play and the importance of their voice in shaping school policies and practices. From an educational management perspective, these components contribute significantly to the creation of a nurturing and effective school environment. According to Hallinger and Heck (2021), leadership that fosters teacher empowerment and institutional responsiveness positively affects school improvement and student learning outcomes. Additionally, integrating social emotional learning implemented, they create systemic support that reinforces not only student success but also teacher satisfaction and retention. Thus, these insights offer a valuable framework for school leaders aiming to foster sustainable, inclusive, educational systems.

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study's findings on the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in classroom management among elementary teachers. It outlines the key implications and offers recommendations for future initiatives to strengthen SEL practices in schools.

4.1. Findings—The research explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers, focusing on both the benefits and challenges they encounter in embedding SEL into their daily classroom routines. These experiences highlight the pressing need for structured SEL programs, sup-

portive school leadership, and adequate training. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of empowering educators through sustained professional development and collaborative practices that not only enhance classroom dynamics but also promote teacher well-being, emotional resilience, and professional fulfillment.

4.2. Implications—

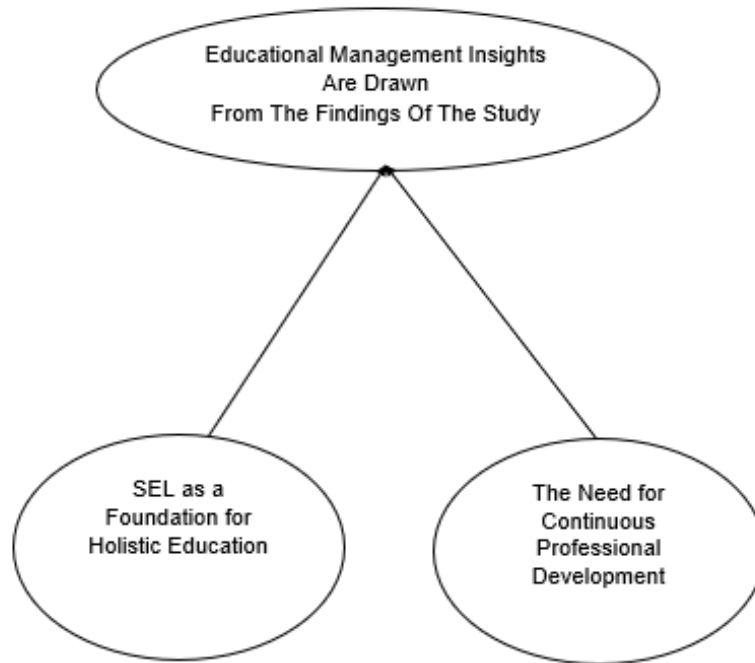


Fig. 5. Educational Management Insights are Drawn from the Findings of the Study

The findings of this study reveal that the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into classroom management significantly shapes the teaching practices and professional experiences of elementary teachers. When SEL is effectively embedded, it enhances not only classroom harmony but also students' overall development, resulting in improved academic and behavioral outcomes. Teachers who integrate SEL report greater job satisfaction and stronger student relationships. This implies that SEL should not be treated as an add-on but as a core component of effective classroom management and holistic education. However, persistent challenges such as time constraints, insufficient training, and lack of institutional support hinder consistent and meaningful SEL implementation. Many teachers feel ill-equipped to deliver SEL strategies systematically due to limited professional development and competing curricular demands. This highlights the need

for educational systems to adopt a proactive stance by institutionalizing SEL through structured programs, embedded training, and practical resources. Without addressing these barriers, even well-intentioned efforts risk becoming unsustainable, leaving teachers overburdened and students underserved. Another key implication centers on the role of teacher attitudes, resilience, and emotional competence. While many teachers demonstrate commitment and creativity in navigating the integration of SEL, relying solely on individual efforts is insufficient. Systemic support—such as school-wide SEL policies, leadership engagement, and accessible mental health resources—is essential. Promoting SEL effectively requires a shift in school culture toward valuing emotional learning as much as academics. This ensures not only teacher effectiveness but also their emotional well-being, fostering a more responsive and empathetic learning environment.

4.3. Future Directions—

This study suggests that the Department of Education must lead in institutionalizing SEL by embedding it in national curriculum frameworks and teacher development programs. Policies should include clear standards for SEL integration, training modules for teachers, and monitoring systems that assess implementation fidelity and impact. By prioritizing emotional intelligence alongside academic achievement, DepEd can better prepare students for lifelong success and equip teachers with the tools to manage classrooms more effectively and empathetically.

School Heads/School Principals

School leaders are central to the success of SEL integration. This research underscores the need for principals to create supportive school environments where SEL is valued and practiced school-wide. This includes providing regular training, encouraging collaboration among teachers, and modeling emotionally intelligent leadership. Principals should advocate for reduced administrative burdens to give teachers more time to plan and implement SEL activities. By cultivating a culture of empathy and open communication, school heads can promote both student development and teacher well-being.

Other Stakeholders (Parents, Community, LGUs)

Community involvement is essential in reinforcing SEL beyond school walls. Parents and local partners can support SEL by participating in school-led initiatives and modeling positive behaviors at home. Local government units may also assist in funding or facilitating wellness and SEL campaigns. This collaboration bridges the gap between home and school, ensuring stu-

dents receive consistent emotional support and fostering a community-wide commitment to empathy, resilience, and mutual respect.

Teachers

Teachers play a vital role in operationalizing SEL in daily practice. This study encourages teachers to remain proactive in seeking out SEL training, collaborating with colleagues, and integrating SEL in creative and culturally relevant ways. Teachers should also prioritize their own emotional wellness, as their capacity to model and guide students' social-emotional growth is deeply connected to their own resilience and well-being. Building support networks and engaging in reflective practice can sustain their motivation and effectiveness in the classroom.

Learners

Learners benefit by developing the ability to understand and manage their emotions. SEL helps them recognize feelings such as frustration, anger, or anxiety and respond in healthier ways, leading to a more positive learning experience.

Future Researchers

Further research may explore the long-term impact of SEL integration on teacher retention, student outcomes, and school climate. Comparative studies between urban and rural contexts, or among different grade levels, could offer insights into context-specific strategies. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to include voices of students, school leaders, and families to capture a more comprehensive view of SEL's role in education. Disseminating these findings through academic journals and professional learning communities can help scale best practices across different school systems.

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