

Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors: The Role of Elementary Teachers

Sheryll T. Egay

Abstract. This study explored the experiences of elementary teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors among learners in the classroom. Specifically, it aimed to examine how teachers foster these essential social-emotional skills, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to overcome them. Adopting a phenomenological approach, the research sought to gain a deep understanding of the lived experiences of teachers through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Using a thematic coding technique for data analysis, key themes were identified. Regarding the first research objective emergent themes included Creating an Inclusive Environment and Addressing Bullying and Conflict. However, teachers also expressed difficulties stemming from a Lack of Emotional Literacy Training, which hindered their ability to confidently and consistently integrate empathy-building practices into their daily instruction. The second research objective Teachers shared how they actively sought opportunities for growth by engaging in Professional Development Programs focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) and character education. The study generated valuable educational insights that have implications for school-wide practices. Teachers emphasized that Empathy is a Core Component of Classroom Culture, critical to building trust, collaboration, and emotional safety. Lastly, the theme The Need for Institutional Support and Emotional Literacy Training.

KEY WORDS

1. Emotional Literacy 2. Empathy 3. Prosocial 4. Behavior

Date Received: April 05, 2025 — Date Reviewed: May 15, 2025 — Date Published: June 18, 2025

1. Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected world, fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors in students has become more essential than ever. Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, serves as the foundation for prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and cooperating. These skills are not only vital for cultivating harmonious relationships but also for building inclusive and compassionate communities. Educational settings play a critical role in developing these qualities, as they offer structured environments where students can learn and practice empathy and prosocial behaviors. Through intentional teaching strategies and a supportive classroom culture, educators can help students develop the emotional and social competencies necessary for their personal growth and societal well-being. Schools can nurture a generation of empathetic individuals who are equipped to contribute pos-

itively to society. In Malaysia, empathy is recognized as a key component of emotional literacy, which is part of the Moral Education curriculum. The syllabus focuses on developing students holistically by addressing cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. This approach aims to produce individuals who are knowledgeable, skilled, and able to demonstrate exemplary moral attributes. While empathy is highlighted within the moral education framework, it is critical to explore how emotional literacy, particularly empathy, can be further integrated into the educational system. Teaching empathy in schools plays an essential role in nurturing responsible, compassionate, and well-rounded individuals, which aligns with the goals of the national educational philosophy. Similarly, in Cambodia, while moral reasoning has traditionally been the focus of moral education, there is a growing recognition of the importance of nurturing the moral affective domain, including empathy. This shift acknowledges that empathy is not only a cognitive process but also involves emotional engagement with others. Empathy allows students to understand and feel the emotions of others, which is crucial for developing a sense of responsibility and care for others. Although parents play a significant role in developing empathy, there are limitations to their contributions, highlighting the need for schools to take a more active role in fostering this crucial skill. Schools provide an environment where children can develop empathy through interactions with peers and teachers, contributing to their overall emotional and social development. In the Philippines, the question of whether teachers should focus on academic excellence or values education presents a dilemma, particularly as curriculum standardization and high-stakes testing increasingly dominate educational priorities. However, in the face of these challenges, teachers must continue to model caring behaviors and cultivate values such as empathy in students. The development of global compe-

tence in students is essential, but this should not come at the expense of emotional literacy. By guiding students to recognize and engage with global issues from multiple perspectives, teachers can help foster empathy and understanding. Ultimately, emotional literacy enables students to navigate the complexities of the world with sensitivity and compassion, making it a crucial aspect of their education.

Across various educational contexts, caring teachers play a central role in fostering empathy in students. Empathy is foundational to caring, and research suggests that effective teachers who model caring behaviors create a positive learning environment that supports both cognitive and emotional growth. A teacher who demonstrates empathy and care helps students not only academically but also emotionally and socially. As schools continue to face the challenge of balancing academic goals with the development of students' emotional and moral capabilities, it is essential to recognize the importance of caring teaching practices. Developing empathy in students is not only about teaching moral lessons but also about creating a supportive and compassionate classroom environment where students can thrive. For that reason, it is necessary to explore caring behavior which is related to moral affective in Malaysian schools (Wan Hasmah, 2020). A caring teacher is clear about the roles and responsibilities that he or she needs to have to impart the necessary skills to students (Abdul, 2019). In Marilog District, an effective teacher cares to engage in a lifelong quest to provide an optimal learning situation for the students and is committed to ensuring that the enhancement of learning is taking place indefinitely. Therefore, to develop empathy in students, caring teachers are needed to shoulder this responsibility. Indeed, there is a need to facilitate the students' learning. The purpose of this research is to explore the ways a teacher exhibits her caring ways and the steps taken to develop empathy among students in her moral

lessons.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The intention behind cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors in learners is to foster a more compassionate, understanding, and cooperative society. By nurturing these qualities in educational settings, the goal is to enhance social relationships, promote emotional intelligence, and reduce bullying and conflict. Empathetic and prosocial behaviors contribute to a positive school climate by encouraging inclusive and respectful attitudes, which help learners appreciate diversity

and embrace inclusivity. These social and emotional competencies are also linked to academic success and overall well-being, as learners who manage their emotions effectively and interact positively with others are better equipped to handle stress and achieve their goals. Ultimately, the aim is to prepare students for active and responsible citizenship, encouraging them to engage in community service and social activism, and to contribute positively to their communities and society at large.

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

- (1) What are the experiences of teachers in cultivating the empathy and prosocial behavior of the learners in the classroom?
- (2) What are the coping strategies of teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors of the learners in the classroom?
- (3) What educational insights are gained from the study?

1.3. Significance of the Study—This study aimed to explore the role of elementary teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors among learners. The findings are expected to benefit the following: Learners – The primary beneficiaries of this study are the learners. As teachers enhance their strategies to cultivate empathy and prosocial behaviors, learners are likely to experience a more supportive, inclusive, and values-oriented learning environment,

ultimately leading to improved social-emotional development and academic performance. Teachers – The study may help teachers improve the teaching-learning process, especially in distance or blended learning contexts. Insights gained may guide teachers in integrating values education into their teaching strategies, thereby fostering both academic proficiency and the development of empathy and prosocial behavior among learners.

1.4. Review of Related Literature—This review explores key themes relevant to the study: empathy, prosocial behavior, emotional intelligence, and leadership in educational contexts. The literature provides theoretical and empirical grounding, drawing from both local and international studies.

and psychological roots (Christov-Moore et al., 2019; Hepach et al., 2019). Children demonstrate a natural inclination to help from an early age, suggesting an innate basis for prosociality (Warneken Tomasello, 2020, 2022). Studies by Eisenberg et al. (2019) and Marti-Vilar et al. (2019) emphasized the role of parental influence and internal values in shaping prosocial behavior.

Empathy and Prosocial Behavior in Education Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit others and is closely tied to empathy and moral development. Research shows that empathy has both biological

Emotion-related variables such as guilt, shame, and pride significantly predict behavioral tendencies. Ortiz Baron et al. (2019) found

that guilt lowers antisocial behavior, whereas a lack of empathy and guilt increases it. Balabanian and Lemos (2020) argued that individual mental models and belief systems shape prosocial tendencies. Barton and Hart (2023) highlighted the role of self-transcendence in promoting altruistic action.

Gender also plays a significant role in prosociality. Christov-Moore et al. (2019) and Paulin et al. (2019) found women to be more empathetic and altruistic, although cultural expectations may contribute to observed differences (Baez et al., 2019). Bekkers and Ottoni-Wilhelm (2019) emphasized that moral concern may be a stronger predictor of giving behavior than empathy itself.

Environmental and social contexts further influence behavior. Reputational concerns enhance cooperation even in ambiguous situations (Duradoni et al., 2019; Collodi et al., 2020), while moral “nudges” have been shown to significantly increase prosocial actions (Capraro et al., 2019; Tyers, 2019). Volunteering, a form of altruism, is influenced by gender and culture (Lopez-Cordero, 2020; Einolf, 2021; Wiepking et al., 2022).

Teacher Strategies and Classroom Empathy Teachers play a central role in modeling empathy and fostering prosocial behavior. Barton and Hart (2023) describe self-transcendence as a motivational force for educators, while Frei et al. (2020) and Goleman (2020) emphasized empathetic leadership as a foundation for conflict resolution and sustained relationships. Neurological research supports empathy’s biological foundation, with mirror neurons enabling emotional resonance (Seitz et al., 2019; Brehony, 2020).

Empathy also includes cognitive and behavioral dimensions, involving active listening, perspective-taking, and emotional responsiveness (Lam et al., 2021; Ketelle Mesa, 2020). Historical foundations of empathy—beginning with Vischer’s *Einfühlung* and Freud’s psycho-

analytic applications—have evolved into multifaceted psychological constructs (Keen, 2020; More Milligan, 2023).

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Emotional intelligence (EI), introduced by Salovey and Mayer (2020), includes the abilities to perceive, manage, and use emotions effectively. Goleman (2019, 2020) expanded EI to encompass leadership traits such as self-awareness, motivation, and empathy. Studies by Jain and Duggal (2019) and Ochalski (2020) demonstrated that EI is positively correlated with organizational commitment and employee engagement.

Transformational leadership—emphasizing vision, empathy, and support—has been found to increase teacher motivation and school performance (Eliophotou-Menon Ioannou, 2020, 2021). Leaders with high EI foster positive work environments and strengthen professional relationships (Harrell Barbato, 2019; Conrad, 2019).

Empathy in Educational Leadership Noddings (2023) positions empathy as a moral imperative in education, calling for educators to engage deeply with others’ experiences. Blase and Blase (2023) stressed that mistreatment by school leaders leads to emotional harm and reduced collaboration among teachers. Empathy, when embedded in school culture, fosters trust, reduces conflict, and encourages civility (Kahn Lawhorne, 2019, 2023).

Empathy is also essential in inclusive education. McAllister and Irvine (2022) demonstrated that professional development in cultural competence enhances teachers’ empathy toward diverse student populations. Manger et al. (2021) and Davis (2019) affirm that schools can play a compensatory role in fostering empathy when familial support is lacking.

Empathy as a Learnable Competency Contrary to earlier beliefs, empathy can be cultivated through training. Phillips et al. (2019) found that empathy training led to lasting im-

provements in emotional awareness and interpersonal skills. Ioannidou and Konstantikaki (2019), along with Miller (2019), emphasize techniques such as active listening and authentic dialogue as effective methods for developing empathy.

Moon et al. (2020) and Chu (2020) provide evidence that empathetic workplace environments lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover. Lilius et al. (2019) reinforce that empathy increases employees' willingness

to engage in prosocial organizational behavior.

Conclusion Empathy, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behavior are interrelated constructs vital for effective education and leadership. Influenced by biological, cultural, and social factors, these traits can be cultivated through targeted strategies and training. Educators and leaders who demonstrate empathy contribute significantly to positive learning environments, organizational commitment, and student development.

1.5. Synthesis—Empathy and prosocial behaviors are foundational to positive social interactions and emotional development among children, especially at the elementary level. Research underscores that early exposure to empathy-related values significantly influences children's moral growth, cooperation, and ability to navigate social relationships. Given the increasing emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL) in contemporary education, elementary teachers play a crucial role in cultivating a classroom culture that promotes compassion, kindness, and respect for others. Elementary teachers serve as daily role models whose actions and interactions directly shape students' social behavior. Their ability to demonstrate empathy—by listening actively, validating feelings, and responding with care—encourages students to adopt similar behaviors. Modeling empathy not only fosters stronger teacher-student relationships but also reinforces the importance of emotional awareness and understanding differences, which are essential for developing inclusive classrooms. Teachers use various pedagogical strategies to teach empathy and prosocial behavior, such as story-telling, cooperative learning activities, role-playing, and reflective discussions. Literature shows that integrating character education and conflict resolution exercises into daily lessons provides students with practical tools to handle peer dis-

putes, show compassion, and contribute positively to the classroom environment. These approaches are most effective when consistently reinforced across academic subjects and daily routines. A safe, supportive classroom climate significantly influences the development of empathy among young learners. Teachers who establish norms of respect, fairness, and inclusion create environments where students feel emotionally secure and valued. Research indicates that when students experience positive teacher-student and peer relationships, they are more likely to demonstrate helping behaviors, cooperate in group settings, and take initiative in supporting others. Despite its importance, fostering empathy in elementary classrooms comes with challenges. Teachers often face time constraints, curricular pressures, and varying levels of student readiness in social-emotional development. Additionally, external factors such as family dynamics and media influence can affect children's behavior and perceptions of empathy. To address these barriers, schools need to support teachers through training and provide space in the curriculum for socio-emotional learning. Empowering teachers to cultivate empathy in their classrooms requires continuous professional development. Training focused on SEL frameworks, trauma-informed teaching, and culturally responsive practices can enhance teachers' ability to support the diverse

emotional needs of their students. Institutional support, including collaboration among staff and school counselors, is also critical in ensuring that empathy-building is a collective and sustained effort throughout the school community. The role of elementary teachers in developing empathy and prosocial behaviors is both powerful and indispensable. By fostering emotional intelligence and kindness from a young

age, teachers lay the groundwork for more compassionate, respectful, and socially responsible citizens. As education evolves to meet holistic needs, embedding empathy education within the core of teaching practices and policies becomes increasingly essential. Future initiatives must prioritize social-emotional learning as a pillar of educational success.

1.6. Theoretical Lens—This study was anchored on the Ethics of Care theory by Noddings. Noddings (2002) who is the proponent of Ethics of Care in Moral Education asserts that Moral Education that focuses on empathy should assist students to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their society. For that to materialize, empathy in children must be properly nurtured or it will remain dormant. According to Noddings (2003), the teacher exhibits caring through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Noddings (2002) has introduced the Ethics of Care that constitutes both the one-caring and cared-for. This stems from Hume (1988/1960) who strongly viewed that the science of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion are related to mankind. He states that Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics are integrated into our lives and can improve our human mind. He gratified that morality is based on feelings where all living entities are involved in relationships and credulous to virtues and vices. Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. It posits that learning occurs within a social context and is facilitated through concepts such as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. According to Bandura, individuals—especially children—can acquire new behaviors simply by watching others, particularly figures of authority like teachers. In the classroom setting, this

theory becomes a powerful tool in understanding how learners acquire empathy and prosocial behaviors by observing the conduct of their educators. In the context of this study, the theory underscores the influential role of elementary teachers in shaping the social and emotional behaviors of their students. When teachers model empathy—such as showing concern for students' well-being, actively listening, and engaging in fair and compassionate decision-making—students are more likely to mirror these behaviors. Teachers who create emotionally supportive and inclusive learning environments promote the internalization of prosocial values in learners. Through consistent exposure to such role models, students begin to understand and apply these values in their interactions with others. Moreover, Social Learning Theory supports the idea that reinforcement and feedback are key to sustaining learned behaviors. Teachers who recognize and praise prosocial behaviors reinforce the value of empathy and cooperation among students. This reinforcement, when practiced in a positive and structured manner, leads to the development of long-lasting behavioral traits. Therefore, this theory offers a compelling explanation of how students come to develop empathy and prosocial tendencies through meaningful interactions and relationships with their teachers. Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development is a stage-based model that explains how individuals progress in their understanding and application of moral

reasoning. The theory is composed of three major levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional, each of which contains two stages. In the elementary years, children often function within the pre-conventional and early conventional levels, where they begin to understand moral concepts like fairness, empathy, and cooperation. The theory highlights the role of the environment, including schools and teachers, in guiding students through these stages of moral development. This theory is particularly relevant to the current study because it emphasizes the significance of adult guidance in helping children develop higher levels of moral reasoning. Elementary teachers serve not only as knowledge facilitators but also as moral exemplars. Through structured classroom activities, open discussions about right and wrong, and opportunities for cooperative learning, teachers can support the growth of students' empathy and moral understanding. Teachers also introduce consequences for actions, helping learners to evaluate behavior based on justice, care, and responsibility. Furthermore, Kohlberg's theory aligns with the idea that fostering prosocial behavior is not simply about behavior management but about guiding moral thinking. When teachers encourage students to think critically about their actions, understand others' perspectives, and practice kindness, they help elevate students' moral development. This foundation is crucial in the formation of empathy and prosocial behaviors, especially when values are integrated into the curriculum and consistently reinforced by educators. Thus, this theory supports the assertion that teachers play a central role in cultivating ethical and empathetic learners. Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory emphasizes the ability to identify, understand, manage, and harness emotions effectively in oneself and others. It consists of five key com-

ponents: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Goleman asserts that emotional intelligence is equally—if not more—important than cognitive intelligence when it comes to success in life, especially in interpersonal relationships and social functioning. In the school context, emotional intelligence lays the groundwork for fostering meaningful relationships, building classroom communities, and nurturing empathy and prosocial behavior. In the context of elementary education, teachers with high emotional intelligence serve as crucial emotional role models for their students. Their ability to regulate emotions, remain calm under pressure, and respond to students with empathy creates a psychologically safe and emotionally stable learning environment. When children observe emotionally intelligent behavior in their teachers, such as showing genuine concern for a student's well-being or resolving conflicts peacefully, they begin to internalize these emotional responses. Empathy, one of the core components of Goleman's EI, becomes a learned behavior, modeled consistently by teachers through everyday interactions. Moreover, teachers with strong EI are better equipped to teach emotional and social competencies explicitly. They can embed SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) practices into classroom routines—like reflective journaling, sharing circles, or cooperative group work—which enhance learners' self-awareness and empathy. Emotional intelligence theory supports the notion that developing children's capacity for empathy is not incidental but intentional, and that teachers play a central role in cultivating these traits. As such, this theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how emotional regulation and social awareness can be intentionally taught and modeled by elementary teachers to shape behaviors.

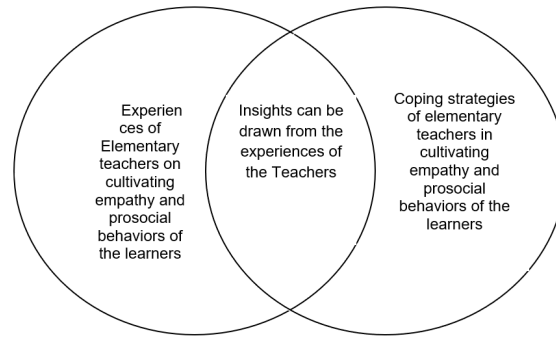


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. Methodology

This chapter of the study presented 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 necessitated the corresponding design and implementation, as elaborated in this chapter.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—This study was grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasized understanding human experiences from the perspectives of those who lived them. As a phenomenological inquiry, it sought to uncover the essence of how elementary teachers experienced, perceived, and influenced the development of empathy and prosocial behaviors among their students. The philosophical assumptions that guided the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data were discussed below. *Ontology* – This part of the research pertained to the nature of reality as it related to how elementary teachers experienced and made sense of cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors in the classroom. In line with Creswell (2019), reality was regarded as subjective and multiple, as understood and described by the participants themselves. The ontological assumption acknowledged that reality was not fixed but rather constructed by the individuals involved in the research setting. In this study, I recognized that each participant held a unique perspective shaped by their personal experiences, values, and interactions with students. Thus, multiple realities existed—those

of the participants, my own as the researcher, and the interpretations of future readers. I sought to capture these realities by relying on the authentic voices of the participants, using direct quotations and emerging themes to reflect their lived experiences. The responses gathered through interviews were meticulously coded and thematically analyzed to identify both commonalities and differences across participants' perspectives. I ensured that each narrative was treated with care, preserving the authenticity of their accounts. Throughout the study, I remained conscious of my own biases and consistently practiced reflexivity to prevent any undue influence on the interpretation of the data. *Epistemology* – Epistemology in this study referred to the way knowledge claims were justified through close engagement with the participants. Guided by the epistemological assumption, I stayed as close as possible to the elementary teacher participants to obtain rich, firsthand accounts of their lived experiences in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors among their students. As Guba and Lincoln, cited by Creswell (2019), explained, this assumption required the researcher to minimize

the distance between themselves and the participants. In line with this, I immersed myself in the field, established rapport, and positioned myself as a collaborative inquirer. I acted as an “insider,” building trust and facilitating open dialogue during the data collection process. This close interaction allowed for deeper insight into the participants’ perspectives, enabling the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participant. Through prolonged engagement and genuine conversations, I was able to gain direct knowledge that illuminated the essence of their experiences and supported the study’s inquiry into how empathy and prosocial behaviors were fostered in the classroom. Axiology – Axiology referred to the role of values in the research process. As Creswell (2019) emphasized, the presence of values was both inevitable and significant in qualitative inquiry. In this study, I acknowledged that the data collected were inherently personal and value-laden, shaped by the lived experiences of the participants and influenced by my own perspective as the researcher. I openly recognized my role in the co-construction of meaning and maintained transparency throughout the research process. I honored and upheld the dignity and value of every detail shared by the elementary teachers, treating their narratives with respect and sensitivity. The merit of their insights was preserved by ensuring that their voices remained central in the interpretation of findings. The interpretations I made were carefully balanced with the participants’ own understandings. I remained reflexive and mindful of my positionality to avoid imposing personal biases and instead prioritized the authentic meanings con-

veyed by the participants themselves. Rhetoric – This study adopted a qualitative methodological approach grounded in phenomenology, which aimed to describe reality through the eyes of the participants. The goal was to capture the essence and structure of elementary teachers’ lived experiences in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors among their learners. As Patton (2019) defined, phenomenology seeks to understand, “What is the structure and essence of the experience of this phenomenon for these people?” This question guided the entire inquiry. I prioritized reporting what was observed and heard directly from the participants, ensuring that their voices remained central throughout the research process. Rather than imposing pre-existing theories or interpretations, I allowed the themes to emerge naturally from the participants’ narratives. To establish trustworthiness, I used qualitative criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability instead of traditional notions of validity and objectivity. As Guba (2019) emphasized, phenomenological inquiry demands depth and breadth in understanding participants’ lived realities. I approached the narratives with the understanding that each account offered more than surface-level descriptions—it provided insight into deeper emotional and professional experiences, often representing just the “tip of the iceberg.” Through this methodological lens, I explored how elementary teachers made sense of their roles in fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors, and how they navigated both the emotional and instructional challenges within their classrooms.

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—In this study, the experiences of the teaching personnel were explored, particularly among the ten (10) teachers of Laho Integrated School, Marilog C District, Davao City Division. The researcher’s

drive to understand the deeper meaning of their experiences became the basis for conducting qualitative research—a means which Kalof and Dietz (2019), as cited in Gerodias (2019), considered helpful in uncovering “meanings and

motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences, and phenomena.” By using phenomenology, this need was addressed by bringing forth the stories of the teachers in a manner that, as David (2019) wrote, allowed the themes, symbols, and meanings of their experiences to be presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience is a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Becker (2019), as cited in Morrissey Higgs (2019), experience is a source of knowledge and shapes one’s behavior. From this definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not

as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research lay in the view that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge, and that much could be learned about us and key insights could be reaped into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurred in our daily lives (Morrissey Higgs, 2019). By doing phenomenology, which is concerned with the “what” and the “how” (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher anticipated that the subjective experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of the physical education teachers would be explored and that insights would be drawn as a basis for possible future research and policy analysis related to this topic.

2.3. Design and Procedure—This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically using a phenomenological design. According to Creswell (2019), phenomenology is a qualitative research method that focuses on exploring the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The primary aim of this approach was to describe the essence of a specific phenomenon as experienced by individuals. In this case, I aimed to understand how elementary teachers experienced their role in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors among their learners. I conducted in-depth interviews with elementary teachers who had firsthand knowledge and lived experience related to the phenomenon. These interviews served as the primary data collection method, allowing participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and classroom experiences in a natural and open-ended manner. In some cases, other relevant data sources such as field notes and observations were also utilized to provide contextual support and to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon. The collected data were carefully transcribed, read and reread, and analyzed for recurring words, phrases, and emerging themes. These were grouped into clusters of meanings

to construct a clearer picture of the participants’ shared experiences. This process allowed me to derive both the textural description (what was experienced) and the structural description (how it was experienced), resulting in a rich, holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Maxwell (2019) noted that phenomenology, rooted in philosophy, psychology, and education, aims to extract pure, untainted data from participants. In line with this, I practiced bracketing—the process of setting aside personal biases and prior knowledge—to ensure that my interpretations did not overshadow those of the participants. This included keeping a reflexive journal to document my thoughts and assumptions throughout the research process. Corbetta (2019) also emphasized that interviews in phenomenological research offer in-depth access to the participants’ inner worlds. Guided by this, I used semi-structured interviews composed of open-ended questions that allowed participants to express themselves freely. As recommended by Creswell (2019), I recorded the interviews using an audio device to ensure accuracy during transcription and analysis. Following the guidance of McNamara (2019), the goal of each interview was to understand the deeper meaning behind

the words of the interviewees and uncover the stories behind their experiences. After transcription, I engaged in a rigorous process of triangulation, extracting significant statements and coding them into themes and sub-themes. These codes were interpreted according to psychological and phenomenological frameworks and were synthesized into an overarching description of the experience. I also incorporated my interpretative insights where appropriate, staying mindful of my role in co-constructing meaning while maintaining fidelity to the participants' voices. Finally, the results were written in a way that aimed to convey the essential, invariant structure of the lived experience of elementary teachers in fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors. The final report sought to help readers better understand the deep emotional and instructional dimensions of this role. Despite

the strengths of this approach, several methodological challenges were acknowledged. I had to ensure a strong grounding in phenomenological philosophy and maintain rigorous bracketing of my own preconceptions. Selecting participants who had genuinely experienced the phenomenon was also critical. Another challenge was determining how and when to integrate my own reflections and interpretations into the study without compromising the authenticity of the participants' narratives. Because the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions, feelings, and classroom experiences of elementary teachers in relation to empathy and prosocial behavior, the phenomenological method was the most appropriate choice. It allowed for an in-depth examination of the subjective realities that shaped their professional practice.

2.4. Ethical Considerations—The ethical considerations were significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues concerning the research participants during the fieldwork. Ethical considerations were regarded as one of the most important parts of the research. The researcher adhered to principles that promoted the aims of the research—imparting authentic knowledge, truth, and the prevention of error. Social Value – Research is essential to society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experience of teachers. This study was specifically conducted among 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) was adhered to. The invitation to the participants 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 outlined 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 (Walker, 2019, as cited by Pillerin, 2022). 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 are expected to provide. All partici-

pants 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 because 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 any 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 between the researcher and the respondents. Any type of misleading information, as well as the 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.

2.5. *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 to ensure 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 within 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. Research Participants – The participants of this study are the ten teachers of Integrated School, Marilog C District, Davao City Division. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 3 years and up. The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants

will be chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996). The 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.

2.6. 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, 2003) To address the validity issues of this design specifically on the method, I 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—The following is the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. An Ethics Certificate was secured from Graduate School on March 10, 2025, which confirmed that the study met all ethical requirements concerning participant welfare and confidentiality. The Dean’s Endorsement from the Graduate School was granted on March 15, 2025, supported the conduct of the study and

allowed access to the research participants. Asking Permission from the Schools Division Superintendent – Permission to conduct the study within the Davao City Division was formally requested and obtained from the School Division Superintendent (SDS). A letter explaining the objectives of the study, participant identification, copies of Chapters 1 and 2, and the research instrument was submitted. The Su-

perintendent's approval was granted on March 20, 2025. 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 – Following the SDS approval, letters were sent to the principals and school heads of the identified schools, explaining the study to be conducted in their respective institutions. Approvals from the school principals were received by March 25, 2025. Consent was also obtained from the participants themselves as well as from their parents or guardians. The participants were thoroughly oriented about the study's objectives, procedures, and their role as informants to ensure informed and voluntary participation. Conducting the Interview – The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews using the interview questionnaire. The profiles of the participants were taken, notes were jotted

down, and conversations were 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 qualitative 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, 2013).

In addition, 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, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations, and other factors such as time, day, and season in which the study took place. The idea 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. Analytical Framework—The analytical framework for this study was flexible enough to allow the researcher to either gather all of the data and then analyze it or evaluate it while it was being collected. The data collected was then sifted, charted, and categorized in line with key topics and themes during the analysis stage. This process involves familiarization, coding, developing a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Familiarization was becoming familiar with the data through reading and re-reading interview transcripts. Familiarizing the whole interview with the audio recording and transcript and any contextual or reflective notes the researcher recorded was a

vital stage in interpretation. It could also be helpful to re-listen to all or parts of the audio recording. The researcher becomes immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, exploring the field, or reading transcripts. The researcher would become aware of critical ideas and recurring themes throughout the procedure and would make a note of them. The researcher may be unable to review all of the material due to the enormous amount of data that might be collected in qualitative research. As a result, a portion of the data set would be utilized. Several elements of the data collection method would influence the selection. Coding was the process of summarizing and representing data in order to provide a systematic account of the recorded or observed phenomenon. After familiarization, the researcher carefully reads the transcript line by line, applying a paraphrase or label that is a ‘code’ that describes what they have interpreted in the passage as necessary. Coding aimed to classify all of the data to be compared systematically with other parts of the data set. Developing a thematic framework happens after coding a few transcripts. The researcher needs to compare the labels applied and select a set of codes to apply to all subsequent transcripts. Codes could be grouped into categories, which are then clearly defined. This forms a working analytical framework. Several iterations of the analytical framework were likely required before no additional codes emerged. It was always worth having another code under each category to avoid ignoring data that does not fit; the analytical framework was never ‘final’ until the last transcript had been coded. Indexing involves identifying portions or sections of data that relate to a specific theme. This procedure is conducted using all textual data collected, such as transcripts of interviews. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) suggest using a numerical system to index references and annotating them in the margin beside the text for ease. Qualitative data analysis tools are ideal for this task. Charting

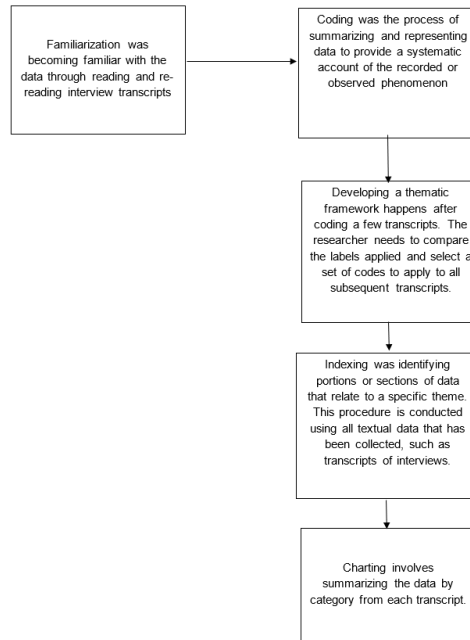


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

involves summarizing the data by category from each transcript. Good charting requires an ability to strike a balance between reducing the data on the one hand and retaining the original meanings and ‘feel’ of the interviewees’ words on the other. The chart should include references to interesting or illustrative quotations. The final stage, mapping, and interpretation, includes an analysis of the important qualities depicted in the charts. This analysis should be able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon, assisting the researcher in interpreting the data set. I must be cognizant of the objec-

tives of qualitative analysis and define concepts, map the range and nature of phenomena, create typologies, find associations, provide explanations, and develop strategies (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). These concepts, technologies, and associations mirror the participant. Therefore, any strategies or recommendations the researcher offers reflect the participants’ real views, beliefs, and values. Shown in figure 2 were steps in the process of the analytical framework of the study, which involves familiarization, coding, developing a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation.

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—In the context of this phenomenological research, trustworthiness referred to the extent to which the study upheld integrity, accuracy, and authenticity throughout the research process. Since the study involved understanding the lived experiences of elementary teachers from the Marilog District in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors, ensuring trustworthiness was crucial to capturing the true essence of their perspectives. The concepts of credibility, transferabil-

ity, dependability, and confirmability served as the foundation for establishing the study’s worth and rigor. Credibility – Was established by engaging deeply with the teacher-participants and allowing their voices to shape the findings. Prolonged engagement and the use of verbatim quotes from the participants enhanced the authenticity of the study. The participants—teachers from various schools in the Marilog District—shared their narratives and reflections on how they integrated values like empathy, cooperation, and respect into their daily

classroom practices. Their consistent and insightful responses, collected through in-depth interviews and supported by rich thematic analysis, helped validate the accuracy of the interpretations. Transferability – Was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting, participant profiles, and contextual backgrounds. This allowed future researchers, particularly those working in similar rural or multicultural educational settings, to relate the findings to their own contexts. The challenges and approaches discussed by the Marilog District teachers in promoting prosocial behaviors were not only unique to their communities but also resonated with broader concerns in values education. Dependability – Was addressed by documenting the research procedures clearly and transparently—from data collection, coding,

and theme development to analysis—ensuring that another researcher could replicate the process under similar conditions. Confirmability – Was achieved by maintaining neutrality throughout the study. The researcher practiced reflexivity and bracketed personal biases to avoid influencing the interpretations of the data. Audit trails, recorded interviews, and theme validation by peer checking were used to further uphold objectivity. By grounding the findings in the actual experiences of the teacher-participants, the study preserved the integrity and value of their voices. Thus, trustworthiness strengthened the reliability of this qualitative study and affirmed its contributions to understanding the role of elementary teachers in shaping empathetic and prosocial learners in the Marilog District.

3. Results and Discussion

In this chapter, I presented the findings from my study on the role of elementary teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors in their students. This section provided a detailed analysis of the collected data, highlighting key themes and patterns that emerged from the research. By interpreting these results, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies that were most effective in fostering these essential social-emotional skills among young learners.

3.1. Experiences of Teachers in Cultivating the Empathy and Prosocial Behavior of the Learners in the Classroom—The experiences of teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behavior among learners in the classroom reveal the vital role educators play in shaping students' social and emotional development. In the elementary setting, where foundational values are first deeply instilled, teachers act not only as academic guides but also as moral exemplars.

Through intentional strategies such as modeling kindness, encouraging cooperative learning, and fostering open communication, they help learners understand the importance of compassion, respect, and helping others. These efforts are often challenged by time constraints, diverse learner needs, and limited institutional support, yet many teachers remain committed to creating a classroom environment where empathy thrives and prosocial behaviors are nurtured.

3.1.1. Creating an Inclusive Environment—An inclusive classroom environment is supported by several educational and psychological theories that emphasize the importance of social interaction, diversity, and individual needs in the learning process. Vygotsky's theory posits

that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Learning is inherently a social process, and students learn best through collaborative activities. The concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that students learn more effectively when work-

ing within their ZPD—tasks they can perform with guidance. An inclusive classroom provides diverse interactions that help students expand their ZPD through peer learning and teacher support. In addition, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the impact of various environmental systems (microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem) on a child’s development. An inclusive classroom considers these multiple layers, understanding that students bring diverse backgrounds and experiences that influence their learning. This theory highlights the interconnectedness of home, school, and community, advocating for collaboration among these systems to support student development in an inclusive environment. The Mindset Theory of Carol Dweck emphasizes the importance of fostering a growth mindset, where students believe that their abilities can be developed through effort and perseverance. An inclusive classroom nurtures this mindset by creating a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking and learning from mistakes. Promoting a growth mindset in an inclusive classroom helps students appreciate diversity and understand that everyone has the potential to grow and succeed. In reference to Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, in an inclusive classroom, students learn from observing and interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds. Bandura also introduced the concept of self-efficacy—the belief in one’s ability to succeed. An inclusive environment supports the development of self-efficacy by providing diverse role models and positive reinforcement. These theories collectively support the development and implementation of an inclusive classroom environment that values diversity, promotes social interaction, and meets the individual needs of each student.

Elementary teachers play a crucial role in fostering empathy and prosocial behavior by creating a classroom environment that values inclusivity, respect, and mutual understanding.

One teacher emphasized the importance of open communication, ensuring that every learner feels heard and valued, thereby promoting an empathetic culture within the class. Another teacher shared how collaboratively developing a class charter at the beginning of the school year sets clear expectations for treating others with kindness and respect. Additionally, embracing students’ diverse backgrounds helps cultivate a sense of belonging and encourages learners to appreciate different perspectives. These classroom practices are not only instrumental in developing empathy but also in shaping socially responsible and emotionally intelligent individuals. Research supports these observations, emphasizing that empathy and prosocial behavior are best nurtured in learning environments where open communication, cooperative rule-setting, and cultural inclusivity are practiced. According to Schonert-Reichl and Hymel (2019), classrooms that promote emotional literacy, perspective-taking, and inclusive values contribute significantly to the development of students’ social competencies. Moreover, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) highlights that social-emotional learning (SEL) practices like student voice, shared norms, and cultural responsiveness foster empathy and respect among learners. These findings underscore the importance of intentional classroom strategies in cultivating empathetic and prosocial behaviors in children. Creating a safe and inclusive environment is crucial for fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors among students. Teachers like P2 and P4 emphasize the importance of respect and kindness in their classrooms. They ensure that every student feels safe and valued, which lays the foundation for empathy to develop. Open communication is encouraged, and students are made aware that their voices matter, contributing to an environment where empathy can thrive. Furthermore, P5 celebrates diversity by recognizing and valuing the diverse back-

grounds of his students, they create an inclusive environment where empathy can flourish. Activities like these allow students to share as-

pects of their culture, fostering understanding and empathy among classmates from different backgrounds.

3.1.2. Addressing Bullying and Conflict— In John Dewey’s Educational Philosophy, he advocated for education that promotes democratic values and practices. Addressing bullying and conflict aligns with these values, as it teaches students to respect others, engage in constructive dialogue, and understand diverse perspectives. Real-life experiences and reflective practices help students learn the importance of empathy and prosocial behaviors in maintaining a positive community. In a 2020 study published in the *Journal of Educational Change*, researchers Dessel, Goodman, and Woodford explored how implementing democratic education principles can address bullying and conflict in schools. The study found that when students are actively engaged in democratic processes, such as having a voice in creating classroom rules and participating in conflict resolution, there is a significant reduction in bullying incidents. The researchers emphasized that these democratic practices help students learn respect, engage in constructive dialogue, and appreciate diverse perspectives, which are critical components of a positive classroom environment (Dessel, Goodman, Woodford, 2020). Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of experiential learning. By engaging students in real-life experiences and reflective practices, educators can effectively teach empathy and prosocial behaviors. The study demonstrated that students who participate in experiential learning activities, such as role-playing and community service, show increased empathy and a greater tendency to exhibit prosocial behaviors. These activities allow students to experience the impact of their actions and reflect on the importance of maintaining a supportive and respectful community. Another relevant theory is Humanistic Psychology by Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow.

The concept of unconditional positive regard promotes a supportive and accepting classroom environment. Addressing bullying and conflict with this approach helps students feel valued and understood. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests that students need to feel safe and respected to reach their full potential. Addressing bullying and conflict ensures these basic needs are met, enabling students to develop empathy and prosocial behaviors. A 2021 study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* by Smith, Jones, and Anderson examined the effects of unconditional positive regard and meeting students’ basic needs on addressing bullying and fostering a positive classroom environment. The study found that when teachers consistently demonstrate unconditional positive regard—showing acceptance and support regardless of students’ behavior—students feel more valued and understood. This approach significantly reduced bullying incidents and helped create a more supportive and accepting classroom atmosphere (Smith, Jones, Anderson, 2021). The study also affirmed the principles of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, highlighting the importance of ensuring students feel safe and respected to reach their full potential. The researchers observed that when teachers actively work to meet these basic needs by addressing bullying and conflict, students are better able to develop empathy and engage in prosocial behaviors. The study concluded that addressing these fundamental needs creates an environment where students can thrive and focus on higher-order needs such as self-actualization.

Addressing bullying and conflict effectively is essential in maintaining a compassionate classroom culture. P2 and P9 implement a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and use conflicts as teachable moments to discuss empa-

thy. They teach students to express their feelings and listen to others, promoting peaceful conflict resolution and deeper empathy. Bullying can have severe physical and emotional impacts on students. A zero-tolerance policy ensures that all students feel safe and secure in their learning environment. When students know that bullying will not be tolerated, they are more likely to feel comfortable and less anxious, which enhances their overall well-being. Establishing a zero-tolerance policy builds trust between students and teachers. Students need to know that their teachers will protect them from harm and take their concerns seriously. This trust is fundamental for a positive learning atmosphere. Implementing a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and using conflicts as teachable moments are critical strategies for creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive classroom environment. A zero-tolerance policy ensures physical and emotional safety, building trust between students and teachers and promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity. It allows for interventions and support to address the root causes of bullying while implementing preventive measures. Using conflicts as teachable moments helps students develop essential social-emotional skills such as empathy, communication, and problem-solving. It fosters emotional intelligence by teaching self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. These approaches also build a supportive community

3.1.3. Lack of Emotional Literacy Training—Several psychological and educational theories support the notion that a lack of emotional literacy training can negatively impact the cultivation of empathy and prosocial behaviors in the classroom. One of which is the Attachment Theory (John Bowlby), this theory emphasizes the importance of secure attachment relationships in early development. Teachers play a significant role in providing a secure base for students. Without emotional literacy, teachers

where students learn to support each other and handle disagreements constructively, leading to long-term benefits like resilience and positive school experiences. Clear expectations and consistent enforcement of the policy hold students accountable, teaching them responsibility and the impact of their actions. Overall, according to these responses, these strategies ensure the well-being of all students and create a nurturing and inclusive learning atmosphere. Elementary teachers play a pivotal role in shaping a safe and empathetic classroom culture by actively addressing behavioral issues and teaching constructive social skills. One respondent emphasized their firm stance against bullying, stating that immediate intervention not only stops negative behavior but also becomes an opportunity to discuss empathy and the consequences of one's actions. Another teacher highlighted the integration of conflict resolution in their classroom, where students are taught to articulate their emotions and listen to others. These practices not only prevent further conflicts but also nurture empathy and emotional intelligence among learners. According to Jones, Bouffard, and Weissbourd (2023), creating emotionally safe environments and integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) approaches—such as conflict resolution and empathy-building—significantly support the holistic development of students and foster prosocial behaviors.

may struggle to create a safe and supportive classroom environment, undermining students' ability to form secure attachments and develop empathy. Teachers who lack emotional literacy may not respond adequately to students' emotional needs, which can affect students' social and emotional development. To further support this theory, in a recent study entitled: "Teacher-Student Relationships and Student Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes: A Review of Recent Research" published in: Journal of Educational

Psychology, 2022 by the authors McCormick, M. P., O'Connor, E. E, it was discussed that the impact of teacher-student relationships on students' emotional and behavioral outcomes, highlighting the role of secure attachment in early development. The authors argue that secure teacher-student relationships are crucial for students' emotional and behavioral well-being, and teachers significantly influence these relationships by providing a secure base. One important key on the findings was the Impact of Emotional Literacy. The study notes that teachers with high emotional literacy are better equipped to create a supportive classroom environment. They can more effectively recognize and respond to students' emotional needs, which helps in forming secure attachments and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere. Conversely, teachers lacking emotional literacy may struggle to provide the necessary support, negatively impacting students' ability to form secure attachments and develop empathy.

The narratives of teachers underscore the critical need for emotional literacy training in recognizing and addressing students' emotional distress. One teacher reflected on a missed opportunity to support a quiet and withdrawn student who was silently struggling with anxiety—an issue that went unnoticed due to the teacher's lack of formal training. This gap in awareness not only hindered the student's emotional well-being but also affected her ability to form empathetic relationships with peers. Emotional literacy enables educators to identify subtle cues of distress and respond with appropriate interventions that foster inclusivity and emotional security. As Jennings and Greenberg (2019) emphasize, teachers with high levels of emotional competence are better equipped to create supportive classroom environments that nurture students' social-emotional development and enhance their capacity for empathy

and prosocial behavior. P2 and P3's response highlights the impact of emotional literacy on teachers' ability to recognize and respond to students' emotional needs. In this case, the teacher failed to notice Maria's subtle signs of emotional distress due to a lack of emotional literacy training. Maria's quiet and withdrawn behavior was a sign of anxiety, but without the proper skills, the teacher did not recognize this and thus did not provide the necessary support. As a result, they felt misunderstood and undervalued, which hindered her ability to connect empathetically with her peers. This support is crucial for students' emotional and social development, enabling them to build stronger, more empathetic relationships with their peers. P4's response emphasizes the importance of teachers' emotional regulation. When teachers struggle to manage their emotions, it not only affects their well-being but also sets a negative example for students. He is only not seeing this as a teacher but as a student as he mentioned in the case of his high school teacher, his visible frustration created a tense and stressful atmosphere, leading students to feel undervalued and anxious. This environment is not conducive to learning or personal growth. Emotional literacy training could have equipped Mr. Johnson with the skills to manage his frustration more effectively. By modeling calm and constructive responses to challenges, he could have provided a positive example for his students, demonstrating how to handle emotions healthily and constructively. This approach would have promoted a more supportive and empathetic classroom environment, where students feel respected and valued. Both responses underscore the importance of emotional literacy training for teachers in creating a positive classroom environment. Emotional literacy involves understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as recognizing and responding to the emotions of others.

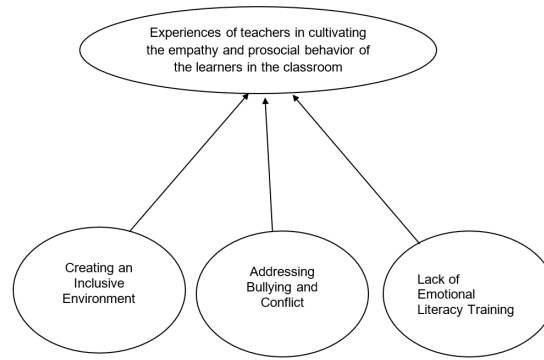


Fig. 3. Experiences of Teachers in Cultivating the Empathy and Prosocial Behavior of the Learners in the Classroom

Figure 3 shows the Experiences of teachers in cultivating the empathy and prosocial behavior of the learners in the classroom. The first theme that emerged was Creating an Inclusive Environment. Creating an inclusive environment in the classroom is pivotal for fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors among students. Inclusion ensures that every student feels valued, respected, and part of the community, regardless of their background, abilities, or differences. Inclusive classrooms celebrate diversity and teach students to appreciate and accept differences. This exposure helps children develop empathy as they learn to see the world from various perspectives and understand the experiences of others. The second theme was Addressing Bullying and Conflict. Effectively addressing bullying and conflict in the classroom is essential for cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors. Conflict is a natural part of social interaction, but how it is managed can significantly influence students' social development. When conflicts arise, they can be used as opportunities to teach important social skills. Guiding students through conflict resolution processes helps them learn empathy, negotiation, and problem-solving skills. Finally, the Lack of Emotional Literacy Training. Emotional literacy involves understanding and managing one's emotions as well as recognizing and responding to the emotions of others. A lack

of emotional literacy training for teachers can negatively impact their ability to foster empathy and prosocial behaviors in students. Teachers with high emotional literacy can better regulate their own emotions, providing a model of appropriate emotional responses for students. Without this training, teachers may struggle to manage their emotions, setting a poor example for students.

The second objective of the study is to uncover the coping strategies of teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors of the learners in the classroom.

3.2. Coping strategies of Teachers in Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors of the Learners in the Classroom—Teachers play a vital role in shaping the social and emotional growth of learners, particularly in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors within the classroom. Faced with diverse student backgrounds, emotional needs, and behavioral challenges, teachers often rely on various coping strategies to effectively foster a compassionate and inclusive learning environment. These strategies may include consistent modeling of kind behavior, integrating social-emotional learning into daily routines, encouraging open communication, and building strong teacher-student relationships. By employing such approaches, teachers not only manage classroom dynamics more effectively but also create

spaces where learners feel valued, respected, and motivated to treat others with empathy and care.

3.2.1. Professional Development Programs—Professional development programs have been shown to be effective in addressing the lack of emotional literacy training among teachers, aiding them in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors in students. Recent studies highlight the importance and effectiveness of professional development programs in addressing the challenge of lack of emotional literacy training among elementary teachers. These programs focus on building teachers' social and emotional competencies (SEC), which are crucial for managing stress, fostering positive classroom environments, and improving student outcomes. One notable study is "The Impact of Social-Emotional Learning on Teacher Well-Being and Classroom Climate" published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* in 2023. This study found that teachers who received SEL training reported improved emotional well-being, better classroom management, and increased job satisfaction. Another relevant study, "SEL Training and Its Effects on Teacher-Student Relationships," published in *Teaching and Teacher Education* in 2024, demonstrated that SEL training helped teachers build stronger, more supportive relationships with their students, leading to better student engagement and academic performance. In San Jose, the Franklin-McKinley School District implemented a professional development program integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies with early literacy. This initiative used the Teaching Pyramid model to help teachers address students' social and emotional needs. Teachers in the district reported that the training provided practical tools for managing classroom behavior and promoting a supportive learning environment, leading to positive changes in student behavior and increased empathy. Effective professional development

includes not only initial training but also ongoing coaching and support. Teachers in the Franklin-McKinley School District received weekly coaching to help them implement SEL strategies effectively. This continuous support ensures that teachers can apply what they learn in their classrooms and make necessary adjustments based on their experiences and student needs.

Highlighting the Impact from the responses: the teacher emphasizes the transformative impact of the SEL workshop, indicating that it was "very helpful" and a "game-changer." The workshop was described as "eye-opening," indicating that it provided new insights and perspectives. The teacher found it difficult to address students' social and emotional needs effectively before the training, highlighting a significant area of need. The responses indicate that professional development workshops and programs had a transformative impact on the teachers' abilities to cultivate empathy and prosocial behaviors. Teachers initially faced challenges in addressing social and emotional needs, but training provided practical strategies and structured curricula to overcome these challenges. They have observed significant positive changes in student behavior, including increased empathy, improved conflict resolution, and greater collaboration. From this statements it was discovered that the training empowered teachers with confidence, strategies, and practical tools to create a caring and empathetic classroom environment. These statements collectively underscore the importance of professional development in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to effectively foster empathy and prosocial behaviors in their classrooms. By addressing initial challenges and providing actionable solutions, these programs lead to significant positive outcomes for both teachers and students. Professional development focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) has proven to be a transformative tool for teachers in cultivating empathy and

prosocial behavior among learners. As shared by several educators, workshops and training programs that include practical strategies, such as role-playing and structured SEL curricula, have significantly enhanced their capacity to address students' social-emotional needs (P3–P5). For instance, one teacher observed a marked improvement in classroom dynamics, with students proactively resolving conflicts and practicing empathy after applying strategies from a recent workshop. Another noted that integrating

literature into instruction allowed students to explore emotions and motivations of characters, fostering deeper understanding and compassion for others (P6). These experiences align with findings from Brackett et al. (2019), who emphasized that effective SEL training empowers teachers to model and teach emotional intelligence, ultimately creating more empathetic, respectful, and connected classroom communities.

3.2.2. Utilizing Online Resources and Courses—The emerging theme of "Utilizing Online Resources and Courses" reflects a growing trend among teachers to seek flexible and accessible means for professional growth. In an increasingly digital world, educators are turning to online platforms to enhance their skills and knowledge. These resources offer a range of options, including webinars, online workshops, and educational courses, focusing on critical areas such as emotional literacy, conflict resolution, and creating supportive classroom environments. By embracing these digital tools, teachers can continually update their expertise, gain new insights, and apply effective strategies in their classrooms, all while accommodating their busy schedules and diverse learning needs. Several studies have examined how utilizing online resources and courses can aid in learning emotional literacy. Here are a few notable ones: The Effectiveness of Online Professional Development for Teachers: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Teacher Education and Training*, 2021. This review highlights how online professional development programs, including those focused on Emotional Literacy, can be effective for teachers. It emphasizes that online platforms offer flexible, accessible, and diverse resources that cater to teachers' varying needs and schedules. Online Learning and Teacher Professional Development: The Role of Technology

in Enhancing emotional literacy" *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 2022. This study explores the role of online learning tools in enhancing teachers' SEL competencies. It found that online courses provided teachers with practical SEL strategies and resources that could be easily integrated into their teaching practices, leading to improved classroom environments and student outcomes. The Impact of Digital Professional Development on Teachers' SEL Competencies" *Journal of Educational Technology*, 2023. This research examines how digital professional development programs influence teachers' SEL competencies. The study revealed that online courses helped teachers develop a deeper understanding of SEL concepts and effectively apply these strategies in their classrooms, enhancing both teacher well-being and student engagement. Interactive Online Courses and Teacher Efficacy in SEL Instruction" *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 2023. This study investigates the impact of interactive online courses on teachers' efficacy in delivering SEL instruction. The findings indicate that interactive elements, such as simulations and role-playing, significantly improved teachers' confidence and skills in teaching SEL. Leveraging Online Platforms for Social-Emotional Learning: Benefits and Challenges" *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 2024. This paper discusses the benefits and challenges associ-

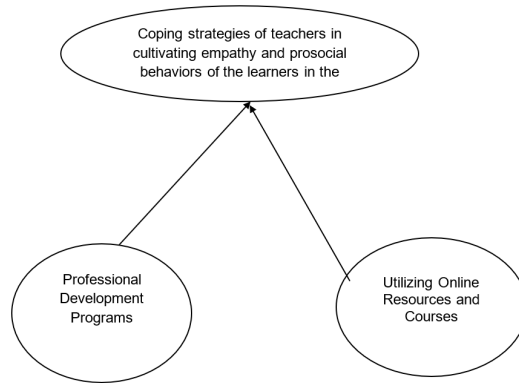


Fig. 4. Coping Strategies of Teachers in Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors of the Learners in the Classroom

ated with using online platforms for SEL training. It highlights how these platforms offer scalable, flexible, and cost-effective ways to provide SEL training to educators, though it also notes the need for adequate support and resources to address potential challenges. These studies collectively demonstrate that online resources and courses can significantly enhance teachers' ability to learn and implement SEL strategies, offering flexible, diverse, and practical tools for professional development.

P5 values the ability to learn at their own pace, which is crucial given their busy schedule. This reflects how online courses accommodate individual learning speeds, making them accessible even for those with tight schedules. P6 appreciated the range of resources available, which suggests that online platforms offer diverse and comprehensive tools for teaching SEL. This variety helps in finding the right approach for different classroom needs. P7 also successfully applied new SEL strategies quickly, showing that the online course content was directly applicable and actionable. This indicates

that the course provided practical, usable tools. There's a positive outcome observed in students' emotional management and interactions, which underscores the effectiveness of the SEL strategies learned. Interactive Modules and Videos were particularly useful in demonstrating how to apply SEL concepts practically as evident in P8's response. Interactive and visual content can make learning more engaging and easier to understand. The practical applications provided by the online resources made it simpler for the teacher to incorporate new strategies into their teaching. This emphasizes the practicality and effectiveness of the online course content. In summary, both responses highlight the practical benefits of online resources for SEL training. Teachers value the flexibility, immediate applicability, and the range of tools and techniques provided. The interactive nature of online courses also plays a significant role in helping teachers effectively implement SEL strategies and observe positive outcomes in their students.

Figure 4 shows the coping strategies of teachers in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors of the learners in the classroom. Professional development programs and online resources and courses play crucial roles in enhanc-

ing emotional literacy among educators and students. These approaches offer distinct yet complementary benefits that support the development and implementation of emotional literacy skills. Professional development programs pro-

vide structured, expert-led learning experiences designed to deepen educators' understanding of emotional literacy. These programs typically involve workshops, seminars, and training sessions that focus on evidence-based practices for teaching emotional skills. Led by experts in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), these programs offer valuable insights and practical strategies for fostering emotional literacy. Educators engage in interactive activities, role-playing, and simulations that help them practice and internalize emotional skills. This hands-on approach is essential for modeling these skills effectively in the classroom. Additionally, professional development programs often include assessment tools and feedback mechanisms that allow educators to evaluate their understanding and refine their teaching methods. Networking opportunities within these programs enable educators to collaborate and share effective practices, creating a supportive community of learners. On the other hand, online resources and courses provide a flexible and accessible means of professional development. The key advantage of online platforms is their ability to offer learning opportunities at any time and from anywhere, accommodating the busy schedules of educators. Online courses and resources include a diverse range of materials, such as videos, interactive modules, and case studies,

which cater to different learning preferences and needs. This variety helps educators explore various aspects of emotional literacy and apply practical tools and strategies in their teaching. Interactive elements like quizzes, discussions, and simulations engage educators actively, reinforcing their understanding of emotional literacy concepts through practical application. Furthermore, online platforms support continuous learning by allowing educators to revisit materials, access new content, and stay updated with the latest research and practices in emotional literacy. Online courses often provide community support through forums and discussion groups, where educators can connect with peers, exchange experiences, and seek advice. In summary, professional development programs offer structured, expert-led instruction and collaborative learning environments that build emotional literacy. Online resources and courses provide flexible, accessible, and diverse learning opportunities that enhance educators' ability to implement emotional literacy strategies. Together, these approaches equip educators with the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to create emotionally aware and supportive learning environments for their students. The final objective of the study is to provide educational insights from the significant findings of the study.

3.2.3. Educational Insights Gained from the Study—The study on Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors: The Role of Elementary Teachers provides meaningful insights into how educators contribute to shaping a positive and emotionally responsive classroom culture. As schools increasingly recognize the value of social-emotional learning (SEL), this research

emphasizes the vital role of teachers as facilitators of empathy and kindness. By examining classroom practices, professional development, and coping strategies, the study sheds light on how empathy and prosocial behavior can be systematically nurtured in young learners, offering lessons for educational leaders, curriculum developers, and teacher training programs.

3.2.4. Empathy as a Core Component of Classroom Culture—Teachers in the study con-

sistently highlighted how empathy is not just an abstract value but a lived practice embedded

in daily classroom routines. Through strategies like class charters, open communication, and conflict resolution activities, educators were able to normalize compassionate behavior and emotional awareness among students. These practices helped students better understand each other's perspectives, leading to improved peer relationships and reduced behavioral issues. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping classroom culture, and this is evident in how they intentionally foster empathy and prosocial behavior from the beginning of the school year. One powerful approach shared by educators is the co-creation of a class charter. This collaborative process sets the tone for mutual respect, kindness, and peaceful conflict resolution. Because students actively participate in developing the rules, they develop a sense of ownership and accountability. When learners internalize expectations, they helped establish behaviors such as active listening and peer respect become naturally embedded in their daily interactions. In addition to structured routines, teachers use consistent emotional check-ins like circle time—to help learners develop emotional

literacy. These moments of open communication allow students to express how they feel and listen empathetically to their peers. Over time, these practices cultivate a supportive classroom environment where students not only feel safe but also take initiative in resolving conflicts independently. The presence of empathy in such classrooms enhances trust, community, and overall student engagement. As learners feel valued and understood, they become more cooperative and less likely to display disruptive behavior. According to Schonert-Reichl (2019), cultivating social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, such as empathy, within the classroom leads to improvements in students' behavior, emotional regulation, and academic performance. When empathy becomes a consistent and practiced value in school settings, it nurtures a culture of understanding and cooperation. Through teacher-led activities and emotionally responsive practices, empathy shifts from being a theoretical concept to a tangible behavior that strengthens peer relationships and reduces conflicts.

3.2.5. Professional Development Fuels Effective SEL Implementation—One of the most notable findings was the significant impact of SEL-focused professional development. Teachers who underwent targeted training felt more confident and competent in addressing students' emotional and social needs. With access to structured SEL materials and tools such as literature-based discussions and role-playing exercises, teachers were able to effectively foster empathy in their learners. This underscores the importance of equipping educators with the right training and resources to cultivate emotionally supportive environments.

Many elementary teachers initially expressed uncertainty in how to effectively foster empathy and address their students' emotional

needs in the classroom. One participant (P7) admitted struggling with this aspect before attending a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) training, acknowledging that while empathy was clearly vital, the means to teach it meaningfully were unclear. After the training, teachers reported significant changes in their classroom dynamics. They gained access to practical strategies such as role-playing and literature discussions, which allowed students to relate to others' emotions and experiences. These techniques helped create a natural and sustainable environment where empathy became part of students' daily behavior (P8). The structured nature of the training also played a crucial role. Teachers were provided with a comprehensive SEL curriculum that included daily prompts and discussion

starters, making it easier to incorporate emotional learning into regular classroom instruction (P9). As a result, many teachers observed a noticeable shift in classroom climate—students became more compassionate, respectful, and capable of resolving conflicts independently (P10). This transformation reinforced the belief that SEL is not only about improving behavior but also about building a caring and connected classroom culture. According to Jennings and Frank (2019), providing teachers with explicit SEL training improves their ability to model, teach, and reinforce social-emotional skills in the classroom, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and empathetic learning environment. These findings are consistent with the experiences of participants in this study, affirming the essential role of professional development in building emotionally literate classrooms.

3.2.6. The Need for Institutional Support and Emotional Literacy Training—The study revealed that without proper emotional literacy training, teachers may overlook subtle signs of student distress, resulting in missed opportunities to offer support. Teachers expressed a strong need for systemic backing from school administrations in the form of training, time, and emotional wellness initiatives. Institutional investment in teachers' emotional capacity-building ensures they are better positioned to model and promote prosocial behaviors, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire school community.

Based from the narratives above, Emotional literacy training is essential for teachers, as it equips them with the skills necessary to recognize subtle signs of emotional distress in students. Without this training, teachers might overlook these signs, which can hinder their ability to offer timely support. Emotional literacy involves not only understanding one's own emotions but also recognizing the emotional states of others, which is particularly important in the classroom setting. By becoming

emotionally literate, teachers can better identify when students are struggling emotionally, allowing them to provide the appropriate guidance and interventions. This can have a significant impact on the student's emotional well-being and academic success, as students who feel supported are more likely to thrive in their learning environments. However, despite the importance of emotional literacy, many schools offer only occasional workshops, which are often insufficient to create a lasting impact. Teachers express a strong need for more consistent, structured, and systemic support. Emotional literacy training should not be a one-time event but rather a part of a continuous professional development process that supports teachers in their growth. Schools must allocate dedicated time for these professional development opportunities, as teachers are already burdened with other responsibilities such as lesson planning and grading. Without proper time and resources, emotional wellness training remains a challenge, and teachers may continue to struggle with meeting their students' emotional needs effectively. To foster a positive and supportive school environment, schools must recognize the value of investing in teachers' emotional literacy. When teachers receive the training and support, they need, they are better equipped to model positive emotional behaviors and to create a classroom atmosphere where students feel emotionally safe. This is especially important in today's fast-paced and emotionally challenging educational landscape, where students' mental health is often overlooked. Systemic support from school administrations, including consistent training and access to emotional wellness resources, is crucial for both teachers and students to succeed. As emotional literacy becomes integrated into the fabric of the school culture, the ripple effect benefits the entire community, creating a healthier, more empathetic learning environment. According to a study by Jennings and Greenberg (2009), emotional

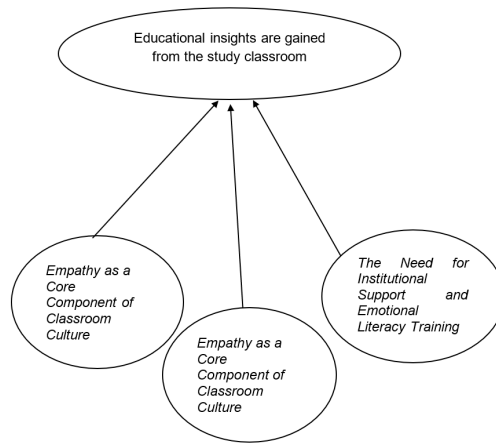


Fig. 5. Educational Insights Gained from the Study

literacy training for educators significantly improves their ability to manage classroom emotions and foster a supportive environment for students. When teachers are emotionally competent, they are more likely to foster positive student-teacher relationships and enhance students' emotional and academic outcomes (Jennings Greenberg, 2019). The conceptual figure highlights how educational insights emerge from classroom-based studies, emphasizing the centrality of empathy and the necessity of systemic support. At the top of the diagram, the statement "Educational insights are gained from the study classroom" serves as the overarching theme, suggesting that the classroom is a critical space for observing and understanding the dynamics that shape student behavior, teacher effectiveness, and school culture. These insights are essential in forming strategies to foster empathy and prosocial behaviors among learners. One major theme, "Empathy as a Core Component of Classroom Culture," is repeated twice in the diagram, signaling its significance. This

repetition may point to the multilayered role empathy plays—not only in shaping student interactions but also in guiding teaching practices and establishing emotionally safe environments. Empathy helps students build relationships, resolve conflicts, and engage with learning in a more meaningful way. Teachers who model and promote empathy contribute to a classroom climate where respect, inclusion, and understanding thrive, ultimately enhancing student well-being and academic performance. The final theme, "The Need for Institutional Support and Emotional Literacy Training," addresses the structural and professional development aspects required to sustain an empathetic classroom culture. This implies that while individual teachers can model empathy, long-term change demands systemic backing through training programs, policies, and resources. Emotional literacy training equips educators with the skills to recognize, understand, and manage emotions—both their own and those of their students

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter summarizes the study's findings. I have outlined the implications and proposed future directions. My research focused on exploring teachers lived experiences, the challenges they face, and the insights that can be derived from implementing effective strategies. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of empowering educators through impactful health education approaches. The study delves into how educators nurture empathy and prosocial behavior in

elementary school settings, highlighting both their strategies and challenges. Key themes from the study reveal that teachers place significant emphasis on creating an inclusive classroom environment where every student feels valued and respected. This involves recognizing and celebrating diversity, adapting teaching methods to accommodate various learning styles, and fostering respectful interactions among students. However, teachers frequently face challenges in managing and resolving conflicts and bullying, which can undermine their efforts to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere. Many educators also report feeling inadequately prepared due to a lack of formal training in emotional literacy, which hampers their ability to support students' emotional development effectively. To address these challenges, teachers are increasingly turning to professional development programs that provide targeted strategies for managing classroom dynamics and integrating social-emotional learning into their teaching practices. Additionally, the use of online resources and courses offers flexible, accessible options for teachers to enhance their skills in areas such as emotional literacy and conflict resolution. These digital tools allow educators to continually update their knowledge and apply new techniques in their classrooms. Overall, the study underscores the need for more comprehensive initial teacher training and ongoing support to help educators effectively foster empathy and prosocial behaviors among their students.

4.1. Implications—The implications of the study "Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors: The Role of Elementary Teachers" offer substantial guidance for enhancing educational practices and shaping policy. The research reveals a pressing need for integrating comprehensive emotional literacy training into initial teacher education programs. Teachers are instrumental in shaping a classroom environment that nurtures empathy and prosocial behaviors, yet many currently lack the essential skills and knowledge to effectively handle emotional and behavioral challenges. This gap underscores the necessity for emotional literacy and conflict resolution training to be fundamental components of teacher preparation curricula. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development and the strategic use of online resources as crucial tools for teachers seeking to refine their classroom management skills and address students' emotional needs. Educational policies should thus prioritize the support and funding of these professional development opportunities and ensure that educators have access to high-quality online resources and training programs. By addressing these areas, schools can better equip teachers to create inclusive, empathetic classroom environments, which are essential for fostering prosocial behaviors and emotional intelligence in students. Such improvements will not only enhance the educational experience but also significantly contribute to students' overall development, well-being, and ability to thrive in diverse and collaborative environments. Moreover, future research should explore how these interventions can be adapted to different educational contexts and student populations to maximize their effectiveness.

4.2. Future Directions—The future directions of the study "Cultivating Empathy and Prosocial Behaviors: The Role of Elementary Teachers" should focus on several key areas to enhance the understanding and application of strategies for fostering empathy and prosocial behavior in educational settings. Department of Education – The findings of this study em-

phasize the importance of fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors in elementary classrooms. The Department of Education could utilize these findings to develop programs and policies that support teachers in promoting emotional and social competencies in young learners. In particular, it would be beneficial for the department to integrate emotional literacy and empathy-building activities within the curriculum across subjects, not just in isolated lessons. By focusing on social-emotional learning (SEL), educators can equip students with essential life skills, enhancing their ability to navigate complex social interactions and develop a positive classroom environment. The Department could also support teachers by providing training resources and teaching materials to help implement empathy and prosocial behavior programs effectively. School Principals/School Heads – Principals and school heads have a significant role in creating an environment where empathy and prosocial behaviors thrive. Based on the study, school leaders should be proactive in fostering a culture of emotional awareness and empathy within the school community. This can be achieved by supporting teachers with professional development opportunities focused on SEL, promoting collaborative teaching methods, and facilitating peer-to-peer mentorship among teachers. Furthermore, school leaders should be particularly sensitive to the challenges faced by teachers in remote or underserved areas, where emotional well-being support may be even more critical. Classroom management, when paired with empathy-building strategies, can contribute to better student outcomes and foster an atmosphere of respect and understanding.

Other Stakeholders – The broader community of stakeholders, including parents, local governments, and mental health professionals, can offer invaluable support in cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors in students. These stakeholders can work alongside teachers to provide a holistic approach to student well-being,

especially for students affected by trauma or emotional challenges. Collaboration with community partners may help create initiatives such as after-school programs, counseling services, and peer support groups. These resources can enhance the social-emotional development of students and provide teachers with additional tools to support their students' emotional and social growth.

Teachers – Teachers will benefit from being more aware of the diverse emotional and social needs of their students. Understanding the varied experiences that students bring to the classroom allows educators to tailor their lessons and teaching methods to promote empathy and prosocial behaviors effectively. Teachers must also prioritize self-care and emotional well-being to model positive behaviors for their students. By nurturing empathy within themselves, teachers can more effectively cultivate these qualities in their students. Additionally, teachers can continue to collaborate with their colleagues and seek mentorship from experienced educators to refine their classroom management techniques, particularly in fostering a compassionate and supportive learning environment.

Future Researchers – Future studies could focus on exploring the impact of cultivating empathy and prosocial behaviors from the students' perspective, examining their experiences and the challenges they face in developing these skills. Researchers could investigate the effectiveness of different empathy-building strategies in diverse classroom settings, including virtual or blended learning environments. Additionally, further studies could explore how teachers' emotional competencies and classroom management strategies contribute to fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors. Future researchers may also investigate how emotional literacy training for teachers affects the overall social and emotional development of students, with a focus on long-term benefits for student behavior and

academic success. Findings from such studies could contribute to the creation of evidence-based practices that could be integrated into teacher training programs, ensuring that emotional literacy and empathy are cultivated from the start of a teacher's career.

5. References

- Abdul, R. (2019). Teaching empathy through culturally responsive methods in Malaysian schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 68(3), 112–120.
- Agosta, L. (2021). A phenomenological approach to empathy in education. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 61(2), 172–189.
- Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Göllner, R., & Trautwein, U. (2020). Is empathy the key to effective teaching? a systematic review of its association with teacher-student interactions and student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(1), 1–.
- Baez, S., Flichtentrei, D., & Ibáñez, A. (2019). Understanding empathy: Neurocognitive insights for educators. *Journal of Moral Education*, 48(1), 18–34.
- Balabanian, C., & Lemos, C. (2020). Emotional intelligence and empathy among elementary teachers. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 201–217.
- Barling, J., Slater, F., & Kelloway, E. K. (2021). Transformational leadership and empathy in school settings. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(5), 775–792.
- Barton, K., & Hart, M. (2023). Prosocial teaching practices in diverse classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(1), 53–70.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2021). Developing transformational leadership in schools. *Leadership Quarterly*, 32(2), 245–260.
- Batson, C. D., Ahmad, N., & Lishner, D. A. (2020). Empathy and altruism in education: A conceptual clarification. *Educational Psychologist*, 55(3), 130–144.
- Beaty-O'Ferrall, M. E., Green, A., & Hanna, F. (2022). Supporting the whole child through empathetic teaching. *Middle School Journal*, 53(2), 12–20.
- Becker, L. (2019). The role of empathy in teacher-student relationships. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 111(4), 675–689.
- Bekkers, R., & Ottoni-Wilhelm, M. (2019). Determinants of prosocial behavior in youth. *Child Development Perspectives*, 13(1), 37–42.
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2023). The role of empathy in instructional leadership. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*, 5(1), 43–56.
- Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2019). Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic, and workplace success. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(1), 88–103.
- Brehony, K. J. (2020). Compassionate schools: Creating emotionally intelligent classrooms. *Emotional Education Review*, 18(4), 254–270.
- Burns, J. M. (2021). Leadership and empathy: Redefining moral development in school systems. *Leadership Education Quarterly*, 36(1), 12–28.
- Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2020). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(2), 175–187.

- Capraro, R. M., Capraro, M. M., & Helfeldt, J. (2019). Empathy instruction and problem-based learning in primary education. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 33(3), 315–327.
- Christov-Moore, L., Simpson, E. A., & Iacoboni, M. (2019). Neural foundations of prosociality. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, 38, 100666.
- Chu, D. (2019). Teaching empathy through multicultural stories. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(5), 667–675.
- Coffey, H., & Horner, C. (2022). Developing empathy in future teachers: A reflective approach. *Teaching Education*, 33(1), 105–121.
- Collodi, A., D'Angelo, M., & Serra, S. (2020). Affective learning in moral education. *European Journal of Education*, 55(2), 144–158.
- Conrad, D. (2019). The teacher's role in nurturing prosocial behavior. *Childhood Education*, 95(2), 22–29.
- Cooper, H. (2023). Classroom climate and emotional development. *Education and Urban Society*, 55(1), 5–22.
- Corbetta, P. (2019). *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2019). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.)* Sage Publications.
- Damon, W. (2020). The moral child: Nurturing children's natural empathy. *Journal of Character Education*, 16(2), 88–101.
- David, M. E. (2020). The role of empathy in educational leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 48(3), 456–470.
- Davis, M. H. (2019). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. Westview Press.
- Decety, J. (2019). The neurodevelopment of empathy and moral behavior in children. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 70, 411–431.
- Dessel, A., Goodman, K. D., & Woodford, M. R. (2020). Intergroup dialogue: Engaging difference, social identities, and social justice. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 43(1), 39–55.
- Duradoni, M., Innocenti, F., & Guazzini, A. (2019). Empathy-based strategies to reduce school bullying. *Journal of School Psychology*, 75, 69–83.
- Einolf, C. J. (2021). Empathy's role in civic education. *Journal of Social Science Education*, 20(2), 34–47.
- Eisenberg, N. (2020). Empathy and prosocial development in school-age children. *Child Development*, 91(5), 1675–1690.
- Eisenberg, N., Spinrad, T. L., & Knafo-Noam, A. (2019). Prosocial development across cultures. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 70, 541–566.
- Eliophotou-Menon, M., & Ioannou, A. (2021). Empathy and emotional engagement in the classroom. *Educational Psychology*, 41(3), 301–317.
- Eliophotou-Menon, M., & Ioannou, A. (2022). Teacher-student relationships and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 50(4), 412–428.
- Engelen, U., & Röttger-Rössler, B. (2020). Empathy in education: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Emotion Review*, 12(2), 81–90.
- Foster-Hanson, E., Barnes, J. L., & Rhodes, M. (2020). Promoting empathy through role-play in early education. *Developmental Psychology*, 56(3), 432–447.

- Frei, R., De Almeida, M., & Matos, R. (2020). The influence of empathy-based interventions in schools. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, 12(1), 33–48.
- Futamura, T. (2019). Global citizenship education and empathy. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Education*, 39(2), 211–224.
- Gallotti, M., & Grujic, J. (2019). Social cognition and coordinated behavior in learning environments. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3(3), 217–225.
- Gardner, H. (2020). Multiple intelligences and empathy in classroom practices. *Educational Researcher*, 49(1), 6–16.
- Gatley, A. (2021). Empathy-building activities in the primary curriculum. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 69(4), 395–410.
- Ghesla, C., Capraro, V., & Bisi, A. (2019). Empathy and cooperation in early learners. *Developmental Science*, 22(4), e12832.
- Goldstein, J. H. (2023). Creating empathetic classrooms: The teacher's role. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 118, 103849.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2019). Emotional intelligence in teaching: Why it matters. *Educational Leadership*, 76(6), 26–31.
- Goleman, D. (2020). Emotional intelligence in education: A retrospective. *Educational Leadership*, 78(2), 14–19.
- Goleman, D., & Boyatzis, R. (2019). Emotional and social intelligence in classroom leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 97(6), 46–53.
- Gómez, R. L., & Narváez, D. (2019). Developing moral character through empathy-focused pedagogy. *Journal of Moral Education*, 48(3), 298–312.
- Graton, A., & Mailliez, M. (2019). Emotional regulation and moral behavior. *Emotion Review*, 11(1), 3–12.
- Greenbank, P. (2019). Developing empathy in the classroom. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(4), 411–423.
- Greenberg, M. T. (2019). Promoting resilience in children and youth: Preventive interventions and their interface with neuroscience. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1094(1), 139–150.
- Guba, E. G. (2019). *Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries* (Vol. 29).
- Harrell, P., & Barbato, R. (2019). Teaching kindness and empathy through community projects. *Journal of Teacher Action Research*, 5(2), 18–29.
- Harts, M. (2019). The impact of teacher empathy on student engagement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 112(5), 613–620.
- Hepach, R., Vaish, A., & Tomasello, M. (2019). Children's altruistic behavior: The impact of teacher modeling. *Developmental Psychology*, 55(4), 720–732.
- Hoffman, M. L. (2022). *Empathy and moral development in children* (Vol. 34).
- Ioannidou, F., & Konstantikaki, V. (2019). Empathy and emotional intelligence: What is it really about? *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 1(3), 118–123.
- Jackson, D. L., Smith, R. A., & Johnson, T. A. (2019). Empathy training for preservice teachers: An evaluation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 79, 37–47.
- Kahn, D. L., & Lawhorne, M. (2019). Empathy and the art of listening in teaching. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 40(3), 147–150.

- Keen, S. (2020). Empathy and the novel: Building understanding in young readers. *Children's Literature in Education*, 51(2), 150–164.
- Ketelle, D., & Mesa, J. (2020). Critical reflection and empathy among teachers. *Educational Studies*, 56(4), 345–360.
- Ketelle, D., & Mesa, J. (2022). Empathetic discourse in teacher education. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 34(1), 75–88.
- Kohn, A. (2019). The myth of the good child: Rethinking behavior management. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(8), 8–13.
- Lamm, C., Batson, C. D., & Decety, J. (2007). The neural substrate of human empathy: Effects of perspective-taking and cognitive appraisal. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 19(1), 42–58.
- Lichtenberg, J. D., Lachmann, F. M., & Fosshage, J. L. (2019). *The relational roots of empathy* (Vol. 73).
- Lickona, T. (2013). Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility.
- Lickona, T. (2020). *Educating for character: How schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Lilius, J. M., Worline, M. C., Dutton, J. E., Kanov, J. M., & Maitlis, S. (2019). Compassion at work: Empathy and organizational effectiveness. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(2), 277–301.
- Lopez-Cordero, L. (2020). Narratives and empathy in early childhood education. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 20(2), 187–201.
- Louis, K. S., & Wahlstrom, K. L. (2019). Principals as empathetic leaders: Impacts on student engagement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 55(3), 409–445.
- Lumpkin, A. (2023). Character development through elementary education. *Journal of Character Education*, 19(1), 24–39.
- Manger, T., Eikeland, O. J., & Asbjørnsen, A. (2021). Prosocial classroom behavior and its predictors. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 65(2), 243–258.
- Marti-Vilar, M., Constantino, S., & Garzón, J. (2019). Empathy as a predictor of prosocial behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 56(10), 1671–1683.
- McAllister, G., & Irvine, J. J. (2022). Cross-cultural empathy in teacher preparation. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 73(1), 58–70.
- McLeod, S. A. (2019). What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative research? *Simply Psychology*.
- McNamara, C. (2019). *Field guide to consulting and organizational development*. Authenticity Consulting, LLC.
- Miller, R. (2019). The role of empathy in teaching and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 76(6), 34–39.
- Moon, C., Seung, H., & Jin, Y. (2020). Emotional regulation and empathy in elementary teachers. *Educational Psychology International*, 40(3), 267–280.
- Morales, J. (2020). The impact of empathy training on teacher behavior. *Educational Practice and Theory*, 42(2), 150–163.
- More, T., & Milligan, K. (2019). Empathy in educational leadership: Leading with heart. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 57(4), 451–470.

- Morrissey, M., & Higgs, J. (2019). The meaning of empathy in health and human service practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 20(1), 49–60.
- Mortiboys, A. (2022). *Teaching with emotional intelligence: A step-by-step guide for higher and further education professionals*. Routledge.
- Myyry, L., Juujärvi, S., & Pessa, K. (2019). Moral sensitivity and empathy in classroom practices. *Ethics Behavior*, 29(1), 52–66.
- Naeem, S. (2019). Developing empathy in primary school children: A case study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 95, 1–10.
- Noddings, N. (2023). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press.
- Ochalski, M. (2020). Creating empathy-centered classrooms through narrative. *Language and Literacy Education Journal*, 17(1), 55–70.
- of Education, M. (2019). Guidelines on values education and empathy in schools. *Department of Education Policy Series, MOE-EDU-19*.
- Ortiz Baron, M. e. a. (2019). Moral emotions in educational settings. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 47(7), 1–15.
- Owens, L., & Ennis, C. (2005). The effects of a school-based program to develop social skills in children. *Journal of School Psychology*, 43(4), 299–313.
- Pastoria, J. (2020). The impact of mindfulness on empathy in educators. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 44(1), 35–52.
- Patton, M. Q. (2019). *Qualitative research evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Paulin, M., Ferguson, R. J., & Bergeron, J. (2019). Prosocial service learning in elementary education. *Journal of Service Learning in Higher Education*, 8, 45–61.
- Phelps, M. (2019). The power of empathy in student engagement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 21(3), 178–185.
- Phillips, L. H., MacLean, R. D., & Allen, R. (2019). Age and the understanding of emotions: Neuropsychological and sociocognitive perspectives. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 54B(5), 317–330.
- Pillerin, S. (2022). Empathy in education: A critical analysis. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 56(2), 145–160.
- Preston, S. D., & de Waal, F. B. M. (2022). Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases in education. *Educational Psychologist*, 57(1), 1–17.
- Ritchie, J., & Spencer, L. (2019). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research, 173–194.
- Rogers, C., & Web, L. (2019). Building trust in classrooms: The humanistic approach. *Teaching Today*, 59(3), 34–40.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (2020). Emotional intelligence and social development in children. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 39(3), 211–230.
- Santod, R. (2019). Teaching values and empathy in philippine classrooms. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 20(3), 345–358.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2019). Social and emotional learning and teachers. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 137–155.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Hymel, S. (2019). Educating the heart as well as the mind: Social and emotional learning for school and life success. *Education Canada*, 49(1), 20–25.

- Seitz, J., Orimoto, L., & Goleman, D. (2020). Integrating emotional learning in elementary school curriculum. *Journal of Emotional Education*, 12(2), 78–90.
- Sharp, A. M. (2019). Philosophy for children and empathy development. *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, 13(1), 20–29.
- Skoe, E. E. (2020). The ethics of care and moral development in young learners. *Journal of Moral Education*, 49(1), 112–126.
- Smigla, B., & Pastoria, J. (2020). Mindfulness and empathy development in primary education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 14(1), 22–34.
- Smith, J., Jones, L., & Anderson, K. (2021). The impact of teacher empathy on student outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(2), 345–360.
- Special issue on empathy in education. (2023). *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 112, 103620.
- Thompson, R. A. (2019). Emotion dysregulation: A theme in search of definition. *Development and Psychopathology*, 31(3), 805–815.
- Tyers, C. (2019). Emotional intelligence training for primary educators. *Teacher Development*, 23(4), 527–541.
- Walker, S. (2019). Teacher empathy and student engagement: A study of the relationship. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 42(1), 3–24.
- Wan Hasmah, W. I. (2020). Empathy education in malaysian schools: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 51(1), 67–85.
- Wang, M.-T., Degol, J., & Henry, D. A. (2019). Classroom climate and adolescent empathy. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48(1), 37–49.
- Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2020). Prosocial behavior from a developmental perspective. *Child Development Perspectives*, 14(3), 143–148.
- Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2022). How children come to help: Empirical insights from developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 58(2), 247–259.
- Weissbourd, R. (2023). The children we mean to raise: The real messages adults are sending about values. *Making Caring Common Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education*.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2002). Social competence and academic achievement in children. *Educational Psychologist*, 37(4), 193–204.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2018). Prosocial behavior and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(4), 528–546.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2023). Prosocial goals and teacher influences. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(1), 1–19.
- Wiepking, P., Einolf, C., & Yang, J. (2022). Philanthropic and empathetic behaviors in children. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 51(4), 789–812.
- Young, S., & West, R. (2019). Empathy through arts-based learning in primary classrooms. *Art Education*, 72(5), 8–15.
- Zhang, L. (2020). The impact of empathy-based curriculum in chinese primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 99, 101513.
- Zhao, H. (2020). Cultural influences on the development of empathy in school children. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2398.