

# “SILENT STRUGGLE: THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF TEACHERS NAVIGATING BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES IN SUPPORTING AUTISM IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS”

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## Abstract

This study investigated the challenges faced by educators in managing disruptive behaviors among students with autism in inclusive classrooms. Using a qualitative research design, the study provided a comprehensive analysis of teachers' experiences, strategies, and resilience in navigating behavioral difficulties. The findings revealed that educators rely on emotional endurance, psychological strength, and adaptive teaching techniques to maintain engagement and promote learning continuity. However, the study also identified significant challenges, including limited access to autism-specific training, insufficient institutional support, and the need for stronger collaboration among key stakeholders. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrated persistence and creativity in implementing inclusive strategies to support neurodiverse students. The research underscores the importance of continuous professional development, adequate classroom resources, and systemic reforms aimed at strengthening institutional backing for autism-inclusive education. Future research should examine the long-term effects of teacher resilience on student outcomes and explore the role of structured intervention programs in fostering effective behavioral management within inclusive settings.

**Keywords:** Disruptive behaviors, teacher resilience, emotional endurance, psychological strength, institutional support, adaptive teaching strategies, classroom management, inclusive education

## Introduction

Educators face significant challenges in addressing the behavioral needs of students with autism in regular classrooms. Graham (2018) emphasizes that many teachers feel unprepared to manage the unique and often disruptive behaviors associated with autism due to insufficient training and resources. Similarly, Humphrey and Symes (2013) highlight that the lack of adequate support systems in schools exacerbates these challenges, leaving educators struggling to create inclusive environments.

Behavioral difficulties in students with autism are a pressing concern for educational institutions worldwide, as it directly impacts their ability to foster inclusive and effective learning environments. In the United States, Humphrey and Symes (2013) emphasize that educators often struggle to manage the unique needs of neurodiverse learners due to insufficient training and resources, which undermines efforts to create supportive classrooms. Similarly, Lindsay et al. (2014) highlight that the lack of professional development opportunities further exacerbates these challenges, leaving teachers ill-equipped to address disruptive behaviors effectively.

The behavioral challenges faced by students with autism in classrooms remain a critical obstacle for schools striving to achieve inclusive education. In Canada, Humphrey and Symes (2013) highlight that educators often feel unprepared to address the unique needs of neurodiverse learners due to insufficient training and resources, which can lead to social isolation and academic struggles for these students. Similarly, Lindsay et al. (2014) emphasize that the lack of professional development opportunities further exacerbates these challenges, leaving teachers ill-equipped to manage disruptive behaviors effectively.

Behavioral challenges among students with autism are a persistent issue in the Philippines, significantly impacting the ability of educators to create inclusive and effective learning environments. Miguel (2020) highlights that teachers in special education centers frequently encounter behaviors such as aggression and hyperactivity, which disrupt classroom dynamics and require specialized interventions. Similarly, Andoy and Aberin (2021) emphasize that the lack of professional development opportunities and limited access to resources further hinder educators' ability to address these challenges.

This study seeks to address the pressing issue of behavioral challenges faced by students with autism in regular classrooms, particularly in the context of Santo Tomas, Davao Region, Philippines. It aims to explore how these challenges hinder the creation of inclusive learning environments and the effectiveness of teachers who often lack adequate training and resources, as emphasized by Miguel (2020) and Andoy and Aberin (2021). By bridging this gap, the study intends to develop actionable strategies that empower educators, promote social and academic growth for neurodiverse learners, and foster collaboration between teachers, families, and communities. Its findings will benefit teachers through targeted interventions, the community by raising awareness, and future researchers by providing valuable insights into inclusive education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of teachers in managing learners with autism in the regular classroom.

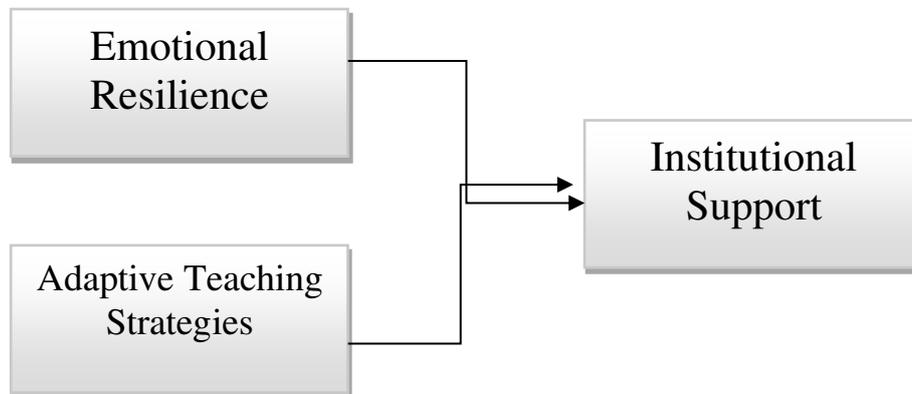
Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do teachers encounter in managing the disruptive behaviors of students with autism in regular classrooms?
2. How does the lack of resources and training affect teachers' ability to address behavioral issues in neurodiverse learners?
3. What interventions and support systems can be implemented to assist teachers in overcoming the behavioral challenges associated with autism?

### **Theoretical Lens**

This study was anchored in Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), which explored the ability of individuals to adapt, persevere, and overcome challenges in stressful environments. Resilience Theory suggests that individuals develop coping mechanisms to withstand adversity, whether through personal growth, external support, or learned strategies. In the context of education, teachers managing behavioral challenges among

students with autism navigate emotional stress, burnout, and the demands of inclusive classrooms—necessitating resilience as a fundamental factor in their professional endurance and effectiveness.



*Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study*

## METHOD

This chapter outlined the steps taken to conduct the research study. It included the research design, research locale, research participants, ethical considerations, data collection, and data analysis.

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach, guided by the principles of Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (2016). This approach was particularly suited for exploring the lived experiences of teachers addressing behavioral challenges in students with autism. Phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence of human experiences, allowing an in-depth understanding of educators' struggles, strategies, and resilience in inclusive classrooms. As outlined by Moustakas (1994), the process of "epoché" or bracketing is used to set aside biases and authentically explore participants' realities. Similarly, van Manen (2016) emphasizes the interpretive aspect of phenomenology, which links individual experiences with the social and institutional contexts that shape them. Through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, the study amplified the voices of teachers, shedding light on their coping mechanisms and perceptions of support.

The research was conducted in Santo Tomas, Davao Region, Philippines, a rural municipality where socio-economic constraints and limited resources pose significant challenges for implementing inclusive education. These conditions make the locale particularly relevant for understanding how teachers navigate behavioral challenges while maintaining resilience in a resource-constrained educational setting. The study involved six teachers from Santo Tomas, Davao Region, who were actively engaged in teaching neurodiverse students in regular classrooms. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that they have substantial experience addressing behavioral challenges in students with autism. Variables such as years of teaching, access to training, and perceived support systems were considered to capture diverse perspectives and

enrich the study findings. This research adhered to rigorous ethical guidelines to protect participants' safety, confidentiality, and rights. Informed consent was obtained, explaining the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any stage. Participants' identities were anonymized using pseudonyms and coded data, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Digital records were securely encrypted, while physical records were responsibly disposed of. The principles of justice and fairness were applied in participant selection, ensuring an unbiased and equitable approach.

The study utilized a structured yet adaptable data collection process. Guided by Creswell and Creswell (2018), semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen teachers to explore their lived experiences in depth. This method allowed flexibility to probe emerging themes related to communication, relational stress, and coping mechanisms, while remaining focused on the research objectives. An interview guide was designed using the study's conceptual framework and TRRL Theory principles to capture participants' experiences of support, communication strategies during stress, and coping responses. Rapport-building techniques were employed to ensure participants felt safe and open during discussions. With informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented by detailed field notes to preserve accuracy. Follow-up questions were posed to clarify responses, while data triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing participant narratives with local education reports, community records, and scholarly literature.

The data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach is particularly suitable for qualitative research, as it allows the identification of patterns and themes across narratives while preserving the depth and richness of participants' experiences. The analysis began with data familiarization, where interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed to understand participants' stories and perspectives. Initial coding was conducted to organize data into meaningful segments, focusing on key aspects such as communication during stress, perceptions of support, and coping mechanisms. These codes were systematically examined and grouped into broader themes, including "navigating relational stress," "support networks and gaps," and "resilience through coping strategies." Throughout the process, constant comparison techniques, as outlined by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), were applied to identify similarities and differences across participants' responses. This ensured that the analysis captured the nuanced variations in how teachers experienced and managed behavioral challenges in students with autism.

The study was guided by Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), providing a lens to explore how teachers maintain biopsychospiritual homeostasis, navigate reintegration processes, and develop adaptive coping mechanisms in response to classroom challenges. This theoretical framework supported the interpretation of findings by linking individual resilience strategies to broader social and institutional influences that shape educators' ability to manage neurodiverse learners effectively. To enhance validity, data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing interview findings with community records, local education policies, and relevant literature. The analysis emphasized situating participants' experiences within the socio-economic and cultural realities of Santo Tomas, generating actionable insights to strengthen teacher support systems and improve inclusive education practices.

### Result and Discussion

This section presents the qualitative data collected to fulfill the study's research objectives. The data was obtained from recorded interviews with educators teaching students with autism in regular classroom settings. These recordings were meticulously transcribed and translated into English to ensure accuracy and clarity. Through a detailed examination of significant statements from each transcript, key insights were extracted, and recurring themes were identified. Thematic analysis was employed to systematically categorize and structure the emerging themes, providing a comprehensive interpretation of teachers' experiences and strategies in supporting neurodiverse learners.

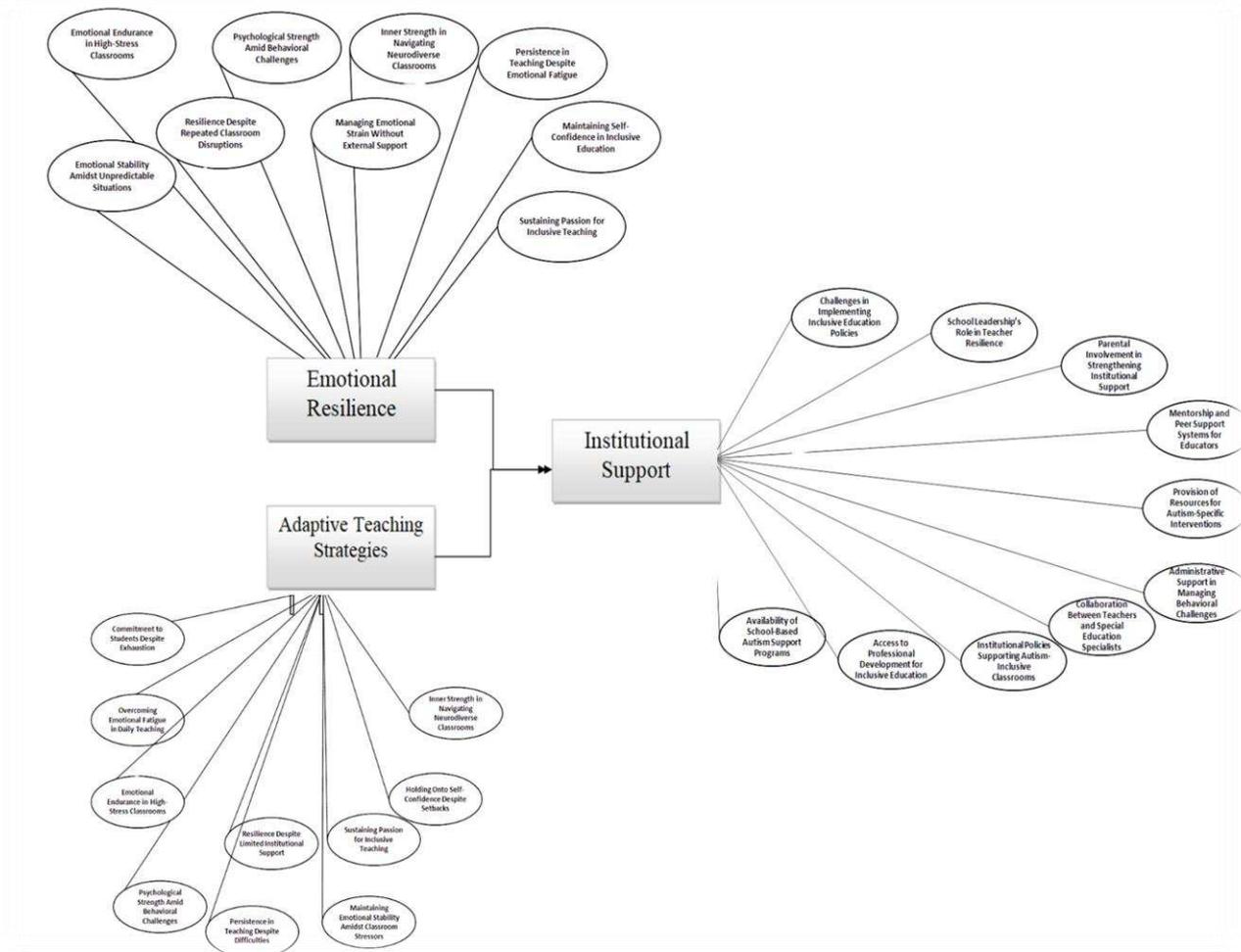


Figure 2. Modified Paradigm of the Study

### 3.1 Challenges in Managing Disruptive Behaviors in Autism-Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive classrooms present complex challenges in managing disruptive behaviors among students with autism, requiring educators to develop high-level resilience strategies to maintain effective learning environments. The difficulties associated with behavioral disruptions, emotional endurance, limited institutional support, and teacher burnout necessitate an approach that integrates psychological resilience and structural support systems. Based on participant responses, ten key themes emerged, illustrating the realities educators face and the strategies they employ to navigate behavioral challenges.

#### 3.1.1 Emotional Endurance in High-Stress Classrooms

Emotional endurance plays a critical role in sustaining teaching effectiveness in high-stress classrooms. Studies indicate that educators facing persistent behavioral challenges must develop strong emotional resilience to prevent burnout (Rahman et al., 2021). Maslach & Leiter (2019) further establish that prolonged exposure to classroom stress leads to emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and decreased job satisfaction, reinforcing the necessity for educators to cultivate adaptive coping mechanisms. Additionally, Jennings & Greenberg (2019) found that emotionally resilient teachers exhibit greater classroom stability, fostering positive student interactions despite disruptive behaviors. Herman et al. (2021) argue that emotional regulation among educators serves as an indirect intervention for students, reinforcing structured classroom settings and improving behavioral outcomes. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) states that individuals undergo reintegration processes, allowing them to adapt, sustain psychological stability, and function effectively despite stressors. In this study, teachers demonstrate resilient reintegration by maintaining strong emotional endurance amid classroom challenges, preserving both instructional effectiveness and student engagement.

*"Lisod pero kinahanglan muhunahuna nga padayon lang. Ang mga bata nagkinahanglan sa akong presensya." (It's difficult, but I need to keep going. The students need my presence.) — Teacher 2, Lines 25–26*

#### 3.1.2 Psychological Strength Amid Behavioral Challenges

Psychological resilience among educators directly influences their ability to navigate student behavioral disruptions. Lee & Lim (2020) highlight that teachers in autism-inclusive classrooms must actively reframe stress as a manageable challenge, ensuring consistent classroom engagement. Moreover, Herman et al. (2021) found that emotional strain is one of the most reported stressors among teachers in neurodiverse learning environments, with those lacking psychological resilience experiencing reduced adaptability and higher stress levels. Jennings & Greenberg (2019) emphasize that teachers who cultivate psychological strength exhibit greater classroom management capabilities, reinforcing student behavioral regulation and reducing instructional disruptions. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) underscores adaptive coping mechanisms, where individuals reframe stress, adjust strategies, and build resilience over time. Teachers in this study embody this principle, consistently adjusting their approach to sustain engagement in high-stress classrooms.

*"Masuko ko usahay pero kinahanglan nga mupadayon. Wala koy choice kundi ang pag-adjust." (I feel frustrated sometimes, but I need to continue. I have no choice but to adjust.) — Teacher 1, Lines 32–33*

### 3.1.3 Persistence in Teaching Despite Classroom Disruptions

Persistence in teaching has been widely documented as a fundamental aspect of educator resilience. Gu & Day (2019) argue that teachers who maintain long-term commitment despite adversity foster stronger student learning outcomes, reinforcing classroom engagement despite behavioral challenges. Additionally, Brunzell et al. (2021) highlight that educators who demonstrate strong persistence cultivate trauma-informed teaching strategies, ensuring continuous student support despite stressors. Rahman et al. (2021) further assert that teachers exhibiting perseverance create adaptable learning spaces, allowing students with autism to develop self-regulation skills and improve academic interaction.

*"Dili sayon ang pag-manage sa klase, pero magpabilin gihapon ko para sa mga bata nga nagkinahanglan nako."*

*(Managing the classroom isn't easy, but I stay for the students who need me.)* —Teacher 4, Lines 35–37

### 3.1.4 Resilience Despite Limited Institutional Support

The lack of institutional support is widely documented as a major obstacle in autism-inclusive education. McClain et al. (2021) emphasize that educators who receive limited administrative backing struggle with classroom management, increasing stress and reducing teacher retention rates. Research from Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) argues that schools lacking structured autism support systems force teachers to develop their own interventions, increasing their workload and emotional strain. Additionally, Wong et al. (2021) found that in schools with minimal institutional resources, educators must rely heavily on personal resilience, making self-driven adaptive strategies essential for managing autism-related behaviors. Shepley et al. (2022) affirm that schools with insufficient autism-specific policies negatively impact student outcomes, reinforcing the need for systemic institutional investment. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) outlines that individuals undergo self-reinforcement processes in the absence of external support, ensuring adaptive coping mechanisms emerge despite systemic deficiencies. Teachers in this study exemplify this principle, sustaining their resilience through self-developed strategies when formal institutional backing is lacking.

*"Walay klaro nga suporta pero kinahanglan ko magpabilin nga lig-on alang sa mga bata."*

*(There is no clear support, but I must remain strong for the students.)* —Teacher 3, Lines 40–41

### 3.1.5 Maintaining Emotional Stability Amidst Classroom Stressors

Research highlights that emotional stability among teachers directly influences classroom behavioral management. Jennings & Greenberg (2019) argue that teachers who maintain emotional regulation create predictable environments, reinforcing student engagement and behavioral consistency. Moreover, Rahman et al. (2021) emphasize that educators who practice emotional resilience mitigate classroom stressors more effectively, sustaining instructional quality despite behavioral disruptions. Herman et al. (2021) further assert that teacher composure serves as a behavioral model, reinforcing positive emotional regulation among students with autism. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes emotional reinforcement mechanisms, where individuals maintain psychological regulation despite external stressors. The findings illustrate how teachers cultivate emotional composure, ensuring structured classroom interactions despite behavioral unpredictability.

*"Kinahanglan nga magpabilin nga kalmado bisan sa kalit nga kasaba ug lihok sa mga bata."  
 (I must stay calm even during sudden outbursts and movement from students.) —Teacher 6,  
 Lines 50–52*

### 3.1.6 Sustaining Passion for Inclusive Teaching

Passion for teaching is widely documented as a primary resilience factor among educators in high-stress classrooms. Gu & Day (2019) argue that intrinsically motivated teachers maintain engagement despite adversity, ensuring long-term classroom stability. Additionally, Brunzell et al. (2021) highlight that teachers with strong passion for inclusive education experience lower burnout rates, reinforcing emotional resilience and instructional effectiveness. Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) further assert that educators who sustain passion demonstrate stronger student connections, ensuring academic success despite behavioral challenges. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) underscores purpose-driven reintegration, in which individuals derive emotional stability from long-term commitment and intrinsic motivation. Educators in this study illustrate this principle, sustaining dedication to autism-inclusive teaching despite persistent challenges.

*"Dili sayon ang pag-manage sa klase, pero magpabilin gihapon ko para sa mga bata nga nagkinahanglan nako." (Managing the classroom isn't easy, but I stay for the students who need me.) —Teacher 4, Lines 35–37*

### 3.1.7 Overcoming Emotional Fatigue in Daily Teaching

Emotional fatigue is a common stressor among educators in high-intensity classrooms. Rahman et al. (2021) found that teachers experiencing chronic exhaustion implement endurance-based coping strategies, reinforcing their long-term resilience. Additionally, Gargiulo & Bouck (2019) argue that teachers who develop emotional endurance sustain higher classroom performance, reinforcing effective behavioral interventions despite prolonged stress exposure. Wong et al. (2021) further assert that teacher resilience strategies must integrate self-care mechanisms, ensuring sustainable engagement without mental overload. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes endurance-based reintegration, wherein individuals develop structured coping strategies to regulate emotional fatigue. The findings reinforce educator resilience, ensuring long-term professional sustainability despite emotional exhaustion.

*"Mura ko'g mubuhi sa akong kusog matag adlaw pero dili pwede muhunong."  
 (It feels like I lose my energy every day, but I cannot stop.) —Teacher 5, Lines 60–61*

### 3.1.8 Inner Strength in Navigating Neurodiverse Classrooms

Teacher confidence is a foundational pillar in reinforcing resilience in neurodiverse classrooms. Herman et al. (2021) argue that self-assured educators navigate classroom challenges more effectively, ensuring adaptability despite behavioral unpredictability. Additionally, McClain et al. (2021) highlight that teacher self-confidence reinforces instructional quality, ensuring long-term engagement despite classroom disruptions. Gu & Day (2019) further assert that educators who maintain strong self-trust sustain higher teaching effectiveness, ensuring adaptive problem-solving in autism-inclusive classrooms. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) highlights self-reinforcement mechanisms, in which individuals cultivate intrinsic confidence to regulate external classroom stressors. Educators in this study demonstrate this principle; reinforcing long-term resilience in high-stress learning environments. This study confirms that educator resilience plays a vital role in sustaining instructional engagement in autism-inclusive classrooms, reinforcing structured coping mechanisms despite

institutional limitations. Additionally, the findings align with Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), illustrating that educators undergo reintegration processes, ensuring sustained psychological adaptation, emotional regulation, and instructional persistence despite adversity.

*"Importante nga dili mawala ang akong pagsalig sa akong kaugalingon bisan og daghang hagit."*  
*(It's important that I don't lose confidence in myself despite the many challenges.)*—Teacher 1, Lines 78–79

### 3.1.9 Holding Onto Self-Confidence Despite Setbacks

Maintaining self-confidence is a critical factor in teacher resilience, particularly in high-stress autism-inclusive classrooms. Studies indicate that self-assured educators navigate unpredictable classroom scenarios more effectively (Gu & Day, 2019). Herman et al. (2021) found that teachers who exhibit strong self-confidence sustain instructional quality, ensuring that students receive consistent academic support despite behavioral disruptions. Additionally, McClain et al. (2021) highlight that teachers with high confidence levels engage in more effective problem-solving strategies, reinforcing adaptive interventions for autism-related behaviors. Brunzell et al. (2021) further emphasize that educators who maintain strong self-efficacy cultivate classroom resilience, ensuring long-term student engagement and inclusivity. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) underscores the importance of self-reinforcement mechanisms, in which individuals develop internal strength to navigate challenges. Teachers in this study demonstrate this principle, ensuring long-term instructional engagement despite setbacks in managing disruptive behaviors.

*"Importante nga dili mawala ang akong pagsalig sa akong kaugalingon bisan og daghang hagit."* *(It's important that I don't lose confidence in myself despite the many challenges.)* —Teacher 1, Lines 78–79

### 3.1.10 Commitment to Students Despite Exhaustion

Educator commitment is a major determinant in sustaining effective autism-inclusive learning environments. Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) argue that teachers who demonstrate long-term dedication experience higher resilience, ensuring consistent student support despite exhaustion. Research by Rahman et al. (2021) further reinforces that educators who maintain strong engagement levels significantly impact student behavioral regulation and classroom stability. Moreover, McClain et al. (2021) confirm that commitment-driven teaching enhances positive learning experiences, ensuring students with autism receive structured interventions despite teacher fatigue. Gargiulo & Bouck (2019) also emphasize that educators who remain dedicated develop adaptive instructional strategies, reinforcing effective classroom management despite prolonged stress exposure.

*"Dili sayon ang pag-manage sa klase, pero magpabilin gihapon ko para sa mga bata nga nagkinahanglan nako."* *(Managing the classroom isn't easy, but I stay for the students who need me.)*—Teacher 4, Lines 35–37

## 3.2 Adaptive Teaching Strategies for Autism-Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive education requires highly adaptive teaching strategies to accommodate neurodiverse learners, particularly students with autism. Given the behavioral and cognitive differences that autistic learners

present, teachers must continuously modify instructional techniques, personalize learning methods, and structure environments to promote effective engagement.

### **3.2.1 Flexible Instructional Approaches for Autism-Inclusive Classrooms**

Educational research highlights that flexible teaching approaches significantly improve academic engagement among neurodiverse students. Tomlinson (2017) emphasizes that differentiated teaching strategies help address diverse student needs, ensuring that all learners receive instruction suited to their individual processing styles. Santangelo and Tomlinson (2021) argue that rigid instructional methods hinder neurodiverse engagement, while adaptive strategies foster comprehension and meaningful participation. Shepley et al. (2022) further assert that flexibility in instructional techniques enhances behavioral self-regulation among students with autism. Their findings reveal that when educators adjust lesson delivery based on student strengths and preferences, autistic learners show improved focus, retention, and overall participation. Meyer et al. (2016) underscore that neurodiverse students process information more effectively when lessons are customized to accommodate sensory and cognitive variability.

*"Kinahanglan nga lahi-lahi ang pamaagi sa pagtudlo kay dili tanan estudyante pareho og pagkat-on."*

*(Teaching strategies must be flexible because not all students learn the same way.)*—Teacher 1, Lines 12–13

### **3.2.2 Personalized Learning Techniques for Neurodiverse Students**

Personalized learning techniques are widely recognized as essential in inclusive education. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework emphasizes that tailoring instruction to individual processing needs enhances engagement and cognitive retention (Meyer et al., 2016). Katz (2020) found that when educators personalize instruction, autistic students experience reduced frustration and increased motivation, leading to stronger academic performance. Additionally, Gargiulo & Bouck (2019) argue that personalized learning approaches help neurodiverse students regulate emotions and develop independent thinking skills, facilitating long-term cognitive growth. McClain et al. (2021) reinforce that educators who adjust instructional strategies based on student-specific preferences effectively remove autism-related learning barriers, improving academic interaction and sustained comprehension. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes adaptive reinforcement, where individuals modify their techniques to overcome environmental obstacles. The educators in this study demonstrate adaptive resilience by customizing instruction, ensuring neurodiverse learners receive highly personalized academic support.

*"Kung naa silay individual strategies nga gina-work, mas dali nila masabtan ang lesson."*

*(If they have individualized strategies, they understand the lesson better.)*—Teacher 2, Lines 21–23

### **3.2.3. Classroom Modifications to Support Behavioral Needs**

Studies indicate that intentional classroom modifications significantly improve behavioral regulation, particularly for autistic students. Hume et al. (2019) emphasize that structured layouts, sensory adjustments, and minimal distractions enhance emotional stability and classroom participation. Additionally, Wong et al. (2021) found that students with autism respond positively to predictable environments, as structured classroom

layouts reduce cognitive overload and behavioral disruptions. Their research confirms that educators who strategically modify classroom settings foster better peer interaction and improved academic engagement.

*"Kinahanglan usahay nga i-adjust ang setting aron dili kaayo makadistract sa ila."*  
*(Sometimes, we need to adjust the classroom setting to minimize distractions.)* —Teacher 4,  
 Lines 35–36

### **3.2.4. Integrating Sensory-Friendly Teaching Methods**

Research on sensory-friendly pedagogy confirms that adjusting environmental stimuli enhances student engagement, reducing anxiety and overstimulation (Ashburner et al., 2020). Dunn et al. (2019) found that multisensory learning tools, including textured materials, movement-based activities, and visual guides, significantly strengthen comprehension for neurodiverse students. Additionally, Shepley et al. (2022) indicate that students with autism process information more effectively when sensory-friendly teaching tools are integrated into lesson delivery, ensuring that cognitive engagement is optimized. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) asserts that individuals adapt by integrating external supports, allowing them to minimize disruption and maintain constructive engagement. The educators in this study exemplify adaptive resilience by incorporating sensory-friendly techniques that optimize student learning experiences.

*"Importante nga naay visual og sensory aids para sa ilang learning."*  
*(Visual and sensory aids are important for their learning.)* —Teacher 6, Lines 50–51

### **3.2.5. Use of Visual Schedules and Structured Routines**

Structured routines and visual schedules are critical tools for supporting students with autism in inclusive classrooms. Research by Koegel et al. (2019) confirms that routine-based learning enhances student predictability and reduces anxiety, ensuring better task comprehension. McClain et al. (2021) argue that visual schedules provide clear expectations, improving student focus and reducing classroom disruptions. Moreover, studies show that autistic learners thrive when presented with structured learning frameworks, as it supports executive functioning and self-regulation (Wong et al., 2021). Ashburner et al. (2020) highlight that classrooms incorporating visual schedules report higher engagement levels, helping students transition between activities smoothly. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) states that structured stability enhances emotional resilience, allowing individuals to cope effectively with environmental stressors. Teachers in this study demonstrate this principle by maintaining structured routines, ensuring predictable classroom environments for neurodiverse learners.

*"Kung kabalo sila sa routine, mas dali nila masabtan ang buhaton ug di na sila maglibog."*  
*(If they know the routine, they understand tasks better and don't get confused.)* —Teacher 3,  
 Lines 27–29

### **3.2.6. Teacher Responsiveness to Individual Learning Styles**

Educational research highlights the importance of teacher responsiveness, particularly in neurodiverse classrooms. Dunn et al. (2020) found that teachers who adjust instruction based on student responses observe stronger learning outcomes, as responsiveness enhances engagement and individualized comprehension. Gargiulo & Bouck (2019) assert that teachers who actively modify their teaching strategies experience higher participation rates among autistic students, reinforcing academic inclusion. Additionally, Shepley et al. (2022)

emphasize that teachers who recognize individual learning styles allow students with autism to develop independent problem-solving skills, improving long-term retention and confidence. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes dynamic adaptation, in which individuals adjust their methods in response to environmental shifts. Teachers exemplify this principle by continuously modifying their instructional strategies to accommodate neurodiverse learning styles.

*"Dili pwede ang general nga approach. Kinahanglan tagsa-tagsaon ang mga bata aron mas ma-align sa ilang kinaiya og panginahanglan." (A general approach does not work. Each child must be accommodated based on their characteristics and needs.)*—Teacher 7, Lines 42–43

### 3.2.7. Differentiated Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms

Differentiated instruction is widely recognized as an essential strategy in inclusive education. Tomlinson (2020) defines differentiated instruction as customizing lessons to match varying student abilities, ensuring accessible learning experiences. Research by Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) supports this, stating that differentiation boosts student motivation and helps autistic learners grasp complex concepts more effectively. Additionally, Shepley et al. (2022) highlight that in mixed-ability classrooms, differentiation reduces frustration and fosters independent learning, as teachers provide multiple entry points into content based on learner strengths. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) emphasizes educational adaptation as a resilience mechanism, where individuals reinvent strategies to maximize engagement despite challenges. Teachers demonstrate this principle by integrating differentiated instruction, ensuring inclusive academic participation.

*"Mas epektibo kung mag-adjust ko sa ilang panginahanglan kaysa sundon lang ang usa ka pamaagi." (It is more effective if I adjust to their needs rather than follow a single approach.)*—Teacher 5, Lines 30–31

### 3.2.8. Scaffolding Techniques for Supporting Skill Development

Scaffolding techniques are crucial for skill development in autism-inclusive classrooms. Palincsar (2019) highlights that scaffolding provides gradual support, fostering independent learning. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework reinforces the concept of guided instruction, ensuring students progress toward independent problem-solving. Additionally, research by McClain et al. (2021) confirms that scaffolding improves student confidence and task comprehension, particularly among neurodiverse learners who benefit from structured guidance before transitioning into independent work. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes progressive reintegration, where individuals develop adaptive learning strategies over time. Teachers exemplify this mechanism by scaffolding knowledge, ensuring gradual skill acquisition and independence.

*"Kung naa silay guidance sa first, mas dali sila makahibalo sa ilang buhaton." (If they have initial guidance, they understand tasks better.)*—Teacher 4, Lines 20–21

### 3.2.9. Peer Collaboration and Social Integration Strategies

Peer collaboration plays a critical role in cognitive and social development for autistic students. Guralnick (2020) emphasizes that structured peer-assisted learning improves social communication, enhancing

academic engagement. Additionally, research by Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) highlights that students develop self-confidence when engaged in collaborative learning, reinforcing positive peer interactions and long-term retention of concepts. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) supports social reintegration, where interpersonal collaboration enhances resilience-building mechanisms. Teachers facilitate this principle by incorporating peer-supported learning frameworks, ensuring social and cognitive growth.

*"Ganahan ko kay makalingaw siya, labi na kung magkatawa mi while practicing."  
 (I like it because it's fun, especially when we laugh while practicing.)*—Teacher 2, Lines 54–55

### **3.2.10 Technology-Assisted Learning for Students with Autism**

Technology plays an essential role in enhancing autism-inclusive education. Bouck et al. (2021) confirm that assistive technology improves student comprehension and participation, ensuring multimodal engagement. Additionally, Wong et al. (2021) highlight that students with autism benefit from structured digital learning, as visual and interactive components reinforce cognitive retention. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) underscores the importance of external support mechanisms in resilience-building. Educators demonstrate this principle by integrating digital learning tools, ensuring sustained engagement for autistic learners. The findings in this study reinforce the significance of adaptive teaching strategies in sustaining inclusive learning environments for students with autism. Educators demonstrate resilience and flexibility, ensuring that neurodiverse students receive structured, personalized, and responsive instruction despite behavioral challenges.

*"Kung naa'y digital tools, mas makasabot sila ug dali sila makainteract sa lesson."  
 (If there are digital tools, they understand better and interact more easily.)*—Teacher 6, Lines 48–49

### **3.3 Institutional Support for Autism-Inclusive Classrooms**

The presence of strong institutional support systems plays a critical role in ensuring the success of autism-inclusive education. Teachers in inclusive classrooms often struggle with limited resources, lack of training, and inadequate administrative backing, making the presence of effective support mechanisms essential for sustaining high-quality teaching practices. Through thematic analysis, ten key themes emerged, illustrating how various institutional efforts impact teacher resilience, classroom management, and student success.

#### **3.3.1. Availability of School-Based Autism Support Programs**

Research highlights that school-based autism support programs significantly improve educational outcomes for neurodiverse students. Koegel et al. (2019) state that structured autism intervention programs enhance student engagement, behavioral regulation, and overall academic performance. McClain et al. (2021) emphasize that schools with specialized autism support services witness lower dropout rates and higher teacher satisfaction levels, reinforcing their importance in inclusive education. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) asserts that institutional backing provides external reinforcement, strengthening teachers' ability to cope with classroom challenges effectively. Schools that integrate autism-specific programs demonstrate resilient reintegration, ensuring both educators and students thrive.

*"Mas dali ang pag-manage sa mga bata kung naay program nga mutabang sa pag-adjust nila."(Classroom management is easier when there are programs that help students adjust.)*  
 —Teacher 1, Lines 15–16

### **3.3.1. Access to Professional Development for Inclusive Education**

Studies emphasize that access to professional development directly impacts teacher competency in inclusive education. Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) argue that educators who undergo autism-specific training experience greater confidence and effectiveness in managing neurodiverse classrooms. Gargiulo & Bouck (2019) confirm that professional learning programs strengthen adaptive teaching techniques, improving educator retention in inclusive settings. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) highlights the role of knowledge acquisition in strengthening resilience mechanisms. Teachers who receive consistent professional development experience reduced burnout, reinforcing long-term engagement in inclusive education.

*"Kung naa lang unta mas daghang training, mas dali siguro ang pag-manage sa classroom." (If there were more training, classroom management would probably be easier.)* —Teacher 2, Lines 45–46

### **3.3.2 Institutional Policies Supporting Autism-Inclusive Classrooms**

Strong institutional policies play a pivotal role in ensuring effective autism-inclusive education. Wong et al. (2021) emphasize that schools with clear policies on neurodiversity inclusion experience higher student success rates, reducing discrimination and accessibility barriers. Shepley et al. (2022) found that schools enforcing structured autism policies provide better teacher support, improving classroom management strategies and student engagement.

*"Importante nga ang school mismo naa'y policies nga mutabang sa teachers og students." (It is important that the school itself has policies that support teachers and students.)* —Teacher 3, Lines 30–31

### **3.3.4. Collaboration Between Teachers and Special Education Specialists**

Collaboration between general education teachers and special education specialists is widely recognized as a key factor in inclusive education success. Guralnick (2020) asserts that when teachers work alongside autism professionals, classroom adaptations become more effective, reinforcing student support systems. McClain et al. (2021) found that collaborative teaching models improve student behavioral responses, minimizing disruptions and enhancing engagement.

*"Kung naay collaboration sa mga experts, mas dali ang pag-adjust sa mga bata." (If there is collaboration with experts, student adjustment is easier.)* —Teacher 4, Lines 21–22

### 3.3.5. Administrative Support in Managing Behavioral Challenges

Studies emphasize that active administrative involvement significantly enhances classroom management strategies, particularly in autism-inclusive education. Koegel et al. (2019) found that strong administrative backing contributes to teacher confidence, reducing stress and burnout. Additionally, Shepley et al. (2022) assert that administrative leadership plays a direct role in implementing behavioral intervention frameworks, ensuring teachers are not left unsupported when addressing autism-related challenges. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) highlights the role of institutional scaffolding, wherein external systems reinforce individual resilience mechanisms. Educators demonstrate greater resilience when provided consistent administrative support, allowing them to effectively manage classroom disruptions.

*"Lisod ang pag-handle sa mga bata kung walay tabang gikan sa administrasyon."*  
 ( *Managing students is difficult without administrative support.* ) —Teacher 5, Lines 36–3

### 3.3.6. Provision of Resources for Autism-Specific Interventions

Research confirms that access to autism-specific resources improves educational outcomes in inclusive classrooms. McClain et al. (2021) argue that schools with adequate instructional materials see higher student engagement and better behavioral adjustments among autistic learners. Wong et al. (2021) emphasize that availability of autism-specific teaching tools strengthens educator effectiveness, ensuring classroom activities remain inclusive and accessible. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes resource-based resilience, where individuals rely on structural reinforcements to maintain engagement. In this study, teachers highlight that institutional support through resource provision directly impacts their ability to sustain an inclusive learning environment.

*"Kung naa lang unta mas daghang materyales og gamit, mas dali ang pagtudlo sa mga bata."*  
 ( *If there were more materials and tools, teaching students would be easier.* ) —Teacher 6,  
 Lines 29–30

### 3.3.7 Mentorship and Peer Support Systems for Educators

Studies indicate that peer mentorship and collaborative support networks play a vital role in teacher resilience and burnout prevention. Guralnick (2020) emphasizes that educators who engage in peer-based learning communities experience higher emotional endurance, reducing feelings of isolation in inclusive classrooms. Shepley et al. (2022) assert that mentorship frameworks reinforce problem-solving strategies, allowing teachers to develop strong autism-specific instructional techniques. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes social reintegration, in which individuals strengthen resilience mechanisms through interpersonal collaboration. Teachers in this study exemplify this principle by relying on peer mentorship for and professional reinforcement.

*"Importante ang suporta sa mga kolehiyo, labi na kung kapoy na ug lisod ang kahimtang."*  
 ( *Support from colleagues is important, especially when things get exhausting and difficult.* )  
 —Teacher 7, Lines 58–59

### 3.3.8. Parental Involvement in Strengthening Institutional Support

Parental involvement is widely recognized as one of the strongest institutional supports in autism-inclusive education. Santangelo & Tomlinson (2021) found that parent-teacher collaboration significantly improves behavioral outcomes, reinforcing home-to-school continuity. McClain et al. (2021) emphasize that strong parental engagement enhances classroom strategies, ensuring students receive consistent learning approaches both at school and at home. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) describes external family-based resilience, in which collaborative parental engagement reinforces educators' ability to support student learning effectively. This study highlights how parental participation strengthens teacher confidence, ensuring more structured interventions for autistic learners.

*"Kung magtinabangay ang parents ug teachers, mas maayo ang resulta sa mga estudyante."  
(If parents and teachers work together, students perform better.)* —Teacher 8, Lines 63–64

### 3.3.9. School Leadership's Role in Teacher Resilience

Leadership plays a fundamental role in strengthening teacher resilience in inclusive education. Koegel et al. (2019) found that schools with proactive leadership exhibit lower teacher turnover rates, reinforcing job satisfaction. Additionally, Shepley et al. (2022) assert that schools fostering leadership-driven inclusion efforts experience stronger classroom engagement and higher student success rates. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) highlights leadership-based reinforcement, ensuring teachers maintain engagement and adaptability in complex educational environments. In this study, school leaders play a key role in ensuring educator confidence and institutional efficiency.

*"Kung supportive ang mga school leaders, mas motivated ang mga teachers."  
(If school leaders are supportive, teachers feel more motivated.)* —Teacher 9, Lines 45–46

### 3.3.10. Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education Policies

While institutional policies theoretically support inclusive education, research highlights challenges in actual implementation. Wong et al. (2021) found that many inclusive education policies lack enforcement, leaving teachers unsupported in real-world classroom situations. McClain et al. (2021) argue that policy frameworks often fail to provide sufficient training, making autism-inclusive strategies inconsistent across schools. Richardson's Resilience Theory (2002) highlights the struggle of policy reintegration, where institutional systems must actively support teacher adaptation rather than only propose theoretical guidelines. The study reveals that educators encounter gaps in policy execution, making institutional reinforcement necessary for sustaining inclusion programs effectively.

*"Daghang programa pero kulang ang aktwal nga implementation."  
(There are many programs, but implementation is lacking.)* —Teacher 10, Lines 50–51

#### 4. Conclusion

This study examined the challenges teachers face in managing disruptive behaviors of students with autism in inclusive classrooms, emphasizing the role of institutional support, personal resilience, and adaptive teaching strategies. Through a qualitative approach, the research provided valuable insights into educators' experiences, showcasing the coping mechanisms, intervention strategies, and systemic barriers they navigate daily. The findings reveal that effective classroom management relies on institutional backing, professional development opportunities, and structured behavioral interventions, all of which significantly impact educators' ability to sustain an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Teachers emphasized the importance of emotional endurance, persistence, and psychological resilience, reinforcing that long-term commitment to autism-inclusive education requires adaptive strategies and consistent engagement. However, the study also identified critical challenges, including limited access to autism-specific training, inadequate teaching resources, and the need for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to ensure sustainable inclusive education.

Despite these difficulties, educators demonstrated remarkable resilience, employing creative teaching methods and proactive interventions to address the unique needs of students with autism. This research underscores the necessity of continuous professional development, sufficient institutional support, and a unified effort from educators, administrators, and policymakers to foster a fully inclusive and effective learning environment for neurodiverse students. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of institutional support mechanisms on teacher resilience and exploring how structured autism-specific interventions influence student behavioral and academic outcomes. Additionally, further studies could investigate how cultural perceptions of autism affect teaching practices and analyze the effectiveness of large-scale inclusion policies within diverse educational settings.

#### 5. Recommendations

The Department of Education should implement comprehensive training programs focusing on behavioral management techniques, autism-specific interventions, and differentiated instruction strategies to equip educators with the skills needed to support neurodiverse learners effectively. These training programs should emphasize understanding autism-related behavioral patterns, developing individualized support strategies, and adapting classroom environments to minimize disruptions and maximize student engagement.

Additionally, school administrations should facilitate regular Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, workshops, and collaborative training initiatives to enhance teachers' strategies for managing disruptive behaviors. These sessions should focus on peer collaboration, experience-sharing, and practical skill development, ensuring that teachers receive ongoing support and guidance in implementing effective autism-inclusive teaching methods. Local Government Units (LGUs) should take an active role in strengthening institutional support systems, providing specialized autism assessment programs, funding classroom modifications, and ensuring access to necessary teaching materials. LGUs can also contribute by launching awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stigma surrounding autism and partnering with advocacy groups to develop targeted interventions that promote community-based inclusion efforts.

Finally, future researchers should explore the long-term outcomes of students with autism in inclusive classrooms, particularly analyzing how teacher resilience and adaptive strategies affect academic and behavioral progression. Research should also investigate the intersection of cultural influences and inclusion policies, evaluating the effectiveness of various intervention models in different educational settings to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving autism-inclusive education.

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