EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ADDRESSING STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

Behavioral problems of the students pose various issues for teachers. This condition has impact to the teaching-learning process in the classroom. This phenomenological study aimed to navigate the lived experiences, coping mechanisms of teachers in New Bataan National High School in dealing with the behavioral problems of the students. Using qualitative research design, data was collected through the use of in-depth interview among 8 teaches of New Bataan National High School. The findings revealed that teachers have positive and negative experiences in dealing students with behavioral problems. This study found out that students common behavioral problems are: bullying, inappropriate social behavior and peers misunderstanding, disruptive Behavior, cheating, absenteeism and being disrespectful. In order to address these behavioral problems, teachers opted to use some coping mechanisms such as communicating rules clearly and employing positive reinforcement. Despite these challenges, teachers still see the importance of their profession as teacher in helping these students. Teachers became adaptive to the needs of the students by understanding the nature of these learners, teachers are now equipped to encourage learning and academic success for all students. These experiences allowed teachers to developed strategies that are tailored to individual differences of the students, thus resulting to a more conducive learning environment.

Keyword : *behavioral problems, coping mechanisms, learning insights, phenomenological study.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students' behavior play a pivotal role in their learning process. These behaviors are attributed to some factors such as individual, social and environmental. Positive behaviors such as active participation, engagement and cooperation are nurtured by supportive classroom environment, thus this result to an effective teaching- learning process (Wentzel & Muenks, 2020) [1]. On the other hand, misbehavior is the result of unmet academic needs, lack of motivation and engagement. Misbehavior of the students can greatly affect the teaching- learning process.

This scenario is also evident among the students in the USA as reported by Ghandour et al., 2019[2]. Behavioral problems of the students continue to be a significant concern, affecting both the learning environment and academic outcomes of the students. These issues are influenced by various factors such as socio- economic status, family dynamics and history and on the school environment itself. Some of the common examples of misbehavior among the students are attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder.

Based on the study conducted by Oestar and Oestar (2022) [3] at Canda National High School, in Quezon Province revealed several behavioral problems were identified which include verbal bullying (such as throwing jokes, giving

nicknames, and insults), tardiness, cutting classes, truancy, absenteeism, lack of attention to teachers, being a source of distraction (e.g., avoiding work, standing, shouting, and frequently changing seats), cheating or copying someone else's assignments, seatwork, projects, quizzes, etc., as well as physical bullying (such as hitting, punching, and pushing).

Another study was conducted in Davao City by Limbo, et al (2013) [4] found out that the prevalent misbehaviors in the classroom, such as requesting papers or school materials despite being instructed by teachers to bring them, engaging in disruptive chatter, teasing or mocking others, and arriving late to class, directly reflect the efficacy of teachers' classroom management skills. All these were the common misbehaviors among the students in Ateneo De Davao University. With this, the researchers have postulated that failure to address these issues adequately can significantly impact the quality of the teaching and learning environment. In addition to this, the impetus for this study arose from reform efforts and concerns regarding discipline within the researchers' workplace. These disruptive behaviors among students have instilled a sense of constant apprehension among students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff.

Moreover, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of students being referred to the guidance office in New Bataan National High School where the researcher is teaching. And the most common problems are dropouts, frequent absenteeism, and class cutting among students. These issues have greatly concerned the researcher, prompting an investigation into this matter. As one of the teachers of New Bataan National High School, the problems on the behavior of the students was rampant and this was personally experienced by the researcher. All these instances encouraged the researcher to conduct a study focusing the experiences of teachers in dealing with behavioral problem of the students

1.1 Research Questions

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms and strategies of 8 teachers in addressing disciplinary problems they encountered in the realm of education recovery. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the participants in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?
3. How do the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?
4. What are the important insights you have learned from these challenges and experiences?
research work Introduction related your research work.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

In this study, a qualitative phenomenological research design was employed to explore the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and strategies used in addressing the behavioral problems of the teachers amidst education recovery. This study specifically made use of phenomenological study. Phenomenology as a philosophical and methodological approach, offers unique insights into understanding human experiences and phenomena as they are subjectively lived and perceived. Phenomenological studies hold significant value in research as they provide a deep understanding of the lived experiences of individuals concerning a particular phenomenon. According to Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015) [5], the phenomenological research approach aided researchers in uncovering the participants' experiences and gaining insights into their beliefs, feelings, and perceptions, focusing on the meaning these phenomena.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted at New Bataan National High School – Junior High School department situated in Poblacion, New Bataan, Davao de Oro. New Bataan is among the 11 municipalities of Davao de Oro, divided into two legislative districts. It belongs to the first district along with Compostela, Maragusan, Monkayo, and Montevista. New Bataan is a landlocked municipality surrounded by mountain ranges, serving as a primary source

of livelihood, mainly through farming and banana plantations. The municipality boasts notable tourist attractions such as Manurigao Falls, a stunning waterfall with clear waters and lush surroundings, and Tandawan Falls, a hidden gem with pristine waters and peaceful surroundings. Also boasts attractive inland resorts such as Bamboo Garden Resort- Sol Invictus, which offers a serene escape, surrounded by lush greenery and tranquil bamboo groves, Tinay Inland Resort features comfortable accommodations that blend harmoniously with the natural environment, providing a peaceful retreat for guests and Yes Go Inland Resort this vibrant resort boasts a wide range of recreational activities and amenities, including spacious swimming pools, thrilling water slides, and well-maintained sports facilities.

The municipality comprises 16 barangays, including Andap, Bantacan, Batinao, Cabinuangan (Poblacion), Cagan, Camanlangan, Cogonon, Fatima, Katipunan, Magsaysay, Manurigao, Pagsilaan, Panag, San Roque, Simsimin, and Tandawan.New Bataan National High School, located in Purok 3a, Poblacion, is considered the flagship educational institution in the New Bataan area. It consists of a junior high school and an integrated senior high school. The teaching staff totals 79 personnel, with 56 teachers in the junior high school and 23 in the senior high school, overseen by one School Principal IV, Assistant Principal II and supported by 17 non-teaching staff. In the academic year 2023-2024, the school served 1244 junior high school students and 899 senior high school students, with a total of 2143 students. New Bataan National High School is renowned for its brand name as "The Catalyst of Hope and Fulfillment," reflecting its commitment to the success and well-being of students, parents, teachers, stakeholders, and the entire community.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The following steps were followed in the gathering of data:

The researcher wrote a letter of permission to conduct the study to the Schools Division Superintendent, Division of Davao de Oro. Prior to this, the researcher secured an endorsement letter from the Office of the Graduate School of Assumption College of Nabunturan. Along with this, was the submission of letter to the Research Ethics Committee for the ethics review of the study. This was followed by a written letter of request sent to the principal of New Bataan National High School asking permission to conduct this and the researcher also asked the cooperation of her prospective participants of the study during the gathering of data. Upon receiving the confirmation from the authorities, the researcher immediately started the conduct of IDI with the participants. Before the interview the participants were oriented about the study and gave them the assurance that their responses were protected. A panel of experts validated the questionnaire to test its validity.

The researcher recorded the ongoing IDI and transcribed them after the interview. All the responses were encoded in the personal computer of the researcher and thematized and analyzed them using the interview guide question.

In conducting research, the data collection procedure refers to the specific courses of action observed in gathering the data. According to Kabir 2016[6], data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on a phenomenon of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, and evaluate outcomes. In the context of this research, this study will make use of in- depth interviews.

One of the most commonly used data collection procedures is an in-depth interview. It involves talking with participants in detailed, open-ended conversations which help in understanding their points of view, experiences, and beliefs towards a topic. The researcher can always modify and ask follow-up questions to clarify some pieces of information. Based on this definition it implies they provide an opportunity for asking further probing questions or follow-up inquiries after listening to the responses of interviewees thus bringing out significant information.

2.4 Data Analysis

In doing qualitative research, data analysis plays a significant role as it revealed themes that leads to the results and findings of the study. After conducting the interview, the researcher transcribed the recording. It will be followed by a manual thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis as cited by Dawadi 2020 [7], is a type of analysis of data used in qualitative research methods. It allows the researcher to systematically analyze data sets obtained from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. It involves the identification of themes through careful reading and analysis of transcribed data. Themes are defined as the answers which are recurring among the participants. A rigorous thematic analysis can produce insightful and trustworthy findings.

Trustworthiness and credibility

The researcher discussed the four components crucial to trustworthiness and credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. The credibility criteria are used to determine if the findings of qualitative research are credible or believable from the standpoint of the study participants. Since the goal of qualitative research is to explain or understand phenomena of interest through the eyes of participants, the participants are the only ones who can properly judge the research's credibility.

In other words, this aspect ensures that all data to be gathered in the research are congruent to reality. To achieve this, the research will make sure that proper research methods will be adopted; specific procedures will be employed. This considers the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participants before the data collection dialogues take place. This may be achieved via consultation of appropriate documents and preliminary visits to the participants.

In addition, credibility is also achieved through making sure that the participants involved of the study have experienced the phenomenon being studied. This requires that the researcher should use a proper sampling method in selecting the participants. In most qualitative study, it uses purposive sampling.

Further, in data gathering, credibility has also to be addressed through triangulation. Triangulation may involve the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups, and individual interviews, which form the **major** data collection strategies for much qualitative research

Transferability. Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the finding of one study can be applied to other situations. The concern often lies in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population.

It specifically refers to the degree to which the result of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to another context or setting. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. Qualitative research can enhance transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. The researcher described in detail the research context and assumptions that were central to the research and showed all data as transparent as possible.

Dependability. The researcher will have an inquiry on the disciplinary problems experienced by teachers in the implementation of DepEd's learning recovery program. Considering that teachers have to deal with adjustments in the implementation of the program, one problem that adds to this adjustment is the observed misbehavior of the students in the class.

In addressing the issue of reliability of this research, the researcher will employ techniques to show that, if the work will be repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results will be obtained.

Confirmability. Researchers should possess a thorough understanding of the backgrounds of their participants to facilitate focused discussions, enabling participants to feel emotionally comfortable sharing their experiences. Maintaining openness and avoiding personal biases, assumptions, and judgments is crucial to prevent data distortion. Consistent use of recording methods such as tapes, notes, and cellphone records throughout the study ensures confirmability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in conducting a research are vital to ensure that protocols and processes to be undertaken uphold the rights, dignity and well-being of participants while making sure that results are valid and reliable. In the context of this research, the following ethical considerations will be addressed.

The researcher obtained voluntary and informed consent forms from the participants before their involvement in the study. This included informing the participants of the nature of the study. It also provided clear and understandable information about the purpose, procedure, risks, benefits, and rights of the participants. It was always emphasized that the participation of the participants was voluntary in nature and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Researchers protected the confidentiality of the participants' personal information including their names and personal identity. Data were stored securely and it was not shared with anybody with the participants' authority.

Researcher should respect the privacy of the participants and minimize intrusion into their personal lives. This could be done by obtaining consent for any observation or recording. In addition, interviews were conducted in a private setting.

Since the participation of the participants was voluntary in nature, researchers respected participant's right to make their decisions and choices regarding their participation in the study. Through this; coercion, undue influence or manipulation were avoided.

By addressing these ethical considerations, the researcher could uphold the principles of ethical conduct in research and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in an ethical and responsible manner.

3. RESULT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section delves into the lived experiences of the teachers in New Bataan National High School in addressing students' behavior. The main emphasis of this study was to navigate the lived experiences, coping mechanisms and learning insights of the teachers in dealing with the behaviors of the students. Answers were given by the participants who were selected based on the research inclusion criteria. Researcher conducted an in- depth interview adhering the research protocols and standards. Researcher also used pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants.

All answers of the participants were subject to thematic analysis. To uphold research integrity, coding techniques were employed to anonymize participants. The findings are presented in alignment with the specific research questions guiding this investigation.

3.1 What are the lived experiences of the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of students?

This section presents the results to the 1st major research question; What are the lived experiences of the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of students? Two specific questions were used to answer and gather information in this major research question. These questions aimed to reveal the lived experiences of the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of the students.

Experiences in Addressing the Behavioral Problems of Students

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What are your experiences in addressing the behavioral problems of students? This question has generated five themes: various experiences encountered, establish and communicate rules clearly, employing positive reinforcement, employing ''engage students'' strategy, quite Challenging but rewarding and a lot of ups and downs.

Effects of Behavioral Problems to Class and Duty as a Teacher

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 "In what way do these behavioral problems affect your class and your duty as a teacher*?"* After a thorough analysis of their responses, this specific question has generated ten emerging themes which are: can disrupt lessons flow, changes class atmosphere and teacher's mood, can affect most when problem not solve, mending problem of students, classroom easier to manage, reducing stress, improving quality of teaching, cause stress and sacrifices vacant and family time. These themes described the negative and positive effects of behavioral problems to class and duty as a teacher.

3.2 What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?

This section presents the results to the 2nd major research question; What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in addressing the behavioral problems of the students? Two specific questions were used to answer and gather information in this major research question. These questions aimed to reveal the challenges encountered by the teachers in dealing with behavioral problems of the students.

Challenges Encountered in Addressing Behavioral Problems

The themes in this section were derived from the specific research question 2.1 "As a teacher, what are the challenges you encountered in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?" After the detailed analysis of their responses, this specific question have generated 8 themes namely: still doing the same mistake, produce disruptions to classes, individual differences, external factors, finding right balance between positive reinforcement and disciplinary actions, various challenges encountered, building good rapport to parents and students having disruptive behavior.

Specific Behavioral Problem Encountered

The themes in this section were derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research 2.2, "What specific behavioral problem did you encounter? This specific question has generated the following themes: bullying, inappropriate social Behavior and peers misunderstanding, disruptive behavior, cheating, absenteeism and disrespectful, *low motivation, hyperactive Students,* swearing inside the classroom and refuse to following Instructions.

3.3 How did the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?

This section presents the results to the 3rd major research question; "How did the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?" Two specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the strategies and methods teacher used to handle and overcome difficulties related to student's behavioral issues.

Ways in Coping Challenges in Addressing Behavioral Problems

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 3.1 'How did you cope with the challenges in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?' The responses generated ten themes: talk to students, build positive relationship towards learners, recognizing students' differences, establishing good communication with parents, applied varied rules and regulations, seeking advice from colleagues, imposing do's and don'ts, must have excessive amount of patience, staying calm and patient and building supportive classroom environment.

Specific Strategies Found Effective in Addressing Behavioral Problems

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 3.2 'What specific strategies you find effective in addressing the behavioral problems of the students?' The responses generated eight themes: knowing the two sides of story, establish clear rules and expectation, positive reinforcement, being patient enough in handling difficult things, giving sanctions, one on one with students, parent's conference and open communication.

3.4 What important insights you have learned from these challenges and experiences?

This section presents the results to the 3rd major research question; "What important insights you have learned from these challenges and experiences?" Two specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on understanding how those situations have contributed to personal growth, skills, and knowledge.

Valuable Lessons Gained from Experiences

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 4.1 'What valuable lesson you have gained from these experiences?' The responses generated nine themes: do not judge what student's did, recognize students' individuality and differences, collaboration between parents and teachers, importance of patience and empathy, being completely patient and understanding, patience and persistence, should prevail respect on both sides, building strong and respectful relationship and importance of empathy and understanding.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, the following implications for practice are offered.

On Experiences in Addressing the Behavioral Problems of Students. As mentioned in the findings of the study, teachers experienced both positive and negative experience, be it negative or positive, addressing behavioral problems of the students is necessary in creating learning environment that is conducive and filled with learning. With this, there is a need for more training on the teachers' pedagogy and intensive integration of values education across disciplines in the curriculum.

On Effects of Behavioral Problems to Class and Duty as a Teacher. It is evident in the discussion of the results that the behavioral problems of students have negative impact to both classroom management and the role of teachers, it is suggested that teachers will come up with more differentiated instructions so that student's differences and needs will be addressed differently.

On Challenges Encountered in Addressing Behavioral Problems. Addressing the behavioral problems of the students is really challenging. However, the best way to solve these problems is to know the root causes of their behavior. Teachers should spend time to know the underlying reasons of their behavior. This includes observations and constant communication with the parents of the students.

On Specific Behavioral Problem Encountered. Teachers face large number of students in the classroom, this number also represent the various personalities of learners. With the specific and common problems encountered by the teachers, teachers should come up with individualized approaches and plans tailored on these on their individual problems.

On Ways in Coping Challenges in Addressing Behavioral Problems. Teachers are left with no choice but continue their classes even if students misbehaved and eventually disrupt classes. This somehow gives additional burden for some teachers. With this, it would be better if the school has designated personnel who will focus on these cases aside from classroom teachers.

On Specific Strategies Found Effective in Addressing Behavioral Problems. The results of the study conveyed that teachers became adaptive and tend to accept that addressing students behavioral problems of the students is part of their duties as a teacher. However, considering the number of students in their classroom, addressing this issue is quite exhausting. It is advised that maybe it is timely to follow the standard number of students in the class in order for the teachers to apply those specific strategies.

On Valuable Lessons Gained from Experiences. The participants of the study emphasized that dealing with students with behavioral problem taught them some lessons; however, teachers direly need the support of school administrator and learners' parents. The school must have a stricter disciplinary measures that should be established on set of every class.

On Ways Experiences Changing the Perspectives about Teaching. Teachers are left with no choice but to accept that disciplining students is part of their job and believing that teaching about life matters most. But, in today's generation, students behavioral problems are getting worse because students believed that they are protected by law. Corporal punishment is banned and prohibited in the schools. With this, the worsening problems of the students should be stopped by making sure that teachers are given the liberty on imposing disciplinary measures to the students. There is a need to review the content of Child Protection Policy.

Implications for Future Research

This undertaking mainly focused on the lived experiences, coping mechanisms and learning insights of teachers of New Bataan National High School in dealing with the behavioral problems of the students, with this the following implications for future research are considered:

First, a longitudinal and thorough study on determining the effects of teachers' experiences in dealing with students with behavioral problem to mental health and well- being. Second, is to examine the impact of these misbehaviors to the academic performance and achievement of the students.

Third, a case study has to be conducted in order to determine the root causes of students' misbehaviors. This way schools and teachers will come up with an individualized approach in addressing the problem of every student.

Fourth, a policy review has to be conducted particularly on the implementation of Child Protection Policy. Students misbehaviors are attributed to their beliefs that nobody in the school has the right to impose punishment because there is a law that protects them, as a result students' behaviors get worse. A study has to be conducted in order to determine if the Child Protection Policy is effective or not.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Behavioral problems among the students seem to be perennial problem experienced by teachers and school administrators. This has to be addressed because this behavior interrupts the teaching- learning process inside the classroom. Addressing this issue could be challenging but if this gets resolved, this is rewarding for the teachers.

In a classroom composed of diverse learners, it also implies that it is a classroom with diverse personalities and attitudes. Student have various attitudes towards learning and some of these attitudes are already detrimental to learning. Students' behavioral problems such as bullying, cheating, loss of respect to teachers, cursing inside the classroom and others deviant behaviors result to another task to teachers. Teachers experience stress and burn-out, all of these experiences have negative impact to their role and duties as teachers.

Despite the challenges experienced by the teachers, teachers remained to be committed in their duty. It is evident in their desire to help the students through using different mechanisms in dealing with these problems. Teachers became resilient and adaptive to these problems. Teachers believed that addressing the behavioral problems of the students is part and parcel of their duties as teachers. With this, it would be great if the Department of Education should hire more non-teaching personnel whose tasks is to focus in giving remedies to the behavioral problems of the students. This would the teacher to focus on their pedagogical strategies. There should a stronger partnership among parents and schools to solve this problem.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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