

The impact of teachers' training and classroom management on enhancing the learning experience of learners with disabilities in San Jose National High School

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of teachers' training and classroom management on enhancing the learning experiences of learners with disabilities (LWDs) at San Jose National High School. With the implementation of DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which mandates inclusive education in the Philippines, it is essential to assess and evaluate how prepared the teachers are to support our learners with disabilities (LWDs). This research used a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, and the study collected data through a researcher-made instrument administered to all 45 teachers and 86 identified LWDs in the school. The results indicate that although most teachers have considerable teaching experience, many lack specific training in special education, specifically the strategies for handling LWDs. This lack hinders the ability of the teachers to implement inclusive strategies effectively. Classroom management practices were found to be moderately effective, especially in maintaining order and routine, but showed limitations in providing individualized support and fostering inclusivity. Despite these challenges, learners with disabilities displayed moderate to high levels of engagement, particularly in interactive and collaborative activities. Regression analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between teachers' training, classroom management, and improved learning experiences for LWDs. The findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development for teachers, specifically targeting inclusive education strategies, alongside stronger collaboration among educators, administrators, and stakeholders. This study also recommends broader comparative studies and incorporates qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of LWDs and their teachers. Strengthening inclusive practices can ensure equitable and meaningful learning opportunities for all learners.

Keywords: inclusive education, teachers' training, classroom management, learners with disabilities, professional development

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1. Introduction

Teachers play an essential role in shaping students holistically, particularly for learners with disabilities. Research by Sharma and Sokal (2016) shows that educators need strong classroom management skills and specialized training in special education to create an inclusive learning environment. Wentzel and Ramani (2016) emphasize that strong classroom social networks contribute to higher levels of behavioral engagement. These findings reinforce the importance of creating structured and supportive learning environments to promote behavioral and academic growth. However, despite the significance of these factors, there is a lack of research on teachers' preparedness to handle diverse learning needs in secondary schools such as San Jose National High School.

The training that educators receive plays a vital role in effectively supporting learners with disabilities. Giovazolias et al. (2019) show that teachers who undergo specialized training in inclusive education are more likely to implement instructional strategies that accommodate various learning styles, leading to improved student achievement. Furthermore, Schütze et al. (2017) emphasize that professional development enhances teachers' capacity to manage behavioral challenges, creating a more supportive classroom environment. However, Ulla (2018) and Oliveira et al. (2019) highlight that many educators' concerns are about inadequate training in special education, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive professional development programs. Fortunately, the Department of Education in the Philippines mandated DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 states the need for capacity-building programs to equip teachers with the skills necessary for managing diverse learners.

Concerning classroom management, Oliver et al. (2011) believe that it significantly influences the learners' academic success. This research suggests that classrooms with clear expectations, consistent routines, and positive reinforcement improve student behavior and academic performance, particularly for those with disabilities. Likewise, Gage et al. (2018) and Korpershoek et al. (2016) state that effective management strategies, such as individualized support and structured interventions, have improved student engagement and reduced disruptive behaviors. Prothero (2023) reports that more than 70% of teachers have observed a recent increase in disruptive behaviors, such as bullying and defiance, in the classroom. Additionally, poorly managed classrooms often experience higher rates of disruptions, leading to decreased student engagement and academic underperformance. Also, Mitchell (2019) points out that while inclusive education has been widely promoted, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific classroom management strategies impact student behavior and academic performance in secondary schools. Addressing this gap is critical in developing policies and interventions that effectively support students with disabilities. Despite the growing body of research on classroom management and teacher training, there is still limited understanding of how these factors specifically affect students with disabilities. Studies emphasize the positive effects of evidence-based teaching approaches on student performance (Conroy et al. 2014; Jennings & DiPrete 2011).

San Jose National High School is following the nationwide implementation of DepEd Order No. 44, series of 2021, "Policy Guidelines of the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program," in which it encloses the provision of overall direction and guidance in the organization, management, and implementation of appropriate programs, services, and interventions for learners with disabilities. Unfortunately, the school lacks appropriate training to cater to the needs of LWDs. It is also challenging for the teachers to enhance learners' learning experiences since not all teachers can attend classroom management training for learners with disabilities. This study aims to assess the current level of teacher training in handling learners with disabilities and to determine the effect of classroom management on the academic performance of learners with disabilities. Specifically, the research will investigate whether there is

a significant relationship between teacher training and classroom management in enhancing the learning experiences of learners with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem - This study sought to determine the impact of teachers' training and classroom management on enhancing the learning experiences of learners with disabilities in San Jose National High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the profile of the student-respondents in terms of age, grade level, and types of disability? (2) What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age and years of teaching experience? (3) What is the level of teachers' training in handling learners with disabilities in San Jose National High School? (4) What is the extent of classroom management of the teachers in handling learners with disabilities in San Jose National High School? (5) What is the level of learning experiences of learners with disabilities? (6) Is the level of learning experiences of learners with disabilities significantly affected by the teachers' training and classroom management?

Significance of the Study - The researchers believe the study will benefit learners with disabilities by improving and developing their learning experiences. Second, the teachers must be fully equipped with the appropriate classroom management training to cater to learners with disabilities. Third, school administrators should assess the level of teachers' training and propose programs to enhance teachers' capabilities in handling learners with disabilities. Lastly, to future researchers, use this as a reference for further research regarding inclusive education, particularly the learning experiences of learners with disabilities.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study - This study focuses only on the learners with disabilities, teachers, and San Jose National High School administrators. This will only consider the learning experiences as an outcome and does not cover other problems that are not considered as one of the given factors. The study utilized a survey questionnaire to collect the needed data. This research aims to provide valuable insights into improving the learning process of learners with disabilities and teachers' capabilities and classroom management with the help of school training and programs and through proper training and development programs.

2. Methodology

Research Design - The study utilized a quantitative research design, specifically using a descriptive-correlational design. Descriptive research was used to determine the level of teachers' training, classroom management, and the learning experience of learners with disabilities in San Jose National High School. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect was used to determine if there was a significant relationship among the three variables.

Respondents of the Study - The respondents of this study included all teachers directly involved in the instruction and management of learners with disabilities, as well as all identified learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School. The researchers employed complete enumeration because all qualified individuals within the target population were selected as respondents for the study. There were 86 students and 45 teachers who participated in answering the survey.

Research Instrument - This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to efficiently collect data from teachers regarding their training, classroom management strategies, and their perceived impact on learners with disabilities. The questionnaire was developed based on the researcher's readings, previous studies, professional literature, and published and unpublished theses relevant to the study. Meanwhile, a Likert-scale format was used to measure respondents' levels of agreement on various statements related to teacher training effectiveness and classroom management challenges. To determine the reliability and validity of the researcher-made instrument, the researchers sought help from the experts from DWCSJ to check if the content of the questionnaires was related to the variables being studied. Comments and suggestions from the experts were incorporated into the final copy of the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedure - Data were collected through structured surveys and standardized assessment

tools, ensuring objective and measurable results. Before data collection, a consent letter was prepared and submitted for approval to the school principal, who granted approval after one week. During the data collection, the researchers presented the consent letter to every respondent. Data gathering was conducted using both online and face-to-face methods to accommodate respondents with limited or no Internet access. The entire data collection process was completed within seven days.

Statistical Treatment of the Data - The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics: descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and frequency) were used to assess the current level of teacher training and resource availability. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationships between teacher training, classroom management, and the academic performance of learners with disabilities. Regression analysis was conducted to further understand the impact of independent variables on the learning experience of learners with disabilities.

Ethical Considerations - This study adhered to ethical research standards, including informed consent obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation; confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were strictly maintained; and approval from the school principal was secured before data collection. Additionally, respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study without penalty. The researchers ensured that no physical, emotional, or psychological harm would result from participation. All information gathered was used solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, data was stored securely to prevent unauthorized access, and the results were presented truthfully and objectively, without distortion or bias.

3. Results and Discussions.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Student-Respondents According to Age, Grade Level, and Type of Disability (n=86)

Age	Frequency	Percent
10-12	2	2.3
13-15	41	47.7
16-18	38	44.2
19 - above	5	5.8
Grade Level		
Grade 7	13	15.1
Grade 8	21	24.4
Grade 9	17	19.8
Grade 10	10	11.6
Grade 11	25	29.1
Type of Disability		
Visual Impairment	48	55.8
Hearing Impairment	22	25.6
Learning Disability	10	11.6
Others	6	7.0
Total	86	100.0

Table 1 shows the age distribution of learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School. Most respondents, or 47.7%, were aged 13 to 15 years, indicating that nearly half of the students are in the early adolescent stage. This was followed by 44.2% between 16 and 18 years old, showing that many were in their mid- to late teens. A smaller group, 5.8%, was aged 19 and above, while only 2.3% fell within the 10–12 age bracket, making them the smallest group. Overall, this showed that most students with disabilities are within the typical age range of junior to senior high school. These results were consistent with the findings of Hallahan et al. (2020), who reported that most students with disabilities were identified during their middle and high school years, which fell within the 13–18 age range. Similarly, the Department of Education (2020) noted that the majority of learners with disabilities in the Philippines were enrolled at the secondary level, particularly during adolescence. The current study supported these findings, emphasizing the importance of this age group in implementing appropriate interventions and support strategies within the secondary education system. In terms of grade level, they were spread across various grade levels at San Jose National High School. The highest

percentage was recorded in Grade 11 (29.1%), indicating that many students could reach senior high school despite their challenges. Grade 8 followed with 24.4%, showing a strong presence during the middle years of junior high. Grades 9 (19.8%) and 7 (15.1%) had moderate representation, suggesting continued support during the early to mid-junior high levels. Grade 10 had the lowest percentage at 11.6%, which may have pointed to possible issues such as dropouts or increased academic and emotional challenges during this transition period. These findings were in line with the study of McLeskey et al. (2014), who found that students with disabilities often encountered greater difficulties during transitions, especially between junior and senior high school. This aligned with the lower enrollment observed in Grade 10, possibly due to challenges in meeting academic expectations, adjusting socially, or lacking adequate support. Similarly, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) reported a rise in dropout rates during the later junior high years, often linked to rising academic pressure and limited accommodations. These studies supported the findings of this research, underlining the need for consistent support, targeted interventions, and well-trained teachers to assist students with disabilities in successfully moving through key educational stages.

Lastly, regarding students with disabilities based on their specific conditions at San Jose National High School. The results indicated that most learners had visual impairments, making up 55.8% of the respondents. Students with hearing impairments followed this at 25.6%, while those with learning disabilities comprised 11.6%. The remaining 7.0% had other types of disabilities. These figures suggested a strong demand for visual and auditory learning support within the school. The findings were supported by Miyauchi (2020), who pointed out that students with visual impairments needed assistive technologies and modified instructional materials to access learning more effectively. This aligned with the study's high number of visually impaired learners, emphasizing the importance of appropriate tools and resources. The presence of students with hearing impairments also aligned with the study of Rangel et al. (2022), which stressed the need for sign language, visual aids, and supportive environments to help avoid social and academic exclusion. Moreover, the number of students with learning disabilities reflected the observations of Brown (2022), who mentioned that although individualized teaching strategies were necessary, many educators were still not adequately trained to apply them. These results agreed with the literature reviewed and highlighted the urgent need for better teacher training, access to assistive technology, and inclusive practices to effectively support students with diverse learning needs.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Teacher-Respondents According to Age and Teaching Experience (n=45)

Age	Frequency	Percent
21-30	10	22.2
31-40	9	20.0
41-50	13	28.9
51. above	13	28.9
Teaching Experience		
below 3 years	3	6.7
3-5 years	2	4.4
6-10 years	18	40.0
more than 10 years	22	48.9
Total	45	100.0

Table 2 shows that teachers handling learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School came from a broad range of age groups. The most significant portions were those aged 41–50 years and 51 years and above, each accounting for 28.9% of the total. This suggested that a significant number of the teaching staff were experienced. Meanwhile, 22.2% were aged 21–30, representing younger educators who could bring fresh perspectives and adaptability. The smallest group, aged 31–40, made up only 20%, which pointed to a possible gap in mid-career teachers, raising questions about consistency and leadership in the school's inclusive education efforts. The findings of this study are supported by Billingsley & Bettini (2019), who emphasized that teacher experience is essential in delivering quality instruction to students with disabilities, as seasoned educators are more capable of implementing evidence-based practices effectively. This aligns with the current study's high percentage of teachers aged 41 and above. However, the notably low number of teachers in the 31–40 age group

raises concerns about long-term sustainability. According to Ingersoll and Perda (2008), as cited by Karakose et al. (2023), mid-career educators were vital in guiding and mentoring novice teachers and balancing innovative methods with practical experience. The lack of this age group may have posed challenges to leadership development and the consistent application of inclusive practices. Thus, the data highlighted a pattern consistent with prior studies and a structural issue that schools needed to address to ensure continuity and progress in inclusive education initiatives.

In terms of teaching experience, the data revealed that most teachers handling learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School had extensive experience. 48.9% (22 teachers) had been teaching learners with disabilities for more than 10 years, while 40% (18 teachers) had been doing so for 6 to 10 years. In contrast, only a small percentage had less teaching experience. About 6.7% (3 teachers) had been in the role for less than 3 years, and 4.4% (2 teachers) had 3 to 5 years of experience. These figures indicated that the school had a workforce with a strong background in handling learners with disabilities. 89% of the respondents had more than 6 years of experience, which likely contributed to the overall quality of instruction and support provided to these students. However, fewer teachers with less experience suggested a possible issue in attracting and developing new special education teachers. Without proper onboarding and mentorship, the school might face challenges in maintaining this level of expertise, particularly as more experienced teachers near retirement. These findings were consistent with the study of Billingsley (2018), who stated that experience and preparation are critical factors in a teacher's success in special education. Similarly, Friend and Bursuck (2019) found that seasoned teachers are often more skilled in applying inclusive strategies and classroom modifications, resulting in improved academic and social outcomes for learners with disabilities.

Table 3

Mean Level of Teachers' Training Handling Learners with Disabilities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
I received sufficient training for handling Learners with Disabilities.	1.67	Very Low Level
I use different teaching strategies to support LWDs.	2.71	Moderate Level
I receive adequate resources from the school to teach LWDs.	1.96	Low Level
I need more professional development in handling LWDs.	3.67	High Level
I feel confident in my ability to create an inclusive classroom for LWDs.	2.44	Low Level
I receive adequate support from my colleagues and administration in handling LWDs.	2.78	Moderate Level
I feel that the current curriculum is adaptable to the needs of LWDs.	2.73	Moderate Level
I have access to assistive technology and tools that help support LWDs.	2.07	Low Level
I can assess and track the progress of LWDs effectively.	2.56	Low Level
I feel supported by the school in addressing the emotional and social needs of LWDs.	2.69	Moderate Level
OVERALL MEAN	2.53	Low Level

Legend: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low Level, 1.75–2.49 = Low Level, 2.50–3.24 = High Level, 3.25–4.00 = Very High Level

Based on the weighted mean score of 2.53, the survey results reflected low teacher training in handling learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School. The highest-rated indicator, with a 3.67, showed that teachers recognized the importance of further professional development. However, the lowest scores—2.07 for access to assistive technology and 1.96 for access to necessary resources—revealed significant gaps in support that affected the teachers' ability to apply inclusive teaching strategies effectively. These results aligned with the findings of Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011), who pointed out that successful inclusive education appropriately required trained teachers, ongoing professional development, and sufficient teaching resources. The current study shared similar conclusions, as the lack of training appeared to lower teacher confidence and hinder their capacity to address the needs of learners with disabilities. In addition, the findings aligned with the study of Alquraini and Gut (2012), which reported that the absence of assistive technologies and school-level support posed significant obstacles to implementing inclusive practices. These issues, in turn, affected both the academic progress and social participation of students with disabilities. In summary, the study confirmed earlier research. It highlighted the need for focused training programs and better provision of assistive tools and materials to

strengthen the delivery of inclusive education in the school.

Table 4

Mean Level of Classroom Management Handling Learners with Disabilities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. My teacher explains the classroom rules clearly.	3.35	Moderate Level
2. My teacher provides additional support when needed.	3.45	High Level
3. My teacher uses rewards and positive reinforcement.	3.35	Moderate Level
4. My classroom is safe and promotes an inclusive environment.	3.27	Moderate Level
5. My teacher provides individualized support plans to meet the diverse needs of the learners.	3.20	Moderate Level
6. My teacher encourages social participation in classroom activities.	3.44	High Level
7. My teacher uses visual aids and other strategies to enhance our comprehension.	3.24	Moderate Level
8. My teacher regularly communicates with parents/guardians about our progress.	3.48	High Level
9. My teacher adapts teaching methods to accommodate our unique needs.	3.37	Moderate Level
10. My teacher promotes a growth mindset, encouraging me to overcome challenges.	3.58	High Level
OVERALL MEAN	3.37	Moderate Level

Legend: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low Level, 1.75–2.49 = Low Level, 2.50–3.24 = High Level, 3.25 – 4.00 = Very High Level

The results in Table 4 show that classroom management for learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School was moderate, with an overall mean score of 3.37. Teachers performed best in maintaining regular communication with parents or guardians (3.48) and promoting social participation in classroom activities (3.44), both of which were rated high. However, other indicators—such as creating an inclusive classroom environment (3.27), providing individualized support (3.20), and using varied teaching strategies (3.24)—were rated moderately, pointing to the needed improvement. These results were supported by Simonsen et al. (2008), as cited by Ahmadi et al. (2023), who stressed the value of positive reinforcement, establishing clear classroom rules, and maintaining strong parent-teacher partnerships to manage student behavior and improve engagement. The high scores related to communication and social participation in this study aligned with those findings. In addition, Tomlinson (2014) noted that inclusive classrooms benefited from differentiated instruction and supportive learning environments, areas where the current study showed only moderate application. This indicated that although some inclusive methods were being practiced, they required further enhancement. Furthermore, the findings reflected those of Mitchell (2019), who stated that well-structured classroom strategies helped ensure academic progress and social development among students with disabilities. The moderate overall mean suggested that such structures existed but were not fully developed. As a result, the study emphasized the need for continuous teacher training and additional support to improve classroom management practices and better serve learners with disabilities.

The data presented in Table 5 indicates that learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School experience a moderate level of learning, with an overall mean of 3.37. High ratings were observed in areas such as collaboration with classmates (3.58), participation in hands-on and interactive activities (3.48), and completion of assignments on time (3.45). These findings suggest that students are actively engaged in collaborative and structured tasks. However, lower mean scores in self-directed learning (3.37) and accessible, tailored learning materials (3.24) indicate that certain areas require further development. These results are supported by the findings of Friend & Bursuck (2019), who emphasized that engagement significantly increases when learners with disabilities are involved in collaborative and interactive classroom activities, which foster academic and social development. The high peer collaboration and hands-on learning scores in this study align well with their conclusions.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Coyne et al. (2012), who pointed out that limited access to individualized learning tools and inadequate teacher training can hinder self-directed learning and academic progress for learners with disabilities. The relatively moderate ratings in this study for self-directed learning and tailored resources support this assertion. Lastly, Tomlinson (2014) stressed the importance of differentiated

instruction and providing learning materials aligned with various student needs and styles, which the current study highlights as needing improvement. Thus, while learners show active involvement in collaborative learning, the findings point to the need for enhanced instructional approaches and more inclusive learning tools to support diverse learning needs fully.

Table 5*Mean Level of Learning Experiences Learners with Disabilities*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I actively participate in class.	3.35	Moderate Level
2. I complete my assignments/tasks on time.	3.45	High Level
3. I engage in meaningful and challenging learning experiences that support academic growth over time.	3.35	Moderate Level
4. I improve my performance through collaborating in different learning activities.	3.27	Moderate Level
5. I engage with the learning experiences designed by my teacher to meet my needs.	3.20	Moderate Level
6. I engage with various instructional methods by my teacher to address my learning styles.	3.44	High Level
7. I utilize learning materials that are accessible and tailored to our learning styles.	3.24	Moderate Level
8. I cooperate in hands-on and interactive activities that develop our skills and abilities.	3.48	High Level
9. I am involved in self-directed learning, enabling us to explore and apply knowledge independently.	3.37	Moderate Level
10. I actively collaborate with my classmates to succeed in the classroom.	3.58	High Level
OVERALL MEAN	3.37	Moderate Level

Legend: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low Level, 1.75–2.49 = Low Level, 2.50–3.24 = High Level, 3.25–4.00 = Very High Level

Table 6*Regression Analysis on the Level of Learning Experiences, the Teachers' Training, and Classroom Management*

Dependent Variable	Variable That Entered the Regression Model	Multiple R	Adjusted R ²	t Value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
L1. I actively participate in class.	C4, C9, C2	.652 ^c	.383	9.408	.001	Highly Significant

Legend: p-value < 0.001 Highly Significant; p-value < 0.05 Significant

The results in Table 6 show a strong and highly significant relationship between students' active participation in class and the predictors C4, C9, and C2 related to classroom management and teacher training. The regression analysis produced a Multiple R of .652 and an Adjusted R² of .383, indicating that these variables explained 38.3% of student participation variation. This suggested that when teachers received adequate training and applied effective classroom management practices, learners with disabilities were more likely to participate actively in class activities. These findings were consistent with the study by Simonsen et al. (2008), as cited by Ahmadi et al. (2023), who emphasized that well-structured and supportive classroom environments played a vital role in promoting academic and behavioral success among students with disabilities. The present study's strong impact of classroom management aligned with their conclusion that a solid classroom structure served as a foundation for inclusive education. The results also reflected the findings of Desimone & Garet (2015), who found that professional development improved teachers' capacity to adjust instruction according to students' needs. The significant contribution of teacher training in the regression model supported this point, suggesting that continuous teacher development directly influenced student participation. Furthermore, the outcomes agreed with Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011), who argued that inclusive education worked best when teachers had both instructional skills and management strategies. The present study validated this claim by statistically demonstrating that these teacher qualities were essential in encouraging active involvement among learners with disabilities. In summary, the findings of this study are strongly supported by related literature, affirming that teacher training and effective classroom management significantly enhance the learning experiences of students with disabilities. This emphasizes the need for sustained professional development and supportive learning

4. Conclusions

The results of this study show that learners with disabilities at San Jose National High School are aged 13 to 18 and come from various grade levels, with the majority having visual impairments. Most teachers handling these students are older and experienced, yet their training specific to learners with disabilities remains low. Classroom management is generally moderate, but individualized support and fostering an inclusive environment need improvement. Despite these challenges, students with disabilities demonstrate moderate to high levels of engagement, particularly in collaborative and hands-on activities. The regression analysis confirms a strong relationship between teacher training, classroom management, and students' learning experiences, emphasizing the importance of strengthening these areas to enhance educational outcomes for all learners.

Recommendations - Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are derived: The school may invest in sustained and targeted professional development programs to enhance teacher training for handling learners with disabilities. The school may conduct qualitative studies to explore the lived experiences of both learners with disabilities and their teachers. Teachers may explore and investigate the long-term outcomes of professional development programs related to inclusive education. The school administration and teachers, in coordination with the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and local stakeholders, may examine the role of parental involvement and school-community partnerships in enhancing support for learners with disabilities. Future researchers are encouraged to broaden the scope of this study by involving more schools or comparing rural and urban settings.

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