



Lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs. The study uses qualitative research design, with semi-structured interviews as primary data collection method. The participants of the study were the seven (7) receiving teachers who have experience in teaching learners with special needs. The data collected from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, with the aim of identifying the key themes. The study identified four themes: emotional challenges and rewards, professional support and training, advocacy and inclusion, and personal growth and fulfillment. The study identified five key challenges faced by receiving teachers, including delivery of instruction, sudden shift of pedagogy, limited resources, knowledge and time, lack of parental participation, and heavy workload. Coping mechanisms adopted by receiving teachers to address these challenges included seeking support from colleagues, time management, self-care and stress management, and professional development. The study identified a range of strategies that receiving teachers use to support the learning and development of learners with special needs. These strategies include adapting teaching methods and materials to meet the individual needs of learners, providing additional support and resources, and building positive relationships with learners and their families. The study highlighted the receiving teachers with the training, support, and resources they need to effectively teach learners with special needs. The study also emphasizes the need for schools to recognize and value the important role that receiving teachers play in supporting the learning and development of learners with special needs.

Keywords: *lived experiences, special needs, receiving teachers, learners with special needs*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on inclusive education and the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream classrooms. The recognition of the rights of all individuals, based on UNESCO to receive quality education, regardless of their abilities, has led to a shift in educational policies and practices worldwide. This shift has placed a significant responsibility on teachers to effectively support and accommodate the diverse needs of learners with special needs in inclusive settings.

In the Philippines, the Republic Act No. 11650, also known as the "An Act Institutionalizing Inclusive Education and Establishing Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers for Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSNs) in All Public Schools Divisions, Providing for Standards and Guidelines," mandates the implementation of inclusive education in all public schools in the Philippines. Inclusive education aims to provide quality education for all learners, including those with special needs. However, the implementation of inclusive education has been challenging for receiving teachers who handle learners with special needs. Receiving teachers often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively cater to the diverse needs of learners with special needs.

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) explored teachers' experiences of inclusion in relation to learners with special needs. The study examined the challenges faced by teachers, the strategies they employed, and the impact of these experiences on their professional development and well-being. The findings highlighted the importance of on-going professional development, collaboration among educators, and the need for supportive school environments to facilitate successful inclusion. Some observations in handling learners with special needs require specialized knowledge and skills that were not typically included in the regular teacher training programs. Receiving teachers were often lack the necessary resources and support to effectively cater to the diverse needs of learners with special needs. To address these issues, the researchers proposed a study that aimed to explore the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs. hence, the objective of this study was to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities of inclusive education and the support needed by receiving teachers to effectively cater to the diverse needs of learners with special needs. Therefore, conducting this study contributed to the improvement of the education system in the school and the Philippines, as a whole.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Lived Experiences of Receiving Teachers

Pugach et al. (2015) looked at general education teachers' experiences instructing students who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In order to fulfill the requirements of students with ASD, the study indicated that teachers frequently feel unprepared and unsupported. The difficult behaviors that students with ASD exhibited also caused teachers to express feelings of frustration and anxiety. Furthermore, a study by Soodak and Podell (2016) investigated general education instructors' experiences in working with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). According to the report, educators frequently feel unprepared and unsupported when it comes to serving the requirements of students who have EBD. The difficult behaviors that students with EBD displayed also caused teachers to express feelings of frustration and stress. This study indicates that receiving instructors frequently feel unsupported and unprepared to address the requirements of students with special needs. Working with students that have a variety of needs causes teachers a great deal of stress and frustration as well.

Limited facilities, materials and equipment for systematic and scientific early identification and screening procedure. According to a study by Kalyanpur and Harry (2012a), receiving teachers frequently do not have the tools and resources needed to properly identify and screen pupils with disabilities. In addition, they lack the education and experience required to employ techniques and instruments for evidence-based screening. Delays in identifying students with special needs and in giving them the necessary supports and interventions may arise from this. Additionally, receiving instructors frequently lack the tools and assistance they need to instruct kids with impairments, according to a research by Pugach et al. (2015). They expressed frustration about not having access to specialized tools and resources, like adaptive educational materials and assistive technology. Receiving teachers may find it challenging to accommodate and modify their lessons to match the different requirements of their students as a result of this. According to Pugach et al. (2015), schools should give receiving teachers continual professional development and instruction in how to engage with students who have disabilities. Additionally, they recommended that schools give receiving teachers access to specialized tools and resources, like adaptive teaching materials and assistive technology. Receiving instructors frequently lack the tools, resources, and expertise needed to properly identify and screen students with disabilities. In

order to tackle these obstacles, educational institutions ought to furnish receiving instructors with continuous professional growth and instruction, particular materials and equipment, and assistance in utilizing evidence-based screening instruments and protocols.

Early intervention program is not sufficient. Cook et al. (2013) looked into the effects of early intervention programs for young children with impairments. The study found that while early intervention programs can improve outcomes for children with disabilities, they are not sufficient on their own. In order to implement the strategies and solutions they have learned in early intervention programs, teachers who work with these kids and get support need ongoing direction and training. In addition, Hemmeter et al. (2012) looked at coaching's function in helping receiving teachers apply research-based strategies for young children with disabilities, which found that coaching can be a useful tool for helping receiving instructors apply research-proven techniques and enhance results for kids with impairments. To be effective, coaching must be ongoing and customized to each teacher's unique needs. Teachers who engage with these children and get support require continuous guidance and instruction to apply the tactics and solutions they have acquired in early intervention programs. This assistance can be given through coaching, but for it to be successful; it must be continuous and customized to the requirements of the teacher.

Attitudinal barrier. In the world of special education, attitudes toward receiving instructors who work with students who have special needs have drawn attention. Numerous investigations have been carried out to examine this problem and offer suggestions for removing these obstacles. The significance of cultural competence in special education was highlighted by Kalyanpur and Harry (2012b). This competency can aid in removing any mental obstacles that receiving instructors may encounter when assisting students with special needs. They maintained that in addition to being open to learning about the cultural backgrounds of their pupils and their families, receiving instructors should also be conscious of their own cultural prejudices and presumptions. Moreover, Pijl et al. (2011) reviewed the literature to determine regular instructors' perspectives on teaching students with special needs in regular classrooms. It was discovered that there are a lot of normal teachers who have unfavorable opinions toward inclusion, and that these attitudes might be a big obstacle to successful inclusion. To get beyond these obstacles, interventions that try to alter teachers' perspectives on inclusion might be required. On the other hand, Ruijs et al. (2010) carried out a review of the literature about the views of teachers regarding inclusive education. They

discovered that many instructors had unfavorable attitudes regarding inclusion, and that these attitudes can be impacted by a variety of elements, including experience, training, and support from administrators and colleagues. In order to overcome attitudinal hurdles to effective inclusion, the authors proposed that interventions targeted at altering teachers' attitudes toward inclusion might be required. Finally, in Mumbai, India, Sharma and Desai (2002) investigated the perspectives of educators about students with impairments. They discovered that many educators had unfavorable opinions of students with impairments, and that these opinions were shaped by societal perceptions of disabilities as well as a lack of assistance and training. According to the authors, in order to effectively overcome attitudinal barriers to inclusion, interventions targeted at altering teachers' attitudes regarding disability may be required.

2.2. Difficulties and challenges encountered by the receiving teachers

Several obstacles that general education teachers have when assisting students with impairments were noted in a study conducted by Pugach et al. (2015). Inadequate materials and resources, a lack of cooperation and communication with special education experts, and a lack of training and support are some of these difficulties. Teachers in general education frequently find it difficult to differentiate their instruction for students with varied needs (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012). The demands of attending to the needs of kids with disabilities in addition to the requirements of other pupils in the classroom have also left teachers feeling overburdened. When working with students who have emotional and behavioral problems (EBD), general education teachers encounter a number of difficulties (Soodak & Podell, 2016). Managing difficult behaviors, attending to the social and emotional needs of students with EBD, and working in tandem with parents and other professionals to support students with EBD are some of these obstacles. Insufficient resources and supplies, a lack of training and support, and difficulty differentiating instruction for students with various needs are just a few of the difficulties many instructors encounter while dealing with students with disabilities. The social and emotional requirements of students with impairments are a challenge for teachers, as is controlling difficult behaviors.

2.3. Coping mechanisms of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs

According to Kalyanpur and Harry (2012), general education teachers often rely on informal support networks, such as colleagues and family members, to cope with the demands of teaching learners with disabilities. Teachers also reported using self-care

strategies, such as exercise and relaxation techniques, to manage stress and prevent burnout. Pugach et al. (2015) identified several coping strategies used by general education teachers in working with students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These strategies include seeking support from special education professionals, collaborating with parents and other professionals, and using visual aids and other instructional materials to support students with ASD. In addition, Soodak and Podell (2016) found that general education teachers often rely on a range of coping strategies to manage the challenges of working with learners with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). These strategies include seeking support from colleagues and special education professionals, using positive reinforcement and behavior management techniques, and engaging in self-care activities to manage stress and prevent burnout. These studies suggest that receiving teachers rely on a range of coping strategies to manage the challenges of working with learners with disabilities. These strategies include seeking support from colleagues and special education professionals, using instructional materials and behavior management techniques, and engaging in self-care activities to manage stress and prevent burnout.

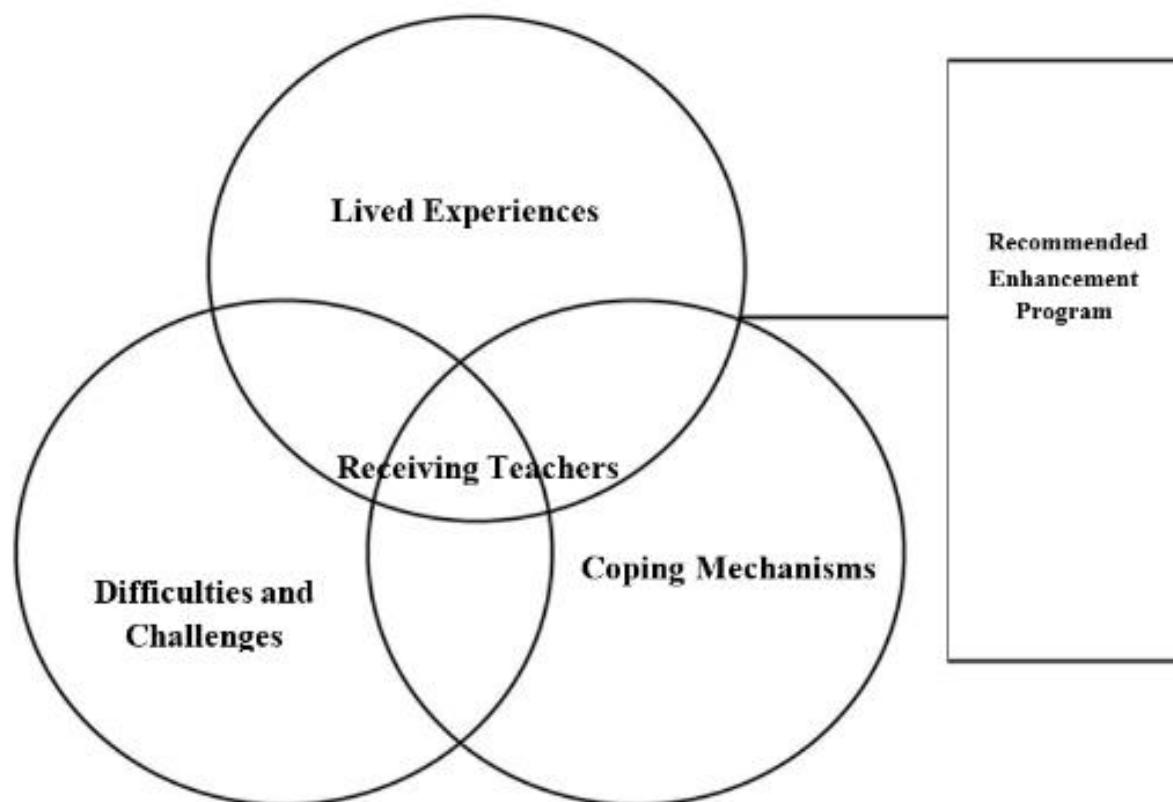
Kalyanpur and Harry (2012) found teachers who work with learners with impairments feel unprepared and non-supported. It is also difficult for them to strike a balance between these pupils' requirements and the needs of their other learners. Teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is a challenge for receiving teachers (Pugach et al., 2015). The dearth of tools and assistance that they have access to also irritates them. Receiving teachers frequently find it difficult to control the difficult behaviors of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), and they also often feel unprepared to meet the social and emotional needs of these students (Alquraini & Gut, 2012; Soodak & Podell, 2016; Smith, 2017). The rigors of instructing these students can cause them to feel anxious and exhausted. Receiving teachers employ a variety of tactics to deal with these difficulties. Furthermore, according to Kalyanpur and Harry (2012), receiving teachers look to their peers and special education specialists for assistance. In order to control stress and avoid burnout, they also employ self-care measures including exercise and relaxation methods. According to Pugach et al. (2015), receiving teachers should receive continual training in working with children with impairments as well as professional development. In order to work with pupils who have particular challenges, like ASD, they also require training in evidence-based techniques and personalized support from special education specialists. According to Soodak

and Podell (2016), receiving teachers employ a variety of coping mechanisms, such as asking for help from peers and special education specialists, utilizing behavior management techniques and instructional materials, and taking time for self-care to reduce stress and avoid burnout. Consequently, receiving instructors who work with students who have special needs encounter a variety of obstacles and problems; nevertheless, they also employ a range of coping strategies to get over these obstacles. It is advised to use evidence-based techniques, individualized support, continuous professional development, and training for receiving teachers in order to better support them.

2.4. Theoretical framework

Figure 1

A Venn diagram showing the receiving teachers as influenced by the lived experiences, coping mechanism, difficulties and challenges experiences



This study was anchored to Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) Theory by Lev Vygotsky. This theory emphasizes that learning and development occur within a zone where a learner can achieve more with the guidance and support of a more knowledgeable individual. The ZPD represents the gap between what a learner can do independently and

what they can do with assistance. Vygotsky believed that social interaction and collaboration play a crucial role in cognitive development within the ZPD. Through scaffolding, a more knowledgeable individual provides support and gradually reduces it as the learner becomes more competent. The ZPD has implications for education, suggesting that educators should provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to facilitate optimal learning and foster the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Vygotsky's ZPD theory is highly relevant to studying the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs. The theory emphasizes the importance of guidance, support, collaboration, and scaffolding in learning. Receiving teachers play a crucial role in providing inclusive education and supporting learners with special needs. Understanding their experiences within the ZPD framework can inform the development of effective teaching strategies, collaborative practices, and targeted professional development programs. Therefore, Vygotsky's ZPD theory provides a valuable framework for examining and enhancing the educational experiences of learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms.

3. Methodology

The research design employed in this study was phenomenological approach, focusing on understanding the lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs. Following the framework introduced by John W. Creswell (1998), which the design was focused on the phenomenological inquiry. It considers researcher to understand the philosophical perspectives behind the approach, especially the concept of studying how people experience a phenomenon. The research delved into the essence of these experiences, assuming a universal structure underlying individuals' perceptions. Through long interviews and careful analysis, the data were systematically dissected into statements, clustered, and described texturally and structurally to extract the essential, invariant structure of the experiences. The locale of the study provided the context for understanding these experiences within a specific demographic setting. Seven receiving teachers, meeting specific criteria, participated in face-to-face, in-depth interviews conducted from September to November 2023.

Table 1*Demographic profile of the participants*

Participant	Age	Number of years as a Teacher
Jenny	39	18
Reina	44	17
Gina	51	18
Rica	51	33
Carl	41	18
Riza	41	18
Mary	35	11

During the face to face in-depth interviews, only seven (7) teachers met the set criteria out of thirty-five (35). The study set the following inclusion criteria using pseudonym to get the necessary data: 1.) An elementary regular teacher, 2.) who has been teaching for at least five years. The participants were one (1) male and six (6) females receiving teachers handling learners with special needs. The demographic profile of the participants reflected a diverse range of ages and years of teaching experience, offering rich insights into their varied perspectives. The data gathering instrument, an interview guide, meticulously formulated questions probing into the challenges, lived experiences, and coping mechanisms of the teachers, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon under study. To validate the interview guide, a jury comprising experts in relevant fields evaluated its content, format, and wording, contributing valuable feedback for refinement. The data gathering procedure prioritized ethical considerations, with informed consent obtained from participants and measures taken to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Interviews were conducted in comfortable, familiar settings, allowing for open dialogue and candid responses. Data analysis involved iterative processes of familiarization, thematic grouping, and synthesis, culminating in the extraction of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. Throughout the research flow, from conceptualization to recommendation, a systematic approach guided the study, ensuring methodological rigor and coherence.

Ethical considerations remained paramount, with strict adherence to regulations safeguarding participant privacy and data confidentiality. By employing a phenomenological research design, this study offered profound insights into the lived

experiences of receiving teachers, shedding light on the nuanced dynamics of teaching learners with special needs in a specific educational context. In the conduct of this study, the researcher made sure that necessary letters of consent were secured and proper coordination with people who have direct involvement in this study was properly conducted especially the permission from the concerned officials of the Department of Education. During the face to face in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, the participants were oriented about the objectives and significance to ensure transparency of this study. It was clarified to the participants that no compensation, monetary or in-kind will be given to them. In addition, letter of informed consent was given to the participants to orient them on the purpose and the nature of the study and for them to know their extent of participation in the study being undertaken. In lieu of privacy and confidentiality, the researchers had exerted measures to preserve the data shared and ensured the anonymity of the teacher-participants by using pseudonyms to conceal their real identity. All the information disclosed by the participants was treated with utmost confidentiality by strictly adhering to the provisions of Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Lived experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs

Theme 1: Emotional challenges and rewards

Receiving teachers express feelings of frustration and stress when faced with the unique needs and behaviours of learners with special needs. They may struggle with managing challenging behaviours or adapting teaching strategies. The literature provides insights into the factors that can influence the experiences of receiving teachers in working with these learners. One study by Buysse et al. (2010) found that receiving teachers need ongoing support and training to effectively implement the strategies and interventions learned in early intervention programs. This lack of resources and training can contribute to the stress and frustration experienced by receiving teachers in working with learners with special needs. However, the respondent's used of self-care and support from colleagues was a positive coping mechanism that could help to manage stress and improved job satisfaction. Another study by Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that receiving teachers who are motivated to work with learners with special needs have a strong sense of personal responsibility and a

desire to make a difference in their lives. This sense of purpose and motivation can help to offset the challenges and stress of working with these learners. Receiving teachers need ongoing support and training to effectively work with learners with special needs. However, the joy of seeing these learners progress and the sense of purpose and motivation that comes from making a difference in their lives can make the challenges and stress worthwhile. The use of positive coping mechanisms, such as self-care and support from colleagues, can also help to manage stress and improve job satisfaction (Buysse et al., 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Despite the challenges, receiving teachers also experience a deep sense of empathy and connection with their learners. They develop strong relationships and find joy in witnessing the progress and achievements of their learners. For instance, Rica emphasized the importance of empathy and connection in creating a positive learning environment for learners with special needs. Similarly, the literature provided insights into the role of empathy and connection in supporting the learning and development of these learners. One study by Pijl et al. (2010) found that positive relationships between teachers and learners with special needs are essential for promoting their social and emotional development. Teachers who demonstrate empathy and understanding towards these learners can help to build trust and rapport, which can lead to improved academic and behavioral outcomes. Another study by Klassen and Kim (2010) found that receiving teachers who have positive attitudes towards inclusion and collaboration with special education colleagues are more motivated to work with learners with special needs. This positive attitude can help to foster a sense of connection and community within the classroom, which can benefit all learners. This proved that empathy and connection were essential for creating a positive learning environment for learners with special needs. Teachers who demonstrate empathy and understanding towards these learners can help to build positive relationships, which can lead to improved academic and behavioral outcomes. Positive attitudes towards inclusion and collaboration can also help to foster a sense of connection and community within the classroom.

Theme 2: Professional support and training

Receiving teachers highlight the importance of specialized training and professional development to effectively support learners with special needs. They express a desire for additional knowledge and strategies to address the diverse needs of their students. The study

by Kalyanpur and Harry (2012) found that specialized training can help educators to develop a deeper understanding of the unique needs and characteristics of learners with special needs. This understanding can lead to more effective instructional strategies and interventions, which can improve academic and behavioral outcomes for these learners. This proved that specialized training plays a vital role in ensuring that learners with special needs receive the quality education they deserve. This can ultimately lead to better academic and behavioral outcomes for learners with special needs. Collaboration with special education professionals and colleagues is seen as essential for providing comprehensive support to learners with special needs. Receiving teachers value teamwork and shared expertise to create inclusive learning environments. Friend and Cook (2016) found that collaboration among educators, other professionals, and families is essential for promoting inclusive education. Collaboration can help to ensure that learners with special needs receive the support and services they need to succeed in the general education classroom. When families are involved in the educational process, they can provide valuable insights into the unique needs and characteristics of their child, which can help educators to develop more effective instructional strategies and interventions. Collaborative efforts were crucial for promoting inclusive and effective education for learners with special needs. This proved that collaboration among educators, other professionals, and families really helped to ensure that learners with special needs receive the support and services they need to succeed. Family involvement is also critical for promoting positive outcomes for these learners.

Theme 3: Advocacy and inclusion

Receiving teachers recognize the importance of advocating for the rights and needs of learners with special needs. They actively work to promote inclusion, access to resources, and equal opportunities for their learners. Based on Artiles and Kozleski (2016), advocacy is essential for promoting equity and social justice in education. Advocacy helped to raise awareness of the unique needs and challenges faced by learners with special needs, and can promote policies and practices that support their inclusion and success. Advocacy also helped to ensure that these learners receive the support and services they need to succeed, and can help to prevent discrimination and marginalization. This proved that advocacy was essential for promoting inclusive and equitable education for learners with special needs. Advocacy can help to raise awareness, promote policies and practices that support inclusion, and ensure

that learners with special needs receive the support and services, they need to succeed. Receiving teachers strive to create inclusive classrooms where all learners feel valued and supported. They adapt teaching methods, modify curriculum, and foster a sense of belonging among learners with special needs. A study by Giangreco et al. (2014) found that providing appropriate accommodations is critical for promoting inclusion and success for learners with special needs. Accommodations can include modifications to the curriculum, assistive technology, and other supports that help learners to access and participate in the general education classroom. Collaboration with professionals and involving families is also essential for promoting inclusion and success for learners with special needs. This can involve working with special education teachers, related service providers, and other professionals to develop and implement effective instructional strategies and interventions. It can also involve working with families to understand the unique needs and characteristics of their child and to develop strategies for supporting their learning and development. This proved that creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all learners requires a multifaceted approach that involves fostering a positive and accepting classroom culture, providing appropriate accommodations, collaborating with professionals, and involving families.

Theme 4: Personal growth and fulfillment

Receiving teachers find fulfillment in witnessing the progress and growth of their learners. They derive a sense of purpose and satisfaction from making a positive impact on the lives of students with special needs. The study by Pijl et al. (2014) found that building meaningful connections with learners with special needs is a key factor in promoting job satisfaction and fulfillment for teachers. This can involve developing positive relationships with learners, understanding their unique needs and characteristics, and providing individualized support and guidance. This can involve setting goals and objectives for learners, monitoring their progress, and celebrating their successes. Finally, the literature suggested that the opportunity for continuous growth and development was essential for promoting job satisfaction and fulfillment for teachers. This can involve on-going professional development, opportunities for collaboration and learning from colleagues, and the ability to take on new challenges and responsibilities. This proved that job satisfaction and fulfillment for receiving teachers working with learners with special needs were promoted by building meaningful connections with learners, seeing their progress and

achievements, and having opportunities for continuous growth and development. Engaging with learners with special needs inspires receiving teachers to continuously learn and improve their teaching practices. They embrace the opportunity for personal growth and development through their experiences. The study by Deshler et al. (2017) found that on-going professional development is essential for promoting effective teaching practices and improving outcomes for learners with special needs. This can involve providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice, receive feedback and support, and collaborate with colleagues to develop new strategies and approaches. It involved developing a deeper understanding of the unique needs and characteristics of learners with special needs, as well as developing skills and strategies for advocating for their rights and needs. On-going professional development was essential for promoting effective teaching practices, improving outcomes for learners with special needs, promoting teacher confidence and self-efficacy, and promoting teacher advocacy for learners with special needs.

4.2. Difficulties and challenges encountered by receiving teachers handling learners with special needs

Delivery of instruction. Receiving teachers may find it challenging to effectively deliver instruction to learners with special needs. They may struggle to adapt their teaching methods and materials to meet the unique learning needs of these learners. For instance, Jenny emphasized the challenges that receiving teachers face when handling learners with special needs. Receiving teachers may have negative attitudes towards inclusion and may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively cater to the diverse learning needs of learners with special needs.

Kalyanpur and Harry (2012) emphasized the importance of cultural competence in special education, which could help to overcome attitudinal barriers that the receiving teachers may have when working with learners with special needs. The teacher recognized the importance of addressing the diverse learning needs of their learners, which is consistent with the need for cultural competence in special education. The teacher recognized the challenges of addressing the diverse learning needs of their learners, which may be influenced by factors such as lack of training and support. Receiving teachers showed the face when handling learners with special needs, and the need for cultural competence,

training, and support to effectively cater to the diverse learning needs of learners with special needs.

Sudden shift of pedagogy. Receiving teachers may face difficulties in adjusting their teaching strategies and pedagogy when working with learners with special needs. They may need to quickly learn and implement new techniques to support the diverse learning styles and abilities of their learners. For instance, Reina revealed the challenges that receiving teachers face when adapting to remote or online learning formats, particularly when working with learners with special needs. The sudden shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges for teachers and learners, particularly those with special needs. The sudden shift to remote learning may exacerbate these attitudinal barriers, as teachers may feel less equipped to address the diverse learning needs of their learners in a virtual environment.

The findings confirmed the results of the study of Pijl et al. (2011) that many regular teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion, which can be a significant barrier to effective inclusion. The sudden shift to remote learning may exacerbate these negative attitudes, as teachers may feel less equipped to address the diverse learning needs of their learners in a virtual environment and as teachers may feel less supported and less equipped to address the diverse learning needs of their learners in a virtual environment. Receiving teachers revealed when adapting to remote or online learning formats, particularly when working with learners with special needs. The sudden shift to remote learning may exacerbate existing attitudinal barriers and negative attitudes towards inclusion, highlighting the need for cultural competence, training, and support to effectively cater to the diverse learning needs of students with special needs in a virtual environment.

Limited resources, knowledge and time. Receiving teachers may encounter challenges due to their limited resources, knowledge and understanding of specific special needs conditions. They may require additional training and resources to effectively support their learners. Additionally, time constraints may make it challenging for teachers to adequately prepare and cater to the individual needs of each learner. For instance, Rica and Carl revealed the challenges that receiving teachers face when handling learners with special needs, particularly in terms of limited resources, knowledge, and time. They lack the necessary resources, knowledge and skills to effectively cater to the diverse learning needs of learners with special needs, and faced significant time constraints in doing so. It proved the

need of the on-going professional development and training to ensure that receiving teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support and accommodate their learners. Time constraints were also significant barrier to effective inclusion in balancing the demands of lesson planning, curriculum implementation, and individualized instruction could be overwhelming, particularly when providing the necessary support and accommodations for learners with special needs often requires additional time and effort. It was validated in the study Ruijs et al. (2010), that many teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion, which can be influenced by factors such as training, experience, and support from colleagues and administrators.

Lack of parental participation. Receiving teachers may face challenges in engaging parents or guardians in the education process. Lack of parental involvement can hinder the progress and development of learners with special needs. Jenny disclosed the importance of parental involvement in supporting the educational journey of learners with special needs, and the challenges that receiving teachers may face when parents are not actively participating. Parental involvement was crucial in promoting positive outcomes for learners with special needs, and that various barriers can hinder parental participation. Some parents may face barriers that hinder their active participation, such as a lack of understanding or awareness about their child's specific needs and how they can contribute to their education. This emphasized need for effective communication and collaboration between schools and parents to ensure that parents have the necessary information and resources to actively engage in their child's learning process.

Turnbull et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of family-centered practices in special education, which involve collaborating with families to identify and address the unique needs of their child. External factors such as work commitments, language barriers, or limited access to technology and communication channels can also contribute to the lack of parental participation. The need for schools to be flexible and accommodating in their approach to parental involvement, and to provide a range of communication channels and resources to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to actively engage in their child's learning process. Some parents may face barriers that hinder their ability to actively engage in their child's learning process. This also highlighted the need for schools to be proactive in identifying and addressing these barriers and to work collaboratively with families to ensure that all students have the necessary support and resources to succeed. It disclosed the

importance of parental involvement in supporting the educational journey of learners with special needs, and the challenges that receiving teachers may face when parents are not actively participating. It validated that the need for effective communication and collaboration between schools and parents, as well as flexibility and accommodation in the approach to parental involvement, to ensure that all learners have the necessary support and resources to succeed.

Heavy workload. Receiving teachers may experience an increased workload when handling learners with special needs. They may need to provide additional support, accommodations, and modifications to meet the individual needs of each student, which can be time-consuming and demanding. It is important to note that these challenges can vary depending on the specific context and circumstances. Receiving teachers play a crucial role in supporting learners with special needs, and it's essential to provide them with the necessary resources, training, and support to overcome these challenges.

Rica disclosed the challenge of heavy workload faced by receiving teachers when handling learners with special needs. The statement is consistent with the findings of the reviewed literature, which suggested that teachers face significant challenges in providing individualized support and accommodations for students with special needs. It proved that the challenge of heavy workload, which can be particularly challenging for receiving teachers who may not have the same level of training and support as SPED teachers. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide individualized education programs (IEPs) for students with special needs, which can be time-consuming and require significant effort and dedication from teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). It revealed the need for teachers to be dedicated and committed to providing individualized support and accommodations for learners with special needs, which can be a significant source of stress and burnout, in providing individualized support and accommodations for learners with special needs, including heavy workload, lack of training and support, and inadequate resources.

4.3. Coping mechanisms adopted by receiving teachers to address the challenges they encountered handling learners with special needs

Seeking support from colleagues. Receiving teachers often rely on the support and guidance of their fellow teachers. They engage in discussions, share experiences, and seek

advice from colleagues who may have faced similar challenges. The collaboration and communication among teachers can be an effective coping mechanism for addressing the challenges of teaching learners with special needs. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (2016), teachers face significant challenges in meeting the needs of students with special needs, including lack of training and support. The two (2) participants emphasized the importance of seeking support from colleagues as a coping mechanism for addressing these challenges. It revealed the importance of seeking support from colleagues when handling learners with special needs which collaboration and communication among teachers can be an effective coping mechanism for addressing the challenges of teaching learners with special needs, and can lead to improved teaching practices and learner outcomes.

Time management. Effective time management is crucial for receiving teachers to handle their workload efficiently. They prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and create schedules to ensure they can meet their teaching responsibilities. Effective time management could help teachers to address the challenges of teaching learners with special needs. Effective time management can also be an effective way to address the individualized needs of students with special needs (Friend & Cook, 2016). The importance of effective time management as a coping mechanism for receiving teachers working with learners with special needs, helped teachers to address the challenges of teaching learners with special needs, and can lead to improved teaching practices and learner outcomes.

Self-care and stress management. Receiving teachers understand the importance of self-care to maintain their well-being. They engage in activities such as exercise, meditation, hobbies, or spending quality time with loved ones to reduce stress and recharge. Self-care and stress management can help teachers to address the challenges of teaching students with special needs. Self-care and stress management can also be an effective way to address the individualized needs of students with special needs (Friend & Cook, 2016). It validated the importance of self-care and stress management in navigating the challenges of teaching learners with special needs, and the benefits of this approach for both teachers and learners

Professional development. Receiving teachers actively seek opportunities for professional development to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge. They attend workshops, conferences, and training sessions to stay updated with the latest teaching strategies and techniques. Professional development helped teachers to address the

challenges of teaching learners with special needs. It helped receiving teachers continually growing and improving as an educator, and in connecting with other educators in the field. Professional development can also be an effective way to address the individualized needs of students with special needs (Friend & Cook, 2016). It revealed the importance of professional development in navigating the challenges of teaching learners with special needs, and the benefits of this approach for both teachers and learners.

5. Conclusion

The study examined the multifaceted experiences of receiving teachers handling learners with special needs, revealing four prominent themes: emotional challenges and rewards, professional support and training, advocacy and inclusion, and personal growth and fulfillment. Teachers encountered both stress and fulfillment in their roles, grappling with the need for specialized training and collaboration while feeling a strong sense of empathy and connection with their students. Key challenges emerged, including difficulties in instructional delivery, sudden shifts in pedagogy, limited resources and time, low parental participation, and heavy workloads. Coping mechanisms adopted by teachers encompassed seeking support from colleagues, effective time management, self-care and stress management practices, and engagement in professional development activities. The study underscores the necessity for additional support and resources to aid receiving teachers in managing the complexities of teaching learners with special needs.

Based on the findings, several recommendations emerge to support receiving teachers in effectively meeting the needs of learners with special needs. Firstly, there is a clear necessity for additional support and resources to assist teachers in developing effective teaching strategies tailored to these students. This could encompass various initiatives such as training programs, workshops, and mentoring schemes aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge in this domain. Secondly, addressing the challenge of workload management is crucial. Providing effective time management strategies and supplementary support staff, such as teacher aides or paraprofessionals, can help alleviate this burden, allowing teachers to focus more on meeting the diverse needs of their students. Thirdly, enhancing communication strategies is essential to foster meaningful engagement with parents and caregivers in the education process. Training programs focusing on communication skills and involving families in the development of individualized education plans can facilitate this

collaboration. Moreover, supporting teachers in their coping mechanisms, including seeking support from colleagues, practicing self-care, and accessing professional development opportunities, is vital. Providing avenues for collaboration, access to mental health resources, and tailored professional development can strengthen teachers' resilience and ability to navigate the challenges inherent in teaching learners with special needs. Finally, a comprehensive approach is warranted, one that integrates all these elements to create a supportive environment for receiving teachers. By addressing these recommendations collectively, educational institutions can better equip teachers to provide effective education to learners with special needs, ultimately fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments.

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