ACCOUNTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON MAINTAINING THE NORM OF CONDUCT IN COMMUNICATING STUDENTS: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Mayvelle V. Malayan[1], Henry C. Ligan PhD[2]
Master of Arts in Elementary Education, St. Mary's College of Tagum, Inc.
Graduate School Department, Tagum City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This qualitative-phenomenological study aims to explore and investigate the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of public elementary school teachers in maintaining the norms of conduct in communicating with students. A purposive sample was utilized in selecting the participants; the study focused on the experiences of fourteen (14) public elementary school teachers where seven (7) teachers participated in a virtual in-depth interview, and seven (7) teachers participated in a focus group discussion. Data coding and thematic analysis were utilized to analyze the data gathered from the participants' responses. From the experiences of participants, six themes emerged, including some issues that appeared from the problem, namely: (1) setting rules in implementing norms of conduct, (2) balance approach in communication with students, (3) establishing appropriate time for communication in social media, (4) teachers' miscommunication with students, (5) maintaining consistency in implementation of norms of conduct, and (6) problems in using inappropriate language in communication. To address the issues, teachers mentioned various ways as their coping mechanisms and nine themes emerged: (1) having direct communication with students, (2) being role-model to students, (3) utilizing different strategies, (4) defining clear boundaries and expectations, (5) receiving guidance and assistance from colleagues, (6) knowing self-role as teacher when communicating with students, (7) emphasizing positive results, (8) exploring and discovering reasons of the problems, and (9) having authority and confidence. Five themes emerged from the insights cited by the participants that they could share with others, namely: (1) be optimistic, (2) apply empathy and consideration with students, (3) improve self and seek guidance, (4) participate in training and seminars for teachers, and (5) have passion and love for teaching. The results of this study are viewed as significant to teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and the Division of Davao de Oro as well as to the DepEd officials, and also to future researchers.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Communication, Norms of Conduct, Qualitative-Phenomenological approach, Davao de Oro*

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways teachers stay in touch with their pupils regarding school-related issues both inside and outside the classroom is by communicating with them. Thus, being connected with them can create problems in maintaining healthy relationships without anyone crossing the line of comfort. Moreover, these interactions are sometimes misunderstood and taken for granted, especially with the use of social media, where communication becomes more accessible. Consequently, most teachers fail and struggle to maintain boundaries with their students, feeling guilty about it and thinking it is selfish.

In Japan, teachers were forbidden from communicating with students privately on social media since this would be viewed as inappropriate behavior and result in disciplinary measures (Baseel, 2021). Moreover, in Indonesia, it has been shown that courts frequently impose extreme penalties for instructors who engage in serious misconduct, such as using their position of authority or influence to manipulate students (Utomo, 2019). Also, in Malaysia, women's rights organizations are taking action to deal with the alarming

problem of abuse and bullying that affects both students and teachers in their schools. Actions are being taken due to the distressing reality that unfortunate children experienced misconduct committed by their teachers during their time in kindergarten and primary school (Hakim, 2021).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, DepEd Order 49, series of 2022, a recent addition to D.O. 47, s. 2022, reminded teachers to treat colleagues and students with the utmost professionalism or the promotion of Professionalism in the Implementation and Delivery of Basic Education Programs and Services. This is after several cases where teachers are involved in incidents and issues that violated the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 and Republic Act 6713, the Code of Conduct, and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees have been reported and investigated. In the Division of Davao de Oro, teachers reported how they struggled to maintain the norm of conduct, especially in communicating with students. They have revealed that it is difficult to have a personal life that feels separate from their job since some students message them outside of school hours.

The urgency of this study arises from the involvement of teachers in different issues and cases that violate the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for teachers, especially involving students, which is alarmingly increasing in the country. In addition, as an elementary teacher, my curiosity and interest urge me to conduct this research. This study is a phenomenology that focuses on the experiences of elementary teachers on maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this qualitative investigation is to investigate and comprehend the viewpoints and experiences of elementary teachers regarding maintaining the norm of conduct when communicating with students in the Division of Davao de Oro. At this stage of research, the perspective of elementary teachers on maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students encompasses their challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights during in-person classes.

RESEARCH QUESTION
The study aims to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the lived experiences of elementary teachers on maintaining boundaries as the norm of conduct in communicating with students?
2. How did elementary teachers cope with the challenges encountered in maintaining boundaries as the norm of conduct in communicating with students?
3. What are the insights drawn from the experiences of elementary teachers on maintaining boundaries as the norm of conduct in communicating with students that can be shared with others?

METHODS
A qualitative research design was used for this study and employed a phenomenological approach since it enables to comprehend and describe elementary teachers' actual practices and frequent experiences, specifically on the experiences in maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students. Also, the phenomenology approach was utilized since it aims to investigate and comprehend the significance of the participants' experiences.

This study adhered to the recommendation of Brown (2021), where the number of participants for qualitative research, usually the average range somewhere between 5 to 10 people, will result in better data. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose the most appropriate participants, samples are chosen from the total sample size based on the survey taker's or researcher's evaluation. The research participant was solely focused on 14 elementary school teachers from the Division of Davao De Oro. Seven (7) participants in focus group discussion, and seven participants for in-depth interviews.

Moreover, in this study, coding and thematic analysis were used to reveal themes in the text by evaluating word meanings and sentence structure (Medelyan, 2019). While the purpose of coding is to give a free-form data structure that may be examined in a systematic process (Bodine, 2021). Meanwhile, thematic analysis is one of the most essential frameworks for assessing qualitative data. Since qualitative

data is directly collected from primary sources, such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc., it must be correctly analyzed to uncover noteworthy trends and transform unprocessed data into useful information (Smith, 2020).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Teacher-Student Communication in the Classroom
To function as a successful teacher, one must only possess 50% knowledge and 50% communication abilities (Sword, 2020). The study of Amadi and Kufre (2017) found that student-teacher communication has significantly affected students' academic performance. Climans (2021) emphasized that students feel more comfortable participating in class discussions, answering questions, and raising problems when they feel protected, appreciated, and well-instructed. Moreover, the study by Ghasemi (2021) revealed that the primary factors impacting the quality of the teacher-student connection were thought to be the teachers' successful classroom strategies.

Roles of Elementary Teachers in Communicating Students
One of the essential roles of teachers in communicating with students is to earn their trust, and always find ways to stay connected with their students. As Konen (2017) mentioned, several strategies can assist with communication. It includes listening, studying, and knowing more about your students. On the other hand, students will develop future-ready skills through collaboration in a supportive environment, including empathy, teamwork, effective communication, leadership, and acceptance of different points of view (Kakumanu, 2021). In addition, continuous teacher training and professional development have been recommended to improve teacher effectiveness, interpersonal skills, and understanding of the variables affecting the teacher-student connection (Ettekal & Shi, 2020).

Ways in Maintaining Boundaries in the Context of Communication between Students and Teachers
Some techniques for effectively communicating with students include planning to manage teacher communication and communicating relevant parts of that plan to your students, outlining how the teacher course works explicitly to help students navigate it successfully, and providing clear communication guidelines to improve the effectiveness of remote instruction (Arbizo, 2020). Moreover, Williamson (2019) mentioned that for the students' emotional growth and intellectual development, you must teach them about boundaries. Additionally, Selva (2018) stated that self-awareness is necessary to set appropriate boundaries. Likewise, Wyrick (2022) suggested that teachers should know their limits and model best behavior and be direct but empathetic when boundaries are crossed. Also, Rusnak (2021) highly recommends that boundaries are frequently checked.

Challenges in Communicating with Students in the Lens of Elementary Teachers
Conflict between students can also result through miscommunication, altercations, fighting, group rivalry, discrimination, bullying, usage of resources and places,

dating, sexual harassment, loss or damage to school property, various elections, travel, and partying (Nadar, 2022). In the study of McCarthy (2021), stating that social media can encourage children to be more assertive in voicing their opinions in ways that may threaten relationships. Moreover, this new environment is constantly shifting and can be challenging to manage, since we establish social media boundaries and safeguard students from the potentially harmful parts of online communication (Stephens, 2019). Moreover, Hunt (2019) stated that common communication barriers in the classroom affect the effectiveness of communication includes hearing, perception, oral communication, and cultural challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Lived Experiences of Elementary Teachers on Maintaining the Norm of Conduct in Communicating with Students

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Setting Rules in Implementing Norms of Conduct	• setting of rules to establish a clear student-teacher relationship • setting rules and standards to gain trust and respect among students and parents • differing backgrounds as barrier to maintain the set rules • having orientation and realistic expectations in setting rules
Balance Approach in Communicating with Students	• using a balanced approach as an effective way of teaching students their limitations and to control their actions • ensuring gaps and boundaries by using a balanced approach • using a balanced approach as an effective way to have positive communication • perceiving a balanced approach as an effective way to communicate with students as a second parent
Establishing Appropriate Time for Communication in Social Media	• observing oneself to respond at an appropriate time to students' messages • maintaining a professional relation with parents and guardian • reminding students about the rules and appropriate time for sending messages on social media • letting students send their messages considering appropriate situations and questions
Teachers' Miscommunication with Students	• experiencing miscommunication with students due to work and pressure • miscommunicating with students due to unclear and disorganized instructions • perceiving teachers' leadership and adjustment as factors to have a proper communication with students • breaking own rules and boundaries and start having casual conversations
Maintaining Consistency in Implementation of Norms of Conduct	• having difficulties being firm in maintaining the implementation • ensuring transparent communication between students and teacher • setting boundaries inside the classroom and stand to it at the very end • ensuring that your rules are aligned with your actions
Problems in Using Inappropriate Language in Communication	• encountering students' inappropriate language as a barrier to positive communication • ensuring that students will still be disciplined in communicating with others even outside the school premises • noticing students' inappropriate language when communicating with teacher • perceiving home is a factor to consider in terms of students using inappropriate language in communicating

Setting Rules in Implementing Norms of Conduct
"Setting boundaries is important for us as teachers, that is why on the first day of school we impose rules and regulations, so that the students know their limitations." FGD-04

"We should set our rules and standards inside the classroom to ensure that our students follow the norm of conduct we wanted to implement, and we must maintain those rules so that you will be able to get their trust and respect as a teacher." FGD-01

"Set and maintain the rules to make sure that their respect will always be with them towards me and that they can put their trust in us as a teacher." IDI-01

Students feel confident and safe in their learning environment when teachers set and maintain boundaries through clear classroom rules and high expectations (Wong & Wong, 2018). Similarly, Hepburn et al. (2020) states that instead of telling students the rules, setting, and teaching the rules proactively supports students in understanding and developing the expected behaviors and moves beyond emphasizing compliance. Moreover, Abrizo (2020) emphasized that establishing and maintaining clear communication via well-defined communication channels allows students to focus on learning.

Balance Approach in Communication with Students
"I would rather use balance approach with my students, I would rather be friendly and strict teacher at the same time because sometimes we need to be strict to our students for them to know that their actions need to be controlled and have limitations." IDI-02

"Being too strict can have negative effects on students, just as being too friendly can also lead to negative results. So, it should be balanced to have that positive communication." FGD-01

"I try to balance my role; somehow, I am a little bit strict and a motherly outside and inside at the same time I am their second parent." IDI-01

The result is parallel with the study of Alshuraiaan (2023) which highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines teacher communication in facilitating teacher-student interaction and its impact on language proficiency development, speaking fluency, and overall learner engagement. On the other hand, Asrar et al. (2018) stated that maintaining a standard and welcoming way of communicating with students is vital to having effective communication and will help to develop a positive student-teacher relationship.

Establishing Appropriate Time for Communication in Social Media
"I set boundaries to clearly communicate my students that after school hours may not be an appropriate time for an urgent inquiries and discussions. That is why I encourage them to respect my personal time and boundaries." IDI-02

"During nighttime if I already got home, I cannot reply in an instant. Even during working hours because when I am having my class I cannot reply immediately. When it is beyond working hours already, I never oblige myself to reply in an instant though I reply but if I am preoccupied, I will not respond." FGD-04

"I message them about reminders and rules that they need to be observed in our group chat." FGD-01

Social media has become an essential element of individuals' lives, including students, in today's world of communication (Chen & Xiao, 2022). In line with this, McCarthy (2021), stated that social media can encourage children to be more assertive in voicing their opinions in ways that may threaten relationships. On the other hand, Higgin (2022), stated that letting students know what, when, and how social media in your classroom facilitates a discussion about why both the benefits of social media use and its risks.

Teachers' Miscommunication with Students
"Teachers are just human beings; we could get tired too because of work and pressure. There are instances that because of exhaustion we cannot put much attention inside the classroom and forget the rules that we have set." IDI-02

"Of course, we are just human beings we forgot and get tired of work. That is why sometimes we are the reason why the students misbehave and crosses boundaries." FGD-06

"You are not giving them the exact or clear instructions and besides that, you did not organize the rules that you wanted to be organized inside the classroom." IDI-01

The teacher participants expressed their experiences of encountering challenges because of miscommunication due to some factors coming from the teachers. In the study of Kanwal et al. (2023), it was stated that teachers in the public sector often have to deal with large class sizes, heavy administrative workloads, and increasing pressure to meet performance targets. As a result, they may be overburdened with work, leading to high levels of stress and exhaustion (Rose & Sika, 2019). This can negatively impact their ability to provide quality education to their students (Hester et al., 2020).

Maintaining Consistency in Implementation of Norms of Conduct
"I always set things with a clear instruction and transparent communication, I should have a clarity with my students, and I make sure that they were reminded." IDI-02

"It is important for me also to have those boundaries inside the classroom that is why I am setting and firm until the end of the class." FGD-01

"In order to implement it, you need to stick to the rules and as teacher you need also to follow what you are saying." IDI-04

Creating a framework of boundaries is extremely helpful for children because it helps everyone remember what acceptable behavior is and is not (Higgins, 2020). In the study of Semião et al. (2023), it shows that teachers' sensitivity to students' diversity issues can improve their learning. Additionally, the study of Govindharajan et al. (2017), stated that teachers impart knowledge and values to learners to create self-sufficient, articulate, socially responsible, resilient, and active citizens of the world.

Problems in Using Inappropriate Language in Communication

"There are times especially when they used cursed words, I really hate those words. In our school it was very common for students to used cursed words." IDI-04

"In my experience inside my classroom I encountered the attitude of the students especially when it comes to using of bad words. Some of the students are fond of saying bad words." FGD-05

"I noticed inappropriate language, the way they speak to you." FGD-04

Simpson (2018), states that today, students are increasingly exposed to a language that is very different from what they are taught. Moreover, Younas et al. (2020), stated that home atmosphere directly and indirectly influences the students' academic capability and achievement. On the other hand, Staake (2019), mentioned on her blog that it is not necessary to punish bad language but to try to help kids see that it is not always appropriate.

Table 2
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Coping Mechanism of Elementary Teachers
in Maintaining the Norm of Conduct in Communicating with Students

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Having Direct communication with Students	• being direct and having clear objectives in communicating with students • considering students' feelings without embarrassment when communicating with you • ensuring clear and precise communication • listening and giving respect to students' opinion • using one-on-one communication with students • addressing the students who need assistance and talking to them • having heart-to-heart communication with students and making sure to know their backgrounds
Being a Role-Model to Students	• teaching students positive behavior to become their model • ensuring authority and reliability in your actions • showing the ideal behavior, you wanted them to follow • being a good example of implementing boundaries • applying own set standards to oneself • ensuring being an example and model to the students
Utilizing Different Strategies	• having a free day to get the students' trust • using non-communication cues to communicate with students • teaching students to communicate with manners by using "po and opo" • applying positive punishment as a consequence • ensuring a positive and inclusive classroom climate in communicating with students • having a positive approach as strategies and techniques for students to follow the norms of conduct in communication
Defining Clear Boundaries and Expectations	• establishing clear and consistent instructions • ensuring clear limitations and boundaries in communicating with students • encouraging the students to respect boundaries and personal time after school hours • reminding students about the boundaries and expectations you have set • establishing clear and fair expectations
Receiving Guidance and Assistance from Colleagues	• getting help from colleagues • seeking inputs and strategies from co-teachers • asking for help from colleagues who encountered the same situation
Setting Professional-Role as Teacher when Communicating with Students	• knowing your own role and scope as a teacher in communicating with the students • ensuring not go beyond the limits of your role as teacher and second parent of the students • reflecting oneself teaching practices and limitations when communicating with students • being calm and making sure not to bypass parents' role
Emphasizing Positive Results	• seeing students become successful someday • having possible positive results for students as motivation • engaging learnings that we want to impart to our students

	• perceiving love and passion as motivation for your dreams for your students
Exploring and Discovering Reasons of the Problems	• investigating the reason to encourage open communication • getting to the root of the matter • observing students and thinking for solution to the problem • understanding the situation and search for information
Having Authority and Confidence	• applying authority in giving instructions • showing authority and confidence in setting and implementing standards • perceiving authority as a factor to consider in terms of maintaining the norms of conduct in communicating with students

Having Direct Communication with Students
"Of course, I talked directly to the student and tell him that whenever we are inside the classroom, I am your teacher, you should call me teacher but if it is outside the school, it is okay to call me "Ate". FGD-06

"I always remind them and have one-on-one conversations with the children." FGD-05

"In my experience, I let the students go outside for 15 minutes to play. I deal with that student, I talked to him one-on-one." IDI-01

Positive relationship between teachers and students results from better communication and contributes to an environment that supports it (Climans, 2021). Moreover, Vucicevic (2023), stated that direct communication conveys information clearly and straightforwardly; you ensure that your interlocutor receives the intended message the way you meant for it to be understood, and it leaves no room for error or confusion, and it also harbors no hidden meanings or pretences.

Being a Role-Model to Students
"We should teach them the positive behavior. As a teacher, we must serve as a model for our students." IDI-05

"Of course, it is important to show the students the right behavior, because as a teacher you should be a role model to the students." FGD-03

"That is why, I firmly believe that to enforce good boundaries for them to follow, we must set a good example for our students." IDI-01

Being role models is important in teaching students to communicate appropriately, display positive behavior, and follow the rules and boundaries that teachers have set (Pandey, 2022). Likewise, the study of Gladstone and Cimpian (2021), defined role models as individuals who can positively shape the motivation of students by acting as a successful exemplar. In line with this, Koplik (2017), stated that no matter what rules you put in place for your classroom, you must be compliant with them.

Utilizing Different Strategies
"For me, I use signals and warnings when they cross over the boundaries." FGD-01

"I always remind them to respond with manner like using "po" and "opo" when answering me or anyone else." IDI-01

"Sometimes, I must implement positive punishment or consequences for their wrongdoings." IDI-02

Teachers' strategy is needed in communicating with students to create an effective learning process (Mesiono & Sahana, 2021). In line with this, teachers can opt for strategies to help them improve their communication skills and grow personally and professionally (Sharma, 2022). On the other hand, the study of Bukit et al. (2023), suggested that teachers must utilize verbal and non-verbal communication to learn and pay attention to the student's language development level.

Defining Clear Boundaries and Expectations
"In my classroom, I always provide clear instructions and ensure that my students understand them. I emphasize the need for reminders and consistency in following the rules I've set for my students." IDI-02

"Set clear and fair expectations." FGD-07
"Set clear expectations with students, like what I mentioned you must set the expectation and must be fair for all the students to maintain the norm." IDI-03

Creating and sustaining boundaries, the physical, emotional, and mental limits we put in honor our personal needs and our role as educators helps not only avoid burnout but also prevent role confusion, build trust, ensure professionalism, foster student independence, and teach students how to respect boundaries outside the classroom (Wyrick, 2022). Moreover, Healey (2023), stated that clear expectations empower students to navigate learning, take ownership of their work, and develop accountability. Also, with clear boundaries everybody knows what and what not to do, making it possible for the teacher to manage other aspects of the environment more easily (Francis, 2022).

Receiving Guidance and Assistance from Colleagues
"My colleagues, and my close co-teachers with whom I shared my problems, and then they gave me advice, but I remain calm and composed." IDI-05

"I usually ask for ideas from my colleagues, reaching out to collect and support. It's like asking for their thoughts on what to do." IDI-03

"I ask help from my co-teacher because they might be going through the same thing." FGD-03

A positive and supportive working environment can improve professional relationships with colleagues (Herrity, 2021). Moreover, in the study of Lee et al. (2021), it was mentioned that helping behavior among coworkers will play a significant role in promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing creativity among members. Also, asking and receiving help from colleagues can quickly, efficiently, and collaboratively help you find a solution to a problem (Lodwick, 2023).

Setting Professional Role as Teacher when Communicating with Students

"Always observe proper etiquette and be a professional teacher to the students, you need to know your role because you are the role model in the four corners of the classroom and even the outside premises of the school."
FGD-02

"Never go beyond or overstep our limits, because we are only a second parent to the students, but we should not act as if we know better than the parents." IDI-03

"I need to reflect at the end of the day, evaluate my own discipline, methods, and see if I crossed my limits and boundaries." FGD-04

The communication skills of a teacher have a significant role in the student's academic success (Jakhanwal and Sinha, 2021). Moreover, when students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, concerns, and questions, it creates an environment of trust and mutual respect (Satam, 2023). Also, in the study of Venet (2019), stated that role clarity defines the scope and goals of our relationship with students and then maintains boundaries that allow us to focus on that scope.

Emphasizing Positive Results

"I motivate myself by focusing on the positive outcomes in the future, especially in maintaining proper conduct when communicating with the students, I do this for the possible positive outcomes." FGD-01

"What motivates me in maintaining those norms of conduct in communicating with my students is the positive effects that it brings which also leads to a positive outcome, where my students and I can benefit." IDI-07

**"I always think first the learnings that I really want to impart to my students that's why I always motivate myself to continue in maintaining these norms. For I know that these norms help them to improve and help them to be a better student or a person someday."* IDI-02

Passionate teachers who are firmly committed to their work can make a positive difference in student achievement (Serin, 2017). In addition, passion can influence learning and teaching positively by creating excitement and action. Moreover, the result supports the idea of Selby (2023), who states that by teaching children to set and respect boundaries, we empower them with essential life skills and equip them for success in their personal and academic lives.

Exploring and Discovering Reasons of the Problems

"You must investigate if what is the reason why it happened for the students to talk too and share why and what happened." IDI-07

"First search information and understand why things occurred the way they did." IDI-02

**"If necessary, understand the situation and find information. They need to be respectful, responsible when it comes to responsible communication and provide positive punishment to improve the situation."* FGD-07

Conducting root cause analysis completely prevents the same or similar issues and incidents from recurring (Guevara, 2023). Once we identify the root cause, we can devise strategies to fix it and implement measures to prevent it from happening again (Timberg, 2023). Moreover, students feel valued and understood when they have opportunities to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas (Satam, 2023).

Having Authority and Confidence

"On setting the rules inside and outside the school it must be transparent, and you must have authority for them to follow." FGD-06

"For me, it is important to have authority every time I set a standard." IDI-04

"Set authority is the first step to maintain the norms in communicating with your students." IDI-06

Authority and confidence are essential in implementing rules, specifically in student-teacher communication. In line with this, Waters (2021), stated that as a leader, you must be aware of the control you hold over your students in implementing norms with students, teachers' authority is significant. Also, Fisher and Frey (2019) mentioned that a teacher with a high degree of credibility is viewed as being believable and knowledgeable. In addition, the teachers are seen as trustworthy and reliable.

Table 3
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Insights drawn from the Experiences of Elementary Teachers on Maintaining the Norm of Conduct in Communicating with Students

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Be Optimistic	• being always prepared and positive in every situation and challenge • staying optimistic despite and positive thinker • taking all the challenges in communicating with students • extending patience in imparting good values to the students • letting go of the problems you will encounter and forget the past • loving our work despite all the challenges • accepting the nature of our work and applying it despite the challenges
Apply Empathy and Consideration with Students	• being an open ear and listening to your students • give support to students by being there as their teacher and second parent • communicating with students in a nice way to avoid hurting their feelings • applying an empathetic approach in communicating with students • establishing positive environment for students where they are accepted and belonged • knowing students' backgrounds and problems by listening to them willingly
Improve Self and Seek Guidance	• research new ways to communicate with students • be creative and always think outside the box • ask for advice from colleagues, school heads, and stakeholders • take time to evaluate and reflect on oneself to improve one's prowess in teaching • evaluate and humble oneself and admit mistakes
Participate in Training and Seminars for Teachers	• need to have training for teachers including parents in higher grades • have training on proper communication for new teachers in the field • suggest to DepEd must provide training and awareness programs on the guidelines and responsibilities of teachers • inclusion of DepEd Order in the induction training for newly hired teachers and MPRE (Mid-Year Performance)
Passion and Love for Students	• push students to be their best for their own good • teach the students to respect their teachers and classmates • show respect, love, understanding, patience, and passion when communicating with students

Be Optimistic
"As teacher, you should be an optimistic and positive thinker."
FGD-07
"Taking all the challenges that I encounter in my classroom."
FGD-05
"*Despite of the challenges, let us try to love our work because this is what we have sworn." IDI-06*
Optimistic disposition allows the teacher to get control of the barriers that affect the communication process to be effective. The study of Marcionetti and Castelli (2022), states that fostering teacher optimism is crucial to reducing the risk of burnout and increasing teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, a study revealed that optimism and resilience can be associated with a higher sense of subjective well-being and psychological health related to academic adjustment (Biber & Czech, 2020). Also, it was strengthened with the study of Sorrenti et al. (2022) about optimism and resilience, which adopt a view focused on the strengths, virtues, and positive attitudes that help recover and rebuild from adverse situations.

Apply Empathy and Consideration with Students
"Communicate with the students politely and respectfully to maintain a positive relationship and avoid hurting students feeling." IDI-02

"Always put themselves to them or should I say be empathetic all the time." FGD-05

"Be direct and empathetic towards the students, that is what I do in setting my boundaries." IDI-03

The teacher participants emphasized the importance of applying empathy and consideration to students. In the study Zhang (2022), it indicates that teacher empathy leads to learner self-confidence in educational contexts. Moreover, Wang (2022), showed that positive teacher-learner rapport can inspire learning motivation and engagement. Also, Derakhshan (2021), indicates that empathetic instructors play ethical roles for their learners by helping them interact with their peers.

Improve Self and Seek Guidance

"You have to keep up with current trends and do some research to avoid being left behind." IDI-04

"Believe in your students' potential, learn everything you can. Be creative and think outside the box, be consistent and decisive. Always be up-to-date and give students the time to talk and be themselves." IDI-03

"I regularly reflect on my teaching practices and student interaction. Then, I seek feedback from my students and close colleagues to identify the for areas of improvement and adopt strategies accordingly." *FGD-04*

The result is aligned with the study of Herman (2020) on teachers' personal development needs, which reveals that teachers consider personal development to be beneficial for increasing professional efficiency, improving communication skills, and increasing creativity. Also, this aligns with the study of Morris (2023) that encouraging the use of skills from professional development is the chance for teachers to participate in a continuous cycle of practice, feedback, and reflection to adapt to new strategies and models appropriately.

Participate in Training and Seminars for Teachers

"They must have training and awareness program, again training and awareness program. There should be like this to ensure that both students, teachers, and stakeholders fully understand the guidelines and their responsibilities." FGD-04

"The DepEd Order must be included during the induction program for newly hired teachers, and it must be included during our MPRE the "Mid-Year Performance." FGD-07

"It would be better to include this on training to help new teachers to be more aware about the acceptable and not acceptable things." IDI-03

The responses of elementary teachers emphasized the importance of improving oneself and seeking guidance and support from others. In line with this the study of Herman (2020) on teachers' personal development needs, reveals that teachers consider personal development to be beneficial for increasing professional efficiency, improving communication skills, and increasing creativity. Also, this aligns with the study of Morris (2023) that encouraging the use of skills from professional development is the chance for teachers to participate in a continuous cycle of practice, feedback, and reflection to adapt to new strategies and models appropriately.

Passion and Love for Students

"But in the classroom, I am strict because I want my students to learn, not necessarily in a physical sense, but I push them up because I want the best for them." IDI-03

"Love, your love for your students, it's your passion, and you should keep it going because that's what motivates me.

Dream, because I also have dreams for myself and for them, so that's it, love, and dream for my pupils." FGD-04

"Just like what I said, show them your respect, love, understanding, and patience. We should always remember that we are born to teach, to guide, to love them, to extend our patience to them." IDI-01

Having the passion and love of teachers in maintaining boundaries despite all the struggles they face is significant to continuously maintain boundaries, give students opportunities, and establish effective communication and environment with students. The study by Serin (2017), stated that passionate teachers who are committed to their work can make a positive difference in student achievement. Moreover, the result is congruent with the idea of Whitbourne (2018), which emphasizes that teachers possess an inner drive to perform and have a work orientation of "calling" rather than "career."

IMPLICATION FOR TEACHING PRACTICE

Maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students has been difficult for elementary teachers. This study successfully uncovered elementary teachers' various views and perspectives regarding the issues of maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students and its effects on the communication process. The overall responses and views of the teacher participants were analyzed and encapsulated, which brings to the themes established from their varied responses. Furthermore, this study provided an opportunity for all teachers, students, parents, and education personnel to understand elementary teachers' diverse points of view on maintaining the norm of conduct in communicating with students.

CONCLUSION

In the process of establishing effective communication with students through applying norms, teachers encountered challenges that affected the implementation process. Specifically, they have stressed the difficulties in maintaining the consistency of the norms, inappropriate language on the students' factor, and miscommunication on the teachers' factor. To address these problems, teachers may define clear boundaries for students so that it would be more precise for them to know their limitations. It is also essential for teachers to act as role models in following the norms in communication.

Moreover, they may seek guidance and assistance from their colleagues to learn new ideas for developing new strategies to solve problems. It is also important for teachers to know their roles and limitations when communicating with students to establish better communication with them without the concern of crossing any boundaries. These teachers will be able to set necessary rules and limits.

Also, in resolving the problem concerning communication with students, teachers may investigate by directly communicating with students to know what causes the problem and utilize different strategies to improve the situation. Most importantly, in implementing the norms in

communication it is very significant for them to be confident in applying to have credibility and show their authority to the students. It is also imperative for teachers to embody optimism and always look for the better side and positive results in maintaining boundaries despite the struggles of the implementation.

On the other hand, the Department of Education officials may pay more attention to the alarming cases involving students and teachers in a downfall situation due to inappropriate communication and other factors that affect effective communication. They may also perform refinement and strengthen the implementation of norms of conduct in communication. Moreover, they may extend their support to the teachers by providing training, seminars, and workshops to impart the knowledge, strategies, and appropriate actions needed for successful implementation.

In addition, school heads and masters' teachers may perform seminars and school base training, particularly through learning action cell (LAC) and during teachers' Mid-Year Performance Review and Evaluation (MPRE), regarding the utilization of norms in communication by maintaining the norms of conduct and appropriate communication between student and teachers.

Moreover, the result of this study will help parents to be aware of what the appropriate communication between the students and teachers is and what is not. With this, parents could assist their children in following the norms in communication and contribute to maintaining boundaries for better and effective student-teacher communication. Similarly, the result of this study will help students be aware of what is appropriate and what is not when communicating with their teachers.

In conclusion, implementing norms in communication by maintaining the norm of conduct would be essential to effective communication with students. With this, teachers, students, parents, and administrators should work hand-in-hand and support each other for its successful implementation. Doing this would make a positive learning environment that promotes respect, safety, and responsibilities possible.

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