



Voices From the Classroom: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

Voices from the Classroom uncovered the lived realities of teachers, revealing the heart of teaching beyond the lessons. This study explored the voices from the classroom of teachers in the Division of Misamis Occidental during the school year 2025–2026. A phenomenological research design was used in the study. There were twelve (12) teachers who served as participants, selected through purposive sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire and interview guide were used to gather the data. Moustakas' method of data analysis was used in analyzing the data gathered. The study yielded seven (7) themes: balancing the challenges and value of professional development amidst daily teaching responsibilities; strategic time management and work habits in balancing school responsibilities and student learning; resource availability and teacher adaptability shaping lesson delivery and learning experiences; fostering inclusive learning through differentiated instruction and respectful classroom practices; sustaining teaching effectiveness through organization, support, and personal resilience; balancing emotional challenges and positive coping strategies to sustain effective teaching; and student-teacher relationships as a source of motivation for teaching, learning, and values formation. The study concluded that teachers' lived experiences in the classroom were shaped by the dynamic interplay of time, space, relationships, bodily experiences, and emotional challenges. It highlighted that effective teaching depended on teachers' adaptability, resilience, and the meaningful connections they cultivated with students and colleagues. Schools were encouraged to provide structured support systems, professional development opportunities, and accessible resources to help teachers balance instructional demands, foster inclusivity, and sustain well-being. The study underscored that understanding teachers' lived experiences informed policies and practices that enhanced teaching effectiveness, promoted holistic student learning, and strengthened relational and emotional support within educational settings.

Keywords

adaptability, classroom, emotional challenges, inclusivity, resilience, teaching effectiveness

1. Introduction

Classrooms are central to the education system because they serve as spaces where teachers and learners continuously engage in the development of knowledge, skills, and values. "Voices from the Classroom" emphasizes that teachers' lived experiences provide authentic insights into the realities of teaching and learning, particularly in understanding how leadership behaviors, motivation, and performance interact within public school settings. These classroom experiences are influenced not only by teachers' personal commitment but also by institutional policies and organizational conditions.

The Department of Education (DepEd) shapes teachers' classroom experiences through the implementation of the Department of Education and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which establish benchmarks for teacher quality, instructional delivery, professional accountability, and continuous growth (DepEd, 2017; SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021). Furthermore, the K to 12 curriculum requires teachers to integrate 21st-century



skills, inclusive education, and digital literacy into classroom instruction, expanding their roles as facilitators of equity and innovation (DepEd, 2016; Tindowen, 2020).

Existing studies revealed that teachers' classroom experiences are significantly affected by working conditions, leadership support, workload, collegial collaboration, and organizational climate. Supportive leadership and professional acknowledgment enhance teachers' motivation, well-being, and classroom effectiveness (Toropova et al., 2020; Collie & Martin, 2023). Similarly, classroom management and emotional labor influence instructional quality and teacher stress, as teachers' situational motivation fluctuates during classroom interactions (Lazarides & Dresel, 2025; Tarantul & Berkovich, 2025).

The integration of technology and professional development also reshapes teachers' instructional practices. Studies showed that motivation-based professional development programs strengthen teachers' confidence and readiness to integrate technology into instruction (Zhang et al., 2021; Chiu et al., 2021). During the pandemic, teachers experienced increased workload and stress, although supportive school environments helped sustain motivation and effectiveness despite challenges (Mo & Morris, 2024; Klassen et al., 2023).

Moreover, collaborative school cultures and instructional leadership contribute positively to teachers' engagement, commitment, and classroom performance. Collegial relationships foster intrinsic motivation and innovation in teaching (Ma & Marion, 2024; Wang et al., 2023), while principals' instructional leadership strengthens teachers' preparedness and instructional effectiveness (Moon et al., 2022; De Weerd et al., 2024).

Overall, the literature suggests that teachers' classroom experiences are multifaceted and shaped by the interaction of leadership, motivation, institutional policies, and organizational culture. Within the context of public schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental, the study aims to examine how school heads' leadership influences teachers' motivation and performance, providing evidence-based insights that may strengthen leadership development, teacher support systems, and the quality of teaching and learning.

1.1. Research Questions

This study explored the voices from the classrooms of teachers in the Division of Misamis Occidental during the school year 2025–2026.

Specially, this study answered the following question:

1. How do teachers experience time in their classroom in balancing instructional responsibilities, personal growth, and professional demands? (**Lived Time- Temporality**)
2. How do teachers describe the meaning of their classroom environment and physical space in shaping teaching and learning experiences? (**Lived Space-Spatiality**)
3. How do teachers experience their physical presence, emotions, and well-being in relation to classroom interactions and professional responsibilities? (**Lived Body- Corporeality**)
4. How do teachers experience their relationships with students, colleagues, school heads, and the broader community within school community? (**Lived Human Relation- Relationality**).

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of teachers, school heads, and school administrative officers regarding classroom realities in the Division of Misamis Occidental during the



school year 2025–2026. Phenomenology focuses on describing the common meaning of individuals' lived experiences concerning a particular phenomenon (Webb & Welsh, 2019). Creswell (2013), as cited in Khan and Ayaz (2018), described phenomenology as the narration of individuals' experiences related to a specific concept or phenomenon. This approach was appropriate in examining the “voices from the classroom” and understanding how participants perceived and experienced leadership dynamics within schools.

2.2. Setting

The study was conducted in selected public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental. These schools represented both urban and rural educational settings and varied in school size, teacher population, leadership style, and administrative support. Such diversity provided a rich context for examining leadership issues and classroom experiences within the region's basic education sector.

2.3. Participants

The participants consisted of four school heads, four teachers, and four school administrative officers selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria required that participants: (1) were assigned within the Misamis Occidental Division, (2) had at least two years of service in the division, and (3) were willing to participate in the study.

2.4. Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-made interview guide designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' lived experiences. Guided interviews focused on the meaning of events within participants' experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). To encourage openness and establish rapport, interviews began with brief social conversations. The interview questions were piloted prior to data collection to ensure clarity and relevance to the research questions. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and validated by the participants to ensure accuracy.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher followed proper protocols in securing permissions from the Graduate School of Misamis University, the Schools Division Superintendent, and Public Schools District Supervisors before conducting the study. Participants were informed about the purpose and significance of the research through consent letters. During the interviews, notes and digital recordings were used to document the discussions accurately. After transcription and participant validation, the data were coded, categorized, and organized into themes using NVivo software.

2.6. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the Misamis University Research and Ethics Committee (MUREC). Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Informed consent was secured prior to data collection, and interviews were conducted beyond office hours to avoid disrupting professional responsibilities. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by replacing participants' names with numerical codes. The study also upheld research integrity through proper citation, accurate reporting, and transparent presentation of findings.

2.7. Data Analysis

The study utilized Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology with the aid of NVivo software. The analysis followed six stages: bracketing, horizontalization, clustering into themes, textural description, structural description, and textural-structural synthesis. Bracketing involved setting aside preconceived assumptions to minimize bias. Horizontalization treated all participant statements with equal value before identifying significant statements or horizons. These horizons were clustered into core themes and validated using related literature and supporting



methods. Textural descriptions explained what participants experienced, while structural descriptions examined how the experiences occurred through imaginative variation. Finally, textural-structural synthesis integrated the common experiences of participants to identify the essence of the phenomenon under investigation.

3. Results and Discussion

The participants consisted of 12 educators from the Division of Misamis Occidental, representing diverse ages, years of service, civil status, and educational attainment. Ages ranged from 24 to 49 years old, with eight female and four male participants. Six participants were married while six were single. Teaching experience ranged from 1 year and 2 months to 7 years and 4 months. Most participants held bachelor's degrees, while four pursued graduate studies such as MAEd and MAEd-CAR. This diversity enriched the study by providing varied perspectives on classroom challenges, professional development, and student engagement.

Theme 1: Balancing the Challenges and Value of Professional Development Amidst Daily Teaching Responsibilities (Lived Time - Temporality)

This theme revealed that teachers experienced constant tension between heavy teaching responsibilities and their desire for professional growth. Lesson preparation, paperwork, classroom management, and instructional tasks limited their available time for seminars, trainings, and graduate studies. Despite these constraints, teachers remained committed to professional development because they viewed it as meaningful and transformative for improving instructional competence and professional identity.

Subtheme 1: Professional Development Constrained by Workload and Time Pressure

Teachers described workload and time scarcity as barriers to attending seminars, trainings, and pursuing higher studies. Daily teaching demands compressed their time and energy, making professional learning difficult to sustain.

Subtheme 2: Commitment to Growth Despite Constraints

Despite limited time, teachers continued attending INSETs, seminars, and online trainings through effective time management and personal commitment. Their intrinsic motivation enabled them to pursue growth despite workload pressures.

Subtheme 3: Professional Development as Meaningful and Transformative

Teachers perceived professional development as beneficial in improving teaching strategies, gaining new perspectives, and strengthening professional growth. Learning opportunities renewed their motivation and instructional confidence.

Overall, the theme highlighted that teachers viewed professional development both as a challenge and a source of renewal. Time constraints and workload pressures limited participation, yet intrinsic motivation and commitment to growth sustained engagement in professional learning.

Theme 2: Strategic Time Management and Work Habits: Balancing School Responsibilities and Student Learning (Lived Time - Temporality)

This theme emphasized that teachers used strategic time management and disciplined work habits to balance instructional duties, paperwork, and student learning. Time was experienced not merely as schedules but as a lived rhythm shaped by routines, planning, and classroom activities.

Subtheme 1: Prioritization and Scheduling

Teachers managed competing responsibilities through advance lesson preparation, scheduling, prioritization, and the use of organizational and digital tools. These strategies allowed them to maintain instructional quality while completing administrative tasks efficiently.



Subtheme 2: Discipline and Personal Work Habits

Teachers highlighted self-discipline, avoiding procrastination, multitasking, and adherence to schedules as essential practices for maintaining productivity and meeting professional responsibilities.

The findings showed that strategic planning, prioritization, and disciplined work habits enabled teachers to maintain balanced and student-centered learning environments despite multiple responsibilities.

Theme 3: Resource Availability and Teacher Adaptability Shape Lesson Delivery and Learning Experiences (Lived Space – Spatiality)

This theme revealed that classroom resources and teacher adaptability significantly influenced lesson delivery and student engagement. Well-equipped classrooms supported interactive and meaningful learning, while limited resources required creativity and improvisation.

Subtheme 1: Resource Availability Enhances Teaching Effectiveness

Teachers explained that adequate instructional materials and conducive classroom environments improved lesson delivery, student participation, and instructional flow. Resource sufficiency enhanced teaching effectiveness and learner engagement.

Subtheme 2: Creativity and Adaptation in Resource-Limited Settings

In situations with limited resources, teachers relied on creativity, improvisation, and flexibility to sustain meaningful learning experiences. They modified instructional materials and teaching strategies to address learners' needs despite constraints.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that effective lesson delivery depended not only on available resources but also on teachers' adaptability and resourcefulness in shaping functional learning spaces.

Theme 4: Fostering Inclusive Learning Through Differentiated Instruction and Respectful Classroom Practices (Lived Space – Spatiality)

This theme highlighted how teachers created inclusive classrooms through differentiated instruction, individualized support, and respectful classroom practices. Teachers organized learning environments that accommodated diverse learning styles, abilities, and student needs.

Subtheme 1: Differentiated Instruction and Individualized Support

Teachers implemented varied instructional strategies, flexible activities, accommodations, and one-on-one support to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students, including learners with special needs.

Subtheme 2: Creating an Inclusive and Respectful Classroom Culture

Teachers cultivated fairness, empathy, flexibility, and respect within classrooms to ensure that students felt valued, accepted, and safe in participating in learning activities.

The findings showed that inclusive education was experienced both as a pedagogical and relational practice, where teachers continuously adapted instruction and classroom interactions to support learner diversity.

Theme 5: Sustaining Teaching Effectiveness Through Organization, Support, and Personal Resilience (Lived Body – Corporeality)

This theme revealed that teaching effectiveness was sustained through organizational strategies, social support, and personal resilience. Teaching was experienced as an embodied practice shaped by emotional endurance, physical demands, and professional responsibilities.



Subtheme 1: Organizational Strategies and Classroom Management

Teachers sustained effectiveness through organization, classroom management, positive discipline, patience, and self-care practices. Structured routines and collaborative support reduced stress and maintained instructional efficiency.

Subtheme 2: Social Support and Collaborative Coping

Teachers relied on colleagues, mentorship, peer advice, and collaborative relationships to cope with instructional challenges and emotional pressures. Collegial support strengthened resilience and professional growth.

Subtheme 3: Personal Resilience and Flexibility

Teachers emphasized flexibility, adaptability, self-care, and maintaining focus on professional goals as essential coping mechanisms for sustaining teaching effectiveness despite challenges and stressors.

Overall, the findings indicated that effective teaching was sustained through the interaction of organizational skills, social support systems, and personal resilience.

Theme 6: Balancing Emotional Challenges and Positive Coping Strategies to Sustain Effective Teaching (Lived Body – Corporeality)

This theme showed that stress, workload, exhaustion, and personal challenges directly affected teachers' focus, patience, energy, and classroom performance. Emotional strain was experienced physically and emotionally through fatigue and reduced motivation.

Subtheme 1: Stress and Workload Affecting Focus, Patience, and Energy in Class

Teachers experienced stress from paperwork, deadlines, multitasking, and personal concerns, which reduced patience, instructional energy, and classroom focus. However, coping strategies such as resting, reflection, listening to music, taking breaks, and practicing time management helped them regain motivation and emotional balance.

The findings highlighted that sustaining teaching effectiveness required intentional coping strategies, emotional regulation, and self-care practices to manage workload-related stress and maintain professional engagement.

Theme 7: Student-Teacher Relationship as a Source of Motivation for Teaching, Learning, and Values Formation (Lived Human Relation – Relationality)

This theme emphasized that positive student-teacher relationships served as a major source of teacher motivation, fulfillment, and values formation. Teachers viewed their relationships with students as meaningful and central to their professional identity.

Subtheme 1: Motivation Through Positive Emotional Connections

Teachers described trust, empathy, student appreciation, and positive emotional bonds as motivating factors that strengthened their commitment to teaching. Observing students' growth and engagement inspired teachers to nurture values such as respect, responsibility, empathy, and lifelong learning.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that teaching is deeply relational, where positive student-teacher interactions enhance teacher motivation, instructional engagement, and values-based education.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that teachers consistently demonstrate strong commitment to professional growth despite time constraints and heavy workloads, showing that intrinsic motivation sustains their pursuit of continuous learning. Effective time management and disciplined work habits are essential in balancing instructional duties, administrative tasks, and quality teaching. Teaching effectiveness is also influenced by resource availability, where



teachers' adaptability and creativity play a key role in maintaining meaningful learning in resource-limited environments.

Inclusive teaching practices, particularly differentiated instruction and respectful classroom interactions, are vital in addressing diverse learner needs and ensuring equitable learning opportunities. Furthermore, teachers sustain effectiveness through a combination of organizational skills, collegial support, personal resilience, and positive coping strategies that help manage stress and maintain well-being. Strong student-teacher relationships further enhance motivation, engagement, and values formation, reinforcing the relational nature of teaching.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that school heads integrate structured professional development into teachers' schedules and provide training on time management, inclusive pedagogy, and stress management. Schools should also ensure adequate learning resources while encouraging teacher adaptability, strengthen peer-support systems, and promote wellness programs to support teacher well-being. Finally, teachers are encouraged to cultivate positive student relationships, and future research should explore the long-term effects of these lived experiences on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

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