

# Building A Positive Classroom Climate: Junior High School Teachers' Standpoint

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*Abstract* — This study uncovers the experiences, coping mechanisms used and educational insights learned by the teachers in building a positive classroom climate. A qualitative approach to research from the Eight (8) Junior High School Teachers coming from Matanao 1, District, Division of Davao Del Sur was observed: establish clear expectations and rules, build positive relationships with students, provide opportunities for student engagement, and address conflict and behavior issues promptly. While the coping mechanisms used in addressing these challenges were; encouraging student voice and participation, providing positive feedback and reinforcement, giving social and emotional support to students, and using restorative practices. Finally, the educational insights learned from the experiences of teachers were as follows: established a sense of trust and respect, incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices help students feel valued and included and finally, fostering a sense of community can promote inclusivity and belonging. These were the key to the success of building a positive classroom climate. All these themes emphasized the positive impact on student engagement, academic performance, social-emotional well-being, and overall classroom dynamics. By creating a nurturing and inclusive environment, teachers empower students to thrive, develop positive relationships, and embrace their learning journey with enthusiasm and confidence. This study may also be published in any reputable research journal.

*Keywords* — *Positive Classroom Climate, Junior High School Teachers, Davao City, Philippines*

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## I. Introduction

*Creating a positive classroom climate is not only about what we do but also about how we make students feel."*

-Carol Ann Tomlinson-

Building a positive classroom climate is essential in promoting student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. It is particularly crucial in the junior high school setting, where students are transitioning from childhood to adolescence, and are faced with many academic and social challenges. A positive classroom climate can help to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where students can thrive and reach their full potential.

The establishment of a positive classroom climate is crucial for a conducive learning environment in junior high school. Positive classroom climate refers to an environment in which

students feel respected, supported, and engaged in their learning (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Teachers play a significant role in creating and maintaining a positive classroom climate that fosters a sense of belonging and academic success (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). However, building and sustaining a positive classroom climate can be challenging, especially in the junior high school setting, where students are navigating various academic and social pressures.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of a positive classroom climate in promoting student well-being and academic achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009). In particular, a positive classroom climate has been shown to be associated with higher levels of student engagement and motivation, better social-emotional development, and lower levels of disruptive behavior (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009). Furthermore, a positive classroom climate has been found to buffer the negative effects of stress on students' academic achievement and well-being.

In the United States, building a positive classroom climate is crucial for junior high school teachers as it creates a conducive learning environment that allows students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally (Cohen, 2014). Teachers have a significant impact on students' perceptions of the classroom climate, and their practices can either foster positive or negative classroom environments. A positive classroom climate is essential as it can improve students' academic achievement, reduce disruptive behaviors, and enhance social interactions among students. Therefore, it is important to investigate how junior high school teachers in the United States build a positive classroom climate.

Research has shown that various classroom management strategies contribute to building a positive classroom climate. These strategies include creating a welcoming environment, developing positive relationships with students, setting clear expectations and boundaries, and encouraging student participation and engagement (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). Additionally, using a variety of instructional methods and incorporating social-emotional learning into the curriculum can also contribute to building a positive classroom climate. By utilizing these strategies, junior high school teachers in the United States can foster a positive classroom climate that supports students' academic and social-emotional development.

In Malaysia, building a positive classroom climate is essential for junior high school teachers as it enhances students' academic achievement and promotes their socio-emotional development. A positive classroom climate is characterized by a safe and welcoming environment, positive teacher-student relationships, and mutual respect among all members of the classroom community (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013). Therefore, it is important to investigate how junior high school teachers in Malaysia build a positive classroom climate.

Research has shown that various classroom management strategies contribute to building a positive classroom climate. These strategies include creating a supportive learning environment, developing positive relationships with students, and using effective communication strategies

(Marzita et al., 2021). Teachers can create a supportive learning environment by establishing clear expectations for behavior and academic performance, providing opportunities for student engagement and participation, and offering timely feedback to students. Developing positive relationships with students can also help to build a positive classroom climate. This can be achieved by showing interest in students' lives, providing emotional support, and demonstrating care and concern for their well-being. Effective communication strategies, such as active listening, positive feedback, and using clear and concise language, can also contribute to a positive classroom climate.

In the Philippines, junior high school teachers play a critical role in building a positive classroom climate that promotes learning, growth, and well-being among students. To achieve this, teachers can use various strategies such as establishing clear expectations and rules, building positive relationships with students, and providing opportunities for student engagement (Roorda et al., 2011; Sabarillo et al., 2017; Slavin, 2015).

One effective strategy for building a positive classroom climate is establishing clear expectations and rules. By clearly communicating expectations for behavior and creating a structured learning environment, teachers can promote a sense of safety and order in the classroom, which can help students feel more comfortable and engaged in their learning (Larrivee, 2015). Teachers can involve students in creating classroom rules, which can help to promote a sense of ownership and responsibility among students (Sabarillo et al., 2017).

However, in the local scenario particularly in Matanao National High School, Division of Davao del Sur, Junior high school teachers encountered varied classroom scenarios that affected the atmosphere inside the class, to name a few, disruptive behavior, bullying and many others. With this, it clearly shows the lack of positive classroom climate in most of the local schools which led to a troublesome classroom environment. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized to minimize if not eradicate the problems in the classroom by building a positive classroom climate.

## II. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to research, specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and were culled for phrases and themes that were grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was

able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25 and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990).

The participants of this study were Eight (8) Junior High School teachers from Matanao 1 District, Division of Davao del Sur. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) Junior High school teacher; and (3) experienced in building a positive classroom climate.

The researcher asked for an endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges as one of the documents needed for submission to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent in asking permission to conduct study.

*Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent.* The researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the identified school. The researcher will send a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with the attached Chapter 1 and 2 together with the research instrument which explains the objectives of the study and the identification of the participants. The researcher will wait for the response of the SDS before conducting it.

After securing the approval of the SDS, the researcher sent letters to the principals of the schools explaining about the study to be conducted in their school.

The researcher asked permission from the participants and to their parents/guardians. They were formally oriented about the study and of the process they shall go through as participants.

The researcher conducted the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. The profile of the participants was taken, jotted down notes, and conversations was record using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher carefully listens and responded actively during the interviews.

The researcher transcribed the responses of the interviewees precisely by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it to English language.

After the transcription, the data will then be categorized and coded. Then, themes were extracted and individual data within the participants was compared and contrasted. The researcher then conducted a second round of interviews (FGD) to corroborate any data that needs further explanation and input from the participants, Additional information gathered were examined thoroughly and integrated into the existing body of data. After which, data were compared between the participants in order to come up with patterns and trends.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### *Experiences of Junior high school teachers' in building positive classroom climate*

Building a positive classroom climate is a critical aspect of effective teaching that contributes to students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. While many studies have investigated the importance and benefits of a positive classroom climate, limited research has focused on the experiences of junior high school teachers in building such a climate. The study by Abunda and Carioso (2021) aimed to explore the experiences of junior high school teachers in the Philippines in building a positive classroom climate.

A study also identified some challenges that junior high school teachers faced in building a positive classroom climate, such as limited resources, large class sizes, and time constraints. The participants emphasized the need for support from school administrators and colleagues in creating a positive school culture and addressing these challenges. The study highlights the complex nature of building a positive classroom climate and underscores the need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to enhance their effectiveness in creating a positive learning environment.

*Establish clear expectations and rules.* Junior high school teachers should set clear expectations and rules for behavior in the classroom. According to a study by Sabarillo and colleagues (2017), students who perceive their teachers to have high expectations for them tend to have better academic performance and greater motivation to learn. By establishing clear expectations and rules, teachers can create a sense of structure and order in the classroom, which can help students feel safe and comfortable. Additionally, clear expectations and rules can also help prevent disruptive behavior and encourage positive behavior among students.

Establishing clear expectations and rules is an essential strategy that junior high school teachers use to build a positive classroom climate. According to the study by Abunda and Carioso (2021), participants highlighted the importance of setting clear expectations and rules at the

beginning of the school year to promote a positive learning environment. Clear expectations and rules help to create a sense of order and structure in the classroom, which can reduce disruptive behaviors and increase student engagement. The participants emphasized that clear expectations and rules should be communicated effectively and consistently reinforced throughout the school year. The study suggests that establishing clear expectations and rules is a critical component of effective classroom management and can contribute to a positive learning environment.

In addition to setting clear expectations and rules, the study by Abunda and Cariaso (2021) identified the importance of creating a positive classroom culture that promotes respect and positive relationships. The participants emphasized that creating a positive classroom culture involves fostering a sense of community and belonging among students, which can be achieved through activities such as team-building exercises and classroom discussions. By creating a positive classroom culture, teachers can promote a sense of mutual respect and understanding among students, which can contribute to a positive learning environment. The study highlights the importance of creating a positive classroom culture as a complement to establishing clear expectations and rules in building a positive classroom climate.

Here were transcript of the participants as transcribed;

“On the first day of classes, I always start it with laying down my expectations from my class and the rules that they have to follow. I am doing this for the students to have something as a guide.” (P1)

“I believe that establishing clear expectations and rules in my class helps my students to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability of the actions they do in the classroom and to their classmates.” (P4)“

“In my opinion, sometimes, a class becomes messy simply because of the lack of clear expectations set by the teacher from her/his students. Another cause also is lack of emphasis on the rules that the students should follow.” (P5)

”In order to establish a positive classroom culture, I think there is a need to emphasize rules and regulations in the classroom to maintain proper structure and order ”. (P7)

*Build positive relationships with students.* Junior high school teachers can build positive relationships with their students by showing interest in their lives, getting to know them, and treating them with respect. According to a study by Roorda and colleagues (2011), positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher levels of student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. By building positive relationships with students, teachers can create a sense of trust and rapport in the classroom, which can foster a positive classroom climate. Additionally, positive relationships can also help students feel more comfortable participating in class and asking for help when needed (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009).



Building positive relationships with students is another critical strategy that junior high school teachers use to build a positive classroom climate. According to the study by Abunda and Cariaso (2021), participants emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and caring classroom environment that promotes positive relationships among students and between students and teachers. The participants noted that building positive relationships involves getting to know students as individuals, understanding their backgrounds, interests, and needs, and demonstrating empathy and respect. By building positive relationships with students, teachers can create a positive and inclusive learning environment that fosters academic and personal growth.

The study by Abunda and Cariaso (2021) also suggests that building positive relationships with students involves creating opportunities for student participation and engagement. Participants noted that engaging students in the learning process and providing opportunities for student voice and choice can increase motivation and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in their learning. By actively involving students in the learning process, teachers can promote positive relationships and create a positive classroom climate. The study underscores the critical role of building positive relationships with students in creating a positive classroom climate and highlights the need for ongoing efforts to cultivate these relationships.

“Building positive relationships with my students is a very important teaching practice. I greeted them with a warm smile, and listened attentively to their thoughts and concerns. I prioritize getting to know my pupils as individuals, understanding their interests, strengths, and challenges. (P1)

“As an adviser, I show genuine care and interest in my students where they feel valued and respected. I maintain open communication with them, sharing their accomplishments and development (P3)

“I strongly believe that building positive relationships with my students is the foundation for a successful education. I take the time to learn about my students’ lives outside of school, their hobbies, and their aspirations. I tried to create a classroom atmosphere that promotes trust, mutual respect, and open communication (P5)

“ As a teacher, I make it a point to have a dialogue with my students, communicating with them, knowing their strengths and weaknesses, praising/ highlighting their achievements so as to establish/ build a positive relationship. (P7)

*Provide opportunities for student engagement.* Junior high school teachers can provide opportunities for student engagement by using interactive teaching methods, such as group discussions, debates, and role-playing activities. According to a study by Johnson and Johnson (1989), cooperative learning methods, such as group discussions and group projects, can improve student achievement, promote positive interdependence among classmates, and reduce negative competition in the classroom. By providing opportunities for student engagement, teachers can create a sense of excitement and enthusiasm in the classroom, which can contribute to a positive

classroom climate. Additionally, interactive teaching methods can also help students develop their critical thinking and communication skills (Slavin, 2015).

Providing opportunities for student engagement is another crucial strategy that junior high school teachers use to build a positive classroom climate. According to the study by Abunda and Cariaso (2021), participants emphasized the importance of providing engaging and relevant learning experiences that promote active participation and student-centered learning. The participants noted that engaging students in the learning process can increase motivation and interest, foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and promote positive relationships among students and between students and teachers. By providing opportunities for student engagement, teachers can create a positive and inclusive learning environment that supports academic and personal growth.

The study by Abunda and Cariaso (2021) suggests that providing opportunities for student engagement involves a variety of instructional strategies, such as project-based learning, group work, and technology integration. Participants emphasized the importance of tailoring instruction to students' needs and interests, creating opportunities for student choice and autonomy, and providing timely and constructive feedback. By providing opportunities for student engagement, teachers can promote positive relationships and create a positive classroom climate. The study highlights the critical role of student engagement in creating a positive classroom climate and emphasizes the need for ongoing efforts to promote student-centered learning.

“Providing opportunities for student engagement is a strategy that I think is effective in making the students get engaged in the class.” (P1)

“As an educator, I've learned that providing opportunities for student engagement is not just about making learning fun; it's about fostering meaningful connections between the curriculum and students' lives. By incorporating real-life examples, current events, and personal experiences into my lessons” (P3)“

”I believe that student engagement is the key to fostering deep learning and critical thinking. By designing lessons that encourage inquiry, problem-solving, and collaborative activities, I see my students actively grappling with concepts and developing essential skills.” (P5)

”Through my teaching experience, I've discovered that active student engagement is the foundation of a positive classroom climate. By creating a safe and inclusive space where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas, I see their confidence increased.” (P7)

*Address conflicts and behavior issues promptly.* Addressing conflicts and behavior issues promptly is an essential strategy used by junior high school teachers to build a positive classroom climate. Junior high school teachers can address conflicts and behavior issues promptly to prevent them from escalating and disrupting the classroom climate. This can involve using restorative practices to resolve conflicts and providing support for students who may be struggling with



behavior issues. Research has shown that restorative practices can improve classroom climate and reduce behavior issues (Krebs & McNeill, 2012).

Promptly addressing conflicts and behavior issues can prevent them from escalating and disrupting the classroom climate. Restorative practices are often used to resolve conflicts and provide support for students who may be struggling with behavior issues. According to Krebs and McNeill (2012), restorative practices can improve classroom climate and reduce behavior issues. Restorative practices involve bringing together students who are in conflict or have caused harm to others and using dialogue to repair the harm and build relationships.

Addressing conflicts and behavior issues promptly is not only important for building a positive classroom climate, but it is also crucial for teaching students important life skills such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, and self-regulation. When teachers address conflicts and behavior issues promptly, they model these skills for their students and provide them with opportunities to practice them in a safe and supportive environment (DeVries, 2016). This can help students develop important social and emotional competencies that can benefit them in all areas of their lives (Zins et al., 2004).

Moreover, when teachers address conflicts and behavior issues promptly, they also promote a culture of accountability and responsibility in the classroom (Skiba et al., 2006). Students learn that their actions have consequences, both positive and negative, and that they are responsible for their behavior. This can help to create a sense of community and mutual respect among students, which can further contribute to a positive classroom climate (Lane et al., 2013).

“Addressing conflicts and behavior issues promptly is a key aspect of maintaining a positive and inclusive classroom. By addressing issues as soon as they arise, I demonstrate to my students that their well-being and learning environment are a priority” (P1)

“Prompt resolution of conflicts prevents negative emotions from occurring and allows students to focus on their learning journey. It also teaches them valuable life skills that they can apply outside the classroom, enabling them to navigate conflicts constructively.” (P3)

“I strongly believe that when conflicts are promptly addressed, students feel heard, understood, and supported, fostering a sense of trust and respect among peers. It allows us to focus on learning and growth rather than being hindered by ongoing conflicts.” (P5)

“Addressing conflicts promptly helps students develop important conflict resolution skills, teaches empathy, and cultivates an environment where differences are valued and resolved in a constructive manner.” (P7)

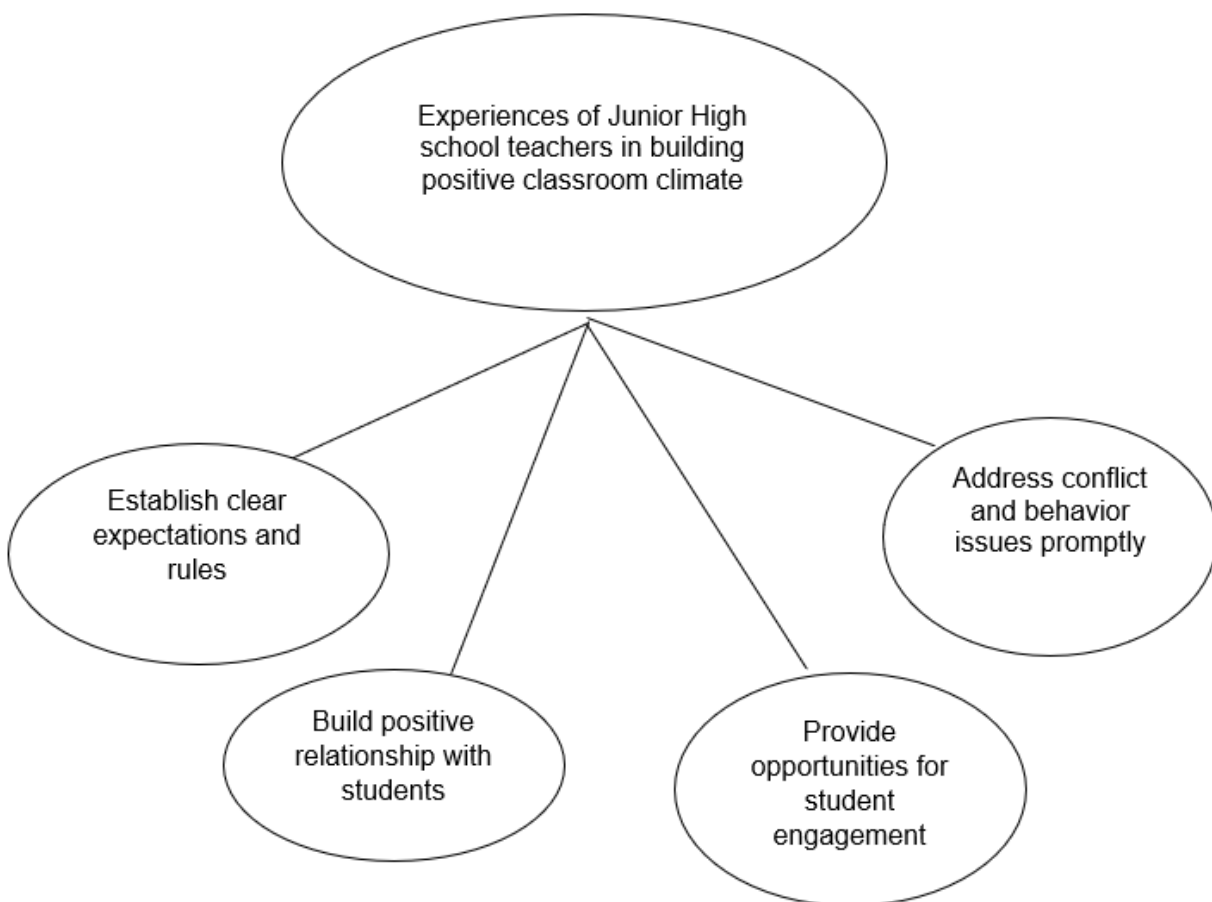
#### *Mechanisms for success in building positive classroom climate*

Creating a positive classroom climate is essential for promoting student engagement, well-being, and academic success. Junior high school teachers play a critical role in building a positive

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classroom climate by establishing positive relationships with their students, creating a safe and supportive learning environment, and fostering a sense of community and belonging among their students. The mechanisms through which junior high school teachers can build a positive classroom climate are multifaceted and include a range of strategies such as using restorative practices, providing social and emotional support to students, establishing clear rules and expectations, and addressing conflicts and behavior issues promptly.

Research suggests that the quality of the teacher-student relationship is one of the most critical factors influencing student outcomes (Pekrun et al., 2017). When teachers establish positive relationships with their students, students are more likely to feel connected to their school, engaged in their learning, and motivated to achieve (Roorda et al., 2011). In addition to building positive relationships, teachers can also promote a positive classroom climate by providing social and emotional support to students. This can include teaching students social and emotional competencies such as problem-solving, self-regulation, and empathy (Zins et al., 2004), as well as providing individualized support to students who are struggling with social or emotional issues (Gresham, 2005).



**Figure 3. The emerging themes on the experiences of Junior High school teachers in building positive classroom climate.**

*Encouraging student voice and participation.* Encouraging student voice and participation is a mechanism used by junior high school teachers to build a positive classroom climate. Teachers who promote student voice and participation create an inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and engaged in the learning process. This approach can help build a positive classroom climate by increasing student motivation, improving their academic performance, and promoting their social and emotional well-being (Levin & Nolan, 2014). Teachers who encourage student voice and participation help create a sense of ownership and engagement in the classroom (Levin & Nolan, 2014). This can include giving students opportunities to contribute to class discussions, allowing them to make decisions about their learning, and providing them with choices in assignments.

To encourage student voice and participation, teachers use a variety of strategies. For example, they provide opportunities for students to share their ideas and perspectives, such as through class discussions, group activities, and individual projects. Teachers also incorporate student choice and autonomy into their lessons, allowing students to make decisions about their learning, such as selecting topics for research projects or choosing the format for a presentation.

Encouraging student voice and participation also promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility among students. By giving students a voice in their own learning, teachers help foster a sense of agency and accountability, which can contribute to their overall academic success and well-being (Levin & Nolan, 2014). When students feel heard and valued, they are more likely motivated and engaged in the learning process, which leads to positive outcomes both in and out of the classroom.

“In encouraging student’s voice and participation, students develop critical thinking skills, learn to collaborate effectively, and gain confidence in expressing their ideas. It’s exciting to see them grow as independent thinkers and engaged learners.” (P1)

“For me, teachers should recognize the importance of encouraging student voice and participation. We should consider the positive impact it has on students’ confidence, engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity” (P3)

“Practicing student’s voice and participation is through integrating strategies such as student-led discussions, project-based learning, and reflection activities. I believe with these, I empower students to become active participants in their education..” (P5)

“One of the most powerful lessons I’ve learned as an educator is the positive impact of encouraging student voice and participation. By creating a culture of respect, active listening, and open dialogue, I give my students an avenue to share their opinions, ask questions, and get involved in conversations.” (P7)

*Providing positive feedback and reinforcement.* Providing positive feedback and reinforcement is another mechanism used by junior high school teachers to build a positive

classroom climate. By recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors and achievements, teachers can help students develop a sense of self-efficacy, increase their motivation, and improve their overall academic performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Moreover, positive feedback and reinforcement can promote a supportive and encouraging learning environment, where students feel appreciated and valued.

Teachers can promote a positive classroom climate by providing positive feedback and reinforcement to their students (Maag, 2001). This can include recognizing students for their achievements, providing specific and descriptive feedback, and using positive reinforcement strategies such as praise and rewards. In providing positive feedback and reinforcement, teachers use a variety of strategies. For instance, they acknowledge and celebrate students' achievements, both academic and non-academic, in front of the class. Teachers also use verbal praise, such as "well done" or "excellent job," to recognize students' efforts and progress. Additionally, teachers provide constructive feedback that highlights students' strengths and areas for improvement, and help them develop a growth mindset, which encourages the belief that abilities and talents can be developed through effort and perseverance.

Providing positive feedback and reinforcement have a positive impact on students' social and emotional well-being as well. When students feel recognized and valued, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards school, themselves, and their peers. This contributes to a sense of belonging and connectedness, which can help foster a positive classroom climate (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

"Based on my observation, through sincere praise, constructive feedback, and rewards, I encourage my students to believe in their abilities and develop a positive mindset. This positive reinforcement not only enhances their academic performance but also promotes resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of joy in their learning." (P1)

"Providing positive feedback and reinforcement is vital in every classroom because this is a way of forming within the students themselves the value of self worth and confidence. It will motivate them to go on with the challenges in their studies." (P3)

"Through providing positive feedback, I cultivate a positive mindset and create a culture where students believe in their abilities. It reinforces them to embrace challenges, persevere through difficulties, and develop a lifelong love for learning." (P5)

"We teachers should be generous to give positive feedback to our students. In checking their learning outputs, and giving comments, we will not dwell on the negative or needs improvement area but more on the strength of the students. This is for them to truly appreciate learning." (P7)

*Giving social and emotional support to students.* Giving social and emotional support to students is a crucial mechanism used by junior high school teachers to build a positive classroom

climate. By creating a safe and supportive learning environment, teachers promote students' well-being and academic success. Research shows that students who receive social and emotional support from their teachers are more engaged in learning, have better academic outcomes, and exhibit fewer behavioral problems (Suldo, Shaunessy-Dedrick, & Hardesty, 2008). Teachers can provide social and emotional support to their students in various ways, such as building positive relationships, creating opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, and providing counseling or referrals to mental health services.

In building positive relationships, teachers showed a genuine interest in their students' lives and well-being, offered guidance and mentorship, and created a classroom culture that values respect, empathy, and inclusivity. By fostering positive relationships with their students, teachers can help them feel safe, connected, and supported, which can lead to improved academic outcomes and social-emotional well-being. Teachers can promote a positive classroom climate by providing social and emotional support to their students. This includes teaching students social and emotional competencies such as problem-solving, self-regulation, and empathy (Zins et al., 2004), as well as providing individualized support to students who are struggling with social or emotional issues (Gresham, 2005).

In addition, creating opportunities for collaboration and teamwork is another effective way to provide social and emotional support to students. By working together on projects, assignments, and activities, students can develop important social and emotional skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Additionally, working in teams can promote a sense of belonging and connectedness, as well as increase students' motivation and engagement in learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2013).

“I incorporate social-emotional learning strategies, such as mindfulness exercises, conflict resolution skills, and self-reflection activities, into my teaching. These practices not only enhance students' emotional intelligence but also equip them with essential life skills that they can carry beyond the classroom.” (P1)

“Social and emotional support towards students is very important. By giving social and emotional support to my students, I have high hopes that it will gear a positive effect on them” (P3)

“I firmly believe that providing social and emotional support to students is just as important as academic instruction. By acknowledging and addressing their emotional needs, I create a classroom atmosphere where students feel seen and heard.” (P5)

“As a teacher I make it a priority to create a classroom culture where students feel safe expressing their emotions and seeking support when needed. By implementing strategies like regular check-ins, small group discussions, and individualized support, I aim to address their social and emotional needs.” (P7)

*Using restorative practices.* Restorative practices are a set of strategies that help to build relationships and repair harm when conflict arises (DeVries, 2016). Teachers can use restorative practices to build a positive classroom climate by facilitating dialogue, repairing harm, and rebuilding trust among students.

Restorative practices are a set of strategies and processes that junior high school teachers can use to build a positive classroom climate by promoting positive relationships, addressing conflicts, and repairing harm. By using restorative practices, teachers can create a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel respected, connected, and engaged in learning (Morrison, 2020). Restorative practices focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships, rather than punishing students for misbehavior, which can improve students' sense of fairness, accountability, and responsibility (Wachtel, 2013).

Restorative practices involve a range of techniques and processes, such as restorative circles, conferences, and meetings, which provide opportunities for students to express their feelings, perspectives, and needs, and for teachers to listen, empathize, and problem-solve with their students (Hopkins & Bergstrom, 2016). Restorative practices also involve a set of principles, such as respect, responsibility, and relationship-building, which guide interactions between students and teachers and promote a culture of cooperation, trust, and empathy (Costello et al., 2010).

Research shows that restorative practices can have positive effects on students' social-emotional well-being, academic engagement, and behavioral outcomes (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2019). By using restorative practices, teachers can promote a positive classroom climate that values respect, inclusivity, and accountability, and provides opportunities for students to learn and grow in a supportive and empowering environment.

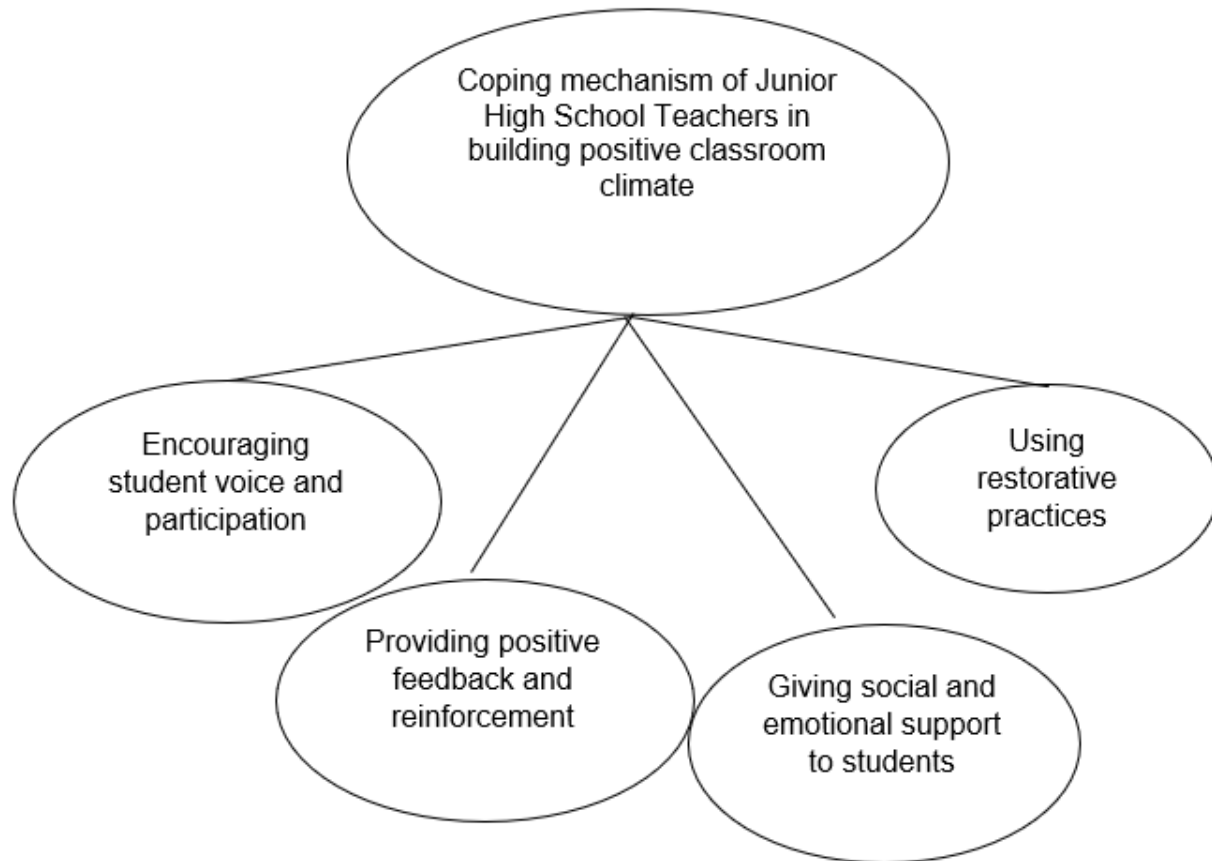
“Oftentimes conflict arises among students. In this situation, I use restorative practices by initiating dialogue between the conflicting parties. I will not let them go without being settled..” (P1)

“Restorative practices in the classroom is a way of promoting a positive classroom climate. Harm and danger will be avoided and a supportive learning environment can be felt.” (P3)“

“In my opinion, a great way of practicing restorative measures is to organize conferences, and meetings, which provide opportunities for students to express their feelings, perspectives, and needs, and for teachers to listen and empathize.” (P5)

”Resolving conflict is relationship building. This includes promoting a culture of understanding and trust for both parties.It has positive effects on students' social-emotional well-being, academic engagement, and behavioral outcomes”. (P7)





**Figure 4. The emerging themes on the coping mechanisms of Junior High School Teachers in building positive classroom climate.**

*Educational management insights gained from the experiences of junior high school teachers*

Building a positive classroom climate is a critical task for junior high school teachers as it can contribute to students' academic success, social-emotional well-being, and overall school experience. By creating a positive classroom environment, teachers can establish a sense of safety, trust, and respect, which can foster a culture of learning, collaboration, and growth. Junior high school teachers have gained various insights into effective strategies and practices that can help them build a positive classroom climate and support their students' academic and personal development.

Through their experiences, junior high school teachers have learned that building positive relationships with students (Cohen, 2006), addressing conflicts promptly and restoratively, providing social-emotional support, and creating a sense of belonging and ownership are crucial elements of a positive classroom climate. By using these insights, teachers can create an inclusive

and supportive learning environment that empowers students to achieve their full potential and thrive in school.

Research suggests that creating a positive classroom climate can have a significant impact on students' academic performance, attendance, and graduation rates (National School Climate Center, 2019). Thus, it is essential for junior high school teachers to prioritize building a positive classroom climate and implement evidence-based practices to support their students' success. By fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness, promoting social-emotional learning, and using restorative practices to address conflicts, teachers can create a safe and supportive learning environment that enables students to thrive academically and personally.

*Establish a sense of trust and respect.* One of the most important insights gained by junior high school teachers in building a positive classroom climate is the importance of establishing a sense of trust and respect with students. Teachers have found that when students feel that they can trust and respect their teachers, they are more likely to be engaged in learning and to feel comfortable in the classroom. This can be achieved through various means, such as actively listening to students, providing opportunities for student voice and participation, and using positive reinforcement and feedback. When teachers prioritize establishing trust and respect with their students, it can have a positive impact on both academic and social-emotional outcomes (Ginsburg & Bronstein, 2015).

In order to establish trust and respect with students, teachers have found that it is important to create a safe and inclusive classroom environment. This includes promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity, setting clear expectations and boundaries, and addressing conflicts and behavior issues promptly. When students feel that their needs and concerns are being heard and addressed, they are more likely to feel a sense of trust and respect for their teacher and the classroom community (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

Another way that teachers can establish trust and respect with their students is by building positive relationships with them. This includes showing an interest in students' lives outside of school, being responsive to their emotional needs, and creating opportunities for positive interactions with both the teacher and other students (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009). Teachers who prioritize building positive relationships with their students have been found to have a positive impact on academic outcomes, such as student engagement and achievement (Roorda et al., 2011).

“I believe that establishing a sense of trust and respect among my students is so essential to be able to make my students be engaged in class. They should feel free and comfortable in the classroom so they will not hesitate to get engaged in all class activities. (P1)

“Establishing a sense of trust and respect entails understanding my student’s needs and limitations. If I know who they are and be able to identify their strengths then, somehow they will trust me to enhance their given talents and potentials.” (P3)“

“Trust and respect should always prevail in a class atmosphere. If a teacher established a sense of trust and respect, he/she would be able to enhance the full potential of a child.” (P5)

”We teachers understood the importance of fostering trust, by showing an interest in students' lives outside of school, being responsive to their emotional needs, and creating opportunities for positive interactions is highly beneficial for all learners”. (P7)

*Incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices can help students feel valued and included.* Another important insight gained by junior high school teachers in building a positive classroom climate is the effectiveness of incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching refers to a teaching approach that recognizes and values the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, and aims to use this diversity to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment. By incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices, teachers can help students feel valued and included, which can lead to improved academic performance and social-emotional development (Gay, 2010).

Some examples of culturally responsive teaching practices include incorporating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum, using teaching strategies that align with students' cultural backgrounds, and fostering positive relationships with students based on respect and understanding. When students see themselves reflected in the curriculum and feel that their culture is valued, they are more likely to be engaged in the learning process and feel a sense of belonging in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In addition, culturally responsive teaching practices can also help to break down cultural barriers between students and teachers, and promote mutual understanding and respect. This can be particularly important for students from marginalized communities who may have had negative experiences with traditional schooling methods that do not acknowledge or respect their cultural backgrounds (Howard, 2003).

“I started my class each day with a morning prayer, and each time in everyday prayer, I assigned students to lead using their own dialect/ manner of praising. This is regardless of their religion and belief like Muslims, indigenous people, etc. I believe in this way, they will feel valued and respected.” (P1)

“I observed that my students are not intimidated or ashamed of their origin because I let them feel valued and respected. Each one of them understands that they belong to different cultures with different practices and beliefs.” (P3)“

“As much as possible, as a teacher, I strive to make my learners understand that life is not the same for each one. There are those who are well off and there are also those who belong to the marginalized group of people. Recognizing these situations, they would know the importance of understanding and accepting all of their classmates, especially those who are less fortunate..” (P5)

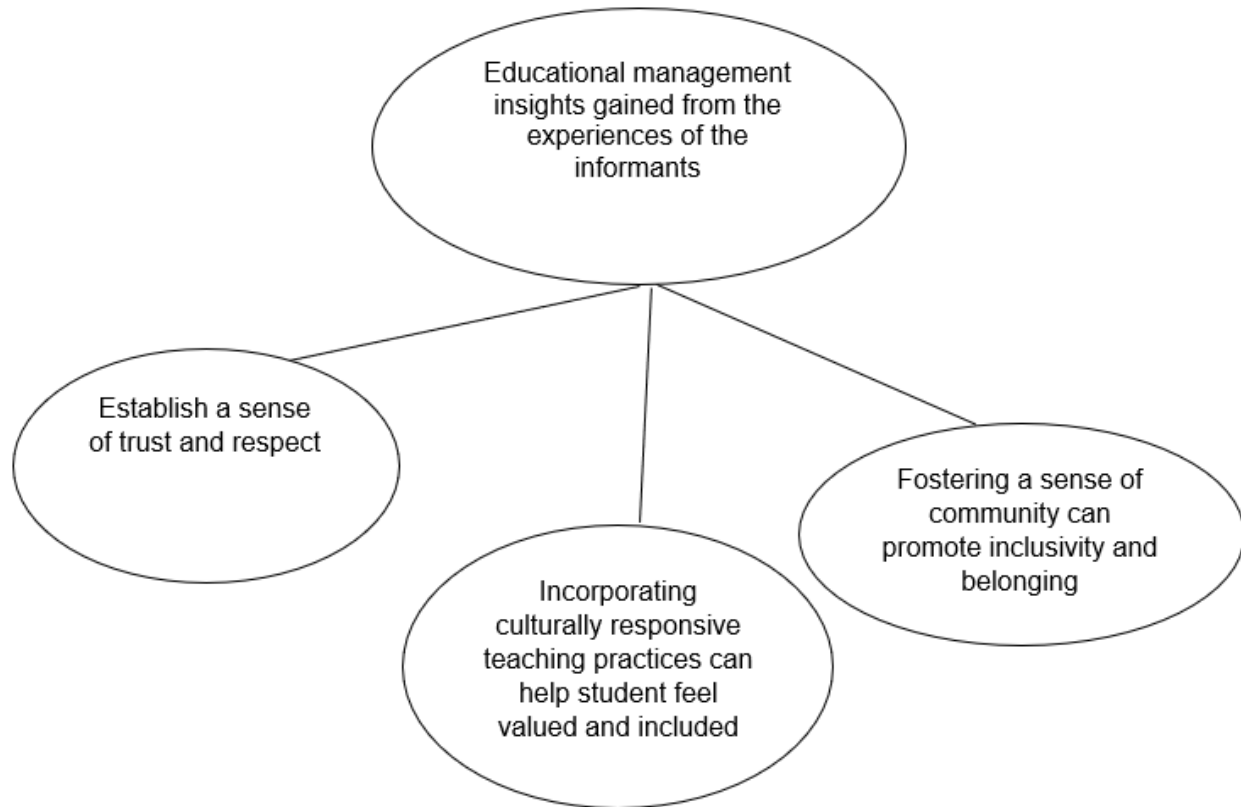
”Incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices is so challenging for me. It is inevitable that some students tend to bully their classmates who are different from them. In terms of culture. We teachers should make an approach that these will be avoided and that we should foster inclusivity in the class.”. (P7)

*Fostering a sense of community can promote inclusivity and belonging.* Another important insight gained by junior high school teachers in building a positive classroom climate is the value of fostering a sense of community. By creating a classroom environment where students feel like they are part of a supportive and inclusive community, teachers can promote inclusivity and belonging, which can lead to improved academic outcomes and social-emotional development. This sense of community can be fostered through a variety of activities, such as collaborative learning projects, class discussions, and team-building exercises (Freiberg, 1999).

In addition to promoting inclusivity and belonging, fostering a sense of community can also help to reduce incidents of disruptive behavior and promote positive social interactions between students. When students feel like they are part of a supportive community, they are more likely to feel a sense of responsibility for maintaining a positive and respectful classroom environment (Cothran et al., 2012).

To foster a sense of community, teachers can create classroom norms and expectations that promote positive social interactions and a sense of shared responsibility. For example, teachers can encourage students to work together on projects and assignments, and provide opportunities for students to share their perspectives and experiences with one another. Teachers can also model respectful and inclusive behavior, and encourage students to do the same.

Overall, fostering a sense of community can be a powerful way to promote inclusivity and belonging in the classroom. By creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, teachers can help students feel valued and connected, which can lead to improved academic outcomes and social-emotional development.



**Figure 5. The emerging themes on the insights gained by the Junior High School teachers in building positive classroom climate.**

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**AUTHOR'S PROFILE****HELEN JANE L. VELEZ**

In the heart of Davao Del Sur, a province known for its picturesque landscapes and vibrant cultural heritage, resides a remarkable woman who has dedicated her life to the pursuit of education and personal growth. This narrative follows the journey of a 29-year-old married woman, whose unwavering commitment to her profession and faith has shaped her path in extraordinary ways.

Born on January 7, 1995, in the bustling town of Digos City, Davao Del Sur, Philippines, she has always been surrounded by the rich traditions and close-knit community that characterize the region. Her early years were spent in an environment that valued education and hard work, laying a solid foundation for her future endeavors. Currently, she resides in Poblacion, Matanao, Davao Del Sur, a quaint yet vibrant locale where she has found both a home and a place to contribute significantly to her community.

Her academic journey is marked by diligence and a passion for learning. She pursued her Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a major in English at the prestigious University of Mindanao Digos College. During her time there, she immersed herself in her studies, eager to hone her skills and prepare for a future in teaching. Upon graduation, she faced one of the most significant challenges for educators in the Philippines – the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Her dedication and hard work paid off as she achieved a very satisfactory rating, a testament to her knowledge and readiness to educate the next generation.

Following her success in the licensure examination, she began her professional career at Matanao Central Elementary School, where she served as a PSB teacher for one year. This initial role allowed her to apply her academic training in a real-world setting, where she quickly proved her capability and dedication. Her time at Matanao Central Elementary School was more than just a job; it was a crucial period of growth and learning. Here, she had the opportunity to impact young minds and contribute to their foundational education, an experience that solidified her passion for teaching.

Her professional journey took a significant turn when, by the grace of God, she secured a position as a Secondary School Teacher I at Matanao National High School. This new role represented not only a promotion but also a recognition of her skills and potential. At Matanao National High School, she continues to inspire and educate, bringing her expertise in English and her enthusiasm for learning to a broader audience.

While teaching at Matanao Central Elementary School, she seized the opportunity to further her education by enrolling in a Master's program. She chose to specialize in Linguistics, a field that would enhance her teaching capabilities and deepen her understanding of language and communication. Her initial enrollment was at the Southern Philippines Agri-Business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST) in Davao Del Sur. This endeavor demonstrated her belief in continuous learning and her commitment to providing the best education possible to her students.

However, life presented unexpected challenges. The global pandemic disrupted many aspects of daily life, including education. Undeterred by these obstacles, she made the pragmatic decision to transfer and continue her Master's studies at Rizal Memorial Colleges. This move was not just a necessity but a strategic step to ensure that she could continue her education without compromising her safety and well-being.

Throughout her journey, she has been guided by a profound belief that while every person has plans, all plans may change according to God's will. This philosophy has been a cornerstone of her life, providing her with the strength and resilience to navigate the uncertainties and challenges she has faced. Her faith has been a source of comfort and guidance, helping her to remain focused and determined in her pursuit of excellence.

Her story is one of dedication, resilience, and unwavering faith. From her humble beginnings in Digos City to her current role as an educator in Matanao, she exemplifies the qualities of a true teacher – passion, commitment, and a deep-seated belief in the transformative power of education. Her journey continues to inspire those around her, proving that with faith and determination, one can overcome any obstacle and achieve greatness.