

Resilience in Inclusion: Case Study of Coping Strategies of a Kindergarten Teacher Handling Learners with ADHD

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has intensified the demands placed on early childhood teachers, particularly those handling learners with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In kindergarten settings, teachers are required to balance developmental appropriateness with behavioral and emotional support, making resilience a critical professional capacity. This study examined the coping strategies employed by a kindergarten teacher in an inclusive classroom when working with learners who have ADHD. Using a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to capture the teacher's lived experiences. Thematic analysis revealed that the teacher employed adaptive coping strategies categorized into emotional regulation, instructional flexibility, classroom structure, and professional support-seeking. Findings indicated that sustained resilience was fostered through reflective practice, differentiated instruction, consistent routines, and collaborative engagement with parents and colleagues. Despite persistent challenges related to learner inattention, impulsivity, and emotional dysregulation, the teacher demonstrated proactive and adaptive responses that supported both learner engagement and classroom stability. The study highlights the importance of strengthening teacher resilience through institutional support, targeted professional development, and the implementation of inclusive policies. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on inclusive education by highlighting resilience as a central mechanism in managing ADHD-related classroom challenges in early childhood contexts.

Keywords: Inclusive education, kindergarten teacher, ADHD, case study, Philippines

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Introduction

Inclusive education has become a global priority, emphasizing that all learners, regardless of ability, should have access to quality and equitable learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2024). International organizations like UNICEF and WHO advocate that inclusion fosters social participation, emotional well-being, and equal learning outcomes for children with diverse needs (UNICEF, 2023; WHO, 2022). These global frameworks align with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes

inclusive and equitable education for all learners worldwide (UNESCO, 2024). Through inclusive practices, teachers and schools create supportive environments that nurture empathy, respect, and resilience among learners (UNICEF, 2023).

Across Asia, inclusive education is gaining momentum as countries strengthen policies to ensure equal learning opportunities for children with disabilities and diverse learning needs (UNESCO Bangkok, 2023). Nations such as Japan, Singapore, and the Philippines are implementing

teacher training programs and inclusive classroom strategies to address the growing needs of learners with attention and behavioral challenges (Tan & Chua, 2022). Regional initiatives highlight that teacher resilience and coping mechanisms are vital in maintaining effective inclusion, especially in early childhood settings (UNICEF East Asia & Pacific, 2024). These efforts demonstrate Asia's collective commitment to fostering inclusive, compassionate, and adaptable education systems that value every learner's potential (UNESCO Bangkok, 2023).

In the Philippines, inclusive education continues to evolve as part of the Department of Education's commitment to providing equitable access for all learners, including those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (DepEd, 2022). Despite the positive efforts through the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, many teachers still face challenges such as limited training, lack of classroom support, and insufficient learning resources (Cruz & Dizon, 2023). Filipino kindergarten teachers often rely on personal coping strategies and professional resilience to manage learners with ADHD while maintaining an inclusive and nurturing learning environment (Reyes & David, 2024). These realities highlight the need to understand how teachers adapt and persevere, contributing to the growing discourse on teacher resilience in inclusive education within the Philippine context (DepEd, 2022).

This case study focuses on a kindergarten teacher in an inclusive public elementary school in Bacolod City who teaches regular classes with learners who were diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Within this inclusive setting, the teacher faces daily instructional and behavioral challenges while striving to maintain a supportive and productive classroom environment. Despite these difficulties, the teacher demonstrates resilience by employing adaptive coping strategies such as differentiated instruction, positive reinforcement, and emotional regulation. Through this case, the study seeks to highlight how a regular teacher without formal special education specialization manages the complexities of inclusion at the foundational learning level in the Philippine context. This propelled the researcher to conduct the study.

Although there are growing studies on inclusive education and ADHD, few have focused on how kindergarten teachers in the Philippine context personally cope with the challenges of teaching learners with ADHD (Aldabbagh et al., 2024). Most existing literature emphasizes learners' outcomes or general teaching strategies rather than the teacher's lived experiences and resilience in managing diverse behaviors (Mikami et al., 2020). Of all the studies discussed, it is seen that there is a limited study about the coping strategies of a kindergarten teacher handling

learners with ADHD in an Inclusive Setting; hence, there is a research gap in the literature that this study would like to fill in. This study aims to close the gap by providing an in-depth exploration of a kindergarten teacher's coping strategies in handling learners with ADHD in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City.

This study will be conducted to explore and describe the coping strategies of a kindergarten teacher handling learners with ADHD in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City. The main objective of this study is to understand how the teacher manages instructional, behavioral, and emotional challenges while sustaining resilience in inclusive teaching. The findings of this study will be used to develop a proposed strategic plan that schools and support groups can use to assist teachers. This may include a teacher training module and a resource manual that highlight effective coping strategies and resilience practices for teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design employing the case study method to examine the coping strategies used by a kindergarten teacher in handling learners with ADHD in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows an in-depth exploration of human experiences, meanings, and processes in a natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The case study method, as defined by Yin (2018), focuses on understanding a phenomenon within its real-life context and is suitable for capturing detailed and personal experiences that cannot be quantified but can provide rich insights into the teacher's behaviors, attitudes, and resilience. The use of a single-case design facilitates the drawing of meaningful conclusions about the complexities of inclusion and the teacher's coping strategies.

Participants

The participant in this study is a kindergarten teacher from an inclusive public elementary school in Bacolod City who has direct experience in teaching learners diagnosed with ADHD. She represents a real-life example of a teacher demonstrating resilience while managing learners with ADHD in an inclusive learning environment, which led to her selection using purposive sampling. To ensure that the data was rich and relevant to the object of the study, the participant was selected based on her active involvement in inclusive education and willingness to share her lived experiences.

Instrument

The main research instrument used in this study was a semi-

structured interview guide. This instrument allowed the researcher to collect detailed journals about the teacher's coping strategies, experiences, and reflections in managing learners with ADHD. Semi-structured interviews are flexible and allow follow-up questions that help clarify and deepen the participant's responses. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore the teacher's instructional, behavioral, emotional, and personal coping strategies. Experts in education and special education validated the instrument to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the research objectives.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered through one-on-one semi-structured interviews conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting within the school premises. Before the interview, informed consent was obtained from the participant. The interview was audio-recorded with the participant's permission to ensure accuracy and completeness of data. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher ensured that the questions were asked conversationally and respectfully, allowing the participant to share her experiences freely. The collected data focused on the teacher's coping strategies, flexibility, and emotional resilience in handling learners with ADHD in an inclusive kindergarten classroom.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by de Farias et al. (2021). This approach involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. The researcher began by transcribing the recorded interview verbatim and then thoroughly reading the transcript to gain familiarity with the data. Initial codes were generated, followed by grouping similar ideas into broader themes representing the teacher's coping strategies. The final themes were refined and interpreted to reflect the teacher's lived experiences and resilience in inclusive education. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows flexibility in exploring personal experiences and provides clear insights into the teacher's coping patterns.

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through member checking, where the participant reviewed the interview transcript for accuracy. Transferability was addressed by providing a detailed description of the research context. Dependability was ensured by maintaining clear documentation of

all procedures. Lastly, confirmability was maintained by keeping an audit trail and the researcher's journal to minimize personal bias and ensure that interpretations were grounded in the participant's responses.

Ethical Considerations

Since this research involved human participation, ethical standards were strictly observed. The participant was informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of all information shared. Informed consent was secured before data collection, and pseudonyms were used to protect the participant's identity. The researcher also ensured that no physical, psychological, or emotional harm occurred during the process. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the Department of Education and the university's research ethics committee. All collected information was securely stored and will be deleted after the completion of the study.

Results

This study examined the experiences and coping strategies of a kindergarten teacher working with learners with ADHD in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City. From the interview responses, five major themes emerged: adaptive teaching strategies, behavioral management, emotional coping and resilience, support systems, and insights on inclusive teaching. The teacher's own personal statements are included to show her genuine lived experiences and perspectives.

Theme 1: Adaptive Teaching Strategies

The teacher emphasized that modifying lessons is essential when working with young learners with ADHD. She shared that she often uses visual aids, songs, and short activities to keep children focused. She said,

"In my class with learners who have ADHD, I make sure that tasks are simple and clear because I know they easily forget and get distracted. When there are too many instructions, they become overwhelmed and cannot follow. That is why I break my lessons into smaller steps and repeat important instructions. I intentionally choose activities with pictures, songs, and movement because these help sustain their attention. When I notice their minds drifting away, I redirect them using visual cues or physical movement. For me, this approach helps them stay engaged despite their ADHD."

This reflects her understanding of attention regulation difficulties common among learners with ADHD. By simplifying tasks and chunking instructions, she reduces cognitive overload and supports executive functioning. The use of repetition and multimodal cues aligns with evidence-

based strategies for sustaining attention. Movement and sensory engagement function as regulatory tools rather than distractions. Proactive redirection prevents task abandonment and frustration. She also added,

“There are learners with ADHD who do not have the same learning pace as others, so I never force them to keep up immediately. When I see that an activity is difficult for them, I give them more time and make them feel that it is okay. I avoid labeling them as ‘late’ or ‘behind’ because I know this affects their self-esteem. If they need further explanation, I will provide it without pressure. What matters to me is progress, even if it is small. This approach helps them stay motivated to learn.”

Her response demonstrates sensitivity to processing speed, as she allows extended time, which reflects inclusive pacing and equitable access to learning. Avoiding deficit labels protects learners’ emotional well-being and motivation. Her emphasis on progress over speed highlights her role in fostering a psychologically safe learning environment. Output-wise, the teacher shared,

“When learners with ADHD have outputs, I give them several choices on how they can show what they have learned. Some prefer drawing, some are better at speaking or making videos, and others are comfortable with writing. I do this because I know they have ADHD and express themselves differently. When I force them into only one format, they become frustrated and disengaged. I make the criteria clear, so the assessment remains fair. Through this approach, they become more confident and less afraid to show their abilities.”

This implies that providing multiple means of expression addresses executive functioning and expressive language challenges associated with ADHD. Choice reduces frustration and task avoidance, common among learners with attention difficulties. Clear criteria maintain assessment integrity while allowing flexibility. This approach aligns with Universal Design for Learning principles.

Theme 2: Managing Behavior and Classroom Routines

Consistent routines, visual cues, and calm redirection are central to the teacher’s behavioral strategies. She shared that she avoids harsh discipline, stating,

“I make sure to keep my voice calm when correcting a learner with ADHD because I know they do not respond well to shouting. When a teacher shouts, they become more distracted and hyperactive. That is why I am choosing a soft and clear voice, so they are not triggered. I remind them of rules in a gentle way. When I see that they are becoming emotionally overwhelmed, I let them rest first. This approach helps prevent the situation from worsening.”

Her approach reflects patience and understanding as her calm verbal approach aligns with trauma-informed and ADHD-sensitive classroom management. Loud reprimands can heighten emotional dysregulation in learners with ADHD. Gentle reminders reduce sensory overload and emotional escalation. The teacher’s strategy promotes emotional safety and trust. Allowing rest supports emotional regulation before redirection. This approach fosters a supportive behavioral climate. When it comes to consistent routines, she shared,

“Routine is a big help in my class with learners who have ADHD. Every morning, we do the same sequence, prayer, song, cleanup, and lesson. When they know what comes next, they feel less anxious and behave better. Routine helps them organize their thoughts. When there is a new activity, I prepare them first by explaining what will happen next. For me, consistency gives them a sense of security.”

So, it supports executive functioning and predictability for learners with ADHD. Predictability reduces anxiety and behavioral disruptions. Advance preparation supports transition management. The teacher’s structured sequencing promotes internal organization skills. Routine acts as a preventive behavior strategy. This highlights the importance of environmental structure in inclusive classrooms. She also added,

“When they cannot stay seated due to hyperactivity, I do not immediately discipline them. I gently remind them and help them settle down again. If they truly cannot manage, I give them a standing task or a small errand. This helps them release energy in an appropriate way. I do not treat movement as punishment. For me, their energy should be guided, not suppressed.”

This demonstrates a strength-based approach to hyperactivity management. Redirecting movement prevents power struggles and frustration. Allowing standing tasks supports sensory regulation. The teacher reframes movement as a need rather than defiance. This approach aligns with self-regulation and inclusive discipline models. It supports learner dignity and autonomy.

Theme 3: Emotional Coping and Resilience

Despite the demands of inclusive teaching, the teacher maintains her emotional well-being through personal grounding practices. She shared,

“There are days when I feel emotionally burdened because of the heavy responsibility of handling learners with ADHD. There are moments when they cannot focus, become very hyperactive, and behavioral challenges happen repeatedly. In those situations, I remind myself that it is not personal but part of their condition. I pray before and after class to ask for strength and patience. Prayer helps me remain

calm even on stressful days. For me, this spiritual coping strategy gives peace to my heart.”

This highlights emotional labor inherent in inclusive teaching, particularly when handling learners with ADHD. The teacher demonstrates emotional reframing by separating the child’s behavior from personal intent. Spiritual coping serves as an internal resilience mechanism that supports emotional regulation. Prayer functions as a self-soothing strategy that reduces stress and prevents burnout. Such practices are culturally grounded and contextually relevant in the Philippine setting. She also finds motivation in small improvements:

“When I see even small progress from a learner with ADHD, I feel happy and use it as my reason to continue. When a child who could not sit before manages to stay seated for even a few minutes, that is already a big achievement for me. I do not compare their progress with other children. I choose to look at their growth based on their own abilities. This mindset helps me stay motivated even on exhausting days. For me, small wins give me strength.”

She celebrates small progress and it reflects a mastery-oriented mindset essential in inclusive education. The teacher’s individualized benchmarks align with developmental appropriateness for learners with ADHD. Avoiding comparison prevents emotional exhaustion and frustration. This reframing supports sustained motivation and resilience. Recognizing incremental gains counters feelings of inefficacy often experienced by teachers in inclusive settings. To maintain balance, she avoids bringing stress home:

“When I arrive home after class, I make sure to rest and not bring classroom stress with me. I know that if I carry exhaustion and frustration home, I will lose energy for the next day. I give myself time to rest or do simple things that make me happy. This helps me recharge emotionally. For me, setting boundaries between work and personal life is very important. This protects my mental health.”

This highlights boundary-setting as a critical emotional coping strategy. Teachers handling learners with ADHD often experience prolonged stress due to constant behavioral monitoring. Intentional rest prevents emotional spillover and burnout. Self-care practices support emotional recovery and long-term resilience. Establishing work-life boundaries enhances sustainability in inclusive teaching roles. This reflects emotional self-awareness and proactive coping.

Theme 4: Support Systems in the School Environment

The teacher acknowledged that her resilience is strengthened by the assistance she receives from her school community. She emphasized,

“The support of my fellow teachers is a big help to me in handling learners with ADHD. On days when a child’s behavior becomes very challenging, someone checks on me or offers help. It is not difficult to ask for advice as we often face similar situations. Their presence reduces my stress. I know that I am not alone in this responsibility. For me, collegial support gives strength and assurance.”

This statement emphasizes the importance of peer support in sustaining teacher resilience. Shared experiences among teachers foster empathy and practical problem-solving. Collaborative environments are essential in inclusive school cultures. This underscores social support as a protective factor against burnout. Also, Administrators provide encouragement and flexibility:

“It is a big help when the school supports me with materials needed for learners with ADHD. When I request manipulatives, visual aids, or sensory materials, the administration does what they can to provide what’s needed. This allows me to implement more strategies in the classroom. I am not limited to only one method because resources are available. Support in materials makes me feel that inclusive teaching is valued. For me, resources are essential in managing ADHD.”

Administrative support reflects institutional commitment to inclusion. Resource availability reduces teacher frustration and instructional constraints. This enables creative and adaptive teaching, so it highlights the role of systemic support in inclusive success. She also added,

“The administration does not force me to strictly follow rigid rules when my actions benefit learners with ADHD. This gives me the freedom to adjust strategies based on the situation. I become more creative because I am not afraid of being reprimanded.”

Administrative flexibility empowers teachers to respond to diverse learner needs. Rigid policies can hinder individualized interventions for learners with ADHD. Trust-based leadership is important because it reduces pressure which allows thoughtful decision-making. In that way, it helps the teacher manage classroom challenges more effectively.

Theme 5: Insights and Commitment to Inclusive Education

The teacher’s experiences shaped her understanding of inclusion. She becomes more responsible, flexible, empathetic and committed. She explained,

“I feel that my responsibility as a teacher became greater when I had learners with ADHD in my class. It is not only about delivering lessons but also supporting their emotions and behavior. Every day, I think about what else I can

learn to help them better. That is why I choose to read, attend training courses, and seek advice. This commitment is not forced but comes from my heart. For me, a teacher's learning never ends."

She demonstrates a strong sense of professional responsibility and lifelong learning. Inclusive education demands continuous skill enhancement, particularly for ADHD-related needs, and her intrinsic motivation supports sustained professional development. This commitment enhances instructional effectiveness and learner support. She also values acceptance because it is the very first step in helping these children:

"The first thing I did to help these kinds of learners is to accept them for who they are and whatever condition they have. Enrich them with their strength, abilities, and capabilities. Help them with their weaknesses because they don't have anyone to believe them aside from their family and us, teachers who truly understand them."

This statement is really heart-melting, for it hits reality hard. The teacher implies that acceptance is the door to a meaningful world full of understanding, empathy, love, and help for these children. Being a teacher is not easy, for it takes a big heart to be one. Her advice to new teachers highlights patience and gratefulness:

"As a teacher handling learners with ADHD, we must strive to be a role model of calmness, respect, and patience. I know that what I model is what they learn. When I remain calm even when they are hyperactive, they calm down more easily. Let's have more patience towards them and be their voice. Respect must still be observed, and be grateful for whatever progress they have, even if it's just small wins. This role is not easy, but I choose to embrace it. For me, this is not just a vocation, but it's a gift from God that was given to me, and I was chosen for I believe that many are called but few are chosen."

Overall, the results demonstrate that resilience in inclusive teaching grows through daily experiences, small victories, and continuous support from the school community. The teacher's authentic statements show that her coping strategies are grounded in compassion, practicality, and a strong commitment to her learners.

Discussion

This case study explored and discussed the five emergent themes derived from the lived experiences of a kindergarten teacher handling learners with ADHD in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City. The findings are examined in relation to contemporary literature on inclusive education, ADHD, teacher resilience, and coping strategies.

Adaptive Teaching Strategies

The findings reveal that the teacher consistently employed adaptive teaching strategies tailored to the cognitive, attentional, and sensory needs of learners with ADHD. Breaking tasks into smaller steps, using multisensory materials, and incorporating movement-based activities align with evidence that learners with ADHD benefit from structured, engaging, and developmentally appropriate instruction (DuPaul & Stoner, 2021). These strategies address difficulties in sustained attention and working memory, which are core characteristics of ADHD.

The teacher's use of concrete materials and storytelling further reflects inclusive early childhood pedagogy, where hands-on and narrative-based approaches enhance engagement and comprehension among learners with attention challenges (Hornby, 2022). Research suggests that multisensory instruction improves on-task behavior and learning outcomes for young children with ADHD (Langberg et al., 2023). The teacher's intentional adaptation of lessons demonstrates instructional flexibility, a key competence in inclusive classrooms.

Moreover, the integration of simple rewards such as stickers supports motivation and reinforces positive behavior. Positive reinforcement is effective in increasing task engagement and reducing disruptive behavior among learners with ADHD, particularly in early childhood settings (Owens & Weiss, 2024). Overall, the teacher's adaptive strategies reflect evidence-based practices that respond directly to the learning profiles of children with ADHD.

Managing Behavior and Classroom Routines

Behavior management emerged as a central coping strategy, with the teacher emphasizing calm communication, predictable routines, and movement breaks. These practices are consistent with literature highlighting the importance of structure and consistency in managing ADHD-related hyperactivity and impulsivity (Fabiano et al., 2021). Daily routines provide predictability, which helps reduce anxiety and behavioral dysregulation among learners with ADHD.

The teacher's refusal to use shouting or punitive discipline aligns with trauma-informed and positive behavior support approaches. Studies indicate that harsh disciplinary practices often exacerbate behavioral difficulties in children with ADHD, whereas calm redirection and supportive guidance promote self-regulation (Murray et al., 2022). By offering movement breaks, the teacher acknowledges the physiological need of learners with ADHD to release excess energy, supporting improved focus afterward.

Flexible behavior management, as demonstrated by the teacher, reflects contemporary inclusive classroom management models that prioritize responsiveness over rigid control (Reyes & David, 2024). Such practices not only benefit learners with ADHD but also foster a supportive learning environment for all students. The findings affirm that effective behavior management in inclusive settings requires patience, flexibility, and a deep understanding of ADHD-related behaviors.

Emotional Coping and Resilience

The study highlights the emotional demands placed on teachers handling learners with ADHD and the coping strategies used to sustain resilience. The teacher relied on prayer, rest, boundary-setting, and self-reward as means of emotional regulation. These strategies are consistent with research indicating that emotional self-care is critical in preventing burnout among teachers in inclusive classrooms (Day & Gu, 2022).

Celebrating little progress among learners with ADHD emerged as a powerful motivational factor for the teacher. Literature emphasizes that recognizing incremental gains helps teachers maintain realistic expectations and emotional well-being when working with learners who demonstrate gradual progress (Beltman et al., 2023). The teacher's ability to reframe challenges as meaningful growth experiences reflects cognitive resilience.

Furthermore, separating work stress from home life aligns with findings that work-life balance enhances teacher sustainability and job satisfaction (Kim & Asbury, 2024). Emotional coping strategies enable teachers to remain patient, compassionate, and effective despite daily challenges. This theme underscores that teacher resilience is not innate but cultivated through intentional emotional practices.

Support Systems in the School Environment

Support systems within the school environment played a crucial role in the teacher's ability to cope with the demands of inclusive education. Collegial support, guidance from experienced teachers, and access to instructional materials were identified as key enablers. Research consistently shows that collaborative school cultures enhance teacher efficacy and reduce stress in inclusive settings (Sharma & Salend, 2021).

The teacher's experience of administrative flexibility is particularly significant. Allowing teachers autonomy in adapting rules for the benefit of learners with ADHD aligns with inclusive leadership practices that promote professional trust and innovation (Ainscow, 2023). Such flexibility empowers teachers to respond effectively to individual learner needs without fear of reprimand.

Emotional check-ins from colleagues further strengthened the teacher's sense of belonging and validation. Social support has been identified as a protective factor against emotional exhaustion among teachers handling learners with behavioral and attention difficulties (Collie, 2022). This theme highlights that inclusive education is a shared responsibility, requiring systemic and interpersonal support.

Insights and Commitment to Inclusive Education

The teacher's reflections demonstrate a deepened commitment to inclusive education shaped by her experiences with learners with ADHD. Her shift from a control-oriented mindset to an understanding-based approach mirrors contemporary perspectives on inclusive pedagogy that emphasize learner-centeredness and empathy (Florian & Beaton, 2022). Recognizing diversity as a strength rather than a limitation reflects inclusive values.

The teacher's pursuit of continuous learning through trainings and peer consultations aligns with research emphasizing professional learning as essential for effective ADHD support (Young et al., 2023). Teaching learners with ADHD prompted reflective practice and professional growth, reinforcing the idea that inclusive teaching fosters teacher development.

Most notably, the teacher reframed ADHD not as a deficit but as a difference requiring appropriate support. This strength-based perspective is supported by recent literature advocating for dignity, equity, and high expectations for learners with neurodevelopmental differences (UNESCO, 2024). Her commitment positions inclusive teaching as both a professional duty and a moral mission, reinforcing the transformative role of teachers in inclusive education.

Overall, the teacher's experiences reflect the multidimensional nature of resilience in inclusive education. Her strategies demonstrate a balance of professional skill, emotional stability, and adaptive problem-solving, consistent with global findings on inclusive classroom success.

Synthesis

This qualitative case study examined the coping strategies of a kindergarten teacher handling learners with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in an inclusive classroom in Bacolod City. Drawing from the teacher's lived experiences, the study revealed how instructional adaptation, behavior management, emotional coping, institutional support, and professional insight collectively contribute to teacher resilience in inclusive education.

Across the five themes, the findings illustrate that effective

inclusion of learners with ADHD is not dependent on isolated strategies but on the dynamic integration of pedagogical flexibility, emotional regulation, and sustained support systems. The teacher's adaptive instructional practices, such as breaking tasks into manageable steps, using multisensory materials, and incorporating movement, responded directly to the attentional and executive functioning challenges characteristic of ADHD. These practices allowed learners to remain engaged while reducing frustration for both the teacher and students.

Behavior management strategies rooted in consistency, calm communication, and predictable routines further support learner self-regulation. Rather than enforcing rigid discipline, the teacher adopted a responsive and child-centered approach, which fostered emotional safety and behavioral stability. This was complemented by emotional coping mechanisms that enabled the teacher to manage stress, prevent burnout, and maintain motivation, highlighting the centrality of teacher well-being in sustaining inclusive practice.

Support systems within the school environment emerged as critical enablers of resilience. Collegial collaboration, administrative flexibility, and emotional support reinforced the teacher's capacity to cope with challenges associated with ADHD inclusion. Ultimately, the teacher's reflections demonstrated professional growth and a deepened commitment to inclusive education, reframing ADHD from a deficit perspective to one grounded in dignity, potential, and equity. Collectively, the synthesis underscores that teacher resilience in inclusive classrooms is both a personal and systemic phenomenon.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates that a kindergarten teacher's resilience in handling learners with ADHD is grounded in a combination of instructional flexibility, behavioral sensitivity, emotional strength, and supportive relationships. The teacher successfully navigated classroom challenges by applying structured routines, visual aids, positive reinforcement, and calm redirection, all of which contributed to maintaining an inclusive and nurturing environment.

Her personal reflections highlight the importance of patience, compassion, and consistent effort, qualities that allowed her to persevere even in stressful situations. The case shows that resilience is not only a professional requirement but also a personal journey shaped by values, personal coping habits, and strong collegial networks.

Below are the lessons in the case study:

- This case study offers several important lessons regarding inclusive education and the handling of

learners with ADHD in early childhood settings. First, inclusion is most effective when teachers adopt a flexible and empathetic mindset that prioritizes understanding over control. The teacher's experiences demonstrate that recognizing ADHD-related behaviors as developmental differences rather than misconduct leads to more effective and humane classroom practices.

- Second, small and consistent instructional and behavioral adjustments can produce meaningful progress for learners with ADHD. Celebrating small gains, such as brief periods of sustained attention or improved self-regulation, enhances both learner confidence and teacher motivation. These incremental successes serve as powerful reinforcers of inclusive practice.
- Third, teacher resilience is sustained through intentional emotional coping strategies and supportive professional relationships. The case highlights that resilience is not merely an individual trait but is strengthened by collegial empathy, administrative trust, and access to resources. Finally, the study reinforces that inclusive teaching fosters professional growth, prompting teachers to engage in continuous learning, reflection, and advocacy. Inclusion, therefore, emerges not only as an educational mandate but as a transformative professional journey.

Ultimately, the study reinforces that inclusive education thrives when teachers are supported, empowered, and guided by both competence and compassion. It highlights the essential role of teacher resilience in promoting equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Limitations of the Findings

This case study focused on a single kindergarten teacher from one inclusive public elementary school in Bacolod City. Because of this, the findings may not represent the experiences of all kindergarten teachers handling learners with ADHD in different regions, school types, or cultural contexts. Additionally, the study relied primarily on self-reported data gathered through interviews. While this allowed for rich and in-depth insights, it may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. Observational data or triangulation with additional sources, such as classroom artifacts or administrator perspectives, could have strengthened the findings. Lastly, the study focused on a regular teacher without formal specialization in special education. While this was intentional, it excludes comparisons with teachers who have specialized training in ADHD or special education, which may yield different coping strategies and experiences. These limitations

suggest that the results should be interpreted as an in-depth but context-specific account rather than a generalized description of all-inclusive teaching experiences.

Future Research Directions

Future research may expand on this study in several ways. First, similar case studies may be conducted across multiple schools or regions to compare coping strategies among kindergarten teachers handling learners with ADHD in diverse contexts. A multi-case design could provide broader insights into patterns of resilience in inclusive education. Second, future studies may include classroom observations and document analysis to triangulate interview data and capture real-time instructional and behavioral practices. Incorporating the perspectives of learners, parents, and school administrators would also enrich understanding of inclusive dynamics. Third, quantitative or mixed-methods studies could examine the relationship between teacher coping strategies, resilience levels, and learner outcomes in inclusive classrooms. Lastly, future research may explore the impact of targeted professional development programs on teachers' preparedness and emotional well-being when handling learners with ADHD, thereby informing policy and teacher education programs.

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