

What Keeps Me Going? Lived Experiences of Parents Having Children with Disabilities

Dexie Rose L. Pely

Holy Cross of Davao College Inc., Philippines
Email Address: dexierose.pely@hcdc.edu.ph

How to cite:

Pely, D. R. L. (2025). What Keeps Me Going? Lived Experiences of Parents Having Children with Disabilities. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Viewpoints*, 1(1), 56-74.

Research Article

Received: 17 Mar 2025
Revised: 20 Apr 2025
Accepted: 17 May 2025
Available: 31 May 2025

Keywords:

*lived experiences and children with disabilities,
parental involvement*

ABSTRACT

Raising a kid with a handicap is a path defined by love, sacrifice, and sometimes great hardship. This qualitative phenomenology study investigates the lived experiences of parents in Banaybanay District, Davao Oriental, caring for children with disabilities. Rooted in Resilience Theory (Masten, 1994; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990), the study concentrated on how parents of children with disabilities confront difficulties, adjust to obstacles, and undergo developmental results. Ten parents from both mainstream and special needs schooling programs were chosen using purposive sampling techniques such as in-depth, open-ended interviews that let people think carefully about their path-acquired data. Thematic analysis identified three important areas: developmental outcomes, adaptation strategies, and challenges. Parents reported daily care load, behavioral problems, medical issues, educational obstacles, and financial struggle under adversity. Emotional control, patience, faith, social support, and outside support were included in the adaptation processes. Parents said that despite their challenges, major developmental results included personal development, closer relationships, and better coping techniques. The results guide future policies and programs by implying the possibility for mediation analysis and the application of recognized themes as variables in statistical studies. Most significantly, our work provides a platform for these parents' voices to be heard, appreciated, and better understood.

© 2025 The Author
published by Edukar Publishing



INTRODUCTION

Widely recognized as a deep and complex problem that impacts not just the emotional and psychological well-being of the caregivers but also the development and general quality of life of their children, parenting stress, especially among parents of children with disabilities, has been recognized. Wu et al. (2025) underlined that the weight of parenting stress affects more than just the person; it also affects the general family environment and the quality of care given. The degree and intensity of such stress have been studied worldwide in several settings. Mbatha and Mokwena (2023) found in South Africa that although parenting stress is a shared experience, it is far more extreme for parents rearing children with developmental impairments. Likewise, Wang et al. (2020) drew attention in Mainland China to how parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) frequently bear excessive childcare duties, suffer financial restrictions, and suffer lower family quality of life. Alansaari (2022)

discovered a clear correlation between the severity of children's behavioral issues and parental stress in Iran and the United Arab Emirates, particularly among families of children with developmental disabilities. Rfat et al. (2024) found that in Türkiye, women bear most of the responsibility for care, frequently without help from social agencies or extended family, hence adding their emotional and practical loads. Ban et al. (2020) reported on the social isolation and prejudice experienced by families of children with disabilities in Nepal's Illam District, especially those with physical limitations affecting every day and social involvement.

The Philippine setting has comparable intricacy. Eduria et al. (2024) looked at the emotional and financial challenges faced by moms of 3–6 year old disabled children in Cebu City. They highlighted the vital importance of resilience in child development. Lasco, Nuevo, and colleagues (2022), working in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, and Davao City, highlighted the protective benefits of social support, a responsive healthcare system, and good religious beliefs, especially among families caring for children with ASD. Agbay and Padillo (2024) found in Mandaue City that moms of deaf children with inadequate sign language knowledge found it difficult to get academic assistance. Abucaya et al. (2022) investigated the everyday challenges and coping mechanisms of parents at Don Julian Rodriguez Sr. Elementary School and Davao City Special School, providing useful ideas on how improved support systems may be built. Chiu et al. (2023), meanwhile, detailed in Cagayan de Oro City how poverty, bureaucratic negligence, and ongoing societal stigma restricted families with impaired children's access to rehabilitation treatments.

Though this research is robust, the literature nevertheless shows a clear disparity. Often inside metropolitan settings and mostly from the perspectives of women, many studies concentrate on certain elements—financial hardships, behavioral issues, or institutional inadequacies. The lived experiences of parents in rural or underprivileged areas are not well understood holistically. Often absent are their voices, reflecting their daily battles, individual coping strategies, and displays of resilience in their cultural environments. This insight drove my personal and academic drive to do a study that explores their reality, voices those whose stories are seldom told, and provides a more inclusive basis for support systems, acknowledging the whole human experience of raising a child with a disability. Particularly in rural and underprivileged locations, this study aims to highlight the sometimes unnoticed obstacles parents parenting children with impairments encounter. Although these parents are usually shown as caretakers juggling duties and obligations, their deeper emotional lives and personal changes are never discussed. This research intends to offer room to their voices by means of careful listening to their lived experiences, therefore honoring their tenacity and development as well as recognizing their hardships. Knowing how these parents overcome hardship and derive meaning from it can help social workers, lawmakers, healthcare professionals, teachers, and others. By means of their stories, this research aims to motivate support systems anchored in the real-life settings of Filipino families, hence inspiring not only functional but also profoundly sympathetic ones. This study aims to provide knowledge that is socially transforming as well as academically relevant by focusing on the human experience.

Problem Statement

Three main research topics guiding this study seek to reveal the subtle experiences of parents rearing children with impairments. First, it inquires: What challenges do parents of children with impairments endure? This inquiry investigates the emotional, social, economic, and practical difficulties parents encounter. Second, it looks at: How do these parents adjust to their suffering? The emphasis here is on knowing the individual and social tactics they utilize to survive and adapt. Finally, it looks at: After overcoming hardship, what developmental results have these parents had? This is to see how their experiences have caused development, resilience, or change across time. These questions taken together seek to offer a thorough knowledge of the parental path in the setting of handicap.

Expectations

Grounded on the conviction that reality is dynamic and molded by personal experiences and social settings, this work Every parent's experience of parenting a kid with a handicap is, in my opinion, unique and always changing as a result of their interactions with everyday obstacles, support networks, cultural norms, and inner resources. Rich, introspective narratives must be used to investigate these experiences, as numerical statistics alone cannot adequately capture them. Meaningful knowledge also comes from a shared narrative and emotional involvement, whereby parents' comments expose insights conventional evaluations would miss. From a methodological

standpoint, I examine this research via a qualitative phenomenological lens, which prioritizes lived experience as a potent source of knowledge. Theoretically, I depend on the resilience theory of Masten, Best, and Garmezy, which views resilience as a developmental process unfolding over time in reaction to hardship rather than a fixed characteristic. In the Filipino setting, cultural factors like close family ties, religious beliefs, and strong community bonds greatly affect how parents suffer, understand, and evolve from their experiences.

Theoretical Viewpoint

Although some points of view describe resilience in terms of personal qualities such as optimism or mental fortitude, this paper adopts a more dynamic, wide approach. Building on the work of Masten (1994) and Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990), I see resilience as a process including confronting major adversity, mobilizing internal and external resources, and attaining positive adaptation over time. Resilience in this context is not something people naturally have but rather something they acquire via interaction with their surroundings. This method lets us look at how parents navigate suffering not as passive victims but as active agents who discover means to cope, adapt, and finally develop. It creates room to see not just the difficulties individuals encounter but also the strengths they develop in reaction to those difficulties. The paradigm guiding this study is founded on the idea of resilience as a developing, process-oriented event. Resilience, drawing from Masten (1994) and Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990), is seen as the result of three interrelated components: first, the experience of adversities threatening healthy development and well-being; second, the ability to adapt through personal strength and accessible support systems; and third, the attainment of favorable developmental results despite the existence of risk factors. This point of view stresses the dynamic and participatory character of human development instead of seeing resilience as an innate personality feature. Within this framework, the parents in this research are actively negotiating difficult emotional and social landscapes, learning from their challenges, and rebuilding their identities rather than just managing. I want to appreciate and grasp the whole range of their experiences using this viewpoint. This viewpoint helps me to appreciate and grasp the whole range of their encounters.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explore and uncover the lived experiences of parents of surviving children with disabilities. As Creswell and Poth (2016) described, phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of human experiences through data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, observations, and personal reflections, emphasizing the need to capture participants' perspectives without imposing predefined categories. Fischer (2009) highlighted the importance of *bracketing*—the suspension of preconceived notions—to ensure that the researcher remains focused on participants' viewpoints, thereby fostering a more authentic understanding of their lived realities. Similarly, Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio (2019) asserted that phenomenological research allows for deep engagement with participants' emotional and experiential narratives, revealing nuances and complexities that structured methodologies may overlook. Guided by the resilience theory, this study used open-ended interview questions to allow participants to fully express their thoughts, emotions, and personal interpretations. This approach facilitated a rich and holistic analysis of their lived realities and provided valuable insights into how they navigate adversity and find strength in their caregiving roles.

Research Locale

I conducted my study in Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, a coastal municipality in the province of Davao Oriental, Region XI. The public schools district supervisor of Banaybanay District and the school's division superintendent of the Schools Division of Davao Oriental were responsible for 14 elementary schools and five secondary schools. All schools offered Special Needs Education classes.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Involving ten (10) parent-informants chosen by purposive sampling, this study took place in the Banaybanay District of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental. These participants were parents of children with disabilities, either enrolled in general education (mainstream) or a non-graded program under the Special Needs Education (SNED) program in a local public school. Following the qualitative sampling recommendations of Creswell (2013) and further discussed by Guetterman (2015), participant selection emphasized the need for pragmatic techniques to decide sample sizes guaranteeing thorough qualitative research, proposal development, and resource planning.

Participants were selected depending on their direct caregiving duties and their readiness to share their experiences via interviews and conversations. The study was also greatly influenced by the physical, cultural, and social setting of Banaybanay, as it formed the meaning and lived experiences of the participating parents. Purposive sampling in qualitative and mixed-methods research, as Robinson (2024) pointed out, is a reflective and iterative process whereby informants are chosen depending on their particular expertise or experience pertinent to the topic. Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024) backed this by claiming that to guarantee high-quality, impartial participant selection, purposive sampling is extensively utilized across research paradigms, hence improving the dependability and credibility of the results. Participants in this study had to be the primary carer or share major caregiving duties for children aged 5 to 22 with a disability and under caregiving stress. The pupils had to be registered in either non-graded special education programs or the regular educational system. Only those who agreed to share their experiences via interviews or group discussions were included. The study excluded parents who elected not to participate or who were not directly involved in caring for their children.

Interview Guide Questions

A semi-structured interview guide question was used in my study. The main questions and their probing questions covered the struggles and challenges that parents faced when having children with disability. Also, it uncovered the management strategies that he or she had used in facing those difficulties. The questions were asked through the perspectives of parents related to the student. Since it was a semi-structured interview guide, questions were predetermined and set during the actual interview, which were relevant and important in gathering substantial data. Once the interview guide and probing questions were crafted, they were submitted for validation by two experts in Special Needs Education and one expert in English Language. These validators were asked to provide comments and recommendations, which have been essential in ensuring that the questions are valid in the context of the situation being studied. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to apply all the suggestions given by the validators.

Data Gathering Technique

I have used certain procedures to gather the necessary data for my qualitative research, particularly phenomenological studies, where I have the data through in-depth interviews in a focus group discussion. However, before doing the said interviews, ethical clearance was first sought from the Research Ethics Committee of Holy Cross of Davao College. Permission was asked from the authorities, which included the Dean of the Graduate School and the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Davao Oriental.

After the ethical approval and permission, Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the public schools' district supervisor and the school heads of the respective schools where I conducted my focus group discussion. I have given the informed consent forms to the parents and begun the in-depth interview. Guided interview questions were validated and reviewed for content, alignment, appropriateness and accuracy. The interviews used primarily verbal communication through FGD, gathering information about the experiences of parents having children with disability. Furthermore, qualitative interviews were discussed as being exploratory and allowed for the collection of rich data on participants' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. Nathan, S., Newman, C., & Lancaster, K. (2019) the technique Qualitative interviewing, a foundational and widely used method in health research and the social sciences, employs verbal communication primarily through face-to-face semi-structured or unstructured interviews to affordably and effectively gather data on participants' socially situated attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. This was in addition to the in-depth interviews with parents having children with disability.

Data Analysis

The most popular technique used by researchers in analyzing qualitative data was thematic analysis. For this particular study, I have adopted the steps proposed by Naeem, M. et al. (2023) presents a systematic six-step thematic analysis process for developing a conceptual model from qualitative research findings, addressing common challenges related to the presentation of results and clarifying the distinctions between inductive and deductive coding approaches. It demonstrates the adaptability and value of this method across various research methodologies including constructivist, positivist, grounded theory, interpretive phenomenology, ethnographic, and narrative approaches thereby enhancing the rigor, replicability, and theoretical depth of qualitative research.

Trustworthiness

In the conducted qualitative study, it was my priority as the primary data gatherer to lessen potential harm that the human participants had encountered. The ethical issues of volunteerism, privacy, confidentiality, and risks, benefits and safety have all been addressed prior, during and after the conduct of the research study I have made sure that the participants agreed participated voluntarily in the study and have secured the informed consent form and assent form. Moreover, I have assured the participants that all information regarding identity, records, and the study has been treated with utmost privacy and confidentiality. All of the data were used for academic purposes, and no information has been divulged to the public for any other reason. Further, the study required the sharing of personal experiences. I have seen that the participants felt safe emotionally and psychologically as they were exposed to details about their experiences and personal insights into their situations. Thus, due to the participants' uneasiness and discomfort, I have prioritized their welfare as participants. However, before this might happen, I have assured them and provided all the support needed, such as debriefing sessions or counseling services, and ensured that the emotional aspects of the study were properly addressed. Furthermore, I have covered all monetary expenses for the study so as not to burden the participants. All of these processes have been laid down, and I have especially secured the ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Holy Cross of Davao College, Inc. I have made it a point that all ethical considerations have been practiced throughout the conducted study, which established ethical standards of research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The emerging themes in Adversities in the process of difficulties are the Daily Care and Behavioral Challenges, Health and Medical Concerns, Social and Educational Challenges, and Financial and Resource Struggles. The emerging themes in Adaptation are Patience and Emotional Regulation, External Support and Collaboration, Keeping the Faith and Spirituality, and Emotional and Social Support. The emerging themes in Development are Emotional and Personal Growth, Strengthened Family and Community Connections, and Enhanced Caregiving and Coping Strategies.

Emerging Themes and Sub-themes

The Adversities Experienced by Parents

The sub-theme is **"Daily Care and Behavioral Challenges."** Parents face continuous struggles in managing daily caregiving tasks like feeding and medication and dealing with emotional and behavioral outbursts such as tantrums and meltdowns. These challenges demand constant vigilance, emotional regulation, and physical endurance. A parent shared their early challenges with administering medicine to their child, highlighting how persistence and routine eventually led to mutual adaptation and ease.

"Kanang sa una, maglisod mi pagpainom sa tambal kung magpainom sa iyaba ky tingalon gyud siya. Hangtod kadugayan, naanad nami, naanad napod siya." Matod pa ky Lilibeth. (Participant 1, page 1.)

"Before, we struggled to give him his medicine because he would resist taking it. But over time, we got used to it, and he did too." Lilibeth said. (Participant 1, page 1.)

Listening to Lilibeth share their experience at home of struggling to give medicine to their child touched me deeply. It made me realize how even the simplest acts, like taking medication, require a slow dance of patience, trust, and adaptation. Their perseverance taught me that love is not loud, it is consistent and tender.

Another parent recounted the daily struggles of preparing their child for school, emphasizing the need for immense patience when faced with the child's strong-willed behavior and resistance.

"Maglisod ko mag alam-alam inig ting eskwela. Ky og dili niya gusto, dili patoo. Makaabsent gyud mi ky magtuman man gyud siya sa iyang gusto Ginataasan nalang nko akong pasensya." Participant 2, page 1.

"I struggle every time we prepare for school because if she doesn't want to go, she won't listen. Sometimes, we end up being absent because she insists on doing what she wants. I just extend my patience." Participant 2, page 1.

Divine's stories about the difficulties during school days moved me to understand the unseen battles families face every morning. The way she spoke of lengthening their patience, despite the daily disruptions, reveals a silent heroism that society often overlooks. Their strength lies not just in enduring, but in loving without conditions.

Joann described how they manage their child's tantrums by seeking support from their spouse and using strategies like eye contact to help regain the child's focus amid distress.

"Inig tantrums ma'am. Naay siya buhaton nga gidistorbo siya. Ihatag nko siya sa iyang daddy. Gina-eye to eye contact nako ky lisod siya ipafocus." Participant 3, page 1

"During tantrums, when something disturbs him, I hand him over to his daddy. I try to make eye-to-eye contact with him because it's difficult to make him focus." Participant 3, page 1.

When Joann described handling tantrums by involving both parents and creating moments of eye-to-eye connection, I felt the quiet but fierce determination they carry. It reminded me that sometimes, battles are not fought with force, but with calm presence and unwavering belief in one's child. Jenefer shared the difficulties of teaching their child reading and letter recognition, noting the importance of patience and sensitivity to avoid triggering the child's frustration and aggressive responses.

"Dili dayon siya kasabot especially sa reading. Letter recognition. Dili pwede sungugon. Alam alaman nko, ky mangumot siya or mangigil." Participant 4, page 1

"She doesn't understand things right away, especially when it comes to reading and letter recognition. She shouldn't be teased because if he gets frustrated, he tends to pinch or clench his fists in anger." Participant 4, page 1.

Hearing about Jenefer's difficulties in reading and letter recognition made me reflect on the deep patience needed to nurture learning. I saw how the emotional regulation of both parent and child is pivotal. Jenefer's story is a gentle reminder that laughter must never turn into ridicule, and learning must be wrapped in kindness.

The sub-theme **Health and Medical Concerns**. Families confront serious health issues like kidney failure and low sodium levels, heightening their psychological burden with persistent stress and anxiety about their child's condition and future. The ongoing medical concerns often lead to emotional exhaustion and fear of the unknown.

Abing discussed the ongoing challenge of managing their child's kidney failure, emphasizing the importance of consistently administering sodium to regulate salt levels and the emotional difficulty of convincing the child to visit the doctor despite their fear of injections.

"Iyang kidney failure. Mubaba ang asin level sa iyang lawas. Maminaw siya pag muingon nako nga muadtog doctor kung di xa mukaon, mahadlok man siya nga maiinjectionan. Dapat dili gyud ko makalimot sa pagpainom sa iyabang sodium ky mao man na ang makapanormal sa iyang asin sa lawas." Participant 5, page 1.

His kidney failure was a big challenge. His body's salt level dropped. I had to tell him that we needed to see the doctor if he did not eat, and he would get scared of injections. I must never forget to give him his sodium because that helps regulate the salt in his body." Participant 5, page 1.

The story of managing a child's kidney condition humbled me. Abing's unwavering vigilance and fear of missing a dose show a parent's burden that is carried with invisible strength. It is a stark reminder that behind every medical compliance lies a silent prayer for survival. Lynel reflected on the stress they experienced during pregnancy due to family problems, but shared how the support of their parents and husband eased the challenges they faced.

"Katong nagbuntis ko sa iyaba sa una, stress kaayo ko ky aduna mi family problem ato. Gisuportahan ko sa akong ginikanan og sa akong bana mao nga wala ko naglisod sa akong sitwasyon." Participant 9, page 1.

"When I was pregnant with him, I was very stressed because we had family problems at that time. But my parents and husband supported me, so I didn't struggle as much with my situation." Participant 9, page 1.

Lyne's reflection on facing stress during pregnancy, and the support from family, revealed to me the crucial role of a strong support system. I realized that sometimes survival is not a solo act but a symphony of silent hands lifting you when you are too tired to stand. Alona shared the traumatic experience of their child suffering second-degree burns during the pandemic after playing with a gel-filled spray bottle near a fire, highlighting the immense strength they needed to maintain in the face of the crisis for their child's well-being.

"Kadtong pandemic time pa ma'am, naay gel nga naa sa spray bottle gisugnod sugnod niya sa gihaling, nagcreate man og spark. Nakapanimabo ko og naay nasunog so ni dali2 ko sulod sa balay, pagsulod nko maam iyang nawong ang nasunog og iyang bubok. Pag adto namo sa hospital 2nd degree burns ang giingon sa doctor mao nga gibutangan bondage iyang tibuok nawong, gitatagan gyud nako akong kaugalingon ato nga panabon ky kung mawad-am ko paglaom, mag-unsang nalng siya?" Participant 10, page 1.

"During the pandemic, he played with a spray bottle that had gel inside and placed it near a fire, which caused it to spark. I smelled something burning and quickly ran inside the house. When I got in, I saw that his face and hair were burned. When we brought him to the hospital, the doctor said it was a second-degree burn, so his entire face had to be bandaged. At that moment, I had to stay strong because if I lost hope, what would happen to him?" Participant 10, page 1.

Hearing about Alona's horrifying experience during the pandemic, when their child was burned, tore at my heart. Yet, their decision to "give themselves" fully to hope rather than despair encapsulated the very soul of parental resilience. It is the hardest kind of love that persists through fear, grief, and unimaginable pain.

The sub-theme **Social and Educational Challenges**. Parents must navigate societal stigma, bullying, and judgment while simultaneously managing their children's struggles with school attendance, academic performance, and learning needs. These combined pressures amplify feelings of isolation and helplessness. Christy discussed the challenges of teaching their child to read and write while also comforting him during his fear of rain, thunder, and lightning, offering constant reassurance and support.

"Sulat og basa ang struggle namo sa iyaba, talawan sa ulan, dalogdog og kilat. Ginagakos nako siya og ginasultihan nga naa rako sa iyabang tapad permi." Participant 6, page 1.

"Reading and writing have been a struggle for us, and he's also terrified of the rain, thunder, and lightning. I always hug him and reassure him that I'm always beside him." Participant 6, page 1.

Christy's sharing about the child's fear of thunder and lightning and academic struggles showed me that comfort is an act of daily devotion. Their act of hugging their child through the storms, both literal and emotional, reflects how physical presence can be a lifeline for a vulnerable heart. A parent (Cherry) recalled the pain of hearing others mock their child as "abnormal," but chose to respond with restraint and used the moment to teach their child the importance of kindness and not bullying others.

"Sa una nakasinati jud ko nga nakadungog nga gitamay ang akong anak. Muingon nga abnormal siya pero gipasagdan lang nko. Wala ko nangaway nila og akoo gisultihan ang bata nga dili nato nila usabon ang pagbully sa akong anak." Participant 8, page 1.

"There was a time when I heard people making fun of my child, calling him 'abnormal.' But I just ignored it. I didn't fight back; instead, I told my child that we should never bully others the way he was bullied." Participant 8, page 1.

When Cherry recounted the experience of hearing people call their child "abnormal," yet choosing not to retaliate, I saw a level of grace that goes beyond instinct. Instead of anger, they chose to teach resilience and dignity, a powerful, quiet revolution against stigma.

A parent reflected on their initial use of punishment to gain their child's attention before his diagnosis, and how, after assessment and medical intervention, they shifted to more compassionate and informed approaches to support his needs.

“At first ma’am, katong wala pa siya naassess, mabunalan namo kay abi namo mao to best nga way para makuba namo iyang attention then after sa assessment, naluoy mi sa among anak og through intervention given sa doktor.” Participant 3, page 2.

“At first, ma’am, before he was assessed, we would sometimes spank him because we thought that was the best way to get his attention. But after the assessment, we felt sorry for our child, and through the intervention given by the doctor, we learned better ways to help him.” Participant 3, page 2.

Hearing Joann's story stirred something profound within me not just as a researcher, but as a mother of a child with disability. In their words, I felt both the weight of unawareness and the warmth of a heart that learned and changed. When the parent said, "mabunalan namo kay abi namo mao to best nga way," I recognized a painful truth: many parents, out of desperation and lack of knowledge, resort to actions they later regret not because they do not love their child, but because they do not yet understand what their child truly needs. A parent expressed moments of emotional vulnerability due to societal judgment but emphasized their determination to stay resilient and not be swayed by others' opinions.

“Usabay bation ko og kaluya ky tao raman ta. Ang judgement pod sa uban pero ginapush nko akong kaugalingon nga dili magpaapekto sa opinion sa uban.” Participant 6, page 2.

“Sometimes, I feel weak because, after all, I am only human. The judgment from others also affects me, but I keep pushing myself not to let their opinions get to me.” Participant 6, page 2.

Christy's words echo the quiet battles many caregivers fight where exhaustion meets the sting of judgment, yet they choose to rise above it with courage. Their strength lies not in the absence of pain, but in the choice to keep going despite it, pushing forward with love that defies others' opinions.

The sub-theme **Financial and Resource Struggles**. Financial hardships from the high costs of treatment and caregiving are compounded by difficulties in accessing government support and community resources. This dual burden intensifies the stress parents experience in ensuring their child's needs are met. A parent recounted a moment of deep despair, questioning God and expressing a willingness to accept their child despite poverty—while also pleading that their child be spared from prolonged suffering.

“Nakapangutana gyud ko sa Ginoo ngano sa amoa siya gihatag ginaampo nko nga lord wala mi kwarta og ihatag nimo siya sa amoa og dawaton namo perp kung mag antos siya, kuhaa nalang.” Participant 5, page 2.

“I asked God why He gave him to us. I prayed, “Lord, we don’t have money, but if You have given him to us, we will accept him. But if he has to suffer, please take him instead.” Participant 5, page 2.

Christy's plea is a raw, sacred expression of love, a prayer shaped by pain, poverty, and the unbearable weight of watching their child suffer. In this vulnerability, I witness a depth of faith and selflessness that words can barely hold, revealing a love willing to surrender everything for their child's peace. A parent shared the need to persevere in giving their child medicine despite difficulties, driven by the fear of hospitalization and the financial strain it would cause their family.

“Antosan gyud ky kung dili namo painomon tambal, magpadayon raman pod iyang kalintura unya og dili ko maningkamot makapainom sa iyaba basin mahospital problema na hinnon kayo ky wala mi kwarta ikagasto.” Participant 1, pages 2 and 3.

“I have to endure it because if we don’t give him medicine, his fever will continue. If I don’t try to give it to him, he might end up in the hospital, which would be a big problem since we don’t have money for expenses.” Participant 1, pages 2 and 3.

Lilibeth's words reflect the quiet heroism found in everyday acts of care, fighting exhaustion and fear to ensure a child takes their medicine. Beneath the struggle is a fierce, unwavering love, burdened by financial hardship, yet fueled by the desperate hope to protect their child from greater pain. Cherry expressed a proactive mindset by seeking strategies and interventions to support their child, choosing action and learning over self-pity despite moments of emotional struggle.

"Nagasearch ko ma'am kung unsa pa nga mga strategies og other interventions nga makahatag tabang para sa iyaba po instead nga magfeel sorry ko." Participant 3, pages 2 and 3.

"Sometimes, I feel weak because, after all, I am only human. The judgment from others also affects me, but I keep pushing myself not to let their opinions get to me I search for different strategies and other interventions that could help him instead of just feeling sorry for him." Participant 3, pages 2 and 3.

Cherry's response reveals a decisive shift from helplessness to hope and a decision to seek knowledge rather than be consumed by sorrow. It is a quiet act of resilience, showing that love is not only in comforting but in the determined pursuit of what might make their child's life better.

The Adaptation Mechanisms Undertaken by The Parents

The sub-theme **Patience and Emotional Regulation**. Parents develop deeper patience and more refined emotional control as they learn to manage their stress, reflect on their reactions, and regulate emotions amidst daily challenges. This emotional resilience becomes crucial to sustaining their caregiving roles. A parent admitted reaching a breaking point that led to yelling and physical discipline, but later reflected with remorse, recognizing their actions as wrong and part of a learning process.

"Niabot sa ponto nga mutaas ang akong tingog, mamunal nko, pero mahimasmagan ko, makareflect ko nga sayop diay to akong gibubai." Participant 1.

"There were times when I would raise my voice and even resort to spanking, but then I would realize and reflect that what I did was wrong." Participant 1.

As I listened to Lilibeth's confession, I felt the weight of their regret—raw, honest, and painfully human. In their reflection, I saw not failure but the deep love of a parent willing to confront their own mistakes, grow from them, and choose a gentler path for the sake of their child.

A parent shared how encouragement from others motivates them to keep going, inspiring them to further strengthen their patience in facing daily challenges.

"Ginaingnan ko nila nga padayon lng. Taasan pa nako akong pasensya." Participant 2.

"They always tell me to keep going and extend my patience even more." Participant 2.

These simple words "*padayon lang*" and "*taasan pa nako akong pasensya*" carry the quiet strength of Divine's choosing to love every single day, even when it's hard. I see a kind of everyday heroism that humbles me as a researcher and reminds me why their voices matter so deeply.

A parent expressed that their child serves as a source of strength and motivation, inspiring them to continue striving despite life's challenges.

"Gahatag og kadasig sa akoo nga magpadayon gihapon sa pagpaningkamot." Participant 1

"It gives me motivation to keep striving." Participant 1.

Hearing these words from Lilibeth reminded me that even in the midst of hardship, hope finds a way to shine through. Lilibeth's quiet determination to keep striving stirred something in me a deep respect for the strength it takes to keep going when life gives every reason to stop. A parent shared how words of encouragement from others remind them to persevere and continually strengthen their patience in caring for their child.

"Ginaingnan ko nila nga padayon lng. Taasan pa nako akong pasensya." Participant 9, page 5.

"They always tell me to keep going and extend my patience even more." Participant 9, page 5.

Lynel's words stayed with me, a gentle reminder that resilience is often nurtured in community, in the quiet encouragement of others. Their choice to keep going and stretch their patience even further reflects a kind of love that endures not just for a moment, but day after day, even in silence.

The sub-theme is **External Support and Collaboration**. Seeking help from family, teachers, and support groups while fostering collaboration with spouses and relatives becomes a vital strategy for parents. These external connections ease the burden and create a network of shared responsibility.

A parent shared how their siblings provide vital support, offering financial assistance, clothes, and even work opportunities for their husband, ensuring they are never left to struggle alone.

"Igsoon nko mutabang, musupport cla sa akoo, dili ko nila gipasagdahan. Ginahatagan mi nila og konsumo, usabay sinina para key tresha ma'am, ginakuha pod nila akong bana og naay trabahoon sa ilaha key kabalo man pod to mamanday," Participant 2, page 4 and 5.

"My siblings help and support me. They never abandoned me. They provide us with necessities, sometimes even clothes for Tresha, ma'am. They also call my husband whenever they need help with labor work because he knows how to do carpentry." Participant 2, pages 4 and 5.

Divine's words touched me deeply, revealing the quiet power of family and how support can come in the humblest yet profound ways even in moments of struggle. The generosity of their relatives, whether through providing food, clothes, or work for her husband, speaks to a network of love and care that surrounds them, offering hope and strength in the hardest times. A parent shared how both families provide ongoing moral and financial support, including sending vitamins recommended by the pediatrician for their child and regularly checking in to help.

"Both families, side nko og side sa akong husband financial help. Usabay tambal, padalhan ko nila vitamins for Dylan nga recommender daw from pedia. Moral and financial help. Ginakumusta mi nila always from time to time, manawag sa phone og financial help po." Participant 3, pages 4 and 5.

Both sides of the family, mine and my husband's, provide financial assistance. Sometimes they send medicine and vitamins for Dylan, which they say were recommended by the pediatrician. They also provide moral and financial support. They constantly check on us from time to time, call us on the phone, and provide financial help." Participant 3, pages 4 and 5.

Listening to Joann's words, I was deeply moved by the unwavering support their family offers, both in financial help and in small yet meaningful gestures like sending vitamins for their child. It's a reminder that love isn't always loud or grand; sometimes, it's the quiet, consistent care from loved ones that makes the toughest journeys bearable. A parent expressed how their father and siblings came together to support them financially for their child's medical assessments, pooling resources to ensure they could meet the costs.

"Akong papa og igsoon tabangan ko nila, sa assessment gitabangan ko nila. Niapil sila paghatag kwarta para sa assessment niya sa doctor. Katong ang akong mga igsoon nag- amot amot sa kwarta para makabatag mi sa among counterpart sa assessment." Participant 4, pages 4 and 5.

"My father and siblings help me. They assisted me during the assessment, even contributing money for the doctor's assessment. There was a time when my siblings pooled their money together so we could contribute our counterpart for the assessment." Participant 4, pages 4 and 5.

Jenefer's story moved me, as it beautifully highlights the strength of family working together in times of need, each person doing their part to lighten the burden. It is a reminder that when one faces challenges, the support of loved ones, whether through financial help or simply being there, can transform a harrowing journey into one of shared hope and resilience. A parent shared how, during times of financial strain and limited child support,

their family's parents and siblings came together to offer consistent assistance, including school transport and immediate help when the children fell ill.

"Katong times nga wala pako trabaho og limited rapod ang ginabatag nga child support sa ilang papa. Naa sila mama, papa og akong mga igsoon nga musuporta. Tinabangay lang mi tanan. During school day ginabatod ni papa ang mga bata inig muesknwela. Pagmasakit ang mga bata irescue gyud ko nila bisan pa dili nako muingon nga need nako og help, naa dayon sila ready." Participant 7, pages 4 and 5.

"Sometimes, I feel weak because, after all, I am only human. The judgment from others also affects me, but I keep pushing myself not to let their opinions get to me. I search for different strategies and other interventions that could help him instead of just feeling sorry for him." Participant 3, pages 2 and 3.

Archie's words deeply resonated with me. They speak to the quiet strength of family and how support doesn't always need to be asked for but is given instinctively when needed most. Their family's selfless care and commitment, from taking the children to school to stepping in during times of illness, remind me that love is often most powerful when it is simply there, unspoken but ever-present.

The sub-theme **Keeping Faith and Spirituality**. Prayer, trust in God, and a reliance on spiritual beliefs provide parents with a steady source of hope, strength, and endurance through their caregiving journey. Spirituality often becomes a lifeline during moments of despair. A parent expressed how their faith has deepened, attributing their strength and gratitude to God's provision and guidance in their journey.

"Nisamot akong pagkamaampon maam, Ginoo gyud ang naghatag sa tanan." Participant 2.

"I have become even more prayerful, ma'am. God is the one who provides everything." Participant 2.

Divine's words touched me deeply, as they express a profound faith that has grown stronger through their struggles. It's a reminder that even in the most challenging moments, many find strength and gratitude in their spiritual beliefs, seeing every blessing as a gift from something greater than themselves.

A parent shared that with the support of their family and the strength of prayers, they feel confident that they can overcome any challenges they face.

Tungod sa ilang suporta, kauban sa prayers, kabalo ko nga Makaya namo." Participant 4, page 6.

"Because of their support, along with prayers, I know that we can overcome this." Participant 4, page 6.

Jenefer's words are a powerful reminder of the strength found in both the support of others and in faith. Knowing that with their loved ones' prayers and unwavering support, they believe they can overcome anything, deeply humbles me and reaffirms the incredible power of community and belief in the face of adversity. A parent shared that they entrust everything to God through prayer, believing firmly that He will never abandon them.

"Pag-ampo. Gisalig nako ang tanan sa Ginoo. Kabalo ko nga dili mi niya pasagdan." Participant 8, page 1.

"Prayer. I entrust everything to God. I know He will never abandon us." Participant 8, page 1.

Cherry's words stirred something tender in me, a quiet, steadfast faith that holds a parent together when everything else feels uncertain. Trusting fully in God's presence, even in the most challenging moments, reveals a kind of inner strength that no hardship can take away.

The sub-theme **Emotional and Social Support**. Emotional encouragement from family members, siblings, and friends plays a crucial role in helping parents cope, heal, and persevere. The sense of belonging and being understood fortifies their emotional well-being. A parent shared that the encouragement and support from their siblings and parents motivate them to stay strong and persevere, reinforcing their commitment not to give in to discouragement.

"Ang akong mga igsoon og akong ginikanan, ginadasig ko nila, mao nga manigkamot pod ko nga dili ko dapat maluya." Participant 1, page 5.

"My siblings and parents encourage me, which is why I strive not to feel weak and discouraged." Participant 1, page 5.

Lilibeth reminded me of how powerful encouragement can be, especially when it comes from those closest to us. Their strength to keep going, drawn from the love and motivation of family, is a quiet but profound testament to how support can become a lifeline in times of weariness. A parent shared that their relatives actively assist them, particularly in providing medications, highlighting the crucial role of extended family in ensuring their child's health needs are met.

"Relatives nga muagak sa amoa labi na sa tambal." Participant 2, page 5.

"Relatives support us, especially when it comes to medicine." Participant 2, page 5.

Divine's statement reminded me that even small acts, like helping with medicine, can mean the world to a struggling family. It speaks to a kind of love that shows up not just in words, but in tangible, healing ways when it's needed most. A parent expressed that their family serves as a vital source of strength, providing the encouragement needed to persevere through challenges.

"Ang akong pamilya ang nabatag sa akoo og dugang kusog." Participant 9, page 6.

"My family gives me additional strength." Participant 9, page 6.

Lynel's words resonated deeply with me. They revealed how the presence of family can become a source of quiet strength in the face of life's hardest moments. Their love doesn't just offer support; it becomes the very reason to keep going.

The Development Outcomes of the Parents

The sub-theme **Personal Growth**. Parents experience significant emotional maturity, growing in patience, empathy, and resilience, while building self-confidence through overcoming ongoing adversities. Their struggles become catalysts for personal transformation. A parent expressed that their family serves as a vital source of strength, providing the encouragement needed to persevere through challenges.

"Malipayon ko nga naexplain sa akoo kung unsa ang disability sa akong anak, Nawala ang akong kabalaka." Participant 4, page 8.

"I am happy that my child's disability was explained to me. My worries have eased." Participant 4, page 8.

Hearing Jenefer's relief brought a lump to my throat; it's a powerful reminder of how knowledge can replace fear with peace. Understanding their child's condition not only lifted their worries but gave them the clarity and courage to embrace the journey ahead with hope. A parent shared that gaining a clear understanding of their child's disability has increased their confidence in managing daily life and made them more open to discussing their child's condition.

"Mas confident ko nga kayabon among inadlaw nga sitwasyon og mas open ko na maghisgot about sa disability sa akong anak." Participant 7, page 8.

"I feel more confident in facing our daily situation, and I am more open to talking about my child's disability." Participant 7, page 8.

Archie's words moved me deeply. They reflect a quiet but powerful transformation from fear and silence to confidence and openness. They remind me that true strength often comes not from having all the answers but from learning to face each day with honesty, love, and a heart willing to grow. A parent shared that they no longer

feel the need to hide their child from the public or relatives, expressing happiness in embracing their child's presence openly.

"Malipay ko nga dili nako kailangan itago akong anak sa public og sa akong relatives." Participant 9, page 8.

"I am happy that I no longer have to hide my child from the public and my relatives." Participant 9, page 8.

Lynel's words touched me profoundly. They speak to the deep freedom that comes with acceptance, both from others and within oneself. The courage to no longer hide their child reflects a beautiful shift from shame to pride, from isolation to embracing the love and support of family and community. A parent shared that following their child's assessment, improved communication with their spouse has enhanced their collaboration in providing interventions for their child.

"After sa assessment, mas open ang communication namo mag-asawa key tandem nami sa paghatag og intervention for dylan." Participant 3, page 8.

"After the assessment, communication between my spouse and me has become more open because we now work together in providing interventions for Dylan." Participant 3, page 8.

Joann's words filled me with warmth. They beautifully highlight how understanding their child's needs has strengthened their partnership. It reminds me that true teamwork in parenting, especially in moments of challenge, can not only enhance the child's care but also deepen the connection and collaboration between partners. A parent shared that after the assessment, they gained a clearer understanding of their child's learning challenges and the Special Education (SPED) approach, leading to improved support for their child's education.

"Mas nakasabot ko ngano nagalisod akong anak sa iyang pagtuon og klaro na sa akua ang pamaagi sa SPED." Participant 6, page 8.

"I now understand why my child struggles with learning, and the SPED approach is now clearer to me." Participant 6, page 8.

Christy's words struck a deep chord with me, as they reflect the transformative power of understanding. To see the struggle through the lens of clarity and to have the SPED approach become a tool of hope is a profound shift, one that not only changes the child's learning journey but also empowers the parent to be a more informed, compassionate guide.

The sub-theme **Strengthened Family and Community Connections**. Caring for a child with difficulties strengthens family bonds and encourages active participation in community networks, programs, and support groups. These connections create a broader safety net and foster shared advocacy. A parent expressed gratitude for the support received from the Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) and the school's feeding program, highlighting how these initiatives have significantly benefited their child.

"Sa inyong suporta maam, sa PDAO nga maapil mi sa ayuda sa PWD, sa feeding sa eskwelahan, makatabang siya sa akong anak." Participant 1, page 6.

"Your support, ma'am, and the PDAO's inclusion of us in PWD assistance programs and the school feeding program help my child a lot." Participant 1, page 6.

Lilibeth's gratitude deeply moved me, as it shows the profound impact that community support can have on a family's well-being. The recognition of how small acts like assistance programs and school feeding can help lighten their burden reminds me of the importance of extending kindness and support to families who need it most. Participant 3 shared that the FGD in the Philippine ADHD Group on Facebook provided significant emotional support, helping her and her husband feel less helpless in their parenting journey.

"Dako og tabang ang FGD sa Philippine ADHD Group sa facebook, mafeel nko nga dili mi helpless sa akong husband." Participant 3, page 6.

"The FGD (Focus Group Discussion) in the Philippine ADHD Group on Facebook has been a big help. It makes my husband and me feel that we are not helpless." Participant 3, page 6.

Joann reminded me of how powerful a connection can be even through a screen. Knowing that they and their husband no longer feel helpless because of the shared stories and support from others in the Philippine ADHD Group speaks to the healing strength of community, empathy, and simply being understood. Participant 8 recounted that confiding in her neighbor about hurtful remarks toward her child led to comforting advice to ignore the negativity and not let it affect her.

"Sa akong Silingan ko nagashare sa akong problema kabahin sa akong anak nga gisultihan lage siya og abnormal. Ang iyang gitambag sa akoo nga dili lang nko pansinon ag pasagdan nalang nako kung unsa akong madungog." Participant 8, page 6.

"I share my struggles with my neighbor regarding my child, especially when people call my child 'abnormal.' My neighbor advised me not to pay attention to those comments and just." Participant 8, page 6.

Cherry's story quietly broke and uplifted my heart at the same time because behind the pain of cruel labels is a parent seeking comfort and finding it in the kind words of a neighbor. It reminded me that sometimes, healing begins with one gentle voice reminding us that others' ignorance does not define our worth or our children.

The sub-theme **Enhanced Caregiving and Coping Strategies**. Parents refine their caregiving skills and adopt positive coping mechanisms, relying on a combination of faith, continuous learning, and external support systems. These enhanced strategies lead to more effective caregiving and improved family well-being. Participant 5 expressed that the seminar conducted by the teacher was highly informative, providing them with practical strategies they could apply at home to support their child.

"Katong seminar nga giconduct nimo teacher, katong giinvite mi nimo, daghan mig nahibaloan nga pamaagi nga maapply namo sa balay para among anak." Participant 5, page 6.

"The seminar you conducted, teacher, where you invited us, was very informative. We learned many strategies that we can apply at home for our child." Participant 5, page 6.

Abing's words humbled me deeply, reminding me that even the simplest efforts to share knowledge can plant seeds of hope in families' lives. Knowing that what we offered in that seminar is now being used with love and purpose at home is a quiet but powerful affirmation of why this work matters. Participant 6 noted that the training workshop held at the school helped them improve their parenting skills at home.

"Training workshop diri sa school po nga nakatabang sa amoang paghandle sa among anak sa balay." Participant 6, page 7.

"The training workshop at the school helped us manage our child at home." Participant 6, page 7.

Christy warmed my heart, as it shows how meaningful it is when schools extend support beyond the classroom. Knowing that a workshop empowered them to better care for their child at home reminds me that when we equip families, we do not just teach, we transform lives. Participant 9 shared that watching vloggers who are in similar situations has helped them cope with their own parenting challenges.

"Nakatabang ang pagtan-aw nko sa mga vlogger nga pareho namo og situasyon." Participant 9, page 8.

"Watching vloggers who are in the same situation as us has also helped me." Participant 9, page 8.

Lynel's words reminded me of how powerful it is to feel seen and witness others navigating the same challenges and finding ways forward. In the stories of vloggers with shared experiences, they find not just guidance, but a quiet reassurance that they are not alone in this journey. Participant 10 mentioned that the SPED class at school has contributed to significant progress in Robert, and they also receive valuable support from their church.

"Sa school po sa sped class, mas Nakita nako ang dako nga progress ky Robert og suporta sa among church." Participant 10, page 8.

"At the SPED class in school, I have seen significant progress in Robert, and we also receive support." Participant 10, page 8.

Alona's words deeply resonated with me, as they reflect the powerful combination of education and community support in fostering growth and progress. It's inspiring to see how Robert's journey is being shaped not only by the SPED class but also by the unwavering encouragement of their church, reinforcing the importance of both learning and belonging.

Viewpoints and Standpoints

Conducting my qualitative phenomenological study, "What Keeps Me Going? Lived Experiences of Parents Having Children with Disability," was a deeply impactful and enlightening experience. As a researcher, I took on the role of an active listener, interpreter, and advocate, exploring the emotions, challenges, and resilience of parents as they navigate the complexities of raising a child with disabilities. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, I served as a voice for those often unheard, translating their lived experiences into valuable insights that highlight their resilience and coping strategies. One of my primary responsibilities was to foster a safe and open environment where participants felt at ease sharing their personal stories. I understood the sensitivity of the subject and approached each conversation with empathy and respect, ensuring that every parent felt acknowledged and understood. This involved not just documenting their words but also immersing myself in their experiences, feeling the weight of their emotions while maintaining the objectivity required for thorough qualitative research. A key part of my role was to analyze and interpret the data to identify recurring themes that illustrate the resilience of these parents. I discovered that patience and endurance were fundamental traits, as parents consistently adapted to their child's needs while managing their emotional responses. My research highlighted the crucial role of faith and social support systems. Parents often shared how they relied on spiritual strength and the importance of family, community, and institutional support to maintain their resilience. As I brought these findings together, I was struck by the relationship between internal strength and external support, underscoring the need for holistic interventions that take into account both personal and societal factors. In addition to analyzing the experiences of my participants, I also had to confront my own biases and assumptions. I was aware of the challenges faced by parents of children with disabilities, but engaging directly with their lived experiences gave me a deeper, more nuanced understanding. I learned to approach each story without preconceived notions, allowing the parents' voices to guide the conclusions rather than forcing their experiences into existing frameworks. Another important aspect of my role was to connect research with advocacy. The findings of the study highlighted not only the resilience of parents but also the shortcomings in governmental and institutional support. By documenting these challenges, I took on the responsibility of amplifying their voices and advocating for systemic changes, such as better financial aid, accessible training programs, and increased public awareness about the struggles faced by families raising children with disabilities.

Overall, my role as a researcher was multifaceted. My study has not only added to the academic conversation on parental resilience but has also profoundly influenced my understanding of human strength and perseverance. I feel honored to have contributed to bringing these stories to light, and I hope that the findings will inspire greater support, understanding, and policy improvements for families navigating this challenging yet deeply meaningful journey.

I discussed the study's results, citing relevant literature that can affirm or deny my study. The presentation is based on three parts, which include the elaboration of themes and sub-themes, the implications of this study for theory, and future practices and actions that may be undertaken based on the gathered results and discussions.

The Challenges Faced by Parents with Children with Disabilities

The difficulties experienced by parents of children with disabilities—from mental and physical weariness to the necessity for unrelenting vigilance—call for continuous control and fortitude. These results agree with research by Chen et al. (2024) and Yildiz and Duy (2024), which show that while social support and self-regulation greatly mitigate these adverse consequences, chronic stress and burnout are prevalent. Khaira and Sari (2022) found in the Indonesian setting that lower stresses, positive cognitive evaluations, and robust social support systems helped to build resilience, therefore benefiting parents as well as children.

Daily Behavioral and Care Challenges

Especially during early diagnostic periods, parents may find themselves with overwhelming caregiving responsibilities and behavioral control concerns. This corroborates Papadopoulos et al. (2023) results on how ASD severity, mother coping mechanisms, and sickness perceptions influence family quality of life within the first six months following diagnosis. Ulu and Karacasu (2022) also underlined the links between parental fatigue, anxiety, and coping attitudes among parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum condition.

Medical and Health Issues

This study revealed more stress and mental health issues among parents of children with impairments, supporting Lim et al. (2021), who found more anxiety and sadness among these parents. The mental health of parents looking after children with complicated medical illnesses, according to Bayer et al. (2021), has a major impact on more general family health results. These findings highlight how caregivers are formed by interconnected systems including healthcare, family, and community, hence reflecting Masten and Barnes's (2018) ecological approach to resilience.

Social and Educational Issues

The results show that many parents turn into de facto advocates, fighting for suitable services and accommodations for their children. This supports Rossetti et al. (2021), who discovered that parents frequently take on advocacy responsibilities inside educational institutions. Likewise, Mercado et al. (2021) found that those with neurodevelopmental disorders' carers are susceptible to anxiety and sadness, particularly under poor perceived social support. These results fit Masten's (2018) perspective of resilience as a relational concept formed by community and institutional ties.

Financial and Resource Challenges

Consistent with Masten's (2021) perspective of resilience as a dynamic interplay between human capacities and environmental supports, this study demonstrated that resilience is co-constructed by means of both internal strengths and access to external resources. Raising a kid with a handicap adds more financial strain, especially for low-income families, as Bondad et al. (2024) noted. These results support theoretical claims by Masten and Barnes (2015) and Ungar (2020), who underlined that resilience is the ability to use resources and change disadvantage by means of adaptive reactions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed several lived experiences of parents rearing children with impairments, therefore highlighting a path characterized by great difficulties as well as exceptional perseverance. Grounded in Masten's Resilience Theory (1994; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990), the results revealed that resilience is a transforming and continuous process firmly anchored in love, faith, and deliberate caring rather than just a response to hardship. Though they also create extensive adaption strategies marked by patience, emotional control, spiritual grounding, and support systems, parents experience great hardships ranging from daily care and behavioral concerns to social, medical, and financial ones. By means of these tools, they provide significant developmental results, including personal development, closer family connections, and improved ability for caring.

Given these results, a major suggestion is to carry out additional quantitative studies using mediation analysis. This method may scientifically investigate how adaption mechanisms mediate the link between adversity and favorable developmental outcomes, therefore offering a complex knowledge of resilience processes. Three fundamental variables—Adversities (e.g., career difficulties, health issues, financial strains), Adaptation Mechanisms (e.g., emotional regulation, spirituality, social support), and Development Outcomes (e.g., personal growth, family cohesion, coping strategies)—could be measured using a well-structured survey. These revelations

also need the creation of focused support initiatives acknowledging the emotional, social, and spiritual facets of caregiving. Stakeholders—including teachers, medical experts, and community leaders—should provide culturally sensitive interventions that include peer mentorship, counseling, and faith-based services as well as material support. Moreover, inclusive policies that comprehensively meet the needs of families with children with disabilities are urgently needed. Lived experiences should guide policies and seek to offer community-based resources, educational assistance, and easily available mental health care.

Acknowledgements

The author extended appreciation to the individuals who provided valuable guidance, effort, and assistance in helping the study achieve its objectives.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest in the preparation and publication of this research. No financial conflict of interest related to this research.

Funding

The author self-funded this research.

References

- Abrol, M. (2023). Role of teacher in promoting inclusive education. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, 5(2), 1–2.
- Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7–16.
- Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: The role of organisational cultures and leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(4), 401–416.
- Allagui, B. (2022). Facilitating creativity through multimodal writing: An examination of students' choices and perceptions. *Creativity. Theories – Research – Applications*, 9(1), 108–129.
- Arias, C. R., Calago, C. N. S., Calungsod, H. F. B., Delica, M. A., Fullo, M. E., & Cabanilla, A. J. B. (2023). Challenges and implementation of inclusive education in selected Asian countries: A meta-synthesis. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 9(2), 512–534. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.3089>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brown, C., & Lee, D. (2023). Inclusive teaching practices in engineering: A systematic review of articles from 2018 to 2023. *Journal of Engineering Education Research*, 15(1), 45–67.
- Brown, O. (2022). Integrating social emotional learning in educational practices. *Frontiers of Educational Review*, 4(1), 26.
- Burgstahler, S. (2008). *Universal design in higher education: From principles to practice*. Harvard Education Press.
- Cagas, E. G., Cagape, W. E., Duyan, M. J. P., & Logdonio, R. (2023). Inclusive education practices among SPED/Gen-Ed teachers in Davao City. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 139(1).
- Carillo, B. (2024). Student-centered classrooms: Public elementary school teachers' engagement strategies for learners in the 21st century. *Nexus International Journal of Science and Education*, 1(1).

- CAST. (2021). The science and research behind the UDL framework.
- CAST. (2024). The UDL guidelines.
- Catubig, M. B. (2023). Exploring student-centered approaches in mathematics education: A qualitative case study. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education*, 1(3), 48–62.
- Chu, S.-Y. (2021). Culturally responsive teaching efficacy in inclusive education at Taiwanese preschools. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 50(1), 97–114.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- de Bie, L., & Brown, K. (2023). *Forward with FLEXibility: A teaching and learning resource on accessibility and inclusion*. eCampusOntario.
- Doore, S. A., Dimmel, J., Kaplan, T. M., Guenther, B. A., & Giudice, N. A. (2023). Multimodality as universality: Designing inclusive accessibility to graphical information. *Frontiers in Education*, 8, Article 1071759.
- Doo, M. Y., Bonk, C. J., & Heo, H. (2023). The effects of using scaffolding in online learning: A meta-analysis. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 705.
- Forlin, C. (2021). *Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches*. Routledge.
- Gelir, I. (2023). Teacher's beliefs and flexible language strategies in a monolingual preschool classroom. *Education 3-13*, 51(8), 1256–1266.
- Gheysens, E., Griful-Freixenet, J., & Struyven, K. (2023). Differentiated instruction as an approach to establish effective teaching in inclusive classrooms. In R. Maulana et al. (Eds.), *Effective teaching around the world* (pp. 678–693). Springer.
- Gosavi, C. S., & Arora, S. (2022). Active learning strategies for engaging students in higher education. *Journal of Engineering Education Transformations*, 36(Special Issue 1), 1–7.
- Gulati, G., Kakkar, S., & Chauhan, R. (2024). A comprehensive review: Effectiveness of multi-sensory learning strategies for learning disability students. *International Journal of Education Sciences*.
- Jiang, L., Yu, S., & Zhao, Y. (2022). Incorporating digital multimodal composing through collaborative action research: Challenges and coping strategies. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 31(1), 45–61.
- Kohnke, L., Fount, D., & Chen, J. (2022). Using learner analytics to explore the potential contribution of multimodal formative assessment to academic success in higher education. *SAGE Open*, 12(2).
- Kuwari, K. (2024). Culturally responsive teaching: Strategies for promoting inclusivity and diversity in the classroom. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 28(S1), 1–3.
- Lawrence-Brown, D. (2020). Differentiated instruction and inclusive schooling. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*.

- Liu, H., Liu, Z., Wu, Z., & Tang, J. (2020). Personalized multimodal feedback generation in education. arXiv preprint
- Mandabon, J. (2023). Readiness and efficacy of teachers in handling learners with special educational needs. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*.
- Mariga, L., McConkey, R., & Myezwa, H. (2014). Inclusive education in low-income countries. Atlas Alliance and Disability Innovations Africa.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). Universal design for learning: Theory and practice. CAST Professional Publishing.
- Morton, B., & Pilgrim, J. (2023). Promoting inclusive education: Social and emotional learning through the lens of Universal Design for Learning. *Estonian Journal of Education*, 11(1), Article 02b.
- Muega, M. A. G. (2016). Inclusive education in the Philippines: Through the eyes of teachers, administrators, and parents of children with special needs. *Social Science Diliman*, 12(1), 5–28.
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2024). An update of PSA's most requested statistics.
- QDAcity. (2023). Thematic analysis.
- Ruiz-Pérez, S. (2023). Multimodal student voice representation through an online digital storytelling project. *CALICO Journal*, 40(1), 1–20.
- Scribbr. (2022). Triangulation in research | Guide, types, examples.
- Seo, J., & Dogucu, M. (2022). Teaching visual accessibility in introductory data science classes with multi-modal data representations.
- Singh, S. (2024). Inclusive education: Promoting equity and access for students with disabilities. *Global International Research Thoughts*, 12(1), 30–35.
- Slee, R. (2018). Inclusive education isn't dead; it just smells funny: The legacy of the Salamanca statement and the future of inclusive education in Australia. *Australian Journal of Education*, 62(2), 139–154.
- Togni, J. (2025). Development of an inclusive educational platform using open technologies and machine learning: A case study on accessibility enhancement. arXiv preprint arXiv:2503.15501.
- UNESCO. (2023). Global education monitoring (GEM) report.
- Varano, S., & Zanella, A. (2023). Design and evaluation of a multi-sensory representation of scientific data. arXiv preprint arXiv:2302.08226.
- Vasinda, S. (2023). Technology supports in the UDL framework: Removable scaffolds or permanent new literacies? *Reading Research Quarterly*.
- Yan, W., Wang, Y., & Zhang, J. (2024). Evidence-based multimodal learning analytics for feedback and reflection in collaborative learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55(2), 345–360.