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**TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOL: BASES FOR  
A SUSTAINABLE PLAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study determined the experiences of teachers and learners in the implementation of Solid Waste Management in St. Bertille Integrated School during the School Year 2025-2026. The study revealed that teachers experienced limited awareness and understanding, inadequate resources and facilities, and inconsistent implementation and practices in the implementation of Solid Waste Management. On the other hand, learners' experiences included developing awareness and understanding of waste management, ensuring active participation in school activities, and maintaining proper disposal of waste. Teachers highlighted several key challenges, including insufficient time in the school schedule, persistent lack of discipline, and inadequate supervision and monitoring. Learners' challenges were insufficient infrastructure and resources, inadequate knowledge and expertise, and persistent social and institutional barriers. To address challenges, teachers employed integrating waste management into classroom instruction, conducting practical demonstrations and hands-on activities and implementing a structured reward systems.

**Keywords:** *Teachers, Learners, Experiences, Implementation, Solid Waste Management, School, Sustainable Plan*

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## INTRODUCTION

Waste management in schools plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development and inculcating habits in society.

Solid waste management has become a critical environmental concern worldwide due to rapid population growth, increased consumption, and improper waste disposal practices. Schools, as focal point of learning and social development, create significant amounts of solid waste daily, such paper, plastic, food waste, and other non-biodegradable materials. Solid waste management becomes effective if the cleanliness is maintained in schools and also imparting environmental responsibility among learners (Haniva et al., 2024).

Solid waste management in schools is necessary due to the large volumes of waste generated daily, such as paper, plastics, food scraps, and other non-biodegradable materials, which if unmanaged can lead to environmental degradation and health hazards. Proper waste management helps maintain a clean and sanitary school environment by reducing litter, controlling pests, and preventing disease transmission. Moreover, integrating solid waste management into the school setting promotes environmental stewardship by teaching students about responsible consumption, waste segregation, recycling, composting, and sustainable practices. These experiences not only improve school sanitation but also shape learners' attitudes and behaviors toward environmental conservation and sustainability beyond the school grounds. Effective school waste management aligns with broader environmental protection goals and equips young people with the knowledge and habits needed for sustainable living (Mpuangnan et al., 2023).

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The effective execution of solid waste management protocols within educational institutions relies heavily on the active participation of both faculty and the student body. Teachers serve as facilitators and role models, while learners are primary participants in waste segregation, recycling, and waste reduction activities. However, despite the presence of policies and programs promoting proper waste management, challenges persist in actual implementation (Margate & Padilla, 2025).

Understanding the lived experiences of teachers and learners regarding solid waste management in schools is crucial for several reasons. First, exploring their real-world experiences reveals how school policies, infrastructure, and daily practices influence waste management behaviors, helping educators and administrators identify practical barriers and enablers that are often overlooked by top-down directives. Teachers' narratives can uncover strengths and challenges in implementing waste programs, showing how their instructional strategies and role modeling affect student engagement and motivation. Likewise, learners' perspectives provide insight into how waste education translates into everyday habits, attitudes, and peer interactions, highlighting areas where education is effective or where additional support is needed. By centering the voices of those directly involved, programs can be tailored to fit the school's context, making waste management education more relevant, effective, and sustainable.

This approach also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among participants, reinforcing environmental responsibility as a lived value, not just an academic concept. Qualitative research that captures lived experiences thus deepens understanding of

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how environmental practices are enacted on the ground and informs the design of interventions that are both meaningful and actionable within school communities (Villas, 2024).

The lived experiences of teachers and learners in implementing solid waste management in school can provide valuable insights into existing practices, difficulties, and opportunities for improvement. These experiences can serve as a foundation for developing a sustainable and context-appropriate solid waste management plan for schools.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter details the research methodology, encompassing the design, participants, data collection processes, research tools, and analytical techniques utilized in the study. The investigation sought to explore the firsthand experiences of specifically chosen educators and students regarding the execution of solid waste management within a school in the Schools District of Leganes during the 2025–2026 academic year.

### Research Method

The study employed a descriptive research method within a qualitative framework, utilizing in-depth interviews to gather data.

This method aimed to systematically depict a phenomenon in its natural context without altering any variables. As noted by Elliott (2025), its purpose was to offer an accurate representation of existing conditions, practices, or relationships in educational settings, which helped the researcher identify trends, patterns, and practical implications.

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This approach was particularly useful as it sought to document and analyze real-world events, behaviors, and perceptions without modifying the environment in which they occurred (Elliott, 2025).

During the interviews, the researcher and participants were seated at a comfortable distance, providing ample time to reflect on a series of questions regarding the specific topic. The ultimate goal was to capture the participants' key perspectives on the issue within its social context through their detailed responses.

## Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology functioned as a philosophical approach to qualitative research that sought to understand how individuals perceived the world and how their viewpoints differed from commonly held perspectives, emphasizing their subjective interpretations of experiences. This approach typically involved interviewing participants to explore their impressions and was commonly applied in fields such as psychology, sociology, and social work.

The methodology centered on examining the underlying structures of consciousness as experienced from a first-person perspective. The primary objective was to investigate and describe phenomena as they were consciously experienced, without relying on theories regarding causal explanations or being influenced by unexamined preconceptions (Biemel and Spiegelberg, 2024).

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## Participants of the Study

The study involved a total of twelve (12) participants, comprising six (6) teachers and six (6) learners, all of whom were selected through purposive sampling.

To qualify, the teacher participants were required to be regular faculty members with at least one year of teaching experience and direct involvement in the school's solid waste management implementation.

The learner participants were officially enrolled students who had completed a minimum of three academic years at the institution. These students had firsthand experience with waste management practices under faculty supervision and had obtained parental consent to participate in the research.

## Sampling Design

The study employed a purposive sampling design. As defined by Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling was a non-probability method in which units were selected based on the specific characteristics necessary for the sample. Essentially, the selection of participants was conducted intentionally, or "on purpose."

Also known as judgmental sampling, this method relied on the researcher's professional judgment to identify and select the individuals, cases, or events best suited to provide the data required to meet the study's objectives.

## Research Instrument

The researcher developed an interview schedule to serve as the primary research instrument for this study.

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In the context of research methodology, an interview schedule functioned as a written set of prearranged questions—whether structured, semi-structured, or open-ended—that guided the interviewer in collecting information consistently from all participants. It acted as a standardized data collection tool, ensuring that the same topics and questions were addressed in every session to facilitate systematic comparison and analysis. During face-to-face, telephone, or online interviews, the interviewer utilized the schedule to present the predetermined questions and document the participants' responses (Socio.health, 2024).

The interview schedule comprised four main questions designed to investigate the lived experiences of teachers and learners regarding the execution of school-based solid waste management, the difficulties they encountered during this process, and the specific strategies or coping mechanisms they utilized to address those obstacles.

Audio and video recording devices were employed for data collection and documentation, contingent upon the participants' consent.

### **Validity of the Research Instrument**

Prior to confirming the validity of the researcher-developed interview schedule, the researcher consulted the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors—chosen for their proficiency in research, assessment, and English—to evaluate each question for potential refinements.

Validity represented the extent to which the research findings, interpretations, and conclusions accurately portrayed the concept under investigation. It ensured that the instrument effectively measured its intended targets and that the outcomes offered a reliable

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reflection of the subject matter. To achieve content validity, the questions and overall structure of the tool were required to align with the study's specific variables and goals, ensuring each item served as an accurate representation of the construct.

This procedure generally involved an expert review to determine if the items were pertinent, lucid, and representative of the studied concepts. By synchronizing the content and design of the instrument with the research framework, the accuracy and utility of the gathered data were enhanced in relation to the study's objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The researcher integrated the feedback, corrections, and recommendations provided by the validation panel into the interview schedule. This process was guided by the content validation criteria established by Good and Scates (1972), as cited by Soqueña (2021).

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

To facilitate the conduct of the study, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals from the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Offices of the Schools Division Superintendent and District Supervisors, the School Head, and the individual participants.

Interviews were carried out in person at the schools, within the community, or at other locations that were convenient for the interviewees.

The researcher requested that all participants provide a signed consent or permission form to formalize their involvement in the study.

During the in-depth interviews, audio and video recording devices were utilized to ensure the participants' responses were fully captured. Once the series of interviews was finished, the researcher compiled and organized all the gathered data.

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## Data Analysis

Data were gathered through the use of an interview schedule and evaluated via thematic analysis, a qualitative approach focused on identifying, interpreting, and documenting recurring patterns or themes within narrative information. This method enabled the researcher to derive meaningful insights into the experiences of purposively selected educators and students regarding the execution of solid waste management within a school in the Schools District of Leganes.

Braun and Clarke (2023) explained that thematic analysis provided a flexible yet systematic framework for examining qualitative data, which allowed researchers to uncover both explicit and implicit meanings within the participants' stories. It was particularly effective in educational research that sought to explore intricate social and organizational dynamics. Furthermore, Nowell et al. (2021) emphasized that thematic analysis bolstered the transparency and credibility of qualitative research by encouraging methodical coding and rigorous interpretation of the data.

The transcribed interview data were examined using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2023), a method deemed appropriate for detecting, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative records. The analysis followed the standard six-phase process, starting with data familiarization through the repeated reading of transcripts in both the local dialect and their corresponding English translations.

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Generating initial codes involved the creation of concise phrases or labels to pinpoint significant segments of the data, such as shared resources, emotional responses, or technical difficulties.

Searching for themes required the organization of the initial codes into potential overarching themes and sub-themes that represented meaningful patterns, where related codes were grouped together under unified headings.

Reviewing themes consisted of refining and validating the identified categories by comparing them against the entire data set to ensure they accurately reflected the participants' viewpoints and remained aligned with the study's central focus.

Defining and naming themes involved establishing precise, clear, and academically suitable labels for the final themes that emerged, all of which were prepared for presentation in Chapter 4.

Producing the report involved integrating the identified themes, supported by direct quotes from participants, into a narrative used for presenting, analyzing, and interpreting the findings in Chapter 4 while linking them to the study's theoretical framework.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research identified the perspectives of educators and students regarding the execution of Solid Waste Management at St. Bertille Integrated School throughout the 2025-2026 academic year.

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The investigation utilized a qualitative methodology centered on in-depth interviews.

The study design adopted a narrative framework and applied thematic analysis to the data.

The subjects of this research consisted of six (6) educators and six (6) students who were actively involved in waste management initiatives.

Researcher-created questionnaires were employed after being reviewed and approved by subject matter experts. Interviews were scheduled during the participants' non-instructional hours, with formal invitations delivered in person.

The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews on the school grounds. For data collection purposes, audio recordings and written notes were maintained, and photographic evidence was captured following the consent of the participants.

The researcher synthesized all information gathered from the interview sessions. These narratives were compiled, converted into text, and evaluated through a thematic lens, with the results interpreted based on these findings.

The subsequent points outline the results of the investigation.

According to the interview feedback, teachers shared varied experiences that could serve as the foundation for improving programs for modern learners. Their primary encounters with solid waste management were characterized by insufficient awareness, a scarcity of resources, and a lack of uniformity in implementation.

During the interview process, it was revealed that students' experiences with waste management centered on their comprehension of trash separation, involvement in campus initiatives, and correct waste disposal methods.

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Regarding the execution of waste management on campus, educators identified several significant hurdles, including a crowded academic schedule, a lack of student discipline, and inadequate oversight.

The interviews indicated that the obstacles students faced during waste management implementation included a lack of proper facilities and equipment, limited information, and various social or organizational constraints.

The study found that teachers utilized specific adaptation methods to manage these difficulties, such as embedding waste management topics into their teaching, utilizing interactive demonstrations, and establishing incentive programs.

Finally, the data showed that students addressed their challenges through collaborative teamwork, the cultivation of personal responsibility, and by requesting assistance from their instructors and school leadership.

## Conclusions

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following are recommendations are:

Teachers should integrate environmental education and solid waste management topics into daily lessons. Guide and supervise students during waste management activities, providing feedback and support. Encourage peer collaboration and leadership by supporting eco-clubs or student-led waste initiatives. Schools should provide clearly labeled and color-coded bins for biodegradable, recyclable, and non-recyclable waste. Students and staff must

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VII, Issue III

February 2026

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be trained to dispose of waste properly. Posters and reminders placed around the school can reinforce correct waste disposal habits. Proper segregation makes recycling and composting more effective.

Students play a critical role in implementing and sustaining proper waste management. They should practice self-discipline and personal commitment by consistently segregating and disposing of waste correctly and collaborate with peers to monitor, educate, and motivate each other to follow proper waste practices.

School leaders provide the structure and resources necessary for successful waste management programs. They should provide adequate facilities such as color-coded bins, composting stations, and recycling points and support and supervise teachers and students in implementing waste management activities.

Future researchers should explore the long-term impact of school-based environmental education on students' behavior at home and in the community and study barriers to proper waste management in schools and propose evidence-based interventions to overcome these challenges.

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VII, Issue III

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