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Creating A Supportive Environment: Strategies for Inclusive Teaching in Special Education

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of inclusive classroom behaviors on students' academic performance in English, Mathematics, and Science. The findings highlight the importance of inclusive classrooms for comprehensive development and academic success. Despite moderate to high levels of disruptive behaviors, lack of engagement, difficulties with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges, these behaviors do not significantly impact academic performance, suggesting the effectiveness of current educational strategies. However, moderate disengagement and communication difficulties indicate a need for further research to identify additional factors affecting achievement and to develop effective support strategies. Enhancing student interest, participation, and smooth transitions is crucial for minimizing disruptions. Addressing communication and social-emotional regulation challenges is essential for effective self-expression and social navigation. This study underscores the resilience of students and the necessity of maintaining and improving educational practices to support behavioral and academic success, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: Inclusive classroom behaviors, academic performance, behavioral challenges, classroom engagement

Introduction

Special education is a complex field dedicated to providing tailored support and resources to children with various disabilities, exceptionalities, or learning challenges. Students in special education require additional assistance and adaptations to engage with the curriculum effectively, participate in classroom activities, and achieve their intellectual, social, and emotional potential (Smith et al., 2019; Brown & Johnson, 2021). Empirical research underscores the recognition and celebration of learner diversity in special education, emphasizing that each student possesses unique talents, needs, and

learning styles (Garcia & Torres, 2020; Munoz & Porter, 2020). The primary goal of special education is to ensure that every student, regardless of their abilities, receives a free and appropriate education tailored to their specific circumstances (IDEA, 2004; DepEd, 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the critical importance of inclusive classroom management in special education settings due to the diverse needs of students (Johnson et al., 2021; Lee, 2022). Effective management practices create an environment where every student feels valued, respected, and included, fostering positive relationships between students and teachers, which in turn enhances engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Munoz & Porter, 2020; Brown & Johnson, 2021). Inclusive classroom management also promotes social-emotional development by teaching essential life skills such as self-regulation, conflict resolution, and collaboration (Garcia & Torres, 2020).

Teachers play a vital role in developing inclusive classroom management strategies. By establishing clear expectations, consistent routines, and systematic procedures, educators can create a well-organized learning environment that minimizes disruptions and maximizes instructional time (Lee, 2022). These practices enable teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students, adapt lessons accordingly, and provide individualized support as needed, thereby improving teacher satisfaction, job stability, and professional growth (Smith et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, inclusive education is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Constitution and supported by various policies and laws, including the Inclusive Education Policy Framework and the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (Republic Act No. 7277, 1992; DepEd, 2022). Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in implementing comprehensive approaches, particularly in special education. Effective classroom management is crucial for addressing these challenges and ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, receive high-quality education tailored to their needs (DepEd, 2022).

While DepEd elementary schools emphasize inclusive teaching, there is a notable gap in research specifically examining inclusive classroom behavior among students (Santos & Reyes, 2023). Comprehensive studies on the application and effectiveness of inclusive practices in special education settings in the Philippines are lacking. Understanding the current state of teachers' inclusive classroom management, student behavior, and its impacts is essential for informing policy and practice in DepEd schools (Lee, 2022; Santos & Reyes, 2023). Additionally, assessing the effects of various inclusive classroom behaviors is crucial for identifying the most effective approaches in the Philippine context (Munoz & Porter, 2020; DepEd, 2022).

Future research in DepEd elementary schools should focus on conducting in-depth studies on inclusive classroom behavior practices among students to address this gap. Examining the experiences and perspectives of educators, researchers can identify successful strategies, innovative methods, and areas for improvement in managing inclusive classrooms in the Philippines. Concentrating on these specific areas can provide valuable insights that support ongoing efforts to advance inclusive education.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design to explore the relationship between inclusive classroom behaviors and academic performance within several schools. Data were collected using a set of questionnaires developed from the works of Sprague & Walker (2005), Ladd (2009), and Weissberg et al. (2011), focusing on various aspects such as classroom management, disruptive behavior, behavior intervention, and social-emotional learning. These instruments were chosen to ensure a comprehensive analysis across common themes related to student behavior and academic achievement. The research was conducted at the Naga SPED Center, an institution dedicated to supporting students with special educational needs. Both teachers and students served as respondents, providing a balanced perspective on the classroom dynamics. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," facilitating nuanced insights into the levels of agreement with the behavioral and academic statements presented. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software at a 0.05 level of significance to ascertain the correlations and implications for developing a strategic plan aimed at fostering a globally competitive educational environment. This strategic plan was intended to enhance instructional support and create a more inclusive and effective learning atmosphere for students with special needs.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Disruptive Behavior

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student frequently interrupts the class or others' learning activities.	3.3	MA
Student refuses to follow classroom rules or instructions.	3.2	MA
Student engages in physical aggression or disruptive outbursts.	3.1	MA
Student consistently distracts peers during lessons or group work.	3.4	A
Student consistently disrupts the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning.	3.3	MA
Grand Mean	3.26	MA

The data presented in Table 1 outlines various indicators of disruptive behavior among students, along with their respective mean scores and

verbal descriptions (VD). The indicators include frequent interruptions of the class or others' learning activities (mean = 3.3, moderately agree), refusal to follow classroom rules or instructions (mean = 3.2, moderately agree), engagement in physical aggression or disruptive outbursts (mean = 3.1, moderately agree), consistent distraction of peers during lessons or group work (mean = 3.4, agree), and consistent disruption of the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning (mean = 3.3, moderately agree). The grand mean of these indicators is 3.26, which falls under the category of "moderately agree" (MA). This suggests that, on average, students exhibit these disruptive behaviors at a moderate level, with the most significant issue being the consistent distraction of peers during lessons or group work. This consistent peer distraction was rated higher (mean = 3.4) compared to other behaviors, indicating it is a more frequent and pressing issue. The findings emphasize the need for effective classroom management strategies to address and mitigate these disruptive behaviors, thereby enhancing the overall classroom environment and learning experience.

Table 2. Engagement

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student appears disinterested or passive during instructional activities.	3.5	A
Student rarely volunteers or participates in class discussions.	3.2	MA
Student frequently appears distracted or off-task during lessons.	2.9	MA
Student exhibits limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities.	3.3	MA
Student consistently demonstrates a complete disengagement from classroom activities, regardless of instructional strategies used.	3.0	MA
Grand Mean	3.18	MA

The data presented in Table 2 highlights various indicators of student engagement, along with their respective mean scores and verbal descriptions (VD). The indicators include student disinterest or passivity during instructional activities (mean = 3.5, agree), infrequent volunteering or participation in class discussions (mean = 3.2, moderately agree), frequent distraction or off-task behavior during lessons (mean = 2.9, moderately agree), limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities (mean = 3.3, moderately agree), and consistent disengagement from classroom activities regardless of instructional strategies used (mean = 3.0, moderately agree). The grand mean of these indicators is 3.18, categorized as "moderately agree" (MA). This suggests that, on average, students exhibit these engagement issues at a moderate level. The highest mean score (3.5) indicates that students appear disinterested or passive during instructional activities, reflecting a significant concern regarding student engagement. The data suggests a need for targeted interventions to increase student interest and active participation in

classroom activities, thereby improving overall engagement and enhancing the learning experience.

Table 3. Difficulty with Transitions

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student requires frequent reminders to transition between activities.	3.2	MA
Student exhibits mild resistance or reluctance to transition.	3.3	MA
Student experiences moderate difficulty with transitions, leading to minor disruptions.	3.4	A
Student struggles significantly with transitions, leading to noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time.	3.1	MA
Student experiences extreme difficulty with transitions, resulting in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions.	3.2	MA
Grand Mean	3.24	A

The data in Table 3 presents various indicators of students' difficulties with transitions, along with their respective mean scores and verbal descriptions (VD). The indicators include students requiring frequent reminders to transition between activities (mean = 3.2, moderately agree), exhibiting mild resistance or reluctance to transition (mean = 3.3, moderately agree), experiencing moderate difficulty with transitions that lead to minor disruptions (mean = 3.4, agree), struggling significantly with transitions causing noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time (mean = 3.1, moderately agree), and experiencing extreme difficulty with transitions resulting in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions (mean = 3.2, moderately agree). The grand mean of these indicators is 3.24, categorized as "agree" (A). This suggests that, on average, students experience difficulties with transitions at a level that educators perceive as impacting classroom functioning. The highest mean score (3.4) indicates that moderate difficulty with transitions, leading to minor disruptions, is the most common issue. The data highlights the need for strategies to support smoother transitions for students to minimize disruptions and enhance the overall efficiency of instructional time.

Table 4. Communication Barriers

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student demonstrates occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally.	3.1	MA
Student exhibits limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts.	3.2	MA
Student experiences moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication.	3.3	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty communicating verbally or nonverbally, impacting interactions with peers and understanding of instructional content.	3.1	MA
Student experiences severe communication barriers, significantly impairing participation in classroom activities and social interactions.	2.8	MA
Grand Mean	3.10	MA

The data presented in Table 4 outlines various indicators of communication barriers among students, along with their respective mean scores and verbal descriptions (VD). The indicators include occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally (mean = 3.1, moderately agree), limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts (mean = 3.2, moderately agree), moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication (mean = 3.3, moderately agree), significant difficulty communicating verbally or nonverbally, impacting interactions with peers and understanding of instructional content (mean = 3.1, moderately agree), and severe communication barriers that significantly impair participation in classroom activities and social interactions (mean = 2.8, moderately agree). The grand mean of these indicators is 3.10, categorized as "moderately agree" (MA). This suggests that, on average, students face moderate communication barriers that affect their ability to interact and comprehend instructional content. The most pronounced issue, with a mean score of 3.3, is moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication. These findings underscore the necessity for interventions aimed at improving communication skills to support.

Table 5. Social-Emotional Challenges

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student occasionally struggles with regulating emotions in certain situations.	3.6	A
Student exhibits mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment.	3.7	A
Student experiences moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions.	3.4	A
Student demonstrates significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, impacting overall classroom climate.	3.5	A
Student experiences severe social-emotional challenges, requiring extensive support and intervention to participate in classroom activities effectively.	3.7	A
Grand Mean	3.58	A

The data in Table 5 highlights various indicators of social-emotional challenges among students, with their respective mean scores and verbal descriptions (VD). The indicators include occasional struggles with regulating emotions in certain situations (mean = 3.6, agree), mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment (mean = 3.7, agree), moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions (mean = 3.4, agree), significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, impacting the overall classroom climate (mean = 3.5, agree), and severe social-emotional challenges requiring extensive support and intervention to effectively participate in classroom activities (mean = 3.7, agree). The grand mean of these indicators is 3.58, categorized as "agree" (A). This suggests that, on

average, students exhibit notable social-emotional challenges that affect their classroom experience. The highest mean scores (3.7) indicate that mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment, and severe social-emotional challenges requiring extensive support, are the most significant issues. These findings highlight the critical need for comprehensive social-emotional support and interventions to help students manage their emotions and improve their interactions with peers, thereby enhancing the overall classroom climate.

Table 6. Learners Academic Performance

Subject	Grade	VD
English	82.78	Satisfactory
Mathematics	83.63	Satisfactory
Science	82.84	Satisfactory

The data presented in Table 6 summarizes the academic performance of learners across three subjects: English, Mathematics, and Science. The grades for these subjects are 82.78 for English, 83.63 for Mathematics, and 82.84 for Science, all categorized as "Satisfactory." This indicates that students are performing at a satisfactory level in each of these core subjects, showing a consistent level of achievement across the board. The highest performance is observed in Mathematics (mean = 83.63), followed closely by Science (mean = 82.84) and English (mean = 82.78). These results suggest that while students are meeting the basic academic expectations, there is room for improvement to elevate their performance to higher achievement levels. Interventions or instructional strategies targeting specific areas within these subjects could potentially enhance overall academic outcomes and further support student learning and achievement.

Table 7. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Inclusive Classroom Behavior and English Performance

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.364	-1.611	0.126	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.184	-0.771	0.451	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.281	-1.207	0.244	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	-0.130	-0.539	0.597	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	-0.047	-0.196	0.847	Not significant	Do not reject

The data in Table 7 examines the significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and English performance, using various constructs such as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-

emotional challenges. The r -values for these constructs are all negative, indicating a slight inverse relationship with English performance. However, none of these relationships are statistically significant, as evidenced by their p -values: disruptive behavior ($r = -0.364$, $p = 0.126$), lack of engagement ($r = -0.184$, $p = 0.451$), difficulty with transitions ($r = -0.281$, $p = 0.244$), communication barriers ($r = -0.130$, $p = 0.597$), and social-emotional challenges ($r = -0.047$, $p = 0.847$). The t -values also suggest that the relationships are weak and not statistically meaningful. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected for any of the constructs, indicating that there is no significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and English performance in this study. This suggests that other factors might be influencing English performance, and further research may be needed to identify these factors.

Table 8. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Inclusive Classroom Behavior and Mathematics Performance

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.330	-1.440	0.168	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.202	-0.849	0.408	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.099	-0.411	0.686	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	0.069	0.285	0.779	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	0.076	0.312	0.759	Not significant	Do not reject

The data in Table 8 explores the significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and mathematics performance, focusing on constructs such as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges. The r -values indicate a mix of negative and positive relationships: disruptive behavior ($r = -0.330$, $p = 0.168$), lack of engagement ($r = -0.202$, $p = 0.408$), difficulty with transitions ($r = -0.099$, $p = 0.686$), communication barriers ($r = 0.069$, $p = 0.779$), and social-emotional challenges ($r = 0.076$, $p = 0.759$). However, all these relationships are statistically insignificant, as shown by their respective p -values being greater than 0.05. The t -values further confirm the weak nature of these relationships, suggesting that none of the constructs have a meaningful impact on mathematics performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected for any of the constructs, indicating no significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and mathematics performance in this study. This outcome implies that while inclusive classroom behaviors are important, they do not significantly influence mathematics performance based on this

data, and other factors may need to be considered to understand the determinants of students' mathematics achievement.

Table 9. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Inclusive Classroom Behavior and Science Performance

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.249	-1.058	0.305	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.071	-0.292	0.774	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.098	-0.405	0.691	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	-0.030	-0.122	0.904	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	0.065	0.269	0.792	Not significant	Do not reject

The data in Table 9 analyzes the significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and science performance, focusing on constructs such as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges. The r-values indicate weak relationships between these constructs and science performance: disruptive behavior ($r = -0.249$, $p = 0.305$), lack of engagement ($r = -0.071$, $p = 0.774$), difficulty with transitions ($r = -0.098$, $p = 0.691$), communication barriers ($r = -0.030$, $p = 0.904$), and social-emotional challenges ($r = 0.065$, $p = 0.792$). All these relationships are statistically insignificant, as indicated by their p-values, which are all above the 0.05 threshold. The t-values further support the insignificance of these relationships, showing that none of the constructs meaningfully impact science performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected for any of the constructs, indicating no significant relationship between the level of inclusive classroom behavior and science performance in this study. This suggests that while inclusive classroom behaviors are an essential aspect of the learning environment, they do not have a significant influence on science performance according to the data presented. Other factors might be playing a more critical role in determining students' achievement in science, and further research could help to identify these factors.

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented, several conclusions can be drawn. The significance of inclusive classrooms for the comprehensive development and academic success of students is emphasized by the data. This implies that more study is required to identify additional factors that could potentially impact academic achievement to formulate efficacious support approaches. Moreover, disruptive

behaviors may not be overtly severe, still impact classroom dynamics and learning outcomes. The existence of moderate disengagement among students points out the necessity for interventions that promote interest and active participation in instructional activities. and implementing transitional smoothness strategies is required to reduce interruptions. Lastly, Moderate difficulties in communication and social-emotional regulation hinder students' ability to express themselves effectively and navigate social situations.

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