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Article

Effective Approaches to Inclusive Classroom Management in Special Education Settings

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of inclusive classroom behaviors on students' academic performance in English, Mathematics, and Science. The findings indicate that while moderate to high levels of disruptive behaviors, lack of engagement, transition difficulties, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges are present, they do not significantly affect academic performance. This suggests that students maintain satisfactory performance levels, demonstrating the effectiveness of current educational strategies or interventions. However, the study also highlights the need for further research to identify additional factors influencing academic achievement and to develop effective support approaches. Interventions to enhance student interest, active participation, and smooth transitions are crucial for minimizing classroom disruptions. Additionally, addressing communication and social-emotional regulation difficulties is essential for helping students express themselves effectively and navigate social situations. Overall, the study underscores the resilience of students and the importance of maintaining and improving educational practices to support both behavioral and academic success. The insights gained provide valuable information for educators and policymakers, reinforcing the potential of current interventions and encouraging further research into innovative educational practices.

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

Introduction

Special education is a field dedicated to supporting students with diverse disabilities, special needs, or learning difficulties through personalized services and support (Brussino, 2020). It aims to ensure these students can access the curriculum, participate in classroom activities, and achieve their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally (Larosa et al., 2022). Moreover, special education aims to

integrate students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms to ensure they are not segregated but included in the general education environment (Francisco et al., 2020). This approach emphasizes acceptance and appreciation of individual differences, fostering a more inclusive school culture (Forlin & Chambers, 2020). Recognizing each child's unique abilities and needs is a cornerstone of special education, celebrating the diversity of learners (McKenna et al., 2021).

The main objective of special education is to provide all students, regardless of their abilities, with a free and appropriate education tailored to their individual needs (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020). Effective inclusive classroom management is essential in special education settings where diverse needs must be addressed. Proper management ensures that all students feel valued and included, which fosters better teacher-student relationships, increased motivation, and academic success (Speakers-Lewis et al., 2022). Effective inclusive classroom management is foundational to providing a free and appropriate education for all students (McLeskey et al., 2022). Employing clear rules, differentiated instruction, social-emotional support, and collaborative practices, teachers can create an environment where all students thrive (Ferreira et al., 2020).

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing inclusive classroom management (Finkelstein et al., 2021). Establishing clear rules, routines, and expectations, they create a structured learning environment that minimizes disruptions and maximizes instructional time (Jaus-Zissis, 2023). This approach allows teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students, customize their teaching methods, and provide necessary support to each student (Boyle et al., 2020). Moreover, teachers who establish and consistently enforce clear rules and routines create a predictable environment that helps all students, particularly those with special needs, to feel secure and understand what is expected of them (Wijaya et al., 2020). This predictability reduces anxiety and behavioral issues, allowing more time for effective teaching and learning.

In the Philippines, inclusive education is supported by constitutional mandates and policies like the Inclusive Education Policy Framework and the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. However, there are significant challenges in implementing inclusive practices, especially in special education. Effective classroom management is crucial to addressing these challenges and ensuring that all students receive a quality education that meets their needs. Despite the emphasis on inclusive education in DepEd elementary schools, there is a clear need for more research on student behavior in inclusive classrooms. Limited studies have directly examined the implementation and effectiveness of inclusive practices in special education settings in the Philippines. Understanding current classroom management practices, student behaviors, and their impacts on the classroom is essential for improving policies and practices in DepEd

schools. Research should also explore the effects of various inclusive classroom strategies to identify the most effective methods in the Philippine context.

Future research should focus on in-depth studies of student behavior in inclusive classrooms in DepEd elementary schools. By examining teachers' experiences and perspectives, researchers can identify effective strategies, innovative approaches, and areas for improvement in managing inclusive classrooms in the Philippines. This research can support ongoing efforts to promote inclusive education and provide valuable insights.

Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between inclusive classroom behaviors and academic performance across multiple schools. Data collection involved questionnaires developed based on the works of Sprague & Walker (2005), Ladd (2009), and Weissberg et al. (2011). These questionnaires covered various aspects such as classroom management, disruptive behavior, behavior intervention, and social-emotional learning, ensuring a thorough analysis of themes related to student behavior and academic achievement. The research took place at the Naga SPED Center, a school dedicated to students with special educational needs. Both teachers and students participated as respondents, offering a balanced view of classroom dynamics. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," providing detailed insights into the levels of agreement with the statements on behavior and academic performance. The data collected were analyzed using statistical software with a 0.05 level of significance to determine correlations and develop a strategic plan aimed at fostering a globally competitive educational environment. This strategic plan seeks 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.	2.6	D
Student refuses to follow classroom rules or instructions.	2.8	MA
Student engages in physical aggression or disruptive outbursts.	2.6	D
Student consistently distracts peers during lessons or group work.	2.6	D
Student consistently disrupts the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning.	2.6	D
Grand Mean	2.64	MA

Table 1 provides the data on various types of disruptive actions exhibited by students in the classroom. The behaviors evaluated include frequent interruptions, refusal to follow rules, physical aggression, and consistent distractions. The mean scores for most behaviors frequently interrupting the class, engaging in physical aggression, consistently distracting peers, and significantly disrupting the learning environment are all 2.6, which is verbally described as "Disruptive". The behavior of refusing to follow classroom rules or instructions has a slightly higher mean score of 2.8, categorized as "Moderately Agree". The overall grand mean of 2.64 falls within the "Moderately Agree". This suggests that while most behaviors are generally seen as disruptive, the refusal to follow rules is slightly more prevalent. The data implies that disruptive behaviors are a moderate issue within the classroom, with rule-following being a particularly notable problem area.

Table 2. Engagement

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student appears disinterested or passive during instructional activities.	3.2	MA
Student rarely volunteers or participates in class discussions.	3.0	MA
Student frequently appears distracted or off-task during lessons.	2.8	MA
Student exhibits limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities.	3.0	MA
Student consistently demonstrates a complete disengagement from classroom activities, regardless of instructional strategies used.	3.0	MA
Grand Mean	3.0	MA

The data in Table 2 addresses the issue of lack of engagement among students during classroom activities. The behaviors examined include appearing disinterested, rarely participating, frequently being off-task, showing limited enthusiasm, and demonstrating complete disengagement. The mean scores for these behaviors range from 2.8 to 3.2, all falling under the "Moderately Agree" category. Specifically, the highest mean score of 3.2, indicating a moderate agreement, is for students appearing disinterested or passive during instructional activities. The mean scores for rarely volunteering, limited enthusiasm, and complete disengagement are all at 3.0, also categorized as "Moderately Agree." The behavior of frequently appearing distracted or off-task has a mean score of 2.8, still within the "Moderately Agree". The overall grand mean of 3.0 suggests that moderate levels of disengagement are consistently observed across various aspects of student participation. This data indicates that lack of engagement is a prevalent issue, with students often showing moderate levels of disinterest, distraction, and lack of motivation in classroom activities.

The data in Table 3 provides an analysis of students' difficulty with transitions between activities. The behaviors assessed include the need

for frequent reminders, resistance or reluctance, moderate difficulty causing minor disruptions, significant struggles causing noticeable disruptions, and extreme difficulty leading to frequent meltdowns.

Table 3. Difficulty with Transitions

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student requires frequent reminders to transition between activities.	2.8	MA
Student exhibits mild resistance or reluctance to transition.	3.4	MA
Student experiences moderate difficulty with transitions, leading to minor disruptions.	3.0	MA
Student struggles significantly with transitions, leading to noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time.	3.0	MA
Student experiences extreme difficulty with transitions, resulting in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions.	2.8	MA
Grand Mean	3.0	MA

The mean scores for these behaviors range from 2.8 to 3.4, with all falling under the "Moderately Agree" category. The highest mean score of 3.4 is observed for students exhibiting mild resistance or reluctance to transition, indicating that this behavior is the most commonly agreed upon as an issue. Both moderate difficulty with transitions and significant struggles with transitions have mean scores of 3.0, suggesting these behaviors are also commonly seen, though to a slightly lesser extent. The behaviors requiring frequent reminders and experiencing extreme difficulty with transitions both have mean scores of 2.8, indicating that these issues are slightly less prevalent but still present at moderate levels. The overall grand mean of 3.0 suggests that moderate difficulties with transitions are a consistent issue across the board. This indicates that while students generally experience moderate levels of difficulty with transitions, the most significant issue appears to be mild resistance or reluctance to transition, which can impact classroom flow and instructional time.

Table 4. Communication Barriers

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student demonstrates occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally.	3.4	MA
Student exhibits limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts.	3.6	MA
Student experiences moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication.	4.0	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty communicating verbally or nonverbally, impacting interactions with peers and understanding of instructional content.	3.2	MA
Student experiences severe communication barriers, significantly impairing participation in classroom activities4.17 and social interactions.	3.0	MA
Grand Mean	3.4	MA

The data in Table 4 evaluates the presence of communication barriers among students. The table examines several aspects of communication difficulties, including expressing thoughts verbally, verbal communication skills in specific contexts, challenges with both expressive and receptive communication, difficulties impacting interactions and understanding, and severe communication barriers affecting classroom participation and social interactions. The mean scores for these behaviors range from 3.0 to 4.0, all categorized under "Moderately Agree". The highest mean score of 4.0 pertains to students experiencing moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication, indicating that this is the most prominent issue. The next highest mean score of 3.6 is for students exhibiting limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts, showing a significant level of agreement on this barrier. Occasional difficulty in expressing thoughts or ideas verbally has a mean score of 3.4, aligning with the overall trend of moderate communication barriers. Students demonstrating significant difficulty in communicating verbally or nonverbally have a mean score of 3.2, indicating that this issue moderately impacts interactions and understanding of instructional content. Finally, the severe communication barriers, with a mean score of 3.0, suggest that while severe issues are less common, they still moderately affect a subset of students. The grand mean of 3.4 reflects a general consensus that communication barriers are a moderate challenge within the classroom. The data highlights that the most prevalent issues are moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication and limited verbal communication skills in specific contexts. Overall, these communication barriers can impact students' ability to participate fully in classroom activities and interact effectively with peers.

Table 5. Social-Emotional Challenges

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student occasionally struggles with regulating emotions in certain situations.	3.4	MA
Student exhibits mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment.	3.6	A
Student experiences moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions.	3.4	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, impacting overall classroom climate.	3.2	MA
Student experiences severe social-emotional challenges, requiring extensive support and intervention to participate in classroom activities effectively.	3.2	MA
Grand Mean	3.0	MA

The data in Table 5 examines social-emotional challenges among students. The table evaluates various difficulties, including regulating emotions, managing frustration, emotional regulation and social interactions, and the impact on the classroom climate and the need for

extensive support. The mean scores for these challenges range from 3.2 to 3.6, mostly falling under the "Moderately Agree" category, with one behavior rated as "Agree". The highest mean score of 3.6 is for students exhibiting mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment, indicating a significant level of agreement that this is a common issue. Both occasional struggles with regulating emotions and moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions have mean scores of 3.4, suggesting that these are also prevalent concerns, though to a slightly lesser extent. Students demonstrating significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, as well as those experiencing severe social-emotional challenges requiring extensive support, both have mean scores of 3.2. This indicates that while these more severe challenges are less frequent, they still moderately affect some students and have a noticeable impact on the classroom environment. The grand mean of 3.0 reflects an overall moderate presence of social-emotional challenges among students. The data highlights that while mild difficulty managing frustration is the most commonly agreed upon issue, occasional and moderate struggles with emotional regulation and social interactions are also significant. These challenges can affect not only individual students' ability to participate effectively in classroom activities but also the overall classroom climate, emphasizing the need for targeted support and interventions.

Table 6. Learners Academic Performance

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

The data in Table 6 presents the academic performance of learners in three subjects: English, Mathematics, and Science. In English, learners achieved an average grade of 82.78, which is classified as "Satisfactory." This suggests that students have a generally good grasp of the English language and are meeting the expected standards. In Mathematics, the average grade is slightly higher at 83.63, also categorized as "Satisfactory." This indicates that students are performing well in math, demonstrating a solid understanding of mathematical concepts and skills.Science performance is similar to English, with an average grade of 82.84, again falling into the "Satisfactory" range. This shows that learners are adequately comprehending and applying scientific principles. Overall, the grades across all three subjects English, Mathematics, and Science are within a close range, and all are considered satisfactory. This uniform performance suggests that learners are consistently achieving expected academic standards across these core subjects, reflecting a balanced and steady level of academic achievement.

The data in Table 7 explores the relationship between various aspects of inclusive classroom behavior and English performance, using correlation coefficients (r-values), t-values, and p-values to determine significance.

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	0.546	1.128	0.342	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	0.223	0.396	0.718	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	0.474	0.933	0.420	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	0.336	0.618	0.580	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	-0.054	-0.094	0.931	Not significant	Do not reject

The constructs examined include Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges. For Disruptive Behavior, the r-value is 0.546, indicating a moderate positive correlation with English performance, but the t-value of 1.128 and p-value of 0.342 suggest this relationship is not statistically significant. Similarly, Lack of Engagement has an r-value of 0.223, showing a weak positive correlation, with a t-value of 0.396 and a p-value of 0.718, also not significant. Difficulty with Transitions has an r-value of 0.474, indicating a moderate positive correlation, but with a t-value of 0.933 and a p-value of 0.420, this too is not significant. Communication Barriers show a weak positive correlation with an r-value of 0.336, a t-value of 0.618, and a p-value of 0.580, which is not significant. Lastly, Social-Emotional Challenges have a slight negative correlation with an r-value of -0.054, and the corresponding t-value of -0.094 and p-value of 0.931 indicate no significant relationship. Overall, the data indicates that none of the examined constructs, Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges have a statistically significant relationship with English performance.

The data in Table 8 investigates the relationship between different aspects of inclusive classroom behavior and mathematics performance, utilizing correlation coefficients (r-values), t-values, and p-values to assess significance. The constructs considered are Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges. For Disruptive Behavior, the r-value is 0.170, suggesting a weak positive correlation with

mathematics performance, but the t-value of 0.170 and p-value of 0.784 indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant.

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	0.170	0.170	0.784	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.812	-2.414	0.095	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	0.441	0.852	0.457	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	-0.624	-1.385	0.260	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	0.651	1.485	0.234	Not significant	Do not reject

Lack of Engagement shows a stronger negative correlation with an r-value of -0.812; however, the t-value of -2.414 and p-value of 0.095 indicate that this relationship is not significant either. Difficulty with Transitions has an r-value of 0.441, showing a moderate positive correlation, with a t-value of 0.852 and a p-value of 0.457, also not significant. Communication Barriers show a negative correlation with an r-value of -0.624, a t-value of -1.385, and a p-value of 0.260, indicating no significant relationship. Social-Emotional Challenges have an r-value of 0.651, indicating a moderate positive correlation, but the t-value of 1.485 and p-value of 0.234 suggest that this relationship is not statistically significant. Overall, the analysis indicates that none of the examined constructs, Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges have a statistically significant relationship with mathematics performance.

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	0.148	0.259	0.812	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	0.726	1.827	0.165	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.109	-0.191	0.861	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	0.608	1.326	0.277	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	-0.632	-1.414	0.252	Not significant	Do not reject

The data in Table 9 explores the relationship between various aspects of inclusive classroom behavior and science performance, using

correlation coefficients (r-values), t-values, and p-values to determine significance. The constructs examined include Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges. For Disruptive Behavior, the r-value is 0.148, indicating a weak positive correlation with science performance. However, the t-value of 0.259 and p-value of 0.812 show that this relationship is not statistically significant. Lack of Engagement has a stronger positive correlation with an r-value of 0.726, but the t-value of 1.827 and p-value of 0.165 indicate that this relationship is not significant. Difficulty with Transitions has an r-value of -0.109, showing a weak negative correlation, with a t-value of -0.191 and a p-value of 0.861, which is not significant. Communication Barriers show a moderate positive correlation with an r-value of 0.608, but the t-value of 1.326 and p-value of 0.277 suggest that this relationship is also not significant. Social-Emotional Challenges have an r-value of -0.632, indicating a moderate negative correlation, but the t-value of -1.414 and p-value of 0.252 indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant either. Overall, the data indicates that none of the examined constructs, Disruptive Behavior, Lack of Engagement, Difficulty with Transitions, Communication Barriers, and Social-Emotional Challenges have a statistically significant relationship with science performance. Despite some moderate correlations, the statistical tests do not support a significant link between these behaviors and science performance in this context

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented, analysis reveals that learners face several moderate to significant challenges in inclusive classroom behaviors, including disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional issues. Notably, communication barriers pose the most substantial challenge, impacting students' abilities to interact and engage effectively in the classroom. Despite these obstacles, statistical analyses indicate that these behavioral issues do not significantly influence academic performance across English, Mathematics, and Science. The lack of statistically significant correlations suggests that these behaviors, while impactful in the classroom environment, do not directly undermine academic achievement, allowing students to maintain satisfactory performance levels. This resilience could be attributed to effective classroom management and instructional strategies that help mitigate the potential adverse effects of these behaviors on learning outcomes. The findings highlight the importance of continued support and tailored interventions to address behavioral challenges while maintaining educational quality and student engagement.

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