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**Article****Encouraging Positive Behavior in the Classrooms in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of behavioral issues on students in inclusive classrooms. Learners experience moderate to slightly higher levels of challenges such as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulties with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional struggles. Despite these challenges, statistical analysis reveals no significant relationship between behavioral problems and academic achievement. This indicates that such behaviors do not hinder students' performance in academic subjects. The effectiveness of current teaching strategies and the supportive learning environment is reflected in the consistently strong academic results across disciplines. These findings demonstrate that students can achieve academic success even when facing behavioral difficulties, highlighting the value of existing educational approaches and interventions. The study emphasizes the importance of sustaining and enhancing these instructional methods to support all learners. It also suggests that educators and policymakers should continue offering targeted support and individualized interventions to address behavioral challenges while fostering academic growth. The limited effect of behavioral issues on academic outcomes supports the development of comprehensive strategies aimed at creating inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environments. Finally, the study recommends exploring innovative educational practices to further improve both behavioral and academic success, ensuring the holistic development of students in inclusive settings.

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

**Introduction**

Special education is a broad area of education focused on providing tailored support and services to students with various learning difficulties, disabilities, or exceptionalities, helping them succeed academically (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021). Roldan et al. (2021) highlight that children in special education often require additional assistance and accommodations to access the curriculum, actively participate in classroom activities, and reach their full academic, social, and emotional potential

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(Roldan et al., 2021; Kuutti et al., 2022). Special education acknowledges the unique differences among students, recognizing that each individual has distinct abilities, needs, and learning styles (Kasirer & Shnitzer-Meirovich, 2021). Moreover, its goal is to ensure that every student, regardless of intellectual ability, receives a free and customized education tailored to their specific needs (Brussino, 2020).

Recent research emphasizes the critical importance of inclusive classroom management not only in special education settings but also in schools with diverse student populations (Garrote et al., 2020; Francisco et al., 2020; Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2023). Effective management strategies foster an environment where all students feel valued, respected, and welcomed (Zulela et al., 2022). This sense of belonging enhances relationships between students and teachers, leading to improved academic performance, greater motivation, and increased engagement (Van Herpen et al., 2020). Inclusion also promotes the social and emotional development of students by teaching vital life skills such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and cooperation (Blewitt et al., 2021).

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing inclusive classroom management practices (Oskarsdottir et al., 2020). By establishing clear rules, routines, and procedures, educators create an organized learning environment that maximizes instructional time and minimizes disruptions (Iqbal et al., 2021). An inclusive classroom allows teachers to differentiate instruction, provide individualized support, and address the diverse needs of all students (Evans et al., 2021). Research shows a strong link between effective management strategies and higher teacher job satisfaction, retention, and professional growth (Buonomo et al., 2020; Ramirez-Montoya et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, inclusive education holds significant importance, supported by numerous laws and policies such as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities and the Inclusive Education Policy Framework. These are further reinforced by the Constitution and other legislative measures. Despite these efforts, substantial challenges persist in implementing inclusive practices, particularly in special education. Efficient classroom management is essential to overcome these obstacles and to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, receive education that is responsive to their individual needs.

## Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between inclusive classroom behaviors and academic performance across multiple institutions. Data were gathered through questionnaires developed based on the frameworks of Sprague & Walker (2005), Ladd (2009), and Weissberg et al. (2011). These questionnaires covered various aspects such as classroom management, disruptive behavior, behavioral interventions, and social-emotional learning, providing a thorough exploration of student behavior and academic outcomes. Both teachers and students participated as respondents, offering a well-rounded perspective on classroom dynamics. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," enabling a detailed assessment of agreement levels related to behavior and academic performance. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software with a 0.05 significance

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threshold to identify correlations. The findings aim to inform the development of a strategic plan focused on enhancing instructional support and fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment for students with special needs, ultimately contributing to a globally competitive education system.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1. Disruptive Behavior

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student frequently interrupts the class or others' learning activities.	3.10	MA
Student refuses to follow classroom rules or instructions.	3.05	MA
Student engages in physical aggression or disruptive outbursts.	3.18	MA
Student consistently distracts peers during lessons or group work.	2.90	MA
Student consistently disrupts the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning.	3.05	MA
Grand Mean	3.06	MA

Table 1 presents the extent of disruptive behavior among students. The grand mean across all behaviors is 3.06, indicating a moderate level of agreement that these disruptive behaviors are present. Specifically, the highest mean score is for physical aggression or disruptive outbursts at 3.18, suggesting that such behaviors are slightly more prevalent or observed compared to others. Close behind, students frequently interrupting the class or others' learning activities have a mean score of 3.10, indicating a notable frequency of this behavior as well. The other behaviors, including refusing to follow classroom rules or instructions and consistently disrupting the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning, both have a mean score of 3.05. The lowest mean score, 2.90, relates to students consistently distracting peers during lessons or group work, implying it is slightly less common than the other behaviors but still present to a moderate extent. Overall, these scores reflect a consistent presence of disruptive behaviors in the classroom setting, each occurring with moderate frequency.

Table 2. Engagement

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student appears disinterested or passive during instructional activities.	3.23	MA
Student rarely volunteers or participates in class discussions.	2.92	MA
Student frequently appears distracted or off-task during lessons.	3.00	MA
Student exhibits limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities.	3.23	MA
Student consistently demonstrates a complete disengagement from classroom activities, regardless of instructional strategies used.	3.05	MA
Grand Mean	3.09	MA

Table 2 present the data on the level of student engagement in the classroom. The grand mean for these behaviors is 3.09, suggesting a moderate level of agreement that these forms of disengagement are observable among students. Two specific behaviors have the highest mean scores of 3.23, students appearing disinterested or passive during instructional activities and students exhibiting limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities. These high scores indicate that these forms of disengagement are particularly prevalent, pointing to a possible underlying issue with how instructional activities resonate with students or their general motivation levels.

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Slightly lower, but still significant, is the mean score of 3.05 for students consistently demonstrating complete disengagement from classroom activities, regardless of instructional strategies used. This suggests that a significant number of students remain disengaged despite varied teaching approaches, which could highlight a need for more tailored or innovative engagement strategies. The mean scores for students rarely volunteering or participating in class discussions and students frequently appearing distracted or off-task during lessons are 2.92 and 3.00, respectively. These figures suggest moderate issues with active participation and attention during class but are slightly less pronounced than the other aspects of engagement. Overall, the consistent presence of these engagement issues, as indicated by the scores, suggests that strategies to increase student interaction, motivation, and interest in classroom activities might be necessary.

Table 3. Difficulty with Transitions

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student requires frequent reminders to transition between activities.	3.25	MA
Student exhibits mild resistance or reluctance to transition.	3.05	MA
Student experiences moderate difficulty with transitions, leading to minor disruptions.	3.16	MA
Student struggles significantly with transitions, leading to noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time.	3.05	MA
Student experiences extreme difficulty with transitions, resulting in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions.	3.10	MA
Grand Mean	3.12	MA

Table 3 focuses on the issues related to students' difficulty with transitions between classroom activities. The grand mean for these behaviors is 3.12, suggesting a generally moderate level of difficulty across various transition-related behaviors. The behavior scoring highest is the need for frequent reminders to transition between activities, with a mean of 3.25. Students exhibiting mild resistance or reluctance to transition, and those struggling significantly with transitions leading to noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time, both received a mean score of 3.05. These issues, while moderate, point to the need for strategic intervention to assist these students in handling changes more effectively. Students experiencing moderate difficulty with transitions that lead to minor disruptions have a mean score of 3.16. This score is slightly higher and aligns closely with students experiencing extreme difficulty with transitions, which result in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions, scored at 3.10. Both sets of data suggest that while not overwhelming, these transition difficulties are sufficiently significant to impact classroom dynamics and learning efficiency. Overall, the data implies that transition difficulties are a common issue that moderately affects the classroom environment. Addressing these challenges might require targeted strategies, such as structured routines, clear and consistent signals for transitions, and possibly interventions tailored to students who show higher levels of distress during these times.

Table 4 present the data on the communication barriers among students. The grand mean for these barriers is 3.39 which described as moderately agree, suggesting a significant but not overwhelming consensus on the presence of communication

challenges. The highest mean score, 3.62, is for students who exhibit limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts.

Table 4. Communication Barriers

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student demonstrates occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally.	3.54	A
Student exhibits limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts.	3.62	A
Student experiences moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication.	3.05	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty communicating verbally or nonverbally, impacting interactions with peers and understanding of instructional content.	3.45	A
Student experiences severe communication barriers, significantly impairing participation in classroom activities and social interactions.	3.28	MA
Grand Mean	3.39	MA

Following closely, students demonstrating occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally have a mean score of 3.54. Significant difficulties in both verbal and nonverbal communication, which impact interactions with peers and comprehension of instructional content, are also evident, with a mean score of 3.45. Students experiencing moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication are scored at 3.05. Lastly, severe communication barriers that significantly impair participation in classroom activities and social interactions have a mean of 3.28. Overall, the data highlights a spectrum of communication barriers impacting students' academic and social experiences. This suggests a need for targeted support strategies, such as speech and language therapy, social skills training, and possibly alternative communication methods or technologies, to assist students in overcoming these barriers and enhancing their educational outcomes.

Table 5. Social-Emotional Challenges

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student occasionally struggles with regulating emotions in certain situations.	3.45	A
Student exhibits mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment.	3.25	MA
Student experiences moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions.	3.32	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, impacting overall classroom climate.	3.15	MA
Student experiences severe social-emotional challenges, requiring extensive support and intervention to participate in classroom activities effectively.	3.25	MA
Grand Mean	3.28	MA

Table 5 present the data on social-emotional challenges faced by students, with overall grand mean of 3.28 which verbally describes as moderately agree. The highest mean score is 3.45 for students who occasionally struggle with regulating emotions in specific situations, which falls under the "Agree" (A) category. Scores that highlight mild to moderate difficulties include managing frustration or disappointment and dealing with emotional regulation and social interactions, with mean scores of 3.25 and 3.32, respectively. A more concerning aspect reflected in the data is the significant difficulty

some students demonstrate in managing emotions or interacting with peers, scored at 3.15, impacting the overall classroom climate. This level of challenge can create a more substantial disruption, necessitating targeted strategies to help affected students integrate effectively and maintain a conducive learning environment. Lastly, students facing severe social-emotional challenges, requiring extensive support and intervention, are given a mean score of 3.25. This score underscores the necessity for robust support systems, such as counseling, behavioral interventions, and possibly collaborative efforts involving teachers, parents, and mental health professionals to ensure these students can participate effectively in classroom activities. Overall, the prevalence of these social-emotional challenges highlights the importance of integrating social-emotional learning and support frameworks within educational settings to address and mitigate these issues effectively, ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed both academically and socially.

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