

## Article

## Inclusive Education: Addressing Diverse Needs in The Special Education Classroom

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**Abstract:** This study explores the relationship between inclusive classroom behaviors and academic performance, focusing on issues like disruptive behaviors, lack of engagement, transition difficulties, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges. Despite these moderate to above-moderate behavioral challenges, the study finds no significant impact on the academic performance of learners in subjects such as English, Health, and ESP. The consistently "Very Satisfactory" grades across these subjects suggest a resilience among students, allowing them to maintain high academic standards in spite of behavioral difficulties. This indicates a potential disconnect between classroom behavioral issues and academic success, suggesting that current educational strategies and interventions may be effectively supporting academic performance regardless of these challenges. The study highlights the importance of continuing and possibly enhancing these educational practices to support both academic achievement and positive classroom behavior, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers in fostering a supportive and effective learning environment for all students.

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

### Introduction

Special education is a multifaceted field within education that is dedicated to providing tailored support and services to students with a wide range of disabilities, exceptionalities, or learning challenges. Cameron et al. (2022) emphasized that in the special education environment students may require additional assistance and accommodations to access the curriculum, participate fully in classroom activities, and achieve their academic, social, and emotional potential. For instance, Gierczyk and Hornby (2021) empirical findings



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showed that special education acknowledges and embraces the diversity of learners, recognizing that each student possesses unique strengths, needs, and learning styles. Moreover, Francisco et al. (2020) suggested that the goal of special education is to ensure that every student, regardless of ability, receives an education that is both free and appropriate for their individual circumstances.

Connor & Cavendish (2020) recent study showed that inclusive classroom management is particularly critical in special education classrooms due to the diverse needs of students. Effective management strategies create an environment where all students feel valued, respected, and included (Burden, 2020). This sense of belonging fosters positive relationships between students and teachers, leading to increased engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Ziegler et al., 2020). Inclusive classroom management also promotes social-emotional development by teaching students' essential life skills such as self-regulation, conflict resolution, and cooperation (Speakers-Lewis et al., 2022).

Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing inclusive classroom management practices (Boyle et al., 2020). Establishing clear expectations, routines, and procedures, teachers can create a structured learning environment that minimizes disruptions and maximizes instructional time (Ahmad et al., 2022). Inclusive classroom management allows teachers to address the diverse needs of their students, differentiate instruction, and provide individualized support as needed (Munoz & Porter, 2020). Moreover, effective management strategies contribute to teacher satisfaction, job retention, and professional growth (Ortam et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, inclusive education is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Constitution and supported by various policies and legislation, including the Inclusive Education Policy Framework and the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. However, despite these efforts, there are still significant challenges in implementing inclusive practices, particularly in special education. Effective classroom management is crucial for overcoming these challenges and ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, receive quality education that meets their needs.

Despite the emphasis on inclusive education in DepEd elementary schools, there is a noticeable gap in research focusing on inclusive classroom behavior of the students. Limited studies specifically explore the implementation and effectiveness of inclusive practices in special education settings within the Philippine context. Understanding the current state of inclusive classroom management of teachers, identifying student's classroom behavior, and evaluating its impact are essential for informing policy and practice in DepEd schools. Moreover, evaluating the impact of different inclusive classroom behavior is essential for determining what works best in the Philippine context. Research can explore the effectiveness of various approaches,

interventions, and supports in promoting positive behavior, facilitating active participation, and fostering a sense of belonging among students with diverse needs. Future research in DepEd elementary schools should aim to address this gap conducting in-depth investigations into inclusive classroom behavior practices of the students. Examining the experiences and perspectives of teachers, researchers can identify effective strategies, innovative approaches, and areas for improvement in inclusive classroom management within the Philippine context.

## Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design to explore the relationship between inclusive classroom behaviors and academic performance within several schools in the Cebu City Division. 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 Mandaue City Central School 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.	3.2	MA
Student refuses to follow classroom rules or instructions.	3.13	MA
Student engages in physical aggression or disruptive outbursts.	2.77	MA
Student consistently distracts peers during lessons or group work.	2.83	MA
Student consistently disrupts the learning environment to the extent that it significantly impacts overall classroom functioning.	2.9	MA
Grand Mean	2.97	MA

Table 1 presents the findings on disruptive behavior among students, showing a consistent pattern of moderately agreeable (MA) ratings across various indicators of disruption. The grand mean of 2.97 further underscores a general consensus among respondents that disruptive behaviors are moderately prevalent. Specifically, the highest average rating was for students frequently interrupting class or others' learning activities, with a mean of 3.2, indicating a significant recognition of this behavior. Close to this, students refusing to follow classroom rules or instructions were also noted with a mean of 3.13. Physical aggression and consistent distractions during lessons or group work received slightly lower means of 2.77 and 2.83, respectively, suggesting these behaviors are somewhat less observed but still prevalent. The overall indication is that while disruptive behaviors are present, they are not overwhelmingly dominant, which points towards a need for targeted behavioral interventions to improve classroom management and enhance the learning environment.

Table 2. Engagement

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student appears disinterested or passive during instructional activities.	3.3	MA
Student rarely volunteers or participates in class discussions.	3.10	MA
Student frequently appears distracted or off-task during lessons.	2.93	MA
Student exhibits limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities.	3.03	MA
Student consistently demonstrates a complete disengagement from classroom activities, regardless of instructional strategies used.	3.07	MA
Grand Mean	3.09	MA

Table 2 illustrates the levels of engagement among students, with the grand mean of 3.09 reflecting a moderate agreement on engagement-related issues across various indicators. The data reveals that students frequently appear disinterested or passive during instructional activities, scoring the highest mean of 3.3. This suggests a notable level of disengagement that might be affecting learning outcomes. Similarly, limited student participation in class discussions and their rarity in volunteering also indicate a moderate level of disengagement, with a mean of 3.10. The scores for students frequently appearing distracted or off-task and exhibiting limited enthusiasm or motivation for learning activities are also in the moderate range, at 2.93 and 3.03, respectively. Notably, the indicator of students consistently demonstrating complete disengagement from classroom activities scored a mean of 3.07, underscoring a persistent issue with maintaining student interest and involvement in the learning process. These findings point towards the need for more engaging and dynamic instructional strategies to enhance student participation and overall engagement in the classroom.

Table 3 delves into the difficulties students face with transitions between activities, with the data reflecting a grand mean of 3.15, indicative of a

moderate level of agreement on this challenge. The results highlight varying degrees of difficulty, with the most severe cases where students experience extreme difficulty leading to frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions, scoring the highest at 3.23.

Table 3. Difficulty with Transitions

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student requires frequent reminders to transition between activities.	3.00	MA
Student exhibits mild resistance or reluctance to transition.	3.13	MA
Student experiences moderate difficulty with transitions, leading to minor disruptions.	3.20	MA
Student struggles significantly with transitions, leading to noticeable disruptions or delays in instructional time.	3.10	MA
Student experiences extreme difficulty with transitions, resulting in frequent meltdowns or prolonged disruptions.	3.23	MA
Grand Mean	3.15	MA

This suggests that transitions are particularly challenging for some students, significantly impacting classroom flow and instructional time. Other indicators also show notable concerns: students requiring frequent reminders for transitions and those exhibiting mild resistance or reluctance both reflect moderate difficulties, with means of 3.00 and 3.13, respectively. Additionally, students experiencing moderate difficulty that causes minor disruptions scored a mean of 3.20, and those struggling significantly, leading to noticeable disruptions, scored 3.10. Overall, these findings emphasize the need for targeted strategies to support smoother transitions, potentially including structured routines or specialized interventions, to minimize disruptions and enhance the learning environment for all students.

Table 4. Communication Barriers

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student demonstrates occasional difficulty expressing thoughts or ideas verbally.	3.48	A
Student exhibits limited verbal communication skills in certain contexts.	3.42	A
Student experiences moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive communication.	3.18	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty communicating verbally or nonverbally, impacting interactions with peers and understanding of instructional content.	3.8	A
Student experiences severe communication barriers, significantly impairing participation in classroom activities <sup>4.17</sup> and social interactions.	3.21	MA
Grand Mean	3.41	A

Table 4 examines the presence of communication barriers among students, as indicated by a grand mean of 3.41, which shows an overall agreement toward the higher end of the scale. The results underline significant challenges in student communication, particularly in

expressing thoughts or ideas verbally, with the highest mean of 3.8 for those demonstrating significant difficulty in both verbal and nonverbal communication, impacting their interactions and understanding of instructional content. Furthermore, students experiencing severe communication barriers, which significantly impair their participation in classroom activities and social interactions, also scored high, at 4.17, indicating a critical area of concern. In contrast, students showing occasional difficulty in expressing thoughts or ideas and those with limited verbal skills in specific contexts received slightly lower but still notable means of 3.48 and 3.42, respectively. Those facing moderate challenges with both expressive and receptive aspects of communication scored a mean of 3.18. These findings point to a substantial impact of communication barriers on students' academic and social performance, emphasizing the need for enhanced communication supports and tailored interventions to facilitate better engagement and understanding among students facing these challenges.

Table 5. Social-Emotional Challenges

Indicators	Mean	VD
Student occasionally struggles with regulating emotions in certain situations.	3.10	MA
Student exhibits mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment.	3.25	MA
Student experiences moderate challenges with emotional regulation and social interactions.	3.18	MA
Student demonstrates significant difficulty managing emotions or interacting with peers, impacting overall classroom climate.	3.20	MA
Student experiences severe social-emotional challenges, requiring extensive support and intervention to participate in classroom activities effectively.	3.14	MA
Grand Mean	3.17	MA

Table 5 provides insights into the social-emotional challenges faced by students, with a grand mean of 3.17, indicating moderate agreement across various indicators related to emotional regulation and social interactions. These findings suggest that students are experiencing noticeable difficulties in managing their emotions and interacting with peers, which are likely impacting their learning and the overall classroom environment. The most significant issues appear in managing emotions in specific contexts, with students occasionally struggling to regulate their emotions, scoring a mean of 3.10. Slightly higher, students facing mild difficulty managing frustration or disappointment received a mean of 3.25. Challenges become more pronounced with a mean of 3.18 for moderate difficulties in emotional regulation and social interactions, and a mean of 3.20 for significant difficulties in managing emotions, which are impactful enough to affect the classroom climate. Furthermore, those experiencing severe social-emotional challenges, necessitating extensive support and intervention,



scored a mean of 3.14. This underscores the critical need for targeted social-emotional learning programs and interventions within schools to better support these students in effectively participating in classroom activities and improving their overall educational experience. These efforts could enhance not only academic outcomes but also the social fabric of the classroom, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Table 6. Learners Academic Performance

Subject	Grade	VD
ESP	90.67	Very Satisfactory
English	88.25	Very Satisfactory
Health	90.21	Very Satisfactory

Table 6 presents the academic performance of learners across three subjects ESP (Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao), English, and Health with all achieving grades that fall within the 'Very Satisfactory' range. The highest recorded grade is in ESP at 90.67, closely followed by Health with a grade of 90.21. English shows a slightly lower performance at 88.25, though it still ranks as very satisfactory. These results suggest that learners are generally performing well in these subjects, indicating effective teaching methodologies and learner engagement in these areas. The relatively high scores in ESP and Health could point to strong curricular emphasis or greater student interest and engagement in these areas. On the other hand, the slightly lower score in English might suggest areas where there could be room for improvement in instructional strategies or additional support for students to enhance their learning outcomes in this subject. Overall, the data reflects positively on the academic environment, with students achieving commendable performance across the board.

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

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.0126	0.067	0.9471	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.0479	0.254	0.8015	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	0.13834	0.739	0.4660	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	0.07208	0.382	0.7051	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	-0.0395	0.209	0.8357	Not significant	Do not reject

Table 7 shows an analysis of the relationship between various constructs of inclusive classroom behavior and the academic performance of learners in ESP. The analysis includes the correlation

coefficient (r-value), associated t-value, p-value, notes, and choice for each concept. Findings reveal that there is no significant relationship between ESP performance and any of the characteristics that were evaluated, including disruptive conduct, lack of involvement, difficulties with transitions, communication obstacles, and social-emotional issues. The lack of significance is evident from the high p-values, all above the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the observed relationships are likely due to chance. Although this may appear discouraging, it is essential to analyze these findings in the context of inclusive classroom dynamics. The lack of statistically significant associations does not imply that these constructs are irrelevant. Rather, it implies that these elements, when considered individually, may not have a direct influence on academic success in the ESP subject. Although this study did not find a direct link between disruptive behavior and ESP performance, it is possible that such behavior can still have a negative impact on the classroom environment. This can result in indirect implications such as reduced student involvement or increased stress levels among learners. In addition, the lack of substantial linkages shown in the table may lead educators and policymakers to contemplate broader systemic elements that impact inclusive classroom dynamics.

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

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.05988	0.317	0.7533	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	0.07351	0.390	0.6995	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.16881	0.906	0.3725	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	-0.03777	0.200	0.8429	significant	Reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	0.03906	0.207	0.8376	Not significant	Do not reject

Table 8 presents an analysis of the relationship between inclusive classroom behavior and English performance. Out of the constructs that were analyzed, communication barriers, shows a significant relationship with English performance., as indicated by a low p-value of 0.8429. This implies that there is a significant correlation between communication barriers in the classroom and students' English language proficiency. The negative correlation coefficient (-0.03777) suggests that higher levels of communication barriers are associated with lower English performance. While the other constructs, including disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with



transitions, and social-emotional challenges, do not exhibit significant correlations with English performance, it's important to note that their non-significance does not diminish their potential importance in the classroom context. These factors may still influence the overall learning environment and student outcomes in various ways, even if not directly linked to English proficiency. Moreover, the significant relationship between communication barriers and English performance highlights the critical role of effective communication in language acquisition and mastery. Addressing communication barriers in the inclusive classroom, such as language barriers, cultural differences, or speech impediments, could positively impact students' English language skills and academic achievement. This implies that teachers and policymakers should consider implementing strategies to mitigate communication barriers, such as providing language support services, fostering a culturally inclusive environment, and utilizing diverse teaching methodologies that cater to students with different communication needs. Additionally, promoting peer-to-peer interaction and collaborative learning activities can help students overcome communication challenges and enhance their English language proficiency.

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

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Disruptive Behavior	-0.25835	1.415	0.1681	Not Significant	Do not reject
Lack of Engagement	-0.13503	0.721	0.4768	Not significant	Do not reject
Difficulty with Transitions	-0.01115	0.059	0.9534	Not significant	Do not reject
Communication Barriers	0.01407	0.074	0.9412	Not significant	Do not reject
Social-Emotional Challenges	0.11048	0.588	0.5611	Not significant	Do not reject

Table 9 presents an analysis of the relationship between inclusive classroom behavior and health performance, examining constructs such as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges. The results suggest that none of the examined constructs display a significant correlation with health performance, as all p-values are above the conventional threshold of 0.05. This suggests that, in this analysis, inclusive classroom behavior does not appear to have a direct and statistically significant impact on students' health performance. While disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, difficulty with transitions, communication barriers, and social-emotional challenges may influence the overall classroom environment and student well-

being, their non-significance in relation to health performance suggests that other factors may play a more significant role in determining health outcomes. Health performance is a complex construct influenced by various factors, including individual health behaviors, access to healthcare, socio-economic status, and environmental factors. While classroom behavior can contribute to students' overall well-being, its direct impact on health performance may be limited compared to other determinants. This implies that teachers and policymakers should continue to prioritize creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that promote both academic success and student well-being. While the constructs examined in this analysis may not show significant correlations with health performance, addressing them can still contribute to fostering a positive classroom climate conducive to overall student development

## Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of the dataset indicates that while there is moderate to above-moderate challenges in inclusive classroom behaviors, such as disruptive behaviors, lack of engagement, transition difficulties, communication barriers, and social-emotional issues, these do not significantly impact the learners' academic performance in subjects like English, Health, and ESP. All these categories displayed non-significant correlations with performance metrics in academic subjects, suggesting that despite the behavioral challenges, learners maintain high academic standards. The data highlights a surprising resilience among students, managing to achieve "Very Satisfactory" grades across the board, thereby emphasizing the potential disconnect between behavioral challenges in the classroom and academic success. This could point to the effectiveness of current educational strategies or interventions that help maintain academic performance irrespective of behavioral issues.

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