

Approaches Of Special Education Teachers In Transforming Behaviorally Challenged Learners

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the behavioral management approaches employed by Special Education Teachers (SPET) and receiving teachers in transforming behaviorally challenged learners. The research sought to identify common challenging behaviors, the behavioral management approaches used, the significant relationship between behaviors and approaches, challenges encountered, and to propose interventions for teachers. The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents were a total of 153 teachers from various elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Norte, composed of 26 Special Education Teachers and 127 receiving teachers. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire and analyzed using statistical treatments such as weighted mean, frequency count, ranking, and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that common challenging behaviors were rated as "challenging" or "a bit challenging," while all behavioral management approaches were consistently applied, rated as "always applied". There was a significant relationship between the behaviors and the approaches, with a positive correlation. The top challenges encountered by teachers included limited resources, difficulty with parental involvement, and lack of special skills. The study proposes a one-day training on participatory approaches for managing behaviorally challenged learners.

Keywords: *Approaches, special education teachers, receiving teachers, transforming, behaviorally challenged learners.*

Introduction

The classroom is a dynamic environment where teachers, learners, and their interactions all influence student behavior. The goal of any classroom is effective teaching and learning, which requires transforming negative behaviors into positive ones. This is a constant focus for teachers (Parsonson, 2012). Over the past three decades, educational policy, influenced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has shifted toward including children with special needs in mainstream classrooms. In countries like Australia, legislation ensures that all students with disabilities have access to and can participate in education on the same basis as their peers without disabilities (Board of Studies, Teaching and National Standards NSW, 2014; DEC Disability Action Plan 2011–2015). In the United States, legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) promotes a "least restrictive environment," positioning the general education classroom as an optimal space for all learners. Similarly, in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) promotes inclusive education through its K-12 program to address the varied realities of learners.

Research has shown that challenging student behavior has detrimental effects on both students and educators, leading to decreased academic achievement and increased drop-out rates. Studies have identified that children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral disturbances (EBD) are particularly challenging to support. Behavioral problems such as disruptive behavior, impulsivity, and tantrums are more common among children with disabilities and negatively affect their academic success (O'Connor et al., 2016; Byrd and Alexander, 2020). A high prevalence of behavioral problems, including self-injurious and aggressive behaviors, has been found among students (Nicholls et al., 2020). Given these challenges, it is important for teachers to understand their perceptions of challenging behaviors and to reflect on their own beliefs to better address them.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method using a descriptive-correlational design. This approach was chosen to identify the characteristics of the variables and to examine the statistical relationships between them.

The descriptive component of the study identified and detailed the common challenging behaviors of learners, such as disruptive/anti-social, self-absorbed, communication disturbance, social relating, and anxiety. It also documented the behavioral management approaches used by teachers, including democratic, assertive, preventive, and intervention strategies. The correlational component, on the other hand, sought to determine if a significant statistical relationship existed between the common behaviors and the approaches used to manage them.

The respondents of the study included a total of 153 teachers from different elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Norte. This group was composed of 26 Special Education Teachers (SPET) and 127 Receiving Teachers. A total enumeration was used for the Special Education Teachers, while a purposive sampling technique was applied to the receiving teachers. A survey questionnaire was the main research instrument which was adopted from Amstand and Muller (2020) and Ganaban (2023).

Results And Discussions

Common Behaviors of Learners that SPET and Receiving Teachers Find Challenging. This section identifies the common challenging behaviors of learners across five domains: disruptive/anti-social, self-absorbed, communication disturbance, social relating, and anxiety.

a. Disruptive/Anti-Social. This section highlights the disruptive or anti-social behaviors often observed by Special Education Teachers (SPET) and receiving teachers. The overall weighted mean of 2.71, interpreted as “Challenging,” shows that such behaviors frequently interfere with classroom instruction. The most common behavior noted was “impatient, impulsive, acts before thinking” (weighted mean = 2.90), while the least common was “throws or breaks objects” (weighted mean = 2.39). The findings suggest that impulsivity and impatience were the hardest to manage because they occurred regularly and disrupted lessons. Learners who constantly blurted out answers or moved around the room without permission caused ongoing distractions that affected the whole class. On the other hand, throwing or breaking objects, though serious, happened less often and was easier for teachers to manage once addressed. These results were consistent with Amstad and Muller (2020), who noted that impulsivity and attention-seeking were among the most stressful behaviors for teachers. Peras et al. (2023) also highlighted that positive reinforcement and calm, consistent strategies are effective in addressing disruptive behavior. This aligns with the Child Protection Policy (2012), which advocates for positive discipline over punitive measures.

Table 1

Challenging Common Behaviors of Learners along
Disruptive/Anti-Social

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Has temper tantrums (e.g. stamps feet, slams doors)	2.74	C
2. Is impatient, impulsive, acts before thinking	2.90	C
3. Is noisy or boisterous, is very active or restless, and can't stand still	2.81	C
4. Is stubborn, disobedient, or uncooperative	2.83	C
5. Is very bossy, and whines or complains a lot	2.57	C
6. Kicks or hits others and tries to manipulate or provoke others	2.56	C
7. Seeks attention more than others.	2.84	C
8. Throws or breaks objects	2.39	ABC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.71	C

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00

2.50-3.24

1.75-2.49

1.00-1.74

Descriptive Interpretation

Very Challenging (VC)

Challenging (C)

A bit Challenging (ABC)

Not Challenging at All (NCA)

b. Self-absorbed. Self-absorbed behaviors are inward-focused actions that may not disturb others directly but limit a learner's participation and engagement in class. The overall weighted mean was 2.29, interpreted as “A

Bit Challenging.” The highest-rated behavior was “poor attention span” (weighted mean = 2.74), while the lowest was “urinates/soils outside the toilet or plays with feces” (weighted mean = 2.05). This means that poor attention span was the most common challenge, as learners often left tasks unfinished, became easily distracted, or shifted quickly between activities. These behaviors slowed class progress and required constant redirection. In contrast, soiling behaviors were less frequently encountered, possibly because they were already addressed through routines or specific support. The findings aligned with Amstad and Muller (2020), who emphasized that even less extreme behaviors like poor focus still disrupted learning flow. Similarly, Maureal and Villajos (2023) reported that short attention spans were a common difficulty for teachers. The DepEd Child Protection Policy (2012) also supported addressing these issues through patience and positive discipline, highlighting the importance of adjusting strategies rather than using forceful measures.

Table 2

Challenging Common Behaviors of Learners along Self-Absorbed

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Bangs head, hits or bites self, bites others	2.24	ABC
2. Cannot attend to one activity for any length of time, has poor attention span	2.74	C
3. Eats greedily, will do anything to get food (e.g. steals food).	2.15	ABC
4. Eats non-food items (e.g. dirt, grass, soap, etc.), chews or mouths objects or body parts	2.06	ABC
5. Has repeated movements of hands, body, head, or face (e.g. hand flapping or rocking)	2.18	ABC
6. Is distant, in his or her own world	2.48	ABC
7. Screams a lot, becomes overexcited	2.48	ABC
8. Stares at lights or spinning objects	2.22	ABC
9. Urinates and soils outside the toilet, although toilet-trained; smears or plays with feces	2.05	ABC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.29	ABC
Rating Scale: 3.25-4.00 2.50-3.24 1.75-2.49 1.00-1.74		
Descriptive Interpretation <i>Very Challenging (VC)</i> <i>Challenging (C)</i> <i>A bit Challenging (ABC)</i> <i>Not Challenging at All (NCA)</i>		

c. Communication Disturbance. Communication is essential in supporting the growth of behaviorally challenged learners. When learners experience communication disturbances, it can affect classroom instruction and peer interaction. The overall weighted mean was 2.33, interpreted as “A Bit Challenging.” The highest-rated behavior was “speaks in a whisper, high-pitched voice, or other unusual tone or rhythm” (weighted mean = 2.54), while the lowest was “talks to self or imaginary people or objects” (weighted mean = 2.14). This means that unusual speech patterns were the most challenging for teachers, as they made classroom communication less clear and sometimes delayed activities. Learners who spoke in whispers during group work required extra prompting, which disrupted the flow of discussion. In contrast, behaviors like talking to oneself were less disruptive but still affected academic performance, as learners often lost focus and left tasks incomplete. These findings aligned with Amstad and Muller (2020), who reported that communication-related behaviors were generally less stressful for teachers compared to more aggressive behaviors, which matches the “a bit challenging” rating found in this study.

Table 3

Challenging Common Behaviors of Learners along Communication Disturbance

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Gets obsessed with an idea or activity	2.39	ABC
2. Is overly affectionate	2.39	ABC
3. Is unrealistically happy or elated	2.25	ABC
4. Prefers the company of adults or younger children, doesn't mix with his or her own age group.	2.37	ABC
5. Repeats the same word or phrase over and over/repeats back what others say like an echo	2.27	ABC
6. Speaks in a whisper, high-pitched voice, or other unusual tone or rhythm	2.54	C
7. Stands too close to others	2.26	ABC
8. Talks to self or imaginary people or objects	2.14	ABC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.33	ABC

<i>Rating Scale:</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
3.25-4.00	Very Challenging (VC)
2.50-3.24	Challenging (C)
1.75-2.49	A bit Challenging (ABC)
1.00-1.74	Not Challenging at All (NAC)

d. Social Relating. This section addresses how learners connect with others in the classroom, and the difficulties that can lead to isolation. The overall weighted mean is 2.33, interpreted as "A bit challenging". The highest weighted mean is 2.54, indicating that learners who "do not respond to others' feelings" are perceived as the most challenging. The lowest weighted mean is 2.06, for behaviors like "hyperventilates, vomits, has headaches," which are considered "A bit challenging". The implication is that teachers find a lack of empathy or emotional responsiveness to be the most challenging social issue. This is supported by Stevenson et al. (2020), who emphasized that the difficulty of connecting with emotionally unresponsive learners remains a significant challenge for teachers.

Table 4

Challenging Common Behaviors of Learners along Social Relating

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Appears depressed, down, or unhappy	2.17	ABC
2. Avoids eye contact, won't look you straight in the eye	2.42	ABC
3. Doesn't respond to others' feelings	2.54	C
4. Doesn't show affection, resists being cuddled, touched or held	2.37	ABC
5. Hyperventilates, vomits, has headaches, or complains of being sick for no physical reason	2.06	ABC
6. Moves slowly, underactive, does little (e.g. only sits and watches others)	2.33	ABC
7. Prefers to do things alone, tends to be a loner	2.42	ABC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.33	ABC

<i>Rating Scale:</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
3.25-4.00	Very Challenging (VC)
2.50-3.24	Challenging (C)
1.75-2.49	A bit Challenging (ABC)
1.00-1.74	Not challenging at all (NCA)

e. Anxiety. Anxiety related behaviors in learners may not always be visible at first glance, but they can significantly affect a child's ability to learn, participate, and function well in school. These behaviors are often triggered by specific routines, classroom environments, or separation from familiar people. Teachers must understand which behaviors linked to anxiety are most challenging to properly support affected learners. The overall weighted mean is 2.24, interpreted as "A bit challenging." This suggests that anxiety related behaviors are observed among learners, but they are generally manageable with appropriate strategies. The highest weighted mean is 2.44, which corresponds to the behavior "is upset and distressed over small changes in routine or environment," and is interpreted as "A bit challenging." This indicates that even minor adjustments in class structure or environment can trigger emotional distress among learners and pose a significant challenge to teachers. In contrast, the lowest weighted mean is 1.99, referring to the behavior "has a loss of appetite," which is also interpreted as "A bit challenging." While this may not disrupt classroom flow, it may reflect emotional or psychological issues that require attention. The findings showed that some learners became upset when routines changed, such as new seating arrangements, adjusted schedules, or having a different teacher. A learner cried or shut down during an unannounced school event, requiring the teacher to pause class instruction to give support. One receiving teacher also shared that a sudden fire drill caused a student to become very distressed, leading the teacher to focus on calming the learner. In other cases, a learner who refused to eat during lunch or snack time did not disrupt the class but experienced fatigue, irritability, or difficulty focusing later in the day. Teachers observed frequent clinic visits or complaints of stomach pain, which required cooperation with parents and school health personnel. These findings are supported by Stevenson et al. (2020), who noted that many teacher training programs lack preparation for managing anxiety-related behaviors. Similarly, Byrd and Alexander (2020) highlighted the need for compassion and emotional support for learners with special needs. Overall, the results stress the importance of giving teachers practical strategies and consistent routines to help reduce learners' emotional distress.

Table 5
Challenging Common Behaviors of Learners
along Anxiety

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Cries easily for no reason or over small things	2.27	ABC
2. Fears particular things or situations (e.g., the dark, insects)	2.20	ABC
3. Has a loss of appetite	1.99	ABC
4. Is a picky eater	2.14	ABC
5. Is distressed about being alone	2.18	ABC
6. Is excessively distressed if separated from a familiar person	2.27	ABC
7. Is shy	2.43	ABC
8. Is upset and distressed over small changes in routine or environment	2.44	ABC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.24	ABC
<i>Rating Scale:</i>		
3.25-4.00	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	
2.50-3.24	<i>Very Challenging (VC)</i>	
1.75-2.49	<i>Challenging (C)</i>	
1.00-1.74	<i>A bit Challenging (ABC)</i>	
	<i>Not Challenging at All (NCA)</i>	

Employed Approaches in Transforming the Behaviorally Challenged Learners . The collaborative practices that teachers engage in the participating school include dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation.

a. Democratic Approach. The democratic approach in classroom management emphasizes mutual respect, open communication, and active participation. In special education settings, this approach allows learners to express themselves while the teacher sets clear expectations and encourages self-regulation. Understanding how often this approach is applied helps determine its role in managing behaviorally challenged learners. The overall weighted mean of 3.44, interpreted as "Always Applied," shows that teachers regularly use democratic strategies in managing learners with behavioral challenges. The highest mean of 3.52 was observed in two practices: giving learners time to think and formulate responses and providing positive comments, both interpreted as "Always

Applied.” These highlight the consistent use of wait time and positive reinforcement in classrooms. During a recitation, teachers patiently allowed learners such as those with language delays extra time to process and answer to help reduce frustration and prevent outbursts. Positive remarks also encouraged participation and reduced anxiety. The lowest mean of 3.38, though still “Always Applied,” was noted in showing interest in all answers and guiding wrong responses toward the correct one. These may sometimes be less emphasized, especially in time-pressured lessons, but when applied, they foster learner motivation and positive behavior. These findings align with Dumagay (2022), who stressed that involving learners in rule-setting and using calm responses promote classroom harmony. They also support Ginott’s Congruent Communication theory, which advocates for respectful teacher language that validates learners’ feelings. Overall, the results affirm that democratic strategies are not only frequently practiced but also effective in promoting learner dignity, engagement, and classroom order.

Table 6

Employed Approaches in Transforming the Behaviorally
Challenged Learners along Democratic Approach

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Give learners time to think and formulate responses.	3.52	AA
2. Show interest in all answers.	3.38	AA
3. Redirect and guide wrong answers/ideas/behaviors towards a correct one.	3.38	AA
4. Give positive comments or remarks to learners.	3.52	AA
5. Wait for learners to finish an idea before injecting.	3.42	AA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.44	AA
Rating Scale:		
3.25-4.00	Descriptive Interpretation	
2.50-3.24	Always Applied (AA)	
1.75-2.49	Sometimes Applied (SA)	
1.00-1.74	Often Applied (OA)	
	Never Applied (NA)	

b. Assertive Approach. The assertive approach emphasizes clear expectations, consistent consequences, and confident teacher responses. It aims to maintain order while promoting mutual respect and accountability. In the context of special education, this approach helps learners understand boundaries and behavioral standards. The overall weighted mean of 3.45, interpreted as “Always Applied,” indicates that teachers regularly use assertive strategies to address behavioral challenges. The highest mean, 3.54, was for building positive, trusting relationships with learners, showing that teacher-learner rapport is central in behavior management. On the other hand, the lowest mean of 3.26 was for developing a hierarchical system of consequences for inappropriate behavior, though still interpreted as “Always Applied.” The most frequently used practice building trust was evident in teachers’ warm greetings, gentle reminders, and recognition of learners’ small improvements. During morning routines, SPED teachers conducted short individual check-ins to foster belongingness, which promoted cooperation throughout the day. Meanwhile, the lowest-rated strategy, creating a clear system of consequences, may have been less visible in some schools due to the absence of written behavior charts, unclear contracts, or lack of visual aids. In these cases, consequences were often applied verbally and inconsistently, making them less effective. These results align with Ganaban (2023), who noted that teachers often use assertive strategies but apply consequence systems inconsistently depending on age and training. Similarly, Stevenson et al. (2020) highlighted a gap between theoretical training and practical application of structured systems. Overall, the findings emphasize the need to strengthen consequence-based strategies through clear guidelines and support, particularly in SPED contexts.

Table 7

Employed Approaches in Transforming the Behaviorally
Challenged Learners along Assertive Approach

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Build positive, trusting relationships with learners.	3.54	AA
2. Develop a hierarchical system of consequences for inappropriate behavior.	3.26	AA
3. Provide positive reinforcements for learner's desirable behavior.	3.51	AA
4. React confidently and quickly in situation that requires the management of student behavior.	3.42	AA
5. Remind learners of classroom rules.	3.44	AA
6. Impose rules and regulations for learners.	3.51	AA
7. Insist and expect responsible behavior from learners.	3.42	AA
8. Maintain adequate classroom discipline.	3.49	AA
9. Establish a positive discipline system.	3.50	AA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.45	AA
Rating Scale: 3.25-4.00 2.50-3.24 1.75-2.49 1.00-1.74		
Descriptive Interpretation <i>Always Applied (AA)</i> <i>Sometimes Applied (SA)</i> <i>Often Applied (OA)</i> <i>Never Applied (NA)</i>		

c. Preventive Approach. The preventive approach focuses on avoiding behavioral problems before they occur. It includes establishing routines, using visual cues, and organizing the environment to minimize triggers. In special education, this approach helps in creating a structured and safe learning atmosphere, especially for learners with emotional or sensory needs. The overall weighted mean of 3.47, interpreted as "Always Applied," shows that preventive strategies are strongly embedded in classroom practices. The highest mean of 3.56 was for showing respect for learners by listening to their needs and understanding their uniqueness, indicating that teachers in public schools prioritize respect and individualized support as key preventive measures. In contrast, the lowest mean of 3.31 was for making sure learners know expectations through a list of standards and consequences, though still "Always Applied." The most practiced strategy respecting learners' uniqueness was evident in teachers' efforts to address individual needs. A teacher supported a non-verbal learner with autism by creating a "calm corner" to manage sensory overload, preventing meltdowns. Another teacher adjusted group work roles after listening to a student's anxieties, assigning them as "research lead" instead of forcing oral participation. These practices showed how respect and accommodation can prevent disruptive behaviors and boost confidence. Meanwhile, the least applied strategy providing visible standards and consequences was sometimes limited by time constraints or lack of printed materials. In some classrooms, expectations were explained verbally but not posted, which left certain learners unclear about rules and follow-up actions. This highlighted the need for consistent, visible reminders to strengthen preventive approaches. The findings support Ganaban (2023), who emphasized that praise and respect enhance classroom relationships and compliance. Likewise, Alhwaiti (2022) observed that resource-limited schools often lack posted rules or written behavior contracts, reinforcing the present finding that setting clear expectations, though important, may be underemphasized.

Table 8

Employed Approaches in Transforming the Behaviorally
Challenged Learners along Preventive Approach

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Give positive comments or remarks to learners.	3.54	AA
2. Make sure that learners know what I expect of them by giving list of standards and consequences.	3.31	AA

3. Keep learners busy and challenged with the materials I prepare for each meeting.	3.42	AA
4. Show respect for my learners by listening to their needs and understanding their uniqueness.	3.56	AA
5. Improve social dynamics by rearranging the seating arrangements.	3.46	AA
6. Employ collaboration, involvement and interaction with the class when discussing a situation related to the topic.	3.45	AA
7. Give motherly/fatherly advice to learners.	3.54	AA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.47	AA

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation
3.25-4.00	Always Applied (AA)
2.50-3.24	Sometimes Applied (SA)
1.75-2.49	Often Applied (OA)
1.00-1.74	Never Applied (NA)

d. Intervention Approach. The intervention approach refers to strategies used by teachers when a learner is already exhibiting behavior that requires correction or redirection. These strategies are more reactive but necessary in managing challenging behaviors that cannot be prevented. For SPET and receiving teachers, knowing how and when to apply appropriate interventions is crucial to ensure safety, restore order, and support positive behavioral change. The overall weighted mean of 3.39, interpreted as “Always Applied,” shows that intervention strategies are regularly practiced by both SPED and receiving teachers. The highest mean of 3.49 was for giving simple, positive reminders to restate rules, indicating that teachers consistently redirect learners in a clear and encouraging manner. In contrast, the lowest mean of 3.18 was for involving learners in making classroom rules, though still “Always Applied.” The most practiced strategy providing simple reminders helped learners recall expectations without feeling criticized. A SPED teacher calmly said, “Remember, we sit quietly during story time,” to guide a restless learner while maintaining a positive atmosphere. On the other hand, the least applied strategy involving learners in rulemaking was often overlooked, as teachers commonly prepared rules themselves. This limited learner ownership, making some students less motivated to follow them. A Grade 3 learner resisted the “no shouting” rule because they were not part of creating it. This suggests the need to empower learners by involving them in rule-setting, even in simplified ways. These findings are supported by Dumagay (2022), who found that consistent verbal reminders improve rule-following behavior among learners with special needs. They also align with Ginott’s and Dreikurs’ theories, which highlight the value of democratic practices in classroom management. However, the limited use of rule co-creation reflects Ganaban’s (2023) observation that learner participation in decision-making remains low in traditional settings where structure is prioritized over shared responsibility.

Table 9

Employed Approaches in Transforming the Behaviorally
Challenged Learners along Intervention Approach

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Utilize varied techniques and approaches to settle conflict and misunderstanding.	3.44	AA
2. Involve learners in making classroom rules.	3.18	SA
3. Redirect learners to wholesome activities whenever they misbehave.	3.41	AA
4. Give simple, positive reminders to state and restate rules.	3.49	AA
5. Apply behavior modifications for learners.	3.36	AA
6. Encourage cooperation in group activities.	3.42	AA
7. Give rewards as extrinsic motivation to learners.	3.46	AA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.39	AA

Rating Scale:

3.25-4.00
 2.50-3.24
 1.75-2.49
 1.00-1.74

Descriptive Interpretation

Always Applied (AA)
 Sometimes Applied (SA)
 Often Applied (OA)
 Never Applied (NA)

Relationship between Common Behaviors of Learners and the Approaches Employed in Transforming Behaviorally Challenged Learners. The test for significant relationship that may exist between the common behaviors of learners along disruptive, self-absorbed, communication disturbance, social relating and anxiety and the approaches employed in transforming behaviorally challenged in terms of democratic, assertive, preventive and intervention were computed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). The results revealed a significant positive relationship between common behaviors in social relating and the intervention approach ($r = .192, p < .05$). This indicates that as teachers employed intervention strategies, improvements were observed in how learners interacted socially. Similarly, the intervention approach was also positively correlated with anxiety-related behaviors ($r = .263, p < .01$), suggesting that direct interventions were particularly effective in addressing anxiety. Further analysis showed that anxiety behaviors were significantly related to both the assertive approach ($r = .170, p < .05$) and the preventive approach ($r = .159, p = .05$). This means that learners who were prone to distress over small changes in routine could benefit from teachers' use of positive relationships, respect, and clear expectations. The relationship between the assertive approach and anxiety behaviors implied that teachers managed anxious learners through calm, direct, and reassuring strategies. When a student became distressed during a surprise event, an assertive teacher calmly acknowledged their feelings and guided them to breathe deeply, providing security and structure until the student regained composure. The preventive approach was also effective, as teachers proactively reduced anxiety triggers. By creating and presenting a daily visual schedule, a teacher helped learners anticipate activities, reducing uncertainty and preventing emotional distress. Lastly, the intervention approach was strongly linked to both social relating and anxiety. This shows that when behaviors occurred, teachers responded with direct, corrective actions. When a student ignored a crying classmate, the teacher modeled empathy by suggesting supportive actions, teaching social skills in real time rather than resorting to punishment. These findings are consistent with Stueber (2019), who emphasized that positive behavioral interventions support not only classroom management but also reduce teacher stress and burnout. Building respectful and supportive relationships not only helps manage learners' anxiety but also creates a stable environment that benefits both teachers and students.

Table 10

Test for a Significant Relationship between the common Behaviors
 and the Approaches Employed

Common Behaviors	Approaches Employed							
	Democratic Approach		Assertive Approach		Preventive Approach		Intervention Approach	
	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Disruptive/Anti-Social	.1	.1	.0	.3	.1	.1	.0	.3
	1	5	7	6	0	9	7	3
	5	8	4	1	4	9	8	8
Self-Absorbed	.0	.5	.0	.5	.0	.5	.1	.1
	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	0
	0	2	9	5	9	1	2	5
Communication Disturbance	.0	.5	.0	.4	.0	.3	.1	.0

	5	0	6	3	7	8	5	6
	4	5	4	5	1	1	2	1
Social Relating	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
	4	8	3	9	2	1	9	1
	0	5	6	3	7	7	2	7
							*	
Anxiety	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0
	4	6	7	3	5	5	6	0
	9	5	0	6	9	0	3	3
			*		*		*	
							*	

*Correlation is Significant @0.05

**Correlation is Significant @ 0.01

Challenges Encountered by the SPET and Receiving Teachers in Managing the Behaviorally Challenged Learners. Teachers face a range of challenges when managing behaviorally challenged learners, particularly in inclusive or SPED classrooms. Identifying these challenges is essential to inform professional development, policy support, and resource allocation. This section outlines which challenges are most pressing for SPET and receiving teachers based on their actual classroom experiences. The table presents eight identified challenges in behavior management, each evaluated by the teachers using a four-point Likert scale. The frequency was used to rank the most to least experienced difficulties. The data revealed that the most pressing challenge faced by SPET and receiving teachers was the limited availability of resources needed to implement behavior management systems. Without visual aids, reinforcement tools, or behavior charts, teachers struggled to apply consistent and structured strategies. The second-highest challenge was involving parents in addressing learners' behavioral issues. Many parents were unavailable, unresponsive, or unsure how to support interventions at home, which weakened school-based efforts. The third major challenge was the lack of knowledge or specialized skills in handling learners with special needs, especially among receiving teachers who had limited training in managing complex behavioral difficulties. In contrast, the least experienced challenges were seeking advice from superiors, collaborating with colleagues and SPED teachers, and managing time, ranked eighth, seventh, and sixth, respectively. This suggested that teachers generally found school leaders approachable, benefited from professional collaboration, and did not consider time management a major hindrance. These results indicated that while training, resources, and parent involvement remained critical gaps, internal support systems within schools were relatively strong. The findings were consistent with Stevenson et al. (2020), who identified lack of resources and weak parent collaboration as top challenges in SPED settings. Alhwaiti (2022) likewise noted that many teachers lacked training tailored to special education contexts, reflecting the third-ranked concern. On the other hand, the present study's low ranking for time and collaboration challenges contradicted Dumagay (2022), who highlighted these as major barriers. This suggests that in the local school context, established collegial and supervisory support may have helped reduce such concerns.

Table 11

Challenges Encountered by the SPET and
Receiving Teachers

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1. Involving parents in addressing issues and concerns of learners	91	2
2. Employing varied classroom management strategies	76	4.5
3. Seeking advice and support from superiors	50	8
4. Collaboration with other colleagues and SPED teachers	68	7
5. Lack of motivating and interesting learning materials, such as big books, manipulative toys, and tactile materials	76	4.5

6. Lack of knowledge or special skills in handling children with special educational needs and behaviorally challenged learners.	85	3	20
7. Limited resources to implement a behavior management system in the classroom	98	1	
8. Time management/Time constraint	73	6	

Proposed Intervention to help the SPET and the Receiving Teachers in Managing the Behaviorally Challenged Learners. The study revealed that while many learner behaviors were considered “challenging,” subtle ones such as loss of appetite, physical complaints without medical cause, or talking to imaginary figures were often rated lower and may be overlooked. These internalized behaviors, though less disruptive, still affect learning and require sensitive, child-centered interventions that include the learner’s perspective. Findings also showed that teachers consistently apply various approaches but place limited emphasis on involving learners in creating rules and guiding them through mistakes. This reflects a teacher-centered approach that misses opportunities to build responsibility and ownership among students. Furthermore, challenges such as insufficient resources, difficulty engaging parents, and limited specialized training highlight the need for targeted support. To address these gaps, the proposed intervention, “Empowered Intervention: Participatory Approaches for Managing Behaviorally Challenged Learners” promotes learner-centered strategies that actively involve students in developing classroom rules and behavior plans. The intervention, designed to support Special Education Teachers (SPET) and receiving teachers, is directly integrated into the school’s professional development program, the 4-Day School-Based In-Service Training for Teachers (INSET) 2025. This integration is essential since the INSET’s core rationale emphasizes strengthening inclusive instruction and aligning competencies with the “evolving needs of the education system,” while the research confirms an urgent need for specialized knowledge and skills in managing behavioral challenges. Strategically, the intervention will be conducted during the third and fourth days of the training, which focus on inclusion education and intervention strategies for learners with diverse needs. This module provides an ideal platform to address the key gaps identified in the study, particularly by training teachers in low-frequency but vital strategies such as involving learners in rule-making to foster ownership and equipping them to respond to subtle, internalized behaviors (such as loss of appetite or talking to oneself) that are often overlooked in traditional, top-down behavior management systems. By leveraging the existing INSET structure, the school ensures that this professional development is targeted, timely, and directly aligned with Specific Objective 4: to “Apply inclusive and differentiated instructional strategies that cater to diverse learners’ needs.”

Conclusions

Based on the obtained results, the researcher formulated the following conclusions.

1) The most challenging behaviors teachers face are those that are consistently disruptive, such as impatience, impulsivity, and a poor attention span. While other behaviors like communication disturbances and social relating issues are present, they are generally considered “a bit challenging” and are less of a concern for teachers compared to the more disruptive actions.

2) SPET and receiving teachers consistently and frequently employ democratic, assertive, preventive, and intervention-based strategies. They are very successful in building positive relationships, showing respect for learners, and giving positive feedback. However, a significant gap was found in their use of participatory methods, specifically involving learners in creating classroom rules and behavior agreements.

3) There is a significant relationship between anxiety and social relating behaviors and the strategies used, especially intervention, assertive, and preventive approaches, highlighting the importance of responsive and specific strategies in those domains. This indicates that teachers adapt their management style to the specific behavioral needs of the learners.

4) Teachers face three primary challenges: a lack of resources for implementing behavior management systems, difficulty involving parents in their children’s behavioral issues, and a lack of specialized knowledge and skills. Conversely, seeking support from colleagues and superiors is not a major challenge, suggesting a relatively strong internal support network within the schools.

5) The study proposes the “Empowered Intervention: Participatory Approaches for Managing Behaviorally Challenged Learners” to address the identified gaps. This intervention is designed to equip teachers with the skills to involve learners in creating classroom rules and behavioral agreements, thereby addressing the lack of participatory approaches and the need for more specialized skills in this area.

Recommendations

The conclusions lead to the following proposed recommendations:

1) School Administrators may allocate more resources, such as visual aids, behavioral charts, and manipulatives, to support the effective implementation of behavioral management systems in both SPED and regular classrooms.

2) SPET and Receiving Teachers may implement participatory practices by involving students in creating classroom rules and behavioral expectations. This will foster a sense of ownership among the learners and improve their adherence to the rules.

3) Parents and Guardians may work closely with their children's teachers to reinforce school-based strategies at home. This collaboration between home and school can more effectively address and resolve behavioral issues.

4) Division SPED Focal Person may integrate participatory behavior management strategies into training modules and workshops for both preservice and in-service teachers.

5) School Leaders may institutionalize the proposed "Empowered Intervention: Participatory Approaches for Managing Behaviorally Challenged Learners" through the one-day training to ensure consistent, structured, and inclusive behavior management practices across grade levels and learner types.

6) For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct similar studies in different contexts or geographic locations, possibly including other stakeholders such as learners, parents, or guidance counselors, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of behavior management dynamics. They may also explore qualitative approaches to capture deeper insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers and learners regarding behavioral interventions.

Acknowledgment

Grateful acknowledgment is hereby extended to the following who have contributed to the success of this study. First, to our Almighty God, for His abundant grace, wisdom, and guidance. To Cris M. Samante, the researcher's beloved partner, for the prayers, love, care, understanding, and support. To Rosendo and Susana, the researcher's parents, for their continued support and endless inspiration. To Shirley C. Dioneda, EdD, the adviser, for the patient guidance, valuable insights, and steadfast encouragement. To Sonia S. Carbonell, PhD, the Dean of Graduate School, for providing continuous support, guidance, and assistance. To the esteemed members of the Thesis Committee, namely Erlinda J. Porcincula, PhD, Jennifer S. Rubio, PhD, and Daryl I. Quinito, PhD, for their rigorous evaluation, constructive suggestions, and contributions. Finally, to the SPET and receiving teachers for their generous participation, valuable inputs, and collaboration as respondents.

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