

# TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON ADDRESSING THE EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT.** This study examined teachers' perspectives on addressing emotional and behavioral challenges among Special Needs Education (SNEd) learners during the 2024–2025 academic year in selected public elementary SPED centers in Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu Cities. Guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework, Self-Determination Theory, and the Trauma-Informed Educational Framework, the research utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design. A total of 45 SPED teachers from Basak Elementary School – SPED Center, Mandaue City Integrated SPED School, and Lapu-Lapu City Central Elementary School – SPED Center participated in the study. Data were gathered through a validated survey questionnaire focusing on emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners, the extent of strategy implementation, and the influence of professional development and institutional support. Findings revealed that teachers "often" observed emotional and behavioral challenges among learners, and "always" implemented appropriate strategies such as positive behavior support, individualized plans, and structured routines. Professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports were rated to have a "very high" level of influence. A significant moderate positive correlation existed between learner challenges and institutional support, while negligible correlations were found between challenges and implementation, and between implementation and support. These findings highlight the critical role of institutional backing and the need for continuous professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness. Based on the results, an intervention plan was proposed to strengthen support systems, teacher training, and collaborative practices. The study concludes that improving systemic support can significantly influence how teachers manage learners' emotional and behavioral challenges in inclusive SPED settings.

**Keywords:** Special Education, Emotional and Behavioral Challenges, Teacher Perspectives, Intervention Strategies, Professional Development, Institutional Support, SPED Teachers, Inclusive Education, Behavioral Management, Philippines.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learners with special educational needs (LSENs), particularly those with emotional and behavioral challenges, present some of the most significant challenges in the educational system due to their complex emotional, social, and behavioral profiles. In special and inclusive education programs in the Philippines, LSENs are typically categorized based on their specific needs, which may include intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, hearing or visual impairments, and emotional or behavioral disorders, among others. Among these categories, students with emotional challenges often require the most intensive support due to difficulties with self-regulation, interpersonal relationships, and engagement in academic tasks. Their behaviors can manifest as aggression, defiance, withdrawal, anxiety, or impulsivity, behaviors that disrupt not only their learning but also the classroom environment. These challenges call for highly specialized, flexible, and individualized interventions in special education and inclusive classrooms.

Special and inclusive education programs in the Philippines aim to provide equitable access to learning for all students, including LSENs. In inclusive education, students with special needs are integrated into general education classrooms, where they are expected to learn alongside their typically developing peers. However, for students with emotional and behavioral challenges, this integration often proves difficult without the right support systems in place. The Department of Education in the Philippines promotes inclusive education through policies and frameworks, such as the Inclusive Education Policy Framework and the establishment of Special Education (SpEd) centers in public schools. These centers are intended to provide specialized services and trained personnel to cater to the unique needs of LSENs. Despite these efforts, the actual implementation of inclusive practices varies widely across regions

due to differences in resources, teacher training, and community support.

The emotional and behavioral characteristics of LSENs with emotional challenges pose specific instructional and management challenges for teachers. These students may have difficulty following rules, cooperating with peers, sustaining attention, and managing stress, significantly hindering their academic and social development. To manage these behaviors effectively, educators must adopt strategies such as Positive Behavior Support (PBS), behavior modification plans, structured routines, and social-emotional learning (SEL) techniques. Trauma-informed teaching practices, which recognize the impact of adverse childhood experiences on behavior and learning, are also increasingly being integrated into classroom strategies. Furthermore, individualized education programs (IEPs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs) are critical tools for setting personalized goals and tracking student progress. Teachers may also utilize visual aids, token economies, mindfulness exercises, and de-escalation techniques to support students with emotional challenges.

Practical support for students with emotional challenges relies heavily on professional development and institutional backing. In Cebu, many teachers feel underprepared due to limited, nonspecific training and a lack of hands-on experience. Mental health support for educators is often overlooked, despite the high stress involved. Resource shortages, large class sizes, and limited collaboration hinder consistent implementation of behavioral strategies, especially in underfunded schools.

Several studies underscore these challenges. Torregosa et al. [1], found that Filipino special education teachers commonly use positive reinforcement, structured routines, and individualized behavior plans. However, these strategies are limited in their effectiveness due to inconsistent application, lack of resources, and

inadequate professional development. Similarly, Fairman et al. [2], examined teachers' experiences in Cebu. They highlighted challenges such as the lack of access to specialized training, insufficient support within inclusive classrooms, and the absence of tailored interventions for students with emotional challenges. Teachers also reported feeling overwhelmed by the dual responsibility of managing LSENs and typically developing students in overcrowded classrooms, leading to increased stress and decreased instructional effectiveness. These findings reinforce the need for stronger support networks, policy reform, and teacher-centered professional development programs that address technical skills and emotional resilience.

Sims et al. [3], further support the need for systemic change by emphasizing the importance of school-wide Positive Behaviour Support initiatives. Their study illustrates that with adequate training and institutional backing, teachers can create structured, supportive classroom environments that reduce behavioral disruptions and promote engagement. However, the success of such initiatives depends heavily on sustained professional development, continuous coaching, and adequate policy support.

Despite existing research, gaps remain in understanding how Cebu's teachers manage emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. Limited studies explore their perspectives, localized strategies, and the emotional toll of teaching students with EBDs. Context-specific research is crucial to inform practical training, resource allocation, and inclusive education policies.

In conclusion, effectively supporting LSENs with emotional and behavioral challenges requires a holistic approach involving tailored strategies, teacher training, institutional support, and stakeholder collaboration. Philippine special education programs offer a framework, but challenges like limited resources and training gaps persist, especially in areas like Cebu. This study aims to inform more effective, locally responsive interventions that empower teachers and enhance outcomes for all learners with special needs.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study examined the teachers' perspectives on addressing the emotional and behavioral challenges of Special Needs Education (SNE) learners during the school year 2024-2025 at Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu Public Elementary Schools-SPED Center as the basis for a proposed Intervention Plan.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What are the respondents' demographic profile in terms of:
  - 1.1 age and gender;
  - 1.2 highest educational attainment;
  - 1.3 number of learners with special needs in class;
  - 1.4 category of special needs handled, and
  - 1.5 related trainings and seminars attended?
2. As perceived by the respondents, what is the frequency level of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners in special needs education?
3. What is the extent of implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges?
4. What is the level of influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the:
  - 5.1 emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners and implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners,
  - 5.2 emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners and influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges, and
  - 5.3 implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners and influence of professional development and institutional

policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges?

6. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention plan can be proposed?

#### Null Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners and implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners and influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between the implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners and influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges.

#### 2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design of which it aimed at an expanded understanding of how special education (SPED) teachers deal with the emotional and behavioral problems of students with special educational needs (LSENs). This study uses structured data gathering and analysis to establish patterns and associations between the main variables, including the incidence of behavioral problems, the efficacy of different intervention strategies, and the extent of the support extended to teachers. The survey questionnaire was structured to gather information from SPED teachers regarding the incidence of emotional and behavioral problems, the intervention strategies used to deal with the problems, and how they perceived institutional support. The gathered data were then being analyzed to determine trends and patterns in special education and ascertain the interventions' impact on SPED teachers.

Furthermore, while this study aimed to examine how special education (SPED) teachers address emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs, the researchers utilized a structured research methodology based on the input-process-output model. In the input phase, the study gathered relevant background information from the respondents, such as their age, gender, educational attainment, the number and types of special needs learners they handled, and their experiences in attending related trainings or seminars. The study also investigated the frequency of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners—such as aggression, anxiety, withdrawal, and defiance—and how often teachers implemented classroom strategies and interventions to address these issues. Additionally, the research explored the influence of professional development, institutional policies, and support systems in helping teachers respond effectively to these challenges. It further examined whether there were significant relationships between the demographic profiles of teachers and their use of various intervention strategies.

During the process phase, the researchers sent a formal transmittal letter to the district supervisors and school heads to request permission to conduct the study. Upon approval, survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected SPED teachers. These questionnaires were designed to gather specific data related to the frequency of student behavioral issues, the intervention strategies applied by the teachers, and the perceived effectiveness of professional development and institutional support. The respondents were given sufficient time to answer the questionnaires independently, and confidentiality was strictly maintained to ensure ethical compliance. Once retrieved, all collected data were reviewed,

validated, and organized for analysis to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the study. In the output phase, the researchers analyzed the gathered data and used the findings to formulate a responsive intervention plan. This plan contained recommendations aimed at enhancing SPED teachers' ability to manage emotional and behavioral issues in the classroom. It also addressed identified gaps in training and institutional support, with the goal of improving teaching strategies and promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

The research was conducted in three established SPED centers in Cebu: Basak Elementary School – SPED Center in Mandaue City, known for its inclusive education practices; Mandaue City Integrated SPED School, recognized for its strong instruction and therapy services; and Lapu-Lapu City Central Elementary School – SPED Center, noted for its school-based management and community partnership in SPED education. These schools were purposely chosen due to their active implementation of SPED programs.

A total of 45 SPED teachers participated in the study, with 15 respondents from each of the three schools. They were selected through purposive and convenience sampling based on their hands-on experience in handling learners with emotional and behavioral concerns. Their direct classroom involvement made them suitable sources of relevant information and insights. The main data-gathering tool used in this research was an adapted survey questionnaire. It was divided into four key parts: the demographic profile of the respondents; the frequency of emotional and behavioral challenges observed among learners; the extent to which intervention strategies were implemented; and the perceived influence of professional development and institutional support. Responses were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, with descriptors from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

The data gathering procedure began with securing the necessary permissions from school authorities. The questionnaires were then distributed and collected after the respondents had completed them at their own pace. The confidentiality of responses was maintained throughout the process. Once completed, the responses were subjected to statistical analysis to generate meaningful interpretations and identify appropriate recommendations. For statistical treatment, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the respondents' demographic profiles. Means and standard deviations were computed to assess the frequency of behavioral challenges and the level of strategy implementation. Inferential statistics, specifically the chi-square test, were used to determine whether there were significant relationships between the respondents' demographics and the strategies they employed, as well as between the frequency of challenges and teacher interventions. A p-value of less than 0.05 was used as the threshold for statistical significance. Each response was interpreted based on the following scoring scale: 3.25–4.00 indicated that behaviors or strategies were always present or implemented; 2.50–3.24 signified they occurred often; 1.75–2.49 meant they happened sometimes; and 1.00–1.74 indicated they were never experienced or implemented. These interpretations helped the researcher identify which areas required improvement and guided the creation of a practical intervention plan aimed at improving SPED practices. To sum up, this research methodology provided a clear and organized framework for examining how SPED teachers address emotional and behavioral challenges, allowing the study to fulfill its objective of contributing to more effective and inclusive special education teaching.

### 3. Literature Review

Recent literature highlights several key issues regarding teachers' perspectives on addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. For example, Alkahtani [4], examined teachers'

knowledge and attitudes toward inclusive education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs), demonstrating that limited knowledge and negative attitudes can hinder effective classroom management. This study suggests that when teachers lack a deep understanding of EBDs, they may be less likely to implement innovative or individualized interventions, potentially exacerbating students' difficulties. Consequently, Alkahtani's findings underscore the necessity for robust professional development programs that not only enhance teachers' subject knowledge but also foster more positive attitudes toward inclusive practices. This need for targeted training is central to the current study, which explores how teachers perceive and manage their classrooms' emotional and behavioral challenges.

Likewise, Simó-Pinatella et al. [5], investigated the experiences of special education teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing that the sudden shift to remote learning, a lack of direct supervision, and reduced student engagement intensified behavioral challenges. Their research illustrates those external pressures such as those imposed by a global health crisis can significantly disrupt established classroom routines and intervention strategies, forcing educators to adapt rapidly under less-than-ideal conditions. This observation is particularly relevant to the current study, considering how teachers' intervention strategies might differ under stable, traditional school settings compared to emergencies. By contrasting these environments, the study seeks to understand the intrinsic challenges of managing EBDs and how situational factors can influence teachers' effectiveness and decision-making processes.

De Swart et al. [6], investigated the impact of teacher–student relationships and classroom structure on managing behavioral problems in students with EBDs, revealing that a positive relational climate coupled with a structured environment significantly reduces disruptive behaviors. Their findings suggest that when teachers invest in building trust and maintaining clear, consistent classroom routines, they create a supportive atmosphere that can mitigate many behavioral challenges. This insight is directly relevant to the current study, which also aims to explore how SPED teachers use relationship-building and structured environments as part of their overall strategy to address emotional and behavioral challenges.

As well as Bruhn *et al.* [7], examined the unique difficulties encountered by students with EBDs during the COVID-19 school closures and how teachers had to rapidly adapt their instructional and behavioral strategies under these unprecedented circumstances. While their study highlights the temporary adjustments and innovative practices implemented during a crisis, it underscores the need for flexible, responsive teaching methods [8]. The current study expands on this by taking a broader view, assessing the immediate adaptations and the ongoing strategies and institutional support mechanisms that help teachers effectively manage these challenges in more stable conditions.

Sisson [9] explores culturally responsive teaching within the context of music education for students with EBDs, emphasizing how personalized and culturally sensitive strategies can positively influence student behavior and engagement. This study highlights that addressing behavioral issues effectively requires a contextualized approach that considers the unique cultural backgrounds of students. Such insights are particularly relevant to the current study, which will examine whether special education teachers incorporate culturally responsive strategies into their broader practices for managing emotional and behavioral challenges. In parallel, Ly and Boll [10], provides first-hand accounts from teachers on managing disruptive behaviors, focusing on proactive interventions, collaborative efforts, and establishing structured classroom environments. These practical insights align closely with the present research, offering concrete examples of intervention methods to enhance teacher effectiveness.

Furthermore, Fu *et al.* [11], investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their overall well-being, demonstrating that educators with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to cope with classroom challenges, reducing the risk of burnout. This connection between emotional resilience and effective classroom management underscores the importance of teacher well-being, a factor that the current study will also explore.

Recent research shows that special education teachers face a range of challenges when working with students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs). Studies like Alkahtani (2022) [4] [12], stress that ongoing training and professional development are essential to give teachers the skills they need to manage these challenges effectively. At the same time, De Swart *et al.* [6], remind us that strong teacher-student relationships and well-organized classrooms can make a big difference in reducing disruptive behaviors. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed by Simó-Pinatella *et al.* [5] and Bruhn *et al.* [7], also showed how quickly educators had to adjust their methods to keep students engaged and maintain a supportive learning environment during remote learning.

Moreover, Sisson [9] highlights that using culturally responsive and personalized teaching methods can help tailor interventions to meet the unique needs of each student, while Fu *et al.* [11], emphasize the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence and overall well-being in preventing burnout and improving classroom management. Building on these findings, the current study explores how special education teachers perceive and address these emotional and behavioral challenges. By exploring effective intervention strategies, the support available through institutional policies, and the impact of professional development, this research hopes to understand better what teachers need to create more inclusive, effective, and nurturing environments for students with EBD.

Several related studies provide a critical context for understanding teachers' perspectives on addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. These studies underscore the importance of comprehensive teacher training, adaptive instructional strategies, and robust support systems in managing the complex needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

McCray *et al.* [13], delve into educators' perspectives on behavioral support strategies in special education, emphasizing that structured interventions such as clearly defined routines and consistent behavior management practices play a pivotal role in improving outcomes for students with EBDs. Their findings suggest that when teachers have access to well-organized behavioral support systems, they can create a more predictable and positive classroom environment that mitigates disruptive behaviors and fosters learning. Building on this, Rivas *et al.* [14], highlight the critical importance of teacher self-efficacy in managing emotional and behavioral challenges. Their research demonstrates that teachers confident in their abilities are more resilient in the face of classroom challenges and more effective at implementing interventions, mainly when supported by robust professional development and institutional frameworks. Enhanced support systems and strengthened teacher self-efficacy can contribute to more inclusive and effective learning environments.

Grossman [15], provide a detailed exploration of the practical strategies that special education teachers use to manage disruptive behaviors and foster inclusive classrooms. Their study highlights the critical role of structured routines and proactive behavior management, suggesting that teachers are more capable of mitigating behavioral issues when they are well-prepared and supported. Moreover, the authors stress the value of ongoing teacher reflection, which continually enables educators to refine their approaches in response to evolving classroom dynamics. Focusing on structured strategies and reflective practice directly informs the current study, which seeks to capture teachers' firsthand experiences

addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. By understanding how seasoned educators implement these strategies, the current research aims to identify best practices and potential areas for enhanced support. It contributes to a more nuanced understanding of what it takes for teachers to effectively manage classroom behavioral issues, ultimately promoting more inclusive and supportive learning environments for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Rock *et al.* [16], explore the transformative impact of targeted professional development programs on special education teachers' behavior management practices. Their study reveals that when educators receive structured, ongoing training, they enhance their intervention strategies and develop greater confidence and resilience in handling challenging student behaviors. This research underscores the idea that continuous professional growth is essential for effectively empowering teachers to manage emotional and behavioral challenges. The findings resonate with the current study's focus on teachers' perspectives in addressing these challenges, as they highlight that a well-supported professional development framework can significantly boost teacher efficacy. By shedding light on how targeted training can refine intervention methods and strengthen teacher resilience, Heflin and Bullock's [17] work provides a critical foundation for the current investigation, emphasizing the need for robust support systems that help SPED teachers create more inclusive and responsive learning environments for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Kilgore *et al.* [18], explore the qualitative dimensions of institutional support by examining how special education teachers perceive the availability and effectiveness of support systems in managing behavioral challenges. Their research reveals that teachers greatly value collaborative networks, mentorship programs, and clear policy frameworks, all of which empower them to implement effective classroom interventions. The study emphasizes that these support systems are not just peripheral but integral to teachers' success in managing complex student behaviors. This insight directly relates to the current study, which explores teachers' perspectives on addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. By highlighting the critical role of robust institutional support, Anderson *et al.* [19], findings provide a framework for understanding how enhanced support mechanisms can bolster teacher confidence and efficacy. In essence, their work underscores that when teachers are well-supported by their institutions, they are better equipped to create inclusive and nurturing learning environments, a theme that the current study seeks to explore further and validate.

These studies emphasize that both inherent teacher knowledge and external circumstances play critical roles in shaping how behavioral challenges are addressed in special education settings. They highlight the importance of ongoing, context-sensitive professional development and adaptive intervention strategies. Building on these insights, the current study will delve deeper into teachers' perspectives to uncover how they balance these internal and external factors to create supportive, effective learning environments for students with emotional challenges.

Several studies also address various aspects of special education, focusing on learners with special educational needs (SENs), strategies for managing emotional and behavioral challenges, interventions, professional development, institutional policies, and available resources.

A study by Bruhn *et al.* [7], examined the difficulties faced by students with emotional and behavioral disorders during the COVID-19 school closures. The research highlighted that special educators and related service providers struggled to meet students' needs due to limited access to technology and inconsistent policies on remote instruction, emphasizing the importance of adequate resources and support systems in addressing these challenges.

A 2023 article discussed behavior modification strategies for managing disruptive behavior in learners. The study emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach that considers not only the learners but also the classroom environment, school community, and home settings to address behavioral issues effectively [20]. While, Lyu *et al.* [21] explored the design of AI-enabled games to support social-emotional learning for children with autism spectrum disorders. The research highlighted the potential of personalized, technology-driven interventions to enhance emotional understanding and social skills among children with ASD, offering insights into innovative approaches to support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges.

On the other hand, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has implemented various capacity-building initiatives for teachers to enhance their competencies in handling learners with special educational needs [22]. For instance, Division Memorandum No. 259, s. 2022, focused on training teachers to teach learners with special educational needs in the new normal, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development to effectively address the diverse needs of LSENs. Also, Republic Act No. 11650, signed into law in 2022, mandates all schools in the Philippines to ensure inclusive education for learners with disabilities. The law requires schools to provide equitable access to quality education for every learner with a disability, including providing assistive devices, facilities, and infrastructure to support their learning needs.

The Philippine Department of Education's Inclusive Education Policy Framework outlines the importance of providing appropriate resources and support to manage the emotions and behaviors of learners with special educational needs. The framework emphasizes the need for adequate physical infrastructure, learning resources, and continuous capacity-building for teaching and non-teaching personnel to create an inclusive learning environment that supports the social, emotional, and behavioral development of learners with special educational needs (LSENs). In addition, the policy advocates for stronger collaboration with parents, caregivers, and community partners to provide a holistic approach to supporting LSENs in both school and home settings [23].

These studies and policies highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach in managing emotional and behavioral challenges among LSENs. They underline the necessity of professional development for educators, effective institutional policies, and adequate resources in supporting the emotional and behavioral well-being of students in special education settings. The continuous research and development in this area also emphasize the evolving understanding of how best to integrate innovative tools and strategies, from technology to holistic resource frameworks, to ensure inclusive and effective education for all learners, particularly those with special needs.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion analyzes, and interprets the data collected to address the study's objectives. It begins with exploring the respondents' profiles in age and gender, highest educational attainment, the number of learners with special needs in their classes, the categories of special needs they handle, and the related trainings and seminars they have attended. The chapter further examines the frequency level of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners with special needs and the extent to which teachers implement strategies and interventions to manage and support these challenges. Moreover, it analyzes the perceived level of influence of professional development, institutional policies, available resources, and support systems in addressing learners' emotional and behavioral issues.

The final part of the discussion of this study investigates whether significant relationships exist between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners and (1) the implementation of strategies and interventions to support them, (2) the influence of professional development and institutional policies and supports, and (3) the relationship between implemented strategies and the institutional and professional factors that influence them. These analyses aim to better understand how teachers manage emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs within the educational setting.

##### 4.1 Age and Gender

Understanding the age and gender distribution of teachers is vital in exploring how they address emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs. Age often correlates with teaching experience, which can shape classroom management strategies and the implementation of interventions. Older teachers may rely on years of hands-on experience, while younger teachers might incorporate newer, research-based practices. Gender, on the other hand, may influence the teachers' approaches to empathy, communication, and behavioral expectations.

Nevertheless, a teacher's age and gender can influence their perspective, approach, and level of experience in addressing emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs. Older teachers may draw on years of practical classroom exposure, while younger educators might apply more recent training and contemporary strategies. Similarly, gender-related experiences and roles may shape how teachers perceive and respond to their students' emotional and behavioral needs. By examining these demographic factors, the study gains insights into how teachers' age and gender may relate to their effectiveness in managing and supporting learners with diverse emotional and behavioral needs. Table 1 presents the data.

**Table 1. Age and gender of the learners**

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	F	%	f	%
45-54	10	22.22	0	0.00	10	22.22
35-44	22	48.89	0	0.00	22	48.89
25-34	12	26.67	1	2.22	13	28.89
Total	44	97.78	1	2.22	45	100.00

The data in Table 1 reveals that most learners are female, accounting for 97.78% of the total respondents, while only 2.22% are male. The most represented age group is 35–44 years (48.89%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (28.89%), and finally the 45–54 age group (22.22%). This

notable gender imbalance suggests a significant underrepresentation of male learners in the setting, which may reflect broader trends in the enrollment or identification of learners with special needs within the program. The data may also indicate that female learners or teachers are likelier

to engage with or participate in specialized programs addressing emotional and behavioral challenges.

These findings align with recent literature emphasizing the role of age and gender dynamics in special education. For instance, Zabel and Kay Zabel [24], noted that younger special education teachers often bring innovative approaches but may lack the practical experience that older teachers possess, while female educators are often more represented in nurturing roles, including special education. Similarly, Aldrup et al. [25], found that gender may influence teacher empathy and communication styles, which in turn affect how behavioral interventions are implemented. The predominance of female participants may also suggest gendered patterns in recruitment or willingness to participate in studies related to emotional and behavioral challenges.

This distribution has significant implications for planning teacher training and intervention programs. There may be a need to ensure more balanced participation among male educators and to provide differentiated support depending on the age group, considering generational differences in pedagogical training and familiarity with inclusive practices.

In conclusion, the demographic profile showing a dominant female representation and a concentration in the 35–44 age range provides critical context for understanding the perspectives and strategies used by special education teachers. It emphasizes the importance of considering both age and gender when developing policies, professional development programs, and support systems aimed at improving the management of emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs.

#### 4.2 Highest Educational Attainment

A teacher's highest educational attainment shapes their knowledge, skills, and confidence in addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. Advanced academic preparation often equips educators with a deeper understanding of child development, behavioral theories, and evidence-based interventions, essential in managing diverse learner needs.

**Table 2.** Highest educational attainment

Educational Attainment	f	%
Master's Degree	6	13.33
With Master's Units	32	71.11
Bachelor's Degree	7	15.56
Total	45	100.00

Table 2 shows that a majority of the teachers, 71.11%, have earned units toward a master's degree, while 13.33% have completed a full master's degree. Only 15.56% hold a bachelor's degree as their highest educational attainment. This data indicates that a significant portion of the teaching workforce in special education is pursuing or has already completed graduate-level studies, which suggests a strong commitment to professional growth and continuous learning. The high percentage of educators with advanced academic backgrounds reflects a promising trend in the specialization and upskilling of teachers handling learners with emotional and behavioral challenges.

This finding is supported by studies such as that of Kennedy et al. [26], which highlights that teachers with graduate-level education are more likely to implement structured, evidence-based interventions and exhibit higher efficacy in classroom management strategies. Similarly, Jordan et al. [27], emphasizes the positive correlation between higher educational attainment and teachers' preparedness to respond to diverse learner needs in inclusive settings. These studies suggest that graduate education enhances theoretical knowledge and practical application, enabling teachers to address behavioral and emotional issues more effectively.

This distribution implies that most teachers are not only qualified but also engaged in ongoing professional development, which is essential for adapting to the evolving demands of special education. However, the data also implies a need for targeted support and mentoring for those who have yet to begin or complete graduate studies, ensuring that all educators are equally equipped to handle the complexities of emotional and behavioral challenges.

In summary, the educational attainment profile of the respondents reveals a highly motivated and academically progressive teaching force. With the majority pursuing or having completed graduate studies, there is strong potential for the effective implementation of advanced strategies and interventions. This reinforces the importance of promoting continuous education and professional development to maintain high-quality support for learners with special needs.

#### 4.3 Number of Learners with Special Needs in Class

The number of learners with special needs in a class significantly influences a teacher's ability to manage emotional and behavioral challenges effectively. A higher number of students with diverse needs can increase the complexity of classroom dynamics, requiring more individualized strategies, greater patience, and enhanced support systems.

**Table 3.** Number of learners with special needs in class

Number of Learners	f	%
25 and above	5	11.11
20-24	5	11.11
15-19	1	2.22
10-14	6	13.33
6-9	10	22.22
5 and below	18	40.00
Total	45	100.00

Table 3 indicates that the majority of teachers (40%) handle classes with five or fewer learners with special needs, while 22.22% manage between 6 to 9 students. Only a small percentage of respondents (11.11%) reported managing classes with 25 or more learners. This distribution suggests that most special education classes maintain a relatively low number of students, which aligns with recommended practices for individualized attention and effective behavior management. Smaller class sizes are generally more conducive to implementing tailored interventions and fostering supportive teacher-student relationships, which are critical when addressing emotional and behavioral challenges.

This finding resonates with the study by Peltier et al. [28], which emphasizes that lower student-to-teacher ratios improve the effectiveness of interventions for students with behavioral and emotional difficulties. Similarly, Tomlinson [29], highlight that teachers managing fewer special needs learners are better positioned to apply differentiated instruction and provide immediate feedback. These studies support the idea that manageable class sizes contribute to a more responsive and emotionally supportive learning environment, especially in special education settings.

The data suggest twofold inferences on one hand, the prevalence of small class sizes suggests that current policies or practices may be supporting optimal learning environments for learners with special needs. On the other hand, the presence of teachers handling 20 or more learners (22.22% combined) indicates the need for increased staffing, classroom aides, or administrative support to maintain instructional quality and ensure that emotional and behavioral interventions remain effective.

Thus, the data reveal that most special education teachers are working with a relatively small number of learners, which supports the delivery of individualized and responsive behavioral interventions. However, attention must be given to those handling larger groups, as their capacity to address emotional and behavioral challenges may be strained. Ensuring manageable class sizes is key to promoting effective teaching and learning in special education.

#### 4.4 Category of Special Needs Handled

The category of special needs that teachers handle greatly influences their perspective and approach to addressing emotional and behavioral challenges.

**Table 4.** Category of special needs handled

Category	f	Rank
LD	22	1
HI	20	2
ID	13	3
ADHD	8	4
ASD	5	5
CP	2	6
Cross Disability	1	7.5
VI	1	7.5

\*multiple response

Table 4 presents the categories of special needs most frequently handled by teachers, with learning disability (LD) ranking highest (f=22), followed by hearing impairment (HI) with 20 responses, and intellectual disability (ID) with 13. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) follow with 8 and 5 responses, respectively. Cerebral palsy (CP), visual impairment (VI), and cross-disability cases were the least encountered. Since the data reflects multiple responses, it indicates that many teachers handle more than one category of special need in their classrooms, underscoring the complexity and diversity of the learners they serve.

This distribution highlights that most teachers are primarily engaged with students who have learning disabilities, hearing impairments, and intellectual disabilities categories that often come with notable emotional and behavioral challenges such as frustration, withdrawal,

impulsivity, and difficulty with social interaction. This finding aligns with the study by Szép et al. [30], which found that teachers working with learners who have LD and ADHD often face classroom management difficulties, especially when emotional regulation is an issue. Similarly, research by Musyoka et al. [31], stresses the importance of teacher preparedness when working with students with hearing impairments and intellectual disabilities, as these conditions require specific behavioral and communication strategies.

The indication of these findings is clear: teachers need tailored training and resources that correspond to the dominant categories of special needs they encounter. Those managing learners with LD, HI, and ID in particular must be equipped with specialized behavioral strategies and interventions. Furthermore, the presence of multiple disabilities within a single classroom point to the need for flexible, inclusive teaching models and the availability of interdisciplinary support.

In conclusion, the variety of special needs handled by teachers, especially the high incidence of LD, HI, and ID, reflects the multifaceted challenges they face in managing emotional and behavioral issues. This diversity demands continuous professional development and resource allocation to ensure educators meet each learner's unique needs. The findings reinforce the value of equipping teachers with a broad range of evidence-based strategies to create inclusive, emotionally supportive learning environments.

#### 4.5 Related Training and Seminar Attended by the Respondents

Relevant training and seminars are vital in shaping teachers' perspectives and capabilities to address special education's emotional and behavioral challenges. These professional development activities enhance teachers' knowledge of evidence-based strategies, classroom management techniques, and current trends in special education practices. From a teacher's perspective, the quality and frequency of such training directly impact their confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness in supporting learners with diverse needs.

**Table 5.** Related training and seminar attended by the respondents

Training and Seminars Attended	f	Rank
INSET	15	1
Filipino Sign Language	7	2
Inclusive Education Training	6	3
IEP Making	5	4
SPED Pedagogy and Content	3	5
MFAT	1	6

\*multiple response

Table 5 presents the types of related training and seminars attended by the respondents, with multiple responses allowed. The most frequently attended training was the In-Service Training (INSET), reported by 15 teachers, followed by Filipino Sign Language (7), Inclusive Education Training (6), and IEP (Individualized Education Program) Making (5). Fewer respondents attended seminars on SPED Pedagogy and Content (3) and using the Philippine-made assessment tool MFAT (1). This data indicates that while most teachers have engaged in some form of professional development, there is an uneven distribution in the type and depth of training received.

The prominence of INSET suggests that general, school-based training is more accessible than specialized or technical

seminars. However, the relatively low attendance in areas such as SPED-specific pedagogy, IEP development, and the use of diagnostic tools like MFAT raises concerns about the sufficiency of targeted training in addressing the specific emotional and behavioral needs of learners with special needs. According to McCullough et al. [32], ongoing and specialized professional development significantly enhances teachers' abilities to implement inclusive and behavior-supportive strategies. Similarly, the study by Crispel and Kasperski [33], highlights that teachers who attend focused training on IEP creation and inclusive pedagogy are more confident and effective in managing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education settings.

The implication is clear: while teachers are engaging in professional development, there remains a need to strengthen access to and participation in specialized training programs that directly address classroom realities in special education. This includes increasing opportunities for seminars on behavior management, differentiated instruction, and individualized planning for learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

In final analysis, the data reveals a foundational level of training among respondents, concentrating on INSET and basic inclusive practices. However, the limited exposure to more technical or SPED-specific training highlights a professional development gap that must be addressed. To enhance teachers' effectiveness in managing emotional and behavioral challenges, educational institutions and policymakers should prioritize providing and promoting specialized, practical, and evidence-based training programs tailored to the evolving needs of learners with special needs.

#### 4.6 Frequency level of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners in special needs education

The frequency level of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners in special needs education is a critical factor influencing teachers' daily experiences and instructional strategies. From the teachers' perspective, understanding how often these challenges occur helps determine the intensity and consistency of support required in the classroom. Frequent occurrences of such behaviors, ranging from aggression and withdrawal to non-compliance and hyperactivity, can disrupt the learning environment, increase teacher stress, and demand specialized interventions. observe a range of emotional and behavioral challenges among learners with special needs. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.16, falling within the "Often" category, indicates that behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, emotional dysregulation, aggression, social difficulties, attention-related issues, defiance, anxiety, and withdrawal are common in special education classrooms. Individual items consistently scored around 3.07 to 3.24, suggesting that these challenges are persistent and widespread, affecting various aspects of learners' participation and interaction.

This frequent occurrence of emotional and behavioral challenges has significant implications for special education teachers, highlighting the continuous demands placed on them to employ effective management strategies and emotional support. These findings are consistent with recent studies like Vetoniemi and Kärnä [34], who emphasize that learners with special needs often experience behavioral difficulties that interfere with academic engagement and social integration. Similarly,

**Table 6. Frequency level of emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners in special needs education**

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	How frequently do you observe disruptive behaviors (e.g., outbursts, non-compliance) among students emotional and behavioral challenges	3.18	0.65	Often
2	How often do you notice emotional dysregulation (e.g., mood swings, crying, extreme frustration) in emotional and behavioral challenges	3.20	0.81	Often
3	How frequently do students with emotional and behavioral challenges display aggressive behaviors (e.g., physical aggression, verbal threats) in your classroom?	3.07	0.89	Often
4	How often do you observe social difficulties (e.g., isolation, difficulty interacting with peers) among students with emotional and behavioral challenges?	3.24	0.88	Often
5	How frequently do you notice attention-related issues that interfere with learning among students with emotional and behavioral challenges?	3.16	0.71	Often
6	How often do you encounter defiant behaviors (e.g., refusal to follow instructions) in students with emotional and behavioral challenges?	3.20	0.69	Often
7	How frequently do you observe signs of anxiety (e.g., excessive worry, nervousness) among students with emotional and behavioral challenges?	3.13	1.01	Often
8	How often do students with emotional and behavioral challenges exhibit withdrawal (e.g., avoiding participation, isolating themselves) from class activities?	3.13	0.84	Often
<b>Aggregate Weighted Mean</b>		<b>3.16</b>		
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>			<b>0.81</b>	<b>Often</b>

**Legend:** 3.25-4.00-Always; 2.50-3.24-Often; 1.75-2.49-Sometimes; 1.00-1.74-Never



The data in Table 6 shows that teachers frequently Lane et al. [35], underscore the prevalence of anxiety and withdrawal behaviors among learners with special needs, which necessitate proactive intervention strategies. The study by Obee et al. [36], further supports the notion that frequent behavioral challenges increase teacher stress and underscores the importance of professional development focused on behavioral management and emotional regulation techniques. These findings suggest that schools and educational policymakers must prioritize ongoing support for teachers through training, counseling resources, and collaborative interventions [8]. Teachers need access to practical behavior management tools, mental health supports, and classroom resources to address these frequent challenges sustainably. Creating a favorable, supportive school climate that fosters emotional well-being is also essential for both learners and educators.

In conclusion, the data affirms that emotional and behavioral challenges are commonly observed by teachers in special needs education, posing consistent demands on their skills and resilience. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive support systems, targeted professional development, and collaborative efforts to create inclusive environments that promote positive emotional and behavioral outcomes for learners. Recognizing the frequency of these challenges is a crucial step toward developing effective interventions and sustaining teacher well-being.

#### 4.7 Extent of implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges

The extent to which teachers implement strategies and interventions to manage and support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges serves as a vital measure of their practical engagement and adaptability within special education environments. When teachers consistently apply evidence-based behavioral techniques such as positive behavior supports, de-escalation methods, and individualized behavior intervention plans, they demonstrate a proactive approach beyond merely reacting to problems. This active implementation reflects not only their dedication to meeting the diverse needs of learners but also their ability to create an inclusive and nurturing classroom atmosphere where students feel understood and supported.

From the teachers' perspective, consistently using tailored interventions and positive reinforcement signals confidence in their skills and a deep understanding of each learner's unique behavioral and emotional profile. However, the reality of the classroom often presents challenges, such as large caseloads, limited time, or insufficient training, which can impact the fidelity and extent of intervention implementation. Thus, evaluating how extensively these strategies are applied sheds light on the gap between teachers' intentions and actual practice. It reveals the areas where teachers excel as well as where they may struggle due to constraints beyond their control.

**Table 7. Extent of implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges**

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I implement positive behavior support techniques to encourage appropriate behavior among students with emotional and behavioral challenges	3.40	0.58	Always
2	I use structured routines and clear classroom procedures to provide consistency and predictability for students with emotional and behavioral challenges.	3.56	0.50	Always
3	I develop and follow individualized behavior intervention plans (BIPs) tailored to the specific needs of each student with emotional and behavioral challenges.	3.33	0.60	Always
4	I employ de-escalation strategies to calm students when they display aggressive or disruptive behaviors effectively.	3.42	0.62	Always
5	I integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) activities into my instruction to help students develop better emotional regulation and coping skills.	3.38	0.61	Always
6	I collaborate with support staff and mental health professionals to address and manage behavioral challenges in the classroom.	3.33	0.71	Always
7	I use proactive behavior management strategies to anticipate and prevent potential behavioral issues before they escalate.	3.47	0.66	Always
8	I incorporate culturally responsive teaching methods to address the diverse needs of students with emotional and behavioral challenge and make interventions more personalized and effective.	3.49	0.66	Always
<b>Aggregate Weighted Mean</b>		<b>3.42</b>		
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>			<b>0.62</b>	<b>Always</b>

Legend:3.25-4.00-Always; 2.50-3.24-Often; 1.75-2.49-Sometimes; 1.00-1.74-Never

The data in Table 7 reveal that teachers consistently implement a variety of strategies and interventions to manage and support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges, as reflected by the aggregate weighted mean of 3.42, which falls within the "Always" category. The highest-rated practice is the use of structured routines and clear

classroom procedures (WM=3.56, SD=0.50), indicating teachers' strong commitment to providing consistency and predictability an essential foundation for learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Meanwhile, the lowest but still highly rated practice is developing and following individualized behavior intervention plans (BIPs) tailored to

each student's specific needs (WM=3.33, SD=0.60), highlighting a slightly lower but consistent effort in personalizing interventions.

The implications of these findings suggest that teachers are highly engaged in applying comprehensive, evidence-based approaches, including positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques, social-emotional learning (SEL), and collaboration with mental health professionals. This proactive and multifaceted approach aligns with current best practices in special education, which emphasize managing behaviors and addressing underlying emotional regulation and social skills development. Recent studies support these conclusions: Selman and Dilworth-Bart [37], emphasize that structured routines and predictable environments significantly reduce behavioral incidents in special education settings. Abdalla and Moussa [38], highlight the importance of culturally responsive teaching in enhancing intervention effectiveness, especially in diverse classrooms. Meanwhile, Bambara and Kern [39], stress the critical role of individualized behavior intervention plans, noting that tailored strategies improve learner outcomes but require sufficient training and collaboration.

In summary, the consistently high extent of implementation indicates that teachers are well-equipped and motivated to support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges.

However, the slightly lower rating for individualized plans points to the ongoing need for targeted professional development and resources to optimize personalized interventions. Strengthening these areas can further enhance teachers' capacity to meet the complex needs of their learners, promoting more inclusive and effective special education environments.

#### **4.8 Level of influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges**

The level of influence that professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports have on addressing learners' emotional challenges is a critical factor shaping teachers' capacity to manage and support students in special education effectively. From the teachers' perspective, ongoing training and clear, supportive policies provide essential knowledge, skills, and frameworks that guide their interventions and classroom management strategies. Additionally, the availability of adequate resources, such as counseling services, specialized materials, and collaborative support teams, plays a significant role in empowering educators to address their learners' complex emotional and behavioral needs.

**Table 8. Level of influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges**

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	The institutional policies at my school clearly outline procedures for managing students with EBDs.	3.42	0.62	Very High
2	I have access to adequate resources (e.g., specialized teaching materials, counseling services) to support students with EBDs.	3.33	0.52	Very High
3	The support systems provided by my institution (e.g., mentorship, collaborative networks) effectively help me address behavioral challenges in the classroom.	3.49	0.59	Very High
4	The administrative and institutional support I receive has a positive impact on my instructional practices and overall effectiveness in managing students with EBDs.	3.38	0.65	Very High
5	Clear institutional policies and procedures enable me to implement consistent and effective behavior management strategies.	3.47	0.59	Very High
6	The overall support system at my school enhances my ability to create a positive and well-managed learning environment for students with EBDs.	3.53	0.59	Very High
<b>Aggregate Weighted Mean</b>		<b>3.44</b>		
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>			<b>0.59</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Legend: 3.25-4.00-Very High; 2.50-3.24-High; 1.75-2.49-Low; 1.00-1.74-Very Low

The data from Table 8 reveals that teachers perceive the influence of professional development, institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners' emotional and behavioral difficulties (EBDs) as very high, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.44. Among the indicators, the highest-rated aspect is the overall support system's role in enhancing the ability to create a positive and well-managed

learning environment (WM=3.53, SD=0.59), highlighting the crucial impact of comprehensive institutional backing. The lowest-rated, yet still very high, indicator is access to adequate resources such as specialized teaching materials and counseling services (WM=3.33, SD=0.52), which suggests a strong but slightly variable perception of resource availability.

These findings imply that institutional frameworks, including clear policies and collaborative support systems, are fundamental in empowering teachers to manage emotional and behavioral challenges effectively. The presence of mentorship, collaborative networks, and administrative support strengthens instructional practices and fosters consistency in behavior management strategies. This aligns with recent literature; Lenning et al. [40], underscore that well-defined institutional policies and ongoing professional development significantly enhance teacher efficacy in special education. Zhao et al. [41], emphasize that accessible resources and supportive infrastructures reduce teacher burnout and improve learner outcomes. Khaw et al. [42], also highlight the positive correlation between institutional support systems and the successful implementation of behavioral interventions.

Thus, the very high level of perceived influence of professional development and institutional supports underscores these factors' essential role in equipping teachers to address emotional and behavioral challenges in learners.

#### **4.9 Test of relationship between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners and implementing strategies and interventions to manage And support learners**

Examining the relationship between learners' emotional and behavioral challenges and implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support them provides valuable insight into how effectively teachers respond to these challenges in special education settings. From the teachers' perspective, understanding this relationship highlights whether the interventions applied are appropriately aligned with the learners' observed behaviors and emotional needs. It also reveals the extent to which targeted strategies mitigate disruptive behaviors and promote positive outcomes. Investigating this connection is crucial for assessing the practical impact of teachers' efforts and identifying areas where intervention approaches may need refinement or additional support to address better the complex needs of learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

**Table 9. Test of relationship between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by the learners and implementing strategies and interventions to manage and support learners**

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Challenges and Implementation	0.187	Negligible Positive	0.220	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

The results shown in Table 9 indicate a negligible positive correlation ( $r = 0.187$ ) between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners and the extent to which teachers implement strategies and interventions to manage and support these learners. The p-value of 0.220, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, leads to the decision to not reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that the relationship between these two variables is not statistically significant. This implies that, from the teachers' perspective, the frequency or severity of emotional and behavioral challenges observed does not strongly predict how extensively they apply management strategies and interventions in the classroom.

The findings may suggest that while teachers are generally implementing strategies, the actual emotional and behavioral challenges learners face may not directly influence the degree of intervention applied, possibly due to factors such as standard school policies, resource availability, or uniform teaching approaches. This aligns with recent studies where researchers like Blinkoff et al. [43] note that teacher interventions often depend on institutional mandates and professional training rather than the direct intensity of learner behaviors. Furthermore, Puffer et al. [44], emphasize that systemic factors, including workload and resource access, can moderate how interventions are implemented, regardless of the severity of behavioral challenge. Kim et al. [45] also highlight that inconsistencies in intervention implementation may result from varying teacher confidence and support systems rather than learner behavior alone.

In conclusion, the lack of a significant relationship suggests that emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners may not be the sole determinant of teachers' application of management strategies. This underscores the need for stronger institutional support, tailored professional development, and reflective practices that enable teachers to better align their interventions with their students' specific emotional and behavioral needs. Enhancing these areas could foster more responsive and effective management of learners' challenges in special education contexts.

#### **4.10 Test of relationship between the challenges exhibited by the learners and influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges**

Exploring the relationship between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners and the influence of professional development alongside institutional policies, resources, and supports is essential in understanding how systemic factors impact teachers' ability to address these challenges effectively. From the teachers' perspective, this relationship sheds light on whether access to ongoing training, clear policy guidelines, and adequate resources correspond with the nature and severity of learners' emotional and behavioral difficulties. Investigating this connection helps determine how much institutional support contributes to teachers' capacity to manage complex learner needs, thereby informing improvements in policy, professional growth, and resource allocation to support special education practices better.

**Table 10. Test of relationship between the challenges exhibited by the learners and influence of professional**

**development and institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing learners-related emotional challenges**

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Challenges and Influence	0.578*	Moderate Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

Table 10 presents a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.578$ ) between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners and the influence of professional development, institutional policies, resources, and supports on addressing these challenges. The p-value of 0.000 is well below the 0.05 significance threshold, leading to rejecting the null hypothesis and indicating that this relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that as teachers perceive greater influence from professional development and institutional support systems, they are better equipped to manage and address their learners' emotional and behavioral difficulties.

The findings imply that professional development programs, clear institutional policies, and adequate resources play a crucial role in enabling teachers to respond effectively to the complex needs of learners with emotional and behavioral challenges. This aligns with recent research where Daum et al. [46], emphasize that ongoing training enhances teacher competence and confidence in managing challenging behaviors. Fox et al. [47], highlight the importance of supportive policies and resources in creating a structured environment conducive to implementing effective behavioral interventions.

Similarly, Cumming et al. [48], identify institutional backing as a key factor in reducing teacher stress and improving learner outcomes in special education contexts.

In conclusion, the significant moderate positive relationship underscores the essential role of professional development and institutional supports in effectively empowering teachers to address learners' emotional and behavioral challenges. Strengthening these areas through continuous training, clear policies, and resource allocation is vital for fostering a supportive and responsive educational environment in special education.

#### **4.11 Test of relationship between the implementing strategies and interventions and influence of Professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports**

Investigating the relationship between implementing strategies and interventions and the influence of professional development alongside institutional policies, resources, and supports is fundamental to understanding how external factors shape teachers' practices in managing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. From the teachers' perspective, this relationship reveals how access to training, clear guidelines, and available support systems facilitate or hinder their ability to apply effective interventions. Understanding this dynamic helps identify how institutional and professional frameworks contribute to the consistency and quality of strategies employed to support learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

**Table 11. Test of relationship between the implementing strategies and interventions and influence of professional development and institutional policies, resources, and supports**

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Implementation and Influence	0.087	Negligible Positive	0.572	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

Table 11 reveals a negligible positive correlation ( $r=0.087$ ) between the implementation of strategies and interventions and the influence of professional development, institutional policies, resources, and supports, with a p-value of 0.572. Since the p-value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that this relationship is statistically not significant. This suggests that, based on the data, there is no strong evidence to conclude that the extent of teachers' implementation of strategies is directly influenced by the level of professional development and institutional support they receive.

This finding may imply that while professional development and institutional supports are important, other factors such as individual teacher motivation, experience, personal teaching philosophy, or classroom-specific challenges could play a more critical role in how teachers apply interventions in managing emotional and behavioral difficulties. Similar

studies by Arsyad Arrafii [49], note that teacher implementation can be affected by contextual barriers including time constraints, workload, and availability of specialized personnel, which are not solely addressed by professional development or policies. Moreover, Diab and Green [50], emphasize the complexity of translating institutional support into consistent classroom practice, highlighting the need for ongoing mentoring and practical coaching beyond formal training.

In inference, while institutional frameworks and professional growth opportunities are valuable, their influence on teachers' actual implementation of behavioral strategies may be limited unless supplemented by supportive conditions at the school and classroom levels. Future interventions should consider multifaceted approaches to empower teachers,

combining policy, resources, and hands-on support to enhance practical application in special education settings.

### 5. Summary of findings

This portion provides a detailed synthesis of the study focused on teachers' perspectives in addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. It further summarizes the critical findings regarding how educators perceive, implement, and are influenced by strategies, professional development, and institutional supports in managing these challenges. It further draws conclusions based on the analyzed data to highlight the effectiveness and gaps in current practices. Finally, it offers recommendations to enhance teacher preparedness, resource availability, and policy support to equip educators better to foster positive outcomes for learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

While this study explored the perspectives of 45 special education teachers from three public SPED centers in Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu City during the 2024-2025 school year, it focuses on how these special education teachers address the emotional and behavioral challenges of learners with special needs. Grounded in theories such as Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the Universal Design for Learning Framework, Self-Determination Theory, and the Trauma-Informed Educational Framework, the research also considered relevant legal bases including the Mental Health Act (RA 11036), the Enhanced Basic Education Act (RA 10533), and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, the study employed an adaptive survey questionnaire to collect data on teachers' experiences, challenges, and intervention strategies, aiming to inform the development of a proposed Intervention Plan tailored to enhance support for learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties in special education settings.

The findings revealed key insights into teachers' perspectives on addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education. Most learners fall within the 35-44 age bracket and are predominantly female, while most teachers possess Master's degrees, indicating a well-educated workforce. Class sizes vary, with most teachers handling five or fewer learners with special needs. Learning disabilities and hearing impairments are the most common categories of special needs addressed. Teachers have actively participated in relevant trainings, particularly INSET and Filipino Sign Language seminars. Emotional and behavioral challenges among learners are frequently observed, including disruptive, aggressive, and anxiety-related behaviors. Teachers consistently implement a variety of evidence-based strategies, such as positive behavior supports and individualized intervention plans, reflecting a high extent of intervention. Institutional policies, professional development, and available resources strongly influence teachers' ability to manage these challenges effectively. However, statistical tests indicate no significant direct relationship between the frequency of learners' emotional and behavioral challenges and the extent of strategy implementation, nor between implementation and institutional influence. Conversely, a significant moderate positive correlation exists between the challenges exhibited and the influence of professional development and

institutional support, underscoring the critical role of systemic factors in addressing learners' emotional and behavioral needs.

### 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that special education teachers possess a strong educational background and actively engage in relevant professional development to better support learners with emotional and behavioral challenges. While these challenges are frequently observed among learners, teachers consistently implement a range of strategies and interventions to manage and support them effectively. The significant positive relationship between the emotional and behavioral challenges exhibited by learners and the influence of professional development and institutional policies highlights the crucial role that systemic support and resources play in equipping teachers to address these challenges. However, the lack of significant correlation between the frequency of challenges and the extent of strategy implementation suggests that other factors, such as classroom conditions or individual teacher capacities, may affect the practical application of interventions. Overall, these conclusions emphasize the importance of sustained institutional support, continuous professional growth, and resource availability to enhance the effectiveness of teaching practices in special education settings.

### 7. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the Department of Education and school administrators enhance professional development programs by offering regular, in-depth training on managing emotional and behavioral challenges using evidence-based strategies such as trauma-informed care, positive behavior support, and individualized intervention plans. Schools should also ensure the availability of adequate institutional support, including access to specialized teaching materials, counseling services, and clear policies that guide behavioral management. Strengthening collaboration through mentorship and structured teamwork among SPED teachers and support personnel is essential. To facilitate the effective implementation of strategies, teacher caseloads in SPED settings should be reduced to manageable levels. Additionally, institutional policies such as DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 must be regularly reviewed and enforced to reflect the real challenges faced in classrooms. Establishing systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions is vital for continuous improvement, and further research is encouraged to explore other contributing factors such as school climate, teacher resilience, and family engagement that may influence the success of addressing emotional and behavioral challenges in special education.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To the Lord God Almighty, I offer my deepest gratitude for granting me the spirit of wisdom and the courage to pursue my studies, especially during moments of difficulty throughout this journey. It is also my pleasure to express my utmost gratitude to the following people who are very significant in the success of my endeavor. I extend my

deepest appreciation to Dr. Janine Joy T. Cañete, Dev.Ed.D., Chairman, for her outstanding leadership and constant encouragement throughout the course of this research. My sincerest thanks go to Dr. Lilibeth C. Pinili, Dev.Ed.D.-SPed, Adviser, for her invaluable support, expert guidance, and insightful feedback, which greatly contributed to the depth and direction of this study. I am especially grateful to my Method Experts, Dr. Reylan G. Capuno, Dev.Ed.D., Ph.D., and Dr. Randy Mangubat, Ph.D., for their expertise and valuable suggestions, which significantly enhanced the methodological soundness of this research. My heartfelt appreciation is also extended to Dr. Raymond C. Espina, Ph.D.-TM, and Dr. Niña Rozanne T. Delos Reyes, Dev.Ed.D.-SPed, Content Experts, for their critical insights and meaningful recommendations that helped refine the content and relevance of this study. My gratitude to Dr. Irene O. Mamites, Dev.Ed.D., Format Expert, for her careful review and support in ensuring the manuscript adhered to academic formatting standards with precision, and to Dr. Emerson D. Peteros, Statistician, for his expertise and assistance in data analysis and interpretation. To all of you, thank you for your indispensable contributions, professional wisdom, and steadfast support. Your involvement has made this academic journey truly meaningful and fulfilling.

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