

Instructional and Behavioral Challenges of Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education: Basis for a Competency-Based L&D Program

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Abstract. Secondary teachers in implementing inclusive education in Roxas-West District, SDO Isabela, and developed a competency-based interpretation of these challenges through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were gathered from 103 teachers using a validated researcher-made questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews to further explain and contextualize the statistical results. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests, were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative responses. Findings revealed that teachers experience a very high level of instructional challenges, particularly in lesson development, instructional delivery, and assessment. Teachers reported difficulty in differentiating instruction, modifying materials and developing inclusive assessments. Also, behavioral challenges were rated very high, especially in the area of handling learners with ADHD, emotional sensitivity and disruptive behaviors, which has a huge impact on the classroom dynamics. The results of the inferential analysis revealed no significant differences in the instructional and behavioral challenges based on age, sex, school affiliation, year level taught, and SPED training. The challenges faced are systemic rather than individual. Teachers described a gap between what they learned in theory and what they experienced in the classroom, particularly in relation to assessment and behavioral management. Despite these challenges, teachers also displayed commitment and resilience in responding to diverse learners in inclusive settings. The study concludes that there are interrelated instructional, behavioral and structural constraints that impede the implementation of inclusive education. The synthesis of findings underscores the need to enhance professional development and institutional support systems. Based on these results, it is recommended to develop a competency-based learning and development program to improve teachers' skills in instructional adaptation, assessment strategies, and behavioral management to advance inclusive education practices.

Introduction

Inclusive education is a major reform in contemporary school systems, aimed at ensuring equitable access to meaningful learning opportunities for all learners, regardless of disability, ability, or background. It creates diversity, participation, and social justice by making schools places of learning in which all learners are valued and supported. This agenda is grounded in global and national priorities, such as the Education for All, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly Article 24, the Sustainable Development Goal 4, and the Philippine Department of Education policies on inclusive education, such as DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009; DepEd Order No. 26, s. 1997; DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019; and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021. Overall, these frameworks demonstrate that

inclusion is not only physical placement of learners in regular classrooms but also about the transformation of school culture, policy, resources, and classroom practices.

Inclusive education is also seen as an educational philosophy that demands schools to cater for the diverse needs of learners through supportive systems, adequate resources and responsive teaching practices. Implementation is influenced by structural factors such as financial resources, infrastructure and institutional support, and subjective factors such as teachers' attitudes, perceptions and readiness toward inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Scior, 2011; Van Mieghem et al., 2020; Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019; Woodcock et al., 2022; Zeilinger et al., 2020). When these conditions are not met, teachers may find it difficult to translate inclusive education policies into classroom practices.

Numerous studies revealed ongoing challenges for teachers in inclusive education. These are poor teacher training, inadequate facilities, rigid curriculum frameworks, lack of support services, lack of awareness of inclusive policies and challenges in identifying and responding to the learning needs of diverse learners (Sree Priya, 2016; Zwane & Malale, 2018). Other studies have also reported challenges such as classroom indiscipline, heavy teaching loads, limited knowledge of the diverse needs of the learners, negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities and behavioral concerns among the teachers (Osero, 2015). The results indicate that inclusive education relies not only on policy support, but also on the competencies of teachers in instructional adaptation, classroom management and learner support.

Instructional challenges in inclusive classrooms frequently arise when teachers must plan, teach, adapt and assess lessons for students with varying abilities, learning speeds and support needs. Thus, classroom models and instructional strategies must be designed to foster participation, academic success, development of life skills, and meaningful social interaction among learners with diverse abilities (Andzik et al., 2016; Bransford, 2015; Carter et al., 2015, 2017; Clark & Mayer, 2016). In the Universal Design for Learning, it has been emphasized that the need is to remove barriers before they begin to constrain participation. However, their effectiveness is heavily reliant on institutional commitment, teacher preparedness, and the presence of support systems (Goodley et al., 2019; Moriña, 2017).

Behavioral challenges need to be taken into consideration in the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are expected to manage disruptive behavior, off-task behavior, emotional concerns, and peer interaction issues while creating a classroom environment conducive to learning and participation. Research suggests that effective classroom management leads to better learning experiences and positive behaviors in students, especially those with emotional and behavioral needs (Elbancol & Marquez, 2025). However, teachers may also experience stress, frustration, burnout, conflicting demands of the classroom, and challenges to maintaining intervention practices when they lack adequate support and strong student-teacher relationships (Lawson et al., 2022).

Therefore, teacher preparation and continuing professional development are critical in strengthening inclusive classroom practice. However, teacher education and training programs may still be limited in their scope if they mostly use lecture-based and teacher-centered approaches rather than collaborative, student-centered and practice-based learning experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As a consequence, future and present teachers might have fewer opportunities to develop competencies in teamwork, problem-solving, collaboration, instructional modification and behavioral support (Vangrieken et al., 2015). This underscores the need for competent, contextualized and responsive learning and development programs which address the real challenges faced by teachers in inclusive classrooms.

In the Philippine context, teachers handling learners with disabilities have also reported limited training in special needs education, inadequate strategies for managing diverse learners, insufficient curriculum support, and minimal stakeholder assistance (Allam & Martin, 2021). More recent studies further emphasize that inclusive education requires stronger administrative leadership, collaboration, resource support, policy awareness, and workload assistance for teachers (Belarda & Belena, 2025; Buenaobra & Belena, 2025). Similarly, teachers' educational attainment and relevant training have been found to be positively associated with their knowledge and skills in inclusive education, underscoring the importance of continuous professional development in improving inclusive practice (Tadeo et al., 2023).

In this study, instructional challenges refer to the difficulties teachers encounter in developing, presenting, adapting, and assessing lessons that respond to the varied learning needs of learners in inclusive classrooms. These may include difficulties in differentiated instruction, limited learning resources, large class sizes, and workload demands (Florian & Pantić, 2017; OECD, 2019; Pozas & Letzel, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Behavioral challenges, on the other hand, refer to difficulties in managing classroom behavior, facilitating positive peer interaction, addressing disruptive or off-task behavior, and coordinating behavioral support with parents and other stakeholders (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Simonsen et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2020). In public and inclusive school contexts such as Isabela, these challenges may be intensified by insufficient training, limited resources, large class sizes, weak support systems, and inconsistent home-school coordination (OECD, 2019; Sharma & Sokal, 2016; UNESCO, 2020).

Despite the growing body of literature on inclusive education, many studies continue to examine instructional and behavioral concerns separately. This limits a more comprehensive understanding of how these two dimensions interact in shaping teachers' experiences and classroom practices. Moreover, while previous studies have recommended professional training and institutional support, there remains limited empirical work that directly uses teachers' identified instructional and behavioral challenges as basis for developing a competency-based learning and development program. This gap is particularly important in local public-school contexts where teachers are expected to implement inclusive education despite limited resources, diverse learner needs, and varying levels of preparation.

Thus, this study investigates the instructional and behavioral challenges encountered by teachers in implementing inclusive education and uses the findings as basis for developing a competency-based learning and development program. Through this, the study aims to generate evidence that may guide the design of a contextualized L&D program that strengthens teachers' competencies in inclusive instruction, classroom behavior management, collaboration, and learner support.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of the respondents?
 - a. age;
 - b. sex;
 - c. school affiliation;
 - d. year level taught; and
 - e. special education training attended
2. What is the level of instructional challenges among teachers in implementing inclusive education?
3. What is the level of instructional challenges among teachers in implementing inclusive education when grouped according to profile variables?
4. What is the level of behavioral challenges among teachers in implementing inclusive education?
5. What is the level of behavioral challenges among teachers in implementing inclusive education when grouped according to the profile variable?

Methodology

Research Design

This research utilized a descriptive comparative design to examine instructional and behavioral challenges encountered by teachers implementing inclusive education and to translate the integrated evidence into a competency-based learning and development (L&D) program. The design was used to determine the level of instructional and behavioral challenges encountered by teachers in implementing inclusive education, as well as to compare these challenges across demographic and contextual variables such as age, sex, school affiliation, year level taught, and special education training attended.

Research Environment

The research took place at all the public secondary schools in the Division of Isabela, where there were ongoing initiatives regarding inclusive education being implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd). This included both students who were considered regular and those requiring special education, based on the government's vision of achieving inclusive and equal education. The school settings consisted of regular classrooms that integrated diverse learners who varied in terms of their abilities, learning styles, and behavioral traits.

Respondents

Secondary teachers in the Municipality of Roxas- West District, Isabela who work in public schools and use pull-out/resources-room or full-inclusion models to achieve inclusive education were the target group. The quantitative strand employed a stratified sampling design with strata defined by year level taught, and inclusion model. The final sample size was not be fixed a priori; rather, it was determined once the population (N) is enumerated and the sampling frame is finalized. Specifically, the required n was computed by specifically: (a) estimating the precision needed for prevalence parameters via a standard formula for proportions (e.g., Cochran's/Agresti's: $n_0 = z^2 p(1 - p)/E^2$), using either prior estimates of p from pilot data/literature or the conservative $p = .50$ when unknown; (b) adjusting for clustering through an empirically justified design effect (DEFF) based on the sampling plan; (c) applying the finite population correction when the sampling fraction exceeds 5% ($n = n_0/[1 + (n_0 - 1)/N]$); and (d) inflating for anticipated non-response/invalid cases to yield the required fielded sample ($n_{\text{field}} = n/(1 - \text{nonresponse})$). In parallel, a power analysis was conducted for the factorial structure (grade band x school type x inclusion model) within a GLM/ANOVA framework to ensure adequate

sensitive to detect theoretically meaningful effects; the larger of the two requirements (precision-based vs power-based) set the target n . Sample allocation across strata was proportionate to stratum size. If variability or cost differentials warrant, Neyman allocation was used to optimize efficiency. To preserve the legitimacy of subgroup comparisons and prospective measurement-invariance tests, a minimum per-stratum (and per-cell) threshold was enforced, with the threshold derived.

Research Instruments

The main data gathering instrument was a research-developed questionnaire drawn from available tools and literature on the subject matter of inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Sharma & Salend, 2016; Pather & Nxumalo, 2022). Two main instruments were used to measure instructional challenges and behavioral challenges. The Instructional has three measures: the challenges brought about by instructional content in developing lessons, presenting lesson challenges, and instructional challenges in assessing lessons. These three dimensions cumulatively represented the total instructional burden experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive practices.

The second instrument that was used is the Behavioral Challenges Scale. This instrument was used to measure the extent of the problems that teachers face concerning the management of learner behavior within inclusive settings. This scale has three dimensions such as, Classroom Management, Temperaments, and Behavioral Statuses.

Validity and reliability procedures were conducted to ensure the accuracy and quality of the instrument. Three experts - a SPED specialist, a research methodologist and a school administrator - assessed the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of each item to establish the content validity. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated based on the evaluations, and the minimum score required to be considered acceptable was 0.80. The reliability of the instrument was also tested by conducting a pilot test on the teachers who were not part of the main study. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, with coefficients of 0.70 and above acceptable and values of 0.80 and above highly reliable. Items with low reliability were revised or refined prior to the final administration of the questionnaire. In general, the Teacher Inclusive Instructional and Behavioral Challenges Questionnaire (TIIBC-Q) is a carefully validated and tested instrument which is effective in measuring the instructional and behavioral challenges that teachers face in implementing inclusive education.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the conduct of the study, formal permission and approval was sought from the Schools Division Office to ensure adherence to the research protocols governing educational institutions. The researcher also obtained approval from the school principals of public schools identified as participants. Letters of request and endorsement was provided to confirm authorization for data gathering. Once approval was granted, coordination was made with the school heads or research coordinators to schedule the data collection in a way that will not disrupt regular classes.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS or other computer software packages were conducted because the data failed to meet the assumption of normality. The descriptive analysis involving mean, frequency, and percentages was used in the study to present the demographic characteristics of the participants as well as the instructional and behavioral issues. In addition, inferential statistics were used, such as Kruskal Wallis test and Mann Whitney U test were used to compare the behavioral and instructional challenges and grouped according to profile variables.

Results and Discussion

<i>Profile Variables</i>		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	21-25 years old	4	3.90
	26-30 years old	9	8.70
	31-35 years old	7	6.80
	36-40 years old	29	28.20
	41-45 years old	27	26.20
	46-50 years old	16	15.50
	50 years old and above	11	10.70
Sex	Female	89	86.40

	Male	14	13.60
	MNHS	25	24.30
School Affiliation	RNHS	67	65.00
	SIS	11	10.70
	Grade 7	14	13.60
	Grade 8	38	36.90
Year Level Taught	Grade 9	32	31.10
	Grade 10	19	18.40
	No Training	94	91.26
	With Training	9	8.74
SPED Training	1 Training Attended	(3)	(2.90)
	2 Trainings Attended	(4)	(3.90)
	3 Trainings Attended	(2)	(1.90)

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Based on the data, most of the participants are in the middle age with the age group 36 – 40 as the most dominant (28.20%) followed by the age group 41 – 45 years (26.20%). The sample is heavily skewed towards the female sex, representing 86.40% of the total population, while males represent only 13.60%. As to the distribution per institution, most of the respondents are found at RNHS (65.00%) while MNHS and SIS constitute 24.30% and 10.70% respectively.

The teaching assignment reveals that the highest number of teachers is in Grade 8 (36.90%) and Grade 9 (31.10%), implying that most of the SPED programs are being catered to the lower secondary grades. A major deficiency in specialized professional development is of great importance since the majority (91.26%) of the teachers are lacking formal SPED training. Of the 8.74% who have had SPED training, the vast majority have had only two training sessions (3.90%) or only one training session (2.90%). The profile suggests an experienced but predominantly female workforce that may require further targeted specialized training to meet the needs of students in the inclusive education.

Test Questions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Qualitative Description
A. Developing Lessons	3.25	0.52	Very High
1. I find it difficult to design lesson plans that address the diverse abilities of all learners in one classroom.	3.04	0.61	High
2. I find it challenging to align lesson objectives with differentiated instructional strategies for students with special needs.	3.31	0.74	Very High
3. I struggle to modify instructional materials to meet individual learner needs.	3.37	0.79	Very High
4. I find it difficult to integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in lesson development.	3.18	0.65	High
5. I experience challenges in selecting appropriate instructional resources for inclusive classrooms.	3.37	0.71	Very High
B. Presenting Lessons	3.29	0.55	Very High Challenge
6. I find it challenging to use varied teaching strategies to address different learning styles during lesson delivery.	3.21	0.62	High
7. I struggle to maintain learner engagement while addressing individual accommodations.	3.33	0.76	Very High
8. I experience difficulty in pacing lessons to ensure understanding for both regular and special learners.	3.40	0.80	Very High
9. I find it challenging to provide timely and appropriate feedback to learners with diverse needs.	3.19	0.63	High
10. I struggle to use assistive technology effectively during instruction.	3.32	0.81	Very High

C. Assessing Lessons	3.25	0.39	Very High
11. I find it difficult to design assessments that are suitable for learners with varying abilities in an inclusive class.	3.13	0.64	Very High
12. I experience challenges in modifying assessment tools for students with disabilities.	3.38	0.63	Very High
13. I struggle to implement alternative assessment strategies (e.g., performance-based tasks).	3.24	0.71	High
14. I find it challenging to interpret assessment results for individualized instructional planning.	3.10	0.59	High
15. I experience difficulty ensuring fairness and equity in grading students with diverse needs.	3.22	0.70	High
Total Mean Score	3.25	0.39	Very High

Legend: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low, 1.75–2.49 Low, 2.50–3.24 = High, 3.25–4.00 = Very High

Table 2 .Level of Instructional Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

The overall results indicate that teachers encounter Very High Challenges, which is proven by an average total score of 3.25 (SD = 0.390). Among the three groups, the Presentation of Lessons category was identified as the most challenging one with an average score of 3.29, especially in dealing with pacing lessons according to the needs of both typical and exceptional learners (M = 3.40, SD = 0.796).

The domains of Developing Lessons and Assessing Lessons both had a mean of 3.25, which is also considered a Very High Challenge. For the domain of developing lessons, teachers indicated that it was challenging for them to adjust their teaching materials and choose relevant materials (both Mean = 3.37). Similarly, in the evaluation phase, the alteration of the evaluation tools according to the students' different capabilities was perceived as the most difficult task (Mean = 3.38, SD = 0.628). Low standard deviation values in all questions show consensus among the respondents regarding the necessity of seeking professional help in differentiation, assistive technology, and assessment.

According to Leek et al. (2024) demonstrates that time is a "hidden curriculum" that as often an "administrative barrier to teaching". Their research explores the concept that the pressures placed upon teachers through times constraints that do not "allow for learners' varying learning capacities"-referred to as "clock-based structures"-contributing to your top ranking individual challenge of pacing as teachers have to balance between the needs of regular and special learners in real time. Goyibova et al. (2025) By adapting instruction, content, and assessment to meet the needs of various learners, differentiation in education improves student engagement and accomplishment.

Additionally, Siriban (2025) reports that the emergent themes of "resource gaps" along with "crafting tailored educational pathways" in the challenges faced when advancing inclusive education in the Philippines, provides further support for your findings where teachers were struggling with the heavy cognitive and temporal loads associated with instructional design. The findings show that the introduction of inclusive education does not solely depend on policies but calls for a lot of pedagogical effort as well. For this reason, any intervention should be done both institutionally and politically, and not just in the classroom.

Variable	n	Mean Rank	H	df	p
21-25 years old	4	42.13	4.536	6	0.605
26-30 years old	9	56.78			
31-35 years old	7	48.5			
Age 36-40 years old	29	53.21			
41-45 years old	27	51.15			
46-50 years old	16	58.44			
50 years old and above	11	45.91			
Total	103				

Legend: Note. H represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 3. Comparison of Instructional Challenges Across Age Groups

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if the level of instructional challenges differed significantly across the seven age categories of SPED teachers ($N = 103$). The results indicated no statistically significant difference in challenge levels based on age, $H(6) = 4.536$, $p = .605$. As shown in Table 3, the Mean Ranks were relatively distributed across all groups, ranging from 42.13 to 58.44. These findings suggest that instructional difficulties in inclusive education are experienced similarly by teachers regardless of their age or length of professional experience.

In addition, Kaji & Dutta (2026) found that there is a general tendency for educators to experience problems such as inadequate training, lack of teaching materials, and problems with catering to the needs of varied students, irrespective of their age. This indicates that the problems associated with SPED educators transcend age groups and have more to do with systematic inadequacies than anything else.

Variable		<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Sex	Female	89	45.14	632	4.536	-0.831	0.406
	Male	14	53.08	4724			
Total		103					

Legend: *U* = Mann-Whitney *U* statistic; *z* = standardized test statistic. Significance level is set at $p < .05$. indicates no significant difference.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney *U* Test Results Comparing Instructional Challenges by Sex

An Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney *U* Test was performed to evaluate whether the level of instructional challenges differed significantly between male ($n = 14$) and female ($n = 89$) teachers. The results of the analysis indicated no statistically significant difference between the two groups, $U = 709.00$, $z = -0.831$, $p = .406$. As shown in Table 4, the mean rank for males (53.08) was slightly higher than that for females (45.14), but this variance did not reach statistical significance. These findings suggest that the gender of the educator does not play a determining role in the perceived difficulty of implementing inclusive education, with both groups reporting comparable levels of instructional challenge. This finding is supported by Selisko et al. (2024), who reported that gender was not significantly associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Their results indicated that both male and female participants demonstrated similar patterns of responses, suggesting that gender does not play a determining role in inclusive education perceptions and challenges.

Variable		<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
School Affiliation	MNHS	25	48.12	0.947	2	0.623
	RNHS	67	53.04			
	SIS	11	54.45			
Total		103				

Legend: *H* represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 5. Comparison of Instructional Challenges by School Affiliation

Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to identify whether there were any significant differences in the instructional challenges faced by the teachers when evaluating the lessons across the three selected schools ($N=103$). It was found that there were no significant differences in instructional challenges faced regardless of school association, $H(2) = 0.947$, $p = .623$. As illustrated in Table 5 below, there were almost equal mean ranks among the three institutions, SIS (54.45), RNHS (53.04) and MNHS (48.12). These results imply that the instructional hurdles associated with inclusive education are consistent across different school settings in the study area, suggesting that the difficulties are likely rooted in the curriculum or student needs rather than school-specific factors.

The results of this study find support in the work of Ainscow et al. (2012), where emphasis was placed on the fact that issues in inclusive education are predominantly systematic and are not affected in any significant way by variations in individual school contexts. The point of view of these authors is that schools functioning under the same education system will experience the same barriers, especially those related to resources, methods, and learners. This is consistent with the present result of the lack of any statistically significant difference among schools in instructional issues.

	Variable	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
SPED Training	No Training	94	52.65	4949.50	361.5	-0.721	0.471
	With Training	9	45.17	406.50			
Total		103					

Legend: U = Mann-Whitney U statistic; z = standardized test statistic. Significance level is set at $p < .05$. indicates no significant difference.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test Results Comparing Instructional Challenges by SPED Training

An Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the level of instructional challenges between teachers with training ($n = 9$) and those without ($n = 94$). The results indicated that having attended SPED training did not significantly reduce the perceived level of instructional challenge, $U = 361.50$, $z = -0.721$, $p = .471$. As shown in Table 6, the mean rank for those without training (52.65) was slightly higher than those with training (45.17), but the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that the current training programs attended by the respondents may not be sufficient to significantly alleviate the difficulties associated with assessing lessons in an inclusive setting, or that the challenges are so systemic that they persist regardless of initial professional development.

According to Rivas, C. 2025, the difficulties that general educators face while teaching special learners in inclusive classroom settings have been highlighted. Inclusion is becoming a trend all across the world. However, there are many issues that a general educator faces when working in an inclusive classroom. These issues range from lack of knowledge to lack of resources and problems relating to modifying the curriculum.

	Variable	n	Mean Rank	H	df	p
Year Taught	Grade 7	14	45.43	5.045	3	0.169
	Grade 8	38	59.97			
	Grade 9	32	47.95			
	Grade 10	19	49.61			
Total		103				

Legend: H represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 7. Comparison of Instructional Challenges by Year Level Taught

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if the instructional challenges in assessing lessons varied significantly based on the year level taught by the SPED teachers ($N = 103$). The statistical analysis revealed no significant difference among the four grade levels, $H(3) = 5.045$, $p = .169$. While Grade 8 teachers recorded a slightly higher mean rank (59.97) compared to Grade 7 (45.43), Grade 9 (47.95), and Grade 10 (49.61), these differences did not reach statistical significance. This implies that the challenges associated with inclusive education are relatively uniform across the junior high school spectrum, suggesting that the complexity of adapting instruction for special learners remains a constant hurdle regardless of the specific grade-level curriculum being taught.

For instance, Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasized that inclusive pedagogy implies catering for diversity in learning needs in all classes regardless of the level of grade involved, thus meaning that the challenge is inherent in all teaching professions. In addition, issues such as differentiation, adaptation of assessment, and time constraints have been shown by Loreman et al. (2014) to exist across all educational settings. That is, challenges related to inclusive programs are similar at all curricular levels. Finally, as per Avramidis & Norwich (2002), barriers to the adoption of inclusion initiatives are linked to variables such as readiness of teachers, availability of resources, and supportive institutional environment rather than differences in grades. Consequently, findings from existing literature lend support to the results obtained in the present study. The implication is that challenges associated with the complexity of inclusive assessment are consistent across all junior high school years.

	Test Questions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Qualitative Description
A. Classroom Management and Facilitating Desirable Social Interaction		3.25	0.50	Very High
1.	I find it difficult to manage learners who frequently act impulsively in class.	3.16	0.64	High
2.	I experience challenges in managing students who are highly emotionally sensitive.	3.41	0.71	Very High

3.	I struggle to manage students who show behaviors commonly associated with ADHD during class activities.	3.31	0.67	Very High
4.	I find it challenging to manage disruptive behaviors during instruction.	3.18	0.59	High
5.	I struggle to apply positive behavior interventions consistently.	3.20	0.82	High
B. Temperaments		3.23	0.54	High
6.	I find it difficult to manage learners with highly impulsive temperaments.	3.23	0.66	High
7.	I experience challenges handling emotionally sensitive students.	3.34	0.72	Very High
8.	I struggle to respond effectively to learners who display low frustration tolerance.	3.17	0.76	High
9.	I find it challenging to adjust my teaching approach to match students' temperament differences.	3.23	0.66	High
10.	I experience stress in dealing with students who frequently exhibit mood variability.	3.20	0.69	High
C. Behavioral Statuses		3.33	0.51	Very High
11.	I find it challenging to support learners with diagnosed behavioral disorders.	3.39	0.60	Very High
12.	I struggle to manage students exhibiting symptoms of ADHD during lessons.	3.40	0.68	Very High
13.	I experience difficulty addressing aggressive behaviors in the classroom.	3.28	0.71	Very High
14.	I find it challenging to implement behavior intervention plans effectively.	3.28	0.62	Very High
15.	I struggle to coordinate with parents and specialists regarding students' behavioral concerns.	3.29	0.72	Very High
Total Mean Score		3.27	0.39	Very High

Legend: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low Challenge, 1.75–2.49 Low Challenge, 2.50–3.24 = High Challenge, 3.25–4.00 = Very High Challenge

Table 8. Level of Behavioral Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

The above statistics show a Total Mean Score of 3.27 (SD = 0.392). The interpretation of the figure above indicates a Very High Challenge. Among all the areas identified in the categories, Behavioral Statuses stood out as being highly challenging (Mean = 3.33). Under this category, the highest challenge identified by the respondents was dealing with students suspected of having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Mean = 3.40) and those who had behavioral disorders (Mean = 3.39).

Very high challenge ratings were also observed in the domains of Classroom Management and Facilitating Desirable Social Interaction, where the mean was 3.25. In this category, the primary difficulty lies in managing students who are highly emotionally sensitive (Mean = 3.41). Meanwhile, the Temperaments domain received a mean of 3.23, which falls under the High Challenge description. Although this rating was relatively lower, educators still experience considerable challenges with emotionally sensitive students (mean = 3.34, standard deviation = .722). The very low standard deviations clearly suggest a unanimous response from the 103 respondents emphasizing the importance of behavioral intervention training.

As stated by Kokkinos et al. (2016), teachers experience high levels of stress when managing unruly students, particularly students who exhibit behavior that relates to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and aggression. As argued by Reinke et al. (2011), however, one of the problems that teachers face is the fact that teachers have challenges with the consistent implementation of behavior management because of aggressive and emotionally vulnerable students.

Furthermore, according to Sharma et al., Loreman, and Forlin (2011), in addition to issues related to behavioral control difficulties, teachers also encounter other challenges, including communication with parents and other professionals who work with the child, supporting the findings presented herein. Therefore, teachers encounter complicated challenges, not only behavioral but also emotional, that extend beyond classroom management skills.

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	21-25 years old	4	36.75	3.773	6	0.707

26-30 years old	9	50.17
31-35 years old	7	45.93
36-40 years old	29	53.64
41-45 years old	27	53.91
46-50 years old	16	58.63
50 years old and above	11	47.77
Total	103	

Legend: *H* represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis *H* Test Results for Behavioral Challenges by Age Group

The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was performed to determine whether there is any significant difference in the perception of behavioral challenges for carrying out inclusive education among the seven age groups of teachers ($N = 103$). Based on the results of this analysis, there is no significant difference in behavioral challenges for the different age groups, $H(6) = 3.773$, $p = .707$. Even though the age group of 46-50 had the highest mean rank (58.63), while the age group of 21-25 had the lowest mean rank (36.75), these differences were not significant. This indicates that challenges related to behavior management, temperament, and behavioral disorder among the learners are equally experienced by teachers irrespective of age or experience in teaching.

This finding is supported by OECD (2019), which reported that teachers across different age groups generally experience similar classroom management and behavioral challenges in inclusive education settings, particularly when adequate institutional support and continuous professional development are lacking. The TALIS 2018 results emphasized that while teaching experience and age may influence confidence levels, they do not significantly reduce the actual occurrence of disruptive behaviors and emotional difficulties among learners. Instead, behavioral challenges are consistently reported across novice and veteran teachers alike, suggesting that such issues are systemic and classroom-context dependent rather than age-dependent. This aligns with the present study's finding that age does not significantly influence the level of behavioral challenges experienced by teachers.

Variable		<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Sex	Female	89	50.70	4597.50	738.5	1.116	0.264
	Male	14	60.25	758.50			
Total		103					

Legend: *U* = Mann-Whitney *U* statistic; *z* = standardized test statistic. Significance level is set at $p < .05$. indicates no significant difference.

Table 10. Mann-Whitney *U* Test Results Comparing Behavioral Challenges by Sex

An Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney *U* Test was conducted to determine if the level of behavioral challenges in implementing inclusive education differed significantly between male ($n = 14$) and female ($n = 89$) teachers. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups, $U = 738.50$, $z = 1.116$, $p = .264$. Although male teachers recorded a slightly higher mean rank (60.25) compared to their female counterparts (50.70), the difference was not sufficient to reject the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that the difficulties associated with managing student behavior, emotional sensitivity, and diagnosed disorders are experienced at a similar level of intensity by both male and female educators within the inclusive classroom setting.

As a consequence, the findings of the present study corroborate those reported by Sharma & Sokal (2016), where it was established that neither the experiences nor the challenges faced by teachers in providing inclusive education are significantly affected by the variable of sex, but rather by experience, training, and classroom dynamics. In particular, the findings of their research on teacher attitudes towards inclusion revealed that there were no significant differences regarding behavioral issues in terms of gender; both men and women teachers faced the same problems managing learners' behavior, especially in classrooms lacking the necessary facilities for effective inclusive teaching.

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
School Affiliation	MNHS	25	49.34	0.904	2	0.636
	RNHS	67	52.61			
	SIS	11	54.45			
Total		103				

Legend: *H* represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis *H* Test Results for Behavioral Challenges by School Affiliation

Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was conducted to find out if there exists any significant difference in the extent of the problem of behavior experienced in practicing inclusive education among the three schools. It indicates that there is no significant difference between the three schools where $H(2) = 0.904$, $p = .636$. The mean ranks of the three schools are shown in Table 11 below: SIS (54.45), RNHS (52.61), and MNHS (49.34). This means that issues related to challenging students' personalities, behaviors, and their behavior problems are not dependent on school culture or setting but can be observed in all three different environments included in this research project. This result correlates with the statement made by Woodcock & Woolfson (2019) concerning the fact that challenges of inclusive education are mostly due to systemic constraints. Their study revealed that while schools may differ in resources and leadership structures, teachers generally report similar levels of difficulty in managing behavioral issues when inclusive policies are implemented without sufficient systemic support, training, and classroom resources. This indicates that behavioral challenges are pervasive across educational institutions and are not significantly influenced by school affiliation, aligning with the present study's result showing no significant difference among MNHS, RNHS, and SIS.

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
SPED Training	No Training	94	52.64	4948.50	360.5	-0.733	0.464
	With Training	9	45.06	405.50			
Total		103					

Legend: *U* = Mann-Whitney *U* statistic; *z* = standardized test statistic. Significance level is set at $p < .05$. indicates no significant difference.

Table 12. Mann-Whitney *U* Test Results Comparing Behavioral Challenges by SPED Training

An Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney *U* Test was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the level of behavioral challenges in implementing inclusive education between teachers with SPED training ($n = 9$) and those without ($n = 94$). The results indicated that professional training in SPED did not significantly impact the perceived intensity of behavioral challenges, $U = 360.50$, $z = -0.733$, $p = .464$. As shown in Table 12, the mean rank for teachers without training (52.64) was slightly higher than for those with training (45.06), but the difference was not statistically significant. This finding implies that the barriers associated with behavior in a classroom setting are quite challenging to deal with, irrespective of whether the teacher has been through professional development training. The finding from the study is supported by Yburan and Tantiado (2025) whose research established that most non-special needs teachers still face immense problems in managing their learners with special needs even after undergoing or without undertaking SPED training. According to Yburan and Tantiado's (2025) findings, professional development on its own does not necessarily mean good classroom management in an inclusive education environment. Particularly, in the situation where educators are faced with difficult behavioral issues coupled with limited or inadequate institutional support and instruction, SPED training does not make any automatic difference at all in the effectiveness of class management skills in inclusive learning environments.

Variable		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Year Level Taught	Grade 7	14	45.43	2.266	3	0.519
	Grade 8	38	56.41			
	Grade 9	32	49.38			
	Grade 10	19	52.42			
Total		103				

Legend: *H* represents the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic, $p > .05$ indicates no significant difference.

Table 13. Kruskal-Wallis *H* Test Results for Behavioral Challenges by Year Level Taught

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if the level of behavioral challenges experienced by teachers varied significantly based on the year level they taught ($N = 103$). The results showed no statistically significant difference among the four grade levels, $H(3) = 2.266$, $p = .519$. While teachers in Grade 8 showed the highest mean rank (56.41), the distribution of ranks across all levels—Grade 7 (45.43), Grade 9 (49.38), and Grade 10 (52.42)—was statistically comparable. This indicates that behavioral issues such as impulsivity, emotional sensitivity, and disruptive behaviors are persistent challenges that do not fluctuate significantly as students move from Grade 7 through Grade 10, suggesting a need for a uniform behavioral support framework across the entire junior high school level.

These findings are supported by Simonsen et al. (2019), which pointed out that behavioral problems within an inclusive classroom environment have a tendency to remain stable throughout the various grade levels if a comprehensive behavioral support program for the whole school is not implemented. The systematic review conducted by Simonsen et al. (2019) on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) indicated that disruptive behavior among students is not necessarily determined by the grade level but rather by effective classroom management and school-wide behavioral interventions. This means that the absence of a uniform behavioral intervention strategy will lead to a consistent pattern of behavioral issues among teachers at various grade levels.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study demonstrated that teachers face extremely high challenges regarding instructions and behaviors for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Through the merging of findings in the qualitative and quantitative approaches, it was noted that the challenges are not individual or unique in nature; rather, they are system-based, interconnected, and pervasive in nature. Whereas the quantitative data identified the challenges faced by teachers, it is the qualitative data that helped to identify the origins of these challenges, which are learner diversity, lack of hands-on training, inadequate instructional materials, oversized classrooms, challenges in modifying assessments, behavior management issues, problems in diagnosis, and inadequate support from specialists and institutions.

The researcher has been able to establish that despite the variations in the demographic and institutional backgrounds of the participants, the statistics have revealed that there are no significant differences in instructional and behavioral problems among those clustered based on their age, gender, school connection, SPED training, and year level taught. This implies that the problems do not emanate from personal attributes and circumstances of the instructors but are rather systemic in nature, affecting all instructors regardless of the environment.

The results indicate that teacher resistance does not present the biggest obstacle to inclusive education. Instead, the central problem is the existence of a capacity support gap, in which teachers are tasked with carrying out their roles without proper preparation, resources, and institutional support for implementation. Instructional difficulties mainly arose during lesson presentation, preparation, and evaluation. Behavioral difficulties went beyond discipline issues and covered aspects like emotion management, classroom management, and an understanding of learners' behaviors, especially when there was ambiguity surrounding diagnosis.

In their integration, quantitative results strongly imply that the problems associated with inclusive education do not stem from the unwillingness or lack of commitment on the part of the teachers involved, but rather from the existence of a capacity-support imbalance. It is clear that the teachers are committed, flexible, and ready for inclusive education, but lack the capacity to do so effectively.

Implications of the study for inclusive education include the fact that a successful inclusion cannot be accomplished through the teacher's efforts only. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing policies; however, the success of their work largely depends on a properly structured and supported system of assistance and training.

The importance of these implications lies in the necessity to move from professional development of teachers to a broader perspective that takes into account competence-based approaches and supportive systems. This implies improving such teachers' skills as differentiated instruction, inclusive assessment, behavior management, and creating supportive schools' environment in terms of collaboration among different participants (administrators, specialists, parents, community members). In general, this study proves that inclusive education practice is based not only on a pedagogical concept but is rather a system-wide task. In the absence of such support, teachers would continue facing instructional and behavioral problems irrespective of their professional skills.

Recommendations

1. The Department of Education as well as school administrations should create training courses aimed at teaching differentiating instruction, UDL (Universal Design for Learning), inclusive lesson plans, and classroom adaptations. Training should be moved from the theory seminar format to a practice one including coaching, modeling teaching, mentoring, so that teachers could implement their knowledge on inclusiveness in real practice.
2. There should be some kind of inclusive assessment system used in all schools. This is needed so that teachers knew how to design valid and appropriate tests for their students who have different educational backgrounds. Such tests might include some alternative forms of assessing students' progress. The presence of pre-made templates of tests would relieve teachers of many efforts.
3. When it comes to behaviors, schools must put up structures such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) which entails behavioral supports, behavior management strategies, functional behavior assessment techniques, referrals, and documentation processes. Teachers, guidance counsellors, Special Education (SPED) experts, and other members of the teaching faculty must work collaboratively to address issues concerning behaviors since these cannot be solved by the teachers alone.
4. Those in charge of setting educational policies at various levels and school heads must see to it that all the necessary instructional materials and learning aids for learners with special needs are provided. Class sizes should also be minimized in order to lessen the burden on the teachers and give room for more individual attention from teachers. These must be focused especially in schools with large numbers of special learners.
5. There should be an understanding that inclusive education is everybody's responsibility and as such, schools must organize periodic case conferences, collaborations between parents and teachers, and multidisciplinary approaches. Schools must have monitoring and follow-through measures to ensure that everything is done effectively and efficiently.

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.