Behavioral Management Strategies of Special Needs Education Teachers

JULIE M. CAMPOLLO
Palina East Elementary School
julie.campollo@deped.gov.ph

PRESLY DE VERA
Pangasinan State University

Abstract — This study evaluated the effectiveness of behavioral management strategies employed by Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers, focusing on five key areas: setting rules, routines, positive reinforcement, relationship-building, and modeling. It also investigated whether teacher profile variables—such as age, gender, position, education, teaching experience, and training—affected the effectiveness of these strategies.

Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 32 Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers in the Schools Division of Urdaneta City through a structured survey. Most respondents were female, aged 41–50, held Teacher III positions, had earned master's units, had 11–15 years of teaching experience, and attended multiple relevant trainings.

Overall, the teachers demonstrated a "Very Effective" level of behavioral management. Among the five domains, "setting rules" received the lowest rating, though still categorized as "Effective." Teaching experience was found to have a significant influence on strategy effectiveness, while other profile variables did not show statistically significant differences.

The study recommends continued professional development through higher education and specialized training. It also suggests strengthening classroom rule-setting strategies and enhancing collaboration with parents to better support learners with special education. These steps aim to sustain effective behavioral management and foster a positive, inclusive learning environment.

Keywords — Behavioral Management Strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) Teachers

I.   Introduction

Globally, the global shift toward inclusive education has intensified the demand for effective behavior management strategies, especially for learners with special educational needs (LSENs). With the implementation of inclusive policies, educators are increasingly tasked with addressing disruptive behaviors that often stem from underlying developmental or cognitive challenges (Autry, 2021; Gonsier-Gerdin, 2021). Such behaviors, if unaddressed, can hinder both teaching effectiveness and peer learning outcomes.

Recent studies have emphasized the role of evidence-based interventions in promoting positive behavior and reducing classroom disruptions (Gagnon et al., 2020; Salem, 2021; Gulliford & Miller, 2023). Approaches such as Positive Behavior Support (PBS), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and individualized behavior intervention plans have shown promise in tailoring support to

student needs (Zajda, 2023; Farooqui et al., 2023). Despite these advances, a persistent gap remains between theory and classroom practice, especially in developing regions or under-resourced settings, where implementation fidelity can be inconsistent (Fisher, 2023; Alam et al., 2022).

In the Philippine context, particularly in the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Urdaneta City, Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers encounter a wide spectrum of behavioral challenges among learners. According to recent local observations and research, many of these behaviors remain unaddressed due to limited training, resources, and support systems (Reyes, 2023; de la Cruz, 2021). This has a significant impact on teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

Given these issues, there is a critical need to explore the behavioral management strategies currently utilized by SNED teachers in Urdaneta City. By identifying effective practices and existing gaps, this study aims to contribute to the enhancement of behavioral support in inclusive classrooms. The findings will inform targeted professional development, resource allocation, and policy recommendations to better support both teachers and learners in managing behavioral challenges.

Statement of the Problem

This aims to determine the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies by the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers of learners with special needs education in Urdaneta City during the school year 2024-2025.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

   a. age;

   b. sex;

   c. civil status;

   d. highest educational attainment;

   e. length of service as a Special Needs Education (SNED) teacher, and

   f. number of relevant trainings attended in Special Needs Education (SNED)?

2. What is the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers, along with:

   a. Setting rules;

   b. routines;

c. positive reinforcement;

d. building positive relationships; and

e. modeling?

3. Are there significant differences in the behavioral management strategies by the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers across their profile variables?

4. Are there significant relationships in the behavioral management strategies by the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers and their profile variables?

5. What training plan can be proposed for setting rules and positive reinforcement?

Literature Review

Inclusive education continues to gain traction globally, propelled by policy reforms and human rights frameworks that promote equitable access to education for all learners, including those with special educational needs (SENs). However, as educators strive to support learners in inclusive settings, managing disruptive behaviors—often linked to various disabilities—remains a persistent and complex challenge (Autry, 2021; Gonsier-Gerdin, 2021).

Disruptive behaviors among LSENs are frequently rooted in intrinsic neurological, psychological, or cognitive conditions. These behaviors, if unaddressed, can escalate, negatively affecting the learning environment for all students (Salem, 2021; Gagnon et al., 2020). Without evidence-based interventions, these disruptions may hinder academic progress and classroom harmony.

Researchers emphasize that effective classroom management depends on tailored behavioral support strategies. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) frameworks, applied behavior analysis (ABA), and individualized behavior intervention plans have demonstrated success in reducing negative behaviors and reinforcing positive ones (Zajda, 2023; Alam et al., 2022; Farooqui et al., 2023; Gulliford & Miller, 2023).

A resurgence in interest around behaviorist methodologies has emerged. Behavior modification, rooted in classical and operant conditioning, continues to evolve, now integrating principles of equity, dignity, and quality of life (QoL) in its application (Ahmad & Parween, 2021; Alhwaiti, 2022). These approaches are most effective when designed and implemented with compassion and respect for the learner.

In practice, posting classroom rules, using visual reminders, offering break times, and providing flexible seating help address specific learning and behavioral needs. These proactive measures enhance student focus and motivation, particularly for those with attention-related disorders (e.g., ADHD).

For learners with ADHD, behavioral interventions—especially those grounded in behavior modification—show robust effectiveness. Studies reveal significant improvement in behavior and long-term outcomes, with some findings indicating reductions in criminal behavior compared to medication-only groups (Maenner et al., 2020). Effective strategies include token economies, time-outs, reinforcement schedules, and structured classroom routines.

According to Reyes (2023), these behavioral issues, if unaddressed, can lead to long-term emotional, social, and academic setbacks. Children may face isolation, diminished self-esteem, and misdiagnoses due to the community's limited understanding of behavioral disorders.

II. Methodology

Research Design and Strategy

The study utilized the descriptive-correlational method of research. Descriptive research, as explained by Bhat (2023), aims to illuminate current issues or problems by collecting data that provides a more complete description than would be possible without this method.

In this study, the focus was on the profile of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers and the variations in their behavioral management strategies when dealing with children with behavioral issues. In addition, the study explored the potential relationships between these behavioral management strategies and the profile variables of the teachers. The correlational aspect of the research was analyzed to determine how the respondents' profile variables relate to the behavioral management strategies.

Population and Locale of the Study

The subjects of this study were the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers of the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Urdaneta City who were selected using a simple random sampling technique. This method ensured that each Special Needs Education (SNED) teacher in the school or district had an equal chance of being included in the study, thus providing a fair representation of the population. The selected teachers were invited to participate voluntarily, and their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

The inclusion of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers in this study was crucial as they play a fundamental role in laying the foundation for children's future learning and development. Their perspectives and experiences provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of current teaching practices and the challenges they face in delivering quality education to young learners.

This was included a total of 32 Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers from the different schools of SDO Urdaneta City were included.

Data Gathering Tools

To gather information for this study, a questionnaire checklist was used. The construction of the questionnaire checklist followed a comprehensive search of related literature and studies. This approach enabled the researcher to gather the necessary data effectively and ensured that the questionnaire was designed to elicit meaningful responses from the respondents.

The questionnaire checklist consisted of two parts. Part I elicited background information on the profile of the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers, including age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years teaching Special Needs Education (SNED), and the number of relevant trainings attended in Special Needs Education (SNED). Part II focused on the behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers, such as positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, and behavior modification.

The questionnaire checklist was constructed after conducting a comprehensive search of related literature and studies regarding behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers in dealing with disruptive behavior, specifically the books, studies by Topping (2022), Sidin (2021), and Sobeck (2020). Likewise, the observation of Special Needs Education (SNED) in Urdaneta I teachers in dealing with disruptive behaviors of Special Needs Education (SNED) learners.

Data Gathering Procedure

After refining and finalizing the questionnaire checklist, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Urdaneta City. This permit is crucial to secure official approval, ensuring that the study adheres to ethical guidelines and procedures established by educational authorities.

Upon obtaining the permit, the researcher planned to personally administer the questionnaire to the mathematics teachers. They distributed the questionnaires, explained the study's purpose and significance clearly to encourage active participation, and collected the completed questionnaires to ensure accurate capture of all essential data.

Subsequently, the researcher intended to analyze and interpret all the collected data using the research instrument. This analysis involved organizing and summarizing the data using appropriate statistical methods and techniques. The outcomes of the analysis were presented in a detailed report, including tables to facilitate data interpretation and comprehension.

Treatment of Data

After collecting data through a questionnaire checklist, the researcher sorted, tallied, organized, and encoded the information into an Excel spreadsheet to ensure data accuracy and identify inconsistencies. The data were then analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to explore relationships between variables and draw meaningful conclusions. To determine the profile of

Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers—including age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of SNED teaching experience, and number of relevant trainings attended—frequency counts and percentages were applied. Behavioral management strategies used by SNED teachers to address disruptive behaviors in learners with special needs were quantified using the average weighted mean, with interpretations based on a five-point rating scale.

Mean Scale Range	Descriptive Equivalent	Transmuted Rating
4.50-5.00	Always	Very Effective
3.50-4.49	Often	Effective
2.50-3.49	Sometimes	Moderately Effective
1.50-2.49	Seldom	Slightly Effective
1.00- 1.49	Never	Not Effective

To evaluate significant differences in the behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers across their profile variables, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and *t-test* were used. To determine the relationship between the behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers and their profile variables, the Coded Pearson Product Correlation was used.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the profile of the Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, teaching position, highest educational attainment, number of years of teaching experience, and number of relevant trainings attended in the district, division, regional, national, and international levels.

Profile Variables	Variable Category	Frequency	Percentage
	21-30	1	3.1
	31-40	9	28.1
Age	41-50	16	50.0
	51-60	6	18.8
	61-above	0	0.0
Sex	Female	25	78.1
	Male	7	21.9
	Single	12	37.5
Civil Status	Married	18	56.3
	Widow/er	2	6.3
	TI	1	3.1
	TII	1	3.1
Teaching Position	TIII	15	46.9
	SPET I	5	15.6
	SPET II	10	31.3
	BEED/BSED	9	28.1
Highest Educational Attainment	BS with MA Units	13	40.6
	MA Degree Holder	5	15.6

	MAED with Doctoral Units		0	0.0
	EdD/PhD Degree Holder		5	15.6
Number of Years Teaching Experience	5 years-below		3	9.4
	6-10 years		8	25.0
	11-15 years		14	43.8
	16-20 years		7	21.9
	21-25 years		0	0.0
	26 years and above		0	0.0
Trainings Attended	District	3 and below	15	46.9
		4-6	9	28.1
		7 and above	8	25.0
	Division	3 and below	15	46.9
		4-6	7	21.9
		7 and above	10	31.3
	Regional	3 and below	24	75.0
		4-6	7	21.9
		7 and above	1	3.1
	National	3 and below	26	81.3
		4-6	6	18.8
		7 and above	0	0.0
	International	3 and below	32	100.0
		4-6	0	0.0
		7 and above	0	0.0

The data show that most ECE and SNED teachers are aged 41–50 (50%), suggesting maturity and professional stability. Females dominate the workforce (78.1%), and over half are married (56.3%), indicating strong potential for empathetic, structured classroom management. The majority hold at least a bachelor's degree with MA units (40.6%), and most have 11–15 years of experience (43.8%). SPET II is the most common rank, reflecting leadership and mentoring capacity. Most have attended 1–3 relevant trainings, showing openness to growth. Overall, the faculty demonstrates a blend of experience, education, and collaboration readiness for effective behavior management.

Table 2 shows the overall summary of the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers.

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Transmuted Rating
Setting Rules	4.45	E
Routines	4.60	VE
Positive Reinforcement	4.48	E
Building Positive Relationships	4.58	VE
Modeling	4.50	VE
Overall Weighted Mean	4.52	VE

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – Very Effective (VE); 3.50-4.49 – Effective (E); 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Effective (ME); 1.50-2.49 - Slightly Effective (SE); 1.00-1.49 - Not Effective (NE)

The study explores the effectiveness of behavioral management strategies used by Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers in Urdaneta City. Results show a high overall effectiveness (mean = 4.52), with strategies such as routines, reinforcement, and modeling being very effective. However, "Setting Rules" scored the lowest (mean = 4.45), highlighting a need for improvement. The study recommends collaborative training, peer mentoring, and parental involvement to strengthen rule-setting practices. It emphasizes the importance of consistent and proactive strategies in supporting learners with special needs and calls for policy support, teacher development, and evidence-based practices to enhance inclusive education outcomes.

Table 3 shows the summary of ANOVA results for mean differences with their corresponding values of significance on the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education teachers across the profile variables.

Profile Variables	Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	.575	3	.575	5.472	.075
	Within Groups	3.472	29	.104		
	Total	4.047	32			
Civil Status	Between Groups	.567	2	.567	5.387	.056
	Within Groups	3.480	30	.104		
	Total	4.047	32			
Teaching Position	Between Groups	.573	3	.126	2.934	.058
	Within Groups	3.474	29	.117		
	Total	4.047	32			
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	.243	4	.121	1.023	.370
	Within Groups	3.804	28	.118		
	Total	4.047	32			
Number of Years of Teaching Experience	Between Groups	.191	3	.032	.263	.768
	Within Groups	3.856	29	.123		
	Total	4.047	32			
RT_District	Between Groups	.506	3	.168	1.477	.238
	Within Groups	3.501	29	.113		
	Total	4.047	32			
RT_Division	Between Groups	.895	3	.095	.796	.458
	Within Groups	3.152	29	.120		
	Total	4.047	32			
RT_Regional	Between Groups	.191	3	.047	.386	.681
	Within Groups	3.856	29	.23		
	Total	4.047	32			
RT_National	Between Groups	.508	3	.298	2.934	.058
	Within Groups	3.539	29	.101		
	Total	4.047	32			

RT_International	Between Groups	.065	3	.169	1.301	.214
	Within Groups	3.802	29	.111		
	Total	4.047	32			

The study found no significant differences in the effectiveness of behavioral management strategies among Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers across various profile variables, such as age, civil status, education, and experience. This uniformity suggests a shared application of effective strategies, likely due to standardized training and institutional practices. It highlights the potential for peer collaboration, where all teachers, regardless of background, can contribute equally. The findings imply that training should be inclusive and focus on evidence-based practices rather than teacher profiles. Overall, the consistency in effectiveness underscores a strong, unified teaching culture that benefits from ongoing support, collaboration, and professional development.

Table 4 shows the t-test on the significant difference in the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers across their Profile Variable Sex.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.102	.752	-.759	30	.454	-.08833	.11640	-.32606	.14939
Equal variances not assumed.			-.578	1.075	.661	-.08833	.15272	-1.73787	1.56120

ACROSS THEIR PROFILE VARIABLE SEX

The study revealed no significant difference in the effectiveness of behavioral management strategies between male and female Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers, as indicated by a significance value of 0.752 (greater than the 0.05 alpha level). This suggests that both genders are equally capable of managing learner behavior, supporting a gender-neutral professional environment. The findings promote inclusive collaboration and the sharing of best practices regardless of sex. Educational training and policies should remain gender-inclusive, focusing on skills and experience rather than demographics. Overall, effective behavior management is shown to be universally accessible among SNED teachers, regardless of gender.

Table 5 shows the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers. This was done by using the Pearson-r Product of Correlation of Pearson-r. In doing so, the profile variables of Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers were

correlated to their level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies in handling learners with special education.

Relationship between the Level of Effectiveness of Behavioral Management Strategies of Special Needs Education Teachers and their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age	-.274	.315
Sex	.031	.562
Civil Status	-.052	.220
Teaching Position	.147	.319
Highest Educational Attainment	.146	.311
Number of Years Teaching Experience	.422	.009*
RT_District	.121	.341
RT_Division	.222	.526
RT_Regional	.248	.116
RT_National	.351	.226
RT_International	.431	.223

Based on the data presented in the table, a significant relationship was observed between the number of years of teaching experience and the effectiveness of behavioral management strategies, as indicated by a p-value of 0.009, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This statistical result implies that teaching experience is a relevant and influential factor in shaping the effectiveness of behavior management practices among Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers.

This finding suggests that years of teaching experience contribute meaningfully to how well Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers implement behavioral management strategies in the classroom.

While the study indicates a significant association, further statistical analysis would be required to determine the direction and strength of this relationship. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to infer that teachers with more experience may exhibit higher effectiveness, owing to accumulated knowledge, practical skills, and situational adaptability.

This relationship underscores the value of peer mentorship and collaborative learning within school communities. New or less experienced teachers can benefit from the Insights, strategies, and techniques of more seasoned educators, modeling of best practices in behavior management, supportive feedback loops, reflective practice sessions, and team teaching or co-planning approaches that pair newer teachers with experienced colleagues. These collaborative strategies can create a culture of continuous learning and professional growth, ensuring that behavioral management effectiveness is shared across all levels of experience.

Training programs for Special Needs Education (SNED) teachers should be tailored to experience levels, with novice educators benefiting from intensive coaching, classroom

simulations, and hands-on workshops to build foundational skills, while veteran teachers could engage in advanced training or leadership roles, such as mentoring peers or designing behavioral interventions. Schools should establish structured mentorship systems to pair experienced SNED teachers with newer colleagues, fostering knowledge transfer and accelerating skill development. Policymakers must prioritize ongoing support and recognition for seasoned educators to retain their expertise, while also creating targeted interventions for early-career teachers to address gaps in behavior management. Retaining experienced SNED teachers is critical, as their proficiency directly correlates with classroom effectiveness; institutions should cultivate supportive environments that value their contributions through professional autonomy, leadership opportunities, and career advancement. Ultimately, the relationship between teaching experience and behavioral management success underscores the need for tiered professional development, mentorship frameworks, and policies that empower educators at all career stages.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the findings in this research, the following conclusions were formulated. The respondent Special Education (SPED) teachers vary in their profile, and in certain instances, their variations are extreme, and are female female-dominated group of respondents. The very effective behavioral management strategies of SPED teachers can be attributed to the consistent practices of Special Education (SPED teachers in handling learners with special education. The respondent Special Education (SPED) teachers vary in their level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies when grouped according to their profile variables. The profile variable number of years of teaching experience is a determinant factor in the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies of Special Education (SPED) teachers.

V. Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study. The respondent Special Education (SPED) teachers who have earned their master's units are encouraged to complete their studies in a reputable institution. Considering that the behavioral management strategy on setting rules obtained the lowest mean, Special Education (SPED) teachers are encouraged to discover other activities that could further amplify said domain for behavioral management for learners with special education.

The Special Education (SPED) teachers are also encouraged to attend relevant trainings that emphasize the importance of behavioral management strategies, which could greatly help in enhancing the socio-emotional skills of learners with special education. Special Education (SPED teachers should strengthen their partnership with parents who can actively guide their children's positive actions towards positive behavior. Further studies should be conducted using more

appropriate and relevant variables to determine further the level of effectiveness of behavioral management strategies in handling learners with special education.

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