

Research Article:

Behavioural Management Challenges and Support Needs in Inclusive Classrooms in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Effective classroom management is crucial for quality education. Students with special education needs often experience higher rates of behavioural issues, posing challenges for teachers. This study aimed to identify challenges and support needs in behaviour management among mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms in Malaysian government primary schools. Five primary school teachers from mainstream inclusive classrooms were recruited. These teachers participated in semi-structured interviews, which were then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of this study revealed three major challenges which included time constraints, student limitations and inadequate parental support. Support needs encompassed collaboration with professionals, training, teacher collaboration, parental cooperation and school support. The findings of this study can inform targeted interventions and policies to enhance behaviour management practices among mainstream teachers and create positive and inclusive learning environments for all students.

Keywords: Behaviour management, inclusive classroom, special education needs, challenges, supports

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INTRODUCTION

Effective management of the classroom is a crucial element of providing valuable education. Studies have observed that the quality of student learning outcomes is significantly impacted by teachers' competencies in handling their classrooms (Berger et al., 2018; Herman et al., 2022; Stevenson et al., 2020). The management of the classroom necessitates strong behavioural management skills. Behavioural management refers to the strategies and techniques teachers use to regulate and respond to student behaviour in the classroom (Marzano et al., 2003). It focuses on establishing and maintaining a positive learning environment that encourages appropriate behaviour, fosters a sense of belonging, and supports both academic and social-emotional development (Allen et al., 2016). A key advantage of effectively managing student behaviour within the classroom is the improvement of academic performance by minimizing disruptions. This enables teachers to concentrate better on delivering instruction and addressing the individual learning needs of each student (Jamba & Norbu, 2023). Students with special education needs (SEN) may encounter challenging behaviours due to various factors such as communication difficulties, sensory issues, or specific disabilities (Hofman & Müller, 2022). Zahid et al. (2023) found that 66.7% of students with SEN displayed behavioural challenges, while 94.9% of mainstream children did not exhibit any behavioural issues. However, students with SEN may be placed in regular classrooms through unconscious inclusion, a practice distinct from the structured inclusive education models commonly promoted in many Northern nations (Lee & Low, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative for teachers working with students with SEN to possess expertise in behaviour management, particularly considering the heightened prevalence of behavioural challenges among students with SEN within inclusive classrooms.

Behavioural Management of Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has been actively engaged in the ongoing development and implementation of inclusive education policies. These policies reflect a strong commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students with diverse needs and backgrounds (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). A key initiative in this effort is the Inclusive Education Programme, or Program Pendidikan Inklusif, which runs from 2013 to 2025. This programme aims to reform the education system to be more inclusive, ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, have equal access to quality education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013).

Behavioural management is closely linked to inclusive education, which ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, have equal opportunities to learn and engage in general education settings alongside their typically developing peers (Zhang & Wang, 2020). An inclusive classroom welcomes and supports students with varying needs, abilities, and learning styles (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009). Therefore, in such diverse

learning environments, effective behavioural management is crucial for facilitating student engagement and participation (Albadareen, 2017). Over the years, the emphasis on effective behavioural management practices for mainstream primary school teachers has grown (Lawrie et al., 2017). Managing behaviour in inclusive classrooms requires teachers to adopt flexible strategies that accommodate different learning styles while balancing the diverse dynamics of students with and without disabilities.

This raises the question of whether mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms face any challenges in behavioural management. What are the support needs of mainstream teachers? Gaining a deeper understanding of these differences could help bridge knowledge gaps in this area and ensure that mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms receive the necessary support.

Challenges in Classroom Behavioural Management

In managing the behaviour of students with SEN, teachers frequently encounter numerous challenges. They must navigate time constraints and multiple responsibilities, which can hinder their ability to prioritise behavioural management effectively (Cheng & Toran, 2022). The issue is compounded by considerable class sizes, making it difficult for teachers to provide personalised assistance to students with SEN who often require extra support (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). The lack of customised behavioural management support, particularly in rural schools, frequently worsens the problem, leaving educators less prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students (Razalli et al., 2020). Consequently, teachers are tasked with accommodating the diverse needs and learning styles of all their students, including those with SEN, which can be overwhelming (Dignath et al., 2022).

Another significant obstacle arises from the scarcity of resources and assistance available for managing behaviour in inclusive classrooms (Sobeck & Reister, 2020; Shoura & Ahmad, 2020). Moreover, teachers often face limitations in accessing support personnel and classroom materials tailored to diverse needs, which can impede their ability to develop personalised behaviour strategies and administer necessary interventions, thereby affecting comprehensive behaviour management (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). The absence of sufficient support may lead to feelings of burnout and frustration among teachers, exacerbating the challenges associated with behaviour management in inclusive education (Green & Stormont, 2017). Furthermore, many teachers lack adequate training in behavioural management, which hampers their ability to properly handle student behaviour in classrooms and cultivate positive learning environments (Cheng & Toran, 2022; Collier-Meek et al., 2018; Isa et al., 2020; Sobeck & Reister, 2020). Lack of knowledge and experience poses a challenge for teachers in effectively planning actions to manage the behaviour of students with SEN, such as those with learning disabilities (Collier-Meek et al., 2018). In addition to this, certain students might resist the introduction of behavioural management strategies, making it more difficult to implement effective intervention strategies to sustain a positive classroom atmosphere (Korpershoek et al., 2016). Teachers may encounter situations where techniques that are successful in one classroom or with a

particular group of students may not yield the same results in another context, necessitating adjustments and modifications to their approaches (Mitchell et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the lack of consistent disciplinary approaches together with rigid educational policies lead to burnout among teachers and their efficacy in creating inclusive learning environments (Shoura & Ahmad, 2020). According to Sobeck and Reister (2020), inconsistent disciplinary rules within a classroom cause more disruptions since students become confused and teachers experience heightened stress. The demand for proper resources combined with consistent policy frameworks to support effective behavioural management reflects the urgent need for educational institutions to address this problem. Another challenge stems from the lack of administrative support. Insufficient guidance and resources from school administration hinder teachers' efforts in implementing behavioural management strategies (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). Issues related to students and parents pose additional challenges for teachers. Cheng and Toran (2022) discovered that managing the behaviour of students with learning disabilities becomes challenging when parents are overly busy, excessively protective or inattentive. Additionally, all 12 participants in their study, who were special education teachers, reported facing challenges related to their students' attitudes, including serious negative behaviours such as tantrums, meltdowns, aggression, defiance and difficulty focusing during lessons.

The challenges commonly reported in the previous literature, as discussed above, encompass a range of issues that have been consistently identified across various studies and are summarised in Figure 1. These challenges include factors such as time constraints, limited access to resources, inadequate training for teachers, inconsistent disciplinary approaches together with rigid educational policies assistance and so on.

While literature has identified specific challenges faced by teachers in behavioural management, there is a need to explore the challenges encountered in the Malaysian context. It is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the types of challenges they face and how these impact their practices of behavioural management. Additionally, it is crucial to examine these challenges in inclusive classrooms, as the challenges may vary and necessitate different support systems. Skura (2022) noted that teachers employed across various types of Polish schools, including mainstream, inclusive and special schools, possess distinct qualifications, competencies and responsibilities due to their training background and working experiences. Similarly, in the Malaysian context, teachers with from mainstream backgrounds might also differ. Considering the diverse range of schools in Malaysia, along with the training of teachers and the educational settings they work in, it is valuable to explore their experiences in dealing with students facing behavioural challenges in inclusive settings. Understanding their perceived challenges is pertinent. Moreover, exploring the support systems required by these teachers is of utmost importance because, by comprehensively examining both the challenges and support systems, better plans and policies can be implemented to assist mainstream teachers in the behavioural management of students with SEN in inclusive classrooms.

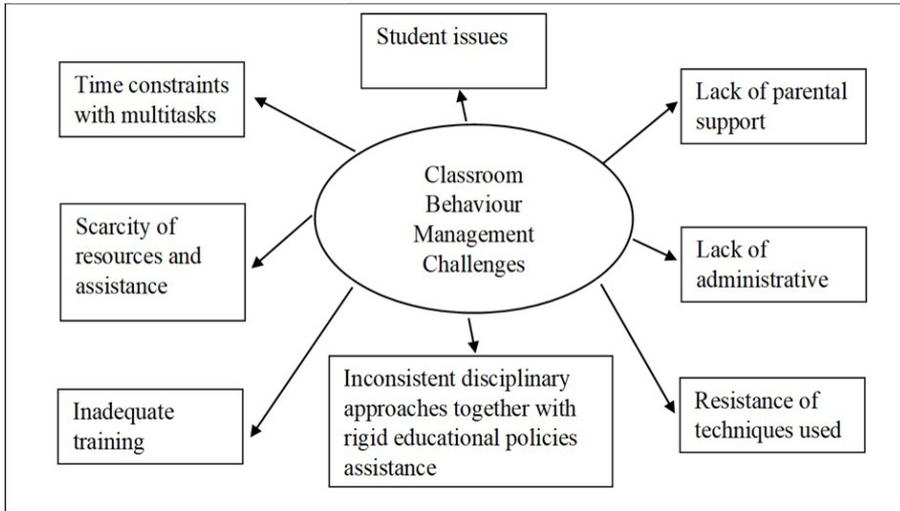


Figure 1. Classroom behaviour management challenges reported in the literature

Support Systems for Classroom Behavioural Management

In the context of classroom behavioural management, support can be referred to initiatives such as professional development, mentorship programmes and access to educational resources and services (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). Thus, in the context of this study, supports can mean any forms of assistance that can contribute to enhancing teachers' capabilities in addressing diverse behavioural needs and creating a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students, especially those with special educational needs. Numerous studies explore support systems for mainstream teachers in Malaysia regarding behavioural management in inclusive settings. To better prepare teachers for inclusive education, there is a growing emphasis on enhancing the knowledge and skills of both pre-service and in-service teachers regarding inclusive education (BERNAMA, 2023). Teacher training focuses on the fundamental principles of inclusive education, which aim to ensure equal opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs, within mainstream classrooms (Mohd et al., 2006). Teachers are typically educated about different types of disabilities and how to effectively address them in an inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, they may receive training on creating individualised educational plans to support students with SEN and provide customised assistance based on each student's unique needs (Charitaki et al., 2022). Rosmalily and Woollard (2019) noted that teacher training institutions may incorporate courses on inclusive education into their undergraduate or postgraduate programmes for prospective teachers.

Additionally, Hassan et al. (2018) explored the impact of professional learning communities (PLCs) on enhancing behavioural management strategies for mainstream teachers in Malaysia. Their research highlighted how PLCs foster a collaborative environment where teachers can share experiences, exchange ideas and jointly develop effective methods for managing diverse behaviours in inclusive classrooms. The study revealed that the collaborative nature of PLCs significantly boosts teachers' confidence and competence in addressing behavioural challenges. On the other hand, Phang et al. (2020) highlight the importance of mentorship in guiding teachers dealing with behavioural issues, providing both practical strategies and emotional support.

Collaboration between mainstream teachers and special education professionals was also a central theme in a study by Razalli et al. (2020). This research examined the effectiveness of such cooperation in managing behavioural issues in inclusive classrooms, emphasising the positive impact of cross-disciplinary collaboration. It is suggested that joint planning, resource sharing and continuous communication contribute to the successful implementation of inclusive behaviour management strategies. On the other hand, Cheng and Toran (2022) emphasised that special education classrooms typically utilise individualised education plans (IEPs) and other specialised tools that can inform strategies for integrated classrooms. By adapting these resources, mainstream teachers are better equipped to address both behavioural and academic challenges in inclusive environments.

The support needs commonly reported in the previous literature, as discussed above, encompass a range of initiatives that have been consistently highlighted across various studies and are summarised in Figure 2. These support needs include teacher training, professional learning communities (PLC), mentorship and so on.

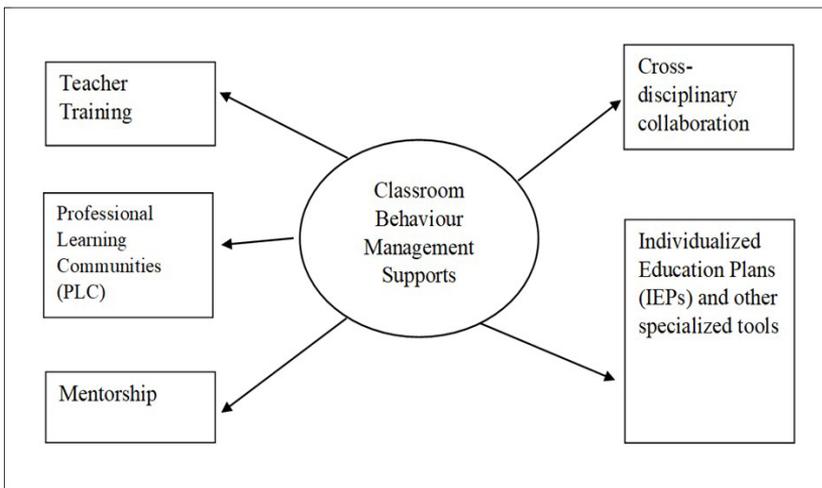


Figure 2. Classroom behaviour management supports reported in the literature

Despite growing awareness of inclusive education, significant gaps remain in the literature. Research on managing students with SEN in Malaysian inclusive classrooms requires an understanding of the support needs of mainstream teachers in order to identify actionable solutions. In this context, identifying the challenges and support needs of mainstream teachers in managing the classroom behaviour of students with SEN is crucial. Examining the types of challenges the teachers face can offer valuable insights into the complexities of behaviour management in inclusive educational settings. This understanding enables targeted efforts to enhance teachers' practices and better support students with SEN in inclusive classrooms. Evaluating support needs helps identify gaps and informs future strategies for improving support structures in inclusive classrooms.

Research Objectives

The main aim of this study was to identify the challenges encountered as well as the supports needed in classroom behaviour management among mainstream teachers who teach in inclusive classrooms in Malaysia government primary school.

The following research objectives were addressed:

1. To identify the challenges encountered by mainstream school teachers in managing classroom behaviour in inclusive classrooms.
2. To identify the supports needed by mainstream school teachers in managing classroom behaviour in inclusive classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative methodology, utilising semi-structured interviews as its main data gathering technique. Specifically, the aim was to thoroughly investigate the challenges as well as support needs related to managing the behaviour of students with SEN in inclusive primary school settings, as perceived by teachers.

Sampling and Participants

This study utilised purposive sampling to select a total of five teachers. Among the participants were five primary mainstream teachers (referred to as M1 to M5) from government primary schools in Malaysia involved in the Inclusive Education Programme which is known as Program Pendidikan Inklusif (PPI). The demographic profile of the participants, as outlined in Table 1, revealed a range of ages from 23 to 34 years. Predominantly, the teachers were female (80%), and all identified as of Chinese ethnicity. In terms of academic qualifications, majority of the teachers held a Bachelor's degree, while

some had attained a Master's degree. Teaching experience varied among participants, spanning from 3 to 11 years. Furthermore, the years of experience each teacher had in teaching students with SEN also varied, ranging from 2 to 6 years.

Table 1. Demographic data of participants

| Teacher | No. | Age | Gender | Ethnicity | Academic qualification | Teaching experience | Teaching experience with students with SEN |
|------------|-----|-----|--------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Mainstream | M1 | 23 | F | Chinese | Degree | 3 | 2 |
| | M2 | 34 | M | Chinese | Master | 11 | 3 |
| | M3 | 30 | F | Chinese | Degree | 6 | 6 |
| | M4 | 33 | F | Chinese | Degree | 9 | 2 |
| | M5 | 34 | F | Chinese | Master | 10 | 4 |

Instrument

The research instrument utilised in this study comprised a series of interview questionnaires tailored to the research aim and objectives as shown in the Appendix. These questions were structured into two sections. The first section focused on gathering demographic and background information from the participants, such as age, ethnicity, gender, academic qualifications and teaching experience. The second section included two interview questions. The first question aimed to explore the challenges encountered by teachers in managing student behaviours. The second interview sought insights into the importance of recognising the support required by teachers to effectively manage student behaviours in the classroom. Prior to implementation, this instrument underwent validation by two experts to ensure its reliability and validity. A special education teacher with five years of working experience, and the other, a mainstream with 15 years of teaching experience in a private school setting helped to validate the instrument. Both experts contributed to the refinement of interview questions and actively participated in the validation process.

Data Collection

Individual interview sessions were arranged with each teacher. Initially, potential participants meeting the selection criteria were invited to take part in the study. Upon agreement to participate, appointments were scheduled in advance, offering teachers the choice to engage either via video call using an online platform or through face-to-face interviews. Before participation, teachers were provided with comprehensive details about the study to obtain their consent. In-depth interviews were conducted, enabling teachers to express their experiences, perceptions and insights regarding behavioural management in inclusive classrooms. To accurately capture participants' responses, interviews were audio-recorded. Each interview session typically lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. Following the

interviews, the authors transcribed all responses provided during the interviews. Verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were carried out to facilitate subsequent analysis. Responses obtained in Mandarin were first be transcribed and then translated into English before analysis. Then, a back-translations (translating the English version back into Mandarin) were performed to check for consistency and ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Data Analysis

Subsequently, a thematic approach was employed to analyse the interview data, aiming to identify patterns, trends and recurring themes present within the dataset. Thematic analysis of the data followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Model. The first step involved familiarisation, during which the data was carefully read through. Then, initial codes were created by pinpointing significant features. These codes were subsequently organised into possible themes. In the reviewing phase, themes were refined to ensure coherence. Afterwards, each theme was clearly defined and named to capture its core meaning. Finally, a report was produced that linked these themes to the research questions, using data extracts for support. This systematic method ensured a thorough and data-driven analysis. The identification of key themes was determined through consensus reached among the authors.

RESULTS

The results section highlighted two primary findings, which were challenges encountered by teachers in behavioural management and the necessary supports for effective behavioural management.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Behavioural Management

In responding to research objective 1, which was “to identify the challenges encountered by mainstream school teachers in managing classroom behaviour in inclusive classrooms”, an interview question was asked. For the first interview question, “Can you describe the struggles you faced when trying to manage behaviours among students in the classroom?” Three themes emerged, reflecting insights into the challenges encountered by the teachers. The subthemes included time constraint, students' limitations as well as lack of parental understanding and support.

Theme 1: Time constraint

A mainstream teacher (M5) expressed difficulties in managing behaviour within the constraints of limited time, emphasising the impact of various responsibilities on their ability to focus solely on behaviour management. She found it difficult to balance individualised teaching for behaviour management with attending to the needs of the entire class.

Some classes have children with special needs, so it will take time and effort to talk to them or to control them. (M5)

Theme 2: Students' limitations

All mainstream teachers (M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5) mentioned challenges related to understanding and managing students' behaviours, including those with ADHD or emotional control issues. Additionally, they discussed difficulties in addressing the diverse needs and behaviours of students with varying levels of understanding.

ADHD, now taking medication. Before this, she would always find things to do or disturb people, trip them and hit them. I had to explain to her myself: "Why do you do that?" If she can't recall, then I explain to her that it's wrong, but she has completely forgotten. After that, she knows how to apologise, but she still repeats it and apologises, but she doesn't understand at all. (M1)

Every student is different, not all students will listen to you. Not all of them will change to be good, at the end of the day, it's how the family teaches them or educates them. They haven't seen the world, when they are immature, no matter how you teach them they won't adapt or change. (M2)

....can't fully get rid of the misbehaviour of some special needs pupils. (M3)

Student has emotion management or control issues. (M4)

Older children will be harder to manage as they tend to be mischievous. Additionally, some classes include children with special needs, requiring extra time and effort to communicate with them effectively or manage their behaviour. Autistic children, in particular, may be less participative. For instance, I have a student who frequently talks to himself but struggles to control his behaviour. (M5)

Theme 3: Lack of parental understanding and support

Two mainstream teachers (M1, M2) encountered challenges related to parental denial or lack of understanding or support, including instances where parents refused to acknowledge their child's behaviour or blame teachers for not informing them.

When telling their parents, she doesn't believe that her child is like that but insists on not watching CCTV (parents in denial that her child is lying). (M1)

Some parents will blame you for not informing them their child is misbehaving, also need to do follow-up so that we know what is going on. (M2)

Supports Needed for Effective Behavioural Management

In responding to research objective 2, which was “to identify the supports needed by mainstream school teachers in managing classroom behaviour in inclusive classrooms”, an interview question was asked. For the second interview question, “What are some of the supports that you think might be able to help you in managing behaviours of your students in your classroom?” Overall, five themes emerged from the thematic analysis, reflecting the diverse needs of support needed. The support included collaboration with professionals, trainings, teacher collaboration, parental cooperation and school support.

Theme 1: Collaboration with professionals

Two mainstream teachers (M1, M3) expressed the need for support and advice from therapists and other professionals, especially when dealing with behaviours beyond their expertise. They valued input and guidance from specialists in handling severe cases of special needs pupils. In other words, collaboration with professionals helps teachers understand and manage students’ behaviours more effectively, enhancing their ability to provide appropriate interventions.

Need professionals to teach us about all these behavioural management, because our school has a lot of students with problems, some need attention and affection, and we want to be able to tell all this, in IPG we only learned all the basics and theories. (M1)

Need support from specialist in handling severe type of special need pupils. (M3)

Theme 2: Training

A mainstream teacher (M4) emphasised the importance of professional development and training in behaviour management strategies to enhance her effectiveness in managing student behaviours.

Attending courses to learn how to assist special-needs children and handle various situations effectively. (M4)

Theme 3: Teacher collaboration

Collaboration among colleagues was recognised as essential by a mainstream (M5) teachers for better understanding and management of student behaviours. For instance, sharing ideas and experiences among colleagues enables teachers to learn from one another and implement effective behaviour management strategies.

Support from colleagues, share their skills in managing their behaviour, and apply all the theories that you have learned before in teaching school. Learning from one another. (M5)

Theme 4: Parental cooperation

A mainstream teacher (M4) highlighted the significance of parental collaboration and responsiveness to teacher feedback in addressing their child's behavioural issues.

Requesting parents to collaborate and take measures to address their child's issues based on teacher feedback. (M4)

Theme 5: School support

A mainstream school teacher (M2) proposed that schools are encouraged to provide moral support to teachers and address parental concerns by discussing and investigating issues instead of solely blaming teachers.

School should give moral support, parents complain, schools should discuss and investigate it instead of blaming the teachers first. (M2)

DISCUSSION

Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Classroom Behaviour Management

The challenges encountered by teachers in managing classroom behaviour, as revealed in this study, stem from a variety of factors that influence their ability to effectively address student needs. A total of three major challenges were mentioned by teachers which included time constraint, students' limitations as well as lack of parental understanding and support. One significant challenge identified by mainstream teachers is the time constraint. Time constraints are a universal challenge in education, affecting both special education and mainstream teachers. Similar concern was raised in a study done by Cheng and Toran (2022), where Malaysian special education teachers encounter challenges balancing time constraints and diverse responsibilities, hindering their ability to prioritise and allocate ample time for implementing behavioural management strategies. In addition to this, Sobeck and Reister (2020) also mentioned that the demands of large class sizes were one of the hurdles encountered by teachers. This limitation may be attributed to various factors, including the demands of curriculum delivery, administrative tasks and the need to cater to individual student needs. In today's educational landscape, teachers often find themselves overwhelmed with multiple responsibilities within limited time frames. The pressure to cover curriculum content while simultaneously addressing behaviour issues can create significant stress and strain on educators, impacting their capacity to implement effective behaviour management strategies. Hence, it can be concluded that time constraints constituted one of the major challenges encountered by teachers. In order to overcome this challenge, mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms could adopt proactive classroom management strategies. For instance, establishing clear routines and visual schedules helps create a structured environment, reducing disruptions and guiding students towards

expected behaviours. Additionally, implementing positive behaviour reinforcement systems, such as token economies and praise, encourages desirable behaviours and motivates students to follow rules. To further ease the teacher's workload, peer mentors could be assigned to support students with behavioural challenges, fostering a collaborative learning environment while promoting social inclusion.

Furthermore, the diverse limitations presented by students contribute to the complexity of behaviour management in classrooms. Students with limitations in self-regulation and social skills often struggle with managing their emotions, understanding social cues, and interacting appropriately with peers. Students with special needs often have specific limitations that require additional attention and resources, leading to shared challenges among teachers in both settings. Addressing the diverse needs and behaviours of students requires a good understanding of individual differences and the implementation of tailored interventions to support their learning and behavioural development. While students' limitations may represent a significant challenge, teachers should also contemplate the underlying reasons for their behaviour. However, they often overlook factors resulting from the teaching process itself, such as overly complex material or ineffective instructional methods, as well as less apparent influences like various school and extracurricular factors (Skura & Wheeler, 2024). Thus, it is suggested that teachers adopt a broader perspective on behaviour, considering the contextual factors that precede challenging behaviours alongside the triggers that provoke them. To address this, teachers could teach self-regulation techniques, such as emotion recognition strategies, to help students develop the ability to manage their responses to different situations, reducing impulsive behaviours and improving focus in the classroom. Additionally, using social stories can be highly effective in modelling expected behaviours. Social stories provide clear, structured narratives that explain appropriate social interactions, helping students understand what is expected in different scenarios. For students with persistent behavioural challenges, teachers should implement structured behaviour support plans tailored to individual needs. These plans outline specific goals, intervention strategies and reinforcement methods to help students gradually improve their self-regulation and social interactions.

On the other hand, mainstream teachers also faced challenges related to parental understanding and support, as they interacted with a broader range of students and families with varying levels of involvement in their children's education. Lack of parental support and collaboration in behaviour management can make it challenging for teachers to reinforce positive behaviours consistently across home and school settings. As to this, this underscores the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents in addressing behaviour issues. In Montezuma's study (2018), following interviews with two special education teachers, it was determined that most classrooms necessitate enhanced parental involvement to effectively manage students' challenging behaviours. Parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting students' behavioural development and reinforcing positive behaviours learned in the classroom. However, challenges may arise when parents are unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge their child's behavioural issues, leading to friction between home and school environments. Thus, there is a need to build strong partnerships

between teachers and parents to bridge this gap and foster a supportive network for student success. To address this, teachers could provide parents with behaviour management strategies that they can use at home. These strategies may include clear expectations, positive reinforcement techniques, and consistent routines to help children develop self-discipline and emotional regulation. When parents apply similar approaches at home, it strengthens the effectiveness of classroom interventions. Regular and open communication is essential to fostering collaboration. Teachers can use apps to update parents on their child's progress, challenges and achievements. This ongoing communication allows parents to stay informed and involved in addressing behavioural issues, creating a bridge between school and home support. Additionally, organising parent workshops on positive discipline and social-emotional development can equip families with the knowledge and skills to manage behaviour effectively.

Overall, three major types of challenges were reported which were time constraints in managing behaviour, student limitations in self-regulation and social skills and lack of parental support and collaboration in behaviour management. The challenges faced by mainstream teachers, along with the corresponding suggested solutions, are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Challenges faced by mainstream teachers along with corresponding suggested solutions

| No. | Themes | Suggested solutions |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | Time constraints in managing behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use proactive classroom management strategies (e.g., clear routines, visual schedules)• Implement positive behaviour reinforcement systems (e.g., token economy, praise)• Assign peer mentors to support students with behavioural needs |
| 2 | Student limitations in self-regulation and social skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach self-regulation techniques• Use social stories to model expected behaviour• Implement structured behaviour support plans for students with persistent challenges |
| 3 | Lack of parental support and collaboration in behaviour management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide parents with behaviour management strategies to reinforce at home• Conduct regular communication through behaviour logs or school apps• Offer parent workshops on positive discipline and social-emotional development |

Supports Needed by Teachers in Classroom Behaviour Management

The identified supports needed for effective classroom behavioural management reflect the diverse needs and challenges faced by the mainstream school teachers. Five types of support were being highlighted by them in this study. Collaboration with professionals emerged as a crucial support needed by them. The complexity of managing student behaviours, especially in cases of severe special needs, often extends beyond teachers' expertise. In Nye et al. (2016) study, special educational needs coordinators may also choose to seek external support for children experiencing elevated levels of emotional and behavioural challenges, facilitating one-on-one interventions within the school environment. Thus, seeking input and guidance from specialists allows educators to gain valuable insights and access resources to address behavioural challenges effectively. The importance of this collaboration underscores the interdisciplinary nature of supporting student development and the significance of leveraging external expertise to enhance classroom practices. Establishing a referral system that allows teachers to seek guidance from behavioural specialists and other professionals is another option. Additionally, conducting joint intervention planning with these specialists ensures that behaviour management strategies are tailored to students' individual needs, promoting a more cohesive approach to intervention.

Professional development and training in behaviour management strategies were also identified as essential supports by the teachers. Continuous learning and skill development are vital for equipping educators with the knowledge and tools to implement evidence-based interventions and adapt to the evolving needs of their students. Fukkink et al. (2019) examined Dutch pre-service teachers, finding their participation in a professional development programme correlated positively with improved behaviour management skills, enhancing confidence and competence in diverse classrooms. Similarly, Paramita et al. (2023) underscores the need for professional learning programmes targeting classroom behaviour management to address teachers' low confidence and feelings of being underprepared. Teacher training is a crucial factor in equipping educators with the necessary skills to handle challenging behaviours effectively. Investing in teacher training not only enhances individual effectiveness but also contributes to a culture of continuous improvement within educational institutions. Organising workshops with behavioural therapists can provide hands-on training on evidence-based strategies, while developing online modules ensures that teachers have flexible access to professional development resources, allowing them to continuously enhance their knowledge on behaviour management in inclusive classrooms.

Furthermore, teacher collaboration emerged as a significant support mechanism for enhancing behaviour management practices. Collaboration among teachers could foster a supportive teaching environment where educators can share insights and strategies. This finding was congruent with a study conducted by Phang et al. (2020) who investigated the support structures within Malaysian mainstream schools, particularly mentorship programmes. Their study emphasised the importance of mentorship in providing

personalised guidance to teachers handling behavioural challenges in inclusive classrooms. Findings revealed that aside from facilitating the sharing of effective strategies, mentorship served as a crucial source of emotional support for educators navigating the complexities of inclusive education. Furthermore, setting up behaviour management teams within the school with a mentorship system could enable teachers to work together in addressing common behavioural challenges, while Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) could offer a platform for educators to exchange best practices, discuss case studies, and refine their classroom management techniques based on collective experiences.

Furthermore, the importance of parental cooperation and involvement in implementing consistent interventions at home was emphasised by teachers. Furthermore, the study revealed that the absence of parental cooperation hindered teachers' intervention efforts. When parents actively cooperate with the school, particularly with teachers, it facilitates the implementation of interventions aimed at fostering positive student behaviour, as these interventions can be reinforced consistently at home. To address this challenge, teacher training programs should incorporate skills for cultivating positive relationships with parents and providing them with support (Cheng & Toran, 2022). In addition to this, involving parents in setting behaviour goals could ensure consistency between home and school expectations. Additionally, providing parents with home-based strategies empowers them to support their children's behavioural development in a structured and proactive manner. Schools could facilitate this by offering workshops, informational resources and regular communication channels to strengthen the parent-teacher partnership.

Additionally, the need for school support and parental cooperation emerged as critical factors influencing effective behaviour management. The teachers highlighted the significance of schools providing support and effectively addressing parental concerns. It is undeniable that schools play a pivotal role in providing resources, moral support, and a conducive organisational culture that empowers teachers to address behavioural challenges effectively. Support from school administration is recognised as one of the important factors in successful classroom behavioural management (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). Strong leadership support is crucial in fostering a positive and inclusive school culture, where behaviour management is seen as a shared responsibility. Encouraging school leaders to prioritise inclusive practices, allocate necessary resources, and promote staff collaboration will contribute to a more effective and sustainable approach to behaviour management in mainstream classrooms.

Overall, five major types of support needs were reported which were collaboration with professionals, teacher training, collaboration among teachers, parental cooperation and school support. The supports needed by mainstream teachers, along with the corresponding suggested solutions, are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Supports needed by mainstream teachers along with corresponding suggested solutions

| No. | Themes | Suggested solutions |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Collaboration with professionals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a referral system for behavioural support • Conduct joint intervention planning with specialists |
| 2 | Teacher training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise teacher training with behavioural therapists on managing challenging behaviours • Develop online modules on managing behaviour in inclusive classrooms |
| 3 | Collaboration among teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up behaviour management teams within the school with mentorship system • Share best practices through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) |
| 4 | Parental cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve parents in setting behaviour goals for their children • Provide home-based strategies for consistency |
| 5 | School support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage leadership support in fostering a positive and inclusive school culture |

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenges encountered by teachers in managing classroom behaviour are multifaceted and influenced by a range of factors, including time constraints, student limitations and parental support. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that encompasses systemic changes within educational institutions, targeted training for mainstream teachers and promoting collaborative partnerships between teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, the identified supports needed for effective classroom behavioural management highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach that encompasses collaboration with external professionals, ongoing professional development, teacher collaboration, school support, and parental cooperation. Understanding and addressing these needs can inform targeted interventions and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing behaviour management practices and fostering positive learning environments for all students. By prioritising these supports, educational institutions can empower teachers and cultivate partnerships that promote the holistic development and well-being of students.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questionnaire

Part A

A1 Age : _____ years old

A2 Gender : Male Female

A3 Ethnicity : _____

A4 Academic achievements : _____

A5 Types of teachers : Mainstream teacher/ Special education teacher

A6 Teaching experiences : _____ years

A7 Teaching experiences in inclusive classrooms: _____ years

A8 Have you received any in-service training about behaviour management before?

If yes, please explain.

Part B

B1 Can you describe the struggles you faced when trying to manage behaviours among students in the classroom?

B2 What are some of the supports that you think might be able to help you in managing behaviours of your students in your classroom?