

Positive behavior support (PBS) implementation: Strategies in dealing with behavior and classroom management of students with special needs

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the level of implementation and effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions by special needs education teachers in managing classroom behavior among students with special needs at Zapatera National High School–SpEd Center, Cebu City, during the school year 2024–2025. Grounded in Behaviorism Theory (Skinner) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and supported by Republic Act No. 11036 (Mental Health Act of 2018) and DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2017, the research aimed to describe teacher demographics, determine the extent of proactive classroom management strategies and behavioral interventions utilized, identify challenges in PBS implementation, and examine the relationship between these variables. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were collected from ten purposively selected special education teachers through a structured survey. Results indicated a very high extent of proactive classroom management strategies (aggregate mean = 3.69) and behavioral interventions (aggregate mean = 3.39), reflecting strong adherence to PBS principles. Despite this, respondents reported being generally challenged (aggregate mean = 3.20), citing large class sizes, limited planning time, and parent engagement difficulties as the most significant barriers. Spearman rho correlation revealed negligible and non-significant relationships between proactive strategies and challenges ($\rho = -0.050$, $p = .891$) and between behavioral interventions and challenges ($\rho = -0.312$, $p = .380$). These findings suggest that systemic factors, rather than individual teacher practices, have a stronger influence on implementation difficulties, underscoring the need for enhanced administrative support, structured professional development, and improved family collaboration to strengthen PBS fidelity.

Keywords: Positive Behavior Support, teacher perceptions, proactive strategies, behavioral interventions, classroom management, special education, Cebu City.

Date Submitted: August 10, 2026

Date Accepted: August 25, 2026

Date Published: August 30, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Classroom behavior management is a critical aspect of effective teaching and learning. Disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, and disciplinary issues challenge educators globally. To address these concerns, Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions have gained

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031459>

Recommended citation:

Tito, J. P. (2026). Positive behavior support (PBS) implementation: Strategies in dealing with behavior and classroom management of students with special needs. *Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (3), 3255-3269. <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031459>

prominence as an evidence-based approach designed to improve student behavior through proactive and preventive strategies. Unlike traditional punitive methods, PBS fosters a positive learning environment by reinforcing desired behaviors and promoting inclusivity and student engagement.

Internationally, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PBS interventions in reducing disruptive behavior and enhancing student social skills (Sugai & Horner, 2021). Research in the United States and European countries highlights the long-term benefits of PBS, including improved academic performance, better classroom climates, and reduced behavioral referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2020). At the national level, Philippine research on behavior management remains limited, though some studies emphasize the significance of structured behavior interventions (Pascua et al., 2021). Locally, schools struggle with behavior management, particularly in inclusive classrooms where diverse student needs require differentiated interventions. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the impact of PBS in managing classroom behavior within the Philippine educational context, providing empirical data to guide policy and practice.

Classroom behavior management is critical to effective teaching and learning, as disruptive behavior, lack of engagement, and disciplinary issues continue to challenge educators globally. To address these concerns, Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions have gained prominence as an evidence-based approach designed to improve student behavior through proactive and preventive strategies. Unlike traditional punitive methods, PBS fosters a positive learning environment by reinforcing desired behaviors and promoting inclusivity and student engagement. Globally, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of PBS interventions in reducing disruptive behavior and enhancing student social skills (Sugai & Horner, 2021). Research in the United States and European countries highlights the long-term benefits of PBS, including improved academic performance, better classroom climates, and reduced behavioral referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2020). Philippine research on behavior management remains limited, though some studies emphasize the significance of structured behavior interventions (Pascua et al., 2021). Locally, schools continue to struggle with behavior management, particularly in inclusive classrooms where diverse student needs require differentiated interventions. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the impact of PBS in managing classroom behavior within the Philippine educational context, providing empirical data to guide policy and practice.

This study aims to assess the current behavioral challenges experienced by teachers in the classroom, evaluate the effectiveness of PBS interventions in reducing disruptive behavior and improving student engagement, and determine the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the implementation of PBS strategies in classroom settings. Additionally, it seeks to provide recommendations for enhancing behavior management approaches through PBS. Despite extensive international research on PBS, there remains a lack of localized studies examining its application in Philippine classrooms, particularly in public school settings.

Existing research tends to focus on short-term effects, with limited exploration of the long-term sustainability of PBS interventions. This study aims to bridge these gaps by providing empirical data on the effectiveness of PBS within local educational contexts, contributing to both theory and practice in behavior management strategies. By addressing these objectives, this research will provide valuable insights into how PBS interventions can be effectively implemented in Philippine classrooms, ultimately contributing to a more positive and conducive learning environment for students and educators alike.

Statement of the problem

This study examined the level of implementation and effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions by special needs education teachers in managing classroom behaviour among students with special needs in special education classroom environments in Cebu City during the school year 2024 to 2025 as a basis for the proposed Intervention Plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher respondents in terms of age and gender, highest educational attainment, and relevant trainings attended?
2. To what extent do the respondents utilize proactive classroom management strategies?
3. To what extent do the respondents utilize behavioural interventions for addressing student misbehaviour?
4. What is the extent of challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing Positive Behavior Support interventions?
5. Is there a significant relationship between proactive classroom management strategies and the challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing Positive Behavior Support interventions, and between behavioural interventions and the challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing Positive Behavior Support interventions?
6. What enhanced PBS strategies and interventions can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, which is widely used to systematically describe variables and explore the relationships among them without experimental manipulation. As Grove and Ciper (2017) explained, a descriptive-correlational design aimed to "describe variables and examine relationships that naturally occur, without researcher intervention" (p. 143). In the context of this study, the design allowed for the assessment of the extent to which Positive Behavior Support (PBS) strategies and behavioral interventions were implemented by special needs education teachers, as well as the challenges they encountered during implementation.

Moreover, it enabled the exploration of possible associations between teacher demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and relevant training, and their implementation of PBS strategies. By using correlational statistics, such as Spearman's rho, the study determined whether statistically significant relationships existed between these variables. This approach provided valuable insights into how teacher perceptions, contextual factors, and implementation strategies interacted, thereby forming an empirical foundation for designing enhanced PBS interventions tailored to the needs of both teachers and students.

Respondents and locale of the study

For this study on the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions in managing classroom behavior, 10 teacher-respondents were selected using purposive sampling from Zapatera National High School–SpEd Center. This non-probability sampling technique

was chosen to ensure that participants had direct experience and expertise in inclusive education, where students with special needs and typically developing learners are taught together in the same classroom. Inclusive classrooms present unique behavioral challenges, making them an ideal setting for evaluating the impact of PBS interventions on fostering positive student behavior. The selection process adhered to specific inclusion criteria: (a) teachers must be currently teaching in an inclusive classroom, (b) have at least one year of experience implementing classroom management or behavioral interventions, and (c) be willing to participate in the study. Teachers who did not meet these criteria or who were not directly involved in classroom instruction were excluded to ensure that the data collected were relevant and accurately reflected actual PBS practices. By employing purposive sampling, the study focused on teachers with meaningful experience in applying PBS strategies, thereby providing valid and reliable insights into their perceptions, implementation practices, and the challenges they encounter in promoting positive student behavior.

Research instrument

The survey questionnaire was designed to assess the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions in managing classroom behavior among teachers handling inclusive classrooms. The instrument was adapted from validated PBS assessment tools used in prior studies and modified to suit the local context and the specific needs of special education settings. It consists of two main sections, each addressing key aspects of PBS interventions: Proactive Classroom Management Strategies and Behavioral Interventions for Addressing Student Misbehavior. A 4-point Likert scale was employed to measure the frequency and perceived effectiveness of the strategies applied by teachers, with response options ranging from 1—Strongly Disagree, 2—Disagree, 3—Agree, and 4—Strongly Agree.

The first section, "Proactive Classroom Management Strategies," focuses on preventive techniques that teachers implement to establish a structured, engaging, and supportive learning environment while minimizing potential behavioral issues. This section includes items on establishing clear classroom rules, fostering student engagement, implementing structured routines, using positive reinforcement, and maintaining proactive communication with students and parents. By evaluating these strategies, the study aims to determine the extent to which teachers integrate PBS principles into their daily classroom practices.

The second section, Behavioral Interventions for Addressing Student Misbehavior, examines how teachers respond to and manage disruptive behavior using evidence-based PBS strategies. It includes items on reward systems, de-escalation techniques, restorative practices, individualized behavior plans, and collaboration with support staff. Assessing these interventions allows the study to identify the effectiveness of PBS implementation, its impact on student behavior, and the overall management of inclusive classrooms. The adapted questionnaire ensures that the instrument is both reliable and contextually relevant, providing valid insights into teacher practices and perceptions regarding PBS interventions.

Data analysis procedure

The researcher employed a quantitative approach to analyze the data from teacher-respondents regarding the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions in managing classroom behavior. The initial stage of data analysis involved a descriptive analysis of the demographic profile of the respondents, categorized by age, gender, highest educational attainment, and relevant training or professional development in behavior management. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to summarize the teachers' backgrounds and qualifications clearly.

To assess the level of PBS implementation, the researcher computed mean scores and standard deviations for two primary areas: proactive classroom management strategies and behavioral interventions for addressing student misbehavior. The mean scores indicated the extent to which teachers applied PBS interventions, while the standard deviations highlighted variations in implementation across respondents. By examining these statistical measures, the study aimed to determine how consistently PBS strategies were applied in inclusive classrooms.

In line with the study's research questions, the analysis investigated whether significant relationships existed between teachers' demographic profiles and their level of PBS implementation. Using correlation analysis, the researcher assessed whether factors such as age, educational background, and professional training influenced how teachers integrated PBS interventions into classroom management practices. The study also explored teachers' challenges in implementing PBS strategies, identifying common barriers and difficulties that may have hindered their effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the level of implementation and effectiveness of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions employed by special needs education teachers in managing classroom behavior among students with special needs at Zapatera SpEd Center, Cebu City, during the school year 2025–2026. It begins by describing the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age, gender, and highest educational attainment. The chapter then discusses the extent to which proactive classroom management strategies are implemented, as well as the degree of utilization of behavioral interventions in addressing student misbehavior. Additionally, it explores the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing PBS interventions. Finally, it examines the significant relationships between (a) proactive classroom management strategies and the challenges faced in implementing PBS interventions, and (b) behavioral interventions and the challenges encountered during implementation.

Age and gender

Age and gender are significant factors that can shape teachers' perceptions and approaches to implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) strategies. Teachers' life stages, professional experiences, and generational perspectives may influence their openness to proactive classroom management techniques, while gender-related differences in communication style, classroom management preferences, and behavioral expectations can affect how PBS interventions are applied. Understanding how these demographic variables relate to the perceptions and implementation strategies of PBS provides valuable insights into the ways teachers adapt and respond to the behavioral needs of students with special needs.

Table 2 reveals that of the 10 teacher-respondents, 90% are female and only 10% are male; half of the teachers fall into the 26–35-year age group, 20% in the 36–45 group, and 30% in the 46–55 group. This demographic configuration suggests that the majority are relatively young and predominantly female, with a smaller proportion having many years of service. Research shows that early-career teachers often feel less prepared and have lower self-efficacy in behavior management and PBS-like interventions but may also be more open to new training and practices (McGuire, Meadan, & Xia, 2023). Older, more experienced teachers tend to have well-developed classroom management practices but may require more institutional support to

adopt newer frameworks or shift from reactive to proactive behavior support (related findings in teacher preparedness literature; *Fostering Early Career Teachers' Preparedness...*, 2024). Studies on gender differences in classroom management indicate that while female teachers are often perceived as more relational and supportive in interactions, measurable differences in implementation skills are often small or context-dependent (*Gender Effect on Classroom Management Skills and Competencies*, 2022; *Gender Differences in Teacher's Pedagogical Practices*, 2024).

In conclusion, the teacher profile at Zapatera SpEd Center highlights a workforce dominated by younger female teachers, supplemented by a minority of more senior teachers. This mix may be beneficial: younger teachers bring energy and recent pedagogical training, while senior teachers offer stability and experience. To bolster implementation of PBS, recommendations include structured mentorship from senior to junior teachers, differentiated professional development that addresses experience-based gaps in training, and collecting further data on years of experience, prior training, and self-efficacy so that strategies are well tailored to individual needs.

Highest educational attainment

Highest educational attainment is an important factor influencing teachers' perceptions and implementation strategies of Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

Table 3 shows that among the ten teacher-respondents, 1 (10%) holds a doctorate, 2 (20%) are master's graduates, and 7 (70%) have master's units but have not completed the degree; this profile indicates a highly educated teaching staff overall, with the majority having completed substantial graduate-level coursework. Such a constellation of qualifications suggests a strong theoretical grounding and familiarity with contemporary educational research among most teachers, which can positively influence perceptions of and receptivity to evidence-based frameworks like Positive Behavior Support (PBS); nevertheless, possession of coursework alone does not guarantee practical fidelity in application, because implementation also depends on hands-on coaching, self-efficacy, and organizational support. Research indicates that better-educated teachers tend to show greater knowledge of instructional and behavioral strategies and higher capacity for data-driven decision making, but implementation fidelity of PBIS/PBS improves markedly when that knowledge is coupled with ongoing, targeted professional development and coaching (Liu, 2021; Terrell et al., 2023). Studies of PBIS/PBS implementation emphasize that teacher perceptions (buy-in, perceived efficacy, and perceived usefulness) strongly mediate whether qualified teachers actually translate knowledge into consistent classroom practice; where teachers receive individualized coaching and technical assistance, fidelity and student outcomes improve even when initial training is uneven (Karlberg et al., 2024; Lory, 2023).

Taken together, these findings imply that Zapatera SpEd Center's largely graduate-trained staff are well positioned to understand and value PBS, but to convert that potential into sustained, high-fidelity implementation the school should invest in practical supports for example, structured coaching cycles, collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs), and systems for ongoing fidelity monitoring and feedback. In conclusion, the school's high level of graduate study among teachers is an asset for PBS adoption, yet to maximize positive student outcomes the center should complement teachers' academic preparation with hands-on mentoring, targeted PD that focuses on classroom application of PBS principles, and routine data-guided coaching; additionally, collecting more granular data on teachers' prior PBS training, years of experience, and self-efficacy will help tailor supports and ensure that advanced coursework translates into effective classroom practice.

Relevant trainings attended

Relevant trainings play a crucial role in shaping teachers' perceptions and their ability to implement Positive Behavior Support (PBS) strategies effectively. Exposure to professional development programs such as INSET sessions, inclusive education workshops, IEP-making seminars, and SPED pedagogy courses equips teachers with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to design proactive classroom management plans, develop individualized behavior supports, and monitor student progress.

Table 4 presents the relevant trainings attended by the respondents, revealing that five teachers participated in INSET (In-Service Training), four in Inclusive Education programs, while only one teacher each reported attending IEP (Individualized Education Plan) Making and SPED Pedagogy and Content training.

These results indicate that most teachers have engaged in general professional development focusing on inclusive practices but have had limited exposure to highly specialized training in individualized programming and specialized pedagogy for students with disabilities. This has significant implications for teacher perceptions and implementation strategies of Positive Behavior Support (PBS). General INSET and Inclusive Education training may positively influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their willingness to adopt proactive behavior management approaches, as such programs typically emphasize equity and student participation. However, the lack of extensive training in IEP development and SPED pedagogy suggests that some teachers may lack the deeper technical skills necessary to design and execute individualized behavioral interventions, collect and interpret behavioral data, and adjust strategies based on student needs—skills that are crucial for high-fidelity PBS implementation. Recent studies emphasize that targeted and sustained professional development is critical for ensuring effective PBS practices; for instance, Smith and O'Connell (2022) reported that teachers with training specifically focused on PBS exhibited stronger classroom management outcomes and higher fidelity in intervention implementation. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2023) found that teachers who had formal preparation in IEP development were significantly more confident in conducting functional behavioral assessments and creating individualized behavior plans, key elements of PBS. Lee, Wong, and Garcia (2024) further showed that while inclusive education training improves teacher attitudes toward supporting diverse learners, it is only when such training is paired with specialized pedagogy workshops that teachers consistently apply proactive, data-driven strategies to manage behavior. Moreover, Thomas and Ramirez (2021) highlighted that one-time INSET sessions without ongoing coaching often fail to produce sustained changes in teacher behavior, underscoring the importance of follow-up support to maintain and refine PBS practices. Taken together, these findings suggest that the teachers of Zapatera SpEd Center are well-positioned to value and support PBS because of their exposure to general training, but they may require more specialized and practice-oriented professional development to translate this knowledge into individualized, high-fidelity behavioral interventions. It is therefore recommended that the school provide expanded opportunities for training in IEP making and SPED pedagogy, integrate PBS modules into INSET and Inclusive Education sessions, and establish structured follow-up through coaching and mentoring so teachers can receive feedback and refine their practice. Additionally, the school may consider implementing collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) where teachers can share experiences, co-develop behavior plans, and collectively troubleshoot challenges, thereby improving both teacher perceptions of PBS and the overall consistency of its implementation. Regular evaluation of training outcomes—through teacher self-efficacy surveys, fidelity checklists, and student behavior data—can

help ensure that these interventions effectively build teacher competence and lead to better classroom behavior management outcomes.

Extent of proactive classroom management strategies utilized by the respondents

Understanding the extent to which proactive classroom management strategies are utilized offers valuable insight into teachers' perceptions and their capacity to implement Positive Behavior Support (PBS) with fidelity. Proactive classroom management encompasses practices such as establishing clear behavioral expectations, teaching routines explicitly, using consistent positive reinforcement, providing opportunities for student engagement, and applying preventative interventions before problem behaviors escalate. When teachers integrate these strategies consistently, they create a structured and predictable learning environment that not only minimizes the occurrence of disruptive behavior but also fosters a climate of safety, respect, and collaboration. Such environments are strongly associated with improved academic performance, better social-emotional outcomes, and reduced reliance on punitive or exclusionary discipline measures. Research from 2020 to 2025 consistently highlights that teachers who implement proactive strategies report higher levels of self-efficacy, perceive PBS as practical and sustainable, and demonstrate greater commitment to maintaining these practices over time (e.g., McGuire et al., 2023; Karlberg et al., 2024). Moreover, the consistent use of proactive management strategies has been shown to reduce teacher stress and burnout by preventing behavior problems rather than responding reactively once they occur, thereby creating a more positive perception of PBS as a supportive, rather than burdensome, framework. Conversely, when proactive strategies are underutilized, teachers are more likely to depend on reactive or punitive discipline approaches, which can reinforce negative cycles of misbehavior, increase teacher frustration, and contribute to the perception that PBS is difficult to implement or ineffective.

Table 5 shows that the respondents reported a very high extent of utilization across all proactive classroom management strategies (aggregate mean = 3.69, SD = 0.46). The highest-rated indicators were the use of non-verbal strategies to prevent misbehavior (WM = 3.90), proactive communication with parents (WM = 3.90), and the use of positive reinforcement (WM = 3.80). These findings suggest that teachers at Zapatera SpEd Center consistently implement key preventive practices such as establishing clear rules and expectations, creating structured classroom routines, reinforcing desirable behaviors, and engaging in active supervision. Such practices align closely with the principles of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), which emphasize the use of antecedent interventions, reinforcement, and environmental structuring to reduce problem behavior and promote academic engagement (Dawes et al., 2024). The high frequency of these strategies also implies that teachers likely perceive PBS as practical and beneficial since its core components are already integrated into their daily routines.

This result has important implications for teacher perceptions and PBS implementation strategies. Teachers who consistently apply proactive approaches generally report higher levels of self-efficacy, stronger belief in their capacity to manage student behavior, and greater willingness to sustain PBS interventions over time (Classroom Behavior Management and Teacher Self-Efficacy, 2024). Additionally, effective use of proactive management has been associated with lower teacher stress and reduced reliance on punitive or exclusionary discipline practices, both of which enhance the likelihood of successful PBS adoption (Dawes et al., 2024). However, self-reported data should be interpreted with caution, as teachers may overestimate their consistency of implementation. Observational fidelity checks and behavioral data are recommended to confirm that reported practices are applied with high quality and produce measurable improvements in student outcomes (Simonsen et al., 2023).

Overall, the very high use of proactive classroom management strategies demonstrates that teachers at Zapatera SpEd Center already possess a strong foundation for PBS implementation. Their existing practices reflect positive perceptions of proactive discipline and create a favorable environment for adopting a more systematic, data-driven PBS model.

It is recommended that the school (1) institutionalize regular classroom observations and use fidelity checklists to validate the implementation of these strategies; (2) provide targeted professional development on advanced PBS components such as functional behavior assessment (FBA) and individualized behavior planning; (3) sustain and expand opportunities for peer collaboration and coaching to maintain high-quality implementation; and (4) integrate behavior data review into school-level decision-making to ensure continuous improvement. These steps will help transform the very high level of proactive strategies into measurable, long-term reductions in problem behaviors and improved student outcomes.

Extent of respondents' utilization of behavioral interventions for addressing student misbehavior

Examining the extent to which teachers utilize behavioral interventions provides critical insight into their perceptions of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and their capacity to implement it effectively. Behavioral interventions—such as de-escalation strategies, documentation of behavioral progress, restorative practices, and collaboration with support staff—are essential components of PBS. Teachers who consistently apply these interventions are more likely to view PBS as a practical and effective framework for addressing student misbehavior, thereby enhancing their commitment to sustained implementation.

Table 6 reveals that teachers at Zapatera SpEd Center report a very high overall utilization of behavioral interventions for addressing student misbehavior (aggregate mean = 3.39, SD = 0.52), with particularly strong ratings in documenting and tracking student behavioral progress (WM = 4.00), providing immediate and constructive feedback (3.80), engaging in SEL (social-emotional learning) to foster self-regulation (3.80), collaborating with support staff (3.70), and implementing de-escalation strategies (3.50). However, certain interventions are less utilized: behavior contracts or goal-setting strategies rank in the “Low” category (WM = 2.40), and use of rewards/consequences systems for consistent behavior shaping is only in the “High” (not “Very High”) category (WM = 2.80). These data suggest that while teachers are responsive and make strong use of many behavior-intervention strategies, some proactive, structured, individual contract- or goal-based approaches are underutilized.

From the standpoint of teacher perceptions and PBS implementation strategies, these findings imply that teachers believe in and are comfortable using many of the classic PBS tools—feedback, tracking, collaboration, SEL—but may feel less equipped, confident, or resourced to employ more structured individualized tools such as contracts or formal goals. Research in recent years supports that behavior tracking and feedback are among the most consistently implemented interventions when teachers feel supported and believe in the efficacy of PBS (for example, the study by Martinez et al., 2022, found that teachers with strong administrative support and professional learning reported high use of feedback and tracking tools). Likewise, studies by Nguyen, Reid, & Parker (2023) demonstrate that SEL programs and collaboration with specialized staff significantly improve both teacher self-efficacy and student behavior outcomes when well-integrated into school routines. Furthermore, Johnson and Bailey (2024) found that while rewards/consequences systems are widespread, their consistency and

effectiveness are often compromised when goal-setting strategies are not part of the intervention plan.

In conclusion, teachers at Zapatera SpEd Center are employing behavioral interventions to a high degree, especially in responsive, supportive, and data-informed dimensions, which reflects positive perceptions of behavior support strategies and a strong readiness for further PBS implementation. To enhance this strength, it is recommended that (1) the school provide additional training and support specifically for individualized behavior contracts and goal-setting methods, ensuring teachers have the resources and templates to apply them; (2) embed consistency checks and monitoring processes so that rewards/consequences systems are applied in a uniform and effective manner; (3) extend collaboration with support staff and deepen the use of SEL and de-escalation strategies by sharing best practices among teachers and creating peer coaching; and (4) strengthen continuous professional development focused on intervention differentiation based on frequency/severity of behavior, so teachers can confidently tailor responses. These steps will help move from high use of some interventions to comprehensive and consistent implementation of the full suite of PBS behavior interventions, thereby improving both teacher perceptions of efficacy and student behavioral outcomes.

Extent of challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing positive behavior support interventions

Exploring the extent of challenges encountered by teachers in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions is crucial to understanding their perceptions and the fidelity of their implementation strategies. Barriers such as limited time, insufficient training, lack of administrative support, and resource constraints can significantly affect how teachers view PBS either as a feasible, helpful framework or as an additional burden.

Table 7 shows that teachers at Zapatera SpEd Center experience a moderate-to-high level of challenge in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions (aggregate mean = 3.20, “Challenged”). The most acute barriers reported are large class size (WM = 3.70) and lack of time to design/implement PBS strategies (WM = 3.70), followed by difficulty engaging parents (WM = 3.50), limited access to adequate training/professional development (WM = 3.40), and resistance from students to proactive management approaches (WM = 3.40). Items that teachers rated as less challenging include perceived administrative support (WM = 2.40, “Less Challenged”) and, to a lesser extent, clarity of guidelines (WM = 2.90, “Challenged”). In short, teachers report that practical constraints time, class size, resources, and parent engagement are the dominant obstacles to applying PBS consistently and with fidelity.

These findings have important implications for teacher perceptions and implementation strategies of PBS. First, when teachers face persistent workloads and large classes, they are more likely to view PBS as an additional burden rather than a sustainable framework, which undermines buy-in and fidelity (Lawson et al., 2022). Second, inadequate professional development reduces teacher confidence to carry out more technical PBS components (e.g., functional behavior assessment, individualized behavior plans), shifting practice toward ad hoc or reactive strategies (Terrell & Cho, 2023). Third, limited parent engagement and scarce resources hamper generalization of school-based PBS supports into the home environment and reduce the consistency of reinforcement systems — both necessary for durable behavior change (Simonsen, Freeman, & MacSuga-Gage, 2023). Finally, the pattern of responses (high challenge on time and class size but lower challenge on administrative support) suggests that leadership may be supportive in principle but that structural and logistical constraints prevent teachers from enacting PBS fully; leadership support therefore needs to be coupled with

concrete resource allocation and protected time for PBS planning and monitoring (Terrell & Cho, 2023).

In light of these patterns and the broader implementation literature, the following conclusions and recommendations are offered. Conclusion: teachers at Zapatera have an awareness of PBS and some supportive attitudes, but practical barriers — especially time, class size, training gaps, parent engagement, and resource availability — constrain implementation fidelity and may negatively affect teachers' perceptions of PBS feasibility. Recommendations (actionable): (1) Prioritize targeted professional development and coaching. Offer brief, practice-focused workshops plus on-the-job coaching to develop skills in FBA-informed interventions, data tracking, and differentiated PBS strategies (Lawson et al., 2022; Terrell & Cho, 2023). (2) Create protected time and reduce workload where possible. Schedule regular, small blocks of time for teachers to design behavior supports, review data, and meet with PBIS/behavior teams; consider reallocating non-instructional duties or providing substitute coverage during planning blocks. (3) Address class size / caseload issues strategically. Where hiring is not immediately feasible, implement team-teaching, paraeducator support, or small-group scheduling to allow more individualized intervention. (4) Strengthen family engagement strategies. Implement structured, low-burden ways to involve families (brief home-school communication tools, culturally relevant outreach, and family training sessions) to improve generalization of PBS at home (Simonsen et al., 2023). (5) Provide simple, low-cost resources and monitoring tools. Share behavior-tracking templates, reward system toolkits, and fidelity checklists so teachers can implement consistently without heavy preparation time. (6) Monitor implementation with data. Use brief fidelity observations and behavior outcome metrics to identify where supports are most needed and to document impact which in turn supports teacher motivation and administrative decision-making.

These steps target the specific barriers teachers reported and are aligned with evidence on improving teacher use of behavioral classroom interventions: reduce competing demands, increase accessible training and coaching, and create systems that make implementation feasible within real classroom constraints (Lawson et al., 2022; Terrell & Cho, 2023; Simonsen et al., 2023).

Test of relationship between the proactive management strategies and challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing positive behaviour support interventions

Examining the relationship between proactive classroom management strategies and the challenges teachers encounter in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions provides critical insight into how teacher perceptions shape practice. When educators consistently apply proactive strategies such as clear rules, structured routines, and positive reinforcement, they may experience fewer behavioral disruptions and perceive PBS as more feasible and effective. Conversely, when challenges such as limited time, large class sizes, and inadequate training are prevalent, teachers may struggle to maintain consistency in proactive management, which can negatively influence their view of PBS and its sustainability. This analysis helps determine whether strengthening proactive management strategies could mitigate perceived barriers and enhance overall fidelity of PBS implementation.

Table 8 shows a Spearman rho of -0.050 ($p = 0.891$) for the relationship between teachers' use of proactive management strategies and the challenges they encounter in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS), indicating a negligible negative correlation that is not statistically significant. In practical terms, this result means that within this sample there is no evidence that greater reported use of proactive strategies is associated with either

more or fewer reported implementation challenges; however, this null finding should be interpreted cautiously. The most likely explanations are methodological rather than theoretical: the very small sample size ($n = 10$) and restricted variance in many measures (several indicators clustered at “High”/“Very High”) reduce statistical power and make detecting real associations unlikely, and reliance on self-report measures can produce ceiling effects or social-desirability bias that mask true relationships (Simonsen, Freeman, & MacSuga-Gage, 2023). Conceptually, the literature suggests that the relationship between teachers’ practices and perceived barriers is often indirect and moderated by organizational supports (coaching, administrative leadership, and resources); for example, teachers who receive sustained coaching are more able to translate proactive practices into high-fidelity PBS implementation and report fewer barriers, whereas teachers without such supports may report similar levels of proactive strategy use but still experience substantial implementation obstacles (Lawson et al., 2022; Terrell & Cho, 2023).

Given these considerations, the practical conclusion is twofold: first, the present analysis does not provide evidence that greater use of proactive strategies alone reduces implementation challenges in this setting; second, addressing implementation barriers likely requires stronger system supports (ongoing coaching, time allocation, resource provision, and administrative structures) rather than simply increasing individual teachers’ repertoire of proactive practices. Recommended next steps are (a) replicate the test with a larger, more diverse sample and with multi-method measures (observational fidelity checks, behavior incident data, and validated barrier scales) to improve statistical power and measurement accuracy; (b) include potential moderators and covariates in the analysis (years of experience, prior PBS training, class size, administrative support) to test conditional relationships; and (c) complement quantitative analyses with qualitative inquiry (teacher interviews or focus groups) to surface contextual reasons why proactive strategies may not be translating into reduced challenges. In parallel, implement practical supports shown to buffer implementation challenges structured coaching, protected planning time, simple behavior-tracking tools, and targeted leadership actions to increase the chance that proactive classroom strategies will lead to higher PBS fidelity and more favorable teacher perceptions over time (Lawson et al., 2022; Simonsen et al., 2023; Terrell & Cho, 2023).

Test of relationship between the behavioural interventions and challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing positive behaviour support interventions

Examining the relationship between teachers’ use of behavioral interventions and the challenges they face in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is essential for understanding how practice aligns with perception. Teachers who regularly apply behavioral interventions such as de-escalation strategies, restorative practices, and individualized supports may perceive PBS as more effective and feasible, resulting in fewer reported challenges. Conversely, when implementation barriers such as time constraints, large class sizes, and limited training are present, even highly skilled teachers may find it difficult to sustain these interventions, shaping their attitudes toward PBS as burdensome or impractical. This analysis helps determine whether strengthening behavioral intervention practices correlates with reduced implementation challenges, offering valuable insight for refining teacher support systems and professional development programs.

The test of relationship between behavioral interventions and challenges encountered in implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) interventions revealed a negligible negative correlation (Spearman’s $\rho = -0.312$, $p = .380$), indicating no statistically significant association between the two variables. This result suggests that teachers’ frequency of using behavioral interventions—such as de-escalation strategies, social-emotional learning activities,

and behavior documentation—does not reliably correspond to the number or severity of challenges they face when implementing PBS. While the slight negative direction of the correlation implies that increased use of interventions may be associated with somewhat fewer perceived barriers, this effect is weak and not conclusive. Similar findings in the literature emphasize that the effectiveness of behavioral interventions in reducing perceived challenges is often contingent on moderating factors such as professional development quality, coaching support, class size, and administrative facilitation (Lawson et al., 2022; Simonsen, Freeman, & MacSuga-Gage, 2023). The absence of a significant relationship in the present study may therefore reflect the influence of contextual variables or the limited sample size, which constrains statistical power. Nonetheless, the result underscores the need to strengthen systemic supports such as training, time allocation, and resource provision so that teachers can translate their use of behavioral strategies into measurable reductions in implementation barriers (Terrell & Cho, 2023).

Based on the findings, the negligible and non-significant negative correlation (Spearman's $\rho = -0.312$, $p = .380$) indicates that teachers' use of behavioral interventions is not directly linked to the challenges they experience in implementing PBS within the current context. This suggests that simply increasing the frequency of behavioral interventions may not be sufficient to reduce perceived barriers without addressing systemic factors such as training quality, administrative support, time constraints, and class size. In line with recent research, improving the enabling conditions of PBS implementation through targeted professional development, ongoing coaching, and provision of practical resources remains essential to translating teacher efforts into meaningful outcomes (Lawson et al., 2022; Simonsen, Freeman, & MacSuga-Gage, 2023; Terrell & Cho, 2023). It is recommended that schools prioritize structured coaching programs, allocate protected time for teachers to plan and monitor interventions, and strengthen collaboration with families and administrators to create a supportive ecosystem for PBS. Future studies should replicate this analysis with a larger sample and include potential moderating variables (e.g., prior PBS training, teacher experience, class size) to capture more nuanced relationships between intervention use and implementation challenges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the teacher-respondents at Zapatera SpEd Center are professionally qualified, actively employ both proactive classroom management strategies and behavioral interventions at a very high level, and demonstrate strong commitment to creating positive learning environments aligned with PBS principles. However, they continue to face notable systemic and logistical challenges, particularly related to large class sizes, limited time, and the difficulty of engaging parents and guardians in reinforcing PBS at home. The absence of significant relationships between both proactive strategies and challenges ($\rho = -0.050$, $p = .891$) and behavioral interventions and challenges ($\rho = -0.312$, $p = .380$) indicates that the presence of these strategies alone does not necessarily reduce perceived implementation barriers. These results underscore the need for enhanced institutional support, sustained professional development, and additional resources to improve PBS fidelity and reduce teacher burden, allowing the benefits of these evidence-based practices to be fully realized.

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