



Teachers' Perceptions of the Behavioural Problems among Regular and Disabled Students in inclusive Saudi Schools

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Many regular students and students who are diagnosed with disabilities are educated in inclusive schools in Saudi Arabia. These students and their teachers may face some difficulties related to their behavioural problems. The study aims to determine teachers' perceptions regarding behavioural problems exhibited by regular students and students with disabilities and teachers' perceptions about their schools' related problems that they face in inclusive education. The study's design was a descriptive study. The participants were 124 male and female teachers, who responded to an online survey. The main findings of the study indicated that regular students did not wish to play with students with disabilities, and they exhibit inappropriate verbal behaviours toward students who are diagnosed with disabilities and have behavioural problems. Students with disabilities showed overly sensitive behaviour and withdrawal behaviours in inclusive settings. Teachers referred that the schools may need to provide behavioural specialists. The study's limitations and recommendations for researchers are mentioned.

Keywords: inclusive education schools, behavioural problems, students with disabilities, regular students, inclusive settings

INTRODUCTION

Schools have many students with different abilities, such as those ready to learn, those exhibiting problem behaviors, and those behaving appropriately. According to Maajeeny (2018), kids with emotional and behavioral disorders aged 4 to 17 years in Saudi schools represent about 20% of all students. These students may not get the necessary help and services in inclusive education. Moreover, these students need to receive appropriate interventions in their schools, such as positive behavior support plans to encourage all students to behave appropriately (Fox et al., 2002). Educating students with disabilities and problem behaviors is not simple for teachers, and it needs more professional training (Deshler et al., 2006). There are many individual differences between each student, and this can be a challenge for educators when managing large classrooms. If educators are not adequately trained well to educate students with problem behaviors or do not receive the necessary educational support and services, they may struggle to manage and teach their students effectively. Students should

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receive effective methods that can help them to learn well, such as a claim-evidence-reasoning framework (Diola et al., 2025)

Historically, the issue of problem behaviors among regular students and disabled students in educational environments is not new. According to Steinberg and Knitzer (1992), the number of students with problem behaviors has been high for many years (Steinberg and Knitzer, 1992). They indicated that had been 374,000 students diagnosed with behavioral and emotional disorders in schools, between 1987 and 1988, in the United States. In Saudi Arabia, the education of students with disabilities began in 1958 and educational services for them have improved and developed continuously (Aldabas, 2015; Alquraini, 2011).

Problematic behaviors among students can negatively impact their learning achievements as well as their peers' (Abdel-Fattah et al., 2004). Saeki et al. (2011) found that disciplinary measures, such as suspension, were commonly used to address problem behaviors. However, it was not an appropriate method to address problem behaviors. Saeki et al. (2011) also noted that alternative methods have been developed to manage problem behaviors, such as Response to Intervention, which provides students with three-tiered interventions before identifying them as having disabilities. Kirkham (2014) highlighted that educators can use a functional behavioral assessment to understand and help plan an appropriate strategy for problem behaviors instead of resorting to suspending students. School educators need to develop their skills and use new methods for dealing with problem behaviors in both students with and without disabilities. To understand the terms of emotional and behavioral disorders, problem behaviors, and inclusive education, they are defined in the following paragraphs.

Emotional and behavioral disorders are one of the recognized categories of disabilities. Students are diagnosed with emotional and behavioral disorders by a specialized multidisciplinary team. These students have difficulty controlling and managing their behaviors, exhibiting verbal and physical behavioral problems. Verbal behaviors may include aggressive expressions, such as threats. Physical behaviors may involve hitting, fighting with others, and harming themselves and others (Ogundele, 2018; Operto et al., 2021).

A problem behavior is defined as any behavior that is not acceptable in schools and society. These behaviors are categorized into two types: internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Internalizing behaviors are those that are challenging for others to observe, such as depression, social withdrawal, spending long periods alone, and anxiety. However, externalizing behaviors are more noticeable, such as disruptive and aggressive behavior, responding to teachers inappropriately, destroying school property, fighting, and kicking (Qu et al., 2024; Nezhad et al., 2011).

The term inclusive educational setting is a school that accommodates students with disabilities. There are multiple forms of inclusion, such as full inclusion, part-time inclusion, and special classrooms within public schools. In full inclusion, students with disabilities are fully integrated into public schools and receive their education alongside their peers in general education classrooms taught by general education teachers. Second, some students split their education between special classrooms and regular

schoolrooms with their peers. These students are educated by both general and special education teachers. Third, some students obtain instruction exclusively in special classrooms; however, these classes are located in public schools, allowing students to contribute to activities with their peers in the broader school community (Abdullah & Hassan, 2024; Edström et al., 2024; Medabesh et al., 2024).

Based on the literature review in this study, many types of technological tools can have many educational advantages for students with and without disabilities (Al-Gaseem et al., 2024; Chalkiadakis et al., 2024; Fernández-Cerero et al., 2024; Kupchyk & Litvinchuk, 2025). For example, artificial intelligence is found to be a beneficial technology for addressing students' behavioral problems (Chalkiadakis et al., 2024). Fernández-Cerero et al. (2024) also used a qualitative method to investigate the effectiveness of using information and communication technologies among students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. They found that technology devices, such as smartboards and projectors can help enhance students' learning achievements. However, teachers need to know how they use technological devices about the curriculum objectives. Students with disabilities benefit from classrooms that are equipped with all the necessary technological devices to support inclusion. Such advancements improve the school educational circumstances for all students with disabilities.

Al-Gaseem et al. (2024) used a quantitative method to investigate the effectiveness of using technological tools, such as smartwatches on Saudi students who were educated in inclusive classrooms. The study took place over 12 months and the participants were 150 students aged between 8 to 15 years old. Al-Gaseem et al. (2024) found that technologies can help both students and teachers provide effective education. Also, technologies can help improve students' academic achievements and performance. Moreover, teachers can save time when teaching students with behavioral problems or disabilities.

In addition, trained teachers are necessary to succeed in an inclusive education. Jardinez and Natividad (2024) point to many barriers that can prevent teachers from effectively educating these students. These barriers include the lack of professional training for educators, difficulty in building solid correlations among teachers and their students, and the lack of parental participation in supporting schools' educational goals or helping provide the necessary materials for teachers. Inclusive education can be an effective approach for helping and enabling students to get the necessary help, such as social communication skills and real-life educational skills, and well-prepared, trained teachers will help support inclusive education for these students.

Moreover, Lestari et al. (2024) did a systematic literature review to define the problems of inclusive education for students with disabilities. They found many problems, including the lack of sources and training for teachers and students and that some teachers may hold negative stereotypes that impact their behavior towards these students. Finally, schools may need to make more of an effort and use preventive interventions to reduce stigma against students with disabilities. However, Lestari et al. (2024) found that inclusive education remains a positive educating method that can help

students with disabilities and behavioural problems integrate with regular students and feel included.

Hornby and Kauffman (2024) pointed out that inclusive education needs to consider each student's behavioral challenges and disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities may need more intensive educational instruction compared to students with other disabilities. These students may need a more tailored teaching approach and specialized teachers with advanced knowledge and skills. However, inclusive education can benefit them even if it is not fully included. They can acquire from their peers and develop many skills like social and communication skills.

Dukmak (2013) did a study to examine general teachers' views about teaching students with disabilities. This research was conducted with general educators in the United Arab Emirates. The researcher found that general educators supported teaching students with disabilities, such as students with emotional and behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities. However, the participants emphasized the need for support services, such as professional training, special education educators, and technological devices. Teachers indicated that inclusion can be a positive education environment for students with emotional and behavioral disorders to improve their learning and behavior alongside their peers.

Alnahdi et al. (2019) explored the diversity between Saudi and Finland teachers' perceptions of inclusive education settings. The participants were 306 Saudi teachers and 186 Finnish teachers. All the teachers were pre-service teachers. The study used an online questionnaire to compare the participants' attitudes. The results revealed that a majority of these participants were in favor of inclusive education. However, Finnish teachers were more positive about inclusive teaching compared to Saudi educators. The results indicated that Saudi teachers support the concept of inclusion; however, they may require specialized educational training, particularly for general education teachers. The researchers suggested that Saudi teachers may need to increase their knowledge about evidence-based teaching strategies, such as peer-mediated interventions.

In Saudi Arabia, students who are identified emotional and behavioral disorders may not receive specialized educational classes like other types of special education, such as learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities (Maajeeny, 2018). These students may face difficulties making positive interactions with peers due to the lack of appropriate school support and effective approaches and interventions. Abdullah and Hassan (2024) investigated educators' views about inclusive education in Saudi Arabia and found that it is difficult to determine teachers' perceptions about inclusion. Many types of characteristics can impact teachers' perception, such as gender, years of teaching practice, type of teaching experience, and educational qualifications. All these characteristics can impact teachers' perceptions about inclusion, and it makes it difficult to determine a specific attitude about inclusive education. Each teacher has different opinions, and some may struggle to control their emotions regarding inclusion. Some teachers may express personal opinions based on their thoughts and feelings rather than scientific perspectives.

Medabesh et al. (2024) used a qualitative study design with adding interviews to investigate the practices and views of kids with disabilities about inclusive education in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the study was to discover techniques that facilitate social integration for these children. The study's participants were 38 parents. It found that many services and strategies need to be provided for children with disabilities. Inclusive education can help these children integrate with society and help them develop their academic and social skills alongside their peers. Schools need to be equipped with assistive technologies and resources that can help provide an effective educational environment for these students. Moreover, students need to receive rehabilitation services that prepare them for inclusive education. Many additional services need to be provided, such as trained teachers, prepared students, and a supportive school community. Schools should also implement clear policies for inclusive education. These services are fundamental to the success of inclusive teaching.

Alahmed (2024) used a descriptive survey methodology to investigate special education teachers' burnout in educating students with disabilities in inclusive educational settings. The participants were 137 Saudi special education educators. The researcher found that special education educators applied too much effort and as a finding, faced burnout; male special education teachers showed more burnout than their female counterparts. They also found that even special education educators found it difficult to teach students with disabilities and that students with certain types of disabilities, such as deafness and behavioral disorders, required more attention.

Aldabas (2020) conducted a quantitative online survey to investigate Saudi special education teachers' views of students with severe disabilities. The research study investigated that special education educators with less teaching experience had the lowest level of confidence in educating students with multiple disabilities, especially when these students were educated in inclusive settings. In Saudi Arabia, many appropriate educational services and forms of support are provided for students with disabilities and behavioural problems. Additionally, many educators in Saudi schools are well-prepared. Aldabas (2020) found results similar to other studies, indicating that teaching students with disabilities and behavioural problems is challenging and requires many services, resources, and forms of support to meet these students' needs, especially when they are educated in inclusive classrooms.

Alsolami and Vaughan (2023) used a descriptive and inferential study to explore Saudi teachers' views of inclusive education. They found that teachers may need to receive some special educational training, such as appropriate educational resources, and training courses related to effective interventions to be used with students with disabilities and behavioural problems in inclusive schoolrooms. The results indicated that some barriers may need to be addressed, such as teachers' stress, and lack of training on special educational needs, especially for general educational teachers. Aldosari (2023) also examined private school teachers' perceptions, and the results indicated that these teachers' responses were slightly negative about inclusive education. Arzhangi and Ghanizadeh (2025) indicated that teachers should use effective strategies to improve their students' learning, such as using game-based-learning.

After reviewing existing studies, students with behavioural problems can be considered an important issue in schools for many years now (Steinberg & Knitzer, 1992; Lestari et al., 2024). Problem behaviors among regular students and who diagnosed with disabilities are particularly concerning, as students with emotional and behavioral disorders may not receive appropriate educational services in Saudi schools (Lestari et al., 2024; Maajeeny, 2018). These students, who are considered to have problem behaviors in Saudi schools, are being educated in inclusive classrooms (Maajeeny, 2018). There are few studies aimed to search about behavioural problems in Saudi Schools, and this study aimed to address the gap of the study.

Research Purpose

Teaching students with disabilities and behavioural problems is challenging and requires many professional teachers and adequate support, such as professional training and necessary resources, especially when these students are educated in inclusive settings and taught by general education teachers (Alahmed, 2024; Lestari et al., 2024). Despite the importance of this issue, few studies have explored schoolteachers' perceptions of educating students with disabilities, especially those with behavioral problems, in inclusive schoolrooms in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study aimed to examine teachers' perspectives on the behavioral problems exhibited by both regular students and students with disabilities in inclusive schoolrooms in Saudi Arabia. The aim of the study is to understand educators' perceptions regarding the behavioral problems of regular students when they are taught together with students with disabilities, the behavioral problems of students with disabilities when they are educated alongside regular students, and the problems that teachers and their schools face in inclusive education.

The study aims to respond to the following research questions: a), what are the teachers' perceptions regarding behavioral problems of regular students when they are educated alongside students with disabilities?, b) what are teachers' attitudes regarding behavioral problems of students with disabilities when they are taught together with regular students?, c), What are teachers' attitudes regarding the challenges they and their schools face in inclusive education?

In this study, the three hypotheses are: a) some regular students may exhibit behavioral problems toward students with disabilities. b) some students with disabilities may exhibit behavioral problems toward regular students. c) teachers may face difficulties and barriers related to their schools and teaching environments when educating students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

METHOD

Research Desing

The study used a descriptive research design employing an online questionnaire. This design was chosen to explore and analyze data linked to the study's objectives. The questionnaire responses were examined to assess teachers' attitudes toward behavioral problems among regular students and students with disabilities in inclusive schools, besides the challenges these teachers face in their schools.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Northern Border University before the study began. After approval, the online survey was sent to the participants with all descriptions of the study's purpose. All the participants received all their rights and confidentiality of their responses. The reliability of the survey was measured using Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of the survey items. Once all participants completed the survey, the data was analyzed.

Participants and Setting

A total of 124 educators participated in this research study. These participants were teachers working in inclusive schools. The sample included both male and female teachers who teach different educational levels involving, pre-school, elementary, middle and high school. The study was taken place in the north of Saudi Arabia, Rafah city. All the participants were from this region.

Data Collection Tools

The study used an online survey consisting of demographic questions and three key dimensions. The first dimension was the behavioral problems for the regular students' scale – a scale comprising 10 items. The second dimension was the behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale – a scale comprising 12 items. The third dimension was the problems related to the teacher and the school scale – a scale comprising 12 items.

Data Analysis

Various statistical analyses were conducted, including calculations of percentages, standard deviations (SD), means, test values, and p-values. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 21 used to evaluate and process the collected data.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

This part presents the demographic characteristics of the participants, with Table 1 having a complete breakdown. The gender distribution of the sample is relatively balanced; 51.6% were female and 48.4% were male. Regarding educational level, the vast majority of participants (91.9%) hold a bachelor's degree, while a smaller proportion (8.1%) possess a master's degree. In terms of school type, a large majority of the participants (83.1%) are employed in government schools, compared to a smaller percentage (16.9%) working in private schools. Participants' years of teaching experience varied, with the largest group having fewer than 5 years of experience (44.4%), followed by 10-15 years of experience (21.0%) and 5-10 years of experience (19.4%). A much smaller percentage of educators were 15-20 years (10.5%) and more than 20 years (4.8%) of experience, indicating a range of experience levels within the sample.

Concerning their field of education, the majority of participants (70.2%) were general education teachers, while a notable proportion (16.9%) were special education teachers. Additionally, a smaller group (12.9%) indicated 'others' as their field of education. The distribution across educational stages revealed that the largest proportion of participants

teach at the primary level (42.7%), followed by kindergarten (22.6%) and medium level (21.0%). The smallest representation is at the secondary level (13.7%). Finally, a majority of participants (62.9%) reported having enrolled in training courses associated with working with students with disabilities, whereas a significant proportion (37.1%) did not. Similarly, a majority (62.9%) have experience teaching students with disabilities, while 37.1% do not.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the participants in the students with disabilities survey

Variables	<i>n</i> (%)
Gender	
Female	64 (51.6)
Male	60 (48.4)
Educational level	
Bachelor	114 (91.9)
Master	10 (8.1)
School type	
Government	103 (83.1)
Private	21 (16.9)
Teacher years of experience	
1- 5	55 (44.4)
5-10	24 (19.4)
10-15	26 (21.0)
15-20	13 (10.5)
Above 20	6 (4.8)
Field of Education	
General Teacher	87 (70.2)
Special Education Teacher	21 (16.9)
Others	16 (12.9)
Educational Stage	
Kindergarten	28 (22.6)
Primary	53 (42.7)
Medium	26 (21.0)
Secondary	17 (13.7)
Enrolment on training courses	
No	46 (37.1)
Yes	78 (62.9)
Teaching students with disabilities	
No	46 (37.1)
Yes	78 (62.9)

Reliability Analysis of the Survey

The reliability analysis conducted in the survey demonstrates strong internal consistency across all scales, as shown in Table 2. The analysis yielded strong Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each scale: behavioral problems for regular students (10 items, $\alpha=0.902$), behavioral problems for students with disabilities (12 items, $\alpha=0.921$), and problems related to teachers and schools (12 items, $\alpha=0.903$).

Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale, encompassing all 34 items, was exceptionally high ($\alpha=0.967$).

Cronbach's alpha is a widely recognized evaluation of internal consistency reliability, with a generally accepted threshold of 0.70 or higher in social science research. Therefore, the alpha coefficients obtained in this pilot study indicate a high level of interrelatedness and consistency among the items within each scale and across the survey. These robust reliability results provide confidence in the characteristics of the survey used in this research. The consistently high alpha values across all scales suggest that the survey items effectively measure the intended constructions related to behavioral problems and challenges faced by teachers and schools. This strong psychometric foundation is essential for confirming the validity and reliability of the results in the main study. The study used a pilot

Table 2
Reliability analysis of the study survey in the pilot study

Scales	Number of statements	Cronbach's alpha
Behavioural problems for regular students	10	0.902
Behavioural problems for students with disabilities	12	0.921
Problems related to the teacher and the school	12	0.903
Total of all Statements	34	0.967

FINDINGS

In this section, all participants' responses were statistically analyzed and discussed. The findings include the statistical analysis of reliability, demographic characteristics of the participants, behavioral problems among regular students, behavioral problems between students with disabilities, and challenges related to teachers and schools. Each of these aspects is presented in the following sub-sections.

The Behavioural Problems for Regular Students' Scale

This section presents a comparison of the behavioral problems for regular students' scale scores across different demographic categories of the participants. The analysis discovered statistically significant differences in the scale scores for several demographic variables, while others showed no significant variation. Gender was found to be significantly associated with behavioral problems for regular students' scale scores ($p < 0.001$). Male teachers reported a significantly higher mean score (3.53 ± 0.609) compared to female teachers (2.92 ± 0.741). The educational level also demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the scale score ($p = 0.049$). Teachers with a master's degree reported a significantly higher mean score (3.66 ± 0.467) contrasted to those with a bachelor's degree (3.18 ± 0.753).

Similarly, years of experience had a significant association with the scale scores ($p < 0.001$). Participants with less than 5 years of experience indicated the lowest mean score (2.87 ± 0.732) compared to the categories. The educational stage showed a significant difference in behavioral problems for regular students' scale scores ($p = 0.008$). The mean scores indicate a trend of increasing perception of behavioral problems with

higher educational stages; secondary school teachers reported the highest mean score (3.57 ± 0.632) while kindergarten teachers reported the lowest (2.85 ± 0.708).

Furthermore, enrolment in training courses correlated to students with disabilities was significantly associated with the scale score ($p = 0.042$). Teachers who had enrolled in training courses reported a significantly higher mean score (3.32 ± 0.751) compared to those who had not (3.04 ± 0.707). Likewise, having experience teaching students with disabilities also displayed a significant association ($p = 0.006$). Educators who had prior experience teaching students with disabilities reported a significantly higher mean score (3.36 ± 0.777) than those without such experience (2.98 ± 0.625). In contrast, school type ($p = 0.984$) and field of education ($p = 0.322$) did not demonstrate statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems for regular students' scale scores.

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for behavioral problems for the regular students' scale, detailing the frequency of responses, percentages, means, standard deviations, and response levels for each of the 10 items on the scale. The scale explores various facets of behavioral problems showed by ordinary students towards their peers with disabilities, encompassing negative attitudes, imitation of behaviors, different forms of assault, acceptance difficulties, empathy, and social inclusion.

The response patterns revealed a nuanced picture of teacher perceptions regarding these behavioral issues. Several items indicated a moderate to high level of concern. Notably, a significant majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that regular students imitate wrong behaviors from students with disabilities (66.9%, $M = 3.65 \pm 0.971$) and that regular students verbally assault students with disabilities (63.7%, $M = 3.47 \pm 1.108$). Similarly, a considerable proportion agreed or strongly agreed that students do not like to play with their peers with disabilities (52.5%, $M = 3.53 \pm 1.070$) and that students are not recommended to join teams with students with disabilities (54.8%, $M = 3.46 \pm 1.070$). These findings suggest that issues like imitation, verbal aggression, and social exclusion are perceived as prevalent behavioral challenges.

However, other items on the scale indicated a more moderate level of perceived problems. For instance, regarding negative attitudes, while a combined 47.6% agreed or strongly agreed, a notable 27.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed ($M = 3.26 \pm 1.140$). Perceptions of physical assault appear less pronounced, with a lower mean ($M = 2.60 \pm 1.167$) and a higher percentage of disagreement (58.8%). Similarly, items related to acceptance difficulties ($M = 3.20 \pm 1.104$), exaggerated empathy ($M = 2.89 \pm 0.989$), lack of help ($M = 3.04 \pm 1.143$), and anxiety/fear ($M = 3.06 \pm 1.092$) all fall within the moderate response level, suggesting these issues are present less than imitation, verbal assault, and social exclusion. The total mean score of 3.22 ($SD = 0.745$) falls within the moderate response level. This indicates that teachers perceive the behavioral problems of regular students towards students with disabilities as being at a moderate level. This suggests that while these issues are not negligible and require attention, they are not perceived as extremely severe across all measured aspects.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of the behavioural problems for regular students' scale

Items	Strongly disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Neutral <i>n</i> (%)	Agree <i>n</i> (%)	Strongly agree <i>n</i> (%)	Mean	SD	Response level
The existence of negative attitudes from ordinary students towards their peers with disabilities.	9 (7.3)	25 (20.2)	31 (25.0)	43 (34.7)	16 (12.9)	3.26	1.140	Moderate
Ordinary students imitate some of the wrong behaviours that occur from students with disabilities.	4 (3.2)	13 (10.5)	24 (19.4)	64 (51.6)	19 (15.3)	3.65	0.971	High
Students who have disabilities were physically assaulted such as beatings by their normal peers.	19 (15.3)	54 (43.5)	15 (12.1)	29 (23.4)	7 (5.6)	2.60	1.167	Moderate
Students with disabilities were verbally assaulted, including being ridiculed by their typically developing peers.	9 (7.3)	18 (14.5)	18 (14.5)	64 (51.6)	15 (12.1)	3.47	1.108	High
The difficulty of ordinary students and students with disabilities accepting each other.	7 (5.6)	32 (25.8)	26 (21.0)	47 (37.9)	12 (9.7)	3.20	1.104	Moderate
Ordinary students show exaggerated empathy towards students with disabilities.	4 (3.2)	49 (39.5)	35 (28.2)	29 (23.4)	7 (5.6)	2.89	0.989	Moderate
The Ordinary student does not take the initiative to help his colleague with disabilities.	11 (8.9)	37 (29.8)	20 (16.1)	48 (38.7)	8 (6.5)	3.04	1.143	Moderate
The student does not like to play with his colleagues with disabilities.	4 (3.2)	17 (13.7)	38 (30.6)	39 (31.5)	26 (21.0)	3.53	1.070	High
The student feels anxiety and fear of students with disabilities.	8 (6.5)	35 (28.2)	34 (27.4)	36 (29.0)	11 (8.9)	3.06	1.092	Moderate
A student is not recommended to join a team with a student with disabilities.	4 (3.2)	23 (18.5)	29 (23.4)	48 (38.7)	20 (16.1)	3.46	1.070	High
Total mean scores of the scale						3.22	0.745	Moderate

Note: N= Number, SD= Standard deviation

The Behavioral Problems for Students with Disabilities Scale

This section presents a comparison of the behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale scores across different demographic categories of the participants. First, gender was discovered to be significantly correlated with the behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale score ($p < 0.001$). Male teachers reported a significantly higher mean score (3.35 ± 0.714) compared to female teachers (2.90 ± 0.674). School type also showed a significant change in behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale score ($p = 0.026$). Teachers in government schools reported a significantly higher mean score (3.18 ± 0.733) compared to teachers in private schools (2.79 ± 0.618).

Years of experience also demonstrated a significant association with the scale scores ($p = 0.021$). Participants with less than 5 years of experience got the lowest mean score (2.89 ± 0.671) compared to other experience categories. Having experience teaching students with disabilities was also significantly associated with the scale score ($p =$

0.031). Teachers with prior experience teaching students with disabilities reported a significantly higher mean score (3.21 ± 0.817) compared to those without such experience (2.95 ± 0.510). In contrast, educational level ($p = 0.423$), field of education ($p = 0.206$), educational stage ($p = 0.175$), and enrolment in training courses ($p = 0.102$) did not demonstrate statistically significant differences in behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale scores.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale within the survey. This includes the frequency of responses, percentages, means, standard deviations, and response levels for each of the 12 items on the scale. This scale explores various facets of behavioral problems displayed by students with disabilities themselves, encompassing feelings of helplessness, acceptance difficulties, jealousy, reliance, sensitivity, participation in activities, feelings of shame, aggression, withdrawal, emotional expression, and participation in decision-making.

Overall, the teachers perceived these behavioral challenges of students with disabilities as being at a moderate level, though certain behaviors were more prominent. Two items reached a 'high' response level: "A student with a disability is overly sensitive to any behavior of his classmates or teachers" ($M = 3.44 \pm 1.006$) and "the student shows withdrawal behavior and isolation" ($M = 3.40 \pm 1.081$). For the 'overly sensitive' item, a significant majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed (56.5%), suggesting this is a notable behavioral manifestation observed by teachers. Similarly, for the 'withdrawal and isolation' item, over half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed (53.2%), indicating that these behaviors are also commonly perceived.

The remaining ten items on the scale all fall within the 'moderate' response level. These items cover a range of aspects, including feelings of helplessness and inferiority ($M = 3.07 \pm 0.964$), difficulties in mutual acceptance with ordinary students ($M = 3.19 \pm 1.031$), feelings of jealousy ($M = 2.86 \pm 0.940$), reliance on female colleagues ($M = 3.15 \pm 1.072$), lack of participation in extracurricular activities ($M = 3.27 \pm 1.120$), feelings of shame in participation ($M = 3.22 \pm 1.071$), physical aggression towards regular peers ($M = 2.60 \pm 1.050$), verbal aggression towards regular peers ($M = 2.64 \pm 1.085$), difficulty expressing feelings ($M = 3.31 \pm 1.047$), and limited participation in decision-making ($M = 3.23 \pm 1.066$). The total mean score for the scale is 3.11 ($SD = 0.727$), which also falls within the 'moderate' response level. This overall moderate score suggests that teachers perceive the behavioral problems shown by students with disabilities to be at a moderate level within their school settings.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of the behavioural problems for students with disabilities scale

Items	Strongly disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)	Mean	SD	Response level
Students with disabilities feel helpless and inferior in school.	5 (4.0)	32 (25.8)	42 (33.9)	39 (31.5)	6 (4.8)	3.07	0.964	Moderate
The difficulty of ordinary students and students with disabilities accepting each other.	4 (3.2)	34 (27.4)	31 (25.0)	45 (36.3)	10 (8.1)	3.19	1.031	Moderate
Students with disabilities are jealous of their peers.	5 (4.0)	44 (35.5)	43 (34.7)	27 (21.8)	5 (4.0)	2.86	0.940	Moderate
A student with a disability relies on a female colleague to perform academic tasks.	6 (4.8)	36 (29.0)	25 (20.2)	48 (38.7)	9 (7.3)	3.15	1.072	Moderate
A student with a disability is overly sensitive to any behaviour of his classmates or teachers.	5 (4.0)	19 (15.3)	30 (24.2)	57 (46.0)	13 (10.5)	3.44	1.006	High
Students with disabilities do not share in extra-curricular activities with their regular peers.	4 (3.2)	34 (27.4)	30 (24.2)	37 (29.8)	19 (15.3)	3.27	1.120	Moderate
The student feels ashamed of classroom and extra-curricular participation.	5 (4.0)	33 (26.6)	28 (22.6)	46 (37.1)	12 (9.7)	3.22	1.071	Moderate
A student with a disability physically assaults his normal peers.	16 (12.9)	51 (41.1)	26 (21.0)	28 (22.6)	3 (2.4)	2.60	1.050	Moderate
A student with a disability verbally assaults his normal peers.	16 (12.9)	51 (41.1)	23 (18.5)	30 (24.2)	4 (3.2)	2.64	1.085	Moderate
The student shows withdrawal behaviour and isolation.	7 (5.6)	19 (15.3)	32 (25.8)	49 (39.5)	17 (13.7)	3.40	1.081	High
The student does not express his feelings and desires.	8 (6.5)	21 (16.9)	28 (22.6)	58 (46.8)	9 (7.3)	3.31	1.047	Moderate
The scarcity of participation of students with disabilities in making decisions related to them.	6 (4.8)	31 (25.0)	26 (21.0)	51 (41.1)	10 (8.1)	3.23	1.066	Moderate
Total mean score of the scale						3.11	0.727	Moderate

Problems Related to the Teacher and the School Scale

This section presents a comparison of the problems related to the teacher and the school scale scores across different demographic categories of participants. School type was found to be significantly associated with the problems related to the teacher and the school scale score ($p = 0.011$). Teachers in government schools reported a significantly higher mean score (3.09 ± 0.694) compared to teachers in private schools (2.65 ± 0.747). In contrast, gender ($p = 0.721$), educational level ($p = 0.133$), years of experience ($p = 0.408$), field of education ($p = 0.947$), educational stage ($p = 0.875$), enrolment in training courses ($p = 0.775$), and teaching students with disabilities ($p = 0.351$) did not demonstrate statistically important differences in the problems related to the teacher and the school scale scores.

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics for the problems related to the teacher and the school scale within the students with disabilities survey. It displays the frequency of responses, percentages, means, standard deviations, and response levels for each of the 12 items in this scale. The scale explores various challenges related to teacher practices and school policies that may contribute to behavioral issues, encompassing teacher care, school deterrent methods, teacher favoritism, lack of specialists, training, communication with parents, parental reservations, and discrimination in extracurricular activities. The response patterns suggest that teachers generally perceive issues related to teacher and school factors as being at a moderate level. However, one item stands out as reaching a 'high' response level: "The school does not have a behavioral specialist"

($M = 3.51 \pm 1.193$). A significant majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (58.1%), highlighting a perceived lack of specialized support within schools for addressing student behavioral problems.

The remaining eleven items on the scale all fall within the 'moderate' response level. These items cover a various range of concerns. Several items relate to perceived teacher behaviors, such as teachers not caring about behavioral problems ($M = 2.69 \pm 1.205$), some teachers favoring regular students ($M = 3.00 \pm 1.112$), and some teachers favoring students with disabilities ($M = 3.16 \pm 1.039$). Other items address school-level factors, including the lack of deterrent methods ($M = 2.82 \pm 1.169$), lack of training courses for teachers ($M = 3.03 \pm 1.118$), absence of regular meetings with parents ($M = 2.85 \pm 1.112$), and lack of periodic courses for parents ($M = 3.02 \pm 1.130$). Parental prospects are also represented, with items on parental reservations about inclusion ($M = 3.05 \pm 1.050$ for regular student parents, ($M = 2.80 \pm 0.979$) for parents of students with disabilities) and parental disagreement with participation in school trips ($M = 2.85 \pm 0.993$). Finally, an item addresses potential discrimination in extracurricular activities ($M = 3.38 \pm 0.993$). The total mean score for the scale is 3.01 ($SD = 0.719$), placing the overall perception of problems related to teachers and schools at a 'moderate' level.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics of the problems related to the teacher and the school scale

Items	Strongly disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Neutral <i>n</i> (%)	Agree <i>n</i> (%)	Strongly agree <i>n</i> (%)	Mean	SD	Response level
Teachers do not care about students' behavioural problems.	19 (15.3)	49 (39.5)	17 (13.7)	30 (24.2)	9 (7.3)	2.69	1.205	Moderate
The school has no deterrent method for undesirable behaviours.	15 (12.1)	42 (33.9)	27 (21.8)	30 (24.2)	10 (8.1)	2.82	1.169	Moderate
Some teachers favour ordinary students at the expense of their peers with disabilities.	12 (9.7)	35 (28.2)	23 (18.5)	49 (39.5)	5 (4.0)	3.00	1.112	Moderate
Some educators Favor students with disabilities at the expense of their average peers.	7 (5.6)	30 (24.2)	30 (24.2)	50 (40.3)	7 (5.6)	3.16	1.039	Moderate
The school does not have a behavioural specialist.	7 (5.6)	23 (18.5)	22 (17.7)	44 (35.5)	28 (22.6)	3.51	1.193	High
The school does not offer training courses for teachers to educate them on ways to deal with students' behavioural problems.	9 (7.3)	37 (29.8)	30 (24.2)	37 (29.8)	11 (8.9)	3.03	1.118	Moderate
There are no regular meetings among the school and parents of regular students and people with disabilities.	10 (8.1)	49 (39.5)	23 (18.5)	34 (27.4)	8 (6.5)	2.85	1.112	Moderate
Periodic courses are not held for parents of ordinary students and people with disabilities to educate them on ways to deal with children's behavioural problems.	9 (7.3)	37 (29.8)	33 (26.6)	32 (25.8)	13 (10.5)	3.02	1.130	Moderate
Parents of ordinary students have reservations about educating their children with students with disabilities.	6 (4.8)	39 (31.5)	30 (24.2)	41 (33.1)	8 (6.5)	3.05	1.050	Moderate
Parents of pupils with disabilities have reservations about their kids' education with regular students.	5 (4.0)	55 (44.4)	28 (22.6)	32 (25.8)	4 (3.2)	2.80	0.979	Moderate
Parents do not agree to the participation of their children with disabilities in school trips.	7 (5.6)	46 (37.1)	33 (26.6)	34 (27.4)	4 (3.2)	2.85	0.993	Moderate
There is favouritism and discrimination in the nomination of students for extracurricular activities related to disability.	3 (2.4)	22 (17.7)	39 (31.5)	45 (36.3)	15 (12.1)	3.38	0.993	Moderate
Total mean score of the scale						3.01	0.719	Moderate

DISCUSSION

The question of behavioral problems in schools is a significant concern globally, which affects the learning environment, student welfare, and general academic results. Within Saudi Arabia, this concern is particularly important because the nation is working on educational reforms, including increasing the educational integration of students with disabilities into mainstream schools. Understanding the learning's attitude to behavioral problems in this developed inclusive education scenario is important for developing effective support systems and strategies (Alharbi & Madhesh, 2018; Hariri et al., 2021). This research study directly addresses this need by examining the perspectives of Saudi teachers on the behavioral problems exhibited by regular students and disabled students in the classroom. By analyzing teachers' opinions, this study aims to provide valuable visions into the nature and extent of these challenges.

The findings from the behavioral problems for the regular students' scale revealed a complex landscape of teacher perceptions regarding the relations between regular students and their peers with disabilities in Saudi Arabian schools. A significant proportion of teachers observed that ordinary students often imitate inappropriate behaviors from students with disabilities (66.9%, $M=3.65$) and engage in verbal assaults towards them (63.7%, $M=3.47$). Additionally, over half of the respondents noted a reluctance among ordinary students to engage in play (52.5%, $M=3.53$) or team activities (54.8%, $M=3.46$) with their peers who have disabilities. These insights suggest prevalent issues of behavioral imitation, verbal aggression, and social exclusion.

These findings align with previous research indicating that students with disabilities often face social challenges and negative behaviors from their peers. For instance, a Saudi study highlighted that general education teachers in Saudi Arabia recognize various behavioral issues among students, including aggression and social withdrawal, which can adversely affect students with disabilities (Abaoud & Almalki, 2015; Keshky & Alahmadi, 2017). Similarly, Aldosari (2022) found that private elementary school educators in Riyadh hold somewhat negative attitudes toward the inclusive education of students with disabilities, which may contribute to the observed social exclusion and negative interactions.

Conversely, other aspects of behavioral problems, such as physical assault, exaggerated empathy, lack of help, and anxiety/fear, were perceived at a moderate level. Specifically, physical assaults ($M=2.60$) and exaggerated empathy ($M=2.89$) were perceived less frequently. This suggests that verbal aggression and social exclusion are prominent concerns; however, overt physical aggression and excessive sympathetic behaviors are less prevalent. Moreover, demographic analyses indicated significant differences in perceptions based on several factors. Firstly, a significant gender difference emerged, with male teachers reporting significantly higher mean scores ($M=3.53$) than female teachers ($M=2.92$). This aligns with the findings of Abaoud & Almalki (2015), who also reported male teachers in Saudi Arabia demonstrated a slightly higher 'understanding of characteristics associated with emotional and behavioral disorders.'

Educational level was significantly associated with scale scores; teachers holding master's degrees reported higher means ($M= 3.66$) than bachelor's degree holders ($M= 3.18$). This suggests that teachers with advanced education may be more attuned to or perhaps more critical in their assessment of behavioral problems from normal students. Years of experience also showed a significant association; teachers having less than 5 years of experience reported the lowest mean scores ($M= 2.87$). This could indicate that less experienced teachers may be less aware of or less likely to perceive and report these behavioral problems compared to their more experienced colleagues. Conversely, more experienced teachers might face accumulated challenges over time, and perceive these issues as more pronounced. Alsolami and Vaughan (2023) also found similar results that aligns with the study's finding that less experienced teachers report lower levels of perceived behavioral problems from regular students.

Educational stage and enrolment in training courses, as well as experience teaching students with disabilities, were also significantly associated with higher scale scores. Teachers in secondary schools perceived the highest level of behavioral problems, and those with training or experience with students with disabilities also reported higher scores. This suggests that increased exposure to older students and specialized knowledge or experience related to disabilities heightens teachers' awareness or perception of behavioral problems than regular students. This could reflect a greater understanding of the social dynamics and potential challenges within inclusive settings that come with experience and specialized training.

The analysis of the behavioral problems for students with disabilities scale offers valuable insights into educators' perceptions of the challenges that these students faced by in Saudi Arabian schools. Notably, teachers identified heightened sensitivity to peer and teacher behaviors ($M=3.44$) and tendencies towards withdrawal and isolation ($M=3.40$) as prominent issues, with over half of the respondents acknowledging these concerns. These findings suggest that emotional sensitivity and social withdrawal are significant behavioral manifestations among students with disabilities.

These observations are consistent with existing literature. For instance, a preliminary prevalence screening study reported that above 20% of children in Saudi Arabia experience peer relationship difficulties and deficiency essential social behaviors, contributing to social withdrawal and isolation (Maajeeny, 2018). Similarly, another study found that primary school students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in Jeddah exhibited high rates of comorbid psychiatric and behavioral problems, including depression and anxiety, which can exacerbate sensitivity and withdrawal behaviors (AlZaben et al., 2018). An interview with special education teachers also highlighted social withdrawal as a significant behavioral characteristic of students with autism; this finding further supports the idea that withdrawal and isolation are recognized behavioral patterns among students with disabilities in the Saudi educational context (Almutlaq, 2021).

Supporting this, a previous study examined general education educators' perspectives on the characteristics of students with emotional and behavioral disorders in Saudi Arabia and found that male teachers exhibited a greater understanding of the

characteristics of students with emotional and behavioral disorders compared to female teachers. This suggests that male teachers may be more attuned to identifying behavioral issues in students with disabilities. However, the same study reported no significant differences in teacher perceptions based on educational level or years of teaching experience, which contrasts with the current findings that highlight the influence of experience on teacher perceptions (Abaoud & Almalki, 2015).

Additionally, Alhossein (2016) explored educators' awareness and use of evidence-based teaching practices for students with emotional and behavioral disorders in Saudi Arabia. The researcher discovered that female educators were more awareness than male educators, but no major differences were observed based on major, educational degree, or years of teaching practice. These variations emphasize the difficult interplay of demographic factors in influencing teacher perceptions of student behavior. Insight into these nuances is critical for developing targeted professional development programs that address specific needs based on teacher demographics, ultimately fostering more effective educational strategies for students with disabilities.

Lastly, our findings about the problems related to the teacher and the school scale highlight a significant concern regarding the lack of behavioral specialists in schools, with (58.1%) of teachers acknowledging this deficiency. This absence suggests that schools may be ill-equipped to address the complex behavioral challenges presented by students with disabilities. This may lead to inadequate support for both students and teachers. The moderate levels of concern expressed about teacher practices and school policies, such as favoritism, insufficient training, and limited parental engagement, indicate systemic issues that could hinder the effective inclusive school classroom of students with disabilities. Notably, teachers in government schools reported higher levels of these problems compared to their counterparts in private schools, suggesting disparities in resources, training, or institutional support between different school types. These findings align with previous research highlighting the essential role of teacher characteristics and school environment in the positive inclusive education of students with disabilities (Alanazi and Alhazmi, 2023) that is important relationships between teachers' agreement with inclusive education and factors like age, gender, training, professional role, knowledge, and experience.

The demographic analysis in the current study revealed that school types significantly influence perceptions of problems related to teachers and schools, with government schoolteachers reporting more issues than those in private schools. This finding suggests that private schools may have more resources or better support systems in place to address these challenges. In contrast, factors like gender, educational level, years of teaching practice, field of education, educational stage, enrolment in training courses, and experience educating students with disabilities did not show significant differences in perceptions. Coskun and Demirci (2024) indicated that in-Service training programs should be provided for teachers frequently to help them develop their teaching skills.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations. First, it used an online survey completed by teachers. It may add an interview that can help to provide more information. Second, the sample size of the study may not be representative of all teachers in Saudi Arabia. Upcoming studies should increase the size of the sample. Third, this study did not include direct observation of schools, teachers, and students to collect data on the subject. It was using only online surveys. Fourth, this study did not focus on specific disabilities, and future researchers may need to focus on specific disabilities, such as learning disabilities and autism, to better understand inclusive education practices. Lastly, the study's participants were only teachers, and it may need to know about students' perceptions that can provide more information about behavioral issues.

IMPLICATIONS

This study has several suggestions. First, future researchers could incorporate interviews and focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of behavioral problems among regular students and students with disabilities, as well as the challenges faced by schools and educators in inclusive settings. These qualitative methods would allow participants to provide richer insights, particularly when conducted in person. Second, future researchers should consider expanding the sample to include participants from all regions to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Third, future researchers may benefit from directly observing schools, teachers, students, and reviewing schools' policies regarding problem behaviors, which could provide a additional complete understanding of the challenges faced by educators and students. Fourth, future researchers may need to focus on specific disabilities, such as learning disabilities and autism, to better understand inclusive education practices. Each student with disabilities may have different problem behaviors and they need more focus and understanding on their problem behaviors even if they have same disabilities. Lastly, the study recommends that teachers may need to increase their knowledge and understanding of using evidence-based interventions. Also, schools should have a target policy and training for both students and teachers. These policies and training should aim to address behavioral problems and prevent all students and encourage them to behave well. They may need to use many behavioral supports, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports that can help all students to behave well.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, problem behaviors exhibited by regular students and students with disabilities remain a significant challenge in schools, particularly in inclusive classrooms where teachers often manage more than 25 students at a time. To effectively support these students, teachers may require evidence-based treatment interventions for managing behavioral issues, as well as professional training, support, and adequate resources from their schools. For inclusive education to be effective, schools need to be well-prepared to accommodate the needs of both students and educators, ensuring that the necessary structures are in place to achieve educational goals. Many students, including those with emotional and behavioral disorders or learning disabilities, have

successfully thrived in inclusive settings in various countries, including Saudi Arabia, due to the provision of appropriate educational environments. When comprehensive support systems and services are in place for both students and teachers, it becomes easier to foster academic success and create a more inclusive learning environment. This study contributed to determine the needs of inclusive education for students with problem behavioral problems among regular and disabled students in inclusive Saudi schools and help stakeholders to provide an effective educational environment for all students. Schools may need to use many behavioral support types, such as using positive behavioral support interventions that can help to provide an effective environment for all students.

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