

## *Original Paper*

# Assessing Teacher Strategies in Responding to Student Mental Health Behaviors

Omar M. Banguih<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University, RT Lim Blvd., Baliwasan, Zamboanga City, Philippines

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### **Abstract**

*This study assessed the strategies employed by teachers in responding to student mental health behaviors at Curuan National High School. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the research examined the frequency, types, and severity of student mental health behaviors; the strategies used by teachers; their perceived effectiveness; and the challenges encountered. A validated questionnaire was administered to 70 teachers. Weighted mean and regression analysis were applied. Results show that students frequently display restlessness, inattention, excessive worry, and emotional instability, significantly affecting academic performance and classroom engagement. Teachers most often implement classroom management techniques, supportive communication, and individualized interventions. However, challenges include insufficient training, lack of resources, and limited administrative support. Regression findings reveal a significant positive relationship between teacher strategies and perceived effectiveness ( $B=0.756$ ;  $p=0.000$ ;  $R^2=0.624$ ). The study concludes that systematic and evidence-based teacher strategies are essential for supporting student mental health and that schools must strengthen resources and teacher training.*

### **Keywords**

*Teacher strategies, mental health behaviors, student engagement, classroom management, data-driven intervention, correlational design*

### **1. Introduction**

Student mental health concerns have increasingly become a major challenge in educational institutions. Anxiety, depression, stress, social withdrawal, and disruptive behaviors have been widely documented among learners, especially in the post-pandemic period. In the Philippines, the Department of Education has emphasized the growing incidence of emotional and behavioral difficulties affecting

academic performance and classroom engagement.

Teachers, being daily frontliners in classrooms, are often the first to observe these mental health behaviors. Their responses significantly shape how students cope and regain stability. However, many teachers rely on personal experience rather than evidence-based strategies, leading to inconsistent interventions and limited effectiveness.

At Curuan National High School, teachers report frequent cases of restlessness, inattentiveness, emotional instability, and social withdrawal among students. While they apply various coping strategies such as classroom routines, counseling, and activity modifications, challenges include limited training, lack of support, and resource constraints. This highlights the need for a structured assessment to better understand current teacher practices and guide the development of a data-driven intervention plan.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1 Research Design*

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to assess the mental health behaviors of students and the strategies employed by teachers at Curuan National High School. The descriptive component determined the frequency, types, and severity of student mental health behaviors, while the correlational component examined whether teacher strategies significantly relate to their perceived effectiveness. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to measure naturally occurring variables without manipulation, enabling the identification of patterns and relationships essential for developing a data-driven classroom intervention plan.

### *2.2 Research Local*

The study was conducted at Curuan National High School in Zamboanga City, a large public secondary school serving diverse learners with varying academic, social, and emotional needs. The school's population presents a realistic environment where teachers regularly encounter learners demonstrating a range of mental health-related behaviors. This setting was ideal for the research because it provided authentic classroom conditions and typical challenges that teachers face in addressing student emotional and behavioral concerns.

### *2.3 Respondents of the Study*

The respondents were 70 teachers selected from a population of 150 through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation based on age, sex, educational attainment, teaching experience, and subject area. The sample included teachers from both junior and senior high school levels, enabling the study to capture a broad range of experiences and strategies used in managing student mental health behaviors. The diversity of the respondents strengthened the validity of the findings by reflecting perspectives from early-career, mid-career, and senior educators.

### *2.4 Research Instrument*

The study utilized a structured, self-administered questionnaire aligned with the Statement of the Problem and designed to measure mental health behaviors, teacher strategies, perceived effectiveness,

and challenges encountered. The instrument consisted of four major parts, each using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Always” or “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Items were developed based on existing literature and expert recommendations to ensure relevance and clarity, allowing respondents to provide consistent and measurable feedback regarding their classroom experiences.

### *2.5 Validity and Reliability*

The questionnaire underwent expert content validation by specialists in guidance counseling, psychology, and educational administration to ensure that each item was clear, appropriate, and aligned with the study objectives. A pilot test was then conducted with 15 teachers from a comparable school, and the results were analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha, which yielded a high reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.88$ , indicating strong internal consistency. With all subscales exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, the instrument was deemed reliable for full deployment in the study.

### *2.6 Data Gathering Procedure*

The researcher first secured permission from the school head, after which teachers were informed of the study’s purpose and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Questionnaires were distributed personally and collected after respondents were given sufficient time for completion. The researcher ensured clarity by addressing questions or concerns during distribution. Once retrieved, the completed forms were checked for completeness, encoded systematically, and organized for statistical analysis while observing ethical considerations such as anonymity and respect for participants’ time.

### *2.7 Statistical Treatment of Data*

The study employed weighted mean to describe the frequency, types, and severity of mental health behaviors, as well as teacher strategies, perceived effectiveness, and challenges. Regression analysis was used to determine whether teacher strategies significantly predicted their perceived effectiveness in responding to mental health behaviors, with the significance level set at 0.05. These statistical tools allowed the researcher to derive meaningful patterns and relationships from the data, supporting both descriptive and inferential objectives of the study

### *2.7 Statement of the Problem*

This study seeks to assess the strategies employed by teachers in responding to student mental health behaviors at Curuan National High School. Specifically, it aims to address the following problems:

1. What are the mental health behaviors of students at Curuan National High School as observed by teachers in terms of:

- 1.1. Frequency**

- 1.2. Type**

- 1.3. Severity**

2. How do teachers respond to student mental health behaviors at Curuan National High School in terms of

- 2.1. Strategies used**

## 2.2. Perceived effectiveness

## 2.3. Challenges encountered?

3. How effective do teachers perceive their strategies to be in addressing student mental health behaviors in terms of:

### 3.1. Impact on classroom management

### 3.2. Student engagement?

4. What challenges do teachers encounter in implementing classroom strategies for students with mental health concerns in terms of

#### 4.1. Resources

#### 4.2. Training

#### 4.3. Support?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the teacher strategies used and their perceived effectiveness in managing student mental health behaviors in terms of measurable classroom outcomes?

## 3. Result and Discussion

**Table 1. Frequency of Mental Health Behaviors Observed Among Students**

Mental Health Behaviors	Mean	Interpretation
Restlessness / Hyperactivity	4.23	Often Observed
Difficulty Concentrating	4.18	Often Observed
Excessive Worry / Anxiety	4.12	Often Observed
Mood Swings / Irritability	3.96	Often Observed
Withdrawn / Quiet Behavior	3.88	Sometimes Observed
Sudden Decline in Performance	3.75	Sometimes Observed
Social Avoidance	3.63	Sometimes Observed
Unexplained Sadness	3.57	Sometimes Observed

Results indicate that restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and excessive worry are the most frequently observed mental health behaviors among students, suggesting heightened emotional and cognitive stress that significantly affects classroom functioning.

**Table 2. Types of Mental Health Behaviors**

Type of Behavior	Mean	Interpretation
Inattentiveness	4.21	Very Frequent
Emotional Instability	4.03	Frequent

Anxiety Indicators	3.97	Frequent
Social Withdrawal	3.67	Sometimes
Behavioral Disruptions	3.44	Sometimes

Inattentiveness appears as the dominant type of mental health behavior among students, followed by emotional instability and anxiety-related signs, indicating both internalizing and externalizing concerns.

**Table 3. Severity of Mental Health Behaviors**

Severity Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Interference with Learning Tasks	4.11	Severe
Impact on Class Participation	4.02	Severe
Emotional Outbursts	3.85	Moderate
Difficulty Following Instructions	3.77	Moderate
Frequent Absenteeism	3.61	Moderate

Severity ratings reveal that mental health behaviors substantially hinder learning tasks and participation, emphasizing the need for structured interventions.

**Table 4. Strategies Used by Teachers**

Teacher Strategies	Mean	Interpretation
Classroom Management Techniques	4.33	Always Used
Supportive Communication	4.28	Always Used
Individualized Guidance	4.12	Often Used
Behavior Monitoring	3.97	Often Used
Activity Modification	3.89	Often Used

Teachers most frequently use classroom management and supportive communication, while collaborative approaches are the least implemented, likely due to workload or structural barriers.

**Table 5. Perceived Effectiveness of Teacher Strategies**

Effectiveness Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Improves Emotional Well-Being	4.29	Very Effective
Enhances Student Engagement	4.18	Very Effective
Reduces Behavioral Incidents	4.07	Effective
Improves Academic Focus	3.92	Effective

Improves Peer Interaction	3.74	Effective
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Teachers perceive their strategies as highly effective in improving emotional well-being and engagement, though effects on peer interaction are somewhat lower.

**Table 6. Challenges Encountered by Teachers**

Challenges	Mean	Interpretation
Lack of Training	4.41	Major Challenge
Limited Resources	4.29	Major Challenge
Large Class Sizes	4.10	Major Challenge
Limited Administrative Support	3.88	Moderate Challenge
Time Constraints	3.76	Moderate Challenge

Insufficient mental-health training and limited resources are the most serious challenges faced by teachers, reducing their ability to consistently implement behavioral interventions.

**Table 7. Effect on Classroom Management**

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Helps Maintain Order	4.22	Very Effective
Reduces Disruptions	4.08	Effective
Improves Classroom Climate	4.02	Effective
Encourages Cooperation	3.91	Effective

**Summary Interpretation:**

Teacher strategies significantly contribute to maintaining a positive classroom climate and reducing disruptions.

**Table 8. Effect on Student Engagement**

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Increases Participation	4.17	Very Effective
Improves Motivation	4.09	Effective
Encourages Focus	3.94	Effective
Builds Confidence	3.85	Effective

The data show that teacher strategies positively affect student participation, motivation, and confidence.

**Table 9. Resource-Related Challenges**

Resource Issues	Mean	Interpretation
Lack of Materials	4.32	Major Challenge
Shortage of Support Staff	4.21	Major Challenge
Limited Space for Activities	3.90	Moderate Challenge

Resource limitations—particularly materials and support personnel—hinder teachers' ability to manage mental health behaviors effectively.

**Table 10. Training Challenges**

Training Needs	Mean	Interpretation
Need for Mental Health Training	4.47	Very High Need
Need for Behavioral Intervention Workshops	4.33	Very High Need
Lack of Updated Guidelines	4.05	High Need

Teachers express urgent need for mental health training, intervention workshops, and updated guidelines to strengthen their classroom practice.

**Table 11. Regression Analysis on Teacher Strategies and Effectiveness**

Statistical Indicator	Value
Beta Coefficient (B)	0.756
p-value	0.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.624
Interpretation	Significant Relationship

Regression results show that teacher strategies significantly predict perceived effectiveness ( $p < 0.05$ ), explaining 62.4% of the variance, demonstrating a strong positive relationship.

#### 4. Discussion and Findings

##### Problem 1 – Mental Health Behaviors of Students

The study found that students frequently display mental health behaviors such as inattention, restlessness, excessive worry, social withdrawal, mood swings, and emotional instability, with

inattention registering the highest frequency and severity. These behaviors significantly affect academic performance, classroom engagement, and peer interactions, indicating that mental health concerns are pervasive and have substantial impacts on learning.

### **Problem 2 – Teacher Responses: Strategies, Effectiveness, Challenges**

Teachers consistently employ strategies such as classroom management techniques, supportive communication, individualized guidance, and instructional modification, which they perceive as generally effective. However, they also encounter major challenges, including insufficient training, lack of resources, limited administrative support, and large class sizes, which hinder consistent implementation of mental health interventions.

### **Problem 3 – Effectiveness on Classroom Management and Student Engagement**

Teachers reported that their strategies effectively reduce disruptive behaviors, improve the classroom environment, enhance student focus, and increase participation, motivation, peer collaboration, and confidence. These results indicate that mental health-responsive strategies significantly contribute to improved classroom management and higher levels of student engagement.

### **Problem 4 – Challenges: Resources, Training, Support**

The study revealed that teachers face substantial challenges in addressing student mental health due to limited materials, lack of time, inadequate classroom space, insufficient technology, and a shortage of guidance personnel. Challenges related to training and support were also notable, as teachers expressed the need for more professional development, workshops, and stronger administrative and parental support.

### **Problem 5 – Relationship Between Strategies and Effectiveness**

Regression analysis showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teacher strategies and perceived effectiveness, with strategies explaining 62.4% of the variance in effectiveness. This means that teachers who use more structured and intentional mental health strategies report greater success in managing student emotional, behavioral, and social concerns.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Problem 1 – Mental Health Behaviors of Students**

It is concluded that mental health behaviors among students are prevalent and significantly affect their academic functioning, peer relationships, and overall classroom engagement. The presence of persistent emotional and behavioral concerns indicates an urgent need for school-based mental health support systems.

#### **Problem 2 – Teacher Responses: Strategies, Effectiveness, Challenges**

Teachers are proactive and resourceful in addressing student mental health concerns, but their efforts are limited by inadequate training, insufficient resources, and weak institutional support. Therefore, teacher responsiveness alone is not enough; systemic improvements are necessary to enhance strategy



implementation.

### **Problem 3 – Effectiveness on Classroom Management and Student Engagement**

Teacher strategies are effective in creating a positive learning environment and improving student participation, demonstrating that mental health–responsive interventions are essential for maintaining classroom order and fostering meaningful engagement. These findings confirm that supporting student mental health directly enhances learning outcomes.

### **Problem 4 – Challenges: Resources, Training, Support**

The study concludes that the major obstacles teachers face are systemic factors beyond their control, including resource shortages, lack of professional training, and inadequate administrative and parental support. Addressing these gaps is essential to strengthen the school’s mental health response system.

### **Problem 5 – Relationship Between Strategies and Effectiveness**

There is a significant and strong relationship between teacher strategies and perceived effectiveness, confirming that well-designed and consistently applied strategies lead to better outcomes in managing student mental health behaviors. This underscores the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary tools, training, and institutional support.

## **Recommendations**

### **Problem 1 – Mental Health Behaviors of Students**

It is recommended that the school strengthen early identification and monitoring of student mental health behaviors through regular screening, teacher reporting tools, and collaboration with guidance personnel to ensure timely interventions.

### **Problem 2 – Teacher Responses: Strategies, Effectiveness, Challenges**

The school should provide structured training programs, allocate needed resources, and encourage collaborative planning among teachers to enhance the consistency and effectiveness of mental health strategies used in classrooms.

### **Problem 3 – Effectiveness on Classroom Management and Student Engagement**

Teachers should continue applying mental health–responsive strategies and be supported with additional interventions such as peer-support programs, socio-emotional learning activities, and positive behavior management systems to further strengthen classroom engagement.

### **Problem 4 – Challenges: Resources, Training, Support**

The school administration should address resource gaps by providing materials, hiring additional guidance personnel, improving classroom conditions, and offering regular professional development. Strengthening administrative and parental involvement is also essential for sustained support.

### **Problem 5 – Relationship Between Strategies and Effectiveness**

Since teacher strategies significantly influence effectiveness, the school should prioritize professional development on evidence-based mental health interventions and provide ongoing coaching, mentoring, and monitoring to ensure consistent and effective application of strategies.

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